TRANSLATION AND TRIBALISM

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The reality is that the major Bible translations in use today are all good, and beyond good, translations. There is no longer a â€œbestâ€ translation but instead a basket full of exceptional translations.
Category: English Bibles

Yesterday, on Twitter, I came across an old link to a fascinating post about Bible translation and decided that it would make a great subject for today's blog post. Then, I discovered that I'd already written about it a number of years ago. Never one to waste an opportunity; here is a repost from 2014.

Scott McKnight has written a fascinating piece on the way that English language translations have been adopted by different groupings or tribes.

> *The Bible you carry is a political act. By â€œBibleâ€ I mean the Translation of the Bible you carry is a political act. Because the Bible you carry is a political act the rhetoric about other translations is more politics than it is reality. The reality is that the major Bible translations in use today are all good, and beyond good, translations. There is no longer a â€œbestâ€ translation but instead a basket full of exceptional translations.*
>
> *The world in which we live, however, has turned the Bible you carry into politics.*

He then goes on to list some of the different tribes that use various translations.

> *The NIV 2011 is the Bible of conservative evangelicals.*
> *The NLT is the Bible of conservative evangelicals.*
> *The TNIV is the Bible of egalitarian evangelicals.*
> *The ESV is the Bible of complementarian conservative evangelicals.*

Iâ€™m not sure that this sort of list holds true in the UK, where Bible choice is less of a divisive issue than it is in the US, but if you take it as a generalisation, there is certainly some truth in it.

Just a couple of thoughts:

- There are places in the world where carrying a Bible is truly a political act; one for which you may well risk your life. There are governments who would have no hesitation to punish anyone who had the temerity to be found owning or reading a Bible. Equally, there are places which would allow you to have a Bible, but only in the majority or national language, not in your own mother tongue. All of this puts our â€˜Bible warsâ€™ into some sort of perspective.
- Meanwhile, as we argue about which English translation is the best, there are millions of people who donâ€™t have access to a single word of Scripture in their own language. Isnâ€™t it about time we stopped being so introspective and got with Godâ€™s program?

Now go and read the whole article.