SIMPLE LANGUAGE

Posted on June 24, 2008 by Eddie

Category: Methodology

David Ker has whipped up a bit of a storm over at Better Bibles Blog with his post entitled Beware of Bible Experts. Basically, David is arguing that experts in the original Biblical languages are not the best placed to speak about the style of translations into English.

> *... in the process of mastering ancient languages they have lost their own. Mastering Greek or Hebrew or Ugaritic is no mean feat. To get to the point where you can fluently read all those squiggles requires years of effort.*
>
> *We should respect these people and listen to them when they tell us about the scansion of the Psalms. Or the laments of Jeremiah.*
>
> *But when they start telling us how to speak English they just need to be listened to patiently and then ignored. And when they start telling us that our Bible translations should sound wooden, well, just roll your eyes and smirk a little.*

It's an interesting post and well worth a read, but make sure you read the comments too.

It's not just in English that these sorts of debates happen. Mark (on the Wycliffe UK Blog) has just picked up on some intersting discussion about the suitability of Jamaican creole as a vehicle for the Scriptures.

> *Some residents say that using the local dialect, known as Patois, is diluting the sanctity of the Scriptures.*
>
> *Others argue that using Patois is empowering because it embraces the Caribbean islandâ€™s heritage. Read More*

I'd be interested to see some thoughts about translation into Patois from those who get so steamed up about issues relating to English language translation.