

Bringing the Written Word to the World



History of Translation (Part 3)

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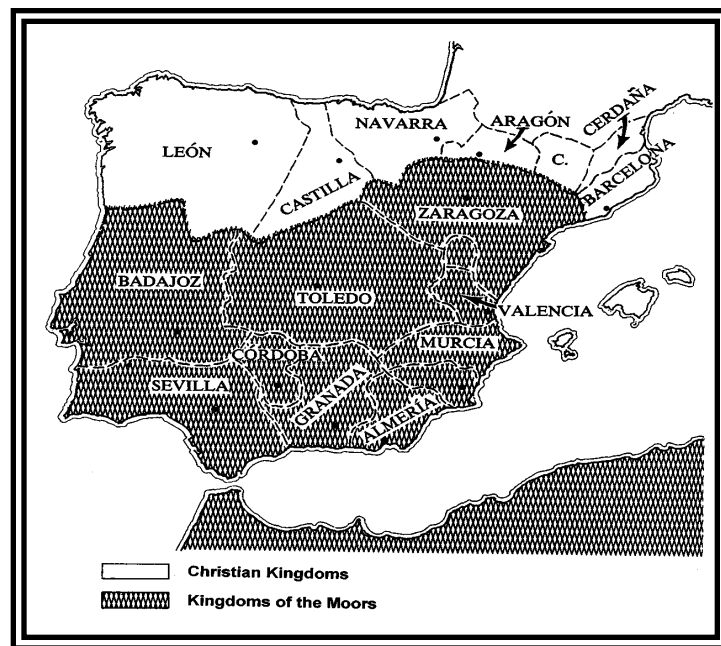
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Spain in the Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages Spain was a primary bridge from Western Europe to the highly advanced culture of the Islamic world. In 711 the Moors invaded Spain, and the Visigoths and other Latin-speaking inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula were pushed north to the mountains that included the Pyrenees along the what is today the French border. It would take 400 years for the Christians to drive the Moors back to the southern fringe of the peninsula and nearly eight centuries to defeat the last Muslim bastion at Granada.

By then the Islamic culture was to have left a profound imprint on the Christians in Spain. During the 8th and 9th Centuries, a little before and during the time when the coasts of Western Europe were raided by Norsemen and much of the continent was divided into small fiefdoms, "the powerful Bagdad Califate had the most advanced libraries and scholars in the world in the fields of science, medicine, philosophy, philology and history, and their activities included the translation of the writings of the ancient Greeks into Arabic and Latin" (Jack Child, Introduction to Spanish Translation, University of America Press, p. 52). The influence of this culture spread throughout the Islamic world and flourished remarkably in the Iberian peninsula, particularly in the city of Toledo.

Thus when the Christians from the north took back their territory they were able to incorporate some of the superior Islamic culture into theirs. These formerly Latin-speaking people now spoke derivative, Romance languages that employed a greatly simplified grammar and vocabulary. One of these new languages would come to be called Castilian and eventually Spanish. By the 12th Century Castilian had gained considerable prestige because the epic poem

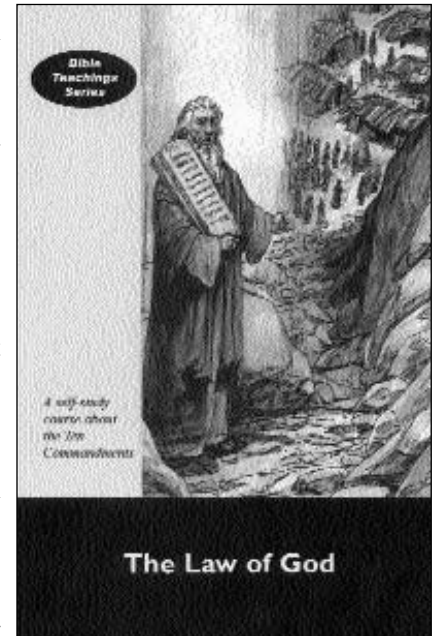
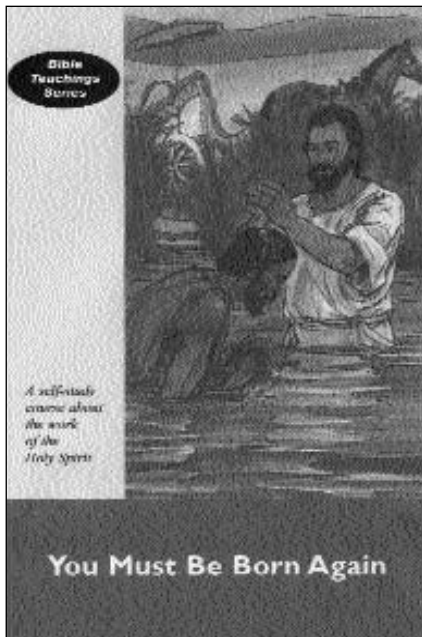


*Spain in 1035 AD,
just before the most of the reconquest began*

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Bible Teachings Series Finished!

All 12 booklets of the Bible Teachings Series have now been finished. These booklets were produced first by pastors and teachers of the WELS for prison ministry and have been adapted for general use. The booklets are intended for adults who can read simple English and who have little understanding about the Bible and most specifically, the gospel. Fresh full-color artwork that tries to represent Biblical characters accurately as the Semitic people they were has been incorporated into the booklets. The Bible translation is the New International Readers Version, which uses simple English. For a complete listing of the twelve titles refer to the MLP Catalog or go to <www.wmcwels.net/bookstore>. The series, which can be used as a correspondence course or taught by lay people in home Bible study groups, is currently being translated into Indonesian, Japanese and Spanish.



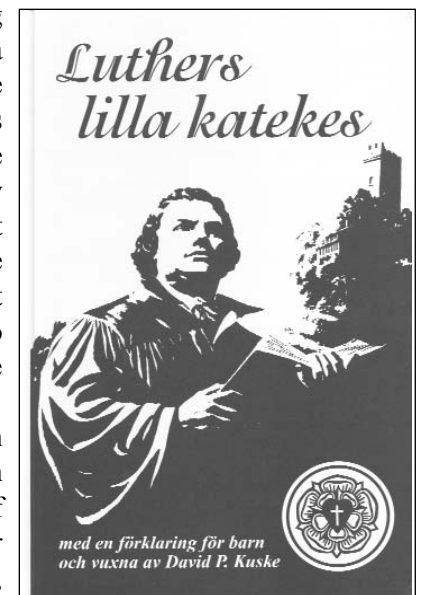
**Shop our online catalog at:
www.wmcwels.net/forsale**



Valuable New Tool

Thanks to the work of the LBK's Literature Committee and to financing from the WELS Multi-Language Publications program, we now have a valuable new tool to use. *Kuske's Catechism*, the standard used in the WELS, is now available in Swedish. The translation looks as professional and attractive as the English edition with the same illustrations, etc. The only difference is that references to clearly United States things has been switched to their Swedish equivalent. At least two of our LBK congregations are working their way through the catechism as their adult Bible study for the year. "I've started using it with my youth confirmation class. Before this time, we had no catechism or equivalent to use." - *Rev. John Vogt*, Counselor for the Confessional Lutheran Churches in Scandinavia.

"How would our congregations [in the United States] function without a catechism to use? Now, after many years, the MLP has been able to make available a valuable tool for instruction. That was one of the original goals of our MLP program, namely, 'to provide tools for our missionaries and lay people to use.'" - *Rev. Harold Essmann*, member of the MLP Committee.



New Publications

Since September the following new publications became available through Multi-Language Publications.

Albanian

Bible Stories in Pictures - 38-7378

CD-Rom

Bible History Illustrations - 38-7391

CD, By *Glenn Myers*, 67 full-color illustrations now available in full-size.

(World Fields in fellowship with the WELS contact Jan Gamble at jgamble@multilanguagepublications.com for a free copy if illustrations are needed before the final release of 120 pictures in the summer of 2003.)

Dutch

The Promise - 38-7393

English

Bible Teachings Series

Adapted from WELS Prison Ministries
by Harold Essmann

What Christians Believe - 38-7350

God's Plan for the World - 38-7351

The Reluctant Prophet - 38-7353

Jesus is Lord, Addiction is Not - 38-7355

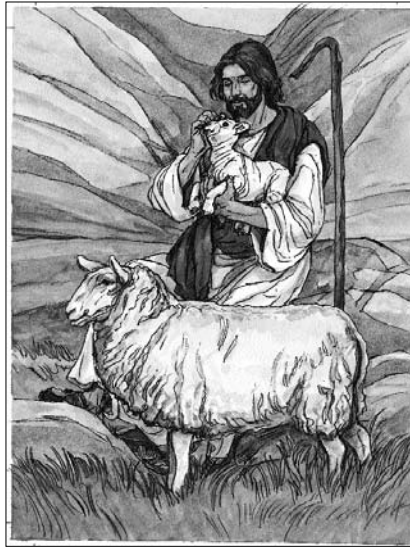
You Must be Born Again - 38-7356

The Law of God - 38-7357

(This completes the series of 12 books planned for this year. Translation work is under way in Indonesian, Japanese and Spanish)

Farsi

The Promise- 38-7358



Laotian

What the Bible and Lutherans Teach - 38-7360

Norwegian

For Such a Time as This, Old Testament

- 38-7368

Russian

People's Bible - John - 38-7370

Spanish

People's Bible -

1 Chronicles - 38-5034 (being printed by NPH)

Matthew - 38-5024 (being printed by NPH)

Swedish

Luther's Catechism with Explanation - 38-7361

Why English materials?

Since Northwestern Publishing House and WELS Parish Services, not to mention many other programs of our synod, produce fine materials in English, it has been asked why does Multi-Language Publications also produce English materials? Indeed, after Spanish, English has the second-largest listing of materials in the catalog.

While many people in the WELS are busy learning dozens of languages to help share the gospel around the world many of the people with whom they come in contact are just as busy learning English. Indeed, a survey taken at the World Seminary Conference in August revealed that more than 45% of the national pastors and students in various worker-training programs around the world can communicate in English. To communicate effectively with those who are learning English, specialized materials are needed that eliminate or explain cultural and historical references that would be well-known to readers targeted in the Midwest of the United States or that simplify grammar and vocabulary, who may have difficulty understanding the nuances of the American vernacular.

Speaking specifically about the **Bible Teachings Series** and referencing the other English publications of the MLP, missionary to the Apache-Americans Daniel Rautenberg in Whiteriver, Arizona writes: "...those books have been terrific for us so far... in fact, everything that we've tried from [Multi-Language Publications] in the last 2 years has been an answer to prayers as far as giving people something they can actually read and understand and then share with their friends and neighbors. For people who do not speak English as a first language and needed something simple to learn and witness their faith these books have been great! For some it's like they're reading Scripture for the first time and understanding it..."

about El Cid's defeat of the Moors (for example, at Valencia) had been written in a primitive form of that language. An important vehicle for the development of the Castilian language and culture was the translation school established during the 12th Century in Toledo, the primary city of Castile.

The Jews, who had also prospered in the Iberian peninsula, made a major contribution in the translation process. An outstanding example of their scholarship was Maimonides who lived in southern Spain during the 12th Century. Maimonides "argued that any translator who attempts to simply find a single word to correspond to each word in the original language will waste much time and will produce an uncertain and confused translation. Much better, he felt, would be for the translator to understand the development of the writer's original thoughts and then express those same thoughts in ways that would be clear and understandable in the second language" (Child, p. 52).

The reconquest and establishment of the translation school set the stage for one of the truly great kings of Medieval Europe. He is commonly known as Alfonso el Sabio, ("the wise"). King Alfonso (1252-1280) ruled the north central kingdom of Castile that by the end of the 15th Century would unite most of the peninsula into one nation. Alfonso himself took part in the translation school, for "he was a scholar in his own right, specializing in lexicography as he studied ways to coin new words in Castilian to express thoughts originating in the Islamic texts." (Child, p. 52). A translated example of a definition from Alfonso's work is: "Argent. The stone which is commonly called 'argent' or silver, and the Moors called 'feda,' can be hammered or smelted the same as other metals. And if its filings are mixed with medicines for the inflammation which they call 'uitreun,' it is beneficial. And likewise for all illnesses which involve inflammation... And the color of this stone is white, and the more it is polished, the shinier it gets." (Lloyd Kasten, "Alfonso El Sabio and 13th Century Spanish", Thought, Vol. 60, No. 239, p. 416).

"The interest in intellectual aspects of translations in the Toledo school led them to keep records detailing the procedures by which translations were made. The process involved teams of translators consisting of a Jewish scholar, who after consulting with his Islamic colleague, would read the original text aloud in Arabic and then give his version of it in Latin and the romance language (Castilian). A third member

of the team, a Castilian Christian, would then (after consulting with his Arabic and Jewish colleagues) write down the version in Latin and Castilian. Since all three members of the team (Muslim, Jew and Christian) had some knowledge of all three languages (Arabic, Latin and Castilian), the process involved much discussion and debate before the final texts were produced. Doubts were resolved by consulting other translators, the rich resources of the Toledo libraries, or the King himself. Such a process would not have been possible without the overlapping presence in Toledo of rich legacies from all of these cultures and the support of the Church and King." (Child, pp 52-53).

The translation work helped support the creation of new publications, the most influential of which was a new law code for Spain, Siete Partidas, which was in turn based on Roman law. The influence of The Seven Divisions, as the book might be called in English, is still felt throughout Latin America and some of the American states that comprise the Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican Secession.

A survey of representatives at the World Seminary Conference indicated that nearly 30% of the students and graduates of worker training programs in fellowship with the WELS use Spanish. After English at 46%, Spanish is by a wide margin the second-most used language among national workers and students. Spanish is also the second language of the United States. In fact, the Hispanic population in the United States is fifth largest in the world after Mexico, Spain, Colombia and Argentina. It is not surprising therefore that Spanish is taught in most of the WELS high schools and has become an important course offering at Martin Luther College. Nor is it surprising that more materials are available in Spanish than any of the other languages listed in the Multi-Language Publications Catalog.

Unlike their forebears prior to World War II, who often spoke German and English, most WELS church workers today have been raised in a monolingual English environment. Spanish serves as an important bridge to introduce these workers to the issues related to communicating in another language. To help our future workers understand those issues, including the principles of translation, our worker-training program should consider strengthening its instruction about the history of Hispanic culture.

