

Bringing the Written Word to the World



Use of the Printed Word

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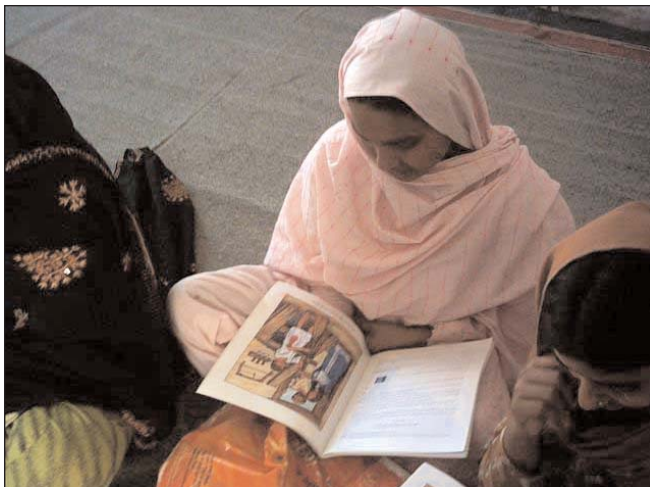
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The following letter was received by a member of the Multi-Language Publications Committee. It tells how Christian literature can bring the gospel to people in Pakistan who would otherwise not come to know Jesus Christ. The letter has been revised somewhat for style and primarily to preserve the anonymity of the people involved.



***“PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY ...
ARE VERY INTERESTED AND EAGER
TO READ THE WORD OF GOD.”***

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Yesterday a Muslim man, very simple in his appearance, came to my office and asked for the book, Bible Stories. He wanted to buy it. He said that he had seen this book, read a part of it after borrowing it from another patient's relative in the hospital and that now he wanted to have it. He also told me that he liked it very much and wanted to take it home to read the rest of it and to give it to his family to read. I told him that we don't sell this book, that we can give it to him.

My wife was sitting in my office at that time. I told him that this book has been translated by her. Then the Muslim man started talking directly to my wife saying in our local language: "Sister, you have done a great job in your life. You will die some day as all other human beings die; but this precious book will not die, because this book, if handled with care, will not die even after a hundred years. Many people in our country will benefit from it and be blessed through it. This book is beautifully written, very simple and easy to understand. Even a child ten years old can understand it easily. The paper used for it is very nice and the colorful pictures are also very beautiful and attractive."

After hearing these words my wife was very happy and thanked God for these encouraging words from a Muslim reader of Bible Stories. Later that evening she told me that when she got this book for translation she was very interested in doing the translation but that she did not have time. So I sent the book to be translated by someone else in another city. But after some time when I inquired about the translation work, they said that nothing has been done so far. So I asked to have this book sent back to us, and then my wife started

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Use of the Printed Word - continued

translating it by herself. The book was printed under the supervision of our pastor; and all who have seen this book appreciate it very much. Everybody wants a copy.

So please advise us whether we should give this book to Muslims and Christians freely with the belief that many will come to know about Christ by reading this book. By doing this we would exhaust our supply very soon. Or should we give it only to our Christian Sunday School students?

People in our country, especially the masses who are not the fundamentalist Muslims, are very interested and eager to read the Word of God. In the golden days when missionaries were working here, there were hidden churches of Muslim people who believed in Jesus Christ in their hearts. They honored Him very much while nobody knew that they were Christian in their hearts. These hidden followers of Jesus Christ have been very useful in saving the lives of many Christians in our country. These people also act as an antidote against the fundamentalists Muslims in our country.

Many years back a Christian village in our country was attacked by fundamentalist Muslims at night. They burnt their houses and killed some of them. They brought hand grenades with them and used those weapons freely in that village. The Christian people were running out of the village, and Muslims were beating and killing them. One of our Christian friends, who is a district sports manager, was also in that village.

He also fled from the village to save his life. He was in a bus that was stopped by the angry mob after two kilometers. Some young men entered the bus and started hunting for Christians. They ordered all the passengers to take out their identity cards and show them because a person's religion is mentioned on the cards. The people started pulling out their cards and showing these young men their identity. Our friend took out his card and was very upset. Another man sitting beside him was a Muslim with long beard. He hit our friend's hand, pretending it happened accidentally. Our friend's card fell down and the Muslim man put his foot over it to hide it. When the angry young men came near them they did not ask the Muslim man with beard about his I.D. card because his long beard was a very prominent sign of his Muslim identity. But they did ask our friend about his card. Immediately the man with beard told them that our friend was his subordinate. So they left our friend and did not ask him again about his card. After the danger had passed, our friend asked that bearded man how he knew that he was a Christian. The man replied, "I saw your religion on your I.D. card. That's why I hit your hand to throw card down and to save you from these foolish people. I also believe in Jesus Christ secretly in my heart."

There are people who really want to have Christian literature to read and come to know the TRUTH.

Please pray that these books bear fruit in the lives of many people in our country so that they are saved by the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Grateful.

In Christ.

(Name Removed)

Last fall, five thousand copies of *Bible Stories* were printed in the Urdu language. Soon another 5,000 copies will be printed. The funds to print these books were provided by the Publications Coordinating Commission.

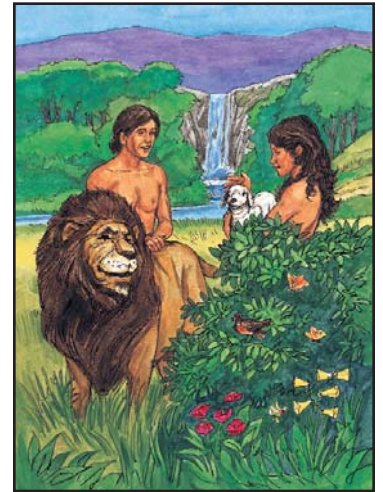
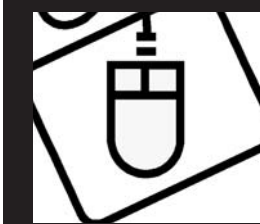


Illustration from
Bible Stories
in the Urdu language



We are only a click away at:
www.mlpwels.com

A Letter of Thanks

This past winter Movers International began to ship 20,000 copies of *The Promise* in the Chewa language to Malawi. Regarding that publication, the chairman of the Department of Education and Publications of our sister church wrote the following:

Twenty thousand copies of *What the Bible and Lutherans Teach* in the same language are also being shipped to Malawi. These donations were made possible by the Lord through contributions to the Synod Mission Offering by the members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Soli Deo Gloria!

Dear Sir:

I, on behalf of the Malawi Synod, and indeed on my own behalf, highly thank you and your committee for your gracious hand and commitment rendered on our Synod as a whole for *The Promise*.

It is our great appreciation, we never expected. May God richly bless you and your committee. To do such a big and tiresome work is not easy!

It is our sincere prayer that our almighty Lord may continue to bless you with such tremendous wisdom.

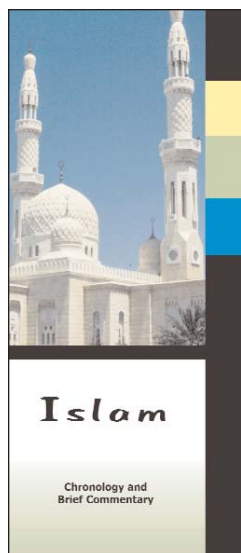
In His Service.

Rev. Davis Wowa

The Chairman

Lutheran Church of Central Africa

Department of Education and Publications



For pricing and ordering information for these and other publications, contact:

New Publications!

Simplified Catechism – Now in Urdu!

Trinity Reprographics has donated the printing of 5,000 copies of this little booklet in Urdu. May God use this donation to teach the gospel in Pakistan! Catalog Number: 38-7501.

Teacher's Guide for Bible Stories Now Available

This 132 page booklet shows how to teach the 32 lessons of the *Bible Stories* booklet, which has been published into Nepali, Urdu, Laotian, Hmong and Mizo. God-willing the same booklet will soon become available in Burmese. Currently, the teacher's guide is available only in English. Catalog Number: 38-3314.

Translation of the Spanish Sunday School Series into English

Both Series A and B are now available on two CD's in WordPerfect and PDF. The material contains the story booklets and worksheets in three levels for both series. Catalog Number: 38-7441.

The Whole Bible – In Spanish

The translation of *The Whole Bible* study guide (student guide and teacher's guide) is proceeding at the rate the material becomes available in English from Northwestern Publishing House. The course guides a student through the Scriptures in short lessons calculated to last about twenty minutes per lesson. References are made to the People's Bible commentaries. This material is being made available for field testing in Spanish. To receive lessons in digital form, write Rev. Ronald Baerbock, the director of Spanish publications, at rbaerbock@elp.rr.com. Close to one third of the entire series is now available for field-testing.

The Congregational Evangelist Program – In Spanish

The translation of the entire curriculum into Spanish continues at a rapid pace. A number of courses are now available from Martin Luther College by contacting Valery Fisher. Call 507-354-8221, ext. 383 or to the website of the Congregational Evangelist Program at www.mlc-wels.edu/evangelist.

Islam – First Study Tract Available

The first of a series of tracts used to teach Christians about the Muslim faith is now available. The first tract will also be used for publicity purposes to promote presentations about Islam and to announce publications suitable for outreach to Muslims. Catalog Number: 38-3319.

Multi-Language Publications

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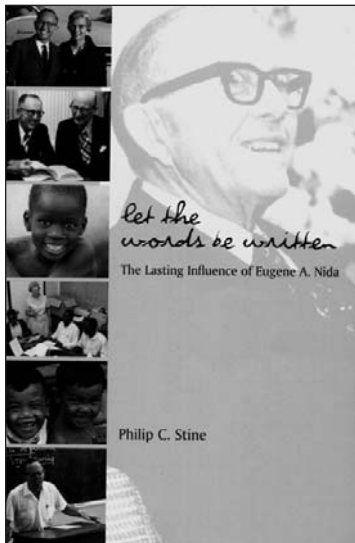
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Let the Words be Written!



LET THE WORDS BE WRITTEN: The Lasting Influence of Eugene A. Nida, by Philip C. Stine. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004. 199 pp, pb, \$24.95.

I had not seen Dr. E.R. Wendland for many years when I had the privilege of attending his translation seminar sponsored by Multi-Language Publications in Milwaukee the summer of 1997. Since college days at Northwestern in Watertown, our service in the WELS had followed very different paths. Dr. Wendland pursued an M.A. in Linguistics and a Ph.D. in African Languages and Literature at the University of Wisconsin. Later he earned a Master of Sacred Theology in Biblical Exegesis from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. His service to his Lord has been given as a missionary of our synod in Central Africa where has spent most of his life. In an article in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, dated 1983, Dr. Wendland described the opportunity to serve as a consultant for the United Bible Society in the translation of the Bible into some of the primary languages spoken in Zambia and Malawi. That work eventually resulted in the new Chichewa Bible translation, entitled *Buku Loyera*.

By 1997 I had spent twenty years as a missionary in Latin America. That was enough time with Puerto Rican and Mexican Christians to appreciate how cultural and linguistic barriers make effective communication a challenging endeavor. The pursuit of a Master of Arts in Spanish at the University of Texas at El Paso created a keen awareness of the richness and variety of Hispanic literature that reflected Latin American experiences and values. I particularly remember translation classes in which we Anglophones could readily produce effective translations of Spanish text into English because we instinctively knew how to express a concept in our own language. But it also became obvious how inept we were when it came to producing effective translations of English text into Spanish. It wasn't our culture. The conclusion was clear: translation teams were needed in which qualified native-speakers did the translation; missionaries should serve as consultants to clarify the source text and evaluate the doctrinal message in the target language.

So Dr. Wendland's basic message at that translation seminar made perfect sense. But the details of his instruction were hard to follow. Dr. Wendland has mastered much more than some of the primary languages and culture of Central Africa.

He has a thoroughly informed understanding of the issues and procedures involved in the translation process, particularly in reference to the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. Dr. Wendland's seminar and his writings are challenging material for those of us who lack his formal training and vast experience.

LET THE WORDS BE WRITTEN: The Lasting Influence of Eugene A. Nida by Philip C. Stine is an excellent bridge to understanding Dr. Wendland. It is likely, for example, that missionaries and world board members have encountered the term "dynamic equivalency." Dr. Nida invented that term, and Dr. Stine explains how the invention came about. Before World War Two and even during the first twenty years of Dr. Nida's service, Bible translation usually followed the literal forms of the original Biblical languages, even though the result was largely unintelligible in third world cultures. Most translation work was done primarily by missionaries who were not working in their own languages. The communication of God's word suffered. To remove this language barrier, teams needed to be formed, training needed to be provided, and procedures had to be established. This in a nutshell illustrates the tremendous contribution Dr. Nida made through the United Bible Society. By the year 1900 about 520 translations of the Bible had been produced. Since then the number of translations has nearly quadrupled. That striking statistic in itself illuminates the contribution Dr. Nida made to the field of Bible translation.

Almost all of our missionaries deal with foreign languages and therefore with translation. Board members need to understand, support and guide the work of their missionaries. Read this book. It will give you a framework for understanding the challenges posed by translation, especially in its most difficult form – the translation of the Bible. Stine's book will also give you insight into the kinds of tasks our fellowship must strengthen in order to be more effective in our translation of confessional Lutheran literature. Are we consistently using qualified native speakers? Do we work as teams? Do we follow established procedures to analyze and translate the source text? Do we revise translations doctrinally and stylistically? Do we test the results of our work? Do we provide sufficient training? How well do we monitor and encourage the process?

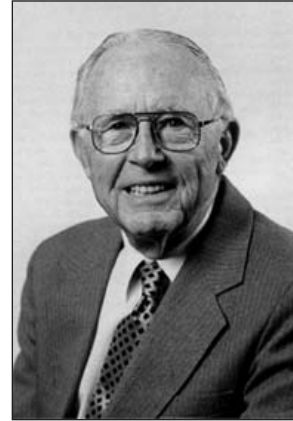
We have a recognized authority in our own fellowship who can strengthen our efforts to translate confessional Lutheran materials. In future issues we hope to provide more information from some of the writings of Dr. Wendland. Several of his books, *Buku Loyera-An Introduction*, *The Cultural Factor in Bible Translation*, *Bridging the Gap*, and *Preaching that Grabs the Heart*, are already in the World Mission Collection at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library. We strongly encourage our seminary students, missionaries and mission board members to read Dr. Wendland. But to gain a basic background, read Dr. Stine's book first.

by Paul Hartman

The Life of Eugene A. Nida

Dr. Nida spent much of his life traveling. Born November 11, 1914 in Oklahoma City, his family brought him to Long Beach, California when he was five years old. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Greek from UCLA, he earned a Master's degree in the Greek New Testament from the University of Southern California and a Ph.D. in Linguistics at the University of Michigan in 1943. By then he had already spent considerable time with the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Mexico.

From 1943 until his retirement in the 1980's, Dr. Nida served in various capacities to lead the translation program of the American Bible Society. Much of Dr. Nida's time was spent in mission fields around the world in order to work with missionary translators on linguistic problems and to find indigenous translators. Workshops were held continually and over time a network and organizational structure was developed that became the global United Bible Societies Translations Program.



Through the years Dr. Nida produced a theory that “would foster effective communication of the Good News across all kinds of cultural and linguistics barriers.” Two of his seminal writings are *Toward a Science of Translating* (Brill, 1964) and *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Brill, 1969, co-authored with C.R. Taber). “His 1986 publication, with Jan de Waard, *From One Language to Another* (Nelson) is the summative explication (sic) of functional equivalence translation.”

Currently, Dr. Nida lives in Brussels, Belgium.

(From “*Brief Biography of Eugene Nida*,” at the website of the *Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship*, www.nidainstitute.org)

Dynamic Equivalence

Opinions differ on Nida's “Dynamic Equivalence” approach to translation. In a future issue we will offer an article about Bible translations in “popular language.” The following is an excerpt from *LET THE WORDS BE WRITTEN: The Lasting Influence of Eugene A. Nida* (pp. 40 and 42).

In *Toward a Science of Translating*, Nida introduced an approach he termed “dynamic equivalence.” In it he states that there are two basic approaches to translation. One is formal equivalence, “which focuses on the message itself, in both form and content.” Thus, a translator is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry or sentence to sentence. Nida contrasts this approach with a second one that attempts to produce “a dynamic rather than a formal equivalence.” In dynamic equivalence, translators concern themselves less with matching a receptor language message with a source language message and more with creating a dynamic relationship “between receptor and message [that] should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (Nida 1964: 159).

The terms “source,” “message,” and “receptor” all make totally explicit Nida's starting assumption: translation is a form of communication. His communication model in its simplest form describes how a message requires a source, a content or meaning, and a receptor. In translation, a translator can function both as a receptor of a source language message and a source in a target language. And indeed, the diagrams in *Toward a Science of Translating* illustrate this point (see 121, 147). But Nida points out how much more is actually involved, especially since interpersonal communication takes place in a sociolinguistic, historical, and cultural context. The meaning of the message and the way the receptor responds to the message are shaped by these factors.

...

Such a translation aims at “the closest natural equivalent” to the source language message. Each of the words in this statement is important. The translation should provide as much as possible a message that is *equivalent* to the source language message. The expression of the message should fit *naturally* into the receptor language. Nida understood “natural fit” to mean that a message should conform to the receptor language and culture, the target context of the message, and the receptor language audience. Finally, given various options, and keeping in mind both “equivalence” and “naturalness,” a translator should choose the form that stays *closest to the form* of the original.

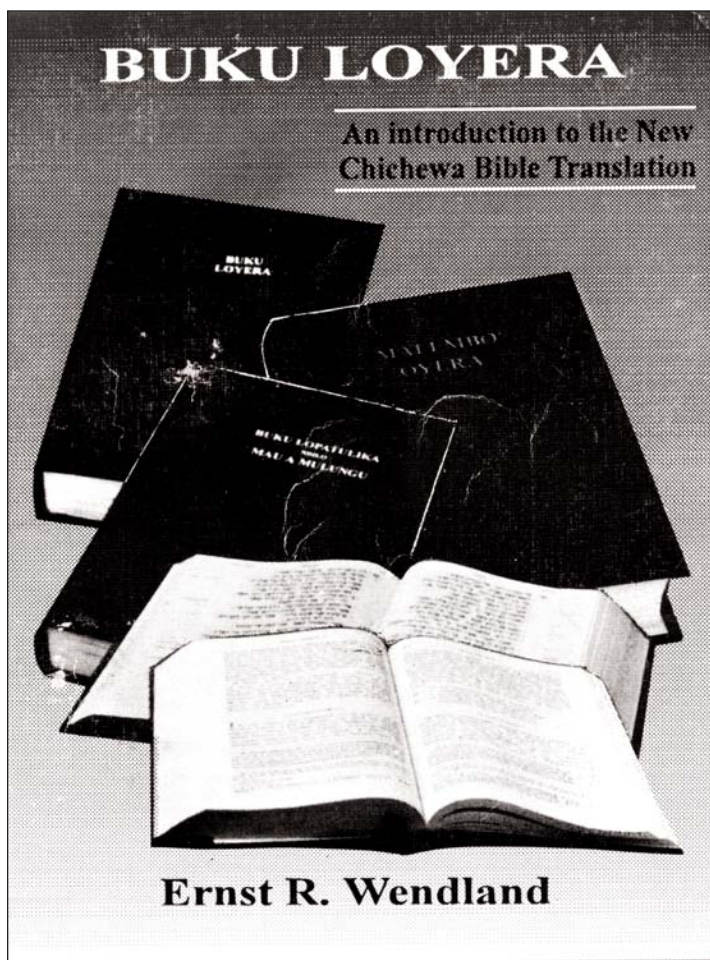
Participation in a Transdenominational Bible Translation Project

How can a WELS missionary and national pastors in fellowship with the WELS serve as consultants to the United Bible Society without violating our fellowship principles? In reference to the project that led to the *New International Version*, Prof. John C. Jeske addressed a similar question in an article for the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, published in 1978:

The participation of our men [of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary faculty] in a transdenominational Bible translation project has on occasion raised questions. The writer has been asked: "Was your participation as a member of translation teams a purely professional exercise?" It could hardly be that for any Christian Bible student. The next question was: "If your participation was an exercise of your faith, is such action in conformity with the synod's stated position on church fellowship?"

The seminary faculty and board were convinced there was no conflict, as long as our representative was not expected to take part in joint devotions. Outside the framework of fellowship joint discussion of scriptural doctrine and of controverted issues does not show indifference to the truth or appear to give error in the church the status of truth. Finally a good Bible translation is something we want and ought to work for (75:4, p 293).

Participation in a UBS project runs the risk of compromising a clear confession to the truth. But it also provides an opportunity to give a clear confession. The involvement by the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the *New International Bible* project helped produce a Bible translation that has been very usable in our synod for nearly thirty years. It appears from *Buku Loyera-An Introduction* that our sister church in Central Africa has received a Bible translation that does not distort the message contained in the original languages.



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