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Translation Debate: What Makes a Bible Translation Good? (Book Review)

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At the end of the book are three appendices. The first discusses the research done with questionnaires and some of the resultant data. It gives insight into the question of nurses entering into spiritual care. The summary of this appendix indicates that

Females verbalize more spiritual needs than males; that the clergyman is the preferred person with whom patients prefer to speak about spiritual needs; that relief from fear of death, a knowledge of God's presence, expression of caring and support from another person, and receiving the sacraments were ranked the four most important spiritual needs by patients; and that patients appreciate

concern and kindness from nurses and desire to be allowed to talk and to be listened to by nurses. (p. 176)

It also includes a list of unpublished master's theses related to spiritual needs of patients.

In the second appendix there is a brief discussion of the origin, development, and purpose of Nurses Christian Fellowship (a department of IVCF). The last appendix is a list of fifteen study guides for nurses, explaining briefly the essence of each.

I recommend this book highly for all those who are involved with health care because it gives good insight into the spiritual needs of those who are ill.

The Translation Debate: What Makes a Bible Translation Good?, by Eugene H. Glassman. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1981, 133 pp., no price listed. Reviewed by John M. Zinkand, Professor of Greek and Theology.

This is not a book to buy if you want a *Consumer Reports*-type evaluation of the more than seventy English translations of the Bible (or parts of it) which have appeared in this century. There are no "Acceptable" or "Best Buy" ratings in Glassman's handy volume. But Glassman, a translator himself, does provide the tools for do-it-yourself Bible critics to make their own, better-informed judgments.

Translating, we are reminded, is a thankless task, not only because recognition is hard to come by, but because the public is so often more concerned with what is familiar than with knowing the truth. Through the centuries most translators and translations alike have been appreciated only in retrospect.

A notion, popular among Evangelicals (or "Conservatives"), is that a literal translation is to be preferred to a paraphrase. (Some booksellers promote "literal translations" for those ministers who are deficient in the original languages of the Scriptures.) Glassman shows that literal translations are often not worthy of the designation *translation*, and that *paraphrase* deserves to be elevated from its pejorative status. Even the King

James Version includes paraphrastic sections; "God forbid!", found about a dozen times in the KJV New Testament, is a translation of two words, neither of which actually means "God" or "forbid."

Literal translations stress *form*, often at the expense of *meaning*. Extreme paraphrases skew the message by capricious additions or deletions. But a good translation/paraphrase—the golden mean—restructures the form so that the meaning is preserved in the language in which the translation is being made.

Missionaries have often struggled to make clear the Word of God to people of languages quite different from our Indo-European heritage. "How would you say that in your own language?" is continually asked. And this has provided the key for communicating the gospel in English as well. Finally, English-speaking Christians are beginning to see that we who were raised on the King James Version (and to some extent this also applies to the ASV and RSV) have been oblivious to the awkwardness of our "Christianspeak."

Glassman's book deserves to be read, especially by those who read but one version of the Bible.