

legitimate understanding of that order in the OT, from its earliest to its latest expressions. Inevitably Lind's thesis will encounter difficulties with some of the royal Psalms, Esther, and certain prophetic traditions such as Micah's prophecy of a new David, and the tradition of war, found along with one of peace, which states that the remnant of Jacob will destroy all of their enemies.

If one is tempted to subordinate these witnesses to more compatible testimony, one is working with a canon within a canon. Or if one is pushed, as Lind is, to make the observation that even though the figure of the king dominates in Ps 18, but that the emphasis on the leadership of Yahweh limits the king's power, one begins to wonder if choosing the view of Yahweh's miraculous victory, or Israel's victory, announced by a prophet, is an exclusive OT view of the theo-political order. Perhaps the king was tempted to exercise the Enlil power of neighboring monarchs, but does this exclude the part of the anointed king as a representative of the people from the victory in the name of Yahweh?

Another question which should be addressed in a book such as this is related to the recognition that beginning with the monarchical period miracles of deliverance, such as contained in Exodus, no longer occurred as earlier. In fact, the question of whether Yahweh acted at all was raised by some voices in Israel. The prophets responded by redefining the activity of Yahweh in the political and military events outside of Israel which were now turned against Israel. While the prophets testify that judgment had fallen on Israel because she had broken the covenant, the Psalter wonders why God, contrary to his promise, had turned the edge of the king's sword and not upheld him in battle. Does this picture open up a wider debate over the place of the king in warfare and focus our attention on the realities of politics and human suffering under some of these systems, or is Lind right in suggesting that the true representatives of the kingdom are those who suffer and wait for Yahweh's new act?

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Nida, Eugene A., and Reyburn, William D. *Meaning Across Cultures*. American Society of Missiology Series, 4. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981. vi + 90 pp. Paperback, \$5.95.

The purpose of this book is to offer a "practical guide to help people understand how misconceptions can arise because of differing cultural backgrounds" and to set forth "the principles of communication that guide one's judgment as to the validity of various types of adaptation and restructuring that occur in many present-day translations of the Bible" (p. vi).

After a short introduction, the book deals with various factors that enter into the communication of a message. The three essential elements are the source, the message, and the receptor. The more one knows about the persons who are the source and the receptor, respectively, and their setting, the easier it becomes to understand the message. The meaning of the message depends much on the cultural presuppositions of a particular society, its patterns of behavior, and the way in which events are interpreted.

The chapter dealing with translation points up the difficulties of the translator (in this case, the source) in his attitude toward the source language and receptor language, the message as it is moved from one culture to another, and the receptor as he, from his cultural background, tries to understand a message coming from another cultural background. Because of the historical roots of the Bible and its unique message, it is not always possible to translate in such a way as to transcend the two cultures without distortion. There are times when marginal notes and explanations must supplement the translation.

Chaps. 4 and 5 deal with the various features that make up the form (such as transliteration, rhetorical devices, figurative language, etc.) and the content of the message (such as specific historical events with or without religious significance, figurative or illustrative events and objects, etc.), and show how these should be dealt with in translation. These chapters offer many informative and helpful hints.

Chap. 6 emphasizes the importance of knowing well the features of both the source language and the receptor language, as well as their correspondences and differences. In the final chapter, instruction is given on how to deal with differences of form or meaning. Types of problems justifying supplementary information are: "(1) important divergencies in original texts, (2) significantly different interpretations of the text, (3) historical events that may be misleading or meaningless, (4) figurative expressions, (5) objects that may differ in form or function, and (6) zero expressions" (pp. 71-72).

As an example of number (3), the strewing of branches in the path of Jesus is noted: In some areas of West Africa this action is understood as a serious insult. As an example of number (4), mention is made of the description of Judah in Gen 49:12 as a person whose "eyes are bloodshot from drinking wine, and whose teeth are white from drinking milk." This can be understood as a condemnation of Judah as a drunkard or glutton, whereas in reality he is being described as a person of prosperity. Number (5) refers to equivalents in coins, weights, and measures, and to objects such as millstones. "Zero expressions" are those which have no meaning in the receptor language because of lack of familiarity, such as proper names which may need a classifier, e.g., *the City of Jerusalem*. The chapter

closes with a list of the types of notes which are not admissible, the location for the placing of supplementary information, and the form of marginal notes.

This is a helpful book for those who are involved in the task of translating Scripture. It helps them to avoid the pitfalls of literalism on the one hand and transculturalism on the other. However, the book could have been organized more tightly, e.g., chaps. 2 and 3 could easily have been combined. In general, the book illustrates well the points it develops, but illustrations of how some translators have dealt with poetry would have been helpful for those who have to translate these difficult portions of Scripture. On the whole, translators will be most grateful for this guide.

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O'Connor, Michael. *Hebrew Verse Structure*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1980. xvi + 629 pp. \$15.00.

Hebrew Verse Structure is a remarkably erudite book. This fact poses somewhat of a problem for its use as a textbook, as I discovered when using it this way for a seminar on Hebrew poetry. In the class, which consisted of students with intermediate-to-advanced-level reading ability in biblical Hebrew, the more advanced the student, the more use was made of O'Connor's book.

Part of the difficulty in students' ability to use the work stems from the writing style of the book, which was originally submitted as a Ph.D. dissertation to the University of Michigan in 1978. In publication it has not undergone the amount of rewriting that would make it more popular in style for textbook use. Rather, it stands on the cutting edge of studies in OT poetry, pointing the direction in which such studies may lead us in the future. Given that purpose of the author, it is natural that the volume would be of more value to the specialist than to the non-specialist. Anyone interested in the analysis of Hebrew poetry, however, will have to reckon seriously with the analysis presented in this work.

In the first section of the book, O'Connor sets forth his thesis that the traditional poetic analyses of Hebrew verse, outlined by Lowth (1753) and Gray (1915) are inadequate both in concept and nomenclature for accurate understanding and description. In his discussion of this point he has brought to bear the results of a wide range of research into the poetry of different languages and cultures around the world. As a part of this survey he has included an examination of the question of orality (the techniques of spontaneous oral composition of poetry) by examining the products of cultures where orality is still a factor in poetic composition. The general