Introduction

In 1999, during a seminar on the training of new Bible-translation consultants, it was observed that Nida and Taber's (1969) *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (TAPOT) was still considered by a significant number of people to be indicative of an organizationally supported, contemporary approach to Bible translation. Over the decades since TAPOT's appearance, many publications on translating the Bible and secular literature have indicated ways in which TAPOT is limited, dated or untenable, and have presented enlarged or alternative perspectives. But these more recent studies have often focused on a particular academic sub-field or on translations in a particular language. Those attending the seminar concluded that it would be helpful to have a book providing a general perspective on Bible translation at the turn of the twenty-first century, in part by indicating important developments since the appearance of TAPOT. *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference* attempts to offer this.

The primary audience envisioned by the contributors are consultants-in-training whose specialty in one academic area needs to be complemented by studies in other areas particularly pertinent to Bible translation. Each chapter is intended not for the specialist in the area discussed, but for those who would benefit from an introduction to issues and tools for study in that area. This approach opens the book to a larger audience of students, publishers and users of Bible translations.

In the first chapter, Aloo Mojola provides a brief historical orientation, suggesting that we may characterize the past 50 years of Bible translation in terms of two eras: the era of dynamic equivalence, in which Eugene Nida played an important role, and the present 'era of translation studies'. Mojola gives due recognition to Nida's genius and leadership in translation studies, but also points out limitations to his approach, especially with regard to the communication model assumed by him and many others in the 1950's-80's. Mojola indicates the broad scope of contemporary translation studies, then Ernst Wendland looks at some perspectives on *literary* translation, an area neglected by Bible translators in the previous era, but of increasing interest to them in the present one; Wendland will return to this topic in the sixth chapter of our book. Mojola concludes that the great diversity of communication situations in which Bible translators work calls for appreciation of a variety of translation approaches

and tools, rather than for an exclusive theoretical perspective or a prescriptive approach.

In the second chapter, Timothy Wilt provides a framework for viewing translation in terms of the communication situation within which it occurs. He proposes a model that represents basic aspects of communication and that may facilitate discussions of the translation process. Key concerns are: the communicative goals of the various participants in the translation process, the organizational as well as sociocultural setting of a translation, community values, and cognitive factors influencing the arrangement and interpretation of text signs. Wilt also indicates how communication situations of Bible translation throughout the world have changed dramatically since Nida and Taber wrote their work three decades ago.

Robert Bascom begins the third chapter by reporting on Katan's (1999) *Translating Cultures*, which exploits the notions of frames and framing as do both Wilt and Bascom, and on Lakoff's (1987) *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, whose study of how humans categorize experience and of the pervasiveness of metaphor in every day language is highly pertinent to translators as cross-cultural communicators. Bascom then gives examples of how textual and cultural frames shape the understanding of lexical items and of relationships between lexical items. He gives special attention to how a general 'boundedness' frame contributes to the relatedness of a variety of key terms in the Hebrew Scriptures. Such relatedness is unlikely to be readily perceived by those of other cultures not sharing the frame. These examples point to the importance of training translators to recognize similarities and differences between target and source culture frames, and to consider options for communicating the Scriptures in view of these similarities and differences.

Challenges to communicating cross-culturally, along with a wide variety of tools for dealing with these challenges, are also pointed out by Ronald Ross in his chapter 'Advances in linguistic theory and their relevance to translation'. Ross focuses on those areas of linguistics in which language is studied in its social, discursive and cultural contexts. While it is widely agreed that an exclusively linguistic approach to translation is *not sufficient* for satisfactorily understanding and practicing translation, Ross's chapter leaves little doubt that an in-depth study of linguistics is *necessary*. This is especially true of Bible translators. Unable to rely on intuitions to the degree that can, for example, an interpreter who is highly fluent in the languages being used in a court-room, the Bible translator must analyze ancient texts in detail and weigh the various linguistic options available for portraying these texts in the target language.

Tools for analyzing and understanding the ancient biblical texts, from a variety of perspectives directly relevant to the translator, are indicated by Graham Ogden. He first surveys advances in traditional areas of biblical studies, such as lexical and grammatical studies. He then indicates a variety of interpretative approaches to the Scriptures that correspond to important trends in secular translation theory. These have contributed to a sharpened awareness of how cultural and theological biases may influence perception of the source text as well as of the translation task. They also challenge us to greater sociocultural sensitivity and more true dialogue in our work.

In the last major chapter of our book, Ernst Wendland explores an approach to translation that integrates insights from the various disciplines considered in the preceding chapters. The approach is informed by, for example, cross-cultural studies of similarities and differences in communicative styles and values, linguistic studies of the function of lower-level structures in terms of higher-level textual ones, and literary and rhetorical studies of biblical texts. Wendland's chapter encourages translating the Scriptures in a way that represents their literary nature. This is an important corrective to discussions of Bible translation which have focused on the informational aspect of the Scriptures, have implied dichotomies of form versus content or literary versus 'common' language, or have lumped together literary, literal and liturgical approaches to translation.

Wendland points out that the approach he outlines is only one of several possible approaches to Bible translation. Its viability depends to a large degree on the abilities and resources of the personnel involved, and its validity depends on the goals of the individuals, organizations and communities involved in the project. Appendix F lists a variety of approaches to print-translation that differ because of the different communication situations in which they have been produced. The list has its limitations but it at least indicates how an approach to translation might be evaluated in terms of basic communicative factors.

Again, the primary goal of this book is to provide an introduction to basic aspects of Bible translation today. Pedagogical applications are not in focus. An editorial challenge was to weigh some reviewers' requests for more demonstrations of practical applications to particular translation

problems against other reviewers' requests to weed out material that, they felt, would be more appropriate in a workbook type of presentation or in a separate monograph. We have tended to favor the latter perspective, although the number of footnotes and appendices indicate our pull towards the former one. From the beginning, it was agreed that this project should be viewed as a step towards the development of practical training materials to be used in university-level courses and in workshops for the ongoing training of Bible translators. All contributors to the book are extensively involved in training and view this book as part of a pedagogical process. We have already begun to develop materials and courses in keeping with perspectives presented here. See, for example, the outline of a Bible translation training program in Appendix B, the outlines for courses on Bible translation in Appendices C-E, the mention of programs to help church leaders use translations in section 2.4.4, and Zogbo and Wendland's (2000) discussion of translating poetry. Much more work in this direction remains to be done.

A key theme of this book is the importance of a holistic approach to translation:

- viewing the translation project in terms of its community, organizational and sociocultural settings;
- viewing the translation product as part of a larger communicative process;
- viewing translation as an interdisciplinary subject;
- viewing textual parts in terms of textual wholes;
- viewing form and content, structure and function, as together contributing to the meaning of texts;
- viewing informative and imperative functions of texts in relation to other functions, especially the aesthetic and ritual functions of scriptural texts.

1. Scripture Translation in the Era of Translation studies

ALOO OSOTSI MOJOLA AND ERNST WENDLAND

The present era of translation is an era characterized by a wide variety of descriptive and explanatory studies of translation processes and products and, accordingly, by a wide variety of approaches to translation. This era contrasts considerably with the preceding one in which Eugene Nida played such a key role in promoting a particular approach to translation. In the first part of this chapter, we briefly indicate some of Nida's insights concerning translation and problematic aspects of his presentation in one work of great influence on Bible translators. We then indicate the broad scope of contemporary studies in translation, and look at some of the discussions concerning the translation of literary texts, an area receiving relatively little attention in the era of dynamic equivalence, but of increasing interest to Bible translators.

1.1 The dynamic equivalent approach to translation and its institutionalization

Nida's (1964) *Toward a Science of Translating* has been described as being, in its time, the "'Bible' not just for Bible translation but for translation theory in general" (Gentzler 1993:44). Five years later, he co-authored with Taber (1969) *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (TAPOT). This "logical outgrowth of the previous book" (1969:vii) would in turn become the key reference point for Bible translators. His later works would be viewed by many, including Nida himself (de Waard and Nida 1986:vii-vii), as basically confirming TAPOT's translation approach and communication model. It is on this work that we concentrate because of its continuing influence on many involved in Bible translation and because of the prominence given to it in discussions of Bible translation.

In their introductory chapter 'A new concept of translating', Nida and Taber (1969:3-9) identified 'new attitudes' concerning the receptor and source languages of Bible translations:

- Each language has its own genius.
- To communicate effectively one must respect the genius of each language.
- Anything that can be said in one language can be said in another, unless the form is an essential element of the message.
- To preserve the content of the message the form must be changed.
- The languages of the Bible are subject to the same limitations as any other natural language.
- The writers of the biblical books expected to be understood.
- The translator must attempt to reproduce the meaning of a passage as understood by the writer.

These 'new attitudes' would, Nida and Taber assumed, lead to working towards a translation 'dynamically equivalent' to the original:

> a translation in which the message of the original text has been transported into the receptor language in such a way that the RESPONSE of the RECEPTOR is essentially that of the original receptors. Frequently, the form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful. (ibid:200; their emphasis)

This was opposed to a formally correspondent translation in which:

> the features of the form of the source text have been mechanically reproduced in the receptor language. Typically, formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand or to labour unduly hard. (ibid:201)

They depicted the process of producing a dynamically equivalent translation as involving three stages:

1) *analysis*, in which the surface structure (i.e., the message as given in language A) is analysed in terms of (a) the grammatical relationships and (b) the meanings of the words and combinations of words,
2) *transfer*, in which the analysed material is transferred in the mind of the translator from language A to language B, and

3) *restructuring*, in which the transferred material is restructured in order to make the final message fully acceptable in the receptor language. (ibid:33, our italics)

The analysis stage, they said, was composed of three major steps:

1) determining the meaningful relationships between words and combinations of words,
2) [determining] the referential meaning of the words and special combinations of words (the idioms), and
3) [determining] the connotative meaning, i.e. how the users of the language react, whether positively or negatively, to the words and combinations of them. (ibid:34)

TAPOT was considered to provide the theory behind popular translations of the New Testament into Spanish and English published in the 1960's. The *Versión Popular* and *Today's English Version* would be followed by the French New Testament *en français courant* and the German *Die Gute Nachricht*. These publications, eventually including the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Apocryphal books, became increasingly viewed by many not only as incarnations of the theory of dynamic equivalence translation as expounded in TAPOT but as models for imitation everywhere. Fundamental support for this approach was provided through those whose scholarly contributions in their primary fields of research enhanced the academic respect for their work on translation and whose communicational skills facilitated practical application: anthropologists and linguists such as Wonderly, Smalley, Reyburn and Loewen; biblical scholars such as Bratcher, Margot, Newman and de Waard.

The validity of the dynamic-equivalence approach was generally assumed or supported in the publications of the United Bible Societies (UBS) produced during that time period: *The Bible Translator*, a journal founded in 1949 to provide a forum for discussing Bible translation theory and practice; a series of monographs on Bible translation; and the *Handbook* series, which attempted to guide translators' application of the dynamic-equivalence approach to the wide range of problems encountered in translating the Bible into languages throughout the world.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), with which Nida had worked before becoming translation secretary for the American Bible Society,

would develop its own literature on translation highly similar in perspective to TAPOT but more developed at the pedagogical level: for example, Beekman and Callow (1974), Barnwell (1975) and Larson (1984). For both SIL and UBS, a missiological agenda was crucially linked to their translation approach, although there was also a keen concern that church people be able to understand biblical texts clearly:

> The Scriptures must be intelligible to non-Christians, and if they are, they will also be intelligible to Christians. Not only is this principle important in making the translation of the Bible effective as an instrument of evangelism, but it is also necessary if the language of the church is to be kept from becoming an esoteric dialect ... (Nida and Taber 1969:31-32)

> [*Translating the Word of God*] has been written out of the conviction that an accurate and intelligible version of the Scriptures is essential both to the evangelisation of the lost, and to the building up of strong communities of believers. (Beekman and Callow 1974:13)

1.2 Evaluation of the TAPOT approach to translation

TAPOT was written with the goal behind all of Nida's work: "the effective communication of the Good News about Jesus Christ across all kinds of cultural and linguistic barriers" (North 1974:xi). Robinson (1991) calls Nida's work towards this goal 'subversive', in the sense that he set out to dethrone the popularity of Bible versions which made little sense to the ordinary person:

> One of the best-publicized recent subversions of the KJV/RSV hegemony was Today's English Version in the mid-sixties – best publicized because one of its prime movers was the prolific and persuasive Eugene Nida ... the foremost theorist of sense-for-sense and response-for-response Bible translation in our day. It may seem strange to call 'subversive' a man who upholds the Bible translation principles of Jerome and Luther – but in fact he is as subversive as Jerome and Luther, who similarly burst upon a scene dominated by rigidly fixed expectations and smashed them. (ibid:225)

Robinson notes that these fixed expectations and the conviction of some that there is one and only one correct Bible translation or version which "they read, or were read to out of, in their childhood" (ibid) tend to become a "nostalgic locus of emotional stability and security". Thus, according to Robinson, part of Nida's subversion was waking up tranquillised audiences:

> Obviously if the translator wants to *reach* his or her ... reader, to be the instrument not of anaesthesia but of conversion, a vehicle not of spiritual death but of awakening, rebirth, new life, there has to be something striking in the translation, something to catch the reader's attention – which is to say, something subversive. To convert, one must subvert. This is obviously true if one is speaking to nonbelievers; but it is also true if one is speaking to believers who are staid in their ways. Wake up, you Pharisees! (ibid:226)

Robinson concludes by correctly noting that Nida "directs the Bible Society's subversion ... at the average Bible reader, the ordinary reader, the fourth-grade reader for whom newspapers are written" (ibid). His subversive act consisted in opening the word to new audiences, as well as to some in the old and familiar audience, in empowering new groups to have direct access to the Scriptures without mediation from the religious elite, the clergy, theologians or the biblical scholar.

Ironically, in the course of time fixed expectations and convictions were built up around the so-called common language translations. These new translations exemplified by the TEV created a new orthodoxy and standard, to be imitated and reproduced everywhere. This was however counter to the subversive spirit set in motion by the Nida revolution, if we can call it that.

An obvious limitation of the TAPOT presentation, reflective of the era in which it was produced, is its focus on sentence-level-and-below linguistics. Nida and Taber of course recognized this limitation and indicated the importance of the study of 'discourse structure' (1969:152ff), an area in which Grimes (for example, 1975) and Longacre (for example, 1983) would do ground-breaking studies, greatly influencing Bible translators and researchers. Chapters 4 and 6 in our book indicate other aspects of above-the-sentence concerns that would receive increasing attention in various academic fields and in a variety of related publications on Bible translation, in the years following the publication of TAPOT.

But it was not just the scope of linguistics at the time that was problematic: even more so was the focus on the discipline of linguistics itself, which seemed to identify translation with – limit it to – the following of linguistic procedures. As pointed out by Holmes, among others, this was fairly typical of writings on translation in that era. Many contemporary translation theorists would agree with Holmes' assessment that this was "in large part simplistic and naïve, at least when applied to highly complex entities of the kind that 'literary texts' tend to be" (1994:81), and that the focus "turned out to be a dead end" (ibid:94). Again, an overview of Nida's work indicates that he was certainly not locked into a 'linguistic approach' to translation. His focus on linguistics in TAPOT was complemented by many other writings espousing a multi-disciplinary approach to translation, a perspective fully embraced and vigorously defended and promoted within the emerging field of translation studies, discussed in the following section.

Another limitation of TAPOT was its portrayal of translation in terms of the dichotomy of formal correspondence versus dynamic equivalence. This was in the tradition of what Robinson (1997:1) refers to as "the ancient division between 'word-for-word' and 'sense-for-sense' translation"; the approach advocated by Nida was in the tradition of Cicero, Horace, Augustine, Jerome and Luther, among many others. But this division "has grown enormously complicated":

> Nowadays it covers radically different ground as Juliane House's ... distinctions between 'overt' and 'covert' translation, between drawing attention to the fact that a given text *is* a translation and pretending that it was originally written in the target language; and Lawrence Venuti's ... distinction, drawn from the German Romantics, between 'foreignizing' and 'domesticating' translation ... Linguistic and literary approaches to translation have likewise grown complex, as linguists and literary critics both become interested in social power and belief systems ... as linguists become psycholinguists, studying translation processes through 'think-aloud protocols', and literary critics become hermeneuticists, studying translation processes through the complex philosophical theories of, say, Walter Benjamin ... Martin Heidegger ... or Jacques Derrida ... (ibid)

Other distinctions could be noted, such as: literal/idiomatic (Beekman

and Callow 1974), semantic/communicative (Newmark 1981), form-based/meaning-based (as in Larson 1984), documentary/instrumental (Nord 1997), direct/indirect (Gutt 2000), observational/participative (Pym 1992), archaizing/modernizing, and linguistic/literary. Such distinctions suggest that various Bible translation situations can be analysed in a wide variety of ways and be considerably more complex than the formal-dynamic dichotomy might suggest.

The TAPOT approach to translation was based upon a communication model developed in Nida's *Message and Mission* (1960), a sophisticated discussion of the complexities of cross-cultural communication. The model assumed, or at least could be understood to assume, what Reddy (1979:209) identified as the fallacy of the conduit metaphor:

1) Language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts bodily from one person to another;
2) in writing and speaking, people insert their thoughts or feelings in the words;
3) words accomplish the transfer by containing the thoughts or feelings and conveying them to others, and
4) in listening and reading, people extract the thoughts and feelings once again from the words.

Johnson (1987:59) expressed the notion this way:

1. Ideas or thoughts are objects.
2. Words and sentences are containers for these objects.
3. Communication consists in finding the right word-container for your idea-object, sending this filled container along a conduit or through space to the hearer, who must then take the idea-object out of the word-container.

Nida and Taber's definition of translation, which, as Fawcett (1997:56) observed, might be better described as a declaration or manifesto, encouraged viewing communication in terms of the conduit metaphor: "Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida and Taber 1969:12). The definition assumes among other things that we have access to the pure, objective meaning of the source language text for which there is *the* closest natural equivalent in another language. What Frawley (1987:136)

said of the conduit metaphor could be applied to this understanding of translation:

> The conduit metaphor creates the illusion of objectivity ... It reifies meaning and gives it some kind of privileged, free-floating status, thereby allowing all linguistic exchanges to have equal participants. It equalizes exchange because the crux of the exchange is taken out of the participants and cast in terms of universal accessibility ... The conduit metaphor reduces language to some sort of effortless gathering of objectified meaning by people who are ultimately all the same.

As is generally recognized by translation theorists today, the reading, interpretation and translation of texts are influenced by presuppositions and assumptions, prejudices and biases, value systems and belief systems, textual traditions and practices, world views, ideology and interests. Readers have no access to the pure original, or to the pure thought of the original author. They interpret texts through the lens of language, their experience, language, belief system, circumstances, interests, needs, and agendas. Thus,

> Translation is ... a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain ... (Bassnett, in Gentzler 1993:ix).

Similarly, Venuti (1995:17-18) writes:

> ... a foreign text is the site of many different semantic possibilities that are fixed only provisionally in any one translation, on the basis of varying cultural assumptions and interpretive choices, in specific social situations, in different historical periods. Meaning is a plural and contingent relation, not an unchanging unified essence, and therefore a translation cannot be judged according to mathematics-based concepts of semantic equivalence or one-to-one correspondence ... Canons of accuracy in translation, notions of 'fidelity' and 'freedom' are historically determined categories ... The viability of a translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read.

As Alvarez and Vidal (1996:6) point out, there are other constraints on the translator that affect not just how they interpret the text but how they represent it:

> Translators are constrained in many ways: by their own ideology; by their feelings of superiority or inferiority towards the language in which they are writing the text being translated; by the prevailing poetical rules at that time; by the very language in which the texts they are translating is written; by what the dominant institutions and ideology expect of them; by the public for whom the translation is intended. The translation itself will depend upon all these factors.

The final problem of TAPOT to be mentioned here is its use of the term 'dynamic equivalence'. A number of interpreters and readers understood it as emphasizing the psychological impact of a translation and diminishing the importance of fidelity to the source text. Clearly the notions of impact and fidelity need not be mutually exclusive and Nida clearly wanted both. De Waard and Nida (1986) replaced the label 'dynamic equivalence' with 'functional equivalence', saying that "the substitution ... is not designed to suggest anything essentially different" (ibid:vii-viii). This claim, coupled with de Waard and Nida's resistance to directly addressing the shortcomings of TAPOT,[1] muddied the waters considerably. Even today one frequently sees the label 'dynamic/ functional equivalence', although many contemporary writers supporting a functional equivalence approach to translation would accept neither the communication model, the understanding of linguistics, nor the prescriptivism of the TAPOT characterization of dynamic equivalence.

Reflection on translation theory, approaches and practice did not of course come to a standstill among Bible translators after the publication of TAPOT. The work by de Waard and Nida, mentioned in the preceding

[1] In addition to the shortcomings mentioned above, see sections 2.1.2.2, 2.2.2, the footnote in section 2.1.1.2, and the conclusion to chapter 6.

paragraph, attempted to move discussion forward, giving particular attention to the importance of semiotics, an area to which, for example, Hodgson (1999) would return (for further discussion, see section 2.1.2.2). Bible translators would also apply insights from and contribute to the fields of: textlinguistics (e.g. Longacre 1983, Wendland 1994, de Regt 1999), sociolinguistics and cultural studies (e.g. Louw 1986, Wendland 1987, Stine and Wendland 1990; van der Jagt *forthcoming*), literary and rhetorical studies (e.g. de Regt *et al.* 1996, Zogbo and Wendland 2000), new media (e.g. Hodgson and Soukup 1997), and cognitive studies (e.g. Gutt 1991).

We shall now consider the field of translation studies, flourishing in increasing numbers of universities, in contrast to the era in which Nida did most of his work – "the fifties, the sixties and the seventies, [when] academic studies in translation and interpreting had to struggle for legitimacy" (Neubert and Shreve 1992:vii). Nida may be considered a trail-blazer for this discipline, in view of his intellectual rigour, his work in a wide variety of cultures, and his multidisciplinary approach to translation. But the trail has become a highway, and Bible translators have much to learn from others travelling on it.

1.3 The emergence of translation studies as an autonomous discipline

The designation 'translation studies' is of recent origin. Hermans (1999:30) identifies the 'declaration of independence' for this field as being James Holmes' paper 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies', originally presented at a conference in Copenhagen in August 1972 (included in Holmes 1994:66-80). Holmes chose this label for the field over those such as 'science of translating' (e.g. Nida 1964), 'science of translation' (e.g. Wilss 1982), or 'translatology' (e.g. Goffin, cited in Holmes 1994:69) since he did not consider translation to be a science. He settled on 'translation studies' since the term 'studies' is commonly used in English for the naming of new disciplines: "One need only think of Russian studies, American studies, Commonwealth studies, population studies, communication studies" (ibid:70).

Holmes quotes Koller to indicate the comprehensive scope of the field of inquiry: "Translation studies is to be understood as a collective and inclusive designation for all research activities taking the phenomena of translating and translation as their basis or focus" (ibid:71). Translation studies can refer to:

> the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and non-literary translation, various forms of oral interpreting, as well as dubbing and subtitling. [It is] also understood to cover the whole spectrum of research and pedagogical activities, from developing theoretical frameworks to conducting individual case studies to engaging in practical matters such as training translators and developing criteria for translation assessment. (Baker 1998:277)

An obvious correlate of the "attempt to consolidate all of the various approaches to translation into the field of translation studies" is the "shrinking role of linguistics as the intellectual basis for translation studies" (Neubert and Shreve 1992:9). This 'interdiscipline', to use the term in Snell-Hornby *et al.*'s (1994) title, draws from a whole range of disciplines:

> In the 1970s, and particularly during the 1980s, translation scholars began to draw more heavily on theoretical frameworks and methodologies borrowed from other disciplines, including psychology, communication theory, literary theory, anthropology, philosophy, and more recently, cultural studies ... The study of translation has gone far beyond the confines of any one discipline and it has become clear that research requirements in this area cannot be catered for by any existing field of study. (Baker 1998:279)

Holmes (1994:71) identified the two main goals of translation studies as:

1) to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience, and
2) to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted.

Holmes provided a map of the discipline, which he understood to be an empirical one. Below, in outline form, is Holmes's understanding of the scope of translation studies, with extensive quotes from his paper (ibid:71-77) to describe the various components.

1) *Pure translation studies*
   a) *Descriptive translation studies:* the branch of the discipline which constantly maintains the closest contact with the empirical phenomena under study.
      i) *Product-oriented*: text focused and concerned with describing existing translations.
      ii) *Function-oriented*: studying the function of translations in the recipient sociocultural situation.
      iii) *Process-oriented*: systematic investigation of what takes place in the translator's mind as he creates a new, more or less matching text in another language.
   b) *Theoretical translation studies* (or *Translation theory*): uses the results of descriptive translation studies, in combination with the information available from related fields and disciplines, to evolve principles, theories, and models which will serve to explain and predict what translating and translations are and will be.
      i) *General:* a full, inclusive theory accommodating so many elements that it can serve to explain and predict all phenomena falling within the terrain of translating and translation, to the exclusion of all phenomena falling outside it. It is not clear whether this is achievable.
      ii) *Partial:*
      (1) *Medium-restricted translation theories*: based on whether they are machine or human, written or oral, etc...
      (2) *Area-restricted theories*: based on the languages or language groups involved or the cultures involved.
      (3) *Rank-restricted theories*: deal with discourses or texts as wholes, but concern themselves with lower linguistic ranks or levels.
      (4) *Text-type restricted theories*: deal with specific types or genres of texts (e.g. literary or non-literary texts, Bible translation, etc.).
      (5) *Time-restricted theories*: concerning translations done within a particular time period relative to the text being translated.
      (6) *Problem-restricted theories*: concerning particular problems such as the limits of variance or invariance in translation, the nature of translation matching, or the translation of metaphors or proper names.

2) *Applied translation studies*
   a) *Translator training:* teaching methods, testing techniques and curriculum planning. For the time being, at least, the major area of research in applied translation studies.
   b) *Translation aids*: e.g. dictionaries, grammars.
   c) *Translation policy*: dealing with decisions on what works need to be translated in a given sociocultural situation, what the social and economic position of the translator should be, the place of translation in the teaching and learning of other languages, etc.
   d) *Translation criticism*: includes questions of translation interpretation and evaluation.

At the end of his proposals, Holmes notes that descriptive, theoretical and applied translation studies are inextricably linked, not in a unidirectional way but in a dialectical manner. He concludes that the discipline of translation studies itself as well as the various areas outlined within the discipline, including histories of developments in these areas, will need to be studied. Hatim (2001), Munday (2001) and Venuti (2000) are highly recommended for their provision of more detailed and comprehensive overviews of translation studies.

1.4 Some contemporary translation approaches[2]

This section briefly indicates some of the contemporary approaches to translation with which students of Bible translation should be familiar. We focus on issues related to the translation of the Bible *as literature*. This area, often neglected in works written from a dynamic-equivalence perspective, is of increasing interest to Bible translators and it is the focus of chapter six in this book. We do not attempt to offer an in-depth, critical analysis of the various approaches mentioned, but, rather, to suggest a starting point for the exploration of how contemporary theorists, especially those dealing with secular literature, can help us better understand the age-old task of Bible translation.

1.4.1 Functionalist approach

A 'functional' approach to translation has long been promoted as a prominent aspect of the *Skopostheorie* school of translation that was pioneered by Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer in the early 1980s and has been further developed in the writings of Nord (e.g. 1997). These writers stress the function (normally referred to only in the singular) that a particular translation is designed to perform for its primary target audience:

> Each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose. The *Skopos* rule thus reads as follows: translate/interpret/

[2] This section uses abridged and revised material taken from Wendland (forthcoming). Our thanks to SIL for permission to use this material.

> speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function. (Vermeer, cited in translation by Nord 1997:29)

There is a notable difference in focus between this perspective and that of functional equivalence. The goal of the latter has been stated as "to employ a functionally equivalent set of forms which in so far as possible will match the meaning of the original source-language text" (de Waard and Nida 1986:36); the communication functions of the *source-language* text are presumed to be pre-eminent and determinative. *Skopostheorie*, in contrast, underlines the importance of the translation's function within the *target-language* setting for determining the manner and style of translation. The goals of a translation are determined within the governing framework for the translation project as a whole: the translation 'brief' explicitly sets forth "information about the intended target-text function(s), the target text addressee(s), the medium over which it will be transmitted, the prospective place and time and, if necessary, motive of production or reception of the text" (Nord 1997:137).

With regard to literary translation, Nord recognizes the importance of stylistic aspects of literary works but focuses on the 'fundamental importance' of "the sender's intention and the receiver's expectations ... for the function and effect of texts" and argues that these intentions and expectations are culture-bound (ibid:82-83). Nord indicates that equivalence, 'a normative concept', might be the ideal of translation but that there are four "requirements that must be fulfilled if the translator is to succeed in establishing equivalence between the source and the target text" (ibid:89-90):

1. The translator's interpretation should be identical with the sender's intention.
2. The translator should verbalize the sender's intention in such a way that the target text is able to achieve the same function in the target culture as that which the source text achieved in the source culture.
3. The target receiver should understand the text world of the translation in the same way as the source receivers understood the text world of the original.
4. The effect the translation has on its readers should be the same as the one the source text has or had on its readers.

These requirements, which sound like they could have been taken from a text on dynamic equivalence, are, Nord says, "rather like a request to square the circle" (ibid:91). Appreciation and understanding of literature depends on shared background knowledge, cultural assumptions and literary traditions; gulfs between source and target communities in these respects prohibit equivalent representations of intentions and expectations. Even where there is a large degree of overlap between source and target cultures and literary standards, 'cultural false friends' prohibit achieving equivalence, Nord says (ibid). She gives three possibilities for dealing with this translation problem (ibid):

1. ... give up literary translation because it is impossible;
2. ... carry on translating as we have done up to now, following our intuition and calling the result an equivalent text, leaving the effect of the target text to the goodwill of its readers and literary critics;
3. ... allow translators to justify their decisions in order to make others (translators, readers, publishers) understand what was done and why.

Nord believes that a functionalist approach encourages the third solution and makes four 'skopos suggestions', concerning interpretation, text function, cultural distance and text effect (ibid:92-93):

1. The translator interprets the source text not only with regard to the sender's intention but also with regard to its compatibility with the target situation.
2. The target text should be composed in such a way that it fulfils functions in the target situation that are compatible with the sender's intention.
3. The text world of the translation should be selected according to the intended target-text function.
4. The code elements should be selected in such a way that the target-text effect corresponds to the intended target-text function.

De Vries (2001) uses the insights of skopos theory to discuss Bible translations in New Guinea and the Netherlands. He observes that the primary function of many initial translations in New Guinea is a missionary one, but that within a few generations the communities for which these initial translations were produced will have access to a variety of Bible translations in the three national languages of New Guinea. When this

occurs, "some sort of functional specialization will take place. A new vernacular version will have to define its function in relation to the other versions used by the community" (ibid:306). The situation will thus become more like that in the Netherlands where there is a tendency to use different versions for different communicative functions. These observations lead to the following programmatic statement:

> A major challenge for [producers of Bible translations is] to develop a theoretical framework within which ... functional profiles of Bible translations can be defined and compared both within one language community and across language communities, and within which methods are developed to link forms and functions of Bible translations in a systematic fashion.

Appendix F of this book is a small step in this direction, suggesting some of the factors that would need to be considered within the framework proposed by de Vries.

Nord tackles the troublesome issue of authorial intention (the so-called intentional fallacy) that often arises in criticism of a functionalist approach with regard to interpretation as well as translation. As a nice alternative to the term 'fidelity', generally used in discussions of Bible translation, Nord speaks of 'loyalty' to a text, which "means that the target-text purpose should be *compatible with* the original author's intentions" (1997:125; our emphasis). This is a more defensible position than the non-demonstrable criterion of being the 'same as' what the original author intended. But how can even this less rigorous objective be accomplished when we have no direct access either to the author or his times? Nord identifies a variety of indicators, for example: the broad "conventional intentions linked with certain text types" and genres; an analysis of *extra*textual factors pertaining to the original communicative setting that may be derived from *inter*textual and socio-historical studies, and "a thorough analysis of *intra*textual function markers...to find out about the communicative intentions that may have guided the author" (ibid:125-126). Included in this last group would be studies that explore the structural arrangement and rhetorical argumentation of the original text, such as indicated in chapter 6 of our book.

A specification of the primary functions of the source-language text is important, but it is only part of the task that confronts translators. The other half is to determine *which* of these communicative intentions are to be conveyed in the target language – and *how* this is to be done, that is, by means of which literary devices and rhetorical strategies among those available in the language. This is probably an even greater challenge, first of all, because it is in fact impossible to convey the full semantic and pragmatic value of the original text via any translation, and secondly, because a choice must be made – that is, which aspects of the text the translators will at least attempt to convey in the target language and which elements they admit will probably be lost in translation. Issues such as these will have to be determined by the project prospectus (*Brief*) and purpose (*Skopos*) according to which the translation is to be monitored and ultimately evaluated.

1.4.2 Descriptive approach

'Descriptive translation studies' (DTS) developed in the early 1970s more or less in opposition to what its originators viewed as the prevailing 'prescriptive' approach to translation. They thus reject "the idea that the study of translation should be geared primarily to formulating rules, norms or guidelines for the practice or evaluation of translation or to developing didactic instruments for translator training" (Hermans 1999:7). DTS theorists attempt to be 'diagnostic rather than hortatory' in their treatment with respect to two major objectives, namely, "to describe the relevant phenomena [that are manifested during the translation of texts], and establish general principles to explain and predict their occurrence" (ibid:29). They are 'product', rather than 'process', oriented in their perspective (Gaddis-Rose 1997:9). Accordingly, the focus is upon 'pure' research, which has a threefold emphasis – description, explanation, and prediction of all sorts of translation-related phenomena, including the activity itself. A major aim is to describe how translations actually function in the wider context of society and more narrowly within a certain literary system.

A programmatic summary of the general DTS approach is offered by T. Hermans (1999:32):

> What they [DTS theorists] have in common is, briefly, a view of literature as a complex and dynamic system; a conviction that there should be a continual interplay between theoretical models and practical case studies; an approach to literary translation which is descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systemic; and an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production

> and reception of translations, in the relation between translation and other types of text processing, and in the place and role of translations both within a given literature and in the interaction between literatures.

One prominent representative statement of a DTS approach to literary translation is found in the work of Gideon Toury. Toury first notes the fundamental ambiguity that is presented by the term 'literary translation', namely, one of perspective: the translation of a text that is "regarded as literary in the *source culture*" as distinct from a target-language product that is "acceptable as literary to the *recipient culture*" (1995:168; original emphasis). In the case of the former scenario, the translated product may not be regarded as literary in the target-language culture; in the latter instance, any source-language text, literary or not, is transformed into a 'literary' product in the target language. The approach discussed in chapter 6 attempts to combine both perspectives: a literary, source-language text (Scripture) is rendered in a distinctively 'literary' manner in the target language.

Toury stresses the importance of cultural perceptions with regard to literature and a literary translation:

> Literature is first and foremost a cultural institution. Thus, in every culture (including different phases in the evolution of one culture), certain features, models, techniques (including modes of translation!), and – by extension – texts utilizing them, are *regarded as*, rather than *are* literary, in any 'essentialistic' sense. (ibid:170, original emphasis)

Thus, Toury claims, a literary translation will be expected to conform to "models and norms which are deemed literary at the target end". This may result in more or less well-formed texts from the point of view of the *literary* requirements of the recipient culture, at various possible costs in terms of the reconstruction of features of the source text:

> Subjugation to target literary models and norms may thus involve the *suppression* of some of the source-text's features, on occasion even those which marked it as 'literary', or as a proper representative of a specific literary model in the first place ... It may also entail the *reshuffling* of certain features, not to mention the *addition* of new ones in an attempt to enhance the acceptability of the translation as a target literary text, or even as a target literary text of a particular type ... The added features may occupy central positions within the translation (when looked upon as a text in its own right), even serving as markers of its own literariness, despite their having no basis in the original. (ibid:171, original emphasis)

Descriptive Translation Studies literature has performed a valuable service by calling attention to the importance of explicit as well as implicit social conventions and norms in translation practice (e.g. Hermans 1999:ch.6; cf. Nord 1997:53-59). For example, 'product norms' embody "the expectations of readers of a translation (of a given type) concerning what a translation (of this type) should be like" (Chesterman 1997:64). 'Process norms', on the other hand, operate to regulate the actual work of translation, in terms of accountability to the original author's intentions, a sufficient degree of intertextual similarity, and overall communication effectiveness, for example (ibid:67-70; Hermans 1999:78). Such popularly recognized ideals and standards serve to guide translators in their work as they interact with their own culture and community, not only with respect to informational clarity, but also in terms of excellence and acceptability. The latter concerns would be especially important of course where a literary-type translation is being either undertaken or evaluated.

1.4.3 Text-linguistic approach

Two volumes by Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997) provide both a theoretical framework and a methodology for applying insights from text linguistics to translation. Although Hatim and Mason do not give as much attention to literary translation as one might wish, their discussion is frequently relevant to this concern. For example, they call attention to the difficulties that translators face when dealing with texts that are stylistically more 'dynamic' or 'turbulent' in nature, as is characteristic of many biblical texts. Dynamic discourse consists of a relatively high incidence of novel or unexpected and unpredictable, rhetorically 'marked' forms, of "the use of language that essentially involves a motivated deviation from some norm" (1997:216).

The notion of 'markedness' in literature can be defined from two interrelated perspectives – that is, in terms of *frequency* or *focus*. The less frequently appearing phonological, lexical, syntactic, or textual forms are

of more 'marked' significance to the message being conveyed; they are less predictable or normal, hence more 'informative' in their co-text of occurrence (cf. 1997:12). Such expressions may also manifest a less usual distribution within a given text, thereby often creating special discourse patterns or arrangements of elements.

Hatim and Mason point out that marked linguistic structures are more often used in 'argumentative' or 'evaluative' texts – and, it could be added, literary texts – than they are in expository texts, which generally have an impersonal style that is more stable, usual, predictable. They offer this rule of thumb: "The less evaluative the text is, the less need there will be for its structure to be modified in translation. Conversely, the more evaluative the text is, the more scope there may be for modification" (1990:187). Similarly, literary translation may involve considerably more structural modifications as translators attempt to creatively exploit the stylistic and expressive resources of the target language.

Hatim and Mason (ibid:188) also generalize about the degree to which structural modification may be necessary in terms of a basic cultural factor: "The less culture-bound a text is, the less need there will be for its structure to be modified. Conversely, the more culture-bound a text is, the more scope there may be for modification". As Bible translators attempt to deal with the various 'culture-bound' genres and sub-types of ancient Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, a considerable amount of innovative 'modification' may be appropriate for communicating in another linguistic and ethnic setting their artistic beauty, depth of connotative feeling, and/or rhetorical impact. But at the same time translators are generally expected to represent as accurately as possible the content of the original texts and to preserve a verbal decorum in keeping with the primary setting foreseen for the translation's use.

1.4.4 Relevance Theory approach

Gutt's (especially, 1991/2000) ground-breaking work has done much to show how the theory developed in Sperber and Wilson's (1986) influential *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* can inform our understanding of Bible translation. The foundation of this cognitive approach to communication may be summarized as follows:

> The central claim of relevance theory is that human communication crucially creates an expectation of *optimal relevance*, that is, an expectation on the part of the hearer that his attempt at interpretation will yield *adequate contextual effects at minimal processing cost*. (Gutt 1991:20, original italics)

Behind the technical expressions is a rather common-sense principle: speakers are generally expected to convey what they have to say in a way that is easiest for their hearers to understand (minimal processing effort), in order to achieve the desired communicative information, impact and appeal (adequate cognitive/emotive/volitional effects).

A key question for translators, for which the response is more often assumed than researched, is: how much are most members of the target audience willing to pay, in terms of processing effort, in order to arrive at an interpretation of a translated text similar to what the translator would hope for? Two extremes are evident in Bible translation: the one is represented by a translation such as the *Contemporary English Version* which assumes that readers will want to pay the lowest possible price and a raise in cognitive costs will correlate with a drop of interest in the book. On the other extreme are the translators such as those referred to in a 'literalist approach' (see section 1.4.6): the potential audience is assumed to be wealthy, in terms of their time, study resources, etc., and ready to pay a high price to work through the texts.

In his study of poetic effects in literature, Pilkington's (2000:100-102) comment on metaphor may be extended to other aspects of literature – and of literary translations of literature:

> In the case of creative metaphors ... the new concept is not derived from a subset of the properties of an existing concept, but it is constructed on the basis of an interaction between assumptions derived from two or more encyclopedic entries ... the connection between which is neither well-established nor easy to achieve ... *A greater amount of processing effort is required: but the rewards in terms of contextual effects are correspondingly higher* ... . (our emphasis)

Another key question in terms of relevance theory's central claim is: how does motivation, and the ability to influence motivation, relate to 'yielding adequate contextual effects'? Also, what are the measures for evaluating 'adequacy' in this respect? It seems that simply having an in-print representation of sacred text can yield adequate contextual effects

for some, perhaps many: the ease of processing what's within the covers of the publication is not nearly as important as knowing that those covers enclose sacred text, text that the preacher will adequately explain on Sundays. Others (audiences as well as translators) may view adequacy primarily in terms of basic information, with little concern for style. Others may be looking for aesthetic adequacy and intellectual challenge.

1.4.5 Post-colonial approaches

Post-colonial approaches to translation are primarily concerned with the links between translation and empire or translation and power, as well as the role of translations in the processes of cultural domination and subordination, colonization and decolonization, indoctrination and control, and hybridization and creolization of cultures and languages. Post-colonial translation theory disputes the proposition that translation has to do mainly with the questions of textual equivalences, or the faithfulness of a target text to an original source text. On the contrary, an axiom of post-colonial approaches is that translation has much more to do with the 'macropolitics' of empire, and the promotion of the interests and well-being of empire. The periphery necessarily serves the interests of the imperial centre.

Bassnett and Trivedi (1999:6) remind us that:

> The act of translation always involves more than language. Translations are always embedded in cultural and political systems, and in history. For too long translation was seen as purely an aesthetic act, and ideological problems were disregarded. Yet the strategies employed by translators reflect the context [of power interests and values] in which texts are produced.

From this perspective, translation is viewed as ultimately a tool of empire. According to Robinson (1997:10),

> [The study of translation and empire, or even of translation as empire] was born in the mid-to-late 1980s out of the realization that translation has always been an indispensable channel of imperial conquest and occupation. Not only must the imperial conquerors find some effective way of communicating with their new subjects; they must develop new ways of subjecting them, converting them into docile or 'cooperative' subjects.

Maria Tymoczko's *Translation in a Postcolonial Context* (1999) is a recent text that exemplifies the power and influence of this sort of imperialistic tendency even within the corpus of western literature itself. For indications of the relevance of post-coloial perspectives to Bible translation, and for biblical studies done from this vantage point, see section 5.2.4.

1.4.6 Literalist approach

Literalist approaches are of course part of an ancient tradition of translation. A distinguishing mark of the contemporary approaches might be their accent on language as spoken, both in its assumed original setting of communication and also in the corresponding contemporary context. As Fox said of his work:

> This translation is guided by the principle that the Hebrew Bible, like much of the literature of antiquity, was meant to be read aloud, and that consequently it must be translated with careful attention to rhythm and sound. The translation therefore tries to mimic the particular rhetoric of the Hebrew whenever possible, preserving such devices as repetition, allusion, alliteration, and wordplay. It is intended to echo the Hebrew, and to lead the reader back to the sound structure and form of the original. (1995:ix-x)[3]

"Translating with an ear to the sound and [discourse] structure" of the Hebrew text (ibid:xiii), Fox tends to be very source language oriented, and this frequently results in a noticeably 'foreignized' (see section 1.4.7) rendering in English – in effect more an instance of 'translated literature' than a 'literary translation' (Lefevre 1981:55).

To support his emphasis upon the orality-aurality of the original, Fox gives particular attention to three major translation techniques: setting the text out lineally in cola (basic utterance units) in lines that resemble free verse, transliterating and explaining Hebrew names within the translation itself, and a strict reproduction of key thematic words, no matter how awkward this may sound in English. He also highlights another trio of minor devices that serve to accent 'the Bible's spokenness', namely, wordplay, allusion, and repetition that is more restricted in scope to certain passages (ibid:xviii-xix). In this manner he seeks "to preserve not only the message of the text but also its open-endedness" (ibid:xx). His literal

[3] In this section, Everett Fox is taken as the primary illustration of a literalist approach. Other relatively recent examples of this sort of a source-language-centred endeavour are: Alter (1996) and, in French, Chouraqui (1985).

methodology hampers realization of the first goal, but he has surely succeeded with regard to the second. A certain 'open-endedness' of ambiguity is created due to the unnaturalness of the English that results from this approach to translation. While his efforts might help the dedicated student to better appreciate Hebrew literary devices, the translation seems far from literary in terms of contemporary English standards; it has been foreignized at times to the point of unintelligibility for all but those who are already familiar with the Hebrew original.

1.4.7 Foreignization versus domestication

We mention this continuum here in view of its helpfulness in dealing with a tension that was often inadequately addressed, if addressed at all, in much literature from a dynamic equivalence or 'meaning based' perspective. This assumed that the more a translation made biblical writers and characters sound like they were expressing themselves in a manner appropriate to target-culture norms, the more successful the translation. The frequently cited work of Venuti has offered an important challenge to this assumption. Venuti (for example, 1995) points out that fluency in translation can involve not just a domesticating of language but also a domesticating of ideas that goes well beyond the issues of fidelity to historical and geographical situations that are often discussed in biblical literature:

> Every step in the translation process – from the selection of foreign texts to the implementation of translation strategies to the editing, reviewing, and reading of translations – is mediated by the diverse cultural values that circulate in the target language, always in some hierarchical order. The translator ... may submit to or resist dominant values in the target language, with either course of action susceptible to ongoing redirection. Submission assumes an ideology of assimilation at work in the translation process, locating the same in the cultural other, pursuing a cultural narcissism that is imperialistic abroad and conservative, even reactionary, in maintaining canons at home. Resistance assumes an ideology of autonomy, locating the alien in a cultural other, pursuing cultural diversity, foregrounding the linguistic and cultural differences of the source language text and transforming the hierarchy of cultural values in the target language. Resistance too can be imperialistic abroad, appropriating foreign texts to serve its own cultural political interests at home; but insofar as it resists values that exclude certain texts, it performs an act of cultural restoration which aims to question and possibly re-form, or simply smash the idea of, domestic canons. (ibid:308-309)

Translators' domesticating or taming of the biblical text through assumption of organizational norms, values and notions, including reliance on traditional models of translation – or their unwitting foreignization of texts through reliance on translation models produced in sociocultural and political settings quite different than that of the target language – is an area worthy of much more attention than it has yet received. See section 2.1.2.3 for further discussion in this regard.

1.5 Conclusion

There is no doubt that the emergence of translation studies as an autonomous discipline has helped to move us far beyond the understanding of translation as conceived for example in TAPOT. This multi-disciplinary field has not produced its Newton or Einstein with a widely accepted, overarching, global translation theory, and perhaps never will. In the current interdisciplinary environment within which translation studies thrive, it seems wisest to listen to the wide variety of voices on translation rather than attempt to argue for a particular theoretical stance on, or an exclusive approach to, Bible translation. In view of the great diversity of translation projects with regard to factors such as culture, language, gender, ethnicity, social status, educational level, age group, and ideological orientation, a prescriptive approach to translation is likely to frequently prove unfruitful. A variety of perspectives and tools can contribute to assessing Scripture needs and desires of diverse audiences and to helping producers of translations respond to these. As Nida and others have long pointed out, different types of translation are valid in view of different primary functions, or *skopoi*. Differing from previous writers on Bible translation, however, we can no longer assume that one type of translation, such as that referred to as a common-language translation, is most likely to best serve most audiences in most situations.