

Specht do a commendable job of ferreting out the idiosyncracies of each version, and they supply numerous examples to help the reader gain a feeling for the text. Indeed, the quotations cited are sometimes more than adequate, tending to break the flow of thought. Attention is given to such details as grammar, punctuation, format, and chapter divisions. One of the most helpful features is the background information included describing why the the version was prepared and under what circumstances. Both assets and liabilities are observed for each, with the most telling criticism directed against those based on less than the best text (e.g. Knox), or those taking excessive liberties in translation (e.g. The Living Bible). Generally, criticism seems even-handed and justified and is always extended respectfully.

It is not clear to what readership the volume is directed. If for the educated layman, perhaps more attention should have been given to appropriate background information, as for example a brief general history of the English Bible, and also perhaps to the definition of a few somewhat technical terms employed such as "autograph," "Western" text, and "emendation."

A concluding chapter provides specific guidelines for selecting a version. Three primary criteria are proposed and discussed: (1) The underlying text, (2) accuracy in translation, and (3) the quality of the English employed. To the question which version is best, the authors supply this perceptive answer: "Perhaps no one version will be sufficient for today. This may well be an age when multiple versions are needed. If one asks, 'Which version is best?' we need to add the questions, 'Best for whom' and 'Best for what?'" (p. 201).

In addition to a bibliography, an annotated list of twentieth-century English translations arranged in chronological order is supplied in an appendix, further enhancing the value of this already very useful study. Indeed, this is no doubt the best treatment of the subject available today, although almost certainly not the last, for as Kubo and Specht rightly observe, "No translation of the Bible can ever be considered final. Translations must keep pace with the growth in biblical scholarship and the changes in language" (p. 14). Thus new translations will require new evaluations.

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McGavran, Donald. *The Clash between Christianity and Cultures*. Washington, D.C.: Canon, 1974. 83 pp. Paperback, \$1.75.

McGavran has written many books on mission in which he has made outstanding contributions to thinking about mission theory and practice. Years ago he was one of the early writers to advocate that the evangelical goal of individual conversions should be broadened to include the possibility of bringing entire communities to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The scope of his research and writing is amazingly broad and ranges from mission work among primitives to principles of church growth in modern urban communities. At the same time, his outlook is staunchly evangelical; and not infrequently we find him in the thick of the battle, defending the case for

evangelical missions against those who advocate a less Gospel-centered style of mission.

In this book we find McGavran at work on two fronts. As the title of the book suggests, he deals in the first instance with the very important matter of the relationship of the Gospel to the culture of the local people. His very important second concern is that the essentials of the Gospel be preserved intact in the process of cross-cultural communication. Along the way, he makes the point that the Bible can be taught to, and understood by, primitive people.

In the first two chapters McGavran outlines problems in connection with the task of teaching the truth of Jesus Christ in such a way that Christianity is authentically understood and experienced in local cultural forms. He illustrates the difficulties inherent in the process by describing less-than-happy solutions historically adopted by the Church in its mission experience. The third chapter describes four specific aspects of the Gospel/culture conflict and affirms that the sources of tension are usually located in a core complex of cultural components. Christianity can be abstracted into several components for analytical purposes; and if this is done, it becomes clear that the hub of the Gospel/culture tensions is located in the central core of those things that are believed. Thus the insightful missionary need not be overly perturbed or confused regarding peripheral phenomena. He should be able to get to the core of the differences at the center of both systems. The solutions to these problems are developed in the two final chapters and flow smoothly from the earlier analysis. McGavran's suggestions, reduced to their simplest form, advocate that the missionary take a firm stand on the essentials of the Gospel as revealed in the Scripture and also an appreciative and high view of the local culture. As a result, the essentials of the Gospel are protected from distortion, and the local culture is protected from needless change. Flexibility is advocated in peripheral matters. The book is, of course, much richer than this bare outline suggests, and both practicing missionaries and those interested in the missionary work of the church will find time spent studying it rewarding.

Some aspects of the book seem to detract from its worthy purposes and noteworthy contributions. The book deals with weighty and serious issues in mission, which unfortunately appear in places to be almost trivialized by exaggeration and polemic. There also seems to be room for further development of both the anthropological and theological analyses presented. Closer attention to these details would make the book more useful to missionaries.

But I must not fault McGavran for a book he may not have intended to write. Perhaps he intended to be polemical and make a case for a certain approach to mission rather than dealing exhaustively with important basic problems in mission. It would seem to this reviewer that either of the above aims would be better served if they were separated from one another and the subject matter appropriate to each handled in different ways in different publications.