

Hugo McCord: The Word "Church" Eliminated

To make this translation as accurate as possible, the word "church" is eliminated. The word "church" is firstly defined by Webster as "an edifice consecrated for public worship," and "church" historically refers to a physical building, a meetinghouse, which the Lord's people in the first century did not build, and for which there is no New Testament word. The English word "church" comes from the Middle English "cherche" or "chirche," which is from the Anglo-Saxon "circe" or "cyrce," which is from the German "Kirche," which is from the Greek kuriakos, meaning "belonging to the Lord." Webster says that the Greek word doma, "house," has to be added to kuriakos to make the word "church," that is a "church" is "the Lord's house." In the New Testament are found two things that are kuriakos, "belonging to the Lord," namely the Lord's Supper (1 Co 11:20) and the Lord's Day (Re 1:10), but never "the Lord's house."

William Tyndale knew that the word "church" is an inaccurate translation of the New Testament word ekklesia, which simply means, "called out." So Tyndale, in the first English translation of the New Testament from Greek in 1525, eliminated "church" in favor of "congregation." King James I, having a vested interest in the word "church," since he was the head of the Church of England, did not like the change, and so he ordered the fifty-four translators of the King James version to use the word "church." Alexander Campbell knew what Tyndale knew about the inaccuracy of that word, and in *The Living Oracles* (1826) he, like Tyndale, used the word "congregation."

The Greek text of the United Bible Societies has one hundred and fourteen citations of ekklesia. In the two instances (Ac 19:32, 41 [E, 41]) where the reference is to an illegal group, this translation has "gathering." In the one instance (Ac 19:39) where ekklesia refers to a lawful group of citizens, this translation uses "assembly." In the one instance where the word refers to the Hebrew nation (Ac 7:38), this translation uses "called-out people," and uses the same phrase thirty-five times in reference to the Lord's New Testament people. Seventy-five times in reference to the same New Testament people, this translation uses "congregation."

Hugo McCord: The Word "Baptism" Eliminated

Likewise, the word "baptism" is eliminated, because it is not a translation: "baptism" only anglicizes the Greek word *baptisma*, using English letters to replace Greek letters, and does not tell what it means. Since the root meaning of *bapto* is "dip," as seen in Lk 16:24: "Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue," this translation uses the word "immersion" (or, "immerse," "overwhelm," "submerge," Mk 10:38- 39) except in four instances where the author's thought is not the action (an immersion), but the result of the action (a washing) (Mk 7:4; Lk 11:38; He 9:10; 1 Pe 3:21). The metonymy is more realistic by the use of *loutron* (Ep 5:26; Ti 3:5) and *louo* (He 10:22). Those words show that *baptisma* sometimes points not to a dipping as such, but to the result of a dipping, namely, a washing, as seen in the statements: "having cleansed them in the washing of the water by the word" (Ep 5:26), and "the bath of the new birth" (Ti 3:5), and "having ... our body washed in pure water" (He 10:22).

William Tyndale in 1525 translated *baptisma* as "immersion," but King James I (in deference to the Church of England that practices sprinkling) forbade his translators in 1611 from using "immersion," and ordered them to use the noncommittal cover-up word "baptism."

Alexander Campbell's translation (*The Living Oracles*, 1826) used "immersion." The restoration preacher, "Raccoon" John Smith, in turning away from the King James version, said publicly, "'Baptize' is a foreign word," and that "as not many of you have the gift of tongues, ... I am resolved to speak to you in Greek no more." Another restoration preacher wrote in 1831: "It is an insult to the Holy Spirit to require his truth to be concealed from men to accommodate sectarian views."

Quite different was the approach of Noah Webster, the father of our dictionary, who wrote in 1833 that he was careful "to avoid giving offense to any denomination of Christians." In 1838 the Baptists asked the American Bible Society to publish a Bible translating *baptisma*. When the Society refused, the Baptists asked Alexander Campbell to assist in a translation for them that used the word "immersion." He did so, but when they read in their new version (*The Bible Union*) of "John the immerser," they would not use it.

In the twentieth century the American Bible Society is still adamant in refusing to translate *baptisma*, defending themselves this way: "No translation should employ a word which would rule out one or the other of the interpretations as to the mode of baptism."