

ROME, BIBLE TRANSLATION, AND THE OKLAHOMA CITY GREEN BIBLE COLLECTION



Thomas P. Johnston, Ph.D.

*Dr. Johnston is Associate Professor of Evangelism
at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Kansas City, Missouri*

Introduction

I want to begin by thanking David Green for his convictions regarding the importance of the Word of God.¹ His generosity, as well as that of the Green Foundation, corresponds with the blessed man, whose “delight is in the law of the LORD, and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa 1:2).² It is with humility and respect that I offer these few words on the topic of “Rome, Bible Translation, and the Oklahoma City Green Bible Collection.” This paper is meant to explain the greater historical context within which the Green Bible Collection is birthed, as well as to consider its place in ongoing scholastic inquiry. Its value is deeply appreciated.

In his 1979 Apostolic address, “Mexico Ever Faithful,” Pope John Paul II explained that the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) did not change the “essence” of the Roman Catholic Church:

The Second Vatican Council wished to be, above all, a council on the Church. Take in your hands the documents of the Council, especially ‘Lumen Gentium,’ study them with loving attention, with the spirit of prayer, to discover what the Spirit wished to say about the Church. In this way you will be able to realize that there is not—as some people claim—a ‘new church,’ different or opposed to the ‘old church,’ but that the Council wished to reveal more clearly the one Church of Jesus Christ, with new aspects, but still the same in its essence.³

¹“The Green family, owners of the Hobby Lobby Empire have created the world’s largest private collection of biblical texts and artifacts which are put on display in *Passions*, a traveling exhibition” (“Passages Exhibition Debuts Historic Display” [online]; available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/slideshow/us/2011/04/12/passages-exhibition-debuts-historic-display/#slide=6>; accessed: 4 June 2011).

²All Scripture citations in the text of this paper are from the King James Version, in honor of its 400th anniversary.

³John Paul II, “Mexico Ever Faithful,” *Osservatore Romano* (5 Feb 1979), 1.

The Church of Rome is therefore the same, not different or opposed to the old church. It still considers itself and only itself “the one Church of Jesus Christ.” As to use of the “old” and the “new,” John Paul II repeated this same idea in his 1994 encyclical, *Tertio Millennio Adviente: As the Third Millennium Draws Near*. He said “In the history of the church, the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ are always closely interwoven. The ‘new’ grows out of the ‘old,’ and the ‘old’ finds a fuller expression in the ‘new.’”⁴ This use of “old” and “new” appears to be a semantic puzzle, and perhaps it is. The old church has never changed, but when and where it has been necessary, it has adapted to a new environment. For example, following Napoleonic Europe, Rome had to adapt to influencing democratic republics rather than dynastic monarchies. Also, where there are occurrences in Rome’s past that appear embarrassing or horrific, these have been skillfully forgotten, avoided, or relegated as part of the “old.” Such appears to be the case in Rome’s role in blocking the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages, as we shall see in this paper.

Furthermore, notice the advice of Pope Clement XIII in his 1761 encyclical titled *In Dominico Agro*, or “In the Field of the Lord”:

It often happens that certain unworthy ideas come forth in the Church of God which, although they directly contradict each other, plot together to undermine the purity of the Catholic faith in some way. It is very difficult to cautiously balance our speech between both enemies in such a way that We seem to turn Our backs on none of them, but to shun and condemn both enemies of Christ equally. Meanwhile the matter is such that diabolical error, when it has artfully colored its lies, easily clothes itself in the likeness of truth while very brief additions or changes corrupt the meaning of expressions; and confession, which usually works salvation, sometimes, with a slight change, inches toward death.⁵

Clement XIII reminded his readers of the challenge of not appearing to turn their backs on proponents of “diabolical error,” and yet to simultaneously shun propagators of the same. Likewise, John Paul II’s use of “old” and “new” appears to provide the equivocation necessary to quiet any speech about the Church of Rome’s illustrious past, while still shunning any who would dare question “our holy Mother the Church Hierarchical.”⁶

⁴John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adviente* (14 November 1994), §18.

⁵Clement XIII, *In Dominico Agro* [in the field of the Lord]—*On Instruction in the Faith (14 June 1761)*, §2; available at: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/C13INDOM.HTM>; accessed: 8 Sept 2004.

⁶Notice for example, several of Ignatius Loyola’s “Rules for Thinking within the Church”:

“First Rule. The first: All judgment laid aside, we ought to have our mind ready and prompt to obey, in all, the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our holy Mother the Church Hierarchical. . . .

“Thirteenth Rule. To be right in everything, we ought always to hold that the white which I see, is black, if the Hierarchical Church so decides it, believing that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Bride, there is the same Spirit which governs and directs us for the salvation of our souls. Because by the same Spirit and our Lord Who gave the ten Commandments, our holy Mother the Church is directed and governed” (St. Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*, trans by

In that light, it appears that the contemporary third rail of theology and church history is speaking negatively of the Roman Catholic Church. If an Evangelical theologian wants to be described as obscurantist, petty, or negative, he needs only to write a paper openly negative about the Church of Rome. These days, speaking negatively of a cult, such as the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses, or writing negatively of another Protestant inclination, such as Calvinism, Arminianism, or baptismal regeneration, or speaking openly of Buddhism or Islam, is deemed acceptable. But not so if one is speaking of the history or false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Yes, speaking ill of Catholicism appears to be the third rail of Evangelical discourse today.

Even more so, it would seem that a nihil obstat is being applied to Evangelical discourse. Nihil obstat basically means "nothing opposing" in Latin. Permissible writings for rank and file Roman Catholics must have both the imprimatur (seal) of a Catholic Bishop or Archbishop, as well as the nihil obstat from a Roman Catholic Censor Deputatus. The imprimatur affixed on the copyright page of the book was mandated by Pope Leo XIII, in his 1897 Apostolic Constitution "Officiorum ac Munerum: On the Prohibition and Censorship of Books."⁷ In doing so, Leo XIII followed a long history of Rome's censorship (especially of historical writings), something which he himself noted in this same encyclical⁸ and which others also have documented.⁹ Ten years later, in 1907, in his encyclical, "Pascendi Dominici Gregis: On the Doctrine of the Modernists," Pope Pius X required the addition of nihil obstat on the copyright page of a book approved for Catholics to read. He decreed that prior to a bishop placing his imprimatur upon a document, a nihil obstat was necessary. This nihil obstat was to be granted by a Censor Deputatus, approved by the Vatican, but undisclosed to the author.¹⁰

Father Elder Mullan, S. J. [New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1914] [online]; available at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ignatius/exercises.txt>; accessed 20 April 2010).

⁷"Let the Ordinaries, acting in this also as Delegates of the Apostolic See, exert themselves to proscribe and to put out of reach of the faithful injurious books or other writings printed or circulated in their dioceses" (Leo XIII, *Officiorum ac Munerum* [Rome: 25 Jan 1897], §21; cited in Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis: Encyclical on the Doctrine of the Modernists* [Rome: 8 Sept 1907], 51).

⁸For example, Leo XIII explained: "Historical Documents bear special witness to the care and diligence with which the Roman Pontiffs have vigilantly endeavored to prevent the unchecked spread of heretical writings detrimental to the public. History is full of examples. Anastasius I solemnly condemned the more dangerous writings of Origen, Innocent I those of Pelagius, Leo the Great all the works of the Manicheans. The *decretal* letters, opportunely issued by Gelasius, concerning books to be received and rejected, are well known. And so, in the course of centuries, the Holy See condemned the pestilent writings of the Monothelites, of Abelard, Marsilius Patavinus, Wycliff and Huss" (Leo XIII, *Officiorum*, par. 2).

⁹For example, George Haven Putnam, *The Censorship of the Church of Rome and Its Influence upon the Production and Distribution of Literature*, vols 1 and 2 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907). These volumes concern the censorship of the printing press, and therefore focus their attention after A.D. 1455.

¹⁰"Under the rules of the Constitution *Officiorum*, many publications require the authorization of the Ordinary, and in certain dioceses (since the Bishop cannot personally make himself acquainted with them

Now, how could it be that one has the impression that the *nihil obstat* is applied among Evangelicals today, and not merely in Catholic circles? The answer to this question revolves around Rome's view of who belongs to the Holy Roman Catholic Church. The 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* addressed this issue in a section entitled, "Who Belongs to the Catholic Church." In this section, the document reaffirmed that all Christians rightly baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit fall under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.¹¹ In fact, teaching on the primacy of the decisions of the Bishop of Rome for all Christians goes back to the teachings of Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 353-430) in his writings against the Donatists and Manicheans. So, as applied today, the local Roman Catholic Bishop has Rome's authority to seek to apply censorship to every Christian in his diocese, when it is possible for him to do so.

Furthermore, Pope Pius X put into place a mechanism whereby this authority could be enforced, especially in democratic societies where control is more complex. In 1907 he also mandated that every Roman Catholic diocese was to organize a "Council of Vigilance." These councils were to be made up of people who were "bound to secrecy," and whose mission was to guard against any "teachers of impiety" within their diocese:

55. But of what avail, Venerable Brethren, will be all Our commands and prescriptions if they be not dutifully and firmly carried out? In order that this may be done it has seemed expedient to us to extend to all dioceses the regulations which the Bishops of Umbria, with great wisdom, laid down for theirs many years ago. 'In order,' they say, 'to extirpate the errors already propagated and to prevent their further diffusion, and to remove those teachers of impiety through whom the pernicious effects of such diffusion are being perpetuated, this sacred Assembly, following the example of St. Charles Borromeo, has decided to establish in each of the dioceses a Council consisting of approved members of both branches of the clergy, which shall be charged with the

all) it has been the custom to have a suitable number of official censors for the examination of writings. We have the highest esteem for this institution of censors, and We not only exhort, but We order that it be extended to all dioceses. In all episcopal Curias, therefore, let censors be appointed for the revision of works intended for publication, and let the censors be chosen from both ranks of the clergy—secular and regular—men whose age, knowledge, and prudence will enable them to follow the safe and golden means in their judgments. It shall be their office to examine everything which requires permission for publication according to Articles XLI and XLII of the above-mentioned Constitution. The censor shall give his verdict in writing. If it be favorable, the Bishop will give the permission for publication by the word *Imprimatur*, which must be preceded by the *Nihil obstat* and the name of the censor" (Pius X, *Pascendi*, §52).

¹¹"The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion under the successor of Peter' [*Lumen Gentium*, 15]. Those 'who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church' (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3). *With the Orthodox Churches*, this communion is so profound 'that it lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord's Eucharist' [Paul VI, Discourse, 14 December 1975; *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 13-18]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994], §838).

task of noting the existence of errors and the devices by which new ones are introduced and propagated, and to inform the Bishop of the whole, so that he may take counsel with them as to the best means for suppressing the evil at the outset and preventing it spreading for the ruin of souls or, worse still, gaining strength and growth' [12]. We decree, therefore, that in every diocese a council of this kind, which We are pleased to name the 'Council of Vigilance,' be instituted without delay. The priests called to form part in it shall be chosen somewhat after the manner above prescribed for the censors, and they shall meet every two months on an appointed day in the presence of the Bishop. They shall be bound to secrecy as to their deliberations and decisions, and in their functions shall be included the following: they shall watch most carefully for every trace and sign of Modernism both in publications and in teaching, and to preserve the clergy and the young from it they shall take all prudent, prompt, and efficacious measures.¹³

These Councils of Vigilance were "charged with the task of noting the existence of errors and the devices by which new ones are introduced and propagated," and then "to extirpate the errors already propagated and to prevent their further diffusion, and to remove those teachers of impiety through whom the pernicious effects of such diffusion are being perpetuated." When such threats were found, then they were to "take all prudent, prompt, and efficacious measures" to eliminate such threats. It appears that "devices" by which pernicious teachings were perpetuated include:

- (1) All schools, their administrators, teachers, and programs: doctoral level, master's level, bachelor, and high school; both religious and secular;
- (2) Journals, magazines, and other periodicals; their editors and articles;
- (3) Scholarly academic societies;
- (4) Publishing houses and printing presses;
- (5) Bible societies and tract societies;
- (6) Denominational agencies, churches, and preachers;
- (7) Travelling evangelists and evangelistic crusades; and
- (8) Original language texts of the Bible, lexicons, language helps, and Bible translations.¹⁴

We may consider adding to this list:

- (1) Radio and television preachers;
- (2) Internet sites and Bible software; and perhaps even
- (3) Bible exhibits and Bible museums.

Likewise, this responsibility for regulating prohibited books and writings was delegated to every Bishop and Archbishop, according to Leo XIII:

¹²"Acts of the Congress of the Bishops of Umbria" (November 1849), tit. 2, art. 6.

¹³Pius X, *Pascendi*, §55.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

29. Ordinaries, even as Delegates of the Apostolic See, must be careful to prohibit evil books or other writings published or circulated in their Dioceses, and to withdraw them from the hands of the faithful.¹⁵

Now, these Councils of Vigilance were to meet every two months in every diocese. There are currently 194 Catholic dioceses in the U.S. and 34 archdioceses.¹⁶ If Pascendi is being followed today, as it is in relation to the nihil obstat, there are in the U.S. 194 of these councils meeting every two months “to prevent the unchecked spread of heretical writings detrimental to the public” and to apply the nihil obstat whenever, whenever, and however they can. Could it be that these 194 “Councils of Vigilance” are the reason that it appears that a nihil obstat has crept into U.S. Evangelical circles today?

I received an email several years ago from someone I did not know. He asked me if he could use my “Inquisition and Martyrdom” chart, which I have uploaded online, for an “Anti-Catholic CD.” My answer was, “No!” You see, I am not anti-Catholic, just as much as I am not anti-Muslim, anti-Buddhist, anti-Methodist, or anti-Baptist. My goal is to love everyone enough to seek to share the Gospel with them, regardless of their religious extraction. Likewise, it is the fallacy of composition to frame every scholar who is seeking to understand and teach about the faith and practice of any religious group as automatically antagonistic or hateful of that group.

Every now and then an issue is so significant that it raises its peak above the waterline to be visible and to necessitate immediate action. It appears that the “‘Passages’ Exhibit” and the Museum that will house the Green Bible Collection is just such an issue. The money being invested, the publicity involved, and the need to avoid an exhibit that is “detrimental to the public” is so great that it appears that the “Council of Vigilance” of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City had to act quickly and decisively—to “suppress the evil and prevent it from spreading at the outset.” First, the council needed to be sure that the exhibit did not include a discussion of the hundreds of martyrs, both translators and Bible salesmen (colporteurs), killed because of vernacular translations of the Bible. Second, the council had to eliminate the inclusion of the numerous writings of the Church of Rome against vernacular translations and lay people reading the Bible. Third, the council had to, if possible, turn the tables and promote itself as the Matriarch of Bible translation, including the King James Bible and other vernacular Bibles. Quite a tall task! To my knowledge, the “‘Passages’ Exhibit” appears to have accomplished all of these surmised goals.

My hope in this article is to point out the history of the Church of Rome in relationship to vernacular translations of the Bible, such as the King James Bible (KJV), and to bring this discussion into the contemporary situation. Several current documents will serve as guideposts for the position of the

¹⁵Leo XIII, *Officiorum*, §29.

¹⁶“List of Catholic Dioceses of the United States” (online); available at: www.ask.com/wiki/List_of_Catholic_dioceses_of_the_United_States; accessed 2 June 2011.

contemporary Roman Catholic Church, the 1968 “Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible” (1968 Guiding Principles), Rome’s 1987 revision of this document (1987 Guidelines), and the 1994 text released by the Pontifical Commission on Biblical Interpretation (PCBI). It appears that arguing who or what antecedent version had the greatest input into the production of the KJV is a mute point. One could argue for any of the following nine Bibles: Wycliffe Bible, Tyndale Bible (portions of OT), Coverdale Bible, Matthew’s Bible, Taverner’s Bible, Great Bible, Geneva Bible, one of 17 editions of the Bishop’s Bible, or the Douai-Rheims Bible, all of which appeared before the 1611 KJV.¹⁷ Furthermore, one could argue about who sat on what committee and the influence that they exerted upon the translation of certain passages. While both of these studies are important and necessary, it is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, my goal, is to highlight (1) official statements of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to vernacular translations and the lay reading thereof, (2) further expand on the contemporary context, specifically looking at the 1968 Guiding Principles, the 1987 Guidelines, and the PCBI, and (3) discuss specific translation issues. We begin with a brief historical overview to show that this study is not the generalization called, “the fallacy of the lonely fact.”¹⁸

History of Enactments

The Roman Catholic Church has a very long history of enactments related to the Bible. Its scholars have written against vernacular Bible translation and against lay people reading the Bible for nearly a millennium, and against the Bible societies since they came into existence at the turn of the nineteenth century.

In 1179 Pope Alexander III prohibited the preaching of the Waldenses, who, during their preaching, were known to recite portions of the Bible in the vernacular tongue:¹⁹

And because some, under an appearance of piety . . . protect their authority to preach . . . we bind them by the same bond of anathema all those who, even though they have been prohibited from doing so neither have they been sent, dare to preach either privately or publicly without having received the authorization of the Apostolic Seat or the Bishop of their locality²⁰

¹⁷Harold Rawlings, *Trial by Fire: The Struggle to Get the Bible into English* (Wellington, FL: Rawlings Foundation, 2004), 113-44; Paul Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 284-305.

¹⁸“The *fallacy of the lonely fact* is the logical extension of a small sample, which deserves to receive special condemnation” (David Fischer, *Historians’ Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* [New York: Harper, 1970], 109).

¹⁹Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible and Other Medieval Biblical Versions* (Cambridge University Press, 1920; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 27, note 2.

²⁰In *Symboles et Définitions de la Foi Catholique*, edited by Heinrich Denzinger, Peter Hünermann, and Joseph Hoffman (Paris: Cerf, 2005), §760-761 (henceforth citations from *Denzinger* will be referred to by *DS* number); this and all other translations from the French mine.

Lollard Bible historian, Margaret Deanesly, cited an interesting firsthand account of their request in 1184, as they “besought [the Pope] with great urgency that authority to preach should be confirmed to them.”²¹ Their request was denied.

In 1184 the Council of Verona condemned the Waldenses as heretics,²² those, in fact, who loved the Bible and persisted in teaching something other than Catholic dogma. These were to be excommunicated (i.e. extirpated from the world through death)²³ and handed over to the secular powers for punishment.²⁴

The infamous 1199 letter, *Cum ex iniuncto*, of Innocent III decried the “simple and uncultivated people” of Metz [Lorraine, France], “lay people and women,” who (1) “made for themselves translations into the vernacular,” and in secret conventicles “belch forth to each other and mutually preach”²⁵—today we call these small group Bible studies or house churches.

²¹“We saw the Waldensians at the council celebrated at Rome under pope Alexander III. They were simple and illiterate men, named after their leader, Waldo, who was a citizen of Lyons on the Rhone: and they presented to the lord pope a book written in the French tongue, in which were contained a text and gloss on the psalter, and on very many other books of both testaments. These besought with great urgency that authority to preach should be confirmed to them, for they thought themselves expert, when they were scarcely learned at all.... For in every small point of the sacred page, so many meanings fly on the wings of virtue, such stores of wealth are accumulated, that only he can fully exhaust them whom God has inspired. Shall not therefore the Word be given to the unlearned as *pearls before swine*, when we know them to be fitted neither to receive it, nor to give out what they have received? Away with this idea, and let it be rooted out. *The ointment ran down from the head, even to the skirts of his clothing*: waters flow from the spring, not from the mud of public ways” (Deanesly, 26-27; citing Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium* (A.D. 1181 or 1192; Oxford: M. R. James, 1914), 60).

²²Deanesly, 26.

²³“*Whether heretics ought to be tolerated?*” I answer that, With regard to heretics two points must be observed: one, on their own side; the other, on the side of the Church. On their own side there is the sin, whereby they deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be severed from the world by death. ...much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death. On the part of the Church, however, there is mercy which looks to the conversion of the wanderer, wherefore she condemns not at once, but “after the first and second admonition,” as the Apostle directs: after that, if he is yet stubborn, the Church no longer hoping for his conversion, looks to the salvation of others, by excommunicating him and separating him from the Church, and furthermore delivers him to the secular tribunal to be exterminated thereby from the world by death.” (SS, Q[11], A[3]: “*Whether heretics ought to be tolerated,*” Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* [A.D. 1275] [online]; available at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.html>; accessed: 10 June 2008).

²⁴*Histoire du Livre Saint en France* [History of the Holy Book in France] (online); available at: <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/hlybk/bible/france.htm>; accessed 2 February 2005.

²⁵“[DS 770] Our venerable brother, the Bishop of Metz [Lorraine, France], We have come to know from his

Cistercian monks were sent to Metz to confiscate and burn all vulgar tongue translations that they found.²⁶ In 1211 Pope Innocent III set up a crusade against the readers of the Bible. All Bibles in the vulgar tongue were to be burned.²⁷

letter that in his diocese as well as in the town of Metz a rather important number of lay people and of women, drawn in some way by a desire for the Scriptures, made for themselves translations into the French language of the Gospels, the epistles of Paul, the Psalter, the Moralia of Job, and many other books; ... (with the result being) that in the secret gatherings lay people and woman dare to belch forth to each other and to mutually preach, and they equally despise the company of those who are not mixed up in such things ... Some of them also despise the simplicity of their priests, and when a word of salvation is proposed to these latter, they whisper in secret that they have better in their writings and that they are capable of express them more judiciously.

“Even if a desire to understand the divine Scriptures and the care to exhort in conformity with them is not to blame but quite the opposite recommended, these people deserve nevertheless to be blamed that they hold secret conventicles, and that they usurp the office of preaching, that they scoff the simplicity of the priests and that they disdain the company of those that do not attach themselves to such practices. God in fact ... hates to this point the works of darkness that he commanded and said (to the apostles): “What I tell you in the dark, say it in the daylight; that which you hear in the deep of your ear proclaim it from the rooftops” (Matt 10:27); by this it is clearly manifest that the preaching of the Gospel ought to be proposed not in secret conventicles, as is done by the heretics, but publicly in the Church, in conformity with Catholic custom. ...

“[DS 771] But the hidden mysteries of the faith ought not to be exhibited everywhere by all, because they cannot be understood by all, but only unto them that are seized by a believing intelligence; this is why the apostle said of the simple: “As unto little children in Christ, it is milk that I made you drink, not solid food” (1 Cor 3:2) ...

“Such is the depth of the holy Scriptures that not only simple and uncultivated people, but even those who are wise and learned are not able to scrutinize the meaning. This is why the Scripture says: “For many of those who sought failed in their search”(Psa 64:7). Also was it correct that it was established in the divine Law that if an animal touches the Mountain (of Sinai) he should be stoned (cf. Heb 12:20; Ex 19:12ff), in order that in fact no simple or uncultivated man should have the presumption to touch upon the sublimities of the holy Scripture or to preach it to others. It is written in fact: “Do not seek that which is too high for you” (Sir 3:22). This is why the apostle said: “Do not seek more than what is necessary to seek, but seek with sobriety” (Rom 12:3).

“Similarly just as the body numbers many members, but not all the members have the same activity, likewise, the Church counts many levels, but not all have the same duty, for according to the Apostle “The Lord has given some as apostles, others as prophets, but others as doctors, etc.” (Eph 4:11). Therefore the doctor is in some ways the principal in the church and this is why no one ought to usurp without deference the office of preacher” (Innocent III, “*Cum ex iniuncto*: To the Inhabitants of Metz [On the Necessity for the Magisterium of the Church for the Interpretation Scripture], 12 July 1199” in *DS 770-771* [online]; available at; <http://www.catho.org/9.php?d=bwh>; accessed: 8 Nov 2008).

²⁶*Histoire du Livre Saint en France.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

The 1229 Council of Toulouse promulgated the following as Canon 14:

Lay people shall not have books of Scripture, except the psalter and the divine office: and they shall not have these books in the vulgar tongue. Moreover we prohibit that lay people should be permitted to have books of the Old or New Testament, except perchance any should wish from devotion to have a psalter, or a breviary for the divine office, or hours of the blessed Virgin: but we most strictly prohibit their having even the aforesaid books translated into the vulgar tongue.²⁸

Likewise the 1234 Council of Tarracon prohibited owning Old and New Testaments, as did the 1299 Council of Toulouse. The Council of Beziers (1243 or 1246) Canon 36 stated:

You will fully watch, according to all that is right and legal, that theological books not be possessed, even in Latin, by lay people, nor in the vulgar language by clerics.²⁹

By the way, the result of these enactments necessitated a shift in discipleship strategy within Catholicism, from using the Bible as their primary discipleship tool to using something else, such as the *Sentences* of Master Peter the Lombard (d. 1160) as their primary discipleship tool. Chapter one of the first lesson in the *Sentences* is titled, “Every doctrine concerns things and/or signs.” Rather than looking to Scripture, it initiated the 15 or 16 year old Novitiate into the signs and symbols of a sacramental salvation, while providing him a Latin primer.³⁰

In 1401 Henry IV’s *De Heretico Comburendo* decreed against translating or owning a Bible, and authorized burning heretics at the stake. The 1408 Council of Oxford prohibited translation into the vernacular (e.g. English). In 1525 Bishop Tunstall and Cardinal Wolsey opposed the Tyndale Bible, confiscating, buying, and burning it.

The 1526 Act of Parliament in France made it illegal to own or sell Bibles in France.³¹ Likewise two of the 17 December 1527 University of Paris censures against Erasmus read as follows:

²⁸Deanesly, 36-37.

²⁹*Histoire du Livre Saint en France.*

³⁰The following is the beginning sentences of Chapter One: “While considering the contents of the Old and New Law again and again by diligent chase [*indagine*], the prevenient grace of God has hinted to us, that a treatise on the Sacred Page is [*versari*] chiefly about things and/or signs. For as Augustine, the egregious Doctor, says in the book *On Christian Doctrine* [Chapter 2, n. 2; here and in the next passage, but with many words omitted by Master (Peter) and not a few added or changed]: ‘Every doctrine is of things, and/or signs. But even things are learned through signs. But here (those) are properly named things, which are not employed to signify anything; but signs, those whose use is in signifying’” (Master Peter Lombard, *The First Book of Sentences* [Paris, 1160] [online]; available at: <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/lombardus/opera/l1-01.html>; accessed 16 May 2006).

³¹*Ibid.*

Although the sacred books might be translated into languages, in that they are in their nature holy and good: yet the great danger of permitting the promiscuous reading of them, when translated without any explanation, is sufficiently shewn by the Waldensians, Albigensians and Turlupins, who have spread abroad many errors through this cause.... Wherefore this kind of translation is by law condemned. . . .

“Since, by a *decree* of the apostolic see, the reading of many such books [Erasmus mentioned ‘any of the books of the Old Testament’] was long since prohibited to the laity . . . the aforesaid proposition is inserted rashly and impudently. For the same cause for prohibiting the reading of such books exists, as there was when the decree of Innocent III was drawn up about these matters, a fragment of which is incorporated in his words in the *De Haeret.*, as the *Cum ex injuncto.*”³²

My paper, “The Evangelistic Zeal of Reformation Geneva (1533-1560) as Exemplified in Crespin’s Martyrology,” names the 67 Huguenots from Crespin’s Martyrology,³³ who went out from Geneva or Lausanne, Switzerland, to sell Bibles, evangelize, and plant churches in France (or Italy), and were martyred for those activities.³⁴

Similar prohibitions, as well as strictures against those who printed Bibles, were reaffirmed during the Council of Trent (1545-1564).³⁵ The bloodshed over vernacular translations from

³²Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible and Other Medieval Biblical Versions* (Cambridge University Press, 1920; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 387-88.

³³“1533, Alexandre Canus; 1535, Pierre Gaudet; 1536, Martin Gonin; 1539, Jérôme Vindocin; 1541, Claude le Peintre; 1546, Pierre Chapot; 1547, Michel (Miquelot), Leonard du Pré; 1548, Sanctin Nivet; 1549, Augustin [Dumarchiet]; Marion [Fournier], wife of Augustin (above), Estienne Peloquin, Leonar Gallimar; 1550, Claude Thierry, Jean Godeau, Gabriel Beraudin, Macé Moreau, Claude Monier; 1551, Thomas de Saint Paul, Jean Joëry and his young assistant; 1552, Martial Alba, Pierre Escrivain, Bernard Seguin, Charles Favre, Pierre Navihères, Pierre Bergier, Hugues Gravier, René Poyet, Denis Peloquin; 1553, Louys de Marsac [and his cousin], Etienne Gravot, Nicolas Nail, Simon Laloé, Pierre Denocheau, Pierre Serre; 1554, Guillaume Dalençon, Richard le Fèvre, Thomas Calbergue, François Gamba, Denis le Vair; 1555, Jean Vernou, Antoine Laborie, Jean Trigalet, Guyraud Tauran, Bertrand Bataille; 1556, Jean Rabec, Pierre de Rousseau, Barthélémy Hector, Nicolas Ballon; 1557, Philbert Hamelin, Archambaut Sepharon, Philippe Cene and Jacques, Pierre de Rousseau; 1558, Jean du Bordel, Matthieu Vermeil, Pierre Bourdon, Benoit Romyen, Gilles Verdickt; 1559, Jean Barbeville, Marin Marie, Adrian Daussi, Jean de Léon, Julien Hernandez; 1560, Jean Louys Pascal” (Jean Crespin, *Histoire des vrais tesmoins de la verite de l’evangile, qui de leur sang l’ont signée, depuis Jean Hus iusques autemps present* [Geneva, 1570; Liège, 1964], 78-557).

³⁴Thomas Johnston, “Geneva’s Evangelistic Zeal as Exemplified in Crespin’s Martyrology.” *Midwestern Journal of Theology*, 6:2 (Spring 2008).

³⁵For example, from the 8 April 1546 session on the Canonical Scripture: “it shall not be lawful for anyone to print or to have printed any books whatsoever dealing with sacred doctrinal matters without the name of the author, or in the future to sell them, or even to have them in possession, unless they have first been examined and approved by the ordinary, under penalty of anathema and fine prescribed by the

Innocent III (1199) to Pius IV (1564) cannot be calculated. However, because official records of the Spanish Inquisition were published, the following was written: “In 330 years (1478-1808), the merciless Spanish Inquisition had 323,362 persons burned alive, and 17,659 persons burned in effigy”³⁶ These included persons from various non-Catholic Christian groups, as well as Jews and others.

In 1713, Clement XI in his Constitution *Unigenitus Dei Filius* condemned 101 heresies of the Jansenist Pasquier Quesnel, refuting errors in his commentaries published variously in 1671, 1687, 1693, and 1699. Note three of the statements that Clement XI deemed to be heretical errors:

80. The reading of Scripture is for everyone. Acts 8:28.

81. The holy obscurity of the Word of God is not for lay people a reason to be exempt from reading it. Acts 8:28.

84. Tearing the New Testament from the hands of Christians or holding it closed to them, by removing from them the means of comprehending it, is closing the mouth of Christ to them.³⁷

Furthermore, based on Rome’s belief in the inerrancy of Church Tradition³⁸ and based on John Paul II’s approach to the “old” and the “new,” these enactments still hold true.

last Council of the Lateran” (from “19th Ecumenical Council, the Council of Trent” [online]; available at: http://www.forerunner.com/chalcedon/X0020_15._Council_of_Trent.html; accessed 8 Jan 2005).

³⁶Joseph F. Conley, *Drumbeats that Changed the World* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 2000), 32.

³⁷*DS* 2480, 2481, 2484.

³⁸“This supernatural revelation, according to the belief of the universal Church, is contained both in unwritten Tradition, and in written Books, which are therefore called sacred and canonical because, ‘being written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author and as such have been delivered to the Church’ [Conc. Vat. sess. iii. cap. ii. de revel.]...

“For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical, are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost; and so far is it from being possible that any error can co-exist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true. This is the ancient and unchanging faith of the Church, solemnly defined in the Councils of Florence and of Trent, and finally confirmed and more expressly formulated by the Council of the Vatican. These are the words of the last: ‘The Books of the Old and New Testament, whole and entire, with all their parts, as enumerated in the decree of the same Council (Trent) and in the ancient Latin Vulgate, are to be received as sacred and canonical. And the Church holds them as sacred and canonical, not because, having been composed by human industry, they were afterwards approved by her authority; nor only because they contain revelation without error; but because, having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author’ [Sess. iii., c. ii., de Rev.]” (Leo XIII, “*Providentissimus Deus*: On the Study of Holy Scripture” [18 Nov 1893], §1, 20 [online]; available at: <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pope0256b.htm>; accessed: 8 Mar 2002).

Nor did the existence of the nineteenth century Bible societies escape the Vatican's notice. The Vatican had a flurry of writings against the Bible societies. Pius VII wrote regarding "The Translation of the Bible" to the Archbishop of Mogilev, Belarus in 1816:

This is why the heretics with their biased and abominable machinations had the custom, in editing Bibles in vulgar tongue (of which the astonishing diversity and contradictions results that they accuse and tear each one the other), to seek to insidiously impose their respective errors by wrapping them of the magnificence of the most holy divine Word.³⁹

In 1844 Gregory XVI's encyclical "*Inter Praecipuas Machinationes*" specifically decried the translation work of Bible societies:

You do not ignore finally what diligence and what wisdom are necessary to faithfully translate into our languages the words of the Lord, because nothing also is so easily produced as the very serious errors introduced into the multiplied translations of the Bible societies, and which stem from the stupidity and deception of so many translators; and these errors, the great number even and the diversity of the translations are concealed for a long time to the detriment of many. These societies themselves bring little or not at all that by reading these Bible translated into the vulgar languages that men fall into such errors rather than others, given that they accustom themselves little by little to turn for themselves to liberty of thought concerning the meaning of the Scriptures, and to despise the divine traditions guarded in the Church on the foundation of the doctrine of the Fathers, and to reject the hierarchy of the Church herself.⁴⁰

In 1846 Pius IX wrote the encyclical "Qui Pluribus," which condemned the Bible Societies and their free Bible distribution programs:

This is what the very cunning Bible societies who, renewing the old trickery of the heretics, translate the books of the divine writings into all of the vulgar languages, against the regulations of the very holy Church, interpret them with the help of explanations that are often perverse, and do not cease to distribute them freely, to give them to all sorts of people, even to those who are less cultivated, with the result that rejecting the divine tradition, the doctrine of the Fathers, and the authority of the Catholic Church, all interpret according to their private judgment, turning aside its meaning, and in this way fall into far greater errors. These societies . . . Gregory XVI . . . reproved, and We wish likewise that they be condemned.⁴¹

³⁹Pius VII, Letter "*Magno et Acerbo*" (1816) to the Archbishop of Mogilev [Belarus]; *DS* 2710-2712. In this letter, Pius VII cited "the celebrated [1199] letter of Innocent III to the faithful of Metz," as well as writings of Pius V, Clement VIII, and Benedict XIV, also mentioning Clement XI's condemnation of the Jansenist teaching: "79. It is useful and necessary at all times, in all places, and for every kind of person, to study and to know the spirit, the piety, and the mysteries of Sacred Scripture" (Clement XI, *Unigenitus* [1713] [online]; available at: <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Clem11/c11unige.htm>; accessed 30 June 2003).

⁴⁰Gregory XVI, "*Inter praecipuas machinationes*" (8 mai 1844) (online) [from *DS* 2771]; accessed: 8 Nov 2008; available at: <http://www.catho.org/9.php?d=bw2>. My translation from the French.

⁴¹Pius IX, "Qui Pluribus" (online); from *Denzinger*: 2784; accessed: 8 Sept 2008; available at: <http://www.catho.org/9.php?d=bw2#elo>.

Later, Pius IX included the Biblical Societies in his lists of “pests” which “are frequently reprobated”:

IV. Socialism, Communism, Secret Societies, Biblical Societies, Clerico-liberal Societies. Pests of this kind are frequently reprobated in the severest terms in the Encyclical ‘Qui pluribus,’ Nov. 9, 1846, Allocution ‘Quibus quantisque,’ April 20, 1849, Encyclical ‘Noscitis et nobiscum,’ Dec. 8, 1849, Allocution ‘Singulari quadam,’ Dec. 9, 1854, Encyclical ‘Quanto conficiamur,’ Aug. 10, 1863.⁴²

Leo XIII continued in the same vein in his 1897 “Apostolic Constitution *Officiorum ac Munerum*: On the Prohibition and Censorship of Books”:

7. As it has been clearly shown by experience that, if the Holy Bible in the vernacular is generally permitted without any distinction, more harm than utility is thereby caused, owing to human temerity: all versions in the vernacular, even by Catholics, are altogether prohibited, unless approved by the Holy See, or published, under the vigilant care of the Bishops, with Annotations taken from the Fathers of the Church and learned Catholic writers.

8. All versions of the Holy Bible, in any vernacular language, made by non-Catholics are prohibited; and especially those published by the Bible Societies, which have been more than once condemned by the Roman Pontiffs, because in them the Wise Laws of the Church concerning the publication of the Sacred Books are entirely disregarded.⁴³

While most of these types of writings are hidden in Latin or Italian documents, many English authors prior to 1907 were quite familiar with them. I do not gloat or salivate over these repeated enactments and strictures against the translation of and/or reading of the Bible in the vernacular. Rather, they produce grief and distress in my soul. Like the nineteenth-century French Reformed pastor-historian Franck Puaux wrote: “We ask ourselves how the church of Rome, so pure and beautiful at its start, was able to degenerate to that extent. Like Thyatira and Laodicea, she had, alas!”⁴⁴ This historical record is not a matter of the fallacy of the lonely fact. Rather, it is a matter of historical ignorance to forget that these councils and decrees are a part of the bloodstream of Roman Catholic history, Tradition, faith, and practice.

Notice, for example, how well the 1761 encyclical of Clement XIII seems to sum up Rome’s view:

3. The faithful—especially those who are simple or uncultivated—should be kept away from dangerous and narrow paths upon which they can hardly set foot without faltering. The sheep should not be led to pasture through trackless places. Nor should peculiar ideas—even those of

⁴²Pius IX, “Syllabus of Errors” (online); available at <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm>; accessed 8 Sept 2004.

⁴³Leo XIII, *Officiorum*, §7, 8.

⁴⁴Franck Puaux, *Histoire de la Réformation Française* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1859), 1:407; translation mine.

Catholic scholars—be proposed to them. Rather, only those ideas should be communicated which are definitely marked as Catholic truth by their universality, ambiguity, and harmony. Besides, since the crowd cannot go up to the mountain [Exod 19:12] upon which the glory of the Lord came down, and if whoever crosses the boundaries to see will die, the teachers of the people should establish boundaries around them so that no word strays beyond that which is necessary or useful for salvation. The faithful should obey the apostolic advice not to know more than is necessary, but to know in moderation [Rom. 12:3].⁴⁵

So, Catholics were “to know not more than is necessary, but to know in moderation.” How different than biblical Christians who teach their church members to “study to show yourself approved” (2 Tim. 2:15) and to diligently search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). Two completely different worldviews become apparent.

Furthermore, those who did translate, read, and/or propagate the Bible in the vernacular were perceived as a threat to Rome. Perhaps that is why it appears that the spread of Evangelicalism in the twentieth century was a threat to the Rome’s primacy among world Christians.

1994 Pontifical Commission on Biblical Interpretation

According to the 1994 PCBI, Evangelicals seem to pose a threat to the primacy of Rome and its interpretation of the Bible in the world. For example, consider how Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, President of the PCBI at the time, and now Pope Benedict XVI, explained this threat:

As the fundamentalist way of reading the Bible spread to other parts of the world, it gave rise to other ways of interpretation, equally ‘literalist,’ in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. As the 20th century comes to an end, this kind of interpretation is winning more and more adherents, in religious groups and sects, as also among Catholics.⁴⁶

So, who were these fundamentalists that had propagated this “fundamentalist interpretation”? In the same paragraph, Ratzinger described them as adhering to the Five Fundamentals as subscribed to in the 1895 Niagara Bible Conference:

The actual term ‘fundamentalist’ is connected directly with the American Biblical Congress held at Niagara, N.Y., in 1895. At this meeting, conservative Protestant exegetes defined ‘five points of fundamentalism’: the verbal inerrancy of Scripture, the divinity of Christ, his virginal birth, the doctrine of vicarious expiation and the bodily resurrection at the time of the second coming of Christ.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Clement XIII, *In Dominico Agro*, §3.

⁴⁶Pontifical Biblical Commission, “Fundamentalist Interpretation,” in *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (18 March 1994); available at: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/PBCINTER.htm>; accessed 17 Oct 2009.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

For clarification, I have compiled a list of some of those who participated in the 1895 Niagara Bible Conference and other Niagara Bible conferences. The list includes people such as J. Hudson Taylor, C. I. Scofield, A. T. Pierson.⁴⁸ Furthermore, based on these Five Fundamentals, R. A. Torrey compiled a famous series of pamphlets entitled, “The Fundamentals.” These included an even more important and diverse list of contributors, including: James Gray, Dean, Moody Bible Institute; G. Campbell Morgan, Pastor, Westminster Chapel; E. Y. Mullins, President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; A. T. Pierson, Editor, “Missionary Review of the World”; Robert Speer, Secretary, The Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.; C. T. Studd, Missionary; C. G. Trumbull, Editor, “Sunday School Times”; and B. B. Warfield, Princeton Theological Seminary.⁴⁹ Basically, it appears that Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was

⁴⁸“It might be helpful to note those who were a part of the Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada, meetings. The Conference grew in reputation in 1889, the same year that J. Hudson Taylor spoke. Following were some of the Evangelical theologians involved in the early Niagara Bible conferences:

“Of organizational significance was the enlarging of the Conference Committee to include the following people: J. H. Brookes [Presbyterian pastor and editor of *The Truth*], President; W. J. Erdman [pastor of Moody’s Chicago Avenue Church, 1875-1878], Secretary; H. M. Parsons, Chairman of Local Committee; and L. W. Munhall, G. C. Needham, C. I. Scofield, T. O. Lowe, T. C. Des Barres, J. Denovan, R. Norton, A. T. Pierson [Pastor, New Park Street (Baptist) Church; Editor, “Missionary Review of the World”], W. A. Parlane, J. S. Helmer, S. P. Harbison, J. L. Taylor, H. M. Moore, J. K. Jamieson, H. Foster, R. Wells, and H. L. Porter [citation: Larry D. Pettegrew, “The Historical and Theological Contributions of the Niagara Bible Conference to American Fundamentalism” (D. Th. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976), 77].

“The pastor of Clarendon Street [Baptist] Church, A. J. Gordon, editor of *The Watchword*, “was good friends of the regular Niagara brethren,” promoting its events in his paper. Later, *The Fundamentals*, eventually edited by R. A. Torrey, President of Moody Bible Institute, included papers by G. Campbell Morgan, E. Y. Mullins (President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), Robert Speer, C. T. Studd, C. G. Trumbull, and B. B. Warfield. Included were professors from Princeton Theological Seminary, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary, Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Moody Bible Institute, Oberlin College, Knox College, and Toronto Bible Training School. They included Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, as well as various Evangelical mission boards” (Thomas P. Johnston, “Billy Graham and John Paul II: On the Assimilation of U.S. Evangelicals into the Church of Rome” [Evangelical Theological Society, 2008], 29-30).

⁴⁹“The 63 contributors writing 84 articles in R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon, et al. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth*, vols 1-4, were (in alphabetical order): Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B., LL.D., London, England [2 articles]; Rev. Henry H. Beach, Grand Junction, Colorado; F. Bettex, D.D., Prof Emeritus, Stuttgart, Germany; Rev. George S. Bishop, D.D., East Orange, New Jersey; Thomas Boston (1676-1732); Rev. Charles A. Bowen, A.M., Ph.D., Olympia, Washington; Rev. David James Burrell, D.D., LL.D., Marble Collegiate Church, New York City; Rev. J. L. Campbell, D.D., Cambridge, Massachusetts; William Caven, late Principal, Knox College, Toronto, Canada; Howard Crosby, late Chancellor, University of the City of New York, New York City; Rev. A. C. Dixon, D.D., Pastor, Metropolitan Tabernacle Church, London, England; W. J. Erdman, D.D., Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey [3 articles]; Rev. J. M. Foster, Boston, Massachusetts; Rev. Henry W. Frost, North American Director, China Inland Mission, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Arno C. Gabelein, Editor, “Our Hope,” New York City; Rev. James Gray, D.D.,

focusing his pen in this section of the PCBI against the majority of conservative U.S. Evangelicals in the early twentieth century, as well as their worldwide missionary endeavors.

Here is the PCBI's concluding paragraph about the "fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible":

The fundamentalist approach is dangerous, for it is attractive to people who look to the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life. It can deceive these people, offering them interpretations that are pious but illusory, instead of telling them that the Bible does not necessarily contain an immediate answer to each and every problem. Without saying as much in so many words, fundamentalism actually invites people to a kind of intellectual suicide. It injects into life a false certitude, for it unwittingly confuses the divine substance of the biblical message with what are in fact its human limitations.⁵⁰

Dean, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois; Canon Dyson Hague, M.A., Vicar, Rector, Memorial Church, London, Ontario, Canada; The Church of the Ephany, Toronto, Canada; Canon, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario [3 articles]; Prof. David Heagle, Ph.D., D.D., Ewing College; Prof. Franklin Johnson, D.D., LL.D., Chicago, Illinois [2 articles]; Howard A. Kelly, M.D.; Prof. M. G. Kyle, D.D., LL.D., Xenia Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.; Rev. George W. Lasher, D.D., LL.D., Cincinnati, Ohio; Lord Lyttelton, as condensed by Rev. J. L. Campbell; Rev. Daniel Hoffman Martin, D.D., Glen Falls, New York; Philip Mauro, Attorney at Law, New York City [2 articles]; Rev. John McNicol, B.A., B.D., Principal, Toronto Bible Training School; Rev. R. G. McNiece, D.D., First Presbyterian Church, Salt lake city, Utah; T. W. Medhurst, Glasgow, Scotland; Rev. William G. Moorehead, D.D., President, Xenia Theological Seminary, Xenia, Ohio [2 articles]; G. Campbell Morgan, D.D., Westminster Chapel, London, England; H. C. G. Moule, Bishop of Durham, Durham, England; Rev. E. Y. Mullins, D.D., LL.D., President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky; Evangelist L. W. Munhall, M.A., D.D., Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [2 articles]; Bishop Nuelsen, D. D., Methodist Episcopal Church, Omaha, Nebraska; Prof. James Orr, D.D., United Free Church, Glasgow, Scotland [4 articles]; Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis, Leicester, England; Rev. George F. Pentecost, D.D., Darien, Connecticut; Arthur T. Pierson, Editor, "Missionary Review of the World" [5 articles]; Rev. A. W. Pitzer, D.D., LL.D., Salem, Virginia; Algernon J. Pollock, Weston-Super-Mare, England; Rev. William C. Proctor, D.Ph., Croydon, England; Prof. J. J. Reeve, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Andrew Craig Robinson, M.A., Ballineen, County Cork, Ireland; Prof. George L. Robinson, D.D., McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois; Bishop Ryle; C. I. Scofield, D.D.; Robert Speer, Secretary, The Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., New York City [2 articles]; Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, London, England; Rev. E. J. Stobo, Jr., B.A., S.T.D.; John Stock; Rev. John Timothy Stone, D.D., Ex-Moderator, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.; Charles T. Studd, Missionary; Rev. H. M. Sydenstricker, Ph.D., West point, Mississippi; Prof. W. H. Griffith Thomas, Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada; R. A. Torrey, D.D. [2 articles]; Canon G. Osborne Troop, M.A., Montreal, Canada; Charles G. Trumbull, Editor, "Sunday School Times," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Prof. Benjamin B. Warfield, D.D., LL.D., Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey; Rev. H. W. Webb-Peploe, Vicar, St. Paul's, Onslow Square, London, England; Prebendary, St. Paul's Cathedral; Rev. Thomas Whitelaw, M.A., D.D., Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland [3 articles]; Prof. Charles B. Williams, B.D., Ph.D., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Prof. Joseph D. Wilson, D.D., Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Rev. Maurice E. Wilson, D.D., Dayton, Ohio; and Prof. George Frederick Wright, D.D., LL.D., Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio [3 articles]" (Thomas P. Johnston, *Evangelizology* [Liberty, MO: Evangelism Unlimited, Inc, 2010], 205 f205).

⁵⁰Pontifical Biblical Commission, "Fundamentalist Interpretation."

It is quite fascinating that in that same year and penned almost simultaneously, “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” was being hailed as a huge ecumenical breakthrough in the U.S. (published in *First Things* [May 1994]). Meanwhile quite a different statement against U.S. Evangelicalism was officially published by the PCBI on the 18th of March 1994. It appears that Clement XIII’s advise to not turn one’s back on and yet to shun simultaneously was followed.⁵¹

1968 and 1987 Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible

From 1994, we now move back 30 years to November 1964 to a meeting in Crêt Bérard, France. This meeting included: Eugene Nida, Executive Secretary of Translations, American Bible Society (1946-1981); Olivier Béguin of the Bible Department of the World Council of Churches, and General Secretary of the UBS (1948-1970); and Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J., first President of Rome’s Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and Confessor for Pope Pius XII. At this meeting, it appears that the initial draft of these Guiding Principles was “largely from the pen of Nida.”⁵² Then after four years in various committees, the 1968 Guiding Principles were jointly published by Rome’s SPCU and the Executive Committee of the United Bible Society (UBS).

Having grown up the child of missionaries in France, I became aware first-hand of the importance of the worldwide U.S. Evangelical missionary force, as well as the number of missionaries supported by the U.S. dollar. In the prior century, the “Great Century of Protestant Missions,” the same could be said of England and the British Pound. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of 200 years of Protestant missionary work was the many Bibles translated into a multitude of languages. Since the days of William Carey, Baptist, Evangelical, and Protestant missionaries had produced hundreds of vernacular language translations of the Bible for their evangelism efforts, many of these being printed and disseminated by groups such as the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society. Consider the words of missionary statesman A. J. Gordon in his closing remarks at the Centenary Conference of Protestant Missions (London 1888):

We have a Bible that is one, but that has been translated into, according to your last report, at least three hundred languages. Now remember that the old Church that shed rivers of blood to prevent one Church of Jesus Christ being translated into various sects, also shed rivers of blood to prevent the Word of God being translated into various languages. That Church is just as opposed to a polyform Christianity as it is to a polyglot Bible. But we have both.⁵³

⁵¹Clement XIII, *In Dominico Agro*, §2.

⁵²Edwin H. Robertson, *Taking the Word to the World: 50 Years of the United Bible Societies* (Nashville: Nelson, 1996), 114.

⁵³A. J. Gordon, “Closing Remarks,” James Johnston, *Report of the Centenary Conference of the Protestant Missions of the World, Held in Exeter Hall (June 9th—19th), London, 1888*, Vol. 1 (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1888), 439-40.

More recently, perhaps the greatest blow to 223 years of Protestant missionary efforts may well be the changes that have taken place because of the 1968 Guiding Principles, and its revision, the 1987 Guidelines published in Rome and available on the Vatican website. It would appear that these documents are having an important impact on the present worldwide retranslation of these many Protestant Bibles. If the words of the official historian of the UBS, Edwin H. Robertson were correct, in the 28 years between 1968 and 1996, there were “quite a few new translations produced in ecumenical cooperation.”⁵⁴ Therefore, perhaps hundreds of Bibles in the same number of languages have been and are being retranslated according to the principles of the 1968 and 1987 Guidelines, subsidized by the American Bible Society and its multiple cooperating groups.⁵⁵ These new Scriptures are being marketed by the leading Bible Societies and may actually result in a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel and to the preservation of the harvest among the various indigenous churches of the world.

In classic understatement, in 1995 John Paul II called this progress in interconfessional cooperation in translating the Bible “significant progress”:

44. Significant progress in ecumenical cooperation has also been made in another area, that of the Word of God. I am thinking above all of the importance for the different language groups of ecumenical translations of the Bible. Following the promulgation by the Second Vatican Council of the Constitution *Dei Verbum*, the Catholic Church could not fail to welcome this development.⁵⁶ These translations, prepared by experts, generally offer a solid basis for the prayer and pastoral activity of all Christ’s followers. Anyone who recalls how heavily debates about Scripture influenced divisions, especially in the West, can appreciate the significant step forward which these common translations represent.⁵⁷

By way of quick introduction of what was agreed upon in the 1968 and 1987 documents, a substantial part of these agreements relates to the composition of the Working Committee for all translations. The 1968 Guiding Principles explained the composition of the Working Committee in this way:

⁵⁴Robertson, *Taking the Word to the World*, 323.

⁵⁵For example, the publisher of the French *Le Semeur* version, that appears to have been published using the 1987 Guidelines, wrote, “This IBS translation of the Entire Bible is for the French language; an estimated 124,000,000 people speak this language as their mother tongue. This translation uses an informal language style and applies a meaning-based translation philosophy. It is translated from the Biblical languages and was completed in June 1999” (“La Bible du Semeur”; available from <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/index.php?action=getVersionInfo&cvid=32>; accessed: 24 Aug 2006).

⁵⁶“Cf. Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Executive Committee of the United Bible Societies, *Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible* (1968). This was revised and then published by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, ‘Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible’: Information Service, 65 (1987), 140-145.”

⁵⁷John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint: That They May Be One* (8 Sept 1995), §44 (online); available at: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/JP2UTUNU.HTM>; accessed 8 Sept 2004.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

For the most adequate development of a translation program, there is need for three groups: 1. a Working Committee, 2. a Review Committee, and 3. a Consultative Group.

1. *Working Committee*

Consisting of 4 to 6 persons equally divided between Protestant and Roman Catholic constituencies and possessing four essential characteristics:

equal standing,
complementary abilities,
mutual respect, and
capacity to work together.⁵⁸

Therefore according to this 1968 document, all the translation teams controlled or influenced by the UBS were to be required to include a 50-50 ratio of Roman Catholic and Protestant translators. It must be stated that this would have been a revolutionary decision for most Evangelicals in 1968. The same portion in the 1987 Guidelines reads as follows:

2.3. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

For the most adequate development of a translation program, there is need for three groups: 1. a translation team, 2. a review panel, and 3. a consultative group.

2.3.1. *Translation team*

Consisting of not more than six persons of high competence from the Roman Catholic and other Christian constituencies and possessing four essential characteristics:

a) comparable qualifications,
b) complementary abilities,
c) mutual respect, and
d) capacity to work together.⁵⁹

The word “Protestant” was completely removed from this portion, and the term was replaced with “other Christian constituencies.” Likewise, in the 1987 agreement, published at the Vatican website, the 50-50 ratio was changed, and the Protestant composition of the translation team was eliminated.⁶⁰ In the

⁵⁸“Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible” [Pentecost, 1968], from Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P., and John B. Sheerin, C.S.B., eds. *Doing the Truth in Charity: Statements of Pope Paul VI, Popes John Paul I, John Paul II, and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity 1964-1980*. (New York: Paulist, 1982), 166.

⁵⁹“Guidelines for interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible the New Revised Edition Rome 1987”; From: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/general-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19871116_guidelines-bible_en.html; accessed: 8 Sept 2007.

⁶⁰“On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, [Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22] are not Churches in the proper sense” (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect, Tarcisio Bertone, S.D.B., Archbishop Emeritus of Vercelli, Secretary, Declaration ‘*Dominus Iesus*’ on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church [Rome: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 6 Aug

1987 Guidelines, the UBS deeded over the full weight of authority for its worldwide Bible translation enterprise to the Church of Rome.

Further it appears that this same “significant progress” of which John Paul II spoke, combined with the watchfulness of the “Councils of Vigilance,” were leveraged more recently to influence the “‘Passages’ Exhibit” of the Green Collection. The Church of Rome appears to be promoted as the Matriarch of Bible translation by the apparent choice of opening the exhibit at the Vatican Embassy in Washington D.C.⁶¹ After a time in Oklahoma City, it will continue its tour both at the Vatican and in New York City.⁶² Had not someone been vigilant, an unchecked museum for the history of the Bible and its translation could have been filled with stories of violence and bloodshed at the hand of the Church of Rome. But vigilance paid off and it appears that little or nothing will be said about Rome’s bloodstained hands along with its long antagonism to the translation of the Bible into the vernacular languages.

Likewise, if the Green Bible Museum were not muzzled by an apparent nihil obstat up front, there may very easily have been a strong surge of negativity to Roman Catholic interests in Oklahoma City and beyond. Rather, as it appears now, the Church of Rome is framed as the Matriarch of Bible translation with little or no bloodstain on its hands.

Is there more at stake than merely a rewriting of history? Yes, I believe so. The most important element in Rome’s antagonism to vernacular translation and the lay reading of the Bible relates to translation policies as applied to the numerous languages of the world. It is to Bible translation that we now turn.

Differences in Catholic and Protestant Translation

An interesting statement in the 1968 Guiding Principles led me to research the differences between Catholic and Protestant translation histories. The statement was this:

Some committees have considered the possibility of explaining different Roman Catholic and Protestant beliefs by noting that one interpretation is held by Roman Catholics and another by Protestants. Such a procedure does not seem wise, for it tends to accentuate differences; nor is it

2000], reaffirmed by Benedict XVI on 11 July 2007).

⁶¹“The exhibition was announced [12 April 2011] at the Vatican embassy in Washington DC” (“Passages Exhibition Debuts Historic Display”).

⁶²“‘Passages’ is making its world premiere at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art through Oct. 16 and then will travel to Vatican City and New York City. The 14,000-square-foot multimedia exhibit is debuting during the year of the 400th of anniversary of the King James Bible. ‘Passages’ spans 2,000 years to tell the story of the translation and publication of the Bible in English” (“‘Passages’ opens today at Oklahoma City Museum of Art” [online]; From: http://www.visitokc.com/index.php?src=news&submenu=newsletter&src_type=detail&category=The%20Oklahoman&refno=248; accessed 4 June 2011).

necessary, since most diversities of interpretation can be covered more objectively by marginal annotations on alternative renderings, if the issue in question is important. Where the matter is not of great consequence, it is better simply to omit reference in the interest of joint undertakings.⁶³

Prior to reading this statement, I was not fully aware of the extent of the differences in approaches in translation between Catholics and Protestants. Thus I began a program of study to consider the differences of which I was formerly unaware. I found that the verses that teach doctrines important in Protestant and Evangelical theology, such as those that teach justification by faith, appeared to be intentionally distorted by Catholic translators. The same was true of passages that teach total depravity, substitutionary atonement, a hearing of faith, the importance of the new birth, etc. Meanwhile, passages that could be leveraged to teach a sacramental salvation were rendered in such a way as to clearly teach those doctrines. The same was true for the role of the priest and the priesthood, the need for human mediation, bowing and kneeling to people, etc. Once I understood the theological issues, and once I began to inspect the translation of texts, the differences were very clear and stark.⁶⁴

The following are charts that display some of the differences in question. First Peter 2:9 includes one verb to describe what the Christian is to do. The KJV renders the entire verse as follows:

But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

The following chart displays 13 translations of the Greek phrase behind “that ye should shew forth the praises”:

⁶³“Guiding Principles,” 162.

⁶⁴A book that began to open my eyes to these tendencies was Samuel Lortsch, *Histoire de la Bible en France* [History of the Bible in France] (Paris: Société Biblique Britannique et Étrangère, 1910) (online); available at: http://www.bibliquest.org/Lortsch/Lortsch-Histoire_Bible_France-1.htm; accessed: 4 Mar 2005.

Translations of τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε in 1 Peter 2:9⁶⁵

Edition	Translation	Emphasis
New Jerusalem Bible* (1985)	“to sing the praises”	Worship-Oriented
French Le Semeur** (1992, 1999)	“so that you may celebrate very highly the marvelous works”	Worship-Oriented
New Living Translation (2004)	“as a result, you can show others the goodness of God”	Lifestyle-oriented
Tyndale Version (1534)	“that ye shuld shewe the vertues”	Lifestyle-oriented
KJV ¹ (1611/ 1769)	“that ye should shew forth the praises”	Lifestyle-oriented
American Standard Version (1901)	“that ye may show forth the excellencies”	Lifestyle-oriented
English Geneva (1560)	“that ye shulde shewe for the the vertues”	Lifestyle-oriented
CEV (1995)***	“Now you must tell all the wonderful things that he has done.”	Proclamation-oriented; muted purpose clause
Good News Trans (1992) ^o	“chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God”	Proclamation-oriented; muted purpose clause
New American Bible ^{oo} (1991)	“so that you may announce the praises”	Proclamational-oriented; as purpose clause (apodosis)
NIV (1984)	“that you may declare the praises”	Proclamational-oriented; as purpose clause (apodosis)
NKJ (1982)	“that you may proclaim the praises”	Proclamational-oriented; as purpose clause (apodosis)
NAS (1977); ESV (2001); HCS (2004)	“that you may proclaim the excellencies”	Proclamational-oriented; as purpose clause (apodosis)

*The New Jerusalem (1885) is a Roman Catholic translation, whose 1973 French older cousin (*Bible de Jérusalem*) seems to be the pattern for the French *Le Semeur*. Interestingly enough, the French *Jérusalem* followed pattern #9, 12, or 13, using “proclaim.”

**Translation mine.

***Published by the American Bible Society, the Contemporary English Version (imprimatur: Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk, President, National Conference of Catholic Bishops [1991]), reorganized words and phrases: “But you are God’s chosen and special people. You are a group of royal priests and a holy nation. God has brought you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Now you must tell all the wonderful things that he has done.”

^oThe Good News Translation is also published by the American Bible Society (imprimatur: Most Reverend William H. Keeler, President, National Conference of Catholic Bishops [1993]).

^{oo}The 1991 New American Bible is copyrighted by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (Washington, D.C.). Some of the oldest French Bibles translate similarly (1530 Lefèvre; 1534 Olivétan; 1550 Louvain).

⁶⁵Thomas P. Johnston, *Evangelizology* (Liberty, MO: Evangelism Unlimited, 2010), 1:48-49. Most Scripture quotations are taken from Bibleworks 8.0 when a translation is available in that software.

The astute observer will note the wide variety of translations of this phrase. Some translations are proclamational and some are not. The variety does not appear to be related to semantics or lexical issues, but rather to missional and ecclesial-theological issues.

Another example is Romans 3:23, a verse found in many Gospel presentations, from the “Roman Road” to the *Bridge to Life*. It teaches a pivotal Gospel truth regarding man’s need for the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Notice the variety of translations of this important verse:

Translations of Rom 3:[22]23 (arranged chronologically)⁶⁶

Edition	Translation
Greek	πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ
Latin Vulgate (early 400s)	<i>omnes enim peccaverunt et egent gloriam Dei</i>
Jacques leFevres d’Étaples (1530)*	“Certainly there is [absolutely] no difference: for all have sinned & are in need of the glory of God”*
French Geneva Bible (1560-1669)**	“for there is [absolutely] no difference: seeing as all have sinned, and are entirely destitute of the glory of God”
English Geneva Bible (1560)	“For there is no difference: for all haue sinned, and are deprived of the glorie of God”
Bishops’ Bible (1568)	“For all haue synned, and are destitute of the glorie of God”
King James Version (1611)	“For all haue sinned, and come short of the glory of God”
French Martin Bible (1699) ^o	“for there is absolutely no difference, seeing as all have sinned, and are utterly deprived of the glory of God”*
Douay-Rheims [‡] (1899)	“For all have sinned and do need the glory of God”
Bible in Basic English (1941/ 1949)	For all have done wrong and are far from the glory of God
French Le Semeur (1992, 1999) ^{oo}	“All have sinned, in fact, and are deprived of the glorious presence of God”
Good News Trans [‡] (1993)	“everyone has sinned and is far away from God’s saving presence”
The Message (1993)	“we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us”

[Translation differences seem to focus on the theological weight of the term ὑστερέω ; moving from a substitutionary model of the atonement to the reconciliation model (from total depravity to relational separation)]

*Original: “Certes il ny a nulle difference: car tous on peche & ont besoing de la gloire de Dieu.”

**Original: “car il n’y a nulle difference: veu que tous ont peché, et sont entiere-ment destituez de la gloire de Dieu.”

^oOriginal: “car il n’y a nulle différence, vu que tous ont péché, et qu’ils sont entière-ment privés de la gloire de Dieu.”

⁶⁶Johnston, *Evangelizology*, 2:654. One row of the chart was removed to save space.

°Original: “Tous ont péché, en effet, et sont privés de la glorieuse présence de Dieu.”

‡This symbol is used to delineate a Bible bearing the Roman Catholic imprimatur.

Again, in Rom. 3:23, it appears fairly clear to the casual observer that there is a great variety of translation of one word. There is a strong likelihood that the differences are not merely semantic, but also theologically-driven.

Perhaps closest to home for biblical Christians is the concept of justification by faith in the Book of Romans. The following chart shows the changes in gradations in the translation of the Greek verb **δικαιόω** (to justify) in the Book of Romans:

Comparative Translations of δικαιόω in Romans⁶⁷

Verses	Greek Byzantine	KJV (1611/1769)	NASB (1977)	NIV (1984)	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)	Good News (1993)	CEV (1991)
Romans 2:13	δικαιωθή- σονται	“shall be justified”	will be justified	who will be declared righteous	the ones that God will justify	that people are put right	God accepts those who
Romans 3:4	ὅτι δικαιωθήης	“thou mightest be justified”	Thou mightest be justified	you may be proved right	you may show your saving justice	You must be shown to be right	Your words will be proven true
Romans 3:20	οὐ δικαιωθή σεται	“there shall no flesh be justified”	no flesh will be justified	no one will be declared righteous	no human being can be found upright	no one is put right	God does not accept people simply
Romans 3:24	δικαιού μενοι	“Being justified”	being justified	and are justified	and all are justified	all are put right	he freely accepts us
Romans 3:26	δικαιοῦντα	“and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”	and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus	and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus	and justifies everyone who has faith in Jesus	and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus	when he accepts people who have faith in Jesus
Romans 3:28	δικαιοῦσθαι	“that a man is justified by faith”	that a man is justified by faith	that a man is justified by faith	a person is justified by faith	a person is put right with God only through faith	that people are acceptable to God because they have faith

⁶⁷Johnston, *Evangelizology*, 1:421-22.

Romans 3:30	ὃς δικαίωσει	“which shall justify”	who will justify	who will justify	he will justify	he will put the Jews right with himself on the basis of their faith, and will put the Gentiles right...	and he accepts
Romans 4:2	ἐδικαιώθη	“were justified”	was justified	was justified	had been justified	he was put right	He became acceptable to God
Romans 5:1	δικαιωθέντες	“being justified by faith”	having been justified by faith	since we have been justified through faith	now that we have been justified by faith	Now that we have been put right with God through faith	By faith we have been made acceptable to God.
Romans 5:9	δικαιωθέντες	“Much more then, being now justified by his blood”	Much more then, having now been justified by His blood	Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more	How much more can we be sure, therefore, that we have been justified by his death	By his blood we are now put right with God; how much more, then,	But there is more! Now that Christ has accepted us because of Christ sacrificed his life’s blood
Romans 6:7	δεδικαιώται	“is freed from sin”	is freed from sin	has been freed from sin	of course, no longer has to answer for sin	we are set free from the power of sin	We know that sin does not have power
Romans 8:30 (1)	ἐδικαίωσεν	“them he also justified”	He also justified	he also justified	he justified	he put right with himself	God then accepted the people
Romans 8:30 (2)	ἐδικαίωσεν	“whom he justified”	whom He justified	those he justified	those that he has justified	[untranslated]	[untranslated]
Romans 8:33	Θεὸς ὁ δικαίων	“It is God that justifieth”	God is the one who justifies	It is God who justifies	When God grants saving justice	God himself declares them not guilty	If God says his chosen ones are acceptable to Him
Total uses of the word “Justify”	15	14/15	14/15	11/15	11/15	0/15	0/15

The final two Bibles in these columns, published by the American Bible Society, seem to correspond to English Bible translations that follow the 1987 Guidelines, whose provenance I have briefly explained above. In the GNT, *δικαίω* is translated variously “put right with God” or “declares . . . innocent.” The CEV translators seemed to prefer the verb “accept” or “make acceptable” in some form. Declarative righteousness and being “put right” or “made acceptable” corresponds nicely with the Roman Catholic Sacrament of Penance by which sinners are absolved of their sins by the priest in the confessional, and given appropriate penance:

1461 Since Christ entrusted his apostles the ministry of reconciliation, bishops who are their successors, and priests, the bishop’s collaborators, continue to exercise this ministry. Indeed bishops and priests, by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, have the power to forgive all sins ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

1462 Forgiveness of sins brings reconciliation with God, but also with the Church. Since ancient times the bishop, visible head of a particular Church, has rightfully been considered to be the one who principally has the power and ministry of reconciliation: he is the moderator of penitential discipline.⁶⁸

Near the beginning of this portion of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it is clearly stated in italics, “*Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.*”⁶⁹ The GNT and CEV translations of the word *δικαίω* in Romans shows how Rome can alter almost any text of Scripture to accommodate its theology.

A verse that has for over a millennium been a problem for the Church of Rome is the Second of the Ten Commandments:

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth (Exod 20:4).

However, the use of statues in worship has been tolerated or encouraged in the Roman Catholic Church since about A.D. 375.⁷⁰ Three ways were found to avoid the weight of this command: (1) renumbering the Ten Commandments so that the Second Commandment became part of the First Commandment, and the Tenth Commandment was divided into two; (2) finding this renumbering from the pen of Augustine; and (3) modifying the translation of this verse, as well as that of its parallel, Deut. 5:8.

⁶⁸*Catechism*, §1461, 1462.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, §1145.

⁷⁰Lorraine Boettner, “Chronological Listing of Roman Catholic Heresies and Inventions,” *Roman Catholicism*, 5th ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962, 1967, 1976, 1985, 1989; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1962, 1966; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 7.

On the Translation of Exodus 20:4

Edition	Word	Translation
Greek Orthodox Text	εἰδωλον	οὐ ποιήσεις σεαυτῷ εἰδωλον, οὐδὲ παντὸς ὁμοίωμα, ὅσα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω καὶ ὅσα ἐν τῇ γῆ κάτω καὶ ὅσα ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς.
NASB (1977)	idol	You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.
NKJ (1982)	carved image	You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;
KJV (1611)	grauen Image	Thou shalt not make vnto thee any grauen Image, or any likenesse of any thing that is in heauen aboue, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water vnder the earth.
Bible in Basic English (1949/1964)	image or picture	You are not to make an image or picture of anything in heaven or on the earth or in the waters under the earth:
CEV (1991)	idols	Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth.
NAB (1991)	carved idols	You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth;
Douai-Rheims (1899)	graven thing	Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth.
GNT (1993)	images	Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth.

Knowing the very long history of ecclesial battles over this verse (including the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries) the translation issues in this verse are very carefully nuanced: (1) in the three contemporary Catholic versions, the clear command against making a singular “idol” or “image” for worship is transformed into a plural command, almost like a city architectural ordinance; (2) both the 1991 NAB and the 1993 GNT make the singular “for yourself” into a plural “for yourselves”: (a) making it a communal command; and (b) implying that making graven images is fine, as long as it is someone approved who makes it. One could see why the PCBI did not like the “literalistic interpretation” or translation efforts of U.S. Evangelicals in the twentieth century.

Finally, I would like to highlight one final set of verses by way of introduction. These verses relate to the closed or ongoing role of the priesthood under the New Covenant. It is important to understand that Rome’s entire ministry of salvation is vested in the mediatory role of its priests. Let’s consider Heb. 7:23-24:

Variety in Translating Hebrews 7:23-24

Edition	Verse 23 Translation	Verse 24 Translation
Byzantine Textform (2005)	Καὶ οἱ μὲν πλείονές εἰσιν γεγονότες ἱερεῖς, διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι παραμένειν·	ὁ δέ, διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην.
English Geneva (1560)	And among them many were made Priests, because they were not suffered to endure, by the reason of death.	But this man, because hee endureth euer, hath a Priesthood, which cannot passe from one to another.
KJV (1611/1769)	And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:	But this <i>man</i> , because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.
NASB (1977)	And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing,	but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.
CEV (1991)	There have been a lot of other priests, and all of them have died.	But Jesus will never die, and so he will be a priest forever!
GNT (1993)	There is another difference: there were many of those other priests, because they died and could not continue their work.	But Jesus lives on forever, and his work as priest does not pass on to someone else.
God's Word to the Nations (1995)	There was a long succession of priests because when a priest died he could no longer serve.	But Jesus lives forever, so he serves as a priest forever

Several issues come to the fore in this chart. Notice how the GWN in verse 23 and the GNT in verse 24 cleverly provide a scriptural basis for priestly successionism. Both the CEV and the GNT emphasize “other priests” or “those other priests,” to differentiate the Old Covenant priesthood and from their view of the necessary New Covenant priesthood (i.e. Rome’s “Sacrament [means of grace] of Holy Orders”). The GNT also implies an ongoing mediatory work of priesthood, “could not continue their work.” In verse 24, the amazing reality of the eternity of Jesus is diminished to “will never die” in the CEV. Again, the GNT is all about the work of the priest, adding a presumption of priestly succession, in that Christ’s priesthood does not pass on. The differences are stark and even appalling, and these few examples merely scratch the surface of the number of issues involved in Bible translation.

The reality is that Baptists and Evangelicals need to be vigilant. There is a battle being waged for the souls of men. And this battle includes the translation of and dissemination of Scriptures. Being unconcerned or ignorant of the past is neither beneficial nor helpful in this battle. Perhaps it was a certain ignorance of the past that allowed the leaders of the United Bible Society to give away the fort in 1968: its manpower, its resources, its real estate, and its committee agreements.

So, with the concerted efforts of the many Councils of Vigilance and today’s “interconfessional” translation of the Bible, it may be that Rome leveraged the “Passages Exhibit” to its own advantage.

But perhaps not, for it promises to be a “non-sectarian” display, that is balanced and favors neither Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, nor Jew.⁷¹ Furthermore, according to a promotional article, the museum will contain unique scientific displays:

Interactive features more readily associated with science museums also help provide context. Visitors can enter St. Jerome’s cave to learn about the fourth-century scholar best known for the Vulgate, his Latin translation of the Bible.⁷²

Perhaps this museum will house a rendition of the cell where Bible translator William Tyndale was held in the Vilvorde Castle or maybe a rendition of the platform on which he was burned at the stake in Antwerp in 1536. Surely the story of Tyndale fits the “non-sectarian” purpose of “Passages”:

‘Passages’ spans 2,000 years to tell the story of the translation and publication of the Bible in English. . . . “Just the idea of contextualizing things . . . is important, so that people see things in a replication of what it would have been like in the world that produced them,” he [Carroll] said.⁷³

Is not the Tyndale story is a part of “the world that produced” the English language Bible translations?

Perhaps the interactive elements of the museum will house a rendition of the place in Smithfield, London, where John Rogers, the translator of the Matthew’s Bible, was burned at the stake in 1555, apparently the first of hundreds of Protestant to be burned during the reign of Queen Mary I.⁷⁴ Perhaps the Green Bible Museum may consider the importance of the unnamed Bible bookseller in Avignon, France, who was arrested by the Catholic Bishop of Aix in 1545, under suspicion of being Lutheran. At his trial, he was condemned to walk to the place of burning with two Bibles hanging from his neck, one in front and one behind, after which he was burned alive, presumably with the Bibles still hanging around his neck.⁷⁵ Perhaps a scientific study of this Bible bookseller, as well as a scientific exhibit would be profitable for the sake of a balanced Bible history; after all hundreds of French Protestants and Germanic Baptists died because they read and believed the Bible in their mother tongue:

⁷¹“Opening today, ‘Passages’ is the nonsectarian, worldwide traveling exhibition of The Green Collection, among the world’s newest and largest private collections of rare biblical manuscripts and artifacts” (“‘Passages’ opens today at Oklahoma City Museum of Art”).

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Rawlings, *Trial by Fire*, 119, 121.

⁷⁵Crespin, *Histoire*, 118-118 *verso*.

- (1) So, what was the Avignon bookseller's name—who made the ultimate sacrifice to sell Bibles?
- (2) What versions of the Bible were hung from his neck, in what language were they, where were they printed, and how were they shipped to him? How long had he owned and operated his Bible bookstore?
- (3) What did this unnamed man preach on his way to the place of burning and when in the flames?
- (4) How long did it typically take a human body to be burned to ashes when placed on a stake and burned? What combustibles were available to the people of Avignon in those years, and how hot did the fire get? Did human beings feel pain in the sixteenth century? And how were his wife and children cared for after the execution?
- (5) Did the onlookers receive a plenary indulgence (of some kind) from the local Catholic priest or bishop for bringing firewood, listening to a prelate preach on the heresy of this unnamed man, and staying to watch the entire episode?
- (6) Did the bookseller's clothing burn first, leaving the crowd watching a pornographic scene during the remainder of the burning?
- (7) What were the various methods of execution used in the Inquisition and post-Reformation era in various parts of Europe? Would not a non-sectarian chronological-geographical interactive map on display at the museum be educational as to the various methods of execution used by all sides in various countries and at different time periods during the 2000 years in question?
- (8) Furthermore, what impact did public execution have on the psyche of a people, particularly the more barbaric and extended the means of execution, such as use of the "*Espadrade*," whereby Denis de Rieux was raised and lowered over the fire three times before being martyred in Meaux, France, in 1528.⁷⁶

Whereas some Catholic scholars consider the accounts of Protestant martyrs as myth,⁷⁷ I anticipate that a world-class museum will include the long-held Protestant views to provide a balanced look at the 2,000 year story of the Bible and Bible translation.⁷⁸

⁷⁶Ibid., 70-70 *verso*. Instead of use of a stationary stake, the "*Espadrade*" made use of a rope over a pulley, the hands and feet of the condemned were tied behind his back, and he was raised and lowered over the fire by the executioner who pulled or released the rope via the pulley, depending on the sentence received from the judge (cf. David Watson, "The Martyrology of Jean Crespin and the Early French Evangelical Movement, 1523-1555," Ph.D. dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 1997).

⁷⁷"Although there have been several exceptions to this generalization on both sides of the confessional line, the historical achievements of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made a return to the myths, among professional historians of any creed at least, virtually impossible" (Brian Van Hove, S.J., "Beyond the Myth of Inquisition: Ours is 'The Golden Age'"; available at: <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/history/world/wh0027.html>; accessed 10 Nov 2005).

⁷⁸By the way, throughout the Middle Ages and beyond the Reformation era many Jews and their Bible manuscripts also were burned.

In 1979 Pope John Paul II reminded his hearers in “Mexico Ever Faithful” that the Catholic Church was not, “as some people claim—a ‘new church,’ different or opposed to the ‘old church,’ but that the Council wished to reveal more clearly the one Church of Jesus Christ, with new aspects, but still the same in its essence.”⁷⁹ His statement may now take on a whole new meaning when one examines the history of the “old church.”

Yes, David Green and the Green Foundation are to be commended for their enthusiastic generosity shown toward the history of the Word of God. Theirs is a commendable love for the Bible, as stated in Psalm 119:97, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”

So, what can be learned in light of the possible historiographic challenges exemplified in the development of a “Passages” Exhibit? (1) It is clear that the translating and publishing of vernacular Bibles, as well as the historical accounts of the same, is a very hotly contested area of study. (2) Since history has a tendency to repeat itself, the wise reader can learn valuable lessons from the past, as well as from the present situation. (3) Likewise, the Christian leader may understand the urgency of obeying the command of Christ in his commissioning of his disciples, “Therefore be wise as serpents” (Matt 10:16). And (4) aware of the work of the approximately 194 Councils of Vigilance meeting every two months in the U.S., U.S. Baptists and Evangelicals need to revive old churches and start new ones. They need to revive old schools and start new ones. They need to revive old publishing companies and start new ones. They need to revive old scholarly societies and start new ones. They need to revive old tract societies and start new ones. They need to revive old journals and start new ones. They need to be both vigilant and evangelistic.

“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Ps. 85:6).

⁷⁹John Paul II, “Mexico Ever Faithful,” 1.