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BIBLICAL LANGUAGE
AND STANDARD WRITTEN FINNISH¹

1. ORIGIN OF FINNISH BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

The whole Bible has been translated into Finnish altogether three times: for the first time in the 17th century and then twice in the 20th century. These translations were done as committee work and aimed at official church use. The history of Bible translations, however, goes back to the 16th century, marking at the same time the birth of standard written Finnish. Mikael Agricola, an influential religious reformer and bishop, was the first person to translate the New Testament in 1548. His aim was to translate the whole Bible, but he managed only to finish some parts of the Old Testament. In addition, he published other ecclesiastical books, including a primer and prayer books for church service. Since written Finnish did not exist before Agricola's time, he also became the founder of standard written Finnish with his translations.

The first Bible translation committee, thus, had a good foundation for its work. The 1642 Bible became a large and magnificent piece of work, and very soon there was need to publish a new, smaller size version. This was carried out by individual clergymen, who produced three different revised editions in the 17th and 18th centuries. Of these, the edition by Antti Lizelius in 1776 was actually in use throughout the following century, all the way to

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year 1938. In fact, some revivalist movements still use this translated version of the Bible, even though its orthography has been modernized and some other minor adjustments have been made to its language. - I will later refer to this translation as the *Lizelius* version (1776/1991), although the term is not in general use.

During the 19th century, the Finnish language underwent a radical change process. For this reason a committee was set up in the 1860s to carry out a new translation of the Bible. The new version, however, was not approved until in 1938 (OT 1933, NT 1938). This translation followed the methods of formal translation. Since the language used in this translation differs significantly from the modern standards of written Finnish, a new committee was set up as early as in the beginning of the 1970s. This new committee chose to apply dynamic translation theories in its work and published its version in 1992. - I will later refer to these two committee translations as the *formal* (1938) and the *dynamic* (1992) translation.

Besides the official Bible translations, several unofficial and revised versions have also been made by both individual persons and working groups during the 20th century in particular. The formal translation has been corrected to better reflect standard modern Finnish, or to make it more accurate in its wording; the newest of these versions is the New Testament translation by 'Raamattu Kansalle society' (1999). Two New Testaments in modern Finnish were also published recently, one using the Living Bible as the source text (translated into Finnish as *Elävä Uutinen* 1977 'The living Promise') and the second using the original text as the basis for translation (*Uusi testamentti nykysuomeksi* 'New Testament in modern Finnish', 1972).

2. BIBLICAL LANGUAGE AS THE NORM

The first centuries of standard written Finnish, from the 16th century until the beginning of the 19th century, are usually called the period of *Old written Finnish* (*vanha kirjasuomi*). The use of written Finnish was scarce, and most printed texts were spiritual and aimed for church use. Some Finnish grammars and dictionaries

written in Latin were also published, but they did not include instructions for normative language usage. The language of the 1642 Bible translation was clearly seen as the norm, and this translation was, thus, taken as a guide for written Finnish, not only in spelling but also in the selection of phonological and morphological variants. This is an obvious conclusion in that Old written Finnish texts clearly show whether they were written before 1642 or after that. The translation committee standardized Agricola's orthography and inflectional forms, reducing the number of variants, thus making the Bible more readable and easier to understand.

Antti Lizelius, who actually edited two translations of the Bible in the 18th century (1758, 1776), was a clergyman, but still wanted to develop the Finnish language also for secular purposes. He founded the first Finnish-language newspaper, *Suomenkieliset Tieto-Sanommat* (1776), and acted as its editor for a year. Lizelius made considerable changes in the orthography and expression of Finnish, making written Finnish much more accessible and closer to the present standard. There is one particularly interesting feature in his reform: secular language was more radically changed than biblical language. Even the orthography used in the newspaper was different from that of the Bible. Biblical language, however, still became the norm to be followed, and the spelling reforms apparent in the newspaper did not become a norm until in the grammar books published at the beginning of the 19th century.

3. BIBLICAL FINNISH AND STANDARD WRITTEN FINNISH: THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

At the beginning of the 19th century a debate started over the reform of standard written Finnish because of the fact that Old written Finnish had been based on western Finnish dialects, or at first even on their more local south-western variant, namely that of the Turku district. Turku was the administrative and ecclesiastical centre of Finland at the time. One grammarian of the time, in fact, referred to this standard as "the biblical dialect" as opposed

to the eastern dialects, which were the main basis for the language of folklore. For these reasons there was a debate aiming to expand - or even replace - the dialectal base of standard written Finnish to include eastern Finnish variants in it. A moderate compromise was in the end reached, and a long period of reform started. The western dialectal foundation of standard Finnish was mainly preserved, but many eastern features were also incorporated, including phonological variants, inflectional forms, derivations and dialectal words. The language was also "purified" in that foreign elements, for instance foreign sentence structures, were removed or modified. A similar trend has marked the development of the Finnish language in the 20th century.

In the 1900s the use of Finnish and Finnish literature underwent a remarkable process of diversification, and Finnish-language press, fiction, theatre, and school system were established. Theoretical and scientific study of the language was started, as well as systematic guidance and supervision in the use of Finnish. During the century a total of over 20 grammar books were published, first mostly in Swedish and later on also in Finnish. Up until that time Finnish had had the role of a vernacular, that is, it had been in the use of the common people, but in 1863 it was given an equal status with Swedish. Thus, even in terms of its structure and vocabulary, Finnish had developed into a full-fledged, cultural language, to be used in all spheres of life.

Standard written Finnish changed in the 19th century so radically and so rapidly that a new translation of the Bible also became necessary. The Lizelius version had already been slightly modified, but in many cases the changes were not made until several decades after they had been adopted in other contexts of written language use. Biblical language thus remained largely in the form established in the 18th century, and was no longer considered the norm for language use. Instead, grammar books and dictionaries replaced its status as a model for standard written Finnish.

The new situation required for the second Bible translation committee to start its work in 1861. It chose the formal translation method as its approach, aiming at as literal a translation as possible. The final form of this translation was not completed until 1938.

Although it was completely different from the Lizelius version, the language used was far from the contemporary modern Finnish used in other contexts of writing. At first the committee had actually decided to renew the biblical language, too, but because of delays new members were appointed to the committee, and towards the end a more traditional view on the language to be used was adopted. The explicit principle behind the translation was to retain the solemn, ceremonial style and the old vocabulary already labelled as “holy”.

As a consequence of this formal translation, then, the separation of spiritual language from the secular, which had started in the socio-linguistic situation of the 1900s, was formally established and sealed. A special, separate concept of *Biblical Finnish* (*pipliasuomi*) had been born, a genre which is still commonly seen as the embodiment of “religious language” in Finland. The distinctive style of Biblical Finnish is poetic, solemn, ceremonial and high-flown.

4. STYLISTIC FEATURES OF ARCHAIC BIBLICAL FINNISH

What, then, is typical of “religious Finnish”? What is this Biblical Finnish that the Bible translation of 1938 canonized and many today’s readers would not like to give up? What features made it “solemn, ceremonial and high-flown”?

In terms of its phonological and morphological structure the formal translation follows the present standard to a great degree. The distinctive features that appear in the text are mainly taken from western Finnish dialects. However, they are not considered dialectal, but, rather, archaic. One example is the plural genitive, which is formed from the singular stem as opposed to the present plural forms, as well as the 3rd person possessive ending *-nsa*, *-nsä* as opposed to the present ending *V + n*:

pl. gen.: *kät/ten*, *vet/ten*, *poika/in*, *herra/in* < sg. stem *käsi* : *kät-‘hand’*, *vesi* : *vet-‘water’*, *poika* ‘boy’, *herra* ‘lord’, cf. *käsi/en*, *vesi/en*, *poiki/en*, *herroj/en* < pl. stem *käsi-*, *vesi-*, *poiki-*, *herroi-*. For example in 1938 we have: *herrain Herra ja kuningasten Kuningas* >

1992 *herrojen Herra ja kuninkaiden Kuningas* 'Lord of lords and King of kings' (Rev. 17:14)²;

poss.: *armossa/nsa*, cf. *armossa/an* 'in his mercy'; both present forms are used in eastern dialects.

The verbal structure *pitää tekemän* 'to have to do' is also of western dialect origin, modern Finnish using another kind of infinitive form: *pitää tehdä*, as also the eastern dialects do. All these variants represent forms that standard written Finnish gradually dropped in the 19th century; they have mainly been used together with eastern dialect variants and are still mentioned in grammar books. Since the Bible translators had a choice, their preference was to adopt the older, more established variant.

The 1st person plural imperative form *menkäämme* is a form that has never been used in spoken Finnish or in the dialects. Instead, the passive present tense *mennään* 'let's go', *lähdetään* 'let's go, leave' is used to express suggestion. The formal translation of the Bible abounds however with examples of this imperative, and the old forms are also used in the liturgy of the Finnish Evangelic-Lutheran Church, e. g. *kiittäkäämme* 'let us thank', *ylistäkäämme* 'let us praise', *rukoilkaamme* 'let us pray', *tunnustakaamme syntimme* 'let us confess our sins'. In many Bible contexts they appear extremely ceremonial, and even artificial. For this reason they have been replaced by more modern variants in the dynamic translation, mostly by the passive or normal present forms (*menemme*), sometimes also by the 2nd person plural imperative forms (*menkää*). The passive forms are used especially in the dialogue, for instance in the Gospel texts with their resemblance to spoken language. The old imperative forms have been retained in the new dynamic translation only in giving spiritual guidance and in making suggestions, suggestions also including the writer:

² The English translations have been taken from *The New English Bible with the Apocryphs* (= NEB), Oxford University Press / Cambridge University Press 1970, or from *The Holy Bible, Translated out of the Original Tongues: and with the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised by his Majesty's Special Command* (= HB), Oxford University Press.

Mark 12:7

1938 *Tämä on perillinen; tulkaa, tappakaamme hänet, niin perintö jää meille*

1992 *Hän on perillinen. Tapetaan hänet niin perintö on meidän*
 'This is the heir; come on, let us kill him, and the property will be ours' (NEB).

Psalms 95:6

1938 *Tulkaa, kumartukaamme ja polvistukaamme, polvillemme langetkaamme Herran, meidän Luojamme, eteen*

1992 *Tulkaa, kumartukaa maahan, polvistukaamme Herran, Luojamme, eteen*

'Come! Let us throw ourselves at his feet in homage, let us kneel before the Lord who made us' (NEB)

Hebrews 13:13

1938 *Niin menkäämme siis hänen tykönsä "ulkopuolelle leirin"*

1992 *Lähtekäämme siis hänen luokseen leirin ulkopuolelle*

'Let us then go to him outside the camp' (NEB)

In the Christmas Story - St Luke's Gospel 2:15 - the shepherds say *Menkäämme nyt Betlehemiin* (1938) 'Come, we must go straight to Bethlehem' (NEB), more literally 'Let us go now even unto Bethlehem' (HB). The dynamic translation simply says *Nyt Betlehemiin!*, literally 'Now to Bethlehem'.

The syntactic structure of Old written Finnish was greatly influenced by foreign languages, which made it quite distinct from spoken Finnish. The language of the translation often followed the original text - in other words, either the original languages of the Bible or Swedish, German, and Latin. There were several un-Finnish expressions, for instance in the postpositional structures and in the use of the passive voice, agent, and the future tense. The passive voice of Finno-Ugric languages is different in nature from that of Germanic languages, and the future tense is expressed by means of the present tense and does not have a category of its own.

Ever since the 1800s there have been attempts to purify the syntax of standard written Finnish from apparent foreign effects.

Yet it is the syntax that makes the language of the formal translation so difficult. The sentences and clauses are long and complicated, particularly in the epistles of the New Testament, and they still contain many passive and future constructions. Un-Finnish elements appear in the word orders used, for instance to follow the German sentence structure of putting the verb at the end of the clause. In Finnish, word order is relatively free and does not generally affect meaning. However, it does have an effect on what is given prominence in the sentence, and more particularly, on the theme_rheme relationship. The exceptional word order use of the formal translation, thus, places peculiar emphases to the words, giving an impression that biblical style can be characterized as having a distinctive, exaggerated rhythm.

5. LEXICON AS A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF BIBLICAL FINNISH

The archaisms presented above are not only typical of Biblical Finnish. Old inflectional forms can also be used in poetic or ceremonial style, and complicated sentence structures have long been connected with legal language. What distinguishes religious language and biblical style from the previous, then, is their use of special vocabulary and phraseology.

Since Agricola's times, the Finnish language has drawn its words from three main sources. The first source is spoken language, in other words, the dialects. Even biblical and liturgical words that have over time developed into theological terms may have their origin in an everyday dialect, although they might have been borrowed from other languages in the distant past. For instance *ehtoollinen*, a derivative of *ehtoo* 'evening', referred simply to the evening meal or dinner in the western Finnish dialects. Today its only meaning is Eucharist or the Holy Communion. In this way, dialectal words that were not very commonly used or had been dropped altogether from everyday use have become "religious", because they are not known any more from other contexts - in modern Finnish the eastern word *ilta* and its derivative *illallinen* 'evening meal' are used instead of the western variants *ehtoo* and *ehtoollinen*.

The second way in which the Finnish lexicon has expanded is by means of derivation or compounding from familiar words. This is easy because Finnish is an agglutinative language with great potential for noun and verb derivation. Even Agricola knew how to exploit this characteristic of the language when he needed new words for his Bible translations. The above mentioned word *ehtoollinen* was formed by using the adjective derivative *-llinen*, which refers concretely to temporality, to the time when something is happening: compare *kevällinen* 'happening in the spring' from *kevät* 'spring' and *ehtoollinen* 'happening in the evening' (as 'meal eaten in the evening'). This derivational construction was adopted by religious language at a more abstract level so that many adjectives were formed by using it, as shown below:

ajallinen 'temporal' < *aika* : *aja-* 'time'
taivaallinen 'heavenly' < *taivas* : *taivaa-* 'heaven'
maallinen 'earthly' < *maa* 'earth'
maailmallinen 'worldly' < *maailma* 'world'
hengellinen 'spiritual' < *henki* : *henge-* 'spirit'
uskollinen 'faithful' < *usko* 'faith, belief'

Derivatives and compound words make the language sound "domestic" and more understandable, as one knows the stem and the meanings of the derivations:

armo 'mercy, grace'
armollinen 'merciful'; *armollisuus* 'mercifulness, graciousness'
armoton 'merciless'; *armottomuus* 'mercilessness'
armahtaa (spiritual) 'to have mercy upon someone', (secular) 'to pardon'; *armahdus* 'the act of being merciful, pardon'

Thirdly, new words have been borrowed from foreign languages. Old written Finnish writers sometimes used direct loans or cognates in cases where there were no Finnish equivalents, as in *religio(n)* 'religion', which does not exist in the Bible, and *elementti* 'element' (2. Peter 3:10). The Finnish words *uskonto* 'religion' and *alkuaine* 'element' were first used in standard written Finnish in 1848 and

in 1829 respectively. An interesting example is the loan word *philosophy* as used by Agricola in Col. 2:8: *Philosophian ia turhan wietteluxen cautta* 'through philosophy and vain deceit' (HB, cf. NEB 'captured by hollow and delusive speculations'). This word was replaced by *järkeisoppi* in the 1938 Bible and by *viisauden oppi* 'the doctrine of wisdom' in the 1992 Bible. Although the loan word is nowadays commonly used as the normal term for the discipline, it has not been accepted in the Bible translations.

In more recent translations of the Bible direct borrowings are only used in special terminology, such as *synagoga*, *farao*, *apostoli*, *evankeliumi*. Such present-day loan words as *negatiivinen* 'negative', *sosiaalinen* 'social', *normaali* 'normal' and *idea* 'idea', on the other hand, are not part of Biblical Finnish, although in some cases are used in the translation of the Living Bible.

Foreign languages have, in fact, also influenced the Finnish lexicon in another important way, namely, through loan translations. Translating the loan word directly into Finnish has been common practice ever since Agricola's time, and many of the derivatives and compound words are actually loan translations; compare *ajallinen* 'temporal' (Latin *temporalis*), *opetuslapsi* 'disciple' (German *Lehrjunge*, Swedish *lärjunge*; *lapsi* 'child'), and *ylösnousemus* 'resurrection' (German *Auferstehung*, Swedish *uppståndelse*).

When the history of a standard written language is as long as it is in Finland, there is time for many changes to take place in both word usage and meanings. After all, it is the lexicon that is the most variable element of any living language. Following this, the original meanings of many old Finnish words have become more abstract, and essentially Christian vocabulary - such as *armo* 'grace, mercy', *pelastus* 'salvation' and *pyhä* 'holy' - has changed into theological terminology. When words are no longer used in everyday life, they are easily seen as belonging to the religious genre. In the same way unused derivatives become special terminology. For instance, many verbal derivatives with the ending *-mus*, *-mys* are already theological terms:

katumus 'penitence' < *katua* 'to repent'
lankeemus 'fall' < *langeta* 'to fall'

luopumus 'apostasy' < *luopua* 'to fall away from'
paatumus 'hardness of heart' < *paatua* 'to harden one's heart'
anteeksiantamus 'forgiveness' < *antaa anteeksi* 'to forgive'
ylösnousemus 'resurrection' < *nousta ylös* 'to stand up'
Kristuksen toinen tulemus 'the Second Coming of Christ' < *tulla*
 'to come'

All these words were already used by Mikael Agricola in the 16th century. Their derivational endings *-mus*, *-mys* have been replaced in Modern Finnish - some of them also in the dynamic Bible translation - by other forms, for instance *-minen* or *-o*, as in *tuleminen* or *tulo* 'coming', *anteeksianto* 'forgiving':

Matthew 24:27

1938 *Sillä niinkuin salama leimahtaa idästä ja näkyy hamaan länteen, niin on oleva Ihmisen Pojan tulemus*

1992 *Sillä niin kuin salama leimahtaa idässä ja valaisee taivaan länteen asti, niin on oleva Ihmisen Pojan tulo*

'Like lightning from the east, flashing as far as the west will be the coming of the Son of Man' (NEB)

6. MODERN BIBLICAL FINNISH

The lexicon of Old written Finnish was not very extensive, even though it expanded along with the development of literature. However, towards the end of this period there were still many important and commonly used words missing, not to mention cultural and scientific vocabulary. As of the 19th century, standard written Finnish has adopted thousands of new words in the ways that were described above, that is by standardizing dialectal words, creating new ones through derivation, or by translating from other languages. New derivational forms have come from the eastern Finnish dialects, for instance. A good example is the reflexive form derived by adding the ending *-utu-*, *-yty-*, which has substituted the use of foreign loan translations or non-reflexive equivalents: *avautua* 'to come open', *leiriytyä* 'to encamp', *mukautua* 'to adapt oneself', *toteutua* 'to come true', *tuhoutua* 'to be destroyed'. For

instance, the verb *käyttäytyä* 'to behave', from the verb *käyttää* 'to use', had formerly as equivalence *käyttää itsensä* 'to use oneself'.
Examples:

Joshua 5:10

1776/1991 *Ja kuin Israelin lapset niin sioittivat itsensä* ['placed themselves'] *Gilgalissa, pitivät he pääsiäistä neljäntenätoistakymmenentenä päivänä sinä kuukautena, ehtoon, Jerihon kedolla*

1938 *Kun israelilaiset olivat leiriytyneet Gilgaliin, viettivät he sen kuukauden neljäntenätoista päivänä, ehtoolla, pääsiäistä Jerikon arolla;*

1992 *Israelilaiset leiriytyivät Gilgaliin ja viettivät pääsiäistä sen kuun neljännentoista päivän iltana Jerikon tasangolla*

'And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the pass-over on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho' (HB)

1. Cor. 13:4-5

1776/1991 *Ei rakkaus kadehdi - - Ei hän käytä itsiänsä sopimattomasti;*

1938 /1992 *rakkaus ei kadehdi - - ei käyttäydy sopimattomasti*

'charity envieth not - - Doth not behave itself unseemly' (HB).

Rom. 12:2

1776/1991 *Ja älkääät sovittako teitänne [= itseänne] tämän maailman muodon jälkeen*

1938 *Älkääkä mukautuko tämän maailmanajan mukaan*

1992 *Älkää mukautuko tämän maailman menoon*

'Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world' (NEB)

Rom. 6:16

1776/1991 *Ettekö te tiedä, että jolle te annatte itsenne palvelioiksi kuulemaan, sen palveliat te olette, jolle te kuuliaisat olette;*

1938 *Ettekö tiedä, että kenen palvelijoiksi, ketä tottelemaan, te antaudutte, sen palvelijoita te olette, jota te tottelette;*

1992 *Tehän tiedätte, että jos antaudutte orjina tottelemaan jotakuta, olette juuri sen orjia, jota tottelette*

'You know well enough that if you put yourselves at the disposal of a master, to obey him, you are slaves of the master whom you obey' (NEB).

The formal translation of the Bible was done over a period when the Finnish language was undergoing a dramatic and continuous change process (1860s -1930s). Despite its archaic style, the translators boldly introduced new vocabulary items in it. Thus, the 1938 Bible translation includes a wealth of everyday vocabulary, which is not the case in the Lizelius version, such as *henkilö* 'person', *johtaja* 'leader', *sukupolvi* 'generation', *oppilas* 'learner', *kirje* 'letter', *itseks* 'selfish', *vieraanvarainen/vieraanvaraisuus* 'hospitable, hospitality', *huolehtia* 'to take care of someone', *sitoutua* 'to commit oneself'. Similar development can be seen in the dynamic translation to appear as the outcome of the work of the new translation committee; compared to the formal translation it includes again new, contemporary vocabulary, such as *tunne* 'emotion', *myötätunto* 'sympathy', *mielikuviutus* 'imagination', *teeskentely* 'pretence', *ihmiskunta* 'mankind', *sateenkaari* 'rainbow' (1938 *kaari* 'bow'), *osallistua* 'to participate', *suhtautua* 'to have an attitude to'. What is common to these translations, however, is that the theological terminology that dates back to Agricola's times has been retained, although in somewhat adjusted form. Thus, it is in fact the words belonging to the spiritual and religious style that have been best preserved until our times.

The recent dynamic translation of 1992, however, is completely different from the formal translation in its translation principles and expression. Morphology and syntax have been fully modernized, and foreign expressions omitted. The lexicon has also been changed, and the archaic words taken out. Familiar theological words appear side by side with present-day secular words, and many concepts are referred to by several words depending on the context, as shown below:

iankaikkinen (old) ~ *ikuinen* (new) 'eternal'
vanhurskas ~ *oikeamielinen* 'righteous'
autuas 'blessed' ~ *onnellinen* 'happy'
pitkämielinen ~ *kärsivällinen* 'patient'

The disciples of Christ are still referred to by the loan translation *opetuslapsi*, but all other "learners" are referred to as *oppilas* (derivative of *oppia* 'to learn'):

Mark 8:27

1938 *Ja Jeesus lähti opetuslapsinensa Filippuksen Kesarean kyliin;*

1992 *Jeesus ja hänen opetuslapsensa lähtivät Filippoksen Kesarean ympärillä oleviin kyliin;*

Cf. NT 1972 *Jeesus ja hänen oppilaansa lähtivät Filippuksen Kesarean kyliin*

'Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi' (NEB).

Luke 6:40

1938 *Ei ole opetuslapsi opettajaansa parempi;*

1992 *Ei oppilas ole opettajaansa etevämpi*

'A pupil is not superior to his teacher' (NEB); cf. 'The disciple is not above his master' (HB).

The style of the dynamic translation is also affected by the fact that archaic and poetic words have been replaced by their more neutral synonyms. This is particularly apparent in the Old Testament where the figurative expressions typical of biblical language have been substituted by more neutral expression or explained verbally. Thus, the figurative style has in some places changed to resemble modern media language. Examples of the words that give the style this kind of colouring are for instance *hallinto* 'administration', *sisältö* 'content', *tavoite* 'aim', *tilanne* 'situation', *todiste* 'proof', *toiminta* 'action', *esiintyä* 'to appear', *esittää* 'to present', *suunnitella* 'to plan', *todeta* 'to state', *tarkistaa* 'to check', *toteuttaa* 'to carry out'. Some of these words have already been used in the formal translation 1938, but their number has increased in the 1992 translation. Yet the dynamic translation takes into account the features typical of literary language - historical and poetic literature and letters. The result is that the language of the dynamic translation is no longer uniform biblical language, as is the case with the previous translations.

The release of the modern Bible translation has caused particular public discussion in Finland, mainly because with the formal translation people had got used to seeing biblical language use as separate from other language use. There have been complaints

about the plainness of the expression, and some have even claimed that the image of God has changed along with the new words used to describe His qualities and actions. The younger generations, however, have welcomed the reform, because it makes the Bible content more understandable.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from the 1500s until the 1700s spiritual and secular language were, practically speaking, one and the same. Today, spiritual language is only one genre, and not even a uniform genre, because socio-linguistic developments affect all language use. Thus, even spiritual language varies according to situation and context, as well as topic and participants; young people have even developed their own religious slang. Biblical language no longer has the status it had up until the 19th century. As was mentioned above, there are several translations in official use, and many other groups than just theologians and linguists are interested in renewing and editing the language of the Bible. Dialectal translations of different texts are very popular today, and in addition to comic strips and the national epic *Kalevala* some Gospel texts and the Catechism have been published in dialectal forms.

I have not addressed the social and scientific context in which standard written Finnish developed and the Bible translations were carried out. It is obvious, of course, that standard written Finnish followed closely the development of Finnish society, for instance education, circulation of literature, folk instruction, and the status of the Finnish language. The disparity between secular and religious language in the 1800s was naturally strengthened and accelerated by the fact that state and church administration were separated from one another at that time. The theological - such as pietistic and ecumenical - movements and the liturgical reforms of different times have also affected the language used by the church (for instance at the semantic level), which in turn has caused changes in the language of the Bible. Therefore, the many different translations can be seen to reflect the variety of

theological views and spiritual needs which prevail in the pluralistic and fragmented society of today.

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BIBLE TRANSLATIONS IN FINNISH

1548. *Se Wsi Testamenti* (NT translated by Mikael Agricola).
1642. *Biblia* (translated by a committee).
1685. *Biblia* (revised by Henrik Florinus).
1758. *Biblia* (revised by Antti Lizelius).
1776. *Biblia* (revised by Antti Lizelius; new, linguistically modified editions up to the present).
1938. *Pyhä Raamattu* (OT 1933, NT 1938, a formal translation by a committee).
1992. *Pyhä Raamattu* (a dynamic translation by a committee).
1969. *Uusi Testamentti* (NT, translated by Aapeli Saarisalo, a formal translation).
1972. *Uusi testamentti nykysuomeksi* (NT in modern Finnish, a dynamic translation).
1977. *Elävä Uutinen* (NT, translated according to the Living Bible).
1999. *Uusi testamentti* (NT, a modern formal translation).