

those in which we find ourselves. A few simple directives suggest themselves:

1. Watch your English usages carefully, and keep your language as simple and direct as possible. A stateside pastor once commented that teaching in Africa must be quite easy with little preparation required. "After all," he declared, "your teaching is conducted on practically an elementary level. If he only knew the painstaking effort that this really requires!"
2. By all means avoid the straight lecture method of teaching. Intersperse your presentation with frequent questions to be sure that your students are with you. Illustrate everything that you possibly can on the black-board. The best lecture material can be entirely lost if this is not done.
3. Do not rely on the students as being able to take their own notes. Prepare and duplicate the essential points of your lesson for the student. You may be using certain key words that he has never heard before. As a summary to your presentation let the students read these notes aloud in class, giving opportunity to ask questions about words not understood.
4. Always allow sufficient time for discussion by the class. If necessary, prepare discussion questions to facilitate this. This discussion can very well be as fruitful to the teacher as to the students.
5. Be specific in your assignments, and if possible prepare a duplicated "worksheet" for such assignments. Simply to say to the students, "Well, students, see what you can find in the library to learn more about this subject," or "I suggest that you do some added research on this matter" is an exercise in futility. It isn't that the students are necessarily lazy. If they are to do some added research or study additional material, they need precise directions for this.

Perhaps all of what has just been said should be taken for granted. As intelligent teachers we certainly know what we are doing. One would surely hope so. And yet it should be said that the above directions have been written after having taught in a foreign environment for some years, and are not considered to be superfluous.

II When we come to the matter of transmitting the truth into another language by using the foreign language itself as the means of communication, we can immediately think of three ways of doing this. We can work through an interpreter. Or, we can know the language well enough ourselves. Or, we can train nationals and provide them with the tools to do it.

A. I'm sure we'll all agree that the first way, using an interpreter, is highly unsatisfactory. Only in emergency situations ought we even consider it. Moreover, if such an emergency does arise, the interpreter must be theologically trained if he is to transmit theological truth. We'll go a step farther. If a theologically trained interpreter can be found for an emergency situation, even when the interpretation should not be done on the spur of the moment, but only after careful advance preparation. One could say a lot more about this, and no doubt more will be said in our subsequent discussion, but at this point we hope it will suffice to say that we as missionaries are wholeheartedly agreed on the inadequacy of the method of using interpreters as a channel of interpretation.

B. The second method, that we missionaries ourselves learn the language of the country in which we are working, is absolutely essential if we hope to do any effective work at all. While our eventual goal must be the training of a national ministry to do the work of transmitting the Gospel, we cannot become a real part of that training program without learning the language ourselves, even though our medium of instruction may be English. Again we are not going to consume much time here with how this language is to be learned. Circumstances in different countries will vary. One can use language tapes. One can hire an informant from the country itself. One can attend language study courses, if such are available. One can live in an area where one is simply compelled to use the language of the country constantly. One can combine the use of various methods outlined above. We know of one man who already speaks fluently, yet who still spends an hour or more every day with a student, conversing with him about any subject that will increase his word knowledge.

Sensitizing
2000?
structuring -
participation
indications
of application

A.
Feed-back
as to correct
terminology
& meaning
of expression

where more languages are used in one country, each missionary ought to concentrate on one of the languages used, which would be of course the chief language of the area in which he is working.

Here we would like to stress a policy already expressed by our Board for World Missions, and that is that the missionary do not become involved in all sorts of practical aspects of the work until he has completed at least a year of intensive language study on the field. At times this will seem like a slow business. One is tempted to get involved in the work at once, hoping that the language end of it will somehow be managed as one goes along. This just doesn't work. Unless one puts forth a concentrated, well-disciplined effort toward learning the language right at the very start, experience shows that one seldom, if ever, has this opportunity later on. And without knowing the language of the people, the ensuing years of activity in the field become more and more frustrating.

Practical Anthropology

Learning the language ourselves has its important by-products. It is the best possible way to become familiar with the culture and thought process of people in another land. Dr. Eugene Nida in his many writings on the study of foreign language and culture associates the two things, language and culture, to a point where he almost identifies the two, and rightly so. The African concepts of time and space, for example, are reflected in his language. His effusive manner of greeting as well. As I learn his language, I get a little insight, at least, into how his mind works. I begin to realize why he uses certain English words as he does. And I can also pick up certain things about his culture, his eating habits, his way of hunting and farming. The same is no doubt true of learning other languages coming out of a culture somewhat strange to us.

A certain definite period of intensive language study is but a good start. This must be followed up by working together with nationals, training them to do the work of the ministry, and together with them providing the tools for this work. Or, as Paul writes to Timothy (2 Timothy 2, 2): "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The business of training nationals and together with them producing materials to use in transmitting the truth of God unto their own people is a field so large and so important that we can only hope to touch on a few of the chief points here.

It is essential, first of all, that we train our own men and produce our own materials if we are to transmit the truth of God's Word. There is no lack of "Christian materials" wherever we work. Unfortunately we are all too often late-comers, working in areas where other Christian denominations have been active for years. At the same time we find that our method of thorough indoctrination has not always been energetically pursued by others, and if it has, it has not been done in the spirit of Article VII of our Augsburg Confession. The Gospel has not been preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it, and the sacraments have not been administered in accordance with the divine Word. Our right of existence in a given area is largely determined and justified by our ability to transmit precisely what God wants us to transmit.

Meaningfully

This requires a certain amount of linguistic expertise on our part, perhaps more than we have often realized. For us it isn't only a matter of getting through, which is often difficult in itself, but of getting through with the truth. There is a lot more to this business of translation than meets the eye. Much that has been translated and produced in the past is not only saturated with Reformed and Roman Catholic error -- it doesn't even make good sense! We find this to be especially true of Bible translations in Central Africa.

THE PRINTED WORD!

If we can depart for just a moment and get a bit technical for the sake of illustration -- most of the early Bible translators used the "formal correspondence" method of translation, a literal method which is often unintelligible to the receptor. The method used by knowledgeable Bible translators today is the "dynamic equivalence" method. The form of words is adjusted in order to preserve the content. Grammatical structures are not used which do not make sense. Care is taken so that the right word is chosen to fit the context, culture, and intended meaning of the writer. One has to be appalled by the wooden response of the people in Central Africa to the reading of the Scriptures

in the Tonga language. This is simply true because nobody quite understands, including the lector himself, what is being read. Fortunately a revision of this translation is in the making.

In producing our own sermon and instruction materials -- which for reasons stated above are a necessity -- we need to be equally careful to produce materials which not only contain the truth of God's Word in English, but which when translated convey a relevant message in the place where we are. We know how overworked the word "relevant" is. In our own terms of reference, however, it needs to be remembered. It must be simple, concise, and above all true. It must be geared to the culture and intelligence level of the people to whom it is proclaimed or taught. It must use words which precisely fit the local situation, and the words must be constructed in such a way that the people know what we are driving at. Every foreign field ought to have at least one "language expert" who is qualified to screen all materials to be printed with these things in mind. And every missionary who is still called upon to produce sermons or lesson materials ought to know enough about the language and the people so that he can avoid the obvious pitfalls when preparing these materials for translation.

*Orientation
into the work
of Messengers
& Learning*

Now where does all this fit into a Seminary program? I think it should show us where our chief linguistic efforts to begin with, at least, need to be directed in our Seminary curriculum. We may have to forego for a time the inclusion of Hebrew and Greek studies. Our curriculum should by all means include courses which have to do with word study and Bible translations in the language or languages in which we work. Theological terms like justification, sanctification, repentance, grace, contrition, inspiration, etc., will not only need to be studied closely, but it ought to be considered how these terms can be explained to the people in a meaningful way. Bible translations should be carefully scrutinized as to their accuracy. We have begun this at our Seminary by working through a basic dogmatics course with the students and finding the translational equivalent for every theological term. Next year we hope to go through the Standard Gospels and Epistles of the church-year and test their accuracy and relevancy of translation. Every week as we study the "Sermon for the Week" which is used for the coming Sunday, the text is carefully studied in the vernaculars also as to its word content.

Seminary students should also be liberally used in assisting with the translation of materials for publication. We are fortunate in having our Lutheran Press right on the Seminary campus, so that the Seminary students are at the same time the chief task force in helping with translations of church papers, Sunday School materials, and sermons. This work is in constant demand and is going on continuously.

The eventual goal in all this, of course, is a national ministry which can transmit the truth of the Gospel in its own idioms and according to its own methods of communication. At such time we as missionaries will for all practical purposes have become linguistically superfluous, unless we have opportunity to stay on for the sake of Hebrew and Greek. If God gives us the time for this, we can consider ourselves extremely fortunate. In the meantime we need to "work while it is day" in this business of transmitting the truth into another language, realizing how essential this is to the spread of the pure Gospel. Our Seminaries ought to be the centers of this work of transmitting.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W
Mequon, Wisconsin

E. H. Wendland