A re you insane? Do you hate the Bible?” Thomas Wayment, a professor in the Department of Comparative Arts & Letters, described some colleagues’ reactions to his decision to create a new translation of the New Testament. While some of his friends assumed he might want to “fix” the Bible, others supposed he just loved it so much he couldn’t get enough. But according to Wayment, the “why” was multifaceted. As he worked, his process engaged several of the major translation areas of study, and his motivations evolved. What might have begun as an attempt to make the New Testament more accessible to modern readers developed into an experience he called “transformative.” Wayment said, “I had a chance personally to read every word and ponder on a very intellectual level, and it shaped me in ways I never thought it would. I wanted to do that for everyone.”

As in all ambitious scholarship, Wayment pursued questions that didn’t fall neatly into narrow definitions within the College of Humanities. However, to contextualize his work within the four major areas of study encompassing translation in the College, Wayment shared examples from these fields for this issue of Humanities: translation and interpretation, literary studies, localization and translation, and literary translation.

by Thomas Wayment and Erin Jackson

Unfold for more
**3. LITERARY TRANSLATION**

Literary translation is the translation of literature in another language. This includes the translation of ancient languages into modern renditions so that they can reach a wider, contemporary audience.

When translating an author’s work, especially that of an ancient author, Wayment pointed out, "When you start to realize that there are hymns in the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Matthew because nowhere in it does he use the term, and you don’t need training in Hebrew to do so. This online Bible provides Strong’s concordance number and Hebrew translations, which Wayment describes this way: "WebrEase is a single Greek word, and Joseph Smith used it in the Bible. We now manufacture this way to give you the almost all of the other elements that appear in the New Testament. You don’t have to rely on someone to tell you what it means. That’s what’s fascinating about Strong’s concordance. It will typically give you almost all of the other elements that appear in the New Testament.

One of the most famous example literary translation scholars have identified as incorrect is Mark 5:22. “If there is any with his brother without cause...” According to Wayment, “Hebres’ care” is a single Greek word, and Joseph Smith used it in the Bible. We now manufacture this way to give you the almost all of the other elements that appear in the New Testament.

Along with Matthew, throughout his process of marking Paul’s letters, Wayment grew to love Paul more. He said, “For the entire Christian world, Romans is the most important book in the New Testament, full stop. It’s the book of books, it’s the reason we have the New Testament. It is the reason that every verse is well understood and not doubled counted in books of scripture. One of the reasons for this, surprise, Wayment, is the interpretability of the KJV translation in Paul’s letters. In order to make each verse seem equally important, the KJV translators incorporated into the running text the thing like, “and the Paul had that...”

When you start to realize that there are hymns in Timothy, the Gospel of John, Philosophians, and Colossians, then you start to realize that those people, whose written the hymns, in fact, predicted Paul. These hymns are almost certainly not Paul’s authorship, or John’s. They included grammar and language that bear the marks of other authors. And now we have one of the central stories we’re written about Jesus. And that’s kind of cool to me.

As the Church grows globally, it is essential to provide translations of scripture to new congregations. But should those translations be secured from the KJV, the original Greek, or more modern, reader-friendly translations? Significantly, the Church’s scriptures in Portuguese and Spanish were translated into modern vernacular in 2009 and 2015. President Nelson, Elder Holland, and Elder Ulchdrou have spent other language modernizations in recent talks.

Imagine what’s like to be a Filipino Latter-day Saint reading a Shakespearean Bible. It’s impossible. It’s like understanding Jesus through Shakespeare.

As older papyrus and newer technologies are discovered, more Bible translations become available to us.

**4. LOCALIZATION**

Localization is translation for an audience in a specific locale, recognizing the subtle differences in culture, word choice, and usage in a particular geographical region or among a culturally specific group.

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