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Leland Ryken on Bible Translations

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Leland Ryken, Professor of English at Wheaton College, has written an excellent and important introduction to the issue of Bible translation. Without ducking the hard questions, Ryken compares the dynamic-equivalence and formal-equivalence approaches. In Bible Translation Differences, he argues that the formal-equivalence method [based in an attempt at an 'essentially literal' rendering] produces a more accurate translation.

Consider this section from Ryken's brief, inexpensive, and accessible work: "We normally operate on the premise that the book that a publisher or translator puts into our hands is what the original author actually wrote. Within the necessary changes that all translation requires, an essentially literal translation does not betray that trust. It keeps to an absolute minimum the intermingling of interpretative commentary with translation. An essentially literal translation operates on the premise that a translator is a steward of what someone else has written, not an editor and exegete who needs to explain or correct with someone else has written."

Professor Ryken served as literary stylist for the English Standard Version translation [ESV], published by Crossway Books. For an extremely helpful resource, go to the ESV on-line edition.

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