Faculty Tenure Papers

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Faith, Languages, Language Learning and Interpreting

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This tenure paper is in many ways a journey—one that has included a wide range of thoughts, reflections and readings over the years on the topic of faith, language, language learning and, more lately, also interpreting. However, reflecting on and discussing a topic is never the same as needing to sit down and put one's thoughts on paper and write about the topic in a systematic and coherent fashion. Thus, I view this tenure paper as the "required opportunity" that Northwestern College has afforded me to try and carefully sort through and organize what I have been studying, teaching and discussing for a number of years. This paper is by no means the final product in my reflection process on the topic; it is merely a step (albeit an important one) along the way. I have taken a personal approach to the paper and I have written it in such a way as to best allow me to benefit from the process. It was not written for the purpose of publication, nor is it primarily intended for an external audience. As such, I raise many questions, posit different ideas and grapple with conflicting opinions as I try to understand exactly what it is that I think and opine concerning many of the aspects of this rather broad topic.

To help me organize my approach, I have divided the paper into three chapters. In the first chapter, "And God said …", I attempt to view language through a biblical lens. In Chapter 2, "Moving from 'Without Let or Hindrance' to 'All of Life Is Worship'", I look at the many ways that different language professors try to bring their faith into the language classroom, discuss whether or not this is truly an integration of faith and learning, and reflect on what is a

possible approach to the integration of faith, teaching and learning in a second language classroom. Finally, in Chapter 3, "Interpreting: 'The Commoditization of Language' or 'Bridging the Gap that Sin Created?'" I look more closely at my specific subfield, interpreting and translating, to better understand how faith and interpreting/translating intersect.

<div align="center">"And God said …"</div>

> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.[1]

"And God said" is the phrase that the author of Genesis uses each time in Chapter I to describe God's action in creation. God did not need to perform special acts, he did not need to wave a magic wand, he did not need to follow a recipe—he merely needed to utter words, and all of creation was brought forth. Words can be powerful tools for almost anyone, but when God spoke, all of creation came into being. We see that God's words are immediately converted into action. Language, when spoken by God, can be understood as almost synonymous with action.[2]

From these opening verses we can also see that language (or stated in a different way, communication) is an attribute of God. If we accept the argument that because God is eternal, his attributes are also eternal, one could go as far as to make the argument that therefore language and communication must also be eternal. If we look at the creation story itself, we see that the phrase "And God said" is used at the outset of creation, i.e., God was able to speak before

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[1] Genesis 1:1-2. All scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of International Bible Society.

[2] This is our first indication as to the strength of language and what can be done with words. Throughout the Bible, language and the power of words are mentioned many times, and even the concluding verses of the Bible refer to language, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon'".

creation itself. Does this than entail that language is eternal? If language is eternal, must we view it in a new light? Would this then set language apart from other aspects of creation?

To complicate the issue further, we must also look at how John refers to creation in John 1 : 1-3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" If we understand that John is referring to Jesus when he refers to the "Word", we see that Jesus was present in creation (and thereby completing the triune presence of God). However, this leads to many questions. In Genesis it states that God spoke and creation came into being; John indicates that all things were made through the Word. If we bring these two passages together, are we saying that Jesus was the language that God used to bring creation into being? For me personally, I think this statement goes too far, yet it merits further attention.

John makes reference to the "Word" again in I John 1 : 1-2

> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

and again in Revelation 19:11-13

> I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

In all three instances, the Spanish translation uses the word "Verbo" which would be back translated into English as "Verb", which for me has much more the connotation of action. (Both the English and Spanish versions are how the Greek term *logos* has traditionally been translated.)

Jesus is being clearly referred to as the Word/Verbo, and he was present at creation. God spoke, and creation came into being. Would this then entail that, in some way, Jesus was the language that God used in creation? Is Jesus the embodiment of the creation language? It would appear that there is a strong connection and yet, without additional theological study and training, I am reluctant to pursue this argument further at the present moment.[3]

Returning to the creation account, in verse 27 of Chapter I we read that "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them". How were we created in God's image? How are we different than animals, which were not created in his image? I would like to argue that one of the ways in which we are created in God's image is in our ability to use language. Although animals have the ability to communicate, and certain animals have been trained to recognize many words and even are able to communicate to a certain extent using those words, in my opinion only people are able to truly use language. For me, this is one of the fundamental aspects in how we were created in God's image.

We were created to be in relation with God and with others, to be in community, and we do so in many ways through language. As such, language has the unique purpose of communication, of providing us with a means to be in relation with God. Although language can be used for many purposes, one of its defining characteristics is that it is one of the attributes of God that we have because we were created in his image, and as such we are able to be in communion with him, having received one of God's attributes to accomplish this.

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[3] The Bible itself is also referred to as "God's Word", which could complicate the issue further.

However, language is not only for communication. In Genesis 2: 19-20 we read,

> Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all
> the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them;
> and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man
> gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

It is in these verses that we see the beginning of another important characteristic of language, its delotic function. In addition to allow us to be in relation to God and others, language also serves us by naming all that we know.[4] This was a function that was imbedded in language at creation. And yet, it was not God that named all aspects of creation. Why an all-powerful God would bestow that privilege on people is a separate discussion, but people were given the task of naming parts of creation. This began with the animals, but it is a function that continues today. One needs only to think about the myriad of computer and vehicle parts that did not exist several decades ago and are now part of our daily vocabulary.

As a professional interpreter with training for interpreting at international organizations and events, it always amazes me how new terms are coined and then translated into other languages. One important topic currently in the international arena is that of climate change. Professional interpreters need to constantly consult with official glossaries from the United Nations and other international organizations to know exactly what the officially "accepted" translation in the other language is for such terms as carbon sink, cap and trade, carbon sequestration, carbon facility, etc. [5] In today's global community, when a term comes into use in

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[4] See also Boot, "Loving Neighbors: Some Considerations for Teaching Foreign Language".
[5] See, for example, http://un-interpreters.org/glossaries/Climate%20Change%20EFS.doc.

one language, the naming function of all other languages is quickly called upon to develop an equivalent way in which to render that term in those other languages.

Although God had declared in Genesis 1:31 that all of creation "was very good", sin soon entered the picture and it affected all parts of creation, including language. No longer were language and communication perfect and direct. Although communication between people and between them and God still existed, it did not escape the effects of sin. Communication between God and people was no longer as it was in the Garden of Eden, and language soon began to be used for deceit as well as for good, for being evasive, rather than being honest.

Since the fall, language has become a powerful tool for evil as well as for good. One only needs to think about how easy it is to insult and hurt others through words, and we quickly see how language has been marred by sin. Communication between people is no longer open and direct. Misunderstandings, be it through spoken conversations or via e-mail, are commonplace. People need to work at understanding one another, even while speaking the same language. James clearly discusses the difficulties of taming one's own tongue in James 3:1-13 and how words are used for different purposes.

The multiplicity of languages that exists also impedes communication both on a global level and increasingly at a local level. Misunderstandings and prejudices are formed because of a lack of understanding.[6] Mistrust is created when people cannot understand each other, when different languages are spoken. However, an important question that needs to be raised at this point is whether or not the multiplicity of languages that exists is because of sin. Although for many beginning students of language the answer is a resounding yes, I have always attempted to convince them that the answer is no for a variety of reasons.

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[6] These misunderstandings can be even further complicated by interpreter mistakes. There are many examples that could be named of international furors caused by the misinterpretation of a single word during international political negotiations.

Although a quick reading of Genesis 11:1-9 would appear to give a ready answer, I am not convinced. Given the fluid nature of language and how quickly it changes[7], it would be reasonable to say that language quickly began to change after creation, and more than likely different dialects evolved. Given the isolation in which people lived, dialects and regionalisms would likely have appeared even quicker. This would appear to be supported in Genesis 10 where it discusses the different descendants of Noah, and how each group developed "each with its own language" (v. 5) or were listed "by their clans and languages" (w. 20 and 32). It seems reasonable to me to argue that language has never been static, that it is always changing and evolving, and that this is part of the nature itself of language.

Even if one were to argue that Genesis 11 is chronologically out of place and that it should appear much earlier in Genesis, this does not entail that the diversity of languages is because of sin. Perhaps it was at that point that God "confused the language of the whole world" (v. 9), but that does not force us to conclude that sin caused the multiplicity of languages.

Indeed, I would argue that the diversity of languages is one of the most beautiful characteristics of language. If one thinks about all the different languages, from tonal to romance to indigenous languages, and all the different sounds that form part of the approximately 7,000 languages that exist, one can only marvel at how God created our mouths and tongues to be able to form so many different sounds, and all with the dual purpose of naming and communication.

God created humans with the ability to speak different languages. We were not created with a limited ability to only form the sounds of one language. Furthermore, I would suggest that

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[7] An example would be English itself and how much it has changed in the last 500 years, from Shakespearian-era writings to distinct versions of English that developed separately in Australia, Canada, Nigeria, Jamaica, India, Pakistan and other parts of the Commonwealth of Nations (formerly known as the British Commonwealth) and in the United States, and even within different regions of the United States.

people did not physically change at the Tower of Babel to suddenly allow them to form the sounds of so many languages. This was part of how God created humans initially at creation.

A baby is capable of speaking any language in the world and will learn the language of his or her environment. This for me is rather stunning to ponder. Everyone on earth has a mouth, tongue and facial structure that are very similar; yet, from that one set of blueprints for that one area of our body, we as humans can form the sounds to speak any language on earth. However, as we grow older, that ability diminishes, and language learning becomes more difficult. Yet, this does not change the fact that when each one of us was a baby, God had created us with the ability to form the sounds of any language.

Thus, in creation God created the foundation for diversity in languages. This was not interjected further along the way; it was part of creation, before sin, and it was not because of sin. It is perhaps because of sin that we are unable to understand speakers of other languages, and the need for interpreters and translators became evident.

Another way of analyzing this topic is to consider whether or not the diversity of languages was what God had originally intended in creation. However, because of the fall, people tried to continue to live in close proximity, tried to continue to speak the same language, and when they realized that they were starting to spread too far apart, they attempted to construct the Tower of Babel to keep themselves unified, against God's wishes. When God confused communication at the Tower of Babel, it then was much more a situation of setting creation back on track, and bringing it more in line with the original intent of creation, of having a multiplicity of languages and having people spread over the whole earth and not just live in one location.

In order to frame this issue more clearly, I prefer to ask the question, "Would diversity in languages have evolved even without sin?" This for me is key to a better understanding of the

issue, and for me the answer is very clear that yes, language evolves and changes, and an inherent part of language itself is the development of dialects, new words, new ways of referring to items and actions, and to aspects of the surrounding environment. (And this then eventually leads to so many changes that speakers are no longer able to understand each other, and the dialects have become different languages.) Languages change in response to the needs of the people and their environments—think of the Inuits in the northern latitudes and their many different words for snow, or for desert dwellers and their many words for sand.

Returning back to the biblical narrative, I think it is important to now move to the New Testament and to what happened at Pentecost in order to better understand what happened at the Tower of Babel. It is through the dual lens of both Pentecost and the Tower of Babel that we can more clearly understand both events.[8]

As we read in Acts 2:1-13 what happened on the day of Pentecost, we notice several essential details that are very relevant to our discussion of languages. In verses 2-4, we see that first of all there was a sound "like the blowing of a violent wind" that filled the house, followed by "tongues of fire" that came to rest on each person. Then, they "were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them".[9] What happened immediately upon receiving the Holy Spirit? People were able to speak in different languages— the language barrier was broken, communication was restored, and people were able to understand what the apostles were saying (vv. 8-1 1).

This has always intrigued me as I try to relate the Tower of Babel to Pentecost. Why was it that the very first manifestation of the Holy Spirit was the ability to break the language barrier?

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[8] See also Smith & Carvill, *The Gift of the Stranger*, pp. 14-15.
[9] In verse 4 and verse 11 the word "tongue" is used; however, this word can also be translated as "language" (which is how it is translated into Spanish); what we read in vv. 8-11 makes it clear that what the apostles were able to do was to speak the different languages that people were speaking at that time in the Roman Empire.

We know that the Holy Spirit bestows many gifts and fruits on believers (I Corinthians 12: 1-11 and Galatians 5:22-23); yet, what happened on the day of Pentecost was the ability to reach speakers of other languages by speaking in their languages.

If we understand the Tower of Babel as being the disunification of the human race, than we can understand Pentecost as being the opposite or the opposing force. It was through the work of the Holy Spirit that people were brought back together again because the Holy Spirit transcends all languages. The Holy Spirit allowed the apostles to share the gospel message with speakers of many different languages immediately after receiving it.

Humans, tainted by sin, rebelled against God at the Tower of Babel, and confusion in communication resulted. God, through the workings of his Holy Spirit, restored communication in order to be able to share the gospel message. The Tower of Babel divided people; the coming of the Holy Spirit reunited the peoples of the earth. The Tower of Babel involved people and their rebellion; Pentecost deals with the Holy Spirit and bringing a message of God's reconciliation for people. Whereas the Tower of Babel can be seen as punishment, Pentecost is through God's grace alone.

An important detail to note is that at Pentecost everyone did not begin to speak the same language (which could then be used to interpret the diversity of languages as something inherently wrong). Rather, it was the apostles that were able to speak the many different languages that were represented on that day. The Holy Spirit allowed the apostles to use the many different languages to share the message of the gospel to allow for communion between the speakers of the different languages. The diversity of languages was not the problem—the lack of understanding between the speakers of the different languages was, and it was this difficulty that the bestowing of the Holy Spirit resolved.

From Pentecost we move forward to Revelation and to what John saw regarding the future. We read in Revelation 7:9-12

> After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes".

From this passage we can see that hunger and thirst will no longer be negative factors in our existence in the future, nor will the heat of the sun be too strong, and God will keep us from sorrow. However, while looking at the future, John explicitly mentions that the multitude will be

inclusive, and that there will be individuals from every nation, tribe and people. From this I understand that we will not all be looking the same, all being from the same race;[10] rather, the many different races and nations and peoples will all be represented at God's throne in the future. Furthermore, John also points out that the different persons will be from the many different languages. Whether that refers to language groups, individual languages, or even so far as speakers of different dialects within one language is not the principal point for me. What is important is that the existence of multiple languages is specifically mentioned. The diversity of languages is not wiped out at the time of Jesus' second coming. Sin will be eradicated, the effects of sin will disappear, and creation will no longer be tainted by the fall. We will be living in a new creation (but one that resembles the first good and perfect creation), and in that new creation John specifically mentions that there will be peoples from different languages present.[11]

If different languages are present, what will happen to accents (and specifically accents due to second language learning)?[12] Will we all speak every language perfectly? Will we all understand all languages but speak our own mother tongue? [13] Whatever the answer is, I do believe that individuals will no longer suffer the pain and humiliation that second language accents entail all too often in today's society when people view those speakers who have learned

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[10] This is neither the time nor the place to be discussing race and how the many different races evolved after creation, and whether or not this was the result of sin or, again similar to language, if it was part of the natural way that humans changed and evolved over history. However, it is interesting to note that the different races will be represented at God's throne.

[11] An alternate way to interpret this passage would be to argue that although there will be speakers from every language, they will all be speaking the same language, in unity, rather than multiple languages. However, I do not agree with this, and I think that multiple languages will be present, but that we will all understand one another and have perfect communion between people and between people and God.

[12] The one place in the Bible that specifically discusses pronunciation and accents is in Judges 12, which I will briefly discuss further on in this paper.

[13] Or, again in the interest of providing an alternate view, will we all speak a celestial language that transcends all other languages? Will language become a mute point and will we all be to communicate our thoughts directly to each other? If we view the diversity of languages as not being because of sin, I would argue that there will be many different languages, but that we will all be able to understand each other in perfect communion.

a second language as adults (and thus speak with the resulting accent) as second class individuals.[14]

What will this entail for language professors and interpreters/translators? Will we be "unemployed" in the new creation? Will our calling in our present life no longer exist after Jesus' second coming? Does the calling of language professors and interpreters/translators exist only because of sin? (Is this similar to the manufacturers of herbicides and pesticides for agricultural use to counter the effects of the fall and the appearance of "thorns and thistles" [Genesis 3: 18]?) Or, are language professors and interpreters/translators to be viewed as one of the many groups of people with a calling to reestablish the bonds that were broken because of sin and the fall?[15]

The Bible mentions the word language 44 times (28 times in the Old Testament and 16 in the New Testament). Of those times, in many instances it is part of a phrase mentioning nations, tribes and peoples. This is the case also in the book of Revelation, where all five references to language are part of a phrase that includes nations, tribes and peoples. Languages are clearly part of what makes the different groups of peoples distinctive, and are part of their ethnicity. Differences among people are not because of sin; each one of us is created uniquely, but all in God's image. As such, languages are part of this diversity among peoples, and that diversity will be reflected also after Jesus' second coming.

In my opinion, the multiplicity of languages is beautiful and good. God created diversity in all of creation, and diversity is not wrong. Diversity in language brings out unique characteristics in different individuals and groups of peoples. To argue that this diversity is because of sin (as is the initial opinion of most students who study with me) is wrong.

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[14] For an example of this point of view via the lens of a personal perspective, see Park, "Nations will bring their glory".

[15] I will discuss this further in chapter three of this paper.

Furthermore, if the basis for the discussion concerning the reasons for language study is flawed, then the resulting conversation will also lead to mistaken conclusions.[16]

I would now like to briefly discuss some of the other biblical passages that address different aspects of language. One passage that is oft mentioned is Judges 12:1-6. This is the only passage in the Bible that directly discusses pronunciation and accents, i.e., the mortal consequence of pronouncing the word Shibboleth as Sibboleth. Although this has little to do with the discussion at hand, it is important to mention that this could be viewed as an extreme example of how people treat those individuals who speak with an accent. This regretful activity continues today in our society. How often are our initial opinions of others not formed by the way people speak? People who speak English with an accent because it is their second language routinely have greater trouble in finding employment, especially if the job involves verbal contact with others.

In Nehemiah 8:1-8 we read about the first example of when part of the Bible (the Law of Moses in this case) was interpreted in order that others could understand it. After the 70 year exile, many of the Israelites who returned to Jerusalem and the surrounding area no longer were overly conversant in Hebrew (and, important to indicate, in a form of Hebrew that was in all likelihood several centuries old, from when the Book of the Law was written). When Ezra read from the Book of the Law, the Levites were "making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read" (vv. 7-9). When this situation is compared to that of recent immigrants to the United States, we see that the vast majority of immigrants are more comfortable in the language (English) of their adopted land than in their original "mother"

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[16] I will discuss this further in chapter 2 of this paper.

tongue (Spanish) within one or two generations.[17] By the third generation, it is quite difficult to converse in the original "mother" tongue. Although the situation of the Jews during the exile was different than that of immigrants to the United States, it stands to reason that many of the returnees had to a great extent lost the ability to communicate in Hebrew.

Another set of related passages that I would like to discuss includes Mark 4:35-41 (when Jesus calmed the storm by rebuking the wind and the waves), Matthew 17:20 (when Jesus said that if we have faith the size of mustard seed, we will be able to order a mountain to move and that nothing will be impossible for us), and Acts 3:1-8 (when Peter healed a crippled beggar by invoking the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth). In each one of these passages we see the power of words and language when they are combined with our faith in God. Jesus needed only to order the winds and the waves to be still, and it happened. This is similar again to what happened at creation—words spoken by our all-powerful and sovereign God are orders for his creation. However, we see that we also have that power, if we have faith. Jesus is very clear that if we have faith, we have that same power to order creation to listen to us, and it will happen. Again, words and language are powerful instruments, especially with the power of God behind them. This becomes exceedingly clear when Peter healed the crippled beggar. If we command something to happen, in the name of Jesus Christ, and if we have faith, it will happen. This for me is something that is hard to understand. How can we, as creatures that God created, be endowed with such power if we "merely" pronounce the name of our creator? This reverence for the spoken name of God is also reflected in the third commandment, where we are warned not to

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[17] "With respect to immigrant children, 70 percent of those 5 to 9 years of age, after a stay of about 9 months, speak English on a regular basis. After 4 years, nearly all speak English regularly, and about 30 percent prefer English to Spanish. After 9 years, 60 percent have shifted to English; after 14 years—as young adults—70 percent have abandoned the use of Spanish as a daily language. By the time they have spent 15 years in the United States, some 75 percent of all Hispanic immigrants are using English every day". Santiestevan, "Use of the Spanish Language in the United States: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities".

"misuse" the Lord's name. Again, this reflects the importance and the incredible power of language.

Language is also how we confess our faith in the Lord, or how we deny it. It was with words that Peter denied being a follower of Jesus (Mark 14:66-72), and it was with words that Thomas affirmed publicly that the resurrected Jesus was Lord and God (John 20:26-29). Indeed, Paul makes it very clear that we although we believe with our heart, it is with our mouths—with language—that we confess our faith (Romans 10:9-10).

Language for many people can be a cause for anxiety, especially when we need to use language in front of a crowd. Public speaking ranks among the items that people in the United States fear the most. In Exodus 4:10-16 we see that Moses was initially very reluctant to speak publicly, and it was only through God's insistence (and anger) that Moses finally agreed. It was the Lord himself who helped Moses and Aaron speak, and who now helps us speak and use language.

The last passage that I would like to discuss is I Corinthians 14:1-19. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is that of speaking in tongues, which, because it deals with language itself, needs to be mentioned within the context of studying how the Bible deals with language. Whether or not the tongues that are spoken when someone "speaks in tongues" are earthly or spiritual languages, they are still languages. As such, they still need to be interpreted. As Paul carefully indicates, speaking in a tongue is either speaking with God and not with other people (v. 2), or it is for self-edification (v. 4). However, when someone speaks in tongues, it can be interpreted into a language that other believers understand (v. 5). Furthermore, when one speaks in tongues, the speaker does not necessarily understand what the mouth is saying (v. 14). However, the

tongue that is being spoken is still a language, whether it is only understood by God or by other people through interpretation.

To conclude this review of how the Bible views language, and before I move on to look at how language learning and faith intersect, I would like to quote I Corinthians 14:9-11, a passage that provides an important perspective:

> Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.

"Moving from 'Without Let or Hindrance' to 'All of Life Is Worship'"

There are many examples of how different second language professors attempt to bring their faith into the language classroom. I would like to list several of them, along with a brief discussion of some of these methods, in order to better evaluate this approach.

One of the most common early (i.e., what beginning language professors utilize) ways of trying to introduce the question of faith into the language classroom is by reading the Bible in Spanish, memorizing Bible verses in Spanish, and praying in Spanish. Although many students view this as integration of faith and learning, most language professors would not.[18] This is an important and worthwhile activity in a foreign language classroom at a Christian college, but for other reasons. A related activity to this would be the singing of Christian songs (for those

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[18] Although student opinion and feedback are important, I now realize that in the area of faith and learning, the views of students and professors are quite divergent as to what constitutes such activity. I am not criticizing student opinion, nor am I criticizing Bible reading and prayer in Spanish; I think they are important. However, the integration of faith and learning must go much further than these and other activities that I mention.

language professors who are musically inclined) in the other language, especially translated ones with which the students are familiar. In the upper level courses, devotionals can be expanded to include student participation and reflection (in Spanish), but again, these activities are important for other reasons, and it is not the integration of faith and learning.

Another activity that some professors have engaged in (myself included) is a brief discussion in most class periods as to the role of the church in Latin America, Christian missions in Latin America, and how the church has heavily influenced culture in Latin America. This can be a wide ranging discussion from cultural Catholicism, the *Virgen de Guadalupe* and syncretism, to where the RCA and the CRC have mission projects underway. Other topics can include the stories of individual missionaries, immigration paperwork roadblocks for missionaries, why the Catholic church has had such an important role in Latin America, how worship differs in Latin America from the United States, the recent neoPentecostal focus on "prosperity theology" in Guatemala and other countries, and the Catholic's church criticism of the Protestant churches, to name a few. Again, for me all of this is important information to discuss with the students, but it is not the integration of faith and learning by itself.

Another activity that at times is used is the writing of a psalm. After a unit of systematic study of the biblical psalms concerning the structure of the psalms and how there are written, the different types of psalms, and the importance of psalms, the student then attempts to write a psalm personally.[19] Although this involves the use of Spanish to study the Bible and then to write a psalm, and is an important exercise both to better understand the biblical psalms and to improve the student's writing and expression skills in Spanish, this is still far from true integration of faith and learning.

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[19] See, for example, Defferding, "Language Through the Psalms".

In the literature classes, one way that is at times attempted is the inclusion of "Christian" literary pieces in an otherwise "secular" reading list. This approach for me is problematical on many different levels, and especially in trying to decide what is Christian and secular.

For vocabulary learning, some professors attempt to include "biblical language" or "Christian" words among the other words, including words for such topics as forgiveness and worship. Again, although it is important for students to learn this style of vocabulary, it is still memorization and does not involve the integration of faith and learning.

Other ways that faith is brought into the classroom include having students write opinion papers (in Spanish) about specific Bible verses, writing a prayer journal in Spanish, or when the language professor shares personal testimony in class. Some professors teach students (in the lower level classes) key phrases in Spanish concerning their faith and how to share it, with the corollary in upper level courses being that students are taught how to preach or lead Bible studies in Spanish. Although these are important skills and activities, I would argue that they are not integration of faith and learning.

Some professors include discussions of "Christian" topics in such areas of culture and language (in English in lower level courses, in Spanish in the upper level courses). These topics might include whether to use the second person singular informal or formal verb form when addressing God in prayer, the fact that we are all created in God's image and how this must impact our view of Hispanics, and liberation theology and its influence in Latin America. Although this approach for me begins to approach the integration of faith and learning in some ways, in and by itself it is not sufficient.

Another more complicated and perhaps more controversial approach is the use of biblical verses to teach grammatical concepts. Although this is one way of bringing the Bible into the

grammar class (such as in an upper level class that is dedicated only to grammar review and practice), it is not without its difficulties. The question is whether or not the benefits of this approach outweigh the concerns. One of the main benefits include being able to use familiar material for students which is readily available in both languages, which then allows for a comparison of the structure in the two languages. Furthermore, because of the ready availability of multiple translations in English and Spanish, further comparison can be made as to the different ways of rendering the same thought in one language, and then comparing the multiple ways to the other language and see how they are similar or different. Students also appreciate being able to use the Bible in this way, in Spanish, and many times they continue the comparison activity outside of class and during their personal devotions.

But is this true integration of faith and learning? This same activity could be done with other texts that are readily available in both languages (although perhaps less familiar for the students), and it essentially reduces the Bible down to its grammatical and lexical components. Could a non-Christian use this approach with equal success? Are we truly allowing our faith to mold our approach, our teaching, or our learning? When we use a biblical passage and then have students find nouns, verbs or other parts of speech in that passage, does this in any way make the classroom more Christian? Again, although it allows us to use the Bible and have it present in the classroom, it is being used for grammatical purposes only. As one author has stated, "the republication of *Mein Kampf* with Bible verses added at the start of each chapter would not make it a Christian textbook".[20] The mere presence of biblical verses does not make for integration of faith and learning.

Indeed, it could be argued that we are devaluing the Bible by using it for a purpose other than for what it was intended. When verses or parts of verses are taken out of context, when we

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[20] Smith, "Some theses concerning the use of scripture in language classes", p. 1.

use the Bible for non religious purposes, when the focus during the use of the Bible is reduced to grammar and vocabulary (rather than the meaning and purpose of what is written), I would argue that we are quickly taking the first steps of going down a slippery slope of using the Bible for wrong purposes. In the same way that the Bible should not be viewed as primarily a history or science book, it should not be used primarily for its grammatical content.

I myself have used and continue to use Bible verses in my upper level Spanish grammar course, but I have become increasingly uncomfortable with this use. Although students are favorably impressed and view it as integrating faith and learning, and indicate such on course evaluations, I have seriously considered removing the verses from the grammar explanations. And yet, I have not done so because I think there is a benefit to their presence, as long as the use of those verses is part of a coherent and structured approach to integrating faith and learning.

Another popular and important approach of late to the integration of faith and learning in the second language classroom is through the role of the "stranger". In this model, students are taught to see that what they learn in the Spanish classroom will allow them to become a blessing for the stranger, and that the stranger will become a blessing for them; then, with that realization, they can learn to better love and serve their neighbor (who in today's world is often a stranger). This relatively newer way of understanding faith and language teaching was fleshed out in greater detail for the first time in Barbara Carvill's and David Smith's book, *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, & Foreign Language Learning*, published in 2000 and an excellent resource for all current and future second language professors.

And yet, for me the integration of faith and learning needs to go still further, be more philosophical on the one hand and more practical on the other. In all areas, students need to be encouraged to form personal opinions through the filter of their personal beliefs and convictions.

A Christian perspective (or perspectives) needs to be brought in as part of all larger discussions in the foreign language classroom, on all topics.

However, as the question is raised from time to time, is there a Christian way of boiling water? Is the way a Christian boils water different from that of a non-Christian? Is the way a Christian language professor in a Spanish classroom in a Christian college teaches the preterit and imperfect any different from the way it is done in a large state university? Are the rules that regulate the use of the preterit and imperfect any different in a classroom in a Christian college than in a state university?[21]

One way that is important for me is the discussion with my students of the Bible verses from Chapter 1 of this paper. However, I can only do that in one semester; when students take multiple classes with me, this approach works well only in one course. One could argue that I could keep adding verses to my list of those suitable to discuss, but that would eventually stray from the central topic, and I am comfortable with the list that I have developed, which is enough for one semester.

Another important aspect for me to integrate faith and learning is an ongoing discussion, in all classes, as to what is the purpose of language and second language learning.[22] Why do we have language? What are the uses of language? Why should language be important for me, as a Christian? From there, it is not difficult to move to a discussion of the reasons for second language learning. Invariably, many students in the lower level courses who are studying with me for the first time will argue that the primary (and for some, the only) reason to study a foreign language–beyond it being a general education requirement–is for the purpose of missions and to

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[21] This is a question I raise with my students from time to time in my different classes. Could a non-Christian taking my classes notice any difference between my classes and a similar class at a non-Christian university? Is the way I teach grammar, interpretation or literature any different? I would like to think so, but is that clear to others? Should it be clear in every class session, in every course, in every concept.?

[22] See also Smalley, "Learning about Language".

share the gospel. (What is interesting to note that some times it is the students who are struggling the most in my Spanish classes are those who hold this view the strongest.) The different areas of life are valued insofar as and only because of their value as a possible tool for missions or spiritual outreach. I think that this attitude is rather unique to Christian colleges and universities. Personally, I would argue that although this is a valid reason for second language study, it is far from the only reason.

Another very commonly held view is that second language study is for tourism and pleasure also. An individual is hoping to travel to that area of the world, and therefore should "brush up" on his or her language skills. Although this is a step up from assuming that all people in the world should be able to speak English to attend to the needs of the English speaking tourist, it is a relatively limited reason in scope.

A third important and very widely held view is that second language study is for the purpose of business and profits. The entire world is viewed as possible profit and loss, and therefore to increase the possibility of profit, one must learn the language of the buyer. As U.S. businesses seek more and more international opportunities and markets, this reason for language study has grown in importance because, as has often been pointed out, it is the language of the buyer that the seller needs to learn in order to be able to sell the product.

Another widespread view is that people need to learn a second language in order to help others. This view is prevalent among Christians and non-Christians alike, i.e., all those who are interested in helping others. The "other", the speaker of the other language, is seen as someone in need of assistance, but is many times thought of as someone poorer (and perhaps inferior), someone who needs the help of others. This view many times diminishes the speaker of the other

language, and can also have the effect of building up the learner of the second language to the detriment of those who speak that language.

The perspective of wanting to teach others what we already know is yet another reason why second language study is viewed as important. The second language learner unknowingly (at times) views what he or she knows as important enough to want to share that knowledge with others. This view is often expressed by students in my beginning classes when the question is asked as to why we should study a second language, and I often hear the answer, "To be able to teach others" or "To be able to share with others what we know" in regard to many different areas of information.

I feel that it is important to know the reasons why we want others to learn another language (or we wouldn't be second language professors) because it is precisely that information that will allow us to shape and mold our approach to second language teaching. All that we do in the classroom is framed within the perspective of why we think it is important to learn another language. The textbook that we choose, whether we focus on a more communicative approach (to allow for interaction between the language learner and Hispanics we meet in our community) or more on a translation approach (to allow the learner to read written works of the target language, perhaps in preparation for graduate study), the vocabulary that we choose to teach (or not to teach), the cultural aspects that we discuss in class, the examples that we choose to illustrate what we are teaching, and even the scholarship that we engage in, are all shaped by how we view the importance of second language learning. Knowing that, we can then begin a structured approach to integrating faith with our language teaching and utilize the many details and activities that inherent to the second language classroom to be part of a greater whole. Rather than a haphazard approach, which occurs when the professor has not thought through this issue

and which results in many individual pieces of the puzzle being used but not fitting together into a greater whole, we can use many of the previous ideas that I discussed as to how to bring our faith into the classroom as part of an overall approach. Without the support of a structured approach, however, all too often the individual ways that second language professors attempt to integrate faith and learning are just that, isolated activities that are not connected to the rest of the class activities, e.g., having devotions, in Spanish, every week or every class, and then teach the rest of the course without it being different from a course in a non-Christian university.

All that we do as second language professors must reflect our approach, and that approach must reflect our faith at its core. Although in one sense this could be viewed as removing our faith from our teaching by one step, it is indeed the opposite. It will come to shape all that we do, and it will allow us to have a much stronger understanding and implementation of faith and language integration.

If we view second language learning as important because all languages are considered equal (for both Christian and other reasons)[23] and that the speakers of other languages are equal to us because we were all created in God's image and we are all equal in his eyes, than we can understand that second language teaching and learning are uniquely shaped. No longer do we only seek to use another language in order that others can allow us to pass through their countries "without let or hindrance";[24] rather, we view second language teaching and learning within the overall perspective of "all of life is worship"[25] and all that we do must reflect our faith in our Lord.

When we see everyone as equals (including students and professors, and students of second language learners and speakers of other languages), we begin to view language learning

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[23] See also Gonzalez, "All languages are created equal".
[24] As foreign authorities are requested to do by the Queen, as stated in Canadian passports.
[25] As the late Dr. Gordon Spykman was so fond of saying in his religious classes at Calvin College.

differently. The examples of real life people that are used in the second language classroom come to life. These are real stories of real individuals, unique people with knowledge and personality. The speakers of the second language then are no longer viewed as "target objects" with whom we need to share our information, or sell our products to, or whose countries we would like to take vacations in, or ways for us to achieve personal gain; rather, the second language and culture is seen as equal to and as valid as the first language and its culture. Information exchange becomes a two-way street, with students being able to learn from people who speak the second language and from the literature and culture of the second language. (This is also increasingly more important with worldwide church membership shifting more and more to the global south, and as such more and more theological writings and religious research and scholarship are in languages other than English.) Many times second language students (and at times their professors) need help to have their ethnocentric views be broadened in order to realize the value of other cultures and languages. If and when, as second language professors, we develop a structured approach to our language teaching, based on a reflective integration of faith and learning that allows to better understand how we value languages and second language learning, we are then able to translate that approach into what we do as professors.

This, then, will in turn shape all that we do as second language professors, both in and out of the classroom. The different activities that we choose to do within the classroom become part of a greater whole. The different ways that we bring our faith into the classroom together then will form part of the integration of faith and learning. The scholarship in which we choose to engage will also be shaped by this decision, as well as our participation in different professional organizations. In many different ways, our approach will continue to constantly manifest itself.

Perhaps not equally in each class period and in each course,[26] and in some courses it will be

"weaker" than in others, but it is our approach to language and second language learning that

will become abundantly clear to all those who study with us. It is for this reason precisely that

new (and seasoned) second language professors should be encouraged to actively reflect on how

they, as Christians, view language, and how this is different from non-Christians, because this

will shape what takes place in the classroom.

Is there a Christian way to teach a ten minute lesson on the past subjunctive? If our

definition of teaching is only what takes place in those ten minutes, I think the answer will likely

be no. However, if we take a step back and look at our overall approach, I think the answer can

be a resounding yes.

"Interpreting: 'The Commoditization of Language' or

Bridging the Communications Gap that Sin Created?'"

And now I come to the last chapter, the one which for me is perhaps the most important

personally at this stage in my professional development, but which at the same time is also the

hardest one for me to process, grapple with, come to terms with, and put my thoughts down on

paper about. How do faith and interpreting/translation[27] intersect? How does faith influence what

I do professionally as an interpreter? How has my faith shaped me as an interpreter? Does faith

have any bearing on what I do? Is my interpreting any different than that of a non-Christian?

As I have thought about and tried to process how faith and interpreting intersect, I have

come to the realization that in part I am uncomfortable with the answers that I reach because I

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[26] This is true in the different courses that I teach also. In some the integration of faith and learning is much more readily apparent to the casual observer, and in others less so; however, overall, I feel that I have strong approach.

[27] From this point forward I will use the single word interpreting or interpreter (as the situation dictates) to include the dual task of interpreting (working with the oral word) and translation (working with the written word).

am uncomfortable with the questions that I am asking. What are the "right" questions to be asking in this area? What are the "big" questions that should be asked? Furthermore, I do not have the luxury of being able to read what others have written about the topic because, frankly, I cannot find this type of reflection on this topic. (I suspect that this is because others have not written about these questions—I do not know any other professor in a Christian college or university that is a professionally-trained interpreter with a graduate degree in the field.) In addition, although it has been a long path thus far for me to have attained my current status in the interpreting field, it is only relatively recently that I have begun to ask myself questions of this nature.

Although I initially began interpreting because of personal reasons,[28] I have continued in my endeavors because of a combination of an inner drive that has pushed me forward coupled with external motivation. As I began to become comfortable with interpreting, realizing that I had an ability that not all bilingual individuals have, I also was encouraged by many others to continue to improve and realize the talent that others also recognized in me. As such, I continued to seek out opportunities that would allow and force me to improve, fueled by a drive to want to progress and advance in my abilities. Being an interpreter requires a dedication to life-long learning and improvement (as well as a willingness to allow one to be criticized by others).

As a Christian and an interpreter, I now ask myself how I am different–if I'm different–from other, non-Christian interpreters. I am also careful to say that I am a Christian and an interpreter, and not to say that I am a Christian interpreter (although I am comfortable in saying that I am a Christian professor of Spanish). Has my faith fundamentally shaped what I do as an interpreter?

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[28] Because of my family situation.

When I am interpreting in the booth, is my interpreting any different from that of a Muslim, Buddhist, or atheist interpreter? Absolutely not, nor should it be. As an interpreter, my personal convictions cannot in any way influence my interpreting. While a student in the Translation and Interpreting graduate program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, I studied under professors and with students who were Buddhists, atheists, spiritualists, anti-Christian, leftists, rightists, of different sexual orientation, Latinos, Anglos, Americans, Mexicans, Jamaicans, Argentineans, and Spaniards; yet, our interpreting of what we heard and our translation of what we read had to be very similar and as identical as possible. Faith could not and did not change what we were interpreting and translating. And yet, faith is important.

When I am in court, whether I am interpreting for a foul-mouthed anti-Christian defendant or for someone who has attended church with me,[29] my interpreting has to be of the same professional caliber. Whether I am interpreting the coarsest of possible insults[30] or the highest praise that could be lavished on someone, my interpreting cannot be different from that of a non-Christian. When an individual reads my translation of a witness statement, a trial information, minutes of testimony, or of the transcription of another interpreter's work, the reader should not, does not and cannot notice that it was translated by a Christian. And yet, I am convinced that my faith is important and does have a bearing on my work as interpreter.

As a certified, professional legal interpreter, I am governed by a strict code of ethics that severely limits what I, as an interpreter, can do.[31] The Iowa Code of Professional Conduct for Judicial Branch Interpreters addresses the areas of accuracy and completeness, representation of

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[29] Interpreting for individuals that you know can introduce other complications and can be grounds, depending on the situation, to declare a conflict of interest and the resulting need to recuse oneself.

[30] The need to interpret vulgarities, insults and course language comes as a surprise to many beginning interpreters. From the outset of any professional training program, it is made clear that an interpreter will need to interpret those terms also.

[31] See also Grabau and Gibbons, "Protecting the Rights of Linguistic Minorities: Challenges to Court Interpretation".

qualifications, impartiality and avoidance of conflict of interest, professional demeanor, confidentiality, restriction of public comment, scope of practice, assessing and reporting impediments to performance, duty to report ethical violations, and professional development. As such, I may not aid and assist defendants, explain terms or processes to defendants, simplify legalese style language, offer assistance, voice their concerns to others (other than interpreting for them), or even have friendly conversations with them during recesses and before or after cases. As an interpreter, I am there to be a bridge between the speakers of different languages (but not to be an active participant in the conversation or discussion), and to provide a level playing field or equal footing for the non English speaking Hispanic defendant or witness. Many times this has the appearance of being cold-hearted, not wanting to help, or just being plain indifferent, and running directly against what the Bible teaches us in the areas of loving our neighbor, helping the stranger, being a voice for the voiceless, and seeking justice for all. But this is exactly what the Code of Professional Conduct requires, and what is considered as part of being a professional interpreter. Furthermore, this is precisely the area in which beginning interpreters have the greatest difficulty. Many times individuals want to interpret in order to try and help others by explaining the system, simplifying terms, voicing concerns, and being an advocate for others. Moreover, whenever an interpreter steps away from strict interpreting, he or she can be legally accused of practicing law (which is the sole jurisdiction of attorneys) and be disqualified from interpreting ever again.

One observation that I have had many times concerning the limited personal interaction that an interpreter is allowed to have with Hispanics during the interpreting process is that the more professional that an interpreter is, the less "Christian" it feels-on one level. This is compounded by the realities of Hispanic culture, where one is expected to engage in

"pleasantries" before dealing with the issue at hand. But yet, looking at it from a different perspective, if I were not the professional interpreter that I am, I would not have any access to these Hispanics, and they many times would not have the benefit of professional interpreting. As such, because I am professional and because I am willing to abide by the code of conduct, I am able to help those who are in need of help, those who are feeling defenseless in their situation.

In other styles of interpreting, such as religious, medical and community interpreting, the situation is similar. Although there is perhaps somewhat more leeway in non-judicial settings, an interpreter is there to interpret, and not for other roles. (However, I prefer to restrict my comments to the areas of judicial and religious interpreting, because those are the two fields in which I do the majority of my work.) When I interpret church services (both in unilingual church settings with the use of wireless equipment for a small number of listeners, or during bilingual services when I interpret from beside the pulpit), I am extremely careful to not change, add to, or subtract from what the pastor says. I have wondered at times whether or not I would be able to interpret a religious service for another faith (after the necessary preparation of memorizing terms, understanding content, etc.[32]). As a professionally-trained interpreter, I should be able to do this. Or, the flip question is, could an atheist interpret a Christian church service (again, after the necessary preparation) equally well?

As I have already indicated, my faith should not be evident in my interpreting. However, others have argued with me that, as an interpreter, I should be a witness to others and use the opportunity to share the gospel, whenever possible, i.e., perhaps before or after interpreting. Or, another approach that others have suggested, is to share a tract with a prisoner in jail after

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[32] As soon as an interpreter receives notification of an assignment, preparation begins by reviewing vocabulary, building glossaries, background reading in both languages, and extensive sight-translation (reading out loud a written document in the other language) of documents in both languages that deal with the subject area.

interpreting between that prisoner and the attorney. For me, both situations cross the boundary of what I am able to do as an interpreter.

In the first situation, the "interpreting triangle" is broken. The triangle concept is very useful in understanding the role of the interpreter. Whenever there are two individuals who speak different languages (representing two points of the triangle), an interpreter is needed to fill the third point of the intelpreting triangle in order that communication can take place. Whenever any point of the triangle is not present (e.g., the attorney steps away for a moment or the judge is attending to other issues, the defendant is out of the room, or the interpreter is not yet present), true communication should not and cannot take place. (In this case, "true communication" is the communication between the attorney or judge and the defendant because the interpreter is not an active participant in the conversation.) Therefore, the interpreter should also step away for a moment whenever either of the other two individuals is not present in the room because the interpreter has no right to speak to either party, other than to interpret.

In the second situation (handing out the occasional tract), the interpreter would be blurring an important distinction between the different roles that the individual has. An interpreter has access to inmates in jail only because of his or her role as interpreter. In that capacity, I (or any other interpreter) should not and must not represent other interests (no matter how good or noble). If I were to begin to represent other interests, distrust as to what my actual role is would result, and I would no longer be asked to interpret in the jail. If an individual wants to share religious tracts with inmates, that individual must enter the jail in that capacity, i.e., as a church elder or as pastor.

I have occasionally pointed out to others that, as an interpreter, in many ways I am limited as to what I can do in the area of advocacy. As such, perhaps an easy way to silence

advocates is to convince them to begin interpreting because their role quickly becomes narrow and quite defined. Nevertheless, the knowledge of our current legal (vis-à-vis Hispanic immigrants) and immigration system that I have acquired as interpreter is now quite in-depth. I am able to share this knowledge in my classes and in other opportunities that I have to educate others. I am privy to situations and examples that few others have the opportunity to see and hear. Although I cannot share the specifics and details of any one situation, I am able to convert that knowledge into teaching tools that allow me to ask the necessary questions for students to think differently about issues related to such areas as justice, society, and immigration. As a Christian, I think this is an important role because as Christians we are called to respond with wisdom to the situations we confront.

Although it is almost too easy to state that motivation is where faith and interpreting intersect, almost to the point of sounding superficial, I do think that it is an important factor. Although some professional interpreters have stated to me that they are professional interpreters solely because of the money, the vast majority indicate that they have some other reason, some other motivation, or they would burn out and search out another, less stressful, career.

For me personally my faith is a factor in my ongoing interest in interpreting and one of the reasons that I continually to move forward professionally in that area. (Teaching Spanish is less strenuous, less mentally challenging, and much less stressful than interpreting.) In a small way, as a professional interpreter who is a Christian, I am able to help to bring justice to others, and I am helping to empower the powerless.[33] In many counties or other districts, where professional interpreters are not readily available (and therefore the courts can turn to other, non-professional interpreters), many times Hispanic defendants are quickly processed, without fully

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[33] For further discussion of this topic, see also Koene, "Professional Court Interpretation and the Christian Professor".

understanding the proceedings (at least not to the extent of a level playing field or equal footing as English speaking defendants). Locally here in Sioux County, many times I am the only constant for the Hispanics during the judicial process.[34] Although they are faced with a series of English-speaking individuals, they receive the interpretation through one individual, which in some ways creates a trust that otherwise could not be achieved.[35] In that sense, I am impacting the lives of others in a positive way, as a Christian, without sharing the gospel and I am following what Jesus himself said in Matthew 25:34-36

> "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me'".

Another way in which faith and my interpreting intersect is by my presence as a Christian in the interpreting field. As one of just a handful of Christians in this field, I am in the privileged position of working with non-Christians in a professional manner and being able to shape others through example. Returning to the argument from the previous chapter that our faith should shape our approach, and that our approach is readily evident in how we carry out what we do and

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[34] Generally, at the time of the arrest of a Hispanic, the local police officer will request the help of a non-certified interpreter. During the booking at the jail, at times I am present and at times a non-certified interpreter is utilized. The day following their booking, when the defendant is with the judge for the initial appearance and the formal judicial process begins, a certified interpreter such as myself should be called. Subsequent contact with the judicial system includes the arraignment (I am present), the pretrial conference (I am present), attorney-client conferences (I am present), the presentence interview and report process (I am present), during the plea offer and plea bargaining pretrial conference (I am present), the plea taking hearing and the sentencing hearing (generally at the same time, and for which I am present).

[35] In larger jurisdictions where multiple certified interpreters are present, this is not necessarily the case because any one of a number of interpreters could then be called on to interpret.

in how we put what we believe into action, the faith that has shaped me as a person and as a professional is evident in what I do as an interpreter.

One clear example that I can give is in the area of professional working relationships with other interpreters. The majority of interpreters are very defensive of their work, many times unwilling to acknowledge mistakes unless they are overly obvious, and quick to point out the faults of other interpreters. This professional pride (and antagonism) is quite typical in the field of interpretation and is part of the rather competitive spirit that exists among interpreters. However, it is also important for interpreters to be humble and to acknowledge mistakes. Interpreters are not machines or computers; interpreters are humans who make mistakes. Not only does the Code of Professional Conduct require that we readily acknowledge are mistakes, as a person I need to be always cognizant of the fact during interpreting that I will make mistakes, that I am far from perfect, and that I always need to continue to improve and expand my skills and knowledge. Therefore, each time I am sworn in as an interpreter, I insist that I am swearing to carry out my task "to the best of my ability".

My faith should also be apparent in my research and writing in regard to interpreting and translation. This could possibly be in regard to the topics that I choose to focus on, or my treatment of more general topics. Exactly how this will play out in the future is not entirely clear at the moment, given the fact that currently there are very limited publishing opportunities for scholarship in this field from a Christian perspective.

Regionally, one concrete way in which faith and interpreting intersect for me personally is that I am now becoming better and better known on a regional level as the certified legal interpreter who is a professor at Northwestern College. The College is becoming a familiar

name[36] within judicial and legal circles in western and northwestern Iowa, and people have already begun to ask whether or not Northwestern would consider the idea of beginning an interpreting program.[37]

Stepping back now somewhat to look at the overall field of professional interpreting both nationally and internationally, it is very clear that the profession is undergoing a process of "commoditization", with interpreters of lesser spoken languages becoming more and more valuable commodities. Although an experienced, free-lance professional Spanish-English conference interpreter (i.e., interpreting at international conferences such as for United Nations bodies, the Organization of American States, the Summit of the Americas, the European Community, etc.) is able to earn up to $800-$900 per diem, this is a paltry sum compared to those interpreters of languages such as Farsi and Dari, who are able to earn from double to triple that amount, depending on their willingness to interpret in more remote areas (such as Guantanamo Bay).[38] Today's international reality determines which languages are more economically valuable, as set by the level of importance attributed to knowing and understanding what the speakers of those languages are communicating to each other, because of political, military, economic, or other reasons and motives. This factor is then compounded by the availability or dearth of professional interpreters for that language combination. As such, it is the "marketplace" that sets the salary range for professional interpreters. But are not all languages created equal? How is that some languages are more "valuable" (at least in the area of interpretation) than other languages? For me there is a disconnect here in many ways.

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[36] For area judges and attorneys it is abundantly clear that I am a professor at Northwestern because any hearing or other proceeding that requires my presence as interpreter need to be scheduled around my teaching schedule.

[37] The possibility of beginning an interpreting program at Northwestern is very intriguing for me personally, and would be one very clear way in which my faith and interpreting would intersect, by helping to develop and influence other Christians who would be learning to become interpreters.

[38] These numbers are those that were used in interpretation and translation classes, 2008-2009, at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Interpreting demands and skills are somewhat similar, independent of language combinations for the bilingual speaker.[39] And yet, although all are equal, some are economically more valuable than others depending on the international realities of the day.[40]

If interpreting is viewed only through an economic lens, it is quite easy to lose sight of our purpose as interpreters–that of bridging the communications gap. As interpreters, our work is valuable anytime that there is miscommunication, lack of communication, or no communication whatsoever because of the language barrier. As an interpreter who is also Christian, I view my interpreting work as one small step in the process of bridging the communications gap that became part of this world because of the presence of sin. It is because of sin that disunity began, and it is through interpretation that I can help to bring about clarity of communication and to begin to help restore harmony in creation.

This then brings us back full circle–it is again the approach to interpreting where faith and interpreting fully intersect (very similar as to teaching a second language, as I discussed in chapter 2). It is my approach to interpreting, based on my faith, that makes my interpreting "Christian", although my interpretation of what is said needs to be the same of that from a non-Christian interpreter. It is through my understanding of what interpreting is, how I approach interpreting, what I do with my skills, my influence in the field, and how I try to research and write about interpreting that allows me to bring faith and interpreting together.

By no means is this the final word or the last step in this discussion and process. In many ways this chapter, although important, is only a tentative and beginning step in trying to process

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[39] The level of difficulty involved in learning to interpret between languages depends on the language combination because sentence structure and word order and complicating factors. However, once the interpreter has reached professional skill levels, the mental demand is quite similar, independent of the language combination.

[40] This is readily apparent in the European Community and its need for interpreters. Interpreters of the more "popular" Western Europe languages (English, Spanish, French, German, etc.) now essential need to learn an Eastern European language as their third language in order to have regularly schedule interpreting assignments in Brussels.

the larger issue of integrating faith and interpreting. Perhaps in the future, similar to the recently developing theology of immigration,[41] a theology of interpreting could be developed in which these preliminary ideas could be fleshed out in greater detail and in a more coherent fashion.

In conclusion, any Christian understanding of both second language teaching and interpreting must be firmly rooted in our understanding of language in general, framed within a biblical perspective on language. It is because of what I discussed in chapter 1 that I am able to understand what I do as a second language professor and as an interpreter and to see how both those areas relate to my faith. As I come to better understand how faith and language intersect, I can also become more effective in my teaching and interpreting—I will be able to become a person who is not a "foreigner" to the other speaker, my students will come to better understand the true meaning of not being a "foreigner" to others, and, as interpreter, I will be able to better bridge the gap between speakers of two languages who indeed are "foreigners" to each other.[42]

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[41] See, for example, Groody, "A Theology of Immigration"; Scott, "Mi Casa Es Tu Case: A Biblical Perspective on the Current Immigration Situation"; "Immigration, 2009" (a resolution of the National Association of Evangelicals); and *Journal of Latin American Theology*, 2008 3.2 Special Edition on Immigration.

[42] See I Corinthians 14:11.

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