

**Dr. Roman Yereniuk
Metropolitan Ilarion**

**TRANSLATING THE BIBLE INTO UKRAINIAN TOOK
THIS PROFESSOR 21 YEARS AND PROVED AN EXCITING
OF SCHOLARSHIP ON THE RUN**

HIS WEEKEND in Winnipeg members of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church are holding ceremonies to mark the completion of a remarkable work of scholarship by the head of the church, 75-year-old Dr. Ivan Ohienko, – «Metropolitan of Winnipeg and All Canada».

His accomplishment is the translation of the whole of the Bible from Greek into modern Ukrainian. It consumed more than 20 years of labor in four countries. In the course of the work he was twice forced to flee with his books and manuscript before the advancing Soviet armies.

Dr. Ohienko, who came to Canada in 1947, and is also known by his religious name as “the Metropolitan Ilarion, wonders today whether he would have taken on the task had he realized at the start all it would involve. It was back in 1936 that the British and Foreign Bible Society, the oldest of the inter-denominational Bible societies which translate and distribute the Bible throughout the world, sought someone to prepare a new translation into Ukrainian.

At that time Dr. Ohienko was living in Poland, having fled into exile when the Soviet Union took over the independent Republic of Ukraine in 1920. A brilliant student of philology, the science of languages, and a prominent Ukrainian Orthodox churchman, he had been the founder-president of the Ukrainian State University. He had also served as Minister of Education and later as Minister of Religious Affairs before the Communists took over the Ukrainian Republic.

In Poland during the ‘twenties and ‘thirties Dr. Ohienko had taught, in universities, meanwhile taking an active part in church affairs and writing prolifically on language subjects. It was a series of articles on methods of translation which attracted the attention of the Bible Society and brought a call from Vladimir Enholtz, its Warsaw representative.

«It was most unexpected when Enholtz asked if I would undertake to translate the whole of the Bible», Dr. Ohienko recalls.

«How soon do you want it done?» f asked.

«As soon as possible», Enholtz said.

«I shook my head and said, You know, this is just not the kind of job that can be rushed».

Dr. Ohienko did not realize how truly he spoke. Enholtz suggested three years and Dr. Ohienko agreed to five years for the completion of the work. Even this longer period was considered possible only because he had worked at intervals since 1918 on Biblical translation, and had the New Testament all but completed.

By 1919, when the war began, his version of the New Testament had been published, and his work on the Old Testament was well in hand. At first the Nazis did not bother him, but soon Enholtz, who was of Jewish faith before being converted to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, felt that his own life was in danger. Accordingly, he returned to Dr. Ohienko units of the completed manuscript that he had not been able to forward to London as previously. He felt the material was safer with the translator, who was now a bishop of the church.

In 1940, Dr. Ohienko was consecrated Ukrainian Orthodox Archbishop of Cholm, in Poland. For some time he hid Enhdltz in his home. His own turn to be threatened by danger came when the Russian armies were pushing back the Germans in Poland in 1944.

He fled to Austria, where he was given refuge in a Roman Catholic monastery at Hertzogenburg, near Vienna. There, in a monk's cell, he carried on with his work.

With the advance of the Russians from the east he moved the Biblical materials for safekeeping into a room provided by the Roman Catholic archbishop at St. Polten. When the Red Army entered the area a few *months later*, he and his group started on foot for the Swiss border, carrying a few personal possessions and as many books and manuscripts as they could pack into their rucksacks.

At the border, which they finally reached after alternatively walking, thumbing rides and taking a train, they were refused admission to Switzerland. One of his sons who was accompanying him (he has two sons and a daughter; his wife died in the mid-'thirties) pleaded successfully for permission to cross the border long enough to make a phone call.

Three days later came an order signed by the President of Switzerland himself authorizing them to enter the country. Dr. Ohienko went to Lausanne to continue his task. But there his work was seriously impeded by the lack of an invaluable dictionary he had compiled to assist him with his translation, and which he had left at St. Polten.

The dictionary, consisting of 37 volumes of 400 pages each, had taken thousands of hours of labor. It gave the nearest Ukrainian equivalent of each word used in the Greek version of the Bible which he was translating.

After a year and a half in Lausanne, Dr. Ohienko accepted the invitation of a Ukrainian congregation in Winnipeg to come to Canada. He was elected to his present position as Metropolitan in 1951.

But before then he had been in touch with Vladimir Enholtz, who had survived the war. An arrangement was made with the Bible Society for British soldiers to «liberate» the dictionary and other reference materials from where they had been left at St. Polten, in the Soviet Zone of occupied Austria.

Once more in possession of the valuable products of his long research, Dr. Ohienko was able to complete his translation. He has still to read hundreds of pages of proofs, but this he considers «relaxation».

In view of the mere physical effort of translating the Bible's 775,000 words – quite apart from the degree of scholarship demanded this is perhaps understandable.

The Bible Society had instructed Dr. Ohienko to make an exact translation of a Greek version by E. Nestle. At the same time, his contract provided that he could consult other versions (an approved Hebrew text was supplied) wherever differences of interpretation arose. He could make reference to these differences in footnotes.

Dr. Ohienko was admirably fitted for his task. In addition to a thorough understanding of Greek and Hebrew, he has knowledge of Latin, Sanskrit, German, French, Russian, Polish, Serbian and English.

A few examples indicate the kind of problems with which he was confronted. In the Lord's Prayer, a line of the King James Version reads in English: «Give us this day our Dr, Ohienko points out that the meaning of the Greek word which has been translated as «daily bread» is not known today. He believes it unlikely that the materialistic idea of «daily bread» would enter into a prayer devoted otherwise

to spiritual matters. Rather he believes the translation should be «our spiritual bread», or «bread of the soul».

The last line of the 23rd Psalm («The Lord is my shepherd») reads in the King James Version: «And I will dwell in. the house of the Lord for ever». A famous modern translation by Prof. Edgar J. Goodspeed has this translation of the line: «And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord down to old age». A literal translation to English of Dr. Ohienko's Ukrainian reads: «I will sit in God's house for long times».

As can be seen, translators often disagree and it is because some translations differ radically from those of the past that controversies arise when new Bibles appear. The Garden of Eden has been translated as «a park»; Noah's Ark as «a barge»; and the «wise men» who came to worship the infant Jesus as «magicians». A reference to the mother of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14) has been translated «a virgin» from Greek and «a young woman» from Hebrew.

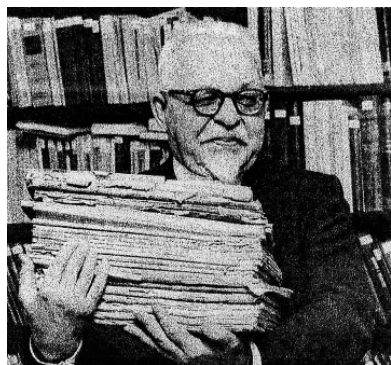
But the Bible translator must do more than merely resolve such linguistic problems. He must be, as one writer has said, «at the same time poet and philosopher, preacher and historian, orator and story-teller».

If a Bible translation is to have literary quality it must retain the exalted and poetical flow of language. Its philosophy and theology must be sound. It must lend itself to simplicity in being read and pleasure in being heard.

Dr. Ohienko hopes his translation will fulfil all these requirements. What he has striven for is a combination of exactness of translation with literary style. If he has succeeded, his translation should remain in use around the world for about 50 years, (In this time, there are language changes and discoveries in scholarship which make new translations necessary. At the moment, for example, the Dead Sea Scrolls are influencing Biblical scholars, though Dr. Ohienko believes that so far the scrolls have supported what was already known.)

Now that the task which has occupied a large part of his life is done, Dr. Ohienko confesses that he is happier than he has ever been. He sometimes ruminates about the medieval monks who spent many years copying the Bible letter by letter. He thinks particularly of one who wrote in the margin at the end of his labors: «How happy are the sailors on reaching safe harbors. Even so am I after completing this work».

To which the Metropolitan is prepared to say with fellow-feeling: «Amen».



Beaming Metropolitan, now 75, began huge task in 1936. Completed manuscripts of his Bible make a bulky armful.



Discussing translation with Dr. Ohienko is his friend and dose associate in church work, Very Rev. S. W. Sawchuk.



First stage in Dr. Ohienko's task was compilation of a dictionary giving Ukrainian meaning of every word in Greek original. Dictionary, oh the shelf behind him, fills 37 volumes.

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ГРИГОРІЙ КОСТЮК: ЧЕРЕЗ РОКИ І ВІДСТАНІ ДО 111-ТОЇ РОКОВИНИ ВІД ДНЯ НАРОДЖЕННЯ

Золотава осінь спадає червленим падолистом на родючі, життєдайні подільські чорноземи, спалахує вогкясто кетягами калкновними в придорожніх лісосмугах та пралісах. Доспівають і важко гупають на позовкљу траву боришко-вещьких садів пізні яблука. А онде, за крутоярем, мовби прощаючись з чудодійним літеплом і незабутніми росяними світанками, під скупими (осінь, бо!) сонячними променями яріє горобина... Поділля, дорогий серцю край, його мала й велика Батьківщина. Він залишив її ще зовсім юним, та завше – і в горі, і в радості – усім серцем линув до неї, не забував про неї ні на мить. Хіба можна забути те до чого приріс змалку усім еством до коріння роду твого і сам ти суцций?»

Він народився в мальовничому селі Боришківці на Кам'яначчині 25 жовтня 1902 року в простій селянській родині, яка з діда прадіда займалася важкою хліборобською працею, ростила дітей, які згодом ставали хліборобами й в цьому вбачали своє покликання, свою долю, сенс свого життя. Так жили не лише Костюки, так жили десятки, сотні боришківчан. Праця й тільки праця давала їм засоби для існування, а рідна земля була для них і рідною матінкою-годувальницею.

Григорій Костюк обрав інший шлях. Ще в зовсім юні роки визріла в сільського хлопчини палка, непереборна любов до української мови й літератури, до слова. Шевченків «Кобзар», його вірші розбудили в серці юнака той вогонь» ті негасні іскри які, нуртуючи в ньому, повели його нелегкими життєвими стежками крізь буревії часів і епох» неймовірно труднощі та боріння до світової слави й визнання.

Він не шукав слави. Він шукав себе, своє місце в цьому складному житті, де так мало добра, правди, справедливості й так багато зла, підступності, брехливого цинізму.

Таки справді нелегким виявився його шлях. Зате праведним, гідного високого звання Людини, Патріота, Громадянина.