



he or she has done what the Lord demands in order to have a clean conscience. Baptism is an appeal *for* not *from* a clean conscience.

alteration of the first part of the text. Both render it “baptism, which now saves you.” However, both editions of the NLT insert bias where the LB did not in the last part of the verse. The 1996 NLT describes baptism as, “an appeal to God FROM A CLEAN CONSCIENCE” (emphasis mine). The 2004 NLT says that it is “A RESPONSE TO GOD FROM A CLEAN CONSCIENCE” (emphasis mine). That is appalling! One may not have a “clean conscience” until

I understand the difficulty that can be encountered in trying to help people understand the wording of readings from older translations. However, there are literal translations which have been done within recent years which maintain the integrity of the text while avoiding denominational bias (e.g. NKJV, NASB, ESV). Whenever Christians look to a “dynamic equivalence” translation (e.g. NIV, 1996 NLT, TEV) they are subjecting themselves to the bias and beliefs of the translators. This is especially true when Christians subject themselves to the use of a clear paraphrase (e.g. LB, 2004 NLT). In my judgment, while we are free to consult any version we choose in personal study, it is unwise to use “dynamic equivalence” translations or paraphrase versions in preaching or public reading without a clear explanation of these dangers. As in the case of the NLT, we might think we are encouraging one thing (1996 NLT) yet lead people toward something altogether different (2004 NLT).



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## Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.

● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

11.31

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

August 2  
2009

## Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Ken Ford  
Charles Kelley  
Pat Ledbetter

## Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Pat Goguen  
Neil Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Fred Perez  
Rusty Scott

## Evangelists:

Kyle Pope  
Curtis Carwile

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“The word of God  
is living and  
powerful...”  
Hebrews 4:12

## The New Living Translation on Baptism

by Kyle Pope

In 1971 Tyndale House published a work entitled the *Living Bible*. This text was the culmination of a project that had begun years earlier by a Baptist writer named Kenneth Taylor. After becoming frustrated at the difficulty of explaining Bible readings to his children from the King James Version, Taylor began each night writing out paraphrases of the text he planned to read to them. As time went on Taylor thought that other families might face a similar problem, and so in 1962 published the *Living Letters: The Paraphrased Epistles* followed in 1967 by the *Living New Testament*. When the complete work was published it became widely popular across the United States, selling over 40 million copies from 1971 to 1996. In spite of its popularity many preachers (even among the denominations) were critical of it because it was not a true translation but a paraphrase. Any paraphrase is subject to the bias and beliefs of its writer. Taylor did not know Hebrew or Greek, but merely simplified the wording of other English translation and often gave para-



phrases which reflected his erroneous denominational views.

In 1996 Tyndale House, under the guidance of Mark Taylor (one of Kenneth Taylor's sons) published a new work entitled the *New Living Translation*. Ten years earlier, Mark Taylor and Ron Beers had set out to produce a true translation of Scripture which retained the readability of the older *Living Bible* but avoided the stigma of being a paraphrase. A team of translators worked on the effort and produced "dynamic

equivalence" translation. This style of translation does not offer a "word for word" rendering of each text, but seeks to convey a "thought for thought" correspondence. All translations do this to some extent. For example, the Greeks would describe people who spoke "face to face" as speaking "mouth to mouth." This means something different to us, so virtually all translations translate this phrase *thought for thought*. It is dangerous when this is done too much because it is more subject to personal bias. When the *New Living Translation* (NLT) first came out (even among brethren) it received some acceptance because of its smooth style and readability. In addition, the fact that it was a translation rather than a paraphrase led some to advocate its use.

However, while these initial efforts to create a translation rather than a paraphrase met with some success, in 2004 Tyndale House issued a revision of the NLT which (in some cases) not only reversed the effort to make this a translation, but actually became more of a paraphrase than the original *Living Bible* ever had been. We cite as an example of this the treatment of three important texts on the subject of baptism:

**Acts 2:38:** Both the original *Living Bible* (LB) and the 1996 edition of the NLT were fairly literal in their rendering of this text. Both described baptism as "for the remission of sins." The 2004 edition of the NLT, however, went beyond the point of paraphrase and read its own biased commentary into the text. It has Peter commanding the people to "be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ TO SHOW THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED FORGIVENESS OF SINS" (emphasis mine). This is outrageous! Scripture never teaches that forgiveness of sins comes in Christ prior to baptism. This is a blatant perversion of the Word of God and an effort to promote denominational error.

**Acts 22:16:** A text which clearly refutes the idea that forgiveness comes before baptism into Christ is found in Paul's ac-

count of his own conversion in Acts 22:16. After the Lord had appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Paul waited three days in the city until Ananias came to him. Again, the LB and 1996 NLT were fairly literal. The LB had him tell Paul, "be baptized and be cleansed from your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." The 1996 NLT used the phrase "have your sins washed away," but kept everything else the same. Yet, the 2004 NLT inserted commentary into the text, having Ananias tell Paul, "Get up and be baptized. [period] Have your sins washed away BY CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD" (emphasis mine). The Bible teaches that "calling on the name of the Lord" encompasses all that is involved in obedience to the Gospel (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13). In the Biblical sense it is true that sins are washed away "by" calling on the Lord's name. However, the denominational world rejects this and teaches that faith alone constitutes "calling on" the Lord's name. The NLT perpetuates this false doctrine by separating the command to "be baptized" from the consequence of baptism in faith—"washing away sins." It then makes it seem as if forgiveness comes through some inner call of faith separate from baptism. If this were true, Paul's sins would have already been washed away. This is not what the Bible teaches.

**1 Peter 3:21:** This powerful text shows beyond all doubt that baptism is necessary for salvation, in that it declares (as most literal translations reflect) "baptism now saves." In this text all of the ren-

derings of the LB and NLT betray a denominational bias. Kenneth Taylor, in the LB went so far as to write, "in baptism we show that we have been saved." Yet, he then puts in the last part of the verse, "in being baptized we are turning to God and asking him to cleanse our hearts from sin." How can baptism show we "have been saved" if it is "asking him to" forgive our sin? Both editions of the NLT rejected Taylor's blatant

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<p><b>Acts 2:38</b> Peter replied, "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."</p>	<p><b>Acts 2:38</b> Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show that you have received forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."</p>
<p><b>Acts 22:16</b> And now, why delay? Get up and be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on the name of the Lord.</p>	<p><b>Acts 22:16</b> What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away, by calling on the name of the Lord.</p>
<p><b>1 Peter 3:21</b> And this is a picture of baptism, which now saves you by the power of Jesus Christ's resurrection. Baptism is not a removal of dirt from your body; it is an appeal to God from a clean conscience.</p>	<p><b>1 Peter 3:21</b> And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.</p>

