

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.0 Introduction

The main task of this thesis has been to compare and evaluate five Chinese versions of the Holy Bible. The following sections will summarize the finding of this thesis and suggest some areas for further study.

#### 6.1 Summary of Findings

This thesis began by stating the goal and methodology. Five Chinese versions of the Holy Bible were selected for comparison and evaluation. Then, a passage, Colossians 2:6-15, was selected based on the difficult level of exegesis and translation. Next, based on the literature review, this selected passage was analyzed in detail verse by verse. Then, the translation issues encountered in the five versions were listed verse by verse. Next, these translation issues were overviewed and sub-categorized. Then, the five Chinese versions were put in order according to the translation issues. Based on this, the five Chinese versions of the Holy Bible are compared according to the translation issues as follows in Table 6:

Degree	Least → Most
Inaccuracies	UMV (3) → NCV(11) → CLB (17) → TCV (21) → PTHV (36)
Unnatural expressions	UMV (0) → NCV (6) → CLB (8) → PTHV (10) → TCV (12)
Lack of clarity	UMV (2), PTHV(2) → NCV (3) → TCV (5) → CLB (8)
Diminished impact	UMV (0) → NCV (1) → TCV (2), CLB (2), PTHV (2)
Outdated words	CLB (0) → NCV (1), PTHV(1) → TCV (2) → UMV (4)

Table 6 Comparison of the Five Chinese Versions of Colossians 2:6-15 with Number of Problem Occurrences

Based on the above analysis, the strength and the drawbacks of each version are discussed as follows:

UMV is the best version among the five Chinese versions. It is the most accurate, natural, logical, clear, dynamic and reliable version. The style is good because of

its rhythm, parallel constructions, concision and other devices. UMV is more concise than other versions. This is a controversial issue. China has a long history of literature. Conciseness, elegance, poetic rhythm, vividness yet simplicity are considered good style. So being concise is appreciated and enjoyed by the Chinese native speakers. However, at the same time, being concise means a heavier information load. Thus it takes comparatively more effort for the readers to understand the meaning. Besides this, the sentence structure of Chinese is becoming less concise and this makes the concise UVM comparatively harder for less educated new generations or non-native speakers (including the minority translators). The biggest drawback of UMV is the use of outdated expressions which occur due to natural language change although these expressions were up-to-date when UMV was translated. Some lexical choices are ambiguous or have too narrow a sense. The logical relations in the translation also need improvement. UMV needs revision and less concise structures; more up-to-date words, final particles, some exclamations and more logical markers should be used to make it updated to current language usage. Although other versions are not as accessible as UMV in Mainland China, they still reach the hands of many Christian leaders. However, most of them choose to continue using UMV. The analysis shows that the high translation quality is one of the main reasons that most Chinese churches accept only UMV as their Bible. UMV has established its high acceptability by being accurate, natural, and clear. Many Christians who have no access to the original texts and any other Chinese versions may accept UMV because it is the only choice or because of habit. However, it does appear that the high quality of the UMV must be considered a factor in its widespread acceptance and continued use.

NCV is the second best version among the five Chinese versions. It is accurate, natural, logical and clear in most places. However, the accuracy, naturalness, logical relation and impact on the readers should be improved in some places. It is the second most concise version. The information load per sentence is the second highest one among the five Chinese versions. It is comparatively harder for less educated and non-native readers to understand this version, while it is enjoyed and

appreciated by the readers of a little bit higher Chinese level. The right grammatical forms (such as parts of speech) and up-to-date words should be used. It is a good reference for minority translators and it is comparatively easy for non-Christian Chinese and non-native speakers to read.

CLB is the third best version among the five Chinese versions. It is accurate, natural, and clear in many places. It contains no outdated words. It is less concise than UMV and CNV. Comparatively it is easier for readers of low Chinese level to understand the meaning. However, it also contains the most logical problems. This makes it hard for the readers to get the overall meaning of the passage. The impact on the readers is marred in some places. The accuracy, naturalness, clarity, logical relation and dynamic effect should be improved. Besides this, the right grammatical forms (such as parts of speech) and proper punctuation markers should be used. Minority translators and new readers of the Bible should be cautious when they use this version.

TCV is the most unnatural version and the second most inaccurate version. It contains the second most unclear logical relations. However, it contains no grammatical mistakes. No punctuation marker is misused. It is less concise than UMV and CNV. Comparatively it is easier for the readers of low Chinese level to understand the meaning. Accuracy, naturalness, logical relation and clarity should be improved a lot. Old words should be replaced by up-to-date words. The impact on the readers should be increased. Minority translators and the new readers of the Bible should be very cautious when they use this version.

PTHV is the most inaccurate version and the second most unnatural version. Mistranslation of key terms is a serious problem. The bad and religious connotations are repellant. Accuracy, naturalness and clarity should be improved a lot. Old words should be replaced by up-to-date words. The impact on the readers should be increased. The strength is its less concise language structure. The lighter information load makes it easier for the readers to get the meaning. The readers of low-Chinese level should be extremely cautious when they use this version although it is comparatively easy to understand. To avoid misunderstanding and

mistranslating, it is not recommended as a reference version for the minority translators.

The translators of the four new versions had good intentions to make the Bible more accurate, more natural and clearer for the modern readers. However, good intentions may not always be accomplished. These four versions have not been accepted by the majority of Chinese Christians and churches due to their quality. They have not been able to replace the UMV. However, they still have their value and they can be used for reference for certain purposes. This does not mean that UMV has no flaws. Indeed, it needs revision to meet the needs of the language changes.

## **6.2 Limitations of this Study**

The limitations of this study are as follows:

- 1) Only one translation theory is used as the standard for comparing and evaluating the five Chinese versions of the Holy Bible.
- 2) Only one passage is compared and evaluated in this study although it is representative.
- 3) Only one genre is under study. Although according to the impression of the author, the problems found in Colossians are also found in passages of other genres, such as Luke 19:1-10 (narrative) and Romans 1:1-7 (expository), different genres still have their own special features which requires special treatment in translation.
- 4) It is difficult to categorize the translation issues precisely. The categories used in the literature have fuzzy boundaries.
- 5) Due to the author's limited knowledge of Greek, the exegesis depended on other scholars heavily.
- 6) The Mandarin spoken in Mainland China is used for checking these five versions. However, usage of Chinese in other parts of the world is different.
- 7) The standard for good style is subjective.

8) Due to the lack of feasibility, comprehension checking with other native speakers of Chinese who had not had much previous exposure to Colossians 2:6-15 (see footnote 1 on UNS) was not carried out. Thus, an objective assessment on comprehensibility was not offered in this paper.

### **6.3 Suggestion for Further Study**

Some particular areas deserving special mention for future research are as follows:

First, different translation theories, such as the relevance theory, should be used as the standard for comparing and evaluating the five Chinese versions of the Holy Bible.

Secondly, more passages of different genres or a whole book from the Holy Bible should be studied.

Thirdly, UNS checking should be carried out in different regions of the world among Chinese native speakers.