

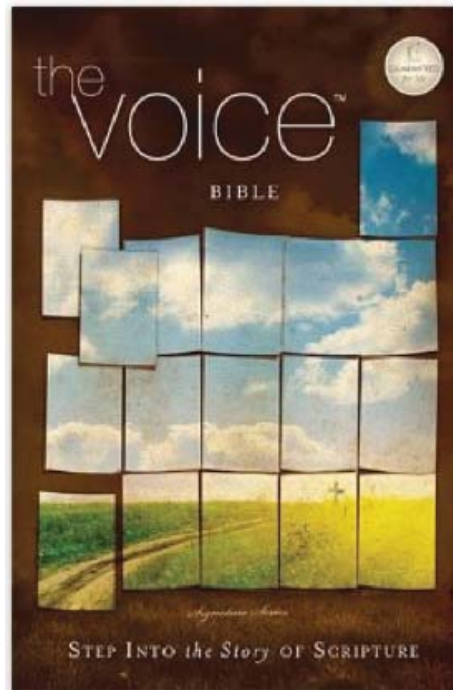
Program Summary (17 October 2013)

At 7:00 p.m., President Byrnes welcomed the membership to the 660th meeting of the HPS, which was founded in 1920.

At 8:00 p.m., President Byrnes introduced Wade Adams, and visitors were introduced by the members. Wade gave a preview of next month's speaker, Rice Bioengineering Professor Rebecca Richards-Kortum and the Rice Design Kitchen's role in the creation of a low-cost CPAP system that can be deployed in third world countries.

At 8:05, President Byrnes introduced the evening's speaker **Dr. David Capes**, a long-time friend. Dr. Capes is the Thomas Nelson Professor of Biblical Languages at Houston Baptist University. He was the founding Dean of the honors college at HBU. He holds a BA in religion from Mercer University and a PhD in New Testament from Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary.

The title of this evening's talk was **Re-Imagining Translation: Twenty-First Century Translating the Bible**. The membership warmly welcomed Dr. Capes. This is the 660th meeting of the Houston Philosophical Society.



Dr. Capes noted that 80% of individuals are born into the faith they practice. Re-translating the bible is necessary, as language changes from decade to decade. The Bible is the most owned and least read book. Can re-translation change this?

Reverend Chris Seay, Pastor of Ecclesia Houston, proposed to Dr. Capes the idea of a new translation of the Bible which would be appropriate for his downtown Church members. This led to a seven-year effort by 120 individuals and 2012 publication of *The Voice Bible*. The effort was guided by the observation that humans are hard-wired to hear and memorize stories, and draw meaning and purpose from them. A new translation of the Bible should focus on the stories and not on the propositions.

How to make a translation that is memorable? Recruit not just scholars but poets to work together. Bring in novelists to tell the story well, not obsess over tense, etc. The 24 Oxford and 24 Cambridge scholars that worked on the King James Bible were in fact also poets and writers. Today's scholars are more narrow.

The authors choose a screen-play format so you know who is speaking. Explanatory notes are part of the text, set off, but right there. If the English word does not exactly match the Hebrew word, an explanatory paragraph is inserted to bring out this fact.

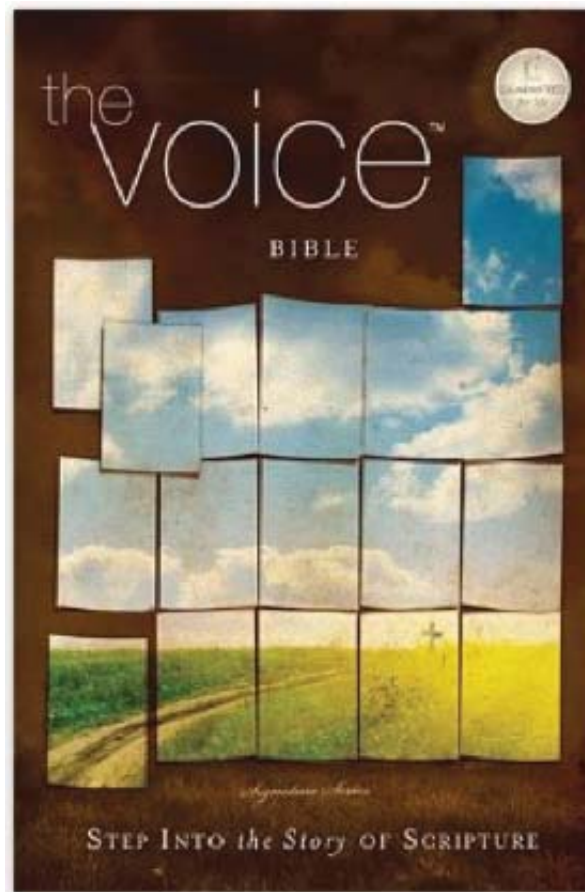
The translation is well-suited to the "virgin reader" of the Bible. College students for whom English is a second language are especially drawn to this version. A Norwegian translation is the best selling book in Norway.

Many key words in the Bible were never translated, but rather transliterated. For example, the word *Passover* did not exist in the 14th century. In Latin, the word was *pascha* and was transliterated to *paske* or *pack*. The word *Passover* was invented by 1535 by Tyndale because *to pass over* was literally the meaning of the Hebrew word. *Christos* -- > *Christus* -- > *Christ*. In *The Voice Bible*, Jesus Christ is translated as Jesus the Anointed. Christ is not a second name.

A thousand years ago, when reading was not common, stained glass was an important vehicle for telling stories. Angels today are willowly women. Angels in the Bible are masculine named and a source of great power and fear. How to translate in the face of conventional representation?

The purpose of the new effort is not to replace your favorite translation, but to provide a more accessible version for the new reader. Translation is an art — and practice makes perfect. Dr. Capes now feels ready to undertake another translation. He brought along a new version of the New Testament

to distribute this evening.



Dr. Capes wrapped up his remarks at 8:50 with an invitation to ask questions while an A/V glitch was attended to (Psalm 150). No luck, but several questions received authoritative information. The audience warmly thanked the speaker.

After another round of applause, and the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

David W. Scott
Recording Secretary