

WHY I SUPPORT THE REINA VALERA GOMEZ BIBLE

by Dr. Phil Stringer

Over the last several months I have received a number of questions about why I support the Reina Valera Gomez Bible—the new Spanish translation coordinated by Humberto Gomez. I have also received several written criticisms of his work and have been asked to respond to them. The following is a summary of some key points on the subject.

I Support the RVG Because of Its Base Text

I believe that God inspired (breathed out) every word of the Scripture (Holy Writings). He used the Greek language, the Hebrew language and a little Aramaic to do so. These words become the standard for every translation in every language. This is, by far, the most important standard for any translation effort. The purpose of any translation is to reproduce those original words in the language of the translation.

Dr. Gomez and those who worked with him are committed to the reproduction of those original words. Their base text is clearly designated. All throughout the various drafts of the work they remained open to have their work challenged on this basis.

Dr. Gomez believes that the accurate base text is the Received Text (Hebrew Massoretic text and the Greek Textus Receptus). This is the textual type used by faithful believers throughout the centuries.

I have not seen a single one of Dr. Gomez's critics state what they believe the base text for a Bible translation should be. If they have a standard text, they are not making it known.

I Support the RVG Because It Is Based Upon Sound Doctrine

Dr. Gomez and his collaborators believe in both the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible and the verbal preservation of the Scriptures. Their doctrinal position is clear and public. Some of Dr. Gomez's best known independent Baptist critics believe in concept inspiration. I have heard some of them say this in person. I am not aware of what the rest believe, but they do not make their positions clear in their statements about the RVG.

I Support the RVG Because Men of Real Scholarship Participated In the Work and Have Endorsed the Work

Dr. D. A. Waite (the Dean Burgon Society) participated in the effort and endorsed the effort. His credentials speak for themselves:

Dr. Waite was thoroughly trained in the original biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. He received credit in these languages at the University of Michigan (1945-48 in Classical Greek), and at the Dallas Theological Seminary (1948-53, New Testament Greek) as follows: In Greek, 66 semester hours; in Hebrew, 25 semester hours; a total of 91 semester hours in combined biblical languages. In addition to these 91 semester hours, the author has received credit for 27 additional hours in other foreign languages, divided as follows: Latin, 8 semester hours; French, 8 semester hours; Spanish, 11 semester hours. The grand total of foreign languages in terms of semester hours, in addition to the many other related courses taken at schools for work on the author's A.B., M.A., Th.M.,

Th.D., and Ph.D., has been 118 semester hours in foreign languages. This is only 2 semester hours short of a solid 4-year undergraduate course consisting of 120 semester hours required for graduation in most universities today. Four of the five residency-earned degrees mentioned above (M.A., Th.M., Th.D., and Ph.D.) required research theses and dissertations which prepared him to deal satisfactorily with documentation and evidence.

Rex Cobb is the Director of the Baptist Bible Translators Institute. He is a veteran missionary to Mexico. He has taught courses in linguistics since 1973. Probably no one in fundamental Baptist circles has addressed the issues of linguistics and translation as he has. He is fluent in Spanish.

Rex Cobb participated in the translation effort and has endorsed the final product.

H. D. Williams (Dean Burgon Society) has produced a first-class book, *Word for Word Translating of the Received Text, Verbal Plenary Translating*, on translation principles.

He spent over eight hours with Dr. Gomez, D. A. Waite, Rex Cobb, Steven Zeinner, myself (I have no idea why I was included in such a group) and others, discussing principles of Bible translation. He has endorsed the RVG based upon the translation principles used.

I have read and heard several critical comments about the RVG by people who question “the scholarship” involved in the project. Yet not one of those men themselves possesses any of the qualifications of a scholar, even though some have labeled themselves as such (scholar is not a title you award yourself nor can it be given to you by a few close friends). Not a one of them has a fraction of the language credentials that D. A. Waite has. I doubt if most of them could understand the titles of the courses Rex Cobb teaches. I know none of them could teach such courses. None of them has, or could produce a scholarly work like those written by D. A. Waite or H. D. Williams. They could not produce a scholarly work on translation or any other subject.

The critics academic credentials are slender and their record of scholarly accomplishments non-existent. Few have any record of any ministry accomplishments.

I Support the RVG Because It Has Convinced Honest Skeptics

Allen Johnson (Wings Bearing Precious Seed) and Carlos Donate (missionary to Guatemala) are both close friends. Both preach, teach and write in Spanish. Both are deeply committed to the pure word of God in Spanish. Both were very skeptical of the Gomez project in the beginning.

As the project advanced and they looked at rough drafts, both had to acknowledge that this was a genuine Received Text Bible in Spanish. Carlos Donate became involved in the project, helping to review the final drafts.

I Support the RVG Because of the Demand for It

I have met a number of American missionaries and Hispanic nationals who testify that this project is an answer to prayers they have been praying for a long time. Dr. Steven Zeinner is a long-time veteran missionary to Mexico, former general director of Bearing Precious Seed, Milfort, and now director of Bearing Precious Seed, Global. He has told me of seeing hundreds of requests for the RVG in a very short time span.

I Support the RVG Because of Its Availability

Anyone can print the RVG. The Word of God should not be bound by man. You do not have to pay royalties to a modernist Bible Society to print the RVG. Humberto makes no profit from this project.

I Support the RVG Because It Has an Honest Name

Throughout the centuries, Bible translations have been identified by the primary editor, translator or sponsor of the translation. This allows people immediately to identify the translation, the text and the principles behind it. God has used the Smith-Van Dyke in Arabic, The Tyndale Bible, The Coverdale Bible, The Matthews Bible, The Taverner Bible in English, The Lutheran Bible in German, The Diodati Bible in Italian, The Reina Valera in Spanish, The Ostervald Bible in French, and The King James Bible in English. A name which identifies the primary individual behind the translation is an honest name.

I Support the RVG Because Of Its Critics

The critics who attack the RVG have unknowingly given a great reason to support it. They constantly claim that the RVG matches the readings of the King James Bible. They claim that this is because the gringos pressured Dr. Gomez to bring the English into the Spanish.

Actually, all of the Spanish readings they defend also match English Bibles. These men are comfortable when their Spanish Bible is identical to the Revised Standard Version, the New English Version or even the Jehovah's Witness New World Translation. But they literally get hysterical when a Spanish reading matches the King James Bible.

This tells me everything that I need to know about these men and also everything I need to know about the RVG.

Conclusion

I know Humberto Gomez *well*. I don't agree with him about everything, but I don't agree with anyone about everything. He is a compassionate soul winner. He has been a very effective church planter. He is fearless and he does not bend to political pressure or intimidation. Men that I deeply respect like Dr. Jon Jenkins and Dr. Mickey Carter have endorsed his ministry. God always matches a man with a moment. He has matched Humberto with this moment.

Many Bible colleges, mission boards and Christian publishing ministries loudly proclaim that they are Received Text when they are raising money. They now have a chance to prove that they mean it. Just as they have a Received Text Bible to use, support and distribute in English (the King James Bible), they now have a Received Text Bible to use, support and distribute in Spanish.

I was pleased to find out that Chick Publications now uses the RVG. BEAMS is printing it (though not exclusively). Victory Baptist Press prints it exclusively. Now is the opportunity for the faithful supporters of the Received Text and the King James Bible to stand up and be counted.