EUGENE A. NIDA & DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE I

There are several translation theories I studied in the university, such as Yan Fu’s theory of fidelity, clarity and elegance, Fu Lei’s spiritual resemblance, as well as Eugene A. Nida’s Dynamic Equivalence, also known as Functional Equivalence. Being a pioneer in the fields of translation theory and linguistics as well as a Biblical scholar, he made the world’s most popular book even more widely available by helping translate the Scripture into 200 languages.

Probably this is his life career, and that leads to the appearance of his later translation theory that gives long-lasting influence to China’s translation field.

Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on November 11, 1914 and died in Madrid on August 25, 2011 aged 96, the linguistic master began his Christian experience from an early age. After graduation from university, he attended Camp Wycliffe, where Bible translation theory was taught. Also he ministered a short time in Mexico, and became a founding charter member of Wycliffe Bible Translators sometime during that period.

Later he pursued his study and received Master’s Degree in New Testament Greek from University of Southern California and Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Michigan. Except for study, his connection with the Bible never stops. After obtained his Master’s Degree, he served as interim pastor of Calvary Church of Santa Ana,
California and a Baptist minister after his Ph.D. In later years Nida became increasingly ecumenical and New Evangelical in his approach.

As for his career, Nida began as a linguist with the American Bible Society in 1943, and quickly promoted to Associate Secretary for Versions, thereafter worked as Executive Secretary for Translations till his retirement. “He was instrumental in engineering the joint effort between the Vatican and the United Bible Societies (UBS) to produce cross-denominational Bibles in translations across the globe”, as the Wikipedia stated.

Even though retired in the early 1980s, he kept on giving lectures in universities all around the world. The contribution to the academic field also includes over 10 works by him, Linguistic Interludes, The Bible Translator, Customs, Culture and Christianity, Toward a Science of Translating, The Theory and Practice of Translation and so forth.