

## Step V Distillation

*How does one move from the "statement intention of the text" to the issues of relevance for the exegete's own world?*

This Step gathers data from the previous steps, incorporates them into one's choices for a smooth translation, and prods one into crossing the "hermeneutical bridge." The first part of the Step is to gather the salient features of previous steps in summary fashion. No need to report everything done in those steps. A practical way to determine "salient features" is to pay attention to the questions asked and organized in Step II. Which questions were you able to furnish with an adequate answer and which ones not? Where did you make some exciting discoveries? Did any "ahas" occur for you? Did you locate the theological "center of gravity" in the text? Are you now able to say what are the major and minor concerns of the pericope? How would you describe it/them in your own words?

You should be ready now for the second part of the Step which is to make a fairly responsible, coherent smooth translation of the text - to take some risks in such a translation based on your exegesis. This translation will probably not be used in a worship setting as a substitute for official translations like the RSV, but it should certainly be used in didactic settings to stimulate further discussion among other participants in the interest of deepening learning and understanding.

Finally the third part of the Step is to build and cross over an interpretive bridge to the present. Put in plain and simple terms, one is invited here to liken what you have heard in the text to the experience of faith and life in our world. Does it remind you of anything? Is it "like" what happens when people wrestle with issues of honesty? Or the deep structures of pain, grief, guilt or some other? Bob Shelton recommends turning to the "keen observers of life." That is a good idea. You find them among the poets, painters, novelists, playwrights, moviemakers, song writers and so on and not only among the famous. Be open to looking in unlikely places for your partners in bridge building. They may be there among your friends and the members of your church. Daily life is the context of hermeneutics.