

Passion Translation Fact Sheet

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Who is Brian Simmons?

Brian Simmons is the founder of [Stairway Ministries](#) in Wichita, Kansas. He's also an "apostle," working under the apostle Ché Ahn, with [Harvest International Ministry](#), an apostolic network of 25,000 churches and organizations in 65 nations. He spent eight years [working with New Tribes Mission](#) in the rain forest of Panama as a church planter, Bible translator and consultant. He's now the lead translator for the [Passion Translation](#). To date, he's translated and released his translation of the entire New Testament, plus Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Songs. He earned his doctorate with the Wagner Leadership Institute (now called [Wagner University](#)) with a specialization on prayer. The Wagner Leadership Institute is not a standard seminary or Bible College that offers academic courses on the Bible and theology. Rather it was founded to [serve](#) the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). Non-traditional courses teach people about NAR and how to be apostles and prophets and work miracles.

What is the Passion Translation and why the need for it?

The Passion Translation is [billed](#) as "a new, heart-level translation that expresses God's fiery heart of love to this generation using Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic manuscripts, merging the emotion and life-changing truth of God's Word." According to the [website](#), "God refuses to meet us only in an intellectual way. God also wants to meet us heart level, so we must let the words go heart deep—which is what we're trying to do with this project. There is a language of the heart that must express the passion of this love-theology." Simmons named it the Passion Translation because he saw a need for a translation that restores the Bible's potency, "unfiltered and unveiled." Source: *Letters From Heaven by the Apostle Paul*, The Passion Translation (Cicero, NY: 5 Fold Media, 2013), 9 Kindle edition.

Who's the publisher? And who, other than Simmons, has contributed to this translation?

The original publisher is named 5 Fold Media. [Take note that the original publisher's name is a reference to a NAR teaching about apostles and prophets known as "fivefold ministry."] The present publisher is BroadStreet Publishing. Simmons serves as the lead translator. [Also take note that he's the sole translator.] He claims that every book and footnote is evaluated by respected scholars and editors. But – notably – he has not publicly revealed the names of any of those scholars and editors.

How popular is the Passion Translation?

The Passion Translation has become very popular among people who attend charismatic churches and churches that are part of the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). People have reported that it helped them discover intimacy with Christ and has rapidly become their favorite translation of choice for Bible study. Its popularity can be seen from its sales on Amazon, which consistently show it ranking among the better-selling Christian books. The popularity of this translation is due, in no small part, to the many NAR leaders who have [endorsed](#) this translation, including Ché Ahn, James Goll, Bill Johnson, John Bevere, and Banning Liebscher. Pastor and best-selling author Bill Johnson [called](#) the Passion Translation "one of the greatest things to happen with Bible translation in my lifetime." This translation is now available on BibleGateway, Logos Bible Software, and the YouVersion App—all popular tools used by mainstream evangelicals and churches. So the Passion Translation is exerting influence in ever-widening circles.

How is the Passion Translation being used?

The Passion Translation is being used as a primary Bible for many people in the New Apostolic Reformation. NAR leaders also promote and preach from this translation in the pulpit, including Bill Johnson. [Source](#) (1:51:00)

Simmons encourages people to use it as a primary text for serious study of God's Word. This can be seen on the Passion Translation website, which [states](#): "*The Passion Translation* is an excellent translation you can use as your primary text to seriously study God's Word because it combines the best aspects of what is called *formal* and *functional equivalence* Bibles. It is a balanced translation that tries to hold both the Word's literal meaning and original message in proper tension, resulting in an entirely new, fresh, fiery translation of God's Word. Furthermore, this is the first modern English

translation to use Aramaic, the language of Jesus and the disciples, as a lens through which to view God's original Word to us, a word of truth and love."

What does Simmons say about his "translation"?

On a 2015 television [program](#), Simmons claimed that, in 2009, Jesus Christ literally visited him in his room, breathed on him, and commissioned him to write a new translation of the Bible. Simmons says, "It felt like Heaven's wind. The rock, the breath, the wind of God came upon me. And he spoke to me and said, 'I'm commissioning you to translate the Bible into the translation project that I'm giving you to do.' And he promised that he would help me, and he promised me that he would give me secrets of the Hebrew language."

Simmons claims that, by blowing on him, Jesus gave him "the spirit of revelation." In no way, he says, would he compare this "breathing" on him to that experienced by the original writers of Scripture. [Take note that he doesn't say how it was any different.] He says: "he breathed on me so that I would do the project, and I felt downloads coming, instantly. I received downloads. It was like, I got a chip put inside of me. I got a connection inside of me to hear him better, to understand the scriptures better and hopefully to translate."

During this same TV program, Simmons claimed Jesus revealed to him a new chapter of the Bible. This happened when he was translated to the library of heaven where he saw more books than you can imagine. One stood out called John 22. It told about the greatest revival the world is yet to see. God promised Simmons that one day He'll bring Simmons back to heaven and give him this book. [Source](#) (21:00)

Some have described The Passion Bible as a paraphrase, similar to the Message Bible. But Simmons is adamant that it's not merely a paraphrase, but rather a bona fide translation. [Source](#) (17:00)

What are the chief problems with the Passion Translation?

The Passion Translation has many serious problems. These include:

- A lack of qualifications of the lead [sole] translator. This is a direct quote from Simmons about his qualifications to undertake this project: "I had minimal background in biblical languages, so yeah, it was something that, honestly, something the Lord has really helped me with." [Source](#) (14:52)

- A lack of transparency in his process (i.e., Simmons doesn't reveal the names of the "reputable" editors and scholars who have supposedly reviewed his work)
- Simmons' reliance on Aramaic manuscripts to produce this translation. This is problematic because the earliest Aramaic manuscripts are from the fifth century. In contrast to Simmons' translation of the New Testament, the standard English translations are based on much earlier and more reliable Greek manuscripts.
- Simmons' claims to have received a personal appearance from Jesus and a commissioning from him to produce this translation
- Simmons' claims that he received revelation "downloads" from God that would enable him to translate
- Simmons' claims that God would give him secrets of the Hebrew language that would enable him to translate
- Simmons' claims that Jesus showed him a new chapter of the Bible, John 22
- His misleading promotion of his work as a "dynamic-equivalent translation" and as a reliable text for serious study of the Bible
- Evidence of bias and abuse of the text of Scripture (see below)

What are some noteworthy examples of NAR-friendly bias and abuse of the text of Scripture?

Following are a few examples of bias and abuse of the text. At the end of this fact sheet are links to critics' sources that contain more examples. Take note that critics have pointed out other examples that Simmons changed after they drew attention to them. So his translation is a moving target. When Simmons has been challenged about faulty renderings of verses, he sometimes has simply revised them – in substantial ways – without offering any explanation for his revisions.

Example 1: Take note of the addition of teaching about the Holy Spirit and the deletion of admonitions to correct and rebuke.

2 Timothy 4:2

Standard English Translations

- "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." (English Standard Version)
- "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." (New International Version)

- “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” ([New King James Version](#))

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- “proclaim the Word of God and stand upon it no matter what! Rise to the occasion and preach when it is convenient and when it is not. Preach in the full expression of the Holy Spirit^[a]—with wisdom and patience as you instruct and teach the people.” ([TPT](#))

Simmons’ footnote a: 2 Timothy 4:2 As translated from the Aramaic.

Example 2: Take note of the NAR bias for an over-realized eschatology – i.e., teachings that the blessings God has promised for the future are readily available in the present age.

Mark 1:15

Standard English Translations

- “and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’” ([ESV](#))
- “‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” ([NIV](#))
- “and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” ([NKJV](#))

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- “At last the fulfillment of the age has come! It is time for the realm of God’s kingdom to be experienced in fullness! Turn your lives back to God and put your trust in the hope-filled gospel!” ^[a] ([TPT](#))

Simmons’ footnote a: Mark 1:15 The Greek is “believe the good news” (“the gospel”), and the Aramaic is “put your trust in the joyful message of hope.” This translation merges both concepts, making it “the hope-filled gospel.”

Example 3: Take note how he has added the word “first” before the word “twelve.” Could this be because NAR leaders, including Simmons, teach that the office of apostle is ongoing for today?

Matthew 10:2

Standard English Translations

- “The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;” ([ESV](#))
- “These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;” ([NIV](#))
- “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;” ([NKJV](#))

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- Now, these are the names of the first twelve apostles: first, Simon, who is nicknamed Peter, and Andrew, his brother. And then Jacob and John, sons of Zebedee. ([TPT](#))

How is the Passion Translation tied to the New Apostolic Reformation?

Brian Simmons, like some other leaders in the New Apostolic Reformation, [denies](#) being a part of this movement. Yet the core teaching of the New Apostolic Reformation is the necessity of the present-day governing *offices* of apostle and prophet along with their new revelations. Simmons holds the governing office of apostle with Harvest International Ministry, and works closely with many New Apostolic Reformation leaders. His translation is endorsed almost only (if not exclusively) by NAR leaders. His translation shows significant evidence of NAR doctrinal bias. For these reasons, critics of this translation have dubbed it the “NAR Bible.”

What are some sources that have critiqued the Passion Translation?

- [Article](#) in the journal *themelios* (Volume 43, Issue 1): “Burning Scripture with Passion: A Review of the Psalms (The Passion Translation)” by Andrew G. Shead
- [Article](#) on the blog THINK (6 January 2016): “What’s Wrong with the Passion ‘Translation’?” by Andrew Wilson
- [Four-part series](#) of articles on the blog Spirit of Error by Holly Pivec