

# MY POSITION ON THE SPANISH BIBLE ISSUE

by Manny Rodriguez

*"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."* - I Cor. 8:1

In the past several years, there has arisen a controversy over the Spanish Bible amongst fundamentalist brethren. I believe this controversy has been much more complicated and nasty than the controversy of the English Bible. There has been so much material and information given from both sides of the issue in regards to God's words in English that to me it's not really much of a controversy anymore. It's just a matter of choosing sides nowadays. But with the Spanish Bible it's been a lot more complicated. For years, I decided not to speak up on the subject and to just let the situation smooth itself out over time. I believe to a certain degree this is starting to happen. But a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city and there has been a lot of offensive energy from every side surrounding the Spanish Bible.

It's gonna be a while before those who have divided over this issue come to terms with one another as true brethren "endeavoring to keep the spirit of unity in the bond of peace". I believe the main cause for the controversial nature of this issue is pride. Only by pride cometh contention is what the Bible says in Proverbs. However, I believe with all my heart that over time truth will prevail, and the brethren will all eventually come together and unify. Some don't believe that. I do. Because I know there are good brethren from all sides of this issue. The same Holy Spirit dwells in every one of them. And with God, nothing is impossible.

The following is a condensed version of an article I am working on explaining my position on this controversial issue. The more detailed account of this article will explain how I was introduced to this subject and how I have dealt with it over the years. It will give you a better understanding on why I have come to the conclusions that I now stand for. For now, here is a condensed version of that article.



***Cassiodoro de Reina***

The Bible that God has given to the Spanish-speaking people is the Reina Valera Bible. It is named after Cassiodoro de Reina and Cipriano de Valera. Reina finished his work of translating the Spanish Bible in 1569 and Valera finished his 20 year work of revising Reina's translation in 1602. This Bible was fruit of the Protestant Reformation (Reina and Valera being Protestants who were persecuted by the Catholic church) and was therefore contemporary with Luthers German Bible and the English King James Bible, amongst others. It was a Textus Receptus based Bible, having been translated from an OT done by 2 Spanish-speaking Jews who based their work on the Hebrew Masoretic Text, as well as Erasmus' Greek text for the NT. There were other texts used as well such as the Latin Vulgate, but for the most part it was based on the same manuscripts that led to the text of Luther's German translation and the King James Bible of 1611.



***Cipriano de Valera***

The Reina Valera Bible has been and should continue to be the standard text for the Spanish-speaking people as this is the text that God has placed his stamp of approval on as evidenced by the fruit it has born throughout history. However, Reina and Valera both have called for their work to be revised according to their own writings. This was due to the fact that their noble work was constantly being interrupted having to flee several times from the Catholic church. The Spanish inquisition was in full swing at the time and it was considered illegal to translate the scriptures without the Catholic church's approval.



### ***The Catholic Spanish Inquisition***

There had been many revisions done since then and this is where everything gets complicated. The most famous revisions being used amongst fundamentalists have been that of 1909 and 1960. Recently another revision that was done in 1865 has been restored and made available to the public again. Which version of the Reina Valera Bible should we use? Well the answer to this question depends upon what exactly you want.

If you want a Bible that is up-to-date linguistically, than you will probably want the 1960 RV. However, if you choose the 1960, you do so at the expense of many critical text readings that were inserted by the revision committee headed up by Eugene Nida of the United Bible Society. If it doesn't bother you that there are departures from the Textus Receptus within the 1960 than you will also be encouraged to know that the 1960 is the most widely accepted version of the RV amongst fundamentalists.

Some fundamentalists who built their ministries with the 1909 have in recent years switched to the 1960 due to it's increasing popularity amongst fundamentalist leaders.

However, there are those who refuse to switch from the 1909 to the 1960, despite it's popularity, because of their desire to have a Bible that is more faithful to the Textus Receptus of which it was originally based upon. But even the 1909 has several critical text readings in it such as Mark 1:2, Rom. 1:16, Eph. 3:9, Luke 23:42, and others. It also uses the Greek transliteration of Gehenna instead of the Spanish word for Hell (infierno) in key places such as Mark 9:43, 45, 47 and Luke 12:5.

Because of the departures from the Textus Receptus found within the 1960 and 1909, there has been a cry for yet more revision. This outcry has seemed to be almost exclusively from fundamentalist American missionaries who stand for the KJV in English and therefore desire to use a Bible in Spanish that is true to the

Textus Receptus as is their KJV in English. This has offended many Hispanic Fundamentalist leaders as they see it as an insult for a bunch of Americans to try and correct them and their Bible of their language. To a certain degree I sympathize with them (I myself am hispanic). I believe there has been too many "bulls in a china shop" who have complicated these matters through their unnecessary aggression, misinformation, arrogance, disrespect, and lack of spiritual discernment in knowing how to deal with people of a different language and culture.

On the other hand, not all of the American brethren have behaved this way. But unfortunately, those who have had a sincere and humble attitude concerning these issues have also been undeservedly lumped into the same category as those who have complicated matters.

Some have taken it upon themselves to revise the Reina Valera versions to bring them more in line with the Textus Receptus rather than the Critical Texts. But most have failed. One caucasian American tried to do a totally new translation straight off the King James Bible. But this was immediately rejected by Hispanic brethren for two reasons. They see a new translation as an undermining of what God has already given the Spanish-speaking world in the Reina Valera Bible. I agree with them on this. Why reinvent the wheel? Secondly they rejected it because it had mistranslations of it manifesting the translator's poor understanding of the Spanish language. For example, he tried translating the word "Holy Ghost", of which there is no Spanish equivalent for "Ghost" in the sense that Americans use "Ghost" in reference to the Holy Spirit. So he translated it as "Fantasma Santo" which is Spanish for a "Holy Phantom", of which in the Spanish mind a phantom is never something good and is only a reference to something demonic. Thus they perceived this rendering as blasphemous and utterly rejected this new translation altogether.

Other men have tried restoring the old Enzinas translation of the NT which was also Textus Receptus based. But this work has not enjoyed much acceptance as it again appears to be an undermining of what God has already given the Hispanic people.

One group has restored the 1865 Mora and Pratt revision, of which the revisers actually used the King James Bible as their primary guide to updated the original 1602. This group has enjoyed some acceptance as it is truer to the Textus Receptus than the 1909 and 1960 and thus reads closer to the KJV. However, many Hispanic people don't care much for this version because of some of its outdated usage of words such as "salud" for the word "salvation", of which the modern usage for the word "salvation" today is "salvacion". Also it uses "alma" (soul) instead of "vida" (life) in Lev. 17:11 as well as other obsolete usages. These are not errors. It's just a matter of difference in word usages in the original Castilian Spanish and today's more common vernacular. At any rate, most

Hispanics, especially in Mexico, have a problem with some of these obsolete usages of words and thus prefer a more updated language.

One church in Monterrey, Mexico has endeavored to restore the original 1602 and update it with the Textus Receptus and King James Bible. There was for a good while a rallying of American Fundamentalists backing this work. But questionable morality of one of it's key players, whether true or untrue, and other questionable behavior by this group has caused those who were already critical of any revision of the Reina Valera to have added ammunition against those wanting a new revision more faithful to the Textus Receptus. Thus, the momentum that this work once enjoyed seems to have lost a lot of it's steam. But it's status is still pending.

Finally, I come to the work of a missionary in Mexico named Humberto Gomez Sr. Bro. Gomez has been a missionary in Mexico for over 30 years. Bro. Gomez is a native Mexican with Spanish as his first language. He is a master of his own language and loves his language with a passion like no other. Bro. Gomez also stands fervently for the King James Bible and the Textus Receptus, being a member and key speaker of the Dean Burgon Society headed up by Dr. D. A. Waite, a modern day champion of the Traditional Texts. Bro. Gomez has worked diligently and sacrificially for the past 7 years on revising the 1909 Antigua version of the Reina Valera Bible. He has used the original 1602 and the King James Bible to bring it more in line with the Greek Textus Receptus and the Hebrew Masoretic Text. He has accurately brought every reading from Genesis to Revelation in line with the Textus Receptus. Thus, his revision reads closest to the King James Bible in English, while staying true and faithful to the original 1602 Reina Valera.

Some are calling this revision "the RVG" for Reina-Valera-Gomez. Many have a problem with Bro. Gomez's name being attached to it. I have witnessed Bro. Gomez himself state several times that he does not care for his name to be attached to the title of this work. This humble man of God has stated over and over again that this work is not about him but about the pure words of God in Spanish. However, no matter what you call this edition of the Reina Valera Bible, the bottom line is that it has been totally brought in line with the Textus Receptus.

Dr. Rex Cobb, director of the Baptist Bible Translators Institute in Texas and former missionary in Mexico for over 20 years, did a study comparing all the major versions of the Reina Valera Bible with the Textus Receptus. His conclusion was the following. The 1960 departed from the TR 191 times. The 1909 departed 122 times. The 1865 departed 28 times. The original 1602 departed 57 times. **Bro. Gomez's 2004 revision of the 1909 departed 0 times.** I have had the privilege to speak with Dr. Cobb personally about these matters. Dr. Cobb documents all of these departures on a chart which can be found in a link below.

Also concerning Bro. Gomez's work, Dr. D. A. Waite has given a public endorsement of it which can be found on the DBS website. (A link is provided below.) In it, he says the following:

*"I am pleased to recommend the Spanish Bible of Dr. Humberto Gomez. I have found him to be a kind, careful, humble, and able student who has spent hundreds of hours in carrying out his burden to get the Spanish Bible of 1909 (by which he was led to the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour) in line with the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words underlying the King James Bible. He has done this. He has spoken with me about several questions he had in certain places of his translation in an effort to be both clear and correct. He did an excellent job when he spoke at our Dean Burgon Society in 2005 concerning the need for an accurate Spanish Bible. He has sought to correct the various errors of translation in the Old Testament as well as those in the New Testament. His Spanish New Testament has followed the Greek Received or Traditional Text on which the King James Bible was based."*

Dr. Waite further states:

*"There are over 8,000 documented differences between the Received Greek Text and the Revised Critical Greek Text. Included in these 8,000 differences are at least 356 doctrinal passages where the Revised Greek Text is in doctrinal error. I have listed 158 of the more important of these 356 doctrinal passages in Chapter V of my book, DEFENDING THE KING JAMES BIBLE. I have personally looked up in Dr. Humberto Gomez's Spanish Bible each one of those 158 passages in my book I found every one of them to be in conformity to the Received Greek Text and have been made doctrinally correct. This cannot be said of the 1960 and even the 1909 in each of these places." (emphasis in underline is mine)*

I have spent hours upon hours examining Bro. Gomez's revision. I own several copies of the 2004 edition in leather and in paperback. I have a copy of it on the Power Bible program as well as the latest edition on the E-sword program. I had the privilege to sit down with Bro. Gomez for about 3 hours discussing his work on the Spanish Bible in Chicago. Since then he and I have become good friends as we communicate with one another on the phone several times on a weekly basis. I have also compared his revision with other Reina Valera versions, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Bible in my own studies and have found it to be 100% faithful to the Traditional texts. The Spanish language and integrity of the Reina Valera Bible is kept intact. Most importantly, IT IS 100% FREE OF ANY CRITICAL TEXT READINGS WHATSOEVER! Consequently, it reads closer and almost parallel (barring language differences) to the King James Bible more than any other version of the Reina Valera Bible in existence. I not only recommend it but I intend to stand for it as I endeavor to reach hispanic souls for Christ.

In regards to those who may use the 1909 or 1960 RV Bibles, I harbor no animosity towards them whatsoever. In fact, many of these men are good and faithful men of whom the Lord has greatly used over the years. I have the utmost respect for them. They should be esteemed highly in love for their work's sake. It is not my concern to start a crusade against them in efforts to change their minds on which edition of the Reina Valera Bible they should use. The main issue is winning souls for Christ. And these men have used these versions for years to minister to their people. After all, despite the critical text renderings in them, they are Textus Receptus based Bibles, which is why these versions have borne much fruit throughout the years. I am a realist. I would be a fool to expect everyone to suddenly drop their Bibles that they have built their ministries upon for another version. People who demand such are unreasonable. Although there are some who are switching from the 1960 or 1909 to the RVG, I intend to leave that matter between them and the Lord. If they change, great. If not, life goes on. God knows how to handle this situation better than we do.

As for me, I must live with my conscience. I emphasize that my decision to use the RVG was not something I came upon hastily. My conclusions are the result of my own experiences and about 8 years of prayer. Some may disagree with my stance. Some may think I have gone too far on this subject. Others may think I haven't gone far enough. I have decided to do my best to follow the Lord and not men no matter how much heat I may receive (and have already received) for my decisions. It is him that I must answer to when it's all over with. Therefore, I intend to do what I sincerely believe with all of my heart is the will of God for MY life.

If you disagree with me on these matters, I would be more than glad to speak with you on this subject. If you think I am misguided in these matters, I would be more than glad to listen to your perspective. I am humble and reasonable enough to talk with anyone in a respectable manner. If you don't think so, try me.

As stated earlier, I am currently working on a more detailed article on this subject. So please check back from time to time for that. I would like to go more in-depth concerning the texts. Before you make a full judgement on my position, I would encourage you to read my more detailed account of this topic before drawing a final conclusion. This article will be ready to be posted any day now. But for now, please follow the links on this website if you desire to look into these matters further.

Manny Rodriguez  
Missionary to Puerto Rico  
[www.4thesaviour.com](http://www.4thesaviour.com)

## Testimonies and Endorsements From Around The World

*"Everything started when I began to read the book The Transmission Of The Text Of The New Testament And Our Bibles Of Today by Rudolf Ebertshäuser. For years I used the RV 1960 and was very content but when I was reading this book I found out that the RV 1960 does not follow the Textus Receptus faithfully but rather there are verses that lean upon the Critical Text. I would ask myself "how is it possible that for years no one has told me anything?" I have been in different churches yet no one has ever said anything to me referring to this subject.*

*I started searching through the Internet and I found websites referring to this subject. First I enquired the 1909 RV and even though it is a Bible more faithful than the 1960 RV, I found words difficult to comprehend because of their antiquity. I continued searching and I was sent an 1865 RV. This version I liked very much because it was faithful to the Received Text, but it also had words of the antiquated Castilian. I consulted this with brethren in other churches and they told me that for the time being outside of the 1909 and 1865 there were no other revisions. Before giving up, I continued searching and I found another revision edited in Columbia SEVA. I contacted them to get a Bible but they told me that it was too expensive to send them by mail so I left that for the moment. But I tried one more time and this time I finally found the RVG on the website [www.rices4peru.com](http://www.rices4peru.com). I downloaded it and I was comparing it with e-sword. I compared the well-known verses like Luke 2:22, Dan. 3:25, II Kings 10:25, I Cor. 10:9, Heb. 10:34, and many others that the RV 1960 (without understanding the intention) changed. In what I have been able to prove, the RVG follows the Textus Receptus faithfully. We Spanish-speaking Christians were in need of a Bible faithful to the Castilian. This is my commentary from Spain. Greetings."*

**Vicente Martin Delgado**  
Preacher in Spain

*"We have used the RVG in our churches and Bible Institute for more than 2 years. We have found it to be the most accurate translation available in Spanish... I am proud to endorse the revision by Bro. Gomez."*

**Tim Urling**  
Missionary in Mexico  
<http://www.2EveryCreature.com>

*"It is a privilege to be the first missionary outside of the continental US to receive and use the SRV2004 (RVG). I pray that many others will see the benefits of this Bible and begin using it in their ministry."*

**Don Rich**  
Missionary in Peru  
<http://www.rich2peru.com>



*"Soon after being saved in 1983 I had the blessing of going to an Independent Baptist Fellowship meeting where I was first made aware that there was not an accurate Spanish Bible. This fact is not a mystery to anyone. For seventeen years I have looked and compared Spanish Bibles looking for an accurate version where I didn't have to apologize or explain away obvious errors. For almost two years, I have had the blessing of having in my hand the Reina Valera Gomez and can now state, without a doubt, that we have an accurate and reliable Bible in Spanish likened unto the KJV."*

**Joe A. Martinez**  
**17 year vet. Missionary in Argentina**

*"I just have recently become good friends with Bro Humberto Gomez through the Spanish Bible "RVG". I was using the 1865 Spanish bible until I found many errors. I did not have peace in my heart using this bible. The 1865 really attacks The word "Hell" Infierno in the old testament... I started to study the issue every day for almost 2 years. I am convinced that the RVG "Gomez" is the Word of God for the Spanish speaking people. God has blessed Greatly!! We have been in Paraguay now almost 2 years many souls are receiving Christ and we are starting a second work. The Holy Spirit is testifying to this Bible. The Christians here are accepting the RVG as the Word of God. They Read it, believe it, love it. Amen Glory to God!"*

**Mike Wilps**  
**Missionary in Paraguay**  
[www.paraguay4christ.com](http://www.paraguay4christ.com)

*"On August 13, a group of students from Champion Baptist College and I flew to Costa Rica. The Lord blessed us with some consecrated young people who were a great blessing to the work, passing out tracts, witnessing, singing etc. Since the middle of August we have seen some 28 people saved, more than 35 new people have attended services and at least 18 people have come 2 or more times already. We have elected to use the newly published revision of the 1909 Bible produced by Bro. Humberto Gomez. We are using it in the John and Romans edition we pass out, as well as for preaching and public reading. We are thankful for a printed Bible that is faithful to the Received Text and praise the Lord for the good reception it has had so far. "*

**Elson Portugal**  
**Missionary to Costa Rica**

*"I would say that time, not argument, will be the determining factor as to the credibility and acceptance of the RVG project. ....I have polled many hispanic preacher around the world who welcome it with open arms. In February of this year, he (**Bro. Gomez**) was given the opportunity to speak before a congress of hispanic fundamentalist leaders from USA, Mexico, Central and South America representing not just Baptists, but old time Methodists, Missionary Alliance, Bible Presbyterian, and Bible churches as well. This group has stood firmly for the 1909 Antigua ever since UBS began promoting W&H*

*in the early 1950's. After the first presentation was given by Dr Gomez, the first reaction was one of caution, but after the week progressed, the delegates had an opportunity to compare verses from RVG (2nd edition) and 1909 and the overwhelming approval and support for the RVG was made known to all by the group's leader. Not only that, but the leading Christian radio station in Guatemala has now publicly endorsed it, and is promoting it daily."*

**Carlos Donate**  
**18 yr vet. Missionary in Guatemala**

*"I have been a missionary in the country of Peru since 2002. I have with great interest studied the matter of the Spanish Bible. I firmly believe that one day I will stand before Almighty God and give an account for my decisions in the ministry as well as my personal life. As a result I have studied since arriving in Peru, the issue of the Spanish Bible. I have read every book that I could get my hands on, I have done in depth studies and comparisons of many Spanish Bibles, I have studied the History of the Spanish Bible, and firmly believe that the Reina Valera Gómez is the most accurate and very best Bible that can be used for the Spanish speaking world. The beauty and purity of the Spanish language has been maintained, as well as a strict adherence to the Textus Receptus and Masoretic texts that the King James Bible is based on. Please visit my web site to see some charts that I have put together: [www.reinavaleraqomez.com](http://www.reinavaleraqomez.com).*

**Shane D. Rice**  
**Missionary in Peru**  
<http://www.rices4peru.com>

*"I bought a Bible with the King James English on one page and the Reina-Valera 1960 on the other page. I very quickly started finding NIV-type readings in the Spanish. I next ordered a 1909 Reina-Valera, but after checking a few proof texts, I found some of the same NIV-type readings. I eventually ordered an 1865 Reina-Valera, but there were still many readings in this Bible that I did not agree with. Then, a few months ago, I discovered the RVG. I checked verse after verse after verse, and I must say that I breathed a sigh of relief as I found what I believe to be the closest Spanish Bible to the King James."*

**Robert W. Thurman**  
**Predicando La Verdad Ministries**  
**Cleveland, Tennessee**

*"I was ignorant to the reality of the Bible versions in English as well as Spanish. Now I stand for the perfect and preserved Words of the KJB and the RVG, brother, let me tell you, IT IS PERFECT! I praise the Lord for what he has done, giving me his perfect words in Spanish!"*

**Nelson Giménez**  
**Preacher in Paraguay**

*"It has been demonstrated to our satisfaction that every mistake we have ever been shown in any of the Spanish versions has been corrected in the RVG revision. It is our prayer that the Lord would sanction this revision with a great revival throughout the Hispanic world."*

**Pastor Tim Fellure**  
**Victory Baptist Church**  
**Milton, FL**  
<http://www.vbcmilton.org>

*"With the RVG Bible I see the opportunity to reconcile fundamentalism in Spanish with the fundamentalism in English. With the RVG Bible I see the opportunity to have our Bible printed in our print shops and freely distributed. In the RVG Bible I see a Bible that reconciled the Reina Valera Bibles with the Received Text and Masoretic text, as well as the Authorized Version in English. This is a Bible without the influence of corrupt Egyptian manuscripts and the gnostic texts that are becoming so prominent in our world today.*

*Fundamental Brethren, I encourage you to study the diabolic influences in our modern Bibles. It is time for us to unite in the battle against Bibles that have been affected by the enemy. The Reina Valera Gomez does not have verses that are affected by corrupt manuscripts, and in its entirety is the Word of God. Read it, study it, and discover it for yourself. We must unite at once, Spanish speaking fundamentalists as well as English speaking fundamentalists in our labor to reach the world with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

**Ulises Velázquez Galindo**  
**Missionary in Mexico**  
[www.interbiblia.com](http://www.interbiblia.com)