

# A General Translation Procedure

## 1. Definition of Functions

- a. Translator: This designation refers to the supervising translator or translation coordinator on the project. This may be an individual who is a mother-tongue speaker of the target language or it may be a cross-cultural missionary.
- b. Translation Assistant: This will normally be one who speaks the target language as their mother-tongue. There will normally be several of these individuals.
- c. Translation Consultant: These individuals will be responsible for helping to check and correct a translation. They will assist the translators with suggestions and training. This will often be accomplished through personal visits to the field. When not engaged in specific projects they will represent the mission in churches as Mission Mobilizers.
- d. Mission Mobilizer: These missionaries represent BPS Global in churches. Their tasks are to educate the churches, recruit laborers for all functions, and to raise funds.
- e. Missionary Translator: This is a missionary who is both a church planter and a translator. This function usually takes place among smaller people groups (perhaps less than 10,000 to 20 million or more) which are considered unreached and which have no Bible translation. In this instance, this individual acts as the supervising translator on the project.
- f. Coordination Committee: This consists of members and partners of BPS Global who will be responsible for organizing the project, supervising the application of the translation criteria, directing the procedures of the translation team, and arranging the printing and distribution of the translation.

g. Theological Advisors: These are individuals with training in Biblical interpretation and teaching. His job is to assist the translator with any difficulties in interpreting the Biblical text.

## 2. General Procedure for Bible Translation Projects

### a. Pre-Translation Foundation

- i. There must be missionaries on the ground among the target people and engaged in church planting efforts.
- ii. The missionaries and translators must have a thorough knowledge of the language and culture of the target people.
- iii. The missionaries must be willing to become translators themselves, to work with full-time translators who relocate to their field, or to supervise native speakers of the target language.
- iv. If there is no written form of the target language, it will have to be developed and literacy classes will have to be begun among the target people

### b. The Preparation Stage: Laying the groundwork by the Coordination Committee and the field missionaries.

- i. Select the target language and assess the need.
- ii. Select and organize the teams: field and home. The field process must be a team effort. The field team organization will be dynamic depending on the needs and available personnel.
- iii. Communicate the principles and criteria to the teams.
- iv. Select the location
- v. Estimate the costs.
- vi. Organize and begin fund raising efforts.

### c. First Draft Stage

- i. Plan the order of translation of the Bible books.
- ii. Prepare a first draft

1. Research any interpretation problems in the text and any particular translation problems that are readily apparent. Questions should be presented to the translation consultants and theological advisors.
  2. The translator (s) should make a first draft working closely with the translation assistants.
  3. Make sure the translation is input into a computer.
- iii. Improve the First Draft
1. Check the translation with the translation assistants and any other missionaries and pastors in the area.
  2. Test the translation with several groups or individuals who are native speakers of the target language and who are not translation assistants. The translation should be read aloud to them to check for accuracy, clarity, and natural flow in the target language.
  3. At this point a back translation into English should be made and submitted to the translation consultant assigned to the project. He will check the translation with the Greek or Hebrew text and the KJB.
  4. After the first two books (at the most) are complete, the translation consultant may make a visit to the field to further check the translation and to assist with any difficulties being encountered.
- iv. Revise the first draft in light of the suggestions and comments
1. Make a revised draft by the translator and the assistants.
  2. Record the changes in the computer and a backup disk.
- d. Second Stage Draft
- i. Proof read and carefully check the revised translation against the first draft copy.
  - ii. Review

1. Send a revised English back translation to the Coordinating Committee for review. If possible, the coordinating committee should discuss the translation as a group.
  2. Test the translation further with other native speakers of the language. The translator may think that the translation is accurate and clear, but when it is read to others he may discover that they understand it incorrectly. There should be lots of testing with others to find out if the translation is communicating clearly.
- iii. Check with a translation consultant.
1. Review of the back translation with the translator, assistants, and the translation consultant. Go over notes and recommendations from the coordinating committee.
  2. Do a verse-by-verse team-check. This includes the translator, translation consultant, translation assistants, and other native speakers.
  3. Incorporate revisions.
- iv. Test the translation
1. Send copies to several churches for real-world testing. The missionaries can use it for preaching and teaching.
  2. Gather feedback.
- v. Revise the translation
- e. The Preparation for Publication Stage
- i. Prepare book introductions and marginal notes (if any).
  - ii. Choose maps to include (if any).
  - iii. Check the consistency of the details
    1. Section breaks, section headings and paragraph breaks
    2. Spelling, and the transliteration of loan words
    3. Use of capital letters, punctuation, and hyphenation
    4. Chapter and verse numbers, and cross-references

5. Standard format markers, and special characters
6. Layout and format (indentation, style, etc.) of Old Testament quotations, poetry, and lists.
- iv. Recheck the accuracy of the translation with the source texts. This is an absolutely necessary final check.
- v. Read through the translation. The field translation team and several church members should be certain they are satisfied with the translation.
- vi. Final approval from the translation consultant and the coordinating committee.
- vii. Typesetting
- viii. Publish and distribute. It is recommended that each book be published and distributed to the people separately as it is ready. This provides for further feedback. Also, the team gains experience as they translate and see the reception of each book.

This is only the translation work. The real foundation and enabling comes through prayer and the power of God. Prayer must be a continual activity throughout this process. Spread it around. Get the churches everywhere praying.