

DEVELOPING AND CHECKING EXTRA-BIBLICAL MATERIAL

The demand for Study Bibles and other helps for readers of the Scriptures is increasing. It is a sign of a growing maturity in the Christian communities we serve. Bible Society seeks to address this audience need. The Translation Consultant, in helping to develop and then to check these materials, plays a vital role in producing a product that meets the highest of Bible Society standards. Some of the tasks in a successful project involving extra-biblical material are:

1. Study Bibles

- be familiar with UBS policy on the nature of notes that are acceptable (refer to the report of the TTW published in 1992)
- research the intended audience and its specific needs. E.g. Lay people may not require the same kind of notes a pastor might need.
- provide background information not obvious in the Bible text but necessary for an understanding of it
- the purpose of notes is to provide the readers with information allowing them to determine the meaning, not to force them into a particular understanding.
- the level of language in the notes and essays should match that of the text.
- the material provided should not be sermonistic, but questions for reflection and application can be added.
- the amount of information provided and the kind of notes given should be such as will meet the needs of the intended audience.
- notes on the meaning of names of people and places; euphemistic terms and expressions; literary features of the original languages; plays-on-words; customs and practices in ancient Israel and the world of the New Testament; historical information all can be included.
- longer essays on general topics should be included as well as notes on the biblical text. Essays can refer to the Pentateuch, Prophetic books, Wisdom material, Gospels, Epistles, Apocalyptic, Psalms etc.
- sectional headings and sectional notes can be provided which point the reader to the key theme or topic of the section. This should not simply repeat what any reader can discern from a reading of the text.
- supplementary materials can be added such as a Glossary, Maps, Illustrations, Cross-references, Hebrew Calendar, Bible Index, NT references to the OT etc.
- a history of Bible translation in that language if appropriate.
- perhaps include "How to Read the Bible" and even a Bible reading plan

2. Book Introductions and Outlines

- establish the purpose of the Introduction and Book Outline. Is it to be a general or detailed?
- determine the amount of information required by the audience.
- highlight key themes and ideas in the book.

- perhaps note the theological viewpoint from which it is written if appropriate.
- note the book's historical setting or of its possible edited form, if appropriate.
- include authorship and dating information, making sure that both sides of disputed issues are treated equally.
- decide how much technical information the audience needs and can accept. Literary forms may be noted.
- ensure that the language level used is appropriate.

3. Bible Illustrations

- decide on the purpose of any illustration - whether it is more for "decoration" as some colour plates are, or to illustrate the text.
- illustrations should assist the reader to understand the text better. Include illustrations of artefacts and other objects.
- any illustration should be historically accurate in all details
- art forms are culture-specific. Check that any set of illustrations is appropriate to the culture and the audience before deciding to borrow a foreign set.
- ensure that cultural sensibilities of the audience are observed in the illustration - e.g. do not use the left hand for offering a gift or blessing etc.
- captions on illustrations should be appropriate and relevant.
- ensure that illustrations are socially representative - avoid an all-male set of illustrations or ones which depict certain kinds of people in a demeaning way.
- determine by research what is the appropriate style of illustration
- realistic, stylised, caricature etc.
- determine by research what style is suitable for the type of Bible - Children's Bible, for example.
- decide on the number of illustrations required by the product (many more are required in a Children's Bible) or possible (due to budget factors).
- recognise that illustrations will increase both the size and the cost of the volume.
- work closely with the artist from the beginning of the project to ensure that accuracy and appropriateness are carried through. The artist should attend the initial workshop for the translators to understand the translation process.

4. Maps

- these are important aids to understanding events and their relative location as well giving perspective to the biblical world and its dramas.
- maps should be accurate and not so stylised that they lack informative value.
- recognise that some locations are uncertain and that many place names have more than one location.

- determine the amount of information required on each map for maximum benefit. This applies to place names as well as to geographical or topographical features.
- colour or black-and-white?
- locate them at appropriate places in or around the relevant text rather than at the end of the Bible, though a pull-out map can be placed at the end.
- many small diagrammatic maps throughout the text may serve better than larger ones gathered in one place.
- take care with the titles of maps. E.g. "Paul's Missionary Journeys" can be better noted as "Paul's Journeys."

5. Glossaries and Word Lists

- ensure accuracy of all information.
- determine the number of entries required to meet audience needs
- decide on the amount of information to be given for each entry.
- establish a method of marking the Glossary items in the text.

6. Weights and Measures

- use current values for all weights and measurements in the text.
- avoid present equivalents for all money values.

7. Time Lines

- use academically recognised dates and relationships. Do not try to date Creation!
- in some contexts (where there is long historical tradition) it will assist readers if a national history can be shown to parallel the biblical time line.
- the time line should indicate where biblical authors or books are located along the line to give a better sense of the relative historical order of books. The probable historical order will then not be confused with the canonical order.

8. Cross References

- ensure the reference is relevant to the text of both passages. Note whether it is a word-use connection, an historical reference or quotation etc.
- compiling cross references is a complex task. Ensure there is no theological "skewing" of the connections between texts.
- list the NT quotations of OT texts, indicating that the former are mostly LXX quotations. Do not harmonise them.

9. Parallel Passages

- note the parallel texts within both OT and NT.

10. Concordances

- these should be based on the original language texts

- note the problem with contextual renderings of terms in functional equivalent translations. Provide a list of all the contextual renderings of given terms.

11. **Bible Index**

- ensure that the index contains all the key references relevant to the entry.
- determine how exhaustive the listing should be - exhaustive or selective.