

Guidelines for the Preparation and Publication of Portions and Selections (or Guidelines for the Production of Portions and Selections)

This document sets out procedures to guide in the process of preparing Scripture Portions and Selections, from the initial request for a particular product to the planning and implementation of a project. It also includes a framework document which defines the essential elements of such products and their relevance to audience and marketing.

A. Guidelines for Pre-Project Planning and Communication

1. The Roles of Program and Translations in Portions and Selections Projects

a. Program

The Publishing Process - definition

- All publication plans should be thoroughly **RESEARCHED** beforehand
- The publishing process should be **MANAGED**
- The work of all the department members should be fully **INTEGRATED**
- Each project should be part of a wider **PUBLISHING PLAN**

Process

- Needs Assessment – Untapped markets; Perceived needs; Customer requests
- Audience research
- Medium selection – print, audio/video; CD; Story telling;
- Selection of appropriate material by Translation/Program Team
- Plan distribution channels – Determine quantities; Determine cost/selling price
- Approve Budget/project
- Select Design – Prepare text and other material ; select supplier; promote new publication; production
- Commissioning – Artwork/Typesetting/Recording/Filming
- Approve CRc/Master tape
- Manufacturing/Production – Approve proofs
- Delivery of finished product
- Distribution
- Assessment of program – Audience response; Distribution experience; selling pattern

b. Translations:

Training. In the case of certain Portion or Selection projects, where special training is needed to prepare a team for the creation of materials for the production (e.g. WASAI; EASA; TAZI), a Translation Officer may be called on to provide specialized training in the translation and Scripture Engagement procedures needed for the project. Such training should be part of a holistic training exercise which incorporates the entire PPM framework.

Quality Control. Because these products incorporate Scripture materials, a Translation Officer should be assigned to ensure that quality control criteria are met at each stage of the creation of the product. This will include determining the appropriateness of the contents of Biblical texts to the chosen theme and type of product, the length of the Biblical texts, and input on the suitability of the translation or version of the Biblical text to be used. This QC-checking role also includes determining the suitability and effects of bridge materials and format of presentation for delivering the Biblical meaning clearly in and through the completed Portion or Selection.

Coordination. The TO assigned to the project will also ensure that checking of the materials is coordinated with other dimensions of the production task.

Other Translation Functions. In some cases it may be deemed appropriate for the TO to serve the project in a creative capacity. Such a decision made at the time of team formation (see below) would have to be based on the individual's qualifications, experience and skills to deliver this kind of specialized service.

2. Procedures for Initiating a Project

a. Communication.

The cooperative nature of a Scripture Portion or Selection Project requires close communication and cooperation among the participating departments. At whatever level a project request is received and considered or conceived (NBS, UBSASC, UBSWSC), the appropriate Program and Translations staff should meet together to discuss all aspects of the proposed project in accordance with the PPM framework.

b. Coordinated Planning and Creation of the Product

Design of the Product. Program and Translations should work together to set the specific parameters of the project according to the PPM framework. The identified audience will determine the nature and design of the product. Decisions about how to achieve the product design should be made cooperatively with all departments involved.

- The PPM process suggests a protocol for project design. Defining the specific PPM contours for a given project should include inter-departmental cooperative decision-making to determine project stages, time-frame, budget, format, etc.

Selection of the Team. Decisions going into the formation of the project team should be made cooperatively by Program and Translations and other departments with a stake in or responsibility for the product. Depending to some degree on the type of product, ideally, the team selected should include: (1) suitably qualified writers and (in some cases translators); (2) marketing personnel; (3) production personnel; (4) quality control personnel (Translations).

B. Guidelines for Project Execution

1. Audience research

A **selection** should be directed to a specific group of potential readers. The first step in the preparation of a selection is the identification of an audience to which it will be directed. This implies establishing what are the existing needs and opportunities and determining the characteristics of the target group, e.g., age, sex, level of education, social context, Christian/non-Christian, urban/rural. If it is a selection for a special day or an important event (e.g., Asian Games) it is likewise necessary to make a study to identify the characteristics of the audience that will meet on that occasion.

Just as we go to the church to worship God, or go to a political meeting to hear what a party has to say, or attend to a presentation of a Shakespeare play to explore a timeless plot, so the potential reader will read a **Bible selection** expecting to find something in it. What is that person going to find?

This area is the responsibility of marketing colleagues, but as TOs do their checking and evaluation, they as TOs must also have a clear understanding of the target audience and the specific need for which the selection is designed.

Special Denominational Requests should be discussed and incorporated into the planning from the start. These may include matters of content and theme, formats



and Scripture translations which are specific to the requesting church(es) and regarded as crucial for meeting the perceived needs of their communities.

2. Objective or goal

A specific selection is directed to a special group to reach a well-defined goal. Therefore, the second step in preparation consists in determining the purpose of the selection. No selection should be done without deciding first its objective and where and how it can be used. What do we want to accomplish through the selection?

Selections can be used for a wide range of audiences and purposes, e.g.:

- encourage interest in the Christian faith
- comfort the suffering
- promote spiritual growth
- teach a biblical truth
- answer a situation where a human need arises.

Once we decide **for whom and for what** we are preparing the selection, we have taken a significant step forward in the preparation process. We have to think about the selection not as an end in itself, but as a part of a process of communicating the Christian faith. It is preferable for specific selections to be part of an integrated plan and programme of a NBS.

3. Text used: what version?

The version of the Bible we are using should meet the requirements established by the UBS. Normally we would use a version published by an NBS or the UBS. Selections may also be produced from work in progress, with text approved by a TO. If a BS opts for a version published by another agency, there would have to be agreements with that agency, and royalties may have to be paid. Some translations show the doctrinal bias of the body sponsoring the translation and would not be recommended for BS use. For instance, a BS would not publish a portion taken from the Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation*.

In Latin America the Spanish-speaking societies have two UBS versions available: **Dios Habla Hoy³ and Reina-Valera (1995)**. The Psalms, Proverbs and NT of the **Biblia en Lenguaje Sencillo** (Bible in Basic Spanish) is also available in electronic

form on <http://bible.gospelcom.net>. It is important to choose a version in keeping with the target audience.

In the last few years the number of Bibles and NTs in indigenous languages has increased dramatically. The introduction of computers has borne fruit in the form of electronic texts. This provides great opportunities for local production of a great variety of materials in indigenous languages.

4. Title

The title of a selection should be related to the text and be eye-catching for potential readers. The title together with the art work should seize their attention and motivate them to accept and read the selection. It is important that the titles (and subtitles) are consistent with the text and that they respect the passage's structure. (See 7.1 below.)

5. Content and meaning

The most difficult and important part in the preparation is the selection of the Bible text, but having followed steps 1 and 2 makes it a lot easier.

The text of a selection should be a complete text. Linguists speak about **discourse units**. A discourse unit varies in size: e.g. a paragraph; a complete letter. The **Bible selection** becomes a discrete discourse in itself.

The **content** of a selection should be **relevant** to the situation for which it is intended. A Bible text used out of **context**, is often no more than a **pretext** (for many things!). We need to have imagination and creativity when selecting Bible passages. We need to make full use of the great variety of subjects presented in the Bible. We also should avoid partisan themes that focus on matters that are insignificant and marginal in the Bible (e.g. Mormons pay a lot of attention to 1 Cor 15.39 and baptism for the dead, but it is the only reference in the Bible to this subject). In choosing more than one passage from the same book, or a variety of passages from different books, it is important to ensure that these supplement and complement each other.

6. Clarity and cohesion of format

It is necessary to maintain the integrity of the biblical text. The biblical materials show structure, meaning and purpose. Do those who design and plan selections respect those purposes in the selection that is being produced?

When preparing the selection, we seek to maintain the discourse unit within the biblical context. We need to assure the effective and faithful communication of the passage's meaning according to that context. This presupposes sound exegesis based on criteria accepted by the UBS.

The text chosen should not distort the message of the complete text from which it was taken. To achieve this it is recommended that additional material be prepared to help readers to make a bridge between their own circumstances and the original setting. **Brief introductions** can help the reader to understand the historical and literary context, e.g.:

- a short explanation of the location of the passage in the Bible;
- a few words to relate the text to the whole book from which the passage was taken;
- a brief indication identifying (as far as possible) the author, the original audience and the intention when the book was written;
- some words to focus the selection's message or subject;
- a short passage, to link the text and the reader.

When quoting several passages from the same book or from different books, we can use **bridge material** to maintain the integrity of the text and guarantee the cohesion of the discourse in the selection. We need to avoid a fragmented content or an incomplete presentation of the subject.

For instance, it is important to identify participants. So, a selection should not begin "And he said" without explaining who was talking and with whom. Information can be drawn from the preceding passage so that if Jesus is the one speaking, the selection may begin: "Jesus said ...". Sometimes implicit information becomes explicit. If a selection began with the words "The next day ..." without any other temporal reference, the temporal reference may be explained or omitted.

A selection might conclude with a sentence or short paragraph to encourage further thought, or to help the reader discover further meaning.

7. Compatibility of form and content

From linguistics and semiotics we learn that everything around us is communicating in some way. We are addressed continuously by a number of "voices" each speaking its own language to us: movement, spatial relationships, color, the clothes we wear, body language, gestures, etc.

Also, in a Bible selection there is a convergence of several factors that are going to "communicate" something to the potential reader: the paper we use, the illustrations we prefer, the text we select, the font we opt for. etc. A Bible selection should be a harmony. We want to "listen" to a symphony of these voices, not to a debate between competing elements.

7.1 Title Content

In a Bible selection there should be interrelation between the title, the theme and the content. Avoid titles which, however eye-catching they may be, do not point the reader to the main theme of the selection.

7.2 Art work content

We need to define the potential reader, and therefore the most adequate means to reach that person: quality of paper, type of illustrations, color selection, artistic genre, etc. We should be aware of the challenge of finding illustrations, photos or drawings that go together with the text to produce a harmonious whole. Each culture has its own artistic expression and iconic inventory and, for that reason, we should be careful not to attempt to use only one style for different audiences. For instance, many ethnic groups in the South America reject Annie Vallotton's drawings. They ask, "Why it does not have eyes? Is it a ghost?". They prefer more realism in the art.

The important thing is the **Bible text**, and the aim of the illustration or the art is enhance and draw attention to the text, to invite the reader to engage with the text. As one colleague has said: "El texto biblico es senor de la ilustración y no la ilustración senora del texto biblico" ("The Bible text is lord of the illustration, not the illustration lord of the Bible text").

With this in mind we should look for harmony and balance between text and illustrations.

7.3 Theme content

The subject or theme of the selection should inform the choice of passage(s) and be informed by the selected passage(s). Lack of this correspondence may provoke a certain reaction and rejection from the reader who does not find consistency in the presentation.

7.4 Audience content



The content should be relevant to the intended audience. Gal 3.15-24 would not be chosen as a selection for eight-year-old children.

Those who prepare selections need to understand the language, culture and needs of the target audience. They need to understand the message of the book from which they select a passage. The size of the passage should also correspond to the reader's age, level of literacy, and concepts of visuality.

8. Format

The format and design of a Bible selection help to

- give the selection an attractive appearance (in keeping with the aesthetic ideas of the target culture) which will encourage potential readers to accept the selection;
- seize potential readers' and move them to read the selection;
- **facilitate** the reading, understanding and assimilation of the text

The combination of type size, font, color and intensity of the color should produce something neat and legible. Different fonts should be used to differentiate between Bible text, introductions and bridge materials, but the use of a smaller type face than that of the Bible text should be avoided.

9. Testing

Before the selection goes into production, it should be tested among the target audience in order to check its acceptance and detect any implicit meaning that could go against the main message of the selection, e.g. illustrations, cultural background. TOs can work with BS colleagues to design procedures for testing.

We should encourage BSs to **avoid the rushed production of Bible selections**. Discipline and a systematic approach are required to plan well beforehand the audience, purpose, theme, text, design, and production of a selection.

10. Copyright

The copyright of the translation used should belong or be available to the UBS.
Copyright must be indicated in the selection.

11. Colophon

The following data are given in the colophon: translation used; copyright; address of the BS; some words encouraging the reader to read the Bible.

The group sponsoring the selection can be mentioned, and/or the target group of the selection.

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