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TRANSLATOR'S NOTES: ENGLISH AND FRENCH HELPS FOR MOTHER-TONGUE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

ABSTRACT

African mother-tongue Bible translators with about ten years of education and little or no knowledge of biblical languages often lack appropriate exegetical resources. This paper will show how Translator's Notes (TN), being produced under SIL's International Translation Department, is intended to help meet their needs. It will focus on the relevance of TN to Bible translation work in Africa, describe the intended use and users of TN, and include a brief history of the project and a discussion of the process of adapting English TN texts for French translation (a process that requires a new look at the exegesis as it relates to French Bible versions). It will give examples of TN use in Africa and how the users responded.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Africa today there are dedicated people who have a worthy goal in view—bringing the message of Scripture to their own people in their own language. But these mother-tongue Bible translators face a problem—the lack of appropriate translation helps. Commentaries that address specific translation issues are few and are not readily available. Writers of many commentaries assume that readers have knowledge of Hebrew or Greek, which is not the case with all mother-tongue translators (MTTs). Even useful tools such as the *UBS Translator's Handbooks* and the *SIL Exegetical Summaries* and *Semantic Structural Analyses* may be too difficult for those whose first language is not English or French.

1.1 Scenario

In an African village, a team of MTTs is working on rendering Luke chapter 11 in their language. They speak English as a second language and are using several English versions of the

Bible as their source text, since none of them has studied Greek. They received training in a two-week translation principles course before beginning work on Luke.

They encounter a number of difficulties when they reach Luke 11:11: “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?” (NIV). First, they are not sure why Jesus posed the question. In 11:13 Jesus appears to be calling his listeners evil. Was he rebuking them in 11:11-12 for offering their children bad things to eat instead of the good things the children asked for? Was he expecting the guilty ones among his listeners to confess that they would indeed give a snake instead of a fish?

Furthermore, the translators recognize a difference between the biblical culture and their own. Fish is rarely eaten in their part of the country, but certain species of snake are a well-known food, and in their culture a son would be much more likely to ask his father for a snake than for a fish to eat.

Not least among the issues facing the MTTs is the question of how these seemingly abrupt questions in 11:11-12 fit the theme of the passage they are working on, Luke 11:1-13. The heading in their NIV Bibles characterizes this section as “Jesus’ Teaching on Prayer.” Verse 13 (NIV: “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”) seems to indicate that Jesus was making some sort of comparison between praying and asking one’s parents for things, but the English expression “how much more” is unfamiliar to the translators, and they are not sure whether the comparison is a negative or a positive one.

1.2 Addressing the need

The above scenario illustrates some of the types of needs TN is designed to address. The MTTs in the illustration would benefit from a resource—written in a style of English simple

enough to be clear to them as non-native speakers—that explains the meaning of the text, guides them in dealing with the translation issues they have encountered in the passage, and suggests how they might express the meaning in their own language. Below are some examples of how *Translator’s Notes on Luke* (TN: Luke) advises MTTs regarding the passage discussed above.

1.2.1 Rhetorical questions

The MTTs in the scenario did not recognize why Jesus posed the question in Luke 11:11.

The notes on this verse include the following information:

This verse is a rhetorical question. Jesus used a rhetorical question to strongly state and emphasize that no father would give evil gifts to his children. There are at least two ways to translate this strong statement:

- *As a rhetorical question. In some languages, it will also be necessary to supply an emphatic answer such as “None!” to the rhetorical question. For example:*

*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?
[None!]*

- *As a non-rhetorical statement. In such a case, you should use another way to show the emphasis. One possibility is the word “certainly.” For example:*

There is certainly no father among you who would give his son a snake when he asked for a fish!

1.2.2 Cultural differences

In the same verse, there is a potential cultural difference with two facets: people in the biblical culture considered fish to be a good food, whereas people in the receptor culture may not; people in the biblical culture considered serpents to be unclean and inedible, whereas people in the receptor culture may value them as food. TN: Luke therefore offers these pieces of advice:

People ate a lot of fish in New Testament times. Here it is implied that the son was asking for a fish because he was hungry. If in your culture people do not eat fish, you may need to:

- *use a word for “meat”*
- *use a generic word for food*
- *substitute the name of another common food that is good for children to eat.*

...In comparison to a fish, which was harmless and good to eat, a snake was dangerous and useless. No father would give his young son a dangerous snake.

If in your culture, snakes are generally considered good to eat, you should:

- *use a specific type of snake that people don't eat. For example:*

viper

-OR-

cobra

-OR-

poisonous snake

- *use another type of snake-like creature that people don't eat. For example:*

worm.

1.2.3 Relevance to the context

One problem the MTTs in the scenario faced was understanding how Jesus' question fit the context of teaching about prayer. Providing an understanding of the source text requires explanation of the overall message of a given book of the Bible and of how the parts of the book relate to one another. Features of TN such as a general introduction, outline of the book of the Bible, headings for main parts of the text, and introductions to those parts all encourage users to keep the bigger picture in mind as they work through the text.

For example, in TN: Luke, the introduction to Section 11:1-13 relates the elements of the passage to one another as follows:

In this section Jesus gave an example of how his people should pray (11:2-4).... He also gave other examples to show that people should pray to God and not give up, because God loves people and wants to give good things to them.

The logic the MTTs struggled with in 11:11-13 is further explained in the following outline of 11:13:

- 1. People are evil.*
- 2. However, people know how to give good gifts to their children.*
- 3. (Implied) God is good.*
- 4. Therefore, God most certainly knows how to give good gifts to his children.*

2. THE VISION BEHIND TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Having considered an illustration of the help TN offers, we turn now to the bigger picture: the purpose, goal, focus, and intended audience for the series.

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of TN is to help mother-tongue translators (MTTs) of the Bible do the following:

- understand the source text;¹
- identify potential translation challenges;
- express the meaning of the source text in the receptor language.

Writers of TN seek to research, evaluate, and summarize existing exegesis rather than do original exegesis. The series addresses interpretational issues that the MTT is likely to encounter in working from different English or French versions of the Bible.

2.2 Goal

The goal of TN is to be easy to use, clear, concise, and accurate.

2.2.1 Ease of use

The main users of TN in English and French are those for whom the language of the TN text is not the mother tongue. Therefore, efforts are made to use a style that is easy to understand and to avoid technical terms other than those taught in courses on basic translation principles.

2.2.2 Clarity and brevity

TN aims to be practical in providing information essential to the process of translation. Each note focuses on a particular issue and is generally no more than five sentences long. However, when it is necessary to choose between clarity and brevity, the priority is to make the information clear.

¹ This paper uses the term *original language(s)* for the Hebrew and Greek, the term *source text* for the English or French versions from which the MTT works, and the term *receptor language* for the language into which the MTT is translating. TN reminds users frequently of features of the original languages (although actual Hebrew and Greek words are used sparingly) in order to help them correctly understand the meaning of their English or French source text.

2.2.3 Accuracy

TN authors, editors, and adapters are required to do thorough, scholarly research. The text is put through a rigorous process of checks and revisions before (and after) being used by MTTs.

2.3 Focus

Rather than being language-specific or oriented toward a particular region, TN focuses on problems universally experienced by Bible translators. In some cases it may be necessary for a translation consultant or workshop leader to adapt TN or to add information or examples for a particular language family or region.

The focus of TN is achieved in part through what it is not. For example, it is not a research paper. Authors do careful research in the Hebrew and Greek texts, in commentaries, and in other resources, but in TN they do not engage in scholarly debate, long proofs, or discussions of various theories. Rather, they provide from their research concise and practical translation advice. Nor is TN a devotional guide. Observations about applying the message of Scripture to the reader's life are omitted in the interest of facilitating the translation of the message. In these and other ways, TN differs from many traditional commentaries.

2.4 Intended audience

TN is aimed primarily at those who lack access to commentaries because of geographical or linguistic limitations and who have little or no theological training. But they have some formal education (ideally at least 10 years of schooling), an adequate knowledge of the language in which TN is written, understanding of basic biblical terms, and access to some translation training and ongoing consultant help. Such MTTs are likely to benefit from using TN in producing a good translation in their language.

3. COMPONENTS OF TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

The two main components of each book in the TN series are the Notes and the Display. In printed editions of TN, the Display is presented within a border on each right-hand page, with the corresponding Notes on the same two-page spread. This makes it easy for the user to refer to both components.

3.1 Format for the Notes and Display

3.1.1 Base text

The base text for TN in English is the Revised Standard Version (RSV) for Old Testament books and the New International Version (NIV) for the New Testament. In French, Bible à la colombe (BC) is the base text for both Old and New Testament books. These versions were chosen as being a fairly literal representation of the biblical text, yet not too difficult for those for whom English or French is not the mother tongue.

3.1.2 Verse parts

The TN author divides most verses into parts in order to discuss one proposition at a time (although some verse parts may include more than a single proposition). This division also allows for easy comparison of different Bible versions, makes the text more readable, and causes references to the biblical text to be more focused.

3.2 The Notes component

The Notes provide information and advice about the larger units of the text and about the details of meaning in each verse. The relevant word or phrase from the base text (RSV, NIV, or BC) is quoted in bold type at the beginning of each note. The note explains in detail the meaning of the original Hebrew or Greek text, alerts the user to possible translation challenges, and/or suggests ways to express the meaning, as appropriate.

A feature of TN that differs from many other resources is that it advises users on ways to translate. This does not mean that various viewpoints and interpretations are not considered and presented. In fact, users are often advised to choose between several valid possibilities. But authors of the Notes are expected to weigh evidence and arguments which may not be available to MTTs and to help them make discerning translation decisions.

Sharon E. Gray, senior editor for English TN, reminds TN authors that they are only giving *advice*, and that in implementing it MTTs will be governed by the structure of the receptor language (RL). She tells TN authors to “provide all the information the MTT needs to unpack figures of speech, turn passives to actives, etc. so that, for example, if the RL cannot use a passive, the MTT will not have to work out for himself who is the agent” (Gray 2002). The following kinds of information and issues are dealt with in the Notes.

3.2.1 Textual issues

Textual issues occur when there is a significant question about the form of the original text. For example, if the MTTs in the introductory scenario had been looking at the King James Version, they would have noticed in Luke 11:11 the words “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?” whereas NIV does not include this question.

3.2.2 Meaning

When the meaning of the source text is not obvious, the Notes provide an explanation. Key biblical terms such as *faith* and *grace* may be explained not only in the Notes but, in more recent editions of TN, in a glossary. The glossary provides consistency in explaining the basic meaning, while the individual notes give nuances of a key term in particular contexts.

Other elements of the text that may need explaining include:

- words and phrases that are used by the biblical writer in a nonprimary sense, such as metaphors, rhetorical questions, and idioms;

- words and phrases with multiple meanings;
- concepts that are likely to be unfamiliar, such as certain biblical customs;
- grammatical elements such as passives and ellipses;
- larger portions of text such as proverbs and parables;
- discourse level features such as conjunctions.

3.2.3 Alternative interpretations

Where Bible scholars have differing understandings of the meaning of a verse or phrase, alternative interpretations may be presented in the Notes. The Notes do not explain all possible alternative interpretations, but only those which influence the translation. These are usually in cases where there are differing interpretations among the Bible versions designated for comparison in such matters (NIV, NJB, TEV, and RSV in English; BC, FC, and TOB in French).²

The Notes list the interpretation that seems to fit the context best as the preferred choice and number it (1). This recommendation is based on a careful study of the passage and of Bible commentaries and other references. Other possible interpretations are listed below the first interpretation, and are numbered (2), (3), and so forth. For example, the alternative interpretations for a clause in 2 Timothy 1:12 are presented as follows:

what I have entrusted to him: *The Greek phrase that the NIV translates as what I have entrusted to him is literally “my deposit.” In Greek, it is not clear in what sense the deposit was Paul’s. There are two possibilities:*

(1) *It was Paul’s deposit because Christ entrusted the deposit to Paul. For example, TEV says:*

...what he has entrusted to me.

(See also RSV, NET, REB, GW, CEV, JBP, NCV.)

² See table of abbreviations at the end of this paper.

(2) *It was Paul's deposit because Paul entrusted the deposit to Christ. For example, the NLT says:*

...what I have entrusted to him...

(See also NIV, NRSV, NASB, KJV, NJB.)

It is recommended that you follow interpretation (1) for the following reason. The same word for "deposit" that appears here also appears in 1:14 and in 1 Timothy 6:20. In these other two contexts, the word clearly means something that God had entrusted to Timothy. For this reason, the versions listed under interpretation (1) above interpret "my deposit" here as something that the Lord had entrusted to Paul.

However, interpretation (2) also has strong support among the major English translations. If the major language version in your area follows interpretation (2), then you may prefer to choose it. You could say,

I am convinced that Christ is able to keep safe what I have entrusted to him until the day he returns.

3.2.4 Translation challenges

Translation advice is provided when there may be some difficulty in understanding or expressing the meaning in the receptor language because of linguistic or cross-cultural differences. Even when the meaning is clear, it may be difficult for MTTs to translate it into the receptor language. Two types of challenges (rhetorical questions and cultural differences) have already been illustrated in the discussion of Luke 11:11.

Another type of translation challenge is implied information. The Notes aim to help the user understand, as nearly as possible, all the meaning of the biblical text that the original audience would have understood when they read or heard the text in Hebrew or Greek. Sometimes the original author assumed that his audience already knew certain facts and so he did not state them in the text. Sometimes an important part of the meaning was implied. The original audience would have understood it correctly, but it may not be understandable to people today. Where it is essential for comprehension of the passage, the Notes explain this kind of implied information.

3.3 *The Display component*

The Display consists of a source line from the Bible, followed by one or more meaning lines, for each verse part. For example, the Display for Philippians 1:11a looks like this:

1:11a ***filled with the fruit of righteousness***
As a tree produces fruit, so you will produce righteous deeds
-OR-
[That is, I pray] that you will be characterized by good qualities and actions.

3.3.1 Source line

In the example above, the source line, from NIV, is in bold type. It is followed by two meaning lines written by the TN author, each providing a rendering of the source line based on the Notes for this verse part.

3.3.2 Meaning line

The meaning line is intended to provide a clear restatement of the meaning. Ambiguities are avoided unless they are deliberately intended by the biblical author. The meaning line is a compilation of the discussion in the corresponding note, reflecting conclusions reached, interpretative choices made, etc. When there are interpretation alternatives in the Notes, only the preferred interpretation is reflected in the meaning line. When the Notes explain implied information, the meaning line illustrates a way to make such information explicit. Implied information is shown in brackets, as in the second meaning line in the example above.

Passive constructions, rhetorical questions, direct speech, figures of speech, and key biblical terms are some of the issues dealt with in the Notes that must be represented in the Display. The following paragraphs explain how these and other features are expressed in the meaning lines.

When the source line includes grammatical features such as passive verbs, rhetorical questions, or direct speech, at least two meaning lines are presented. The first (more literal) meaning line retains the passive, rhetorical question, or direct speech for those languages which

naturally use such features. The second line adjusts these grammatical features (passives rewritten as actives with the implied agent supplied, rhetorical questions rewritten as declarative sentences, direct speech rewritten as indirect speech, etc.) for those languages which do not use them. Offering more than one meaning line can help to train the MTT to discern what is best for his or her language.

Luke 11:11 was used above as an example of the way the Notes deal with rhetorical questions. Below is Luke 11:11 as it appears in the Display, showing two ways to phrase the verse as a rhetorical question and one example of expressing it as a declarative:

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?

Would any of you (plur) fathers/men give your son a snake if he asked you for a fish [to eat? Of course not!]

-OR-

Suppose one of your (plur) sons asks you for a fish. Which of you (plur) fathers would give him a snake instead?

-OR-

None of you (plur) men would give your son a snake when he asked you for a fish!

When the source line includes a figure of speech, at least two meaning lines are presented. The first retains the figure of speech, often representing a metaphor as a simile. The last meaning line gives the meaning directly, in non-figurative language. For example, the Display of 2 Timothy 4:6a shows these two ways of representing Paul's likening the end of his life to a drink offering being poured out:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering,

[I give you these commands] because my life is like a drink offering that [a priest] pours out [as a sacrifice].

-OR-

[I give you these commands,] because my life and work for God are already ending.

Since the translation of many key terms is language specific, it is impossible to render them in the source line in a way that will be helpful for all languages. For example, in one language, the word "church" may be a transliterated term. In another language it may be an

entire phrase. Therefore, when the source line includes a key biblical term, the first meaning line retains the term. A second meaning line may offer a translation alternative reflecting the meaning of the term as defined in the Notes and/or glossary.

Other considerations in the Display include event nouns, complex sentences, and potentially unknown ideas. Event nouns in the original text are usually expressed by verbs. For example, the NIV phrase “your sincere faith” in 2 Timothy 1:5 is expressed in the Display meaning line as “you genuinely/truly believe [in Christ Jesus].” Complex sentences in the original are broken down into shorter sentences. Ideas that are likely to be unknown in many receptor language cultures are expressed with descriptive phrases that break down the components of meaning. When Jesus said in Luke 5:3, “And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins...” his listeners would have recognized immediately the picture he was portraying and understood how foolish it would be to pour new wine into old skins. But readers today are usually unfamiliar with such practices. The Notes explain Jesus’ illustration, and in turn the Display shows how to apply the explanation in a clear translation by filling in the cultural gaps: “Also, people do not pour new wine into old animal skin bottles. If people did, the new wine would [ferment and] break/split the [old wine] containers, [which cannot stretch].”

3.4 Other components

Included in the front matter of each book in the TN series are recommended reference helps, a general introduction, an outline, and a summary of the book of the Bible. Optionally, there may be a section explaining the book’s title. The back matter of each TN book may include appendices and a glossary and should always include a bibliography and a section called

“Guidelines for Using the *Translator’s Notes* Series,” which gives the reader important information for using TN effectively.

4. HISTORY

TN owes much to the methods used by Bible translators in the past, to the exegetical work of many, past and present, and to interaction with mother-tongue translators all over the world. Additionally, French TN owes much of its development to the English model.

4.1 Development of TN

4.1.1 English TN

Guidelines for writing the *Translator’s Notes* series were first drawn up in December 1990. A major restructuring of the standards and guidelines for writing TN took place in 1999 in the interest of making each note more concise and sharply focused and creating more consistency and ease of use in the entire series. Since that time, most of the TN books written before 1999 have undergone major revisions.

4.1.2 French TN

The first drafts of TN in French were *Notes de traduction : Philémon* and *Notes de traduction : Tite*, translated with some adaptations from the English *Translator’s Notes on Philemon* and *Titus* and completed in May and July, respectively, 1998. They were field-tested by the adapter/translator (Keith Patman) in July 1998 in a workshop for four languages of the Mbam region of Cameroon.

French TN has thus far been based on the English series. Books in French have been revised not only as a result of the French team’s system of checking and field testing, but also in keeping with the major revisions that have taken place in English TN books since 1999.

In February 2004 the title of the French series was changed to *Comprendre pour traduire* (CPT). Adaptation of the TN text for CPT insures that it will reflect the way French versions deal with issues.

4.1.3 Adaptation of English TN for use in French

In the adaptation of a TN text for French, English TN provides a base from which the adapter works, taking what has been researched and written in English and rewriting it to reflect the issues that are relevant to the French Bible text or the French language. French Bible versions sometimes make different exegetical choices than English versions do in places where there are variants or interpretational ambiguities. The aim of adaptation (as opposed to direct translation) is to represent a solid study of the French versions and of how they deal with each issue.

The adapter considers the same issues in the French Bible versions that the original English TN author considered. For example, he or she compares selected French versions to check for their treatment of variants in the Hebrew or Greek text. The three main versions that serve as a basis for comparison are Bible à la colombe (BC), Bible en français courant (FC), and Traduction œcuménique de la Bible (TOB). Other French versions consulted in the process are listed in the table of abbreviations at the end of this paper.

Careful comparison of BC, FC, and TOB, as well as other major French versions, usually reveals issues that did not need treatment in English TN but which may pose problems for MTTs using French versions as their source language. In such cases, the adapter is expected to do the same type of exegetical research in Hebrew or Greek, commentaries, and other resources that English TN authors do.

4.2 Use of TN in Africa

While the TN series is being developed for use by MTTs all over the world, the primary usage of

French TN, and a major usage of English TN, is in Africa. Below are some examples of how the series has been used effectively—and in turn has been improved—in African settings.

4.2.1 Use in workshops

In October 2000 Jerry and Jan Allen, who authored some of the first books in the TN series, held a two-week workshop for MTTs in Nigeria on translating Philippians. Jan spent ten to thirty minutes each morning teaching the participants how to use TN. She wrote afterwards that she strongly recommends teaching TN usage “as part of a translation workshop in which the TN on the book being translated is constantly in use—is in fact the main reference book, next to Bible versions” (Allen 2001).

Many other translation workshop leaders have reported that this is an ideal situation for introducing English or French TN as a tool. In March 2005, SIL translation consultant Jackie Hainaut tested French TN: Philippians at a workshop for four languages in Chad. She reported that the educational level of workshop participants ranged from only having completed four years of elementary school to having graduated from high school, and that facility in French ranged from poor to quite good. The language level of the TN text seemed to work well for those with a grade nine education level or better. Hainaut served only as a resource person and a checker of the work of the MTTs. Otherwise, with TN as their main resource, “all worked independently in this workshop, which was a first for some of them” (Hainaut 2005).

Hainaut gave the MTTs about one and a half hours of formal training in the use of TN at the beginning of the workshop and informal training as they went on. She communicated to the TN editors many specific comments, corrections, and suggestions. But her general comment after seeing the MTTs use TN was as follows: “I was quite pleased with the results obtained in

the workshop. They were actually beyond what I hoped for, especially since two of the teams do not have people with [developed] exegetical abilities” (Hainaut 2005).

4.2.2 Input from MTTs

Such workshops have in fact been an important resource for improving the quality of TN as a result of MTTs’ response to using books in the English or French series. For example, in a workshop for ten Nigerian languages in June 2005, MTTs wrestled with the logical connections in Luke 11:31. As a result, workshop leader Randy Groff found a way to clear up the unanticipated difficulties. The struggle of the TN users was helpful in bringing more clarity to the explanation of the passage. The dialog between the production team and the users has proven essential in this case and many others.

4.2.3 Input from consultants

Consultants have offered valuable insights as well, often in the context of translation workshops. Workshop leaders in an African setting, especially if they are Africans, have an opportunity to adapt TN or to add information or examples for their particular language family or region.

SIL translation consultant Steve Payne recorded examples of the importance of such adaptation in his report on a Luke Partnership workshop held in Uganda in June 2004 (Payne 2005). In a checking session on the passage on levirate marriage and the resurrection (Luke 20:27-40), Congolese (DRC) translation consultant Andy Alo, who was leading, pointed out several cultural considerations that affect translation. First, he observed that the translator must make it clear that the word “brother” used throughout the passage is literal—a son of the same mother and father—rather than a friend, a fellow Christian, or a member of the community, as the word may mean in African contexts.

Secondly, in many African cultures it would be natural to assume that the woman in the story caused the death of all seven brothers, that she was a sorceress. If that were the case, Alo pointed out, why would any of them want to be her husband in the resurrection! At best, such an understanding of the story would add a distracting complication. In an African setting it might be essential to make explicit the fact that the seven brothers each died of natural causes, although it would not be necessary to do so in a European setting.

Payne observed that an African consultant can offer this kind of insight because he or she knows the culture. This adds depth to the issues the TN author raised, which cannot be as linguistically or culturally specific.

From a consultant's point of view, TN offers an advantage that has not yet been mentioned. In doing exegesis for the series, SIL consultant Liz Raymond noted the preventive quality of TN. In other words, given a guide to help them recognize and think carefully about issues as they prepare a first-draft translation, MTTs are less likely to make many of the mistakes that are often not detected until the draft is tested with other speakers of the receptor language or checked by a consultant, at which point the MTT may become discouraged at having to undo much hard work.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that TN is able to fill a critical need as a tool to help mother-tongue Bible translators better understand the meaning of the source text, become aware of potential translation challenges, and consider possible ways to express the meaning. But to be effective in facilitating the production of accurate, clear, and natural-sounding translation of the Bible in many languages, the tool must be made available.

This paper therefore ends with an unapologetic appeal. People connected with Bible translation work in African languages are asked to make MTTs aware of the TN series. To inquire about obtaining TN books in English or French, the address to contact is

International Translation Department
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas, TX 75236
U.S.A.

or by e-mail, Translation_Department@sil.org.

The Word of God has yet to penetrate every people group in their mother tongue. There are about 843 languages in Africa, and 2644 worldwide, where Bible translation work has not yet begun, according to a recent reckoning (Wycliffe International 2005). *Translator's Notes* is designed to provide guidance in the translation process to those committed to doing the work. This is a call to put the tool in their hands.

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ABBREVIATIONS

English Bible versions

CEV	Contemporary English Version (1995)
GW	God's Word (1995)
JB	The Jerusalem Bible (1966)
JBP	J. B. Phillips (<i>The New Testament in Modern English</i> , 1958)
KJV	King James Version (Authorized Version) (1611)
LB	Living Bible (1971)
NAB	New American Bible (1971)
NASB	New American Standard Bible (1995)
NCV	New Century Version (1991)
NEB	New English Bible (1972)
NET	NET Bible (New English Translation, 1999)
NIV	New International Version (1993)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
NKJV	New King James Version (1982)
NLT	New Living Translation (1996)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
REB	Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV	Revised Standard Version (1952)
TEV	Today's English Version (1976)

French Bible versions

BC	Nouvelle édition Segond révisée (Bible a la Colombe, 1978)
BJ	La Bible de Jérusalem, nouvelle édition (1973)
FC	Bible en français courant, nouvelle édition révisée (1997)
NBS	Nouvelle Bible Segond, Société Biblique Française (2002)
PdV	Parole de Vie (La Bible en français fondamental, 1993/94)
Sem	La Bible du Semeur (1992)
TOB	Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible (1972/75/91)

Other abbreviations used in this paper

CPT	<i>Comprendre pour traduire</i>
MTT	Mother tongue translator
SIL	SIL International (formerly Summer Institute of Linguistics)
TN	<i>Translator's Notes</i>
UBS	United Bible Societies