NEW READER SCRIPTURE INSTITUTE

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In October 1974, a three-week Institute was held at Rajpur, North India, with a specific emphasis on preparing material for New Readers. There were 20 participants representing 14 languages, and three full-time Bible Society staff members.

Because of its special emphasis, the working programme was rather different from that which will be familiar to many TBT readers. There was, as usual, a series of lectures on translation principles, though it was shorter than at most translators' institutes. There was also a series of lectures dealing with the characteristics of New Reader Scriptures and the problems of preparing materials specially for new readers. Both these series were concluded by the end of the second week.

At least three hours per day, and much more during the final week, were devoted to "workshop" sessions. A set of 16 selections had been chosen in advance by the Translations Department of the Bible Society of India, and the participants were given two goals. They were not only to translate this set of selections into their own languages, but also to prepare manuscripts as nearly as possible ready for the printer, in the format in which they will eventually reach the reader.

With these goals in view, there was no formal lecture series on Biblical problems, but a large amount of time was devoted to a study of the meaning of the particular selections that were being translated, and to the translation problems involved. The "Translator's Notes on Literacy Selections" prepared by Dr. Nida were used where they covered the relevant passages.

It was found most effective to have all the participants gathered together, and to do the translation in the presence of the staff members, as soon as the problems of a passage had been discussed. This method of working had several advantages. It gave the translators no time to forget the problems before tackling them. It gave opportunity to raise questions immediately they occurred, and in a context in which the answers were available to all participants. Thus translators were often alerted by the contributions of others to something neither they nor the staff members had noticed. Last but not least, it kept everyone working at the same speed, with no excuse either for slacking or for showing off. Everyone attained the targets set, and so everyone shared a sense of achievement, and morale was high throughout.

With several languages there were two speakers present, and in these cases they were encouraged to translate independently, then compare their work and make it into one final draft afterwards. This method helped to cultivate the idea that things can be said in more than one way, and that the way most appropriate for the target audience must be chosen. Where there were

two speakers, they were also encouraged to read their work aloud to each other, and try to hear it from the point of view of a non-reader.

One conclusion that arose from the workshop sessions was that a clear distinction should be made between a text intended for publication for New Readers in English, and a text intended as a translation base for New Reader Scriptures in other languages. Neither the TEV nor the UBS New Reader selections proved suitable as a translation base as they stand. Where the selections chosen by the Bible Society of India were among the second language English texts prepared by Dr. E. R. Hope, the latter were used as the starting point. Half of the BSI selections, however, were from the Passion story, for which no New Reader texts were available. As these were worked over, a translation base was produced in which many alternatives and many possible restructurings were included. Suggestions from the participants were often incorporated and this helped to orient the translation towards the Indian context which gave birth to it. In any future workshops it would probably be an advantage to prepare such a translation base beforehand. And where a continuous narrative, such as that of the Passion, is intended for publication as a booklet, a careful study of the transitions between sections could also be done in advance.

Rajpur was a "guinea-pig" Institute, and experience had to be gained the hard way. At least the participants felt the experiment was a success. As one of them put it, "I have smelt the hand of God here".

A NOTE ABOUT CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor invites Bible translators and other readers of *Practical Papers for the Bible Translator* to submit contributions for publication. There is a continuing need for articles and notes which are of interest and relevance to translators in their work. In particular short articles by translators about aspects of their own work and experience will be welcome.

Contributions may be of any length up to a maximum of 5000 words, and should be sent to The Editor, *Practical Papers for the Bible Translator*, United Bible Societies, 146 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4BX, England.

BOOK REVIEW

The Translator's New Testament. London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1973.

As the name suggests, this new translation is a text of the New Testament for translators. Its introduction begins with this explanation of its purpose:

> The primary purpose of this book is to make available, to those translators of the New Testament into their own mother tongue who depend on English for access to the sources of biblical scholarship, such help as is necessary for the making of effective translations in the languages of today.