

## PROCEDURE FOLLOWED FOR TRANSLATING THE BOOK OF ACTS INTO KITUBA

*The following notes from a translator in West Africa, showing how he set about his work, may be of particular help to new translators. Ed.*

### I. Overall Preparation.

A. During our 1960–61 furlough I had the opportunity to work through the book of Acts (as well as Luke, Romans, Hebrews and James) in Greek, making notes in my interleaved Nestle Greek text.

B. Previous to translating Acts, I read through some introductions to the book in the commentaries. I also checked all indications of variant readings in the R.S.V., N.E.B., Segond, Synodale, and Jérusalem translations, determining where they and the Kikongo-Fioti and the Kituba–1957 translations differed among themselves and/or with the Nestle<sup>24</sup> (1960) Greek text. (See II E. 1 below).

### II. Daily Preparation—latter part of the day.

A. Read through a section of 8 to 12 verses to be translated the following day, in Nestle Greek text, referring to the Arndt & Gingrich lexicon wherever necessary.

B. Read through the commentaries (both those in my possession and those loaned by the American Bible Society): constant reference to the *Translator's Handbook*—preliminary form (for Acts 1–17 only), the *Interpreter's Bible*, *Moffatt New Testament Commentary*, Bruce's commentary; occasional reference to Rackham and Knowling (*Expositor's Greek Testament*).

C. Checked all references to passage to be translated, in grammars of Greek New Testament: Burton, Moulton, Moulton-Howard, Blass-Debrunner, Turner.

D. Prepared translational version, in French, with constant reference to the following translations: *English*—R.S.V. (1960 rev.), Rieu, N.E.B.; *French*—Segond (1962), Synodale (8th rev.–1956) and Jérusalem (1955); occasional references to: *English*—Twentieth Century (1904), Weymouth (5th ed.–1930), Moffatt (rev.–1935), Goodspeed (rev.–1948), Montgomery, C. B. Williams, Knox, C. K. Williams, Phillips (1960 rev.), Schonfield; *African languages*—Kikongo-Fioti, Kikongo-San Salvador, and Kituba–1957.

Other tools used: Moulton and Geden's *Concordance of the Greek Testament* (4th ed.); *Complete Concordance of the R.S.V.*; *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*; *Vocabulaire Biblique*; Goodspeed's *Paul*; Deissmann's *Paul—A Study in Social and Religious History*; Bouquet's

*Everyday Life in New Testament Times; Corswant's Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Biblique.*

This translational version was typed on  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$  paper, with twice as many lines left blank for Kituba as used for French.

In this version, passives have largely been eliminated, participles eliminated entirely, long sentences broken up into shorter units, pronominal referents clarified, etc.

E. On a second typewriter, simultaneous with the preparation of the translational version on the first machine, I made notes (with a carbon copy to my fellow-worker, Harold Fehderau) on green paper (6 squares to a page) of:

1. *All textual decisions*, with note of any variants among Nestle<sup>24</sup> (1960), R.S.V., N.E.B.; Segond, Synodale, Jérusalem; Kikongo-Fioti and Kituba—1957. We departed from Nestle *only* when three of the following four translations—R.S.V., N.E.B., Segond, Synodale—agreed in a reading differing from that of Nestle. I have collated 113 instances in Acts of lack of unanimity among the eight above-mentioned editions.
2. *Differences in verse division* in these eight editions. I have collated 13 such instances in Acts.
3. *Exegetical decisions*, with support lined up (Arndt & Gingrich lexicon, commentaries, translations, dictionaries of the Bible, etc.), often including alternatives rejected (with their support).
4. *Adaptations necessary for Kituba* (with support lined up when works mentioned in II.E.3 provide suggestive leads).

In all, for the above four categories, I made 1,046 such notes for the book of Acts.

### III. Procedure followed in daily translation session with assistant (informant)—first part of day (for all books):

#### A. Prayer.

B. I read aloud the translational version in French once through as assistant listened; opportunity given the assistant to ask questions. Incidentally, all discussion in the translation session was carried on in Kituba.

C. Translation of a sentence at a time. I typed translation, as he dictated, in blank spaces of sheet mentioned in II.D above. During this process, opportunity was given informant to ask any further questions necessary to his understanding of passage.

D. Translation, when completed, given two readings, with necessary adjustments made—such as replacement of past indefinite by historical present in narrative passages, shifts in word order, etc.

E. A third reading, with assistant following in the Kikongo-Fioti translation. This permitted me to turn up:

1. An occasional word or phrase skipped;
2. An occasional difference in Greek text followed by Kikongo-Fioti not revealed by previous checking;
3. An occasional further difference in interpretation worth noting. (See II.E.3.)

Observations from 2 and 3 were then typed on the green sheets.

F. Each day my wife typed up the translational version in French onto pink cards and the translation into Kituba onto gray cards. These cards were double-spaced to allow for later changes.

G. Every few chapters we went back and provided section headings (based on the United Bible Societies' Guide).

H. Every few weeks my assistant and I read over the Kituba together and he proposed changes which, if adopted, were typed in red on the gray cards.

#### **IV. The assistant re-read the translation.**

When we finished our translation of Acts, I re-read the Kituba against the R.S.V., with reference to the notes on green paper, which had been cut up and filed daily. (Note that in our current translation of Luke we are taking care of this checking by having my wife check the translation each day to catch any slips, after she has typed up the cards.) My informant then re-read the whole book in the Kituba only, and noted any further changes which he thought were necessary, from the point of view of style. This was the first time he had looked at the Kituba. All of his previous contact with our translation had been oral -aural. Then we sat down together and discussed his proposals for changes. Those that we adopted I then typed in red on the gray cards.

#### **V. Use of A.B.S. check lists.**

1. My wife is checking all the proper names against the A.B.S. check list, with the aid of the Concordance of the R.S.V.
2. I will then check vocabulary against the A.B.S. word check list.

#### **VI. Stencilling and verifying.**

The next step is typing up the translation onto stencils and running off copies to be sent to the Verification Commission for their suggestions. Were Harold Fehderau on the field, this step would be preceded by his checking of the translation with his Congolese assistant.