

Using AI for High-Quality Translation

Translation Policy & Procedure (for N2N Publishing Team)

Purpose:

Help our publishing team (student notes and curriculum materials) use AI to **verify the consistency and accuracy** of translations we receive from different countries, and **occasionally produce first-draft translations** that can later be reviewed by a national language checker.

Core conviction:

When used carefully with clear instructions and verification steps, **AI-assisted translation can be as good as—and in some cases better than—local human translators who have limited English training.** AI is not “rough enough is good enough.” We use it as a quality tool.

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01 Policy: Our Translation Standards

1.1 Audience and tone

- Our translations must be understandable for **pastors and church leaders**.
- Use **clear, modern, spoken language** that can be read aloud easily.
- Keep tone **warm, pastoral, and relational** (not academic).

1.2 Church vocabulary preference

We prefer language used by **evangelical and Pentecostal Protestant churches**, and we avoid:

- Catholic terminology when it changes meaning or tone
- Sectarian/cultic terminology (example you gave: Kimbanguist terms in Congo)

1.3 Bible quotation standard

- At the start of any project, we determine:
 1. Major Bible translations in that language
 2. Which are commonly used in **Protestant/Pentecostal churches**
 3. Which is most similar to **NIV (modern, clear, widely understood)**
- If the translation is already done by a national team and includes Bible quotes:
 - We **identify which Bible version they are using** and continue using that same version for consistency.

1.4 Consistency is not optional

If a document has:

- section titles
- table titles
- repeated phrases
- key theological terms
...those must remain **consistent everywhere** within the same translation set.

02 Procedure A: “Audit & Repair” (Most Common Use)

Use this process when a translation looks inconsistent, confusing, or suspicious.

Step 1 — Identify the problem type

Pick one or more:

- **Inconsistent headings** (table title differs in different places)
- **Inconsistent key terms** (e.g., “salvation” translated two different ways)
- **Unclear/odd wording** (reads like a literal or Catholic/sectarian phrase)
- **Formatting problems** (tables, outlines, numbering, references)
- **Bible quotes inconsistent** (different style or different Bible version)

Step 2 — Extract a focused “test set”

Copy/paste into AI:

- The questionable heading/table title + at least **5–10 lines around it**
- The matching heading/table title from another place that should match
- Any relevant outline section where it appears

Step 3 — Ask AI what it thinks the text means (without changing it)

Prompt AI:

- “Explain what this means in English.”
- “What is the intended point?”
- “Do you see religious vocabulary that sounds Catholic/sectarian vs Protestant/Pentecostal?”

Goal: Understand whether the translation is faithful to the original intent.

Step 4 — Back-translate to English (first verification)

Have AI translate the foreign-language segment back into English.

Compare to the original English (if you have it):

- Is the meaning the same?
- Any missing ideas?
- Any added ideas?
- Any theological drift?

Step 5 — Cross-check with a second tool (quick confidence test)

If something still feels off, run the same back-translation in a second tool (for example: another AI system, DeepL, Google Translate).

- If both tools give **similar English meaning**, confidence increases.
- If they give **very different meaning**, we flag it.

Step 6 — Check Bible version usage (if Scripture is included)

Ask AI:

- “Which Bible translation does this wording most resemble in [LANGUAGE/COUNTRY]?”
- “Which Bible translations are most used by Protestant/Pentecostal churches in that country?”
- “Which translation is most similar in style to NIV?”

Then choose one approach:

- **If the existing translation clearly follows a known version** → keep using it.
- **If inconsistent or unclear** → select the most suitable Protestant/Pentecostal modern translation and standardize quotes.

Step 7 — Create (or update) a mini glossary for the project

When repeated terms are involved, make a simple glossary:

- English term → approved translation → notes (why)

Examples:

- Pastor
- Church (Body vs building)
- Salvation
- Grace
- Faith
- Discipleship
- Holy Spirit
- Covenant, anointing, etc.

Rule: Once a glossary term is chosen, it stays consistent everywhere.

Step 8 — Repair the translation (only what is needed)

Ask AI to propose **two alternatives** that are:

- Protestant/Pentecostal tone
- clear, read-aloud friendly
- consistent with the glossary

Pick the better one and use it consistently.

Step 9 — Flag items that require a national checker

Escalate when:

- A theological term could be misunderstood
- Bible verses are disputed or inconsistent
- A phrase may be culturally inappropriate
- You suspect Catholic/sectarian vocabulary is dominating
- The AI outputs remain unstable or conflicting

03 Procedure B: Producing a First-Draft Translation (Occasional Use)

Use this when we have new material that was not translated by a national team.

Step 1 — Determine target language profile

Ask AI (in English) about the language in the target country:

- “What dialect or standard form is widely understood by Protestant/Pentecostal pastors?”
- “Which terms should be avoided if we want Protestant/Pentecostal wording?”
- “Which Bible translations are most used by Protestant/Pentecostal churches there?”
- “Which is closest to NIV in clarity and tone?”

Step 2 — Establish the glossary first

Before translating the full document, decide the key terms:

- God, Jesus, Holy Spirit
- Pastor, church (Body vs building)
- salvation, grace, faith
- disciple/discipleship, gospel, repentance, etc.

Step 3 — Translate in sections

Translate one section at a time (not huge dumps), so you can:

- preserve formatting
- preserve headings
- preserve table structure
- catch drift early

Step 4 — Do a quick back-translation check per section

For each section:

- Back-translate to English
- Compare with the original English
- Fix any drift immediately

Step 5 — Consistency pass at the end

Have AI scan the entire translation for:

- headings/titles consistency
- glossary consistency
- repeated phrases consistency
- Bible quote consistency

Step 6 — National checker review (recommended)

Send to a trusted national language reviewer for:

- naturalness
- church-appropriate vocabulary
- clarity for pastors in that region
- confirmation of Bible version usage

04 “Red Flags” Checklist (When to Worry)

If you see any of these, run Procedure A:

- Headings/tables don’t match in different places
- The same English term is translated multiple ways without reason
- The language sounds overly formal, liturgical, or “church-service” oriented
- Terms feel Catholic/sectarian rather than Protestant/Pentecostal
- Bible verses vary in style like they came from multiple versions
- Back-translation returns meaning that is “close but not quite”
- Two tools back-translate very differently

05 Translation Prompt Template for Any Language (N2N Ministries)

Copy/paste and fill in the brackets.

TRANSLATION PROMPT TEMPLATE (N2N Ministries)

- Translate the following text into clear, modern **[LANGUAGE]** used in **evangelical and Pentecostal Protestant churches** in **[COUNTRY/REGION]**.
- If there are multiple dialects, use **[DIALECT / MAJOR CITY STYLE]** but keep vocabulary simple enough for pastors and leaders in smaller towns.
- Keep the tone **warm, pastoral, relational, and easy to read aloud**.

Church vocabulary requirements

- Use Protestant/Pentecostal terminology (avoid Catholic or sectarian/cultic terms common in this region).
- Avoid overly formal, academic, or liturgical language.
- Avoid street slang.

Bible quotations

- When quoting Scripture, use the wording of **[BIBLE VERSION NAME]** where possible.
- If you are unsure which Bible version is most used by Protestant/Pentecostal churches in **[COUNTRY]**, first list the top options and recommend the best “NIV-like” choice (modern, clear, widely understood).

Consistency requirements

- Keep section headings and table titles consistent everywhere they appear.
- Maintain consistent translations for key terms. If a key term could be translated multiple ways, ask me what to choose OR propose the best option and use it consistently.

Clarity rules

1. Keep sentences short and clear.
2. Prefer natural spoken phrasing pastors would actually say.
3. Preserve formatting, numbering, outlines, and table structure.
4. If there is no natural word, keep the English term and explain it briefly in **[LANGUAGE]**.

Before you begin: Ask me any questions you need about dialect, Bible version preference, or key vocabulary choices.

[PASTE TEXT BELOW]

06 Sample Translation Prompt for Lingala

Translation Prompt for Lingala (N2N Ministries):

- Translate the following text into clear, modern Lingala used in evangelical and Pentecostal churches across Congo.
- Use “Urban Lingala (Kinshasa)” but keep the vocabulary simple enough for pastors and leaders in smaller cities.
- Keep the tone warm, pastoral, and relational.

Apply the following vocabulary rules:

- God = Nzambe ; Jesus = Yesu ; Holy Spirit = Molimo Mosantu
- Pastor = Pastër (do NOT use Prêtre or Padri)
- Church (Body of Christ) = Lingomba ; use Eglise only for the physical building
- Salvation = kobikama / lobiko ; Faith = bondeli or foi ; Grace = grâce or lilengalenga (use whichever is clearer in context)
- Avoid Catholic or Kimbanguist terms (e.g., Santu, Yezu, Mokonzi ya losambo, Nkanda ya Nzambe meaning liturgical "service")

Translation principles:

1. Keep sentences short, clear, and easy to speak aloud.
2. Use Bible quotations in the LRV wording where possible.
3. Avoid street or slang Lingala.
4. If there is no natural Lingala word, keep the English term and explain it briefly in Lingala.

07 Simple “Do This Every Time” Checklist (1 minute)

When checking a translation:

1. Identify what looks wrong (title, table, key term, Bible quote).
2. Paste both versions into AI and ask for meaning in English.
3. Back-translate to English and compare to the original intent.
4. If still unsure, check in a second tool.
5. Standardize using a mini glossary and keep headings consistent.
6. Flag anything risky for a national checker.