



Policy for the use of texts from Bibles in the vernaculars of South Africa

Guidelines on copyright and consent

1. Introduction

Since its inception in 1820, it has always been the mission of the Bible Society of South Africa (BSSA) to provide the Holy Scriptures to every man, woman and child in a language and form each can readily understand, and at an affordable price. To achieve this goal, the work of the BSSA consists of Bible translation, Bible production and Bible distribution. This task, undertaken without profit, is a cause which all Christians and churches are urged to support. Please feel free to visit our website at www.biblesociety.co.za.

The BSSA is the exclusive holder and worldwide proprietor of all copyrights in a range of Bible texts in Afrikaans, Sepedi (Northern Sotho), Sesotho (Southern Sotho), Setswana (Tswana), isiNdebele (Southern Ndebele), Siswati (Swati), Xitsonga (Tsonga), Tshivenda (Venda), isiXhosa (Xhosa) and isiZulu (Zulu). Any use of a Bible text in any manner or form requires the BSSA's consent, prior to any publication thereof.

2. Why does copyright subsist in Bible texts?

The main reasons for the subsistence of copyright in any published work is firstly to protect the integrity of the text, and secondly, to protect the rights of the copyright holder. Under Copyright Law, no person or publisher will be allowed to publish the Bible texts, which have been translated from the original source languages by the BSSA at great costs, without consent and for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

It must be borne in mind that the BSSA has also concluded several agreements with the copyright holders of English and other foreign Bible texts. As remuneration for the right to publish these Bibles, the BSSA pays royalties to these foreign copyright holders.

3. When should I approach the BSSA for consent?

The BSSA currently only grants permission to quote from the following Bible texts:

- a) Bybel in Afrikaans 1933/1953-vertaling © Bybelgenootskap van Suid-Afrika 1933, 1953;
- b) Bybel in Afrikaans 1983-vertaling met herformulerings tot en met 1992 © Bybelgenootskap van Suid-Afrika 1983, 1992;
- c) Bybel vir dowes/almal © Bybelgenootskap van Suid-Afrika 2007;
- d) NT en Psalms: 'n Direkte Vertaling © Bybelgenootskap van Suid-Afrika 2014;
- e) Bible in Sepedi 2000 translation © Bible Society of South Africa 2000;
- f) Bible in isiNdebele 2012 translation © Bible Society of South Africa 2012;
- g) Bible in Sesotho 1989 translation (Standard Orthography) © Bible Society of South Africa 1989;

- h) Bible in Sesotho 1989 translation (Lesotho Orthography) © Bible Society of South Africa 1989;
- i) Bible in Siswati 1996 translation © Bible Society of South Africa 1996;
- j) Bible in Xitsonga 1907/2012 © Bible Society of South Africa 2012;
- k) Bible in Xitsonga 1989 translation © Bible Society of South Africa 1989;
- l) Bible in Setswana 1970/1987 © Bible Society of South Africa 1970, 1987;
- m) Bible in Tshivenda 1998 translation © Bible Society of South Africa 1998;
- n) Bible in isiXhosa 1859/1975 Bible Society of South Africa 1975;
- o) Bible in isiXhosa 1996 translation © Bible Society of South Africa 1996; and
- p) Bible in isiZulu 1959/1997 © Bible Society of South Africa 1959, 1997.

All other translations and editions to which the BSSA holds copyright are excluded from such permission.

We outline below the scenarios where such use is automatically permitted, as well as those where a formal application must first be lodged with the BSSA.

4. SCENARIO 1: Use of Bible text without the need for formal permission

Provided that the following conditions are met, permission is automatically granted to quote up to and including five hundred (500) verses from any of the above BSSA publications:

- 4.1. The quoted verses may not constitute more than fifty percent (50%) of a complete book from the Bible; and
- 4.2. The quoted verses may not constitute more than twenty five percent (25%) of the total text of the work; and
- 4.3. A suitable copyright notice must appear on the work (see page 3 for examples hereof); and
- 4.4. One (1) copy of the work must be couriered to the BSSA as a copyright copy, marked for the attention of:

Legal Practitioner and Copyright Officer
Bible Society of South Africa
134 Edward Street
Bellville
7530

For administrative purposes, please send a confirmatory email to copyright@biblesociety.co.za once your copyright copy has been couriered to us.

5. SCENARIO 2: Use of Bible texts where formal permission is required

Formal, written consent is required where more than five hundred (500) verses from any of the above Bible texts are utilised, or where the use of such Bible text exceeds either conditions 4.1. or 4.2. above. A formal application form must be lodged with the Legal Practitioner and Copyright Officer, and can be located [here](#).

Copyright permission must always be requested during the planning phase of the work, prior to the production thereof. Applications are assessed on their individual merits, and the

BSSA has the sole discretion to approve or refuse any application, as well as to set the conditions of any approval.

Your application must clearly state whether the product will have commercial or non-commercial application, or both:

5.1. Commercial application

A product has an application in commerce where, notwithstanding its format, it is subject to a sale, lease or trade agreement. A formal application form must be lodged with the BSSA for any use of our Bible texts in media which have commercial application, and where such use exceeds any of the conditions under heading 1.

Where a product has commercial application, two (2) copyright copies of each publication in each format must be couriered to the BSSA free of charge and as soon as possible after publication.

5.2. Non-commercial application

Non-commercial application of a product is any use other than commercial application as defined above, and generally means the free distribution of works which contain Bible texts. Use by local churches such as bulletins, orders of service, bulletin boards, posters and overhead transparencies, recordings of worship services, or similar materials used in the course of religious instruction or services at a place of worship or other religious assembly would fall into this category. Please note that a formal copyright application must still be lodged with the BSSA where it exceeds any of the conditions under heading 1. Where the Bible text is utilized as lyrics in a song, permission must be obtained from the BSSA for the production of the song.

Where a product has non-commercial application, one (1) copyright copy of each publication in each format must be couriered to the BSSA free of charge and as soon as possible after publication.

6. **How must copyright be acknowledged?**

Any quotation of the above Bible texts must be accompanied by a suitable copyright acknowledgment. The wording of the acknowledgement will depend on the format of the work in which the quotation is utilized.

It is furthermore important to note that “*Afrikaans Ou Vertaling*” and “*Afrikaans Nuwe Vertaling*” are not official BSSA acronyms for the Bible in Afrikaans 1933/1953 and Bible in Afrikaans 1983/1992, and may therefore not be used when referring to these Bible texts.

6.1. Written/printed format

The following copyright notice must appear on the verso page of the work:

Skrifaaanhalings geneem uit [insert relevant copyright acknowledgment (a) to (d) on page 1]. Gebruik met toestemming. Alle regte voorbehou.

OR

Scriptures taken from [insert relevant copyright acknowledgment (e) to (p) on page 1]. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

Please feel free to contact the BSSA's Legal Practitioner and Copyright Officer at copyright@biblesociety.co.za, should you require any assistance.

6.2. Visual and electronic (digital) application

“Visual” application includes videos, films, slides and overhead transparencies. “Electronic” application denotes the use of an interactive computer, mobile phones, ipads, e-readers and technologies alike, whether such technologies are known or still to be developed in the future. Examples include computer software and mobile applications.

Quotations from Bible text in visual and electronic media must include an appropriate copyright notice a) on the product (the medium itself i.e. CD-ROM), b) on the product's packaging and wrapping, and c) in any acknowledgment section, where applicable. In the case of a) and b), a shortened copyright notice may appear:

[insert relevant copyright acknowledgment (a) to (d) on page 1]. Alle regte voorbehou.

OR

[insert relevant copyright acknowledgment (e) to (p) on page 1]. All rights reserved.

Where Bible text is published on social media, e.g. Facebook, the publication is limited to one verse at a time. Under these circumstances, a shortened copyright notice is acceptable, for example:

Johannes 3:16 – “God het die wêreld so liefgehad dat Hy sy enigste Seun gegee het, sodat dié wat in Hom glo, nie verlore sal gaan nie maar die ewige lewe sal hê.”

Bybel in Afrikaans 1983/1992 © BSA 1983, 1992

OR

Uyohane 3:16 – “Kaloku uThixo ihlabathi ulithande kangangokuba ude wancama uNyana okuphela kwakhe, ukuze wonke umntu ozinikele kuye ngokupheleleyo angatshabalali, koko abe nobona bomi bungenasiphelo.”

Bible in isiXhosa 1996 © BSSA 1996

6.3. Audio application

This category includes cassettes, CD-ROMs, mp3's and other audio formats for use on music players, mobile phones, ipads, e-readers and technologies alike, whether such technologies are known or still to be developed in the future. Quotations from Bible texts in audio format must include an appropriate copyright notice a) in the recording, b) on the physical product (e.g. CD-ROM), and c) on the product's packaging and wrapping. In the case of b) and c), a shortened copyright notice may appear, for example:

Bybel in Afrikaans 1983/1992 © BSA 1983, 1992

OR

Bible in isiXhosa 1996 © BSSA 1996

7. Additional information on Bible text rights and permissions

7.1. Different editions

Permission for the use of copyrighted material applies only to a particular edition. For any reprint or proposed republication, a new application form must be submitted.

7.2. Copyright fees

A copyright fee may be payable as determined by the BSSA in its sole discretion. The calculation may be based on the quantity and percentage of Bible text used in the publication, the scope and production cost of the print run, and the income received from its commercial application.

7.3. License agreements

The BSSA may in its sole discretion elect to execute a formal copyright license agreement with any publisher desiring to make use of a Bible text in its publication. Where a large number of Bible verses are utilized in the publication, the BSSA may require that a text release be executed, in order to ensure that the Publisher utilizes the most up to date Bible text. A text release fee may be applicable, depending on the number of verses utilized.

In the event that the BSSA issues a text release, the Publisher agrees that:

- 7.3.1. the electronic files will only be used for the purpose stated in said agreement;
- 7.3.2. under no circumstances will the electronic files be loaned, sold or otherwise transferred to any third party, without the prior written permission from the BSSA;
- 7.3.3. the electronic files provided remain the sole property of the BSSA; and
- 7.3.4. the Publisher accepts full responsibility for maintaining the accuracy of the Bible text contained in the electronic files and included in the publication.

7.4. Additional rights

For any rights or permissions not expressly provided for in this document, or for additional information, please send an email to copyright@biblesociety.co.za, or write to us at:

Legal Practitioner and Copyright Officer
Bible Society of South Africa
PO Box 5500
Tyger Valley
7536