



# The Wartburg Project

## Newsletter September 2015 The Start of Year 3

The Wartburg Project is a group of WELS and ELS pastors, professors, teachers, and laypeople who are working together to produce a new translation of the Bible in honor of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.

### Progress Report

#### Material Progress

The updated progress chart at the end of this report summarizes the status of the project. The following paragraphs highlight a few of the most significant points.

**NT** Translations have been completed for all books of the New Testament. For many New Testament books technical review is complete. Editors are working on a set schedule with NPH to get the New Testament books edited, reformatted, and set up for publication. The editing of the New Testament is at the half-way point and is scheduled, God willing, to be completed early next year.

**OT** Drafts have been completed for 21 Old Testament books, and parts of a large number of additional books, including large parts of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Work is underway on Job, one of the hardest books. Joel and Hosea are available for assignment. And though work has begun on these books, parts of Samuel, Chronicles, and Isaiah are also open for more assignments. Technical review of 12 books of the Old Testament is complete. This does not mean these books are finalized since committees will still be proofing, harmonizing, and cross-checking the books, but all the technical reviews from Exodus through Joshua have been processed, and a Pentateuch committee will be working to finalize those books. We hope Genesis and Judges are not too far behind. In the case of the Minor Prophets marked on the chart below, all the technical reviews that have been received have been processed, but in some cases one or more technical reviews are still out which will be processed as they are received. The poetic books minus Job will be the next section to go through this process.

We have a lot of popular review opportunities coming up, and a number of OT tech review assignments are on the horizon so if you are ready to begin this for the first time or to resume work after being on a break for a while, contact the editors.

We can also use special skills like proofreading and reformatting. We are preparing final editions of NT books, and a number of OT books that were already completed before our agreement with NPH need to

be reformatted to NPH specs. We are already getting much appreciated help in these areas, but as more material is moving through the pipeline, we will probably be able to use more help. Another set of eyes looking for missing punctuation, typos, missing verse numbers, etc. is helpful.

The contest for nominating names for the translation closed at the end of August, and we are ready to begin processing the nominations. Watch for updates in upcoming newsletters.

We have received enough generous offerings to implement sabbatical help for editors, and we are providing some support to the general editor as the position has become a more full-time job.

### Spiritual Progress

Perhaps more important than the external progress at getting a translation on paper is the spiritual progress for the participants. We are getting closer to the completion of the [relatively] easy part of the project: completing draft translations of all of the books. Now we are getting deeper into the more difficult process of gathering all the different reviews and all the diverse feedback on all these books and somehow weighing it all and blending it all into one translation. It is not unusual, when we have three technical reviewers working independently on a given book, that we receive three different opinions on the best solution to a given translation issue. Often when we poll a group of reactors on choices that must be made for the translation, one of the options wins by only a slim majority. Although the translators and tech reviewers do the “heavy lifting” and have the most invested in a given book, every book in the end will be a team product. That is why we are not putting the names of individual translators on the books. No translator or reviewer gets all his preferences adopted. Some make it into footnotes. Others survive only in the translator’s own teaching and writing. A project like the Wartburg Project requires an enormous amount of teamwork, cooperation, and give and take. Happily, such cooperation has been on display in abundance. Not everyone is always convinced that the option chosen was better than his own, but participants have been very good about maintaining a brotherly atmosphere in discussion and decision making. This has been a good gift of the Spirit which we work and pray to continue.

We are not aware of any bigger team projects in WELS unless perhaps it is *Christ Light*. And what is more amazing is how much of it is done by volunteers who must sacrifice something in some other part of their lives to participate. Although there are not immediate financial paybacks for all the participants, it is exciting to see how much payback there is to the participants in terms of learning that will enrich their ministries. On a difficult Old Testament book like Leviticus or Ezekiel it can be a difficult task to combine the translation and three technical reviews into one composite document that can be used to create a final translation, yet it is very rewarding and even exciting. The more thorough and comprehensive the review, the more difficult it is to assimilate it all and incorporate its insights and suggestions, but it is easy to see that large amount of studying and learning that has gone into each review. In a single book, if one adds up all the growth in biblical knowledge and understanding that has been gained by the translator, the editors, and the reactors, and then adds in all the additional work of popular reviewers and readers, the amount of Bible study and knowledge that accrues to the long-term benefit of the church is enormous. The project is already paying big dividends for the church in all the in-depth Bible study it is producing. In thirty-plus years of seminary teaching I have never had a class that was more beneficial to the teacher and the students than the “classes” that make up the work of the project. The benefits to the participants will trickle down to their congregations and conferences. This benefit alone is worth all the time and effort that participants are sinking into the project.

As always participants are reminded not to let their work for the project interfere with their ministry or family life. Keep us informed when you need either more or less to do. And keep focused on the joy and satisfaction of working together harmoniously on this great opportunity the Lord has given us, whatever your role may be, whether it is translating, reviewing, editing, or “holding up the prophets’ hands.”

**September 1, 2015  
PROGRESS CHART**

<b>Key:</b>
✓ = submitted to NPH for publishing
× = Tech review complete
<b>Bold</b> = completed initial draft
<b>Blue underlined</b> = recently completed
*Asterisk = assigned or in progress
<i>Red Italic strikethrough</i> = not yet assigned

**OLD TESTAMENT**

Pentateuch	Historical I	Historical II	Poetical	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
<b>Genesis</b> ×Exodus ×Leviticus ×Numbers ×Deuteronomy	×Joshua * Judges * Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel * 1 Kings (ch 6-7) * 2 Kings 1 Chronicles (ch 1-9, 23-26) 2 Chronicles (ch 3-4)	<b>Ezra</b> <b>Nehemiah</b> <b>Esther</b>	* Job <b>Psalms</b> <b>Proverbs</b> <b>Ecclesiastes</b> ×Song of Songs	<b>Isaiah 1-12</b> Isaiah 13-39 <b>Isaiah 40-66</b> * Jeremiah *Lamentations <b>Ezekiel</b> <b>Daniel</b>	<del>Hosea</del> <del>Joel</del> * Amos ×Obadiah * Jonah * Micah ×Nahum ×Habakkuk ×Zephaniah ×Haggai * Zechariah ×Malachi

**NEW TESTAMENT**

Gospels – Acts	Epistles I	Epistles II & Prophetic
✓ Matthew ✓ Mark ✓ Luke ✓ John ✓ Acts  ✓ Passion History	✓ Romans ✓ 1 Corinthians ✓ 2 Corinthians ✓ Galatians ✓ Ephesians ✓ Philippians × Colossians × 1 Thessalonians × 2 Thessalonians × 1 Timothy × 2 Timothy × Titus × Philemon	× Hebrews × James × 1 Peter × 2 Peter × 1 John × 2 John × 3 John × Jude Revelation

Completed Initial Drafts are in various phases of review and editing. The Wartburg Project process is rigorous and will take time. Some books are being carefully checked by “technical reviewers.” Other books are being read by “popular reviewers.” After all of this input, we seek to produce the most accurate and clear translation we can.

**We are on schedule to publish a New Testament and Psalms special edition in 2017.**

**Samples Published:**

**Matthew – Kindle ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) Psalms – Kindle ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))**

**Passion History – available from Northwestern Publishing House (<http://online.nph.net>) **FREE PDF****

Completed Initial Drafts are in various phases of review and editing. The Wartburg Project process is rigorous and will take time. All books are reviewed by three technical reviewers and three popular reviewers and by a sectional editorial committee and by the final editorial board. Many others have the opportunity to provide input to the translation. After all of this input, we seek to produce the most accurate and clear translation we can.

**A significantly updated rubrics incorporating a lot of our work on the Pentateuch has been posted. It has the heading *2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Active translators and reviewers should read this document if you have not read the rubrics for a while. For anyone who is interested in our translation, this document provides a lot of information about the translation, and it gives an opportunity for feedback. Our FAQs elaborate on some of the items in the rubrics.**