



News from the Wartburg

No. 2

We are ready to launch the first stage of the project. This letter is to update you on the progress so far and to move the project into the first phase.

Welcome

First of all, a warm welcome to everyone that has accepted the invitation to participate in the project.

Translators

This is the initial list of translators. Acceptance does not in every case mean immediate availability, but an interest in participation and wanting to be included in the loop. So far no one who was invited has declined the invitation, but there are three who have not yet responded or are deliberating.

OT: [nine people accepted initial OT assignments](#)

NT: [seven people accepted initial NT assignments](#)

Books with finished drafts: Matthew, Psalms. You will receive copies of these soon for “in-house” use. Matthew will be made available more widely to the public in January and Psalms in late spring.

Books in progress: Mark, Luke, Proverbs

A Help: Concordia Publishing House has offered us electronic files of the Concordia Commentary to be used for templates or resources for translation. So far we have only been requesting Old Testament files. The CC Proverbs commentary is working quite well as a template for that book. The CC books we have in electronic form are: Ruth, Proverbs, Joshua, Ezekiel, Jonah, Amos, and Ecclesiastes. Others available are Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Leviticus, Isaiah ii and iii, and Song of Songs. It is worth considering this resource since it the commentary that will be most used by WELS, ELS, and LCMS pastors.

Books “assigned”: Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Ezekiel, Joshua, Deuteronomy, (Joel, Lamentations, 1 Chronicles) Hebrews, Revelation, Ephesians, Acts. (These are tentative and could still be changed if we

get additional requests. “Assigned” mean that someone has expressed an interest in working on this book.)

Requests: You are all invited to submit requests to the editors to reserve books you are especially interested in working on, if you have not already done so. If there is a particular reason you are interested in that book, you can include it in the request. We want to make the first assignments in January. Assignments will be made in consultation with you on the basis of the requests we receive. Any deadlines will be set in consultation with the translator and are flexible.

Other Feedback?

For now our project is called the Wartburg Project. We won't be making any decision of the name of the translation in the near future. Ultimately, if we have a publisher, they too may want to be in the loop. But just for fun, what name would express your vision for the project? *The People's Bible* to reflect its grass roots approach? *Revised English Version* (REV) to reflect pastoral involvement? *The Holy Scriptures* –Luther-like simplicity? Have the terms “new” and “revised” been over-used? Throw out some ideas.

Do you have nominees for “technical reviewers,” reviewers who are able to react to Hebrew and Greek issues and to interact with the translators? If you have names to suggest, include contact information.

Do you have nominees for “popular reviewers,” reviewers who react to readability, pew appeal, etc. ? These can include teachers and laypeople. If you have names to suggest, include contact information.

Do you have suggestions for copy editors, proofreaders, etc. ? If you have names to suggest, include contact information.

Distribution and Attribution

In the final publication, biblical books will not be attributed to specific translators, but there is no reason you cannot tell people (your congregation, your conference, etc.) what you are working on.

We will be “publishing” only a couple of books a year for the general public. For the first year, it will probably be Matthew and Psalms. If we want a publisher to be interested in publishing our end product, we cannot have all our material already being reproduced all over the place, so there should be no general dissemination of materials outside of the designated reviewers. Reviewers should be asked to keep draft versions “in house”. An additional factor is that none of the early drafts are final, and it will be very confusing if all sorts of different versions are circulating.

An edited draft of Matthew is attached to this message. Next time Matthew is on your reading schedule, read through it for a sample of the project. This is not a final version but an edited draft.

Backups and Formatting

Keep lots of backups of your work. Archive your preliminary editions with distinct names like *Genesis Jan 14*. Keep them archived all the way to the very end of the project.

Use this format for the draft file of the book that you are translating which you submit to the editors for the next stages of editing and review: book name +dr +your three initials, e.g., *Psalms dr jfb* .

If you start with a more literal translation, keep a draft of that. *Psalms lit jfb*. Maybe there will be a desire also for a more literal version.

Add Ons

If you wish, you can place headings into your translation. See the samples in Matthew and Psalms.

Keep notes on translation choices and items that you think should be included in the handbook that will be published after the Bible is completed to explain our translation decisions.

Keep notes that could be useful in producing a study Bible.

Rubrics

Every two or three months you will get a new copy of the rubrics. Items that have changed since the last edition will be in blue. The rubrics are guides not absolute laws. If you are consciously departing from a rubric, you might want to tag that with a footnote for the reviewers, including your reason for your decision. If you have a new rubric to add, send it to the general editor. Also if you think a rubric is wrong, send your reason to the general editor.

Don't become enslaved by the rubrics. Read them and consult them, but don't get too tied up with them in a way that bogs you down. The closer you can come to implementing them, the easier it will be for the editors who have to harmonize things, but don't get too hung up on looking things up constantly in a way that handcuffs you. If our transliterations of Hebrew and Greek terms are the most natural, it should be relatively easy for you to find things with a search.

Dangers and Joys

We hope that for participants will be two main joys: being part of a project that can be a blessing to the church, and the joy of growing in your knowledge of the Scriptures in a way that will be a blessing to you and your ministry.

There are two main "dangers" in a volunteer project like this. One is that assignments will get bogged down and remain unfinished for a long time. The other is that translation, like the internet, can become addicting. When you get on a roll, there can be the temptation to keep going in a way that gobbles up too much time from other things. For groups as dedicated and hard-working as this one, the second danger may be as great or greater than the first. Being a translator or working on a bigger writing project of any sort takes two kinds of discipline, discipline to keep plugging away and discipline to avoid getting carried away. We don't want callings or families to get short changed or anyone to create too much pressure on himself. Relax and enjoy.

Translating and writing also takes another kind of patience. Every writer likes to see the fruits of his labor and to see others benefitting from it, but publishing is a process that takes time. I had a book come out this year that was at the publishing house for seven years! I was starting to wonder if it was coming out in my lifetime. Hopefully, we won't experience delays of that proportion, but my guess, based on experience, is that producing a fairly developed draft of the translation, especially the NT, is going to take

less time than many have thought, but that getting everything pulled to together and working through the publication phase will be more time consuming than we expect, though by that point, when we have a supply of manuscripts, we may be able to have one or more people devoting full-time to the project.

What Now?

Relax. Dream a little bit. Plan a little bit. Dip your toe in the waters. Dabble in the books you are interested in. Send in your requests and recommendations. Pray a lot.

Translator's Prayer

Help me hand on your timeless Word in a timely way to our time and place. Bless my study and deepen my understanding of your Word. Bless my efforts so that my work may be a blessing to me and to others.