Introducing The EHV

A Collection of Four Articles About the EHV

This collection of four articles introduces prospective readers to some of the main issues to consider concerning *the Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version*. The articles are updated summaries and expansions of articles that have appeared as EHV FAQs and articles. The Wartburg Project website has many more articles on these subjects in the library and FAQ sections of the website.

Each article is designed to be read independently of the others, so there is some repetition.

The four articles are:
1) Why should I try the EHV?
2) What were the greatest difficulties encountered in producing the EHV?
3) What are some of the features that distinguish the EHV from other translations?
4) Tips for becoming accustomed to a new translation

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In the EHV logo, the circle of light or the rainbow radiating from the cross is divided into three parts to symbolize the three *solas* of the Reformation: by grace alone, by faith alone, and by Scripture alone. This semi-circle, together with the base, forms the Latin letter D, which means 500 and honors the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, the year in which the first partial edition of the EHV was published.

Article 1: Why should I try the EHV?

The EHV lectionaries are being used in many congregations. The print edition of the basic EHV Bible is available from Northwestern Publishing House, and the print editon of the study Bible is expected in Fall 2021. Two electronic versions of the complete EHV study Bible (American and metric) are available from the Microsoft Store, and an electronic version of the EHV Study Bible for Apple, iPhones, and Android is available from Faith Life (Logos). The EHV is becoming available in catechisms, commentaries, and other works. A condensed edition of the EHV for use as a textbook, *the Story of God's Love,* is also available.. So an obvious question is, "Why should I try the EHV?"

The simplest and most important answer to that question is that every faithful translation of the Bible delivers the Word of God to its readers. Even if you already have a translation you really like, reading another translation will give you fresh insight into some Bible passages and motivate you to study those verses more carefully.

An additional reason to try a brand-new translation like the EHV is that for dedicated readers of the Bible, the opportunity to participate in the evaluation and improvement of a new Bible translation is likely to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Regardless of what you decide about a specific translation like the EHV, the opportunity to take a closer look at the process of Bible translation and to participate in evaluating some of the complex decisions that are involved in Bible translation will be its own reward.

As far as the EHV translation specifically, here are a few reasons to give tke EHV a look.

A key word for the EHV in defining our goals is *balance.* The goal of our project is to produce a *balanced* translation, suitable for all-purpose use in the church.

We seek a balance between *the old* and *the new.* We respect and try to preserve traditional terms that are well established in the doctrinal statements and the worship life of the church, but the EHV does nevertheless introduce some new terms in those places where the traditional translation no longer communicates clearly. The reason for such new terminology will be explained in the footnotes to the translation, which will also include a reference to the traditional term.

We seek a balance between the poles of so-called *literal* and *dynamic equivalent* theories of translation. A translator should not adhere too closely to any one theory of translation because literalistic, word-for-word translations sometimes convey the wrong meaning*,* or they do not communicate clearly in the receiving language. Overly free translations deprive the reader of some of the key expressions, imagery, and style of the original biblical texts. So if you like a more literal translation like the NASB, the EHV will provide you with more idiomatic, easy-to-read renderings of many passages, which you can compare with the more literal translations. If you like one of the freer translations, the EHV will provide you with renderings that stick closer to the Hebrew and Greek texts. Such readings will be presented in the translation itself, with additional options recorded in the footnotes.

Translators should strive for a balance between preserving the *original meaning* of the text and producing *English which sounds natural*, but the preservation of meaning takes priority.

We seek a balance between *formality* and *informality*. The Bible contains many types of literature and different levels of language, from the very simple to the very difficult. For this reason, the translator should not be too committed to producing one level of English but should try to reproduce the tone or "flavor" of the original. Informal conversation should follow a more informal style than a royal proclamation or a divine decree.

The EHV strives to preserve not only the meaning but also the emotional impact of the original. Gentle passages should be gentle. Harsh passages should be harsh. Strong language should not be watered down. Emotional outbursts should be preserved in the translation.

The EHV places a priority on producing a *fuller representation of the Hebrew and Greek biblical texts* than many recent translations do. The EHV includes readings which are well supported by ancient manuscript evidence, but which have been omitted from many other recent translations, because those translations tend to focus on certain limited portions of the manuscript evidence rather than the whole range of evidence which is weighed by the EHV.

We place a *priority on prophecy*, so our translation and notes strive to give clear indications of Messianic prophecy.

The EHV is committed to using *archaeology, geography, and history* to provide a clearer understanding of the original setting of the biblical text, and this will be reflected both in the translation and in the footnotes. Many instances of this are explained in the next two sections of this collection of articles and in the FAQs on the Wartburg Project website.

We hope that the Evangelical Heritage Version will prove to be very readable to a wide range of users, but the EHV is designed with *learning and teaching* in mind. It is designed to assist careful, in-depth Bible study in the church. We assume that our readers have the ability and the desire to learn new biblical words and to deepen their understanding of important biblical terms and concepts. Translators should not be condescending or patronizing toward their readers but should be dedicated to helping them grow. The Bible was written for ordinary people, but it is a literary work that includes many figures of speech and many rare words. The Bible is a book to be read, but it is also a book to be studied. Our footnotes are designed to assist in the process of learning and teaching. Our translation is in that sense a textbook. This concept is carried out in much depth in our study Bible, which is available in electronic editions and coming soon in print.

The EHV is a *grass-roots translation*. It makes extensive use of parish pastors and lay people in the editing and evaluation of the translation. This will make the EHV more user-friendly.

The EHV is *a gift to the church*. It was produced at very low cost because of the abundance of volunteer labor. The EHV has also given a written promise that we will not deny individuals or churches, who have obtained rights to use the EHV in derivative works like commentaries or study Bibles, the right to continue to use the version of the EHV which they have adopted, even if new versions of the EHV appear someday.

> The FAQs, our rubrics, and the articles available in the library section of our website provide many examples of these principles in practice.

The EHV was available for use in church bulletins and other resources, even before the full Bible was available in hardcover print editions. A wide range of lectionaries can be downloaded from the Wartburg Project website for free congregational use. Authors and composers can obtain permission to use the EHV in works such as commentaries, Bible history books, catechisms, memory passage lists, Bible classes, and study Bibles.

Some of these works already exist. Among them are:

The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: A Harmony of the Four Gospels available from Northwestern Publishing House.

The ELS Catechism from the ELS publishing house.

The WELS Catechism from NPH.

We expect many more much works.

In production are an abbreviated summary of the Bible and a commentary on Mark. The hardcover print edition of the EHV is available from Northwestern Publishing House. The two electronic study Bibles (regular and metric) can be purchased from the Microsoft Store and Faith Life.

Article 2: What Were the Greatest Difficulties Encountered in Producing the EHV?

It goes without saying that producing a Bible translation is a tremendous undertaking. What are the greatest difficulties we encountered in producing the EHV?

Volume

The first one obviously is the sheer volume of the project. A typical English translation of the Bible fills more than 1500 pages of text. The original text was written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) and in various styles within those three languages. The sixty-six books were written over a period of 1500 years, with all the changes of alphabet, grammar, spelling, and style which that timespan implies. The only solution to this problem caused by the volume of text is having enough participants, allowing enough time, and exercising enough patience to keep working through the mountain of text.

Language Problems

Sometimes the original language of the text, especially in the Old Testament, is extremely difficult. Sometimes the difficulty is due, at least in part, to the subject matter, for example, in the difficult task of translating the description of Solomon's Temple or Ezekiel's Temple. Knowledge of ancient temples and of ancient and contemporary building techniques can help resolve some of the translation difficulties, but, at times, the translation remains uncertain. The same situation exists in the translation of the names of musical instruments and other musical terms. The growing amount of information about ancient music can help the translator, but here too there is a big cultural gap that must be bridged. When the translation of a term is uncertain, the EHV footnotes will indicate that.

In some cases, the difficulty is due to the peculiar dialect of the Hebrew. The book of Job is written in a dialect that is not standard Judean Hebrew. There are many rare words and difficult passages. One blessing that helps the translator overcome this problem is that most of the book of Job is written in poetic parallelism, in which alternate lines echo each other. A point which is obscure in one line may be expressed more clearly in the corresponding parallel line. In especially difficult cases, translators have to do the best they can, relying on the meaning of the parallel line as their best resource. Job provides a good illustration of the principle that a translator cannot allow a quest for "the perfect" to stand in the way of achieving "the possible." When commentaries are laden with a half dozen or more options for a given expression in Job (some of which are very different from each other), since the EHV is a Bible intended for general use, it seems wisest for the translator to choose one meaning that fits the context well (and perhaps one other one to be used in a footnote) and not to bog down the text and confuse the reader with too many options. That task can be left to the commentaries. In spite of the difficulties of the language of Job, because there is so much repetition of the same thoughts throughout the book of Job, readers can be confident that the message of Job is coming through clearly.

Cultural Problems

The texts of the Bible were written in a culture or, more accurately, in several cultures very far removed from our cultures. This applies not only to material objects of daily life, but also to the whole social and political structure of society. Geographical, archaeological, and historical resources can help us bridge the gap, especially in regard to material goods and historical events. Ancient documents, such as ancient law codes, can also provide some insights into law, family life, and the structures of society during biblical times, but when we are dealing with this problem, there is no substitute for a careful study of the whole biblical text, in order to gain a better understanding of specific issues, such as the relationships of men and women, parents and children, slaves and masters, and so on.

Sometimes this difficulty involves different value systems between the ancient societies and our own, but sometimes the problem simply involves very different ways of expressing the same basic interests. For example, the Song of Songs contains many descriptions of ideal feminine beauty. The lady is like a horse; her hair is like a flock of goats; her nose is like a tower. Many of these pictures do not resonate with contemporary urban Americans, but a translator's job is not to re-write or update the Bible, but to transmit it. Translators should not distort the ancient culture by eliminating its symbolism and word pictures and by making its poetry prosaic. In many cases (maybe even in most cases) translators should retain the ancient pictures and allow modern readers and teachers to search out the right meaning from the context, sometimes with the help of footnotes and commentaries. Just as careful listening and thoughtful consideration of what people are saying is essential when we are trying to communicate with someone from a contemporary culture that is very different from our own, when we are trying to communicate with people from a distant time and place, this is doubly true. Careful listening and thoughtful consideration are the key.

Translation Options and Preferences

Sometimes the problem for the translator is that the Hebrew is so hard that it is difficult to find one good translation for a verse (see the comments on Job above), but sometimes the problem is the opposite—there are a half dozen good, plausible English translations for a given passage. Strange as it seems, this situation can be more time-consuming for translators and editors than the first situation. When editors are struggling to come up with even one good translation, all they can do is choose one option and move on (at least for the time being). When there are many credible options, it is easy for translators to get bogged down in debating options and going round in circles or bogging down the reading of text with too many footnotes. This is true, for example, when there are four reviewers for a given passage and each one of the four reviewers prefers a different option for the translation (a situation not as uncommon as you might think). Carefully considering which option will communicate most clearly is a valuable exercise and should not be cut short, but once again, a quest for "perfection" cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the "possible." Even when there is no clear-cut basis for choosing one option over the other, a choice finally has to be made, and only one reviewer will get his or her first choice. The rest have to say, "Well, I can live with that choice, even though mine was clearly better." Such is the nature of a collaborative translation.

It is important to remember that such situations in which there is more than one good option will often result in what we call *exegetical questions*. An *exegetical question* occurs when the issue is whether a given passage teaches doctrine A or doctrine B, both of which are scriptural.

For example, is Galatians 5:17 about the Holy Spirit who puts a new spirit in us? Or is it about the new spirit that the Holy Spirit puts in us? The end result for preaching and teaching is pretty much the same, regardless of whether the translator decides to write *spirit* or *Spirit* in the main text. If translators always let Scripture interpret Scripture, they will not teach anything wrong, even if they are occasionally unsure of the point in a given verse.

Language Barrier Problems

Sometimes difficulties are due to the different structures and practices of the two languages. The interplay of nouns and pronouns is probably the area in which translators most often must depart from a word-for-word rendering of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. English often requires a noun where Hebrew might be able to use a pronoun, and vice versa. English style does not permit us to use a pronoun unless there is a clear antecedent in the near vicinity. In cases in which a Hebrew pronoun does not follow its antecedent closely enough to fit English style, translators sometimes have to replace the pronoun with the appropriate noun in order to make it clear who is being referred to (for example, "Moses" rather than "he"). English style normally does not permit use of a pronoun until a noun has been mentioned to serve as its antecedent. Hebrew often does this very thing. On the other hand, repeating the same noun over and over again, which is not uncommon in Hebrew, sounds strange in English. So for readability and to avoid a mistaken perception of grammatical and stylistic errors, pronoun usage in the EHV normally follows English usage. But if the biblical author is using pronouns to build suspense by withholding the identity of the referent, a translator should preserve the suspense.

Sometimes the standard of politeness is different in the two cultures. *Me and you* is perfectly fine in Hebrew, but *you and me* is more polite in English. To avoid the impression of grammatical error, the EHV usually follows the proper English order, unless it seems that there is some special significance to the Hebrew order.

In the Hebrew culture, lower-status people often address higher-status people by honorary titles rather than by a pronoun or by their name. Speaking to the king, a common person or even a royal official does not say, "I thank you," but "I thank the king" or "I thank my lord." He may even refer to himself not as "I" or "me" but as "your servant," even if he is an official of cabinet rank. Men address their social superiors as "father," their equals as "brother," and their inferiors as "sons." A man may address a woman of lower status or a significantly younger woman as "my daughter." A woman may address her husband as "my lord." Such social distinctions, though they may sound strange to us, should not be scrubbed out of the culture of the text. The translator's job is to express the biblical speaker's culture, not our own.

Formatting Problems

In English, *quotation marks* are used to indicate a change of speakers in written conversations. Because quotation marks are not part of the Hebrew text, they present a special problem for translators. Inserting quotation marks is always an act of interpretation. Sometimes this task is quite easy, because there is a formula like "Moses said" or a Hebrew word like *lemor* (saying) preceding the quotation. At other times, there are changes of speakers that are not explicitly marked in the Hebrew text, but changes in the number and gender of the pronouns and

verbs may point to the change. At still other times, it is uncertain whether there is a change of speakers.

In nested quotations, in which quotations lie within other quotations, the American English practice is to alternate sets of " " and ' '. Trying to follow this practice in translating the biblical text would lead to many sentences that would be punctuated like this: "*quotation*"'" or even an occasional "*quotation*"'"". This would be confusing and would seldom be useful. To minimize this, the EHV treats long speeches, prophecies, etc., as documents in their own right. They are set off by special indentation and they do not begin and end with quotation marks. This greatly reduces instances of."'"" For more about this type of problem, see our EHV handbook on grammar.

Another problem is caused by the expressions: "This is what the LORD says" and "the declaration of the LORD." Many translations treat these phrases as an introduction to a quotation and add another set of quotation marks at each occurrence. But these phrases usually do not function as the introduction of new speech or a new speaker. There are, instead, intended to be an assertion of the authority of the words that follow or precede. These phrases may, in fact, occur several times within a single quotation. For this reason, EHV does not treat every occurrence of "This is what the LORD says" or "This is the declaration of the LORD" as a signal which triggers another set of quotation marks. The EHV's practice intended to reduce swarms of quotation marks may strike readers as unusual at first, but they will grow to appreciate the absence of the annoying swarms of quotation marks. Levels of indentation provide a better guide to changes of speaker than swarms of " '' ". This practice also gives a more pleasant look to the page. It is amazing how much editorial time is consumed by the simple [??] issue of quotation marks.

A somewhat similar problem arises from the fact that Hebrew does not use the same structure for differentiating *direct and indirect questions* that English does, so sometimes direct questions in Hebrew have to be converted to indirect questions in English.

Sometimes the simplest issues can become very time-consuming, for example, *commas*. It is very common that one reviewer is taking out the same commas that another reviewer has just put in and vice versa. In a translation like the EHV, which will be used frequently in public reading, the most important function of commas is to help the reader place pauses in those spots which help the listener grasp the flow of the sentence. This function of assisting reading is more important than conforming mechanically to abstract rules about the punctuation of various types of phrases and clauses. The purpose of punctuation is to help writers convey their intended meaning. It is not the purpose of writers to serve rules of punctuation. It is the purpose of "rules" of punctuation to serve writers and readers. Obviously, a writer or an editor cannot simply ignore what most well educated people think the rules are, but punctuation rules are sometimes similar to the rules "take the 3-0 pitch," "punt on 4th and long," and "run on 3rd and inches." These rules are helpful guidelines, but they do not apply to every situation.

This principle is true also of other punctuation marks such as the *question mark* and *exclamation mark.* The following two sentences have the same form, but not the same function and meaning: "What do you know?" and "What do you know!" (Actually, in conversation either of these can also be pronounced, "What da ya know?" or "Whadda ya know!" but they cannot be written that way except in recording lively conversation, so we have to rely on the punctuation and context to help the reader grasp the point.) In such cases the writer's choice of punctuation directs the reader to the right inflection of the sentence. The sentence "What do you know?" is

sometimes a question calling for an answer, but it could be the equivalent of "Hi. How ya doing?" and require no answer beyond "Not much." "What do you know!" or "Whadda ya know!" can also be an exclamation at a surprising turn of events. Punctuating such a sentence with a ? or ! helps the reader express the correct tone of the sentence. Not every sentence that has the grammatical form of a question is actually a question.

A brief sentence like "he does" can be punctuated: 1) "He does." 2) "He does?" or 3) "He does!" Each has a different meaning and intonation. What is the difference of meaning and intonation in each case?
1) "Does he like pizza?" "He does."
2) "He likes Brussels sprouts." "He does?"
3) "Does he really care?" "He does!"

What inflection does the question mark suggest in this sentence: "Really?"
    What intonation does the speaker use in the sentence?
What inflection does the exclamation mark suggest in this sentence: "Really!"

This is just a small sample of the punctuation questions a translator must wrestle with. For a more exhaustive and exhausting discussion, see our EHV grammar handbook, *Biblical Grammar: Mechanics or Meaning.*

<center>Matters of Taste and Personal Preference</center>

Sometimes the issues involved in translation are simply matters of taste not of principle, and there can be (or should be) no disputing matters of taste. To use the theological term, these issues fall into the realm of adiaphora. But people sometimes have strong feelings about adiaphora. One illustration of this problem is the difference between *formal textbook grammar* and *informal conversational grammar*. If Jesus says, "Who are you looking for?" many readers will say "Jesus would not use bad grammar." If Jesus says, "For whom are you looking?" or better yet, "Whom seekest thou?" another set of readers will say, "Nobody talks like that. Jesus would not be stuffy." The EHV attempts to reflect the level of formality of the biblical context. This is discussed at length in the Wartburg Project book *Biblical Grammar: Mechanics or Meaning.*

Very similar reactions are raised by *choice of words*. One reader's "fresh and lively" is another's "too slangy." In Isaiah 55:1 the EHV says, "Hey, all of you who are thirsty, come to the water." Many other translations say, "Come, all of you who are thirsty, come to the water." Some readers think that *hey* is too slangy for the Bible, and that *come* is better and more dignified.

Here is the full EHV translation with its footnote:
Hey,[1] all of you who are thirsty, *come* to the water,
even if you have no money!
Come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.
    Footnote: [1]The English word *hey* expresses the same urgency as the Hebrew word
    hoi. It is the cry of the street vendor who is eager to sell his wares.

The first Hebrew word in Isaiah 55 is not the Hebrew word that means "come," which is used three times later in the verse. The Hebrew word here is *hoi,* which is not a verb but an

exclamation. It even sounds like the English exclamation *hey*, so by translating *hey* the EHV rendering is following a literal understanding of the Hebrew word *hoi* and differentiating it from the three instances of *come* that follow later in the verse.

Here the word *hoi* is simply trying to get attention. The English word *hey* serves the same sort of functions: to attract attention, to express surprise, interest, or annoyance, or to express agreement. It covers a wide range of moods: Hey, what's going on? Hey, what's up?   Hey, that's great! Hey, how are you doing? Hey, look at me now. All these have their own shade of meaning, often depending on the tone of voice.

The imagery of the text is that of a street vendor, urging the crowd to buy his wares. Though we did not have this example in mind when we translated Isaiah, a recent visit to Miller Park in Milwaukee, demonstrated that *hey* is the right choice here. The vendors were shouting, "Hey, cotton candy," "Hey, ice cold beer here," "Hey, lemonade," or whatever cry was appropriate to their wares. So it seems that *hey* catches the right tone here—the urgency of a vendor. See a fuller discussion of this in FAQ 33 on the Wartburg Project website.

Another emotional issue arises is the strong *sexual language* in some Bible passages. The Bible in most cases uses euphemistic terms for sexual matters, but some passages are very blunt. English readers are often unaware of these jarring statements, because English translations often hide them behind euphemistic alterations of the language. But do translators have authority to censor the Holy Spirit? These two issues are dealt with at some length in our online course and in the article, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," and in the article "Blunt Language in the Bible" both of which can be found in our online library, so only one specific example will be discussed here.

Issues of blunt language are scattered throughout the Old Testament, but in Ezekiel the issue reaches an intensity which is not found elsewhere. The problem occurs throughout the book, but especially in chapters 16 and 23, in which Ezekiel describes Judah and Israel as two prostitutes, who are unfaithful to the LORD. He uses very ugly terms to describe their very ugly behavior.

In Ezekiel 16:25, many translations refer to an immoral woman *who offers her body* to every passerby. The Hebrew literally says *she is spreading her legs* to every passerby. Which of the following translations would you choose? Why?
A. she offers her body to   B. she has sex with
C. she spreads her legs for   D. she lies down with
Choices B and D soften a harsh expression and take some of the sting out of Ezekiel's message. Example A does not have the full force and offensiveness of C. All of the phrases have the same basic meaning, but they do not have the same emotional impact. Such blunt terms as *spreading her legs* cause a negative emotional reaction in many readers, but isn't that Ezekiel's purpose? He portrays the full ugliness of Israel's behavior. Do translators have the right to censor the Holy Spirit?

We can say all Scripture is written for our learning, but not all Scripture is necessarily for use in Sunday school.

Sometimes grammatical *conventions change so abruptly* that the translator is caught in a whirlpool. For hundreds of years it was not the custom to capitalize pronouns that refer to God. During the 19th and 20th centuries this practice became commonplace, and many people wrongly think that this was always the practice. More recently, when there was a return to the long-

standing practice of not capitalizing such pronouns, this was interpreted by some people as diminishing God's honor, but, in fact, it was simply a return to the traditional practice, which, by the way, agrees with the practice of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. For further discussion of this issue read EHV FAQ 3.

Another issue is the trade-off between *familiarity* or *improved accuracy*. Long-time Bible readers are used to hearing Jesus say, "Truly I say to you," but in his recorded speech Jesus almost never uses the Greek word that means "truly." He almost always is reported as using the Hebrew word *amen,* even when all the surrounding words are Greek. When the original text uses Hebrew words like *hallelujah, amen*, and *hosanna* in Greek speech, it is good practice to honor that choice made by the inspired writer. First-time readers of the EHV are sometimes jarred when they hear Jesus say, "Amen, I say to you," but sometimes familiarity has to yield to accuracy. For further discussion of this issue read EHV FAQ 1.

Another emotional issue involves the *choice of the text* to be translated. Because some recent translations that are perceived to be liberal by some readers have shorter biblical texts than the King James Version does, the whole topic of textual criticism is suspect for many Bible readers. But properly practiced, with presuppositions of faith, textual criticism strengthens our confidence in the text that has been transmitted to us. The EHV often follows a fuller text than most recent translations (except for those translations that follow the King James text almost exactly), but since some Bible readers have doubts about any textual criticism, careful explanation of good textual practices is necessary.

The EHV approach to the text of the New Testament is balanced in that it avoids a bias toward any one textual tradition or group of manuscripts. An objective approach considers all the witnesses to the text without showing favoritism for one or the other, since each of these has its own strengths and weaknesses as a witness to the biblical text. The textual evidence should be weighed on a case-by-case basis. From a set of variants, the EHV adopts the reading that best fits the criteria of having both manuscript evidence that is early and that is distributed throughout more than one geographical area of the church. We do not use subjective criteria as a basis for excluding readings from the text as some translations do. For specific examples, see "Applying Textual Criticism" in Article 3 of this book, page 22.

EHV FAQ 10 and EHV Appendix 1 also discuss this topic in more detail. The textbook *Old Testament Textual Criticism* by John Brug discusses this topic at length, with an emphasis on Luther's role as a pioneer of textual criticism.

Sometimes a situation is such a mess that no reasonable, consistent solution is anywhere in sight. An example of such a mess is the *spelling of place names and personal names* in the English Bible. A tug-of-war is going on between preserving the traditional spellings, which are largely based on the Greek and Latin spellings rather than on the Hebrew text, and the desire to bring the English spelling closer to the Hebrew. The English spelling *Jerusalem* is not at all a good transliteration of the Hebrew *Yerushalaim,* but it is too established to change. Other names are more open to change. Beersheba or Beersheva? Elat, Elath or Eilat? All the systems in use, including our EHV system, are riddled with inconsistencies. To compound the problem there is a lot of inconsistency of spelling within the original biblical text itself. EHV FAQ 17 addresses this problem. See also the discussion of spelling in section 3 of this book.

To a lesser degree the same dilemma applies to the spelling of English words. God has not appointed any individual or board as the universal spelling czar with the authority to decree the correct spelling of every word. There are hundreds (more likely thousands) of examples of dueling authorities. If a translator corrects a spelling in response to a complaint, he will discover that his new spelling now places him into conflict with a different authority. Even such beloved rules as "i before e, except after c (except when sounded as *a*)" do not hold up to scrutiny.

Sometimes issues that generate discussion or reader reaction are not even issues of translation but issues about formatting the layout of the text; for example, how many *section headings* do readers prefer to provide them with help in navigating the flow of the text and locating specific passages? There is no single solution that everyone likes. The original Hebrew and Greek texts were, for the most part, unformatted as far as margins, headings, punctuation, capitalization, etc. These features were added to the text in the process of copying and translation. So almost all aspects of formatting, including chapter and verse numbers, are editorial additions, designed to help readers follow the flow of the text and locate specific passages, and there are disagreements between various systems for dividing the text.

These features are all a matter of editorial and reader preference. Some readers like the two-column-per-page format that has been used in many Bibles. A significant majority of our readers like the one-column-per page format that was used in the EHV edition of the New Testament and Psalms. Most readers like the formatting of the poetry of the Bible according to poetic lines, even though this was not part of the original text. Some readers like a lot of headings and notes. Some like fewer. Some (seemingly a significant majority) of our readers like the topical headings. These headings not only help the readers outline the text, but they help them locate specific passages. Some readers, however, like few or no headings.

We have approached the decision "How many headings should we include?" in a way similar to the decision about how many clothes to take to a spring sports event in Wisconsin. If you take too many clothes, you do not have wear them all. If you did not take enough clothes with you, you can't wear them when the cold, driving rain arrives. We have worked with this approach, because readers who do not like headings can skip them, but they are there for those readers who want them. It is relatively easy to by-pass the headings. FAQ 48 discusses the issue of headings, particularly as it applies to Psalms. See also FAQ 52 on verse numbers.

Sometimes issues that generate discussion are not even issues of translation at all, but simply issues of *reader perception.* A concerned evangelist told us that in his area he is afraid that the use of the term *Evangelical* in our name will turn off some users because it makes the EHV seem like a pro-Trump Bible, since some Evangelicals appear regularly on TV to defend President Trump. We believe the best solution to this specific issue is to show by our words and actions what *evangelical* really means—*for the gospel*. Or just call our translation the EHV—problem solved. FAQ 49 discusses this issue.

Biases can be overcome by patient presentation of objective data, but there is no cure for people who are too biased to take a look at the data.

These are a few examples of the many ways in which translators find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place, knowing that no matter which option they choose some readers will think their choice is wrong. But these dilemmas do not discourage them because they know that there is one solution to all these dilemmas: a combination of study, patience, and

cooperation. One of the great blessings of a project like the EHV (maybe as great or greater than the end product) is that it prompts Bible readers and translators to a more careful study of the original text and to a more careful study of the principles and practices of Bible translation.

An even greater comfort to translators is expressed by a key principle set forth in theology: "The essence of Scripture is not the shape of the letters or the sound of the words but the divinely intended meaning." If a translation conveys that divinely intended meaning, it is delivering the Word of God, regardless of what the letters look like or how the words are pronounced, whether the language is a bit stuffy or archaic or a bit too casual for the tastes of some. The external forms change (indeed they must if they are to keep communicating the same meaning), but the meaning, the essence of the Word of God, must remain forever.

This article is just a sample of key issues, for many more examples see our 50+ pages of rubrics and guidelines, which can be downloaded from our Wartburg Project website.

Computer Issues

While they are a great blessing, computers introduce a new set of problems. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are a great help in proofreading, but they sometimes introduce their own errors (pericope becomes periscope). A brush of the touchpad or hitting adjacent keys inserts rogue characters or delete text. The formatting of an outline might disappear. Often this may happen after the final proofreading.

Article 3: What Are Some Features of the EHV That Set It Apart From Other Translations?

Since popular contemporary translations cover a wide range of goals and styles, from the quite literal (NASB) to the very free (The Message), any specific comments that we make about features of the EHV in order to compare it to other translations will apply more directly to some translations than to others, but since we are aiming for a balanced, central position in the spectrum of Bible translations, most of the following comparisons will differentiate the EHV from both ends of the spectrum. Rather than comparing the EHV directly with specific translations, this article will address the more general question, "What are some features of the EHV that might strike first-time readers as different from what they are accustomed to hearing in their current Bible translation?"

Balance

A key word for the EHV in defining our goals is *balance.* The goal of our project is to produce a *balanced* translation, suitable for all-purpose use in the church.

We seek a balance between *the old* and *the new.* We respect and try to preserve traditional terms that are well established in the worship life of the church, but the EHV does introduce some new terms in those places in which a traditional translation no longer communicates clearly. These new terms will be explained in the footnotes at the places where they are introduced.

We seek a balance between the poles of so-called *literal* and *dynamic equivalent* theories of translation. A translator should not adhere too closely to any one theory of translation because literalistic, word-for-word translations sometimes convey the wrong meaning**,** or they do not communicate clearly in the receiving language. Overly free translations deprive the reader of some of the expressions, imagery, and style of the original.

Translators will strive for a balance between preserving the *original meaning* of the text and producing *English which sounds natural*, but the preservation of meaning takes priority.

We seek a balance between *formality* and *informality*. The Bible contains many types of literature and different levels of language, from the very simple to the very difficult. For this reason, the translator should not be too committed to producing one level of language but should try to reproduce the tone or "flavor" of the original.

We place a priority on producing a *fuller representation of the biblical text* which has been transmitted to us than many other recent translations do. The EHV includes readings which are supported by ancient manuscript evidence but which are omitted in many other recent translations, because those translations tend to focus on certain parts of the manuscript evidence rather on than the whole range.

We place a *priority on prophecy*, so our translation and notes strive to give clear indications of Messianic prophecy.

The EHV is committed to using *archaeology, geography,* and *history* to provide a clearer understanding of the original meaning of the biblical text, and this will be reflected both in the translation and the footnotes.

Let's look at some specific examples that illustrate these principles.

Balancing Old and New

The EHV has a goal of preserving familiar expressions in well-known passages, but if the traditional reading or term is not very precise or clear, we give priority to expressing the meaning of the original text more clearly.

We make an effort to retain key terms that appear in creeds, catechisms, liturgy, and hymnals. We preserve heritage terms like *sanctify, justify, covenant, angels,* and *saints*, but not to the exclusion of explanatory terms like *make holy*, *declare righteous*, *agreement*, *messengers,* and *holy people*. EHV keeps traditional names like *the Ark, the Ark of the Covenant, the manger,* etc. A translation that moves too far away from the worship life of the church does not serve well as an all-purpose translation.

We also try to reflect common biblical expressions like "the flesh," "walk with God," "in God's eyes," "set one's face against," "burn with anger," and "listen to the voice." Our goal is not to preserve Hebrew or Greek grammatical idioms for their own sake, but to preserve important biblical expressions and imagery and, when possible, biblical word-play. We do not, however, slavishly preserve these expressions in contexts in which they sound strange in English.

That being the case, what are some examples of specific cases in which we feel clear communication and a closer reflection of the emphasis of the biblical text requires a change of the traditional terms.

Amen

The first EHV distinctive that caught some readers' attention was how often in the EHV gospels Jesus says "Amen, Amen, I say to you." Readers were used to reading, "Verily, verily or truly, truly, I say to you." Why the change?

"Truly I say to you" or "I tell you the truth" both convey a clear meaning, but "truly" or "truth" are not the words Jesus uses in the Greek text. Jesus consistently is quoted as using the Hebrew word *amen*. Jesus was introducing a new word for the use of the church throughout the world, and Jesus' use of the term is the basis for the popularity of *amen* in the epistles and Revelation and in the life of the church.

One of our translation principles is that we try to follow not only the theological intent of the text but also the literary intent. That is why one of our rubrics says, "Hebrew/Aramaic words used in Greek text should remain Hebrew: *Amen, hallelujah, abba, maranatha, raca, talitha qum*, etc." When the inspired writers use a Hebrew word in a Greek text, they have a reason to do so, and translators should respect their intention.

Our FAQ 1 provides a more detailed discussion of this issue.

LORD of Armies

The Hebrew *Adonai Sebaoth* has traditionally been translated Lᴏʀᴅ of Hosts or Lᴏʀᴅ *Sebaoth.* In contemporary English the word *host* usually refers to a party host or a communion host, but the Hebrew term here refers to soldiers engaged in military service. So EHV translates Lᴏʀᴅ *of Armies*. If the Lᴏʀᴅ rules the army of heaven (the angels) and the army of the heavens (the stars), he rules everything, so the common translation *Lord Almighty* does not give a wrong idea, but it loses the imagery of the text.

The Dwelling

The portable sanctuary built by Moses has traditionally been called *the Tabernacle*, but the only tabernacles around today are the Mormon one in Salt Lake City and the containers in which the host is reserved in Catholic churches. The Hebrew word *mishkan* actually means *dwelling place,* so EHV calls the movable sanctuary *the Dwelling* (*mishkan*) or *the Tent* (*ohel*) depending on which Hebrew word is used in the original. The term *dwelling* also helps the reader connect God's presence in the Dwelling with the many New Testament references to God dwelling with us.

Festivals and Sacrifices

Israel's autumn festival has traditionally been called the *Feast of Tabernacles*. The word *tabernacle* here is not the same Hebrew word, *mishan,* mentioned above, but a different Hebrew word, *sukkot*, which means *temporary shelters.* The EHV, therefore, calls the fall festival *Festival of Shelters* (with a footnote: Traditionally, *Tabernacles*). The older names for the festival, *Tabernacles* and *Booths* do not convey a clear meaning. *Booths* sounds like a commercial structure or a voting booth. The term *shelters* more clearly conveys the nature of the festival, in which the Israelites lived in temporary shelters, and it more clearly differentiates the two Hebrew words.

For the other festivals, EHV uses whatever term most clearly reflects the Hebrew text. The Passover is *Passover* or *Festival of Unleavened Bread*, depending on what the original text has. Pentecost is *Pentecost*, *Festival of Weeks,* or *Festival of Reaping*, depending on what the original has.

For the prescribed offerings, EHV uses a mixture of old and new terms—whichever term will most clearly indicate the nature of the offering. The four main offerings are *the whole burnt offering, the fellowship offering* (traditionally *peace offering*), *the sin offering,* and *the restitution offering* (traditionally *guilt offering*). Although the Hebrew word *minchah* literally means "gift," because the *minchah* always consisted of grain products, EHV calls the *minchah, grain offerings,* even though this is not a very literal translation. For the offerings of wine and beer *drink offerings* is the term used rather than *libations*, since *drink offerings* is easier to understand. EHV uses *Bread of the Presence* for the *showbread*. Other recent translations also use this term.

Atonement Seat

Concerning the name of the lid over the Ark of the Covenant, there are two competing traditions. The most recent one is "atonement cover." The traditional translation, "mercy seat," is based on Martin Luther's rendering, *Gnadenstuhl,* "throne of grace." Luther's translation was theologically brilliant, because he recognized that this object was more than a lid or cover for a box—God was enthroned above it, and the blood of atonement was being presented there at the foot of his throne of grace. But "mercy" is not a very precise rendering of the Hebrew *kopher.* "Atonement" is better. "Cover," on the other hand, misses an important point. The atoning blood was being presented to the Lᴏʀᴅ at the foot of his throne. The EHV combines the best of the old

and new traditions into "atonement seat," since this most clearly brings out the meaning of the text and gets the reader looking in the right direction—not down at the tablets of the law, but up to the throne of the gracious God.

Ephod

Our names for the high priest's garments are *special vest* or *vest* (with the footnote *ephod*); *chest pouch* or *pouch; robe; tunic; sash* around the waist; *band* on the vest; *turban* for the priest; *small pointed turban* for the regular priests (unless someone can come up with something better, which is also accurate; *caps* does not do it); and *medallion (tzitz)* and *crest (netzer)* on the turban. Most translations despair of finding any translation for *ephod,* so they just keep the Hebrew word *ephod.* But this term communicates nothing. The description of the ephod in Exodus makes it clear this was a vest-like garment (actually sort of like a scrimmage vest), so the EHV calls it *a special vest.*

Serens

Most translations call the rulers of the five Philistine city states the *lords* of the Philistines, but the word used in the original is not a Hebrew word meaning *lord*. *Seren* is a special word used only of the rulers of the five Philistine city states. It seems to be a Philistine term. It may be related to the Greek word *tyrant*, an autocratic ruler of a city state. (One Philistine inscription, in fact, spells it *trn*.) *Seren* is a title like pharaoh or czar, which is applied to one specific class of rulers. Since this is a unique title, the EHV uses the transliteration *seren* rather than the traditional rendering *lord*. If it makes sense to call a *pharaoh* a *pharaoh,* it is consistent to call a *seren* a *seren*. The Bible uses a unique word here, so EHV does too.

Children of Adam

The Hebrew *BneAdam (sons of adam/Adam)* often simply refers to mankind in general, but *children of Adam* may be appropriate in some contexts, such as those alluding to original sin. It is true that all sinners are properly called *mankind* or *humans,* but that is because they are *children of Adam.*

Measurements

In dealing with measurements some translations put the ancient measurement in the text and a modern equivalent in a footnote. The EHV, for the most part, uses modern measurements in the text and puts the ancient term in the footnote. This is much smoother for the reader. Appendix 3 of the EHV "Biblical Weights and Measures" deals with this issue.

Archaeology, Geography, and History

The EHV is committed to using *archaeology, geography,* and *history* to provide a clearer understanding of the original meaning of some elements of the biblical text. This will be reflected both in the translation and the footnotes. Here are a few examples.

Applying Archaeology

Brass or Bronze?

Older translations often say that the furnishings in the temple were made of brass, probably because the furnishing on the translators' church altars were brass. But analysis of metal objects from the biblical period, including coins, shows that objects with a copper base were made from

some form of bronze. Pure copper is too soft to be used for utilitarian objects such as tools. The EHV therefore there calls biblical coins and furnishings *bronze*, not *brass* or *copper*. Although Hebrew uses the same word for both copper and bronze, EHV calls the ore *copper* and most of the objects *bronze*.

Tambourines or Hand Drums?

Older and even some more recent translations refer to *tambourines* in the Bible, but ancient pictures indicate that the instrument in question (Hebrew *tof*) was not a hollow circle with rattlers on it, which was meant to be shaken, but a small hand drum, meant to be struck. So EHV regularly refers to *drums* or *hand drums*. The Israelites did also have rattles, shaped somewhat like a baby rattle. This instrument is called a *sistrum*. It, of course, would be possible to combine both a drum and tambourine into one instrument.

In the same way, many translations are careless about distinguishing the stringed instruments *kinnor* and *nebel*. It is possible that both of these instruments are four-sided instruments called *lyres* (*harps* have three sides or are shaped like a bow), but the EHV tries to be consistent in distinguishing *kinnors* and *nebels* as *lyres* and *harps* respectively. In the same way the EHV tries to consistently distinguish three wind instruments: *shofar*=ram's horn or horn, *yobel*=special ram's horn*,* and *hatsotserah*=metal trumpet.

None of these issues affect doctrine, but observing distinctions shows respect for the text.

Beer, Liquor, or Strong Drink?

Many translations refer to the two categories of alcoholic beverages that appear in the Bible as *wine* and *strong drink* or some such term. *Strong drink* tends to make one think of distilled or fortified beverages like brandy or whisky. The archaeological and historical evidence indicates that producing this type of alcoholic beverages was not part of the Near Eastern culture (though some dispute this). The two categories of alcoholic beverages in the Bible appear to be grape-based and grain-based. The current archaeological term for these ancient grain-based beverages is *beer*. The similarities and differences between ancient beer and the present-day beers that descend from it is a study in itself, perhaps a topic for another FAQ. Since *beer* is the standard archaeological term for these ancient grain-based beverages, it is the term EHV will use.

Horsemen or Charioteers?

The account in Exodus of Pharaoh's army being overwhelmed by the Red Sea uses a word pair often translated *chariots* and *horsemen*. Archaeological and textual evidence indicates that mounted cavalry was not in general use in the Near East before the Assyrian period in the 8th century BC, so this word pair in most cases probably refers to *chariots* and *charioteers.*

An interesting question in the translation of biblical battle scenes and military rosters is at what point of military history can we begin to refer to horseback riders and cavalry. All the way down through the times of Ahab, in both biblical and secular sources we have no evidence for any large-scale action by cavalry. The mobile strike forces are chariots not cavalry. At about the eighth century BC, Assyrian stone relief carvings picture soldiers shooting bows from horseback. At first horsemen functioned as mobile, mounted infantry, who served as scouts and perhaps as

pursuit forces, but not as attack forces to win pitched battles. One reason is that before the invention of stirrups and treed saddles, a horse is not a particularly good battle platform. It seems clear that battles were fought largely by chariots not cavalry, though some survivors may have fled on horseback. The first really significant use of cavalry as a major component of winning battles in the ancient Near East was by Alexander the Great. It is perhaps significant that in ancient pictures Alexander is pictured on horseback, but the Persian king fights from a chariot, which was already becoming obsolete except in parades and on race tracks.

The translation issue then is how we should translate the Hebrew word *parosh.* When is it *charioteers* and when is it *horsemen*? Since the battles recorded in the Old Testament involve chariots not cavalry, it seems that in pitched battles *parosh* should usually be translated *charioteer* rather than *horseman*. The term *charioteers* includes the drivers and the archers or spearmen who fought from the chariot.

1 Kings 20:20 may be the first clear reference to flight on horseback, but verse 21 makes it clear that this battle was a chariot battle rather than a cavalry battle. It seems that the four horsemen in Zechariah 1 are mounted riders, but they are scouts more than attackers. In most biblical texts the ratio of *paroshim* to *chariots* is appropriate for the *paroshim* to be the chariot crews. So in the absence of any evidence for cavalry action and in the presence of clear evidence for the dominant role of chariots, EHV usually translates *parosh* as *charioteer* in early texts. This case illustrates the need for translators to look beyond the dictionary meaning listed for a word to the context, both in the text and outside of the text.

Assyrian "cavalry,"
no stirrups, no true saddle

Alexander on horseback
Darius in his chariot

Connecting to Geography

In geographical references, some translations use the ancient name of the place; others use the modern name. In general EHV uses modern names for well-known geographical features like the Dead Sea, the Mediterranean, the Sea of Galilee, etc., but provides footnotes to the ancient names. An exception is when one ancient name is explained in terms of another. Then both ancient names have to be in the text, and the modern name is in the footnote. (Example: the Sea of the Arabah is the Salt Sea. [Footnote] That is, the Dead Sea). In some ancient stories such as the stories in Genesis, it might be more appropriate to use the old name in the text.

We will call Israel's neighbors to the north *Aram* and *Arameans* rather than Syrians, because that is the name contemporary historians use. We will use *Chaldeans* as an ethnic name for the Neo-

Babylonians where the text uses it. When the word *chaldeans* refers to a class of *astronomers* or *astrologers*, it should be translated with whichever term fits the context. We translate *Mizraim* as *Egypt* because this is the established English translation in both testaments. In the EHV the names of places in Egypt usually retain the standard English forms derived from the Greek and Latin Bibles rather than more correct derivations from the Hebrew and Egyptian forms. The same is true of the names of Persian kings

We try to introduce readers to Hebrew geographic terms like *Negev, Shephelah,* and *Arabah* because they are commonly used in modern discussions of the geography of Israel. We use the extensive geography in the book of Joshua to explain geographic terms. Our rule is to do whatever seems best to help the reader understand the biblical text and to work comfortably in modern atlases and modern discussions of ancient geography.

Making Use of History

A careful reading of the biblical text combined with ancient historical resources often helps clear up historical issues. In 2 Kings 23:29 Josiah tries to prevent Pharaoh Neco from going up to meet the Assyrian army at the Euphrates River. Translations disagree about whether Necho is going *to* the Assyrians or *against* the Assyrians. Even the Hebrew text has both readings.

The meeting of Hezekiah and the Babylonian king, Merodak Baladan, recorded in Isaiah and 2 Kings, makes it clear that Judah was allied with Babylon against Assyria, and the political and military implications of this move are further clarified by other historical sources from the period. The right translation, therefore, is "Pharaoh was going to help the Assyrians at the Euphrates."

Our next example will be given a more detailed treatment to a fairly minor issue, because it is an example of how historians and Bible scholars make mistakes and then try to blame the Bible for their mistake.

The Bible calls a people who appear in the patriarchal accounts in Genesis *Hittites* or *descendants of Heth.* These Hittites are classified with the Canaanite peoples of the land. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, newly discovered ancient texts revealed a new rival of the Egyptians at about the time of the biblical judges. They were an Indo-European people from central Anatolia (Turkey), whom the historians named Hittites.

Much has been written about the Hittite-Egyptian rivalry, and these Hittites play a prominent role in ancient history books. These people moved into an area of Anatolia that had been called the land of Hatti, so the historians named them Hittites, on the basis of the apparently erroneous conclusion that these people were related to the Hittites in the Bible. They then pointed out that these Hittites rose to prominence in central Anatolia significantly later than the biblical dates for the patriarchal period. It was concluded that the biblical references to Hittites must be anachronisms based on confused memories of the Hittites that were introduced into biblical accounts, which these historians claimed were written long after the heyday of the Hittites.

But there is a major problem with this explanation. The problem is that these Indo-European rivals of the Egyptians did not call themselves Hittites. They called themselves Neshians. When they competed with the Egyptians, they were relatively new arrivals in the land of Hatti in central Anatolia, where they displaced an earlier non-Indo-European people called Hattians. The

Neshians kept the geographic name, land of Hatti, but they did not call themselves Hattians or Hittites. The Neshians were given the name Hittites by scholars on the basis of the alleged similarity to the name *Hatti* to *Hitti* in the Bible. This error produced a discrepancy between the biblical and historical description of "Hittites." This discrepancy was not produced by the Bible. It was produced by the historians who erroneously stuck the tag Hittites on the Neshians.

About the Hittites the University of Pennsylvania's archaeological magazine *Expedition* (January 1974) says:

> The first thing to realize about the Hittites is that they are not Hittites. The sad fact is that we are stuck with an incorrect terminology, but it is too late to do anything about it now. This unfortunate situation came about as a result of several deductions made by earlier scholars which, though entirely reasonable at the time, have proved to be false. …

> We now know that these people we call Hittites were Indo-European. … It is now believed that the Hittites came into Anatolia sometime in the latter part of the third millennium B.C., though exactly when and from where are questions we still cannot answer. …

> The Hittites were indeed a major world power in the period 1700-1200 B.C., but they were not Hittites. That is, they did not call themselves Hittites. They refer to themselves as Neshians, "inhabitants of the city Nesha," and their language Neshian. But so much for that; the scholarly world had already labelled them Hittites and, like it or not, Hittites they shall forever remain. It is just as well, for the term Neshian only calls attention to our ignorance of this early period; we do not even know where Nesha is to be located….

> There was the evidence all along: what we call Hittite should be called Neshian and the evidence for this had been available since 1887.

That is the simplified version of a complicated story. In the EHV we considered calling the biblical *Hittites Hethians* to avoid the confusion historians have created. But since the biblical Hittites are the real Hittites and the historical Hittites are the imposters, we decided to keep the term *Hittites* along with the term *descendants of Heth* and to explain the problem with a brief note.

We have provided an extended discussion of this relatively minor point to illustrate a too common phenomenon: scholars misread the biblical text, draw an erroneous conclusion, and then blame the Bible for their error.

Applying Textual Criticism

One of the more sensitive and emotional issues in Bible translation today is the issue of textual variants. Bible readers notice that many recent translations have a shorter text than the King James Bible, and they suspect that editors are subtracting from the Word of God. Especially noticeable are the omission or the bracketing of the conclusion of Mark and the pericope about the adulterous woman in John.

The EHV approach to the text of the New Testament is to avoid a bias toward any one textual tradition or group of manuscripts. An objective approach considers all the witnesses to the text (Greek manuscripts, lectionaries, translations, and quotations in the church fathers) without

showing favoritism for one or the other. As we examine significant variants, the reading in a set of variants that has the earliest and widest support in the textual witnesses is the one included in the EHV text. The other readings in a set of variants may be included in a footnote that says: *many, some,* or *a few witnesses to the text* have this reading.

The net result is that readings and verses which are omitted from many recent versions of the New Testament, but which have textual support that is ancient and widespread, are included in the EHV translation. If there are readings where the evidence is not clear-cut, our "bias," if it can be called that, is to include the longer reading along with a footnote that not all manuscripts have it. Our approach is to reflect the manuscript evidence as accurately as possible, without substituting our subjective judgment for the weight of the manuscript evidence. The result is that our New Testament is slightly longer than many recent translations of the New Testament.

For example, the last phrase of John 3:13 is included in the text of the EHV:

[13]No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, <u>who is in heaven</u>.[a]
  [a]13 A few witnesses to the text omit *who is in heaven.*

Most modern translations omit the last phrase, "who is in heaven," but it was included in the King James Version and the New King James Version. EHV includes the phrase and notes that a few witnesses to the text omit "who is in heaven." The longer reading is a striking testimony to the union of the two natures in Christ. It is easy to see why some scribes might have omitted it. It is hard to see why some would have added it.

The EHV also includes Mark 16:9-20 in the text, without raising doubt on its place in Scripture. These verses are included in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts that have been handed down to us. Evidence for the existence of this long ending extends back to the 2nd century AD. In the early centuries of the church, these verses were read in worship services on Easter and Ascension Day. That seems significant. Yet we also note that a few early manuscripts and early translations omit verses 9-20, and a few manuscripts have a different ending. Strong subjective arguments can be made against inclusion of the long ending, but our default setting is to go with the manuscript evidence rather than subjective opinions.

Sometimes the inclusions are just one word, as is the case in Acts 8:18: "When Simon saw that the Holy[a] Spirit was given." The NIV and the ESV omit the word "Holy" here. The EHV includes the word with the note: [a]18 A few witnesses to the text omit *Holy.*

Unlike the KJV and the NKJV, the EHV does not include the so-called *comma Johanneum* of 1 John 5:7-8, because the longer reading lacks early, widespread textual support in Greek manuscripts. This is how those verses are translated, along with the footnote:
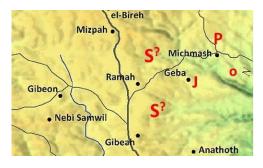
[6]This is the one who came by water and blood: Jesus Christ. He did not come by the water alone but by the water and by the blood. The Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. [7]In fact, there are three that testify:[b] [8]the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one.
  [b]7 Only a very few late Greek witnesses to the text include the additional words in half brackets: *testify ˌin heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.* [8]*And there are three that testify on earth:ˌ* This marginal

reading appears to have originated in fifth and sixth century Latin texts, because it is not found in the earliest Old Latin texts. It was not in the first edition of the Latin Vulgate published by Jerome. It was never mentioned by any of the Greek Fathers in the Trinitarian controversies. Erasmus did not include it in his first edition of the Greek New Testament. Although it was in the Latin Vulgate by that time, it was not in any Greek text he was aware of. He famously and foolishly promised to insert the clause if it could be found in any Greek manuscript. A very late manuscript was found, so Erasmus included these words in his second edition of the Greek New Testament. Luther did not include the clause in his translation. The King James Version did.

In the Old Testament the Masoretic Hebrew Text as exemplified by the BHS text is given preference unless there is good, objective evidence for another reading. We consider significant Hebrew variants as well as variants from other ancient versions, especially the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), which was the Bible of the early Christian church. The problem with weighing the manuscript evidence for Old Testament variants is that it is often a one-to-one tie of the Hebrew text versus the Greek Old Testament.

When there is evidence that something which has been lost from the Hebrew text has been preserved in an ancient version or a parallel passage, the accidental omission may be restored to the EHV translation. A footnote reports the source. The most common type of evidence that would justify the inclusion of the longer reading is when the longer reading occurs between two occurrences of the same Hebrew word, and the shorter reading still makes good sense without the missing words (this would make the proofreader less likely to notice that words were missing. We will illustrate the problem with three examples.

In 1 Samuel 13 the Hebrew text tells us:
[7]Saul remained at Gilgal…. [10]Samuel met him there…..
[15]Then Samuel left Gilgal <> and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred. [16]Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah[e] in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Mikmash.

[e]16 Two Hebrew manuscripts read *Gibeah*; most read *Geba*.

The Hebrew text of verse 15 reads: "Samuel went up from Gilgal <> to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men."

The Greek Old Testament reads: "Samuel went up <u>from Gilgal</u>. <The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army. They went up <u>from Gilgal</u>> to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul counted the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. [16]Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Geba in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Mikmash."

It appears that the eye of the scribe of the Hebrew manuscript skipped from one occurrence of "from Gilgal" to the next. It is Saul and the people who go to Gibeah in Benjamin in verse 15.

Two more examples:

From 1 Samuel 1: Hannah and Elkanah bring Samuel to the house of the LORD in Shiloh.

[24]The boy <was with them. And they brought him before the LORD, and his father killed the sacrifice as he regularly did before the LORD, [25]and they brought> the boy. He killed the bull and presented the child to Eli.

The words in the arrow brackets are not in the Hebrew text, but the Greek Old Testament has these words. The Hebrew text has the puzzling reading *the boy [was] a boy*, which is usually translated, *the boy was still young.* The longer reading may preserve evidence of an accidental omission from the Hebrew text between the two occurrences of the word *boy.*

From 1 Samuel 14: Saul is trying to find the guilty party.

[41]So Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, <"Why have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is in me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim, but if the fault is with the men of Israel> respond with Thummim." Jonathan and Saul were chosen, and the people were not chosen.

The words in the arrow brackets are not in the Hebrew text but are restored from the Greek Old Testament. They give a clearer statement of Saul's request, which requires the use of Urim and Thummim. The accidental omission from the Hebrew text seems to have been triggered by the repetition of *Israel.* The text continues.

[42]Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. <Whoever the LORD identifies by lot shall be put to death." But the people said to Saul, "This will not be done." But Saul prevailed over the people, so they cast lots between him and Jonathan his son.> Jonathan was selected by lot.

The words in the arrow brackets are not in the Hebrew text but are restored from the Greek Old Testament. An accidental omission from the Hebrew manuscript seems to have been triggered by the repetition of the word *son.*

Spelling

Readers may notice that EHV spellings of personal and place names may not always agree with those of other translations.

The problem of the spelling of personal and geographic names is a nightmare for translators, but many users of a translation might never notice it, unless they try to look a name up in an atlas or Bible dictionary. The problem arises because the letters of the Hebrew alphabet do not always make a good match with a letter of the English alphabet, so different people transliterate the names differently. A further complication is that many of the English names in the Bible have not come directly from Hebrew but via Greek or Latin.

Today the spelling of place names and personal names in the Bible is in near total disarray, with a tension between preserving traditional English spellings and bringing the spelling into closer alignment with Hebrew.

[If reading the following explanation is too painful, you may skip to the last paragraph of this section on place names.]

An attempt is underway to get closer to a consistent transliteration of the Hebrew: כ *kaph=k,* ק *qoph=q,* ח *chet=ch,* צ *tsade=ts,* but in practice *tsade* is often written as *z,* and *chet* is often *h. Chet* really needs a special character which is not an English letter, an *h* with a dot under it.

A particular problem is soft *kaph,* which has also been rendered *ch* in many names. This is a problem because biblical *ch* is not pronounced like the *ch* in *church.* EHV generally uses *k* when we want to prevent a pronunciation like *ch* in *church,* but in some familiar names the traditional spelling with *ch* is retained.

Some English transliterations are so established that we simply must live with the inaccurate rendering. We cannot change the inaccurate *Jerusalem* to the more correct *Yerushalem,* or *Tyre* to *Tsur,* or *Bethlehem* to *Bet Lechem.*

Among the many spelling options are *Beersheba/Beersheva, Beth Shean/Beth She'an/Bet Shan/ Beth Shan, Acco/Akko, Hebron/Chevron*. There is no consistent system in common use. All of the systems are riddled with inconsistencies.

As a general rule EHV keeps spellings made familiar by recent translations since this is the spelling in many recent Bible helps, such as Bible atlases, which may be consulted as a source for spellings, but these systems too are inconsistent.

Consonantal י *yod* remains *j* not *y* in most cases (*Joshua* not *Yehoshua*) but there are some special cases like *Yarkon,* which is a familiar modern place name.

What a mess! The system is wildly inconsistent, and no solution is in sight. The best we can hope for is to make it as easy as possible for readers to find names in atlases and Bible dictionaries, but these books too are inconsistent, and some of them offer several options. The best thing readers can do if they do not find the term in a Bible dictionary is to know the common alternates like *k* for *c* and try again. Looking up a name online will often produce a list of options.

The same chaos exists in personal names: *Melchizedek* but *Adoni-Zedek* even though it is the same type of formation. EHV spells names ending in *melek* (the Hebrew word for *king)* with a final *k* not a final *ch*: *Abimelek, Elimelek,* but keeps names like *Lamech* and *Baruch.* In general we preserve traditional spellings of well-known names.

In regard to the spelling of biblical names, there is a regression to a pre-Webster era, in which there is no king, and every speller does what is right in his own eyes.

There are a few bright spots in a cloudy sky: 1) the other common systems are even less consistent than the EHV's, 2) computers make it much easier to achieve consistency of spelling across the translation, and 3) English speakers already know that English spelling is a really messed-up discipline. The most notorious example is *ghoti,* which is an alternate spelling for "fish": *gh* as in *enough, o* as in *women,* and *ti* as in *nation.* Messed-up spelling is no stranger to readers of English.

This is an example of a translation issue which many readers may never notice, but which requires thousands of decisions for translators and editors.

The Important Question:
How often do translation differences affect doctrine?

How often do translation differences affect doctrine? As a percentage of the whole translation the number of passages in which the different translations have doctrinal implications will probably be relatively small, but they are nevertheless important.

In Genesis 2:24 many translations have something like "For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh." But the Hebrew verb means *cling to,* and the New Testament rendering reflects the same idea. So the EHV translation, "For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will *remain* united with his wife, and they will become one flesh" is more precise than the translation *be united with his wife.* It more clearly reflects the permanent nature of marriage, which is Jesus' point in quoting this passage in Matthew 19.

There are some interesting features in the EHV translation of 1 Peter 3:17-21:

[17]Indeed, it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, [18]because Christ also suffered once for sins in our place,[a] the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you[b] to God. He was put to death *in flesh*[c] but was made alive *in spirit,*[d] [19]in which he also went and made an announcement to the spirits in prison. [20]These spirits disobeyed long ago, when God's patience was waiting in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In this ark a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. [21]And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the body but the *guarantee*[e] of a good conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[a]18 A few witnesses omit *in our place*
[b]18 Some witnesses to the text read *us.*
[c]18 Here *flesh* is a reference to Christ's state of humiliation. See Romans 1:3; 1 Timothy 3:16.
[d]18 Here *spirit* is a reference to Christ's state of exaltation. See Romans 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:16.
[e]21 Or *legal claim,* or *assurance*
This translation and the notes recognize that the *flesh/spirit* contrast at times refers to Christ's states of humiliation and exaltation, and that baptism is God's pledge to us, not our pledge to him.

Reviewers have expressed appreciation for the way the EHV handles texts involving the sacraments. Another example is 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 where the EHV chose the familiar "heritage" term "communion":

[16]The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a communion[a] of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a communion[b] of the body of Christ? [17]Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.
[a]16 Or *joint partaking*
[b]16 Or *joint partaking*

Communion has been a common name for the Lord's Supper for hundreds of years, and this translation helps explain the derivation of that name. This passage deserves a full article for itself. See FAQ 33, which provides such a study.

The EHV translation of the Great Commission is unique in English translations (as far as we know):

> [18]Jesus approached and spoke to them saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19]Therefore go and *gather* disciples from all nations by baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20]and by teaching them to keep all the instructions I have given you. And surely I am with you always until the end of the age."
> [a]19 Or *into*

This translation recognizes that we gather disciples by using the means of grace through which the Holy Spirit makes people disciples. FAQ 41 discusses this passage.

Romans 4:25 – the meaning of Christ's resurrection:

> [25]He was handed over to death *because* of our trespasses and was raised to life *because* of our justification.

This translation agrees with other justification passages by showing that Easter is the declaration of an objective justification which had already occurred. God had forgiven the world's sins because Jesus had paid for them.

This section just gives a sample of the kind of issues involved. Because of the importance of this topic, we have a separate article in our library about passages which provide a useful basis for a doctrinal comparison of translations. It deals with these and many more passages on the basis of ten different translations.

Perhaps this section of doctrine raises the question is the EHV a Lutheran translation? The short answer is "No." The EHV translation is a translation by confessional Lutherans, but it is not a Lutheran translation in the sense that it inserts Lutheran interpretations in the translation. Our translators understand that it could properly be understood as a denomination slant or bias if we translated, "Jesus said, 'This is my true body and blood." They understand that the duty of a translation is to say no more than the text says: "Jesus said, 'This is my body.'" The translators understand and observe the difference between presenting a Lutheran understanding of Scripture in a confessional statement and importing that interpretation into the words of a translation.

When If the EHV translates 1 Corinthians 10:16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a *communion* of the blood of Christ?" is that translation Lutheran? Though this translation does agree with the Lutheran understanding of Communion, it is not a Lutheran translation. The translation accurately produces the meaning of the Greek text. It was the translation of the King James Version, which the whole English-speaking Protestant church used for 400 years, despite different ideas about the nature of the Lord's Supper.

The EHV translation is not a "go it alone" project. It rests on the foundation of centuries of Bible translation including the work of Luther, Tyndale, the King James Version, and recent Bible scholarship of Lutherans and non-Lutherans. In the Old Testament it often utilizes the best

Jewish scholarship on the Hebrew text. We receive help and suggestions from many non-Lutherans including permission to use their maps, pictures, and textual studies.

Non-Lutheran readers have told us they do not regard the EHV as a denominational translation. It fits comfortably into the family of contemporary Evangelical translations. Many listeners hearing it read in a church service do not immediately notice that a different translation is being used.

Very many translations are begun by a specific group and achieve wider usage based on their quality, beginning with Luther's pioneering work and continuing to the very recent CSB which originated as a Baptist translation first produced by one man. What determines whether or not a translation is denominational is not how many people produced it or how many people use it or how theologically diverse its translators are or how many reviews it has, but how faithful it is to the divinely intended meaning of Scripture.

The Vulgate, which was used by millions of people for many centuries and which was the Bible that nourished Martin Luther, was sectarian when it translated the first gospel promise in Genesis 3:15, "She [Mary] will crush the serpent's head." When Luther revised the Vulgate and translated, "He [Christ] will crush the serpent's head," his one-man translation was not sectarian but truly catholic ("catholic" means holding to the doctrine Christ entrusted to the whole church). The same would be true of a translation made by Lutherans today. The very definition of a "Lutheran" translation, that is, a Luther-like translation, is that its goal is to say everything the text says, but no more than the text says. A translation made by confessional Lutherans would not be "a Lutheran translation" in the sense that it introduced a Lutheran bias into the translation. It would be a "translation by Lutherans," which honestly set forth the meaning of the text, a translation that other users will recognize as accurate and fair.

The EHV does not intend to be labeled as a Lutheran translation or to be a translation that it will appeal only to Lutherans. We hope that eventually Lutherans will be the minority of users. Our name is not the Lutheran Heritage Version but the Evangelical Heritage Version. Evangelicals will recognize the EHV it as a translation that builds on the heritage of English Bible translation that strives to preserve the best of the past and also to offer new insights.

The EHV Study Bible produced by the Wartburg Project will be Lutheran in the views presented in the doctrinal notes which it contains. The *EHV* is the basic translation of the Bible, together with its accompanying translation notes. Developers can obtain permission to use this EHV translation in any number of derivative products: study Bibles, commentaries, catechisms, etc. The material that they develop to accompany the EHV text in such products is the responsibility of the developers, and they publish these works through whatever outlet they choose.

The study Bible that the Wartburg project has produced is such a derived product. In addition to the basic EHV translation, it includes detailed introductions to each book of the Bible as well as supplemental appendices on subjects such as weights and measures, Israel's neighbors, biblical chronology, geography, the Herods, and so on. It includes maps, charts, and pictures. Its notes focus on archaeological, historical, and geographic information about the text, but it also includes doctrinal notes. This study Bible is written from a Lutheran perspective, so the doctrinal notes on topics like the sacraments, the millennium, etc., will reflect a Lutheran understanding of

these topics. We do not think this will limit the usefulness of our study Bible to Lutherans only, since the archaeological, historical, and geographic information is not dependent on any denominational understanding, and non-Lutherans may appreciate including in their study Bible collection a study Bible that helps them understand the confessional Lutheran perspective on various issues. When we advertise this Wartburg Project EHV Study Bible, we will make it clear that it has a Lutheran perspective, so potential buyers have a clear idea of the approach of the study Bible and do not have false expectations for the book.

We certainly hope the Wartburg Project's Lutheran study Bible will not be the only study Bible based on the EHV text, because we do grant licenses to use the EHV translation in study Bibles, catechisms, and other derived works. In a Lutheran catechism that uses the EHV translation, the comments on the text would be Lutheran. If a Presbyterian church, for example, used the EHV text in their catechism, the text would be the EHV translation, but the comments would be those of the editors of the catechism. The same would be true for study Bibles that are licensed to use the EHV text.

This situation is the same as that which exists for study Bibles based on other recent translations. There are, for example, many different study Bibles, from a variety of perspectives and purposes, that are based on the NIV text, including a Lutheran version of the NIV study Bible, which was produced by Concordia. Another example would be the *Lutheran Study Bible* published by Concordia, which is based on the ESV text, but there are also other study Bibles based on the ESV text from other perspectives.

So there is a difference between *the EHV translation*, which has a duty to say no more or less than the text says, and *derived products that use the EHV translation*, which will include the perspective of their producers. Most of the notes in any study Bible could be the same regardless of the denomination of its producers (notes on Herod, on dating, on geography, etc.), but on some topics such as the Lord's Supper or the millennium, the notes would likely vary with denominational perspective. In the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible,* for example, the comment on 1 Peter 3:21 says, "Baptism saves only in the sense that it represents what Christ has achieved." It is to be expected that this comment would be different in a Lutheran version of an NIV study Bible if there was one.

To summarize: The main version of the EHV translation, which will simply be called the *Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV)*, will not include the many additional notes and helps that are contained in the EHV Study Bible. The study Bible (or, hopefully, study Bibles) based on the EHV text will be separate publications with different names and very likely different publishers.

Article 4: Getting Used to a New Bible Translation

For devoted Bible readers, getting accustomed to a new Bible translation can be a challenge, especially if they have used one translation for many years. We like familiarity and can feel some regret even when we have to get a new copy of the same translation that we have been using. I am on my third or fourth copy of the NIV, and it is going to be close race between me and my present copy to see which of us expires first. I don't like to start new copies because I have grown familiar with my present worn copy

Devoted Bible readers may experience some sense of loss when they have to buy a new copy of the same translation. In their old Bible they had a feeling for the position of their favorite passages on the pages of their Bible. And now they are going to have to redo all their underlings and notes. But remember that the benefit that results from going through the process of becoming familiar with a new Bible more than compensates for whatever is lost.

Remember that such change is a normal part of the life of the church today. I am of retirement age, and I am on my third Bible translation (with a lots of others used on the side), my second hymnal (with a third on the way), my fifth or sixth catechism, and my fourth translation of the Lutheran Confessions. In most of these cases, I did not feel any great need for the change, but I experienced some benefits from them all. I am at the point of life where I don't really need anything new. If you too are at the point of life where you don't need a new Bible translation or hymnal or catechism for yourself, remember that the important question is not "What do I need?" but "What do I want to leave for the next generation? What do I want to pass on as a gift to my children and grandchildren?"

Remember that turning toward something new does not mean you have to dump the old. You can still pray the old version of the Lord's Prayer (maybe in your private prayers you still do that on auto-pilot). You can still use the beloved King James Version of the Christmas story. You can have the KJV version of Psalm 23 read at your funeral if you wish to. Regardless of your age, you can keep turning back to your own well-worn version of your confirmation Bible for your daily reading from time to time.

Even in an era when you can have as many translations of the Bible on your phone as you care to have, I think most devoted Bible readers will still have their favorite go-to translation, even if that version changes one or two times in their lifetime. But regardless of whether your new translation becomes your favorite or remains a supplement to your old favorite, you can be sure you will be blessed by the process of working through a new translation.

What are some things to keep in mind as you do this?

The first thing to do, before you even start reading the translation, is to refresh and expand your understanding of the process of Bible translation. The EHV Translation Rubrics, which are available on our web site, provide about fifty pages of information concerning the principles and the specific rules that were the basis for the EHV translation.

Take time to understand the difficulties of the translation process as it is outlined in articles 2 and 3 of this book. It is a good idea to do some of this before you even begin to read a new

translation, but you can use the resources we have mentioned whenever you run across something in the translation that puzzles you.

Approach the task with humility. Martin Luther once commented that he was very happy that he had undertaken the work of translating the Bible, because before he did this, he had been under the delusion that he was a learned fellow. We can paraphrase Ecclesiastes as saying, "Of the making of many translations there is no end, and much study wearies the body." Part of this is because of the ever-changing nature of language and because of preferences for different styles of translation, but much of it is due simply to the nature of the art of translating, writing, and editing. No matter how many times translators, writers, or editors reread their work, if they are honest, they will always see something to change. They change A to B to C, and then decide A was better after all. It simply is the nature of the discipline. In many cases, there is more than one good translation of a verse.

Understand what the specific goals of this translation are and how this translation compares to other translations that are available. Where is this translation trying to fit into the spectrum of translations that runs from the very literal to the very free? See the appendix at the end of this article for one opinion.

Take your time. It takes at least two or three years of regular use to become familiar with a new translation. Most translations do a modest revision after three to five years of regular use. By looking at selected passages, readers can get a feeling for the doctrinal and literary perspective of a translation, but gaining an informed appreciation of a translation requires several readings of the whole translation.

Look at the "minors" but focus on the "majors." In evaluating Bible translations, people can get caught up in their likes and dislikes concerning individual passages and lose sight of the big issues of translation: preservation of biblical imagery, clear reflections of prophecy, and clear communication of the theological, literary, and emotional intent of the text. Above all else, comes doctrinal clarity.

At the Wartburg Project our motto has always been "purely positive." We do welcome differences of opinion and discussion concerning every point of translation, but only with a spirit that is based on careful study of the evidence, a spirit of cooperation and compromise on issues that are a matter of style and individual preferences, and the principle that upholding the integrity of the text is the highest priority, outranking our likes and dislikes.

Among all the manuscripts and resources that we have used in working on the EHV, including the Hebrew and Greeks manuscripts, we have never found any that had no mistakes. So try as we may, we do not expect to be exempt either. Though the inspired authors of Scripture were protected from error, translators and editors are not, so we will always be rechecking our work to make corrections or clarifications and updates, and our readers will be part of the process.

Translating, writing, and editing have two common enemies. One is carelessness that does not try to produce a clean product. The other is perfectionism that can never bring anything to conclusion and say "I have to go with what I have." In the Evangelical Heritage Version we are aware of both pitfalls. We worked hard to try to produce a good product, but to do it relatively

quickly, so it can be of use to the church now, and so that the church can have input into its final form in the future.
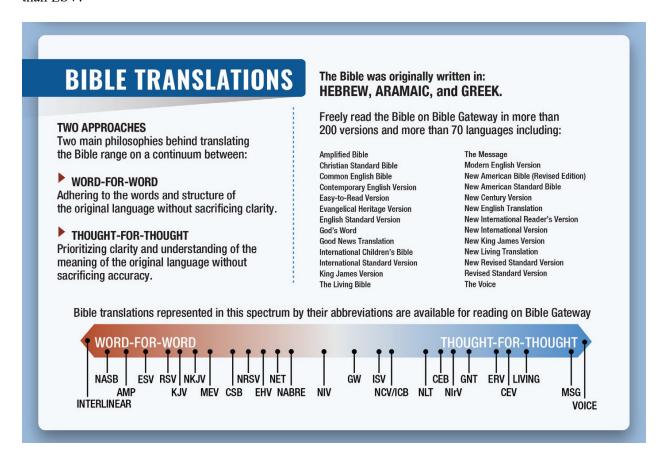
When the EHV departs from traditional renderings, it is not novelty for the sake of novelty but an attempt to convey the meaning of the text more clearly or to get closer to the style and intent of the author.

These articles provides a few examples of the many ways in which translators find themselves between a rock and a hard place, knowing that no matter which option they choose some readers will think it is wrong. But these dilemmas do not discourage them because they know that there is one solution to all these dilemmas: a combination of study, patience, and cooperation. One of the great blessings of a project like the EHV (maybe as great or greater than the end product) is that it prompts Bible readers and translators to a more careful study of the original text and a more careful study of the principles and practices of Bible translation. All participants grow from the process. We invite you to be part of the process with us.

An even greater comfort to translators and Bible readers is expressed by a key principle which is set forth in theology: "The essence of Scripture is not the shape of the letters or the sound of the words but the divinely intended meaning." If a translation conveys that divinely intended meaning, it is delivering the Word of God, regardless of what the letters look like or how the words are pronounced, whether the language is a bit stuffy or archaic or a bit too casual for the tastes of some readers. The external forms change (indeed they must if they are to keep communicating), but the meaning, the essence of the Word of God, must remain forever.

Appendix A: A chart of Bible translations

BibleGateway, an important Bible site, has added EHV to their chart which rates Bibles for their literalness or readability and places us right where we want to be, more literal than NIV, more idiomatic than ESV.

Appendix B: For further reading about the EHV and Bible translation

These and many other studies are available from the Wartburg Project online library and FAQs.

Biblical Grammar: Mechanics or Meaning. The EHV grammatical handbook.

"Between a Rock and a Hard Place," and "Blunt Language in the Bible." Dealing with blunt sexual language in the Bible

WP FAQ 11

WP FAQ 15