



The Wartburg Project

June Report
2017

The Wartburg Project is a group of WELS and ELS pastors, professors, teachers, and laypeople who are working together to produce a new translation of the Bible called the *Evangelical Heritage Version*® or *EHV*®.

June 2017 is a special month for the Wartburg Project. It is an exciting month. The paperback, printed edition of the preview translation of the New Testament and Psalms is now available for purchase from Northwestern Publishing House. Electronic versions are expected to be available soon.

June is a very busy month. The editing of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel is nearing completion. When this is done, the completion of the EHV translation, God willing, will be in sight.

2017 Preview Edition

The appearance of the 2017 Reformation Anniversary Edition of the EHV is an occasion for thankfulness and for an invitation.

We offer a preliminary word of thanks to all those who have participated in the preparation of this translation: translators, editors, technical and popular reviewers, proof-readers, those who maintain the web site, those who create the lectionaries, those who designed logos, our financial officers and board, the staff at Northwestern Publishing House who set up the manuscripts for printing, and those who support the project with their gifts, their words of encouragement, their suggestions and advice, and last, but not least, their prayers. We thank God for this fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

We also extend an invitation. While the appearance of the Reformation Anniversary edition is a milestone for us, it is just a humble first step. Now we set out together on the next important

step: reading, and rereading, and testing, and refining the translation through its use in the life of the church. The EHV is a practical translation addressed to the needs of the church, so the testing and refining which will take place in the next few years as you read it and offer your suggestions for improvement will be an important step in the development of the EHV. We invite you all to join us on this journey as you use the preview edition of the New Testament, as you use the lectionary and other works based on the EHV text, and through the preview editions of Old Testament books which we will be publishing during the next two years.

While the appearance of the print edition of the preview translation of the New Testament and Psalms is a cause for celebration, it is also a cause for humble thankfulness. 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. 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 text and a more careful study of the principles and practices of Bible translation. All participants grow from the process. They also grow in their ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively in dealing with the many knotty issues involved and their ability to subordinate their own preferences to the common good. If they grow more excited about the Bible for themselves, they will be more excited about sharing it with others.

Among all the manuscripts and resources that we have used in working on the EHV, including the Hebrew and Greeks manuscripts available to us, 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.

The first and less important part of this is removing any mechanical errors which sneak through. Most often these are due to human error by an individual somewhere along the line, but sometimes glitches remain a mystery, even more so in the computer age. An experience we had this week illustrates this. A reader noticed that one of the verse numbers in Matthew was not superscript as it should have been. The number was correctly superscripted in the final print-out approved by the proof-readers, but somehow in the bound book it was not. Maybe it was a computer gremlin. More likely an operator got his or her hand a little too close to the touch pad and made an inadvertent change which no one intended. At any rate, it is a reminder of the frailty of everything produced by humans (and by computers).

The more important part of the task is removing errors or unclarity that might interfere with the message. Technical or mechanical error are like a whipped cream pie in the face—embarrassing but no harm done. Errors or unclarity in meaning are like getting hit in the head with a stone—maybe minor, maybe not. They have to be removed so they don't get in the way of the message.

This means that, even though we want an EHV text which is as set and stable as possible, careful, ongoing revision is nevertheless essential. During the course of a translation project, the team learns many things—about the original text, about exegesis, about consistency, and about how to handle key terms or difficult passages. Thus at the end, they realize that, in view of what they have picked up along the way, they need to begin all over again. They must undertake a careful revision in order to correct the inevitable errors and to improve the wording wherever possible, based on

their accumulated experience and also the feedback from the users of the translation. We invite you, the users of the EHV, to share the joy of the journey with us.

Through it all, we remember the comforting truth that 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, remains forever.

Grass withers, flowers fade, but the Word of our God endures forever.

Translators come, translations go, but the Word of our God endures forever.

June 2017 PROGRESS CHART

Key
✓ Completed for publishing
● Tech review complete
○ Completed initial draft
➤ Updated this month

All books not shown are completed for publishing

OLD TESTAMENT

Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
✓ Isaiah	○ Hosea
✓ Jeremiah	○ Joel
✓ Lamentations	○ Amos
➤ ✓ Ezekiel	✓ Obadiah
➤ ✓ Daniel	○ Jonah
	○ Micah
	● Nahum
	● Habakkuk
	● Zephaniah
	✓ Haggai
	○ Zechariah
	✓ Malachi

Lectionaries Update

With the completion of the translation coming closer, we will be able to update the Old Testament readings in the lectionaries to their final form. The lectionaries for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 church years will continue to be made available to congregations free of charge.

Derived Works

The harmony of the Four Gospels is ready to go to the publisher.

Studies for This Month

Found attached to the email, on the website, or by request.

1. A comparison of Luther's principles of Bible translation with those of the EHV.
2. The Christmas story compared in five translations and a musical version of the EHV Christmas story. We are posting this now because teachers may be looking for Christmas music already this summer.

Coming Studies

1. A technical study of Bible passages pertaining to marriage issues and the roles of men and women.
2. A preview translation of 1 Kings.

Website

See our website (wartburgproject.org) for more information relating to the EHV. See FAQ #15 on the Bible name. Sign up on the "Contact" page to receive free e-reports. Like us on Facebook to receive the latest updates posted there.

We continue to be a "purely positive" effort, avoiding debates and controversy. We are just quietly trying our best to translate the Bible "to spread its light from age to age." So far, so good! God has richly blessed us. To God be the glory and praise for all of his blessings!

The address of our financial office is: **The Wartburg Project, 907 Mattes Road, Midland, Michigan**