



The Wartburg Project

Fox Valley Update April 2016

The Wartburg Project[™] is a group of WELS and ELS pastors, professors, teachers, and laypeople who are working together to produce a new translation of the Bible in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

The Bible translation which is being produced by the Wartburg Project has been named *The Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV)*. Why this name?

The name *The Holy Bible* stresses that our aim is not to produce anything new but to pass on the heritage which we have received from the church, which has been handing down the inspired Word from generation to generation for nearly 2000 years.

Our translation is called *Evangelical* because its highest goal is to proclaim the good news of the gospel of salvation through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son. Though there are many topics in the Bible, all of them are there to serve the gospel of Christ. All of our work in producing and distributing this translation is directed to the glory of God and to the eternal salvation of people's souls.

Our translation is called *Heritage* because this word looks to the past, present, and future.

Heritage expresses our respect for the generations of Christians and for the faithful translators who have passed the Bible down to us. We are very conscious that we in the present are building on the foundation which they have laid. As the old saying goes: We can see so far because we are standing on the shoulders of giants.

The term *Heritage* also looks to the future. The gospel is a precious inheritance that is to be passed from generation to generation until Christ returns. It is our prayer that this translation will have a part in that great mission which the Lord has left for his church. Our goal and motto is expressed in the hymn verse:

God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever.
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way.
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant while worlds endure
We keep its teaching pure
Throughout all generations.

More Information About the Project

The Wartburg Project is a para-synodical organization in fellowship with WELS and ELS. The Wartburg Project receives no funding from WELS for the work it is doing.

The Wartburg Project includes more than 100 participants from ELS and WELS who have volunteered to work on the translation in some capacity from translating to proofreading to reading for clarity and style. About 25 men are serving or have served as translators, with the heaviest work being done by about a dozen men.

As a result of the rapid progress made on the New Testament, the Wartburg Project was able to make available a downloadable *Passion History* for congregations to use during the 2015 and 2016 Lenten seasons. A lightly revised edition will appear for 2017.

Draft translations of Matthew and Psalms are available from Amazon. A prototype for a study Bible version of Psalms will appear this year. We also hope to have a harmony of the Gospels available this year.

Beginning with the 2016–2017 church year electronic versions of the lectionary readings for each Sunday will be available for congregations to use in their services free of charge.

We are on schedule for Northwestern Publishing House to produce a paperback promotional edition of our New Testament and Psalms for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Work on the New Testament and Psalms is complete. The following chart shows the progress on the Old Testament.

April 2016 April 2016 PROGRESS CHART

| |
|--|
| Key: |
| ✓ = editing completed |
| × = Tech review complete |
| Bold = completed initial draft |
| Blue underlined = recently completed |
| *Asterisk = in progress |
| <i>Red Italic strikethrough</i> = not yet assigned |

OLD TESTAMENT

| Pentateuch | Historical I | Historical II | Poetical | Major Prophets | Minor Prophets |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| ✓ Genesis ✓ Exodus ✓ Leviticus ✓ Numbers ✓ Deuteronomy | ✓ Joshua *Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel *1 Kings *2 Kings 1 Chronicles *2 <i>Chronicles</i> | Ezra Nehemiah × Esther | *Job ✓ Psalms × Proverbs × Ecclesiastes ✓ Song of Songs | Isaiah 1-12 *Isaiah 13-39 Isaiah 40-66 Jeremiah *Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel | Hosea Joel *Amos × Obadiah *Jonah *Micah × Nahum × Habakkuk × Zephaniah × Haggai *Zechariah × Malachi |

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

Samples Published:

Matthew – Kindle (www.amazon.com) Psalms – Kindle (www.amazon.com)

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

A significantly updated rubrics, incorporating a lot of our work on the Pentateuch has been posted at our website. It has the heading *3rd Edition*. For anyone who is interested in our translation, this document

provides a lot of information about the translation, and it gives an opportunity for feedback. Our FAQs elaborate on some of the items in the rubrics.

Offerings

We are incorporated and have status as a 501 c 3 tax exempt group under the WELS umbrella. We have our own EIN. We have a treasurer and a financial secretary who are financial professionals. Bank accounts and methods for giving have been set up. More complete information on giving donations appears in the public section of our web site.

Our operating expenses have been modest (domain names, web site maintenance, incorporation, trademarking, etc.). In the early stages of the project all editors and translators were working as unpaid volunteers. We now have sufficient support to speed up the project by providing relief time for some participants by paying their calling bodies for preaching help, etc. and by giving some support to the general editor who is working more or less full time on the project.

wartburgproject.org



Principles and Rubrics for Translators For the Wartburg Project

A Bible translation needs a set of general principles of translation as well as a set of rubrics or guidelines on how to translate specific words and phrases. [A complete set of our rubrics and guidelines is available on our web site in the resources section.](#) Here are a few of the highlights:

The duty of a translator is to convey all the meaning (or the openness to more than one meaning), all the beauty (or the ugliness), all the style (high or low), and all the emotional impact of the original text into the translation.

The translator should remember he is a translator not an editor. He has no calling to “improve” the message the Spirit has given.

Some Principles and Guidelines

1. Although any skilled linguist who is fluent in the source language and the receiving language can do an acceptable job of rendering the literal sense of the words of Scripture, the most important qualities for a Bible translator to possess are a thorough knowledge of the whole message of Scripture, the aptitude to let Scripture interpret Scripture, and a humble willingness to submit to everything which Scripture says. It was this aptitude, more than the depth of his knowledge of the original languages that made Luther such a great translator.
2. Translators will strive for a balance between preserving the original meaning and producing English which sounds natural, but the preservation of meaning takes priority.
3. The translation must be free of doctrinal errors whether inadvertent or deliberate. It must not falsify the Word of God. It must not subtract from its meaning.
4. The translator should not be too locked in to any one theory of translation whether so-called “dynamic equivalence” or “literal translation.”
5. It is necessary for a translation to have a set of rules and rubrics^a to guide the translators, but the relationship between two languages is so complex, that it is hard to image a rule or rubric which can be applied without exception.
6. The translator should adhere to the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture. This is especially true in regard to doctrinal statements. One passage of Scripture cannot be set against another. New Testament interpretations of the meaning of Old Testament passages must be accepted.
7. The translator should not specify one level of language and usage to be used uniformly throughout the Bible because the level of language in the Bible itself varies greatly from book to book and from passage to passage. The goal is that the level of difficulty of the translation should be similar to the level of difficulty of the original.
8. The translator should not drain the color and variety of expressions from passages or “homogenize” the language by flattening the imagery.
9. Though “one Hebrew word = one English word” is not a viable standard for a translator to apply consistently, the translator should strive to be consistent rather than casual in his renderings of specific words and word groups.
10. The translator will try to be euphemistic where the original is euphemistic and blunt where the text is blunt
11. Translators should be wary of importing their own stylistic preferences into the text against the preference of the author, unless such changes are necessary for clear communication.

^a Here “rule” means a general guideline such as those we are listing here. A “rubric” is a more specific guideline such as: “we will translate the Tetragrammaton as LORD.” Our rubrics for translators consist of 25+ pages.

12. Where possible, when the text, on the basis of Scripture, is open to two equally valid understandings, the translator should attempt to preserve both options. When this is not possible, one of the options can be preserved in a footnote.
13. In using “gender-accurate language” the translator will strive to be inclusive where the original is inclusive and exclusive where the original is exclusive.

Translation Issues

One of the purposes of this presentation is to give participants an idea of some of the difficulties translators face, so that future users of the Evangelical Heritage Version™ will be in a position to understand the reasons behind the translation choices that were made for the EHV.

In last year’s presentation we touched on four points.

- 1) We try to preserve familiar heritage terms, but we use fresh, new renderings where they are necessary to making the meaning of the text clear.
- 2) We prefer dignified, formal language in the narrative, prophetic, and poetic texts, but informal conversations which are reported in the text have a more conversational style.
- 3) How do we handle the sensitive issue of blunt sexual language in the Bible? We are euphemistic where the original text is euphemistic, but we try to retain blunt or technical terms where they serve a distinct purpose in the original text.
- 4) We include longer readings of the text which are omitted from many recent translations if they have significant support in early manuscripts.

In this year’s presentation we will review those points and add some new examples and new issues.

1) Familiar or Fresh?

We try to preserve common biblical expressions like “the flesh,” “walk with God,” “in God’s eyes,” “set one’s face against,” “his anger burned,” etc. Our goal is not to preserve Hebrew or Greek idioms but to preserve biblical imagery. We preserve heritage terms like “sanctify,” “justify,” “angels,” and “saints,” but not to the exclusion of “make holy” and “declare righteous,” etc. We make an effort to retain key terms that appear in the creeds, catechisms, and hymnals.

In some cases the traditional translations may not be the best from a technical point of view, but they have become firmly established by long usage. The Old Testament name of God was probably pronounced Yahweh, but for thousands of years both Jews and Christians have followed the tradition of pronouncing it as LORD. Though a valid linguistic argument could be made for Yahweh, we retain the time-honored tradition of LORD, especially since it is followed in the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament.

Some of the traditional terms discussed in last year’s presentation were “ark,” “manger,” and “swaddling clothes.”

In some cases the common translations can be improved by making them correspond more closely to the original text. In most recent translations of the gospels Jesus frequently says, “Truly I say to you.” Jesus, however, consistently uses the Hebrew word *amen*, and the EHV lets Jesus say “Amen.”

In other instances a fresh translation more clearly brings out the theological intent of the text. In the case of the lid over the Ark of the Covenant, there are two competing traditions. The recent one is “atonement cover.” The traditional “mercy seat” is based on Luther’s *Gnadenstuhl*. “throne of grace.” Luther’s translation was theologically brilliant, because it 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. 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 LORD at his throne. Combining the best of the old and new traditions into “atonement seat” 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.

The portable sanctuary that Israel used before Solomon’s temple was built was traditionally called the Tabernacle, but this word does not communicate clearly. People hardly ever hear the word except in “Mormon Tabernacle Choir.” The Hebrew word is actually quite simple and means “dwelling.” This clearly states the purpose of the sanctuary as God’s dwelling on earth, and it connects with the New Testament passages about God dwelling with us. So EHV will call the sanctuary the Dwelling.

Older translations call Israel’s fall festival the Festival of Tabernacles, even though the Hebrew word translated “tabernacles” is a completely different word than the word for the movable sanctuary. Here the Hebrew word *Succoth* means “huts” or “shelters.” A key feature of this celebration was that the Israelites lived in temporary shelters. So EHV will call the fall festival the Festival of Shelters.

These are a few examples of how the EHV will make the meaning of texts clearer for contemporary readers.

2) Formal or Colloquial?

Our basic approach is to retain more formal language in decrees, prophecies, doctrinal statements, prayers, etc. We use more colloquial language in conversational speech.

- In general we avoid contractions, except in informal speech where the non-contracted forms may sound stilted.
- We do keep distinctions between *who* and *whom*, etc., but try to avoid uses that sound stilted or pedantic in contemporary English. “Who are you looking for?” sounds like normal conversation. “For whom are you looking?” does not sound normal in casual conversation.
- As the previous example shows, we do the same for the rule “no prepositions last.” In Germanic languages “prepositions” (which often are actually detachable particles that are part of the verb) sound very natural at the end of a sentence.
- We capitalize all the titles of God including those of the Messiah, but we do not capitalize common nouns and pronouns that refer to God, since this is not a feature of the original text, of the original King James Version or of Luther’s translation. (See WP FAQ 3)

When you encounter something in the translation that strikes you as new or strange, take time to consider the issue more thoroughly. There is plenty of material for pastors conferences and Bible classes here. Whenever you do such study, the main question must always be “What best conveys the theological, literary, and emotional intent of the text?”

Our rubrics, the monthly articles on our web site, and the FAQs will explain many of the choices we have made.

3) Euphemistic or Harsh?

Some parts of the Bible contain sexual language or other coarse language that is quite explicit. Many English translations try to hide or soften this language (euphemism). Our translation principle is to be euphemistic when the text is euphemistic (“lie down with” rather than “have sex with”) and blunt when the text is blunt, but to also take care to avoid offense to readers who may not understand that biblical language is sometimes quite blunt.

Last year’s presentation dealt with the very blunt language Ezekiel uses in describing Israel’s shocking behavior. One of Ezekiel’s favorite terms for *idol* is the Hebrew word *gillul*. This refers to the round things that comes out of the east end of a west-bound horse. Many contemporary translations go with the colorless term “idols,” hiding the cruder term that Ezekiel chooses. In EHV we will probably go

with “filthy idols,” which reflects the blunt intent of the author but which is not too shocking. We will follow a similar balanced approach with other sensitive terms.

We have just completed work on the legal sections of the Pentateuch, which contain many laws governing sexual behavior. The Hebrew uses distinct terms for various sexual acts. Many English translations blur the distinctions by translating them all with a generic term like “have sex with” or “sleep with.” But it is necessary to preserve the distinction of terms, or we may miss the intent of the law.

Exodus 18:20 says, “To the wife of your fellow citizen you shall not give your deposit for seed.” (The exact meaning of “your deposit” is uncertain.) Many translations simply say, “Do not have sex with the wife of your fellow citizen,” but the special wording of the original may be intended to exclude surrogate arrangements intended to provide a child for someone, so the EHV retains a more literal rendering: “You shall not give the wife of your fellow citizen your deposit of semen for seed, so that you become unclean with her.” To the best of our ability we have to let the text say what it intends to say.

Also in Leviticus 18, there are many verses that say “you shall not uncover the nakedness” of a near relative. Recent translations often say “do not have sexual relations with” a near relative. This lessens the meaning of the law. “Do not uncover the nakedness” certainly includes “do not have sexual relations with,” but it also forbids sexual misconduct that fall short of intercourse.

In legal contexts we will use terms like “penis” and “testicles” if the original text uses standard biological terms, not slang or euphemisms.

The sexual language of the Bible is predominantly euphemistic, so the sexual language of EHV will follow that pattern, but if the Bible uses blunt or anatomically correct language, the translator does not have a right to remove it. “All Scripture is written for our learning,” but all Scripture is not necessarily for Sunday School.

4) Which text are you following?

One of the more sensitive and emotional issues in Bible translation is the issue of textual variants. 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 bracketing of the end of Mark and the pericope about the adulterous woman in John.

Our 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 with a note that not all manuscripts have it. 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:

¹³No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.^a

^aA 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 EHV also includes Mark 16:9-20 in the text without casting doubt on their 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. In the early centuries of the church, these verses were read in worship services on Easter and Ascension Day. That seems very 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.

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.

^a18 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 support. This is how those verses are translated, along with the footnote:

⁶This 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. ⁷In fact, there are three that testify:^b ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one.

^b7 Only a very few late witnesses to the text read *testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.* ⁸*And there are three that testify on earth:*

In the Old Testament the Masoretic Hebrew Text as exemplified by the BHS text is given preference unless there is good evidence for another reading. We consider significant Hebrew variants and variants from other ancient versions, especially the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint).

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 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 reader 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:



⁷Saul remained at Gilgal.... ¹⁰Samuel met him there....
¹⁵Then Samuel left Gilgal <> and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred. ¹⁶Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah^c in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Mikmash.

^c Two Hebrew manuscripts read *Gibeah*; most Hebrew manuscripts read *Geba*.

The Hebrew text of verse 15 has “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 has: “Samuel went up from Gilgal. <**The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army. They went up from Gilgal**> to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul counted the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. ¹⁶Saul 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 text 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: Hanna and Elkanah bring Samuel to the house of the LORD in Shiloh.

²⁴The boy <was with them. And they brought him before the LORD, and his father killed the sacrifice as he regularly did before the LORD, ²⁵and 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 seems to 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.

⁴¹So 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*.

⁴²Saul 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. The accidental omission from the Hebrew text seems to have been triggered by the repetition of the word *son*.

5) Big and Small

We will close with two examples of big and little problems.

Spelling

The problem of the spelling of personal and geographic names is a nightmare for translators, but many users of the 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 have not come directly from Hebrew but via Greek or Latin.

Today the spelling of place names and personal name 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. An attempt is underway to get closer to a consistent transliteration the Hebrew: \aleph *kaph*=*k*, \beth *qoph*=*q*, \gimel *chet*=*ch*, \daleth *tsade*=*ts*, but *tsade* is often written as *z*, and *chet* is often *h* in familiar names. *Chet* really needs a special character which is not an English letter. These examples provide only a sample of the problem. There are many other cases.

A particular problem is soft *kaph* which is also 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 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 correct *Yerushalaim* 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 *Zondervan Bible Atlas*, which may be consulted as a source for spellings, but this system too is inconsistent.

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

There is also the problem when names are made up of more than one Hebrew word. *Beth* (*house*) is a separate word in most place names (*Beth Shan*, *Beth Shemesh*, etc.), but these names are often hyphenated in some translations (*Beth-Shemesh*), and *Bethel*, *Bethlehem*, and *Bethsaida* are exceptions to the rule (they are one word—no hyphen). EHV's default practice is two words, no hyphen (*Beth Shemesh* means "house of the sun" or "Sun City." Making it two words follows the normal English practice: Sun City, Bay City, etc.)

EHV uses these names, inconsistent as they are: Acco not Akko, Akkad not Accad, Achor not Akor, Akzib not Achzib, Tannach not Tannak, Meshek not Meshech, Machpelah not Makpelah, Mikdash not Michdash, Lachish not Lakish, Ajalon not Ayalon, Jericho not Yericho, Joppa not Yafo, Aphek not Afeq, Ashkelon not Ashqelon, En Gedi but Endor, Elat not Elath or Eilat, Kinneret not Chinnereth.

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 readers can do if they do not find the term in a dictionary is to know the common alternates like *k* for *c* and try again. Looking up a name online will often produce options.

The same chaos exists in personal names: *Melchizedek* but *Adoni-Zedek* even though it is the same type of formation. EHV spells "king names" ending in *melek* with a final *k* not a final *ch*: *Abimelek*, *Elimelek*, but inconsistently *Lamech*. In general we preserve traditional spellings of well-known names. Some other names: Achan, Aksah, Arphaxad, Caleb, Makir, Obed Edom.

There are a couple of bright spots in a cloudy sky: the other common systems are less consistent than ours, computers make it much easier to get consistency of spelling across the translation, English speakers already know that English spelling is a really messed up discipline. The most notorious example is *ghoti* which spells "fish": *gh* as in *enough*, *o* as in *women*, and *ti* as in *nation*.

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 One

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 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 is "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." This better 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:

¹⁷Indeed, it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, ¹⁸because 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. ²¹And 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.

^a18A few witnesses omit *in our place*

^b18 Some witnesses to the text read *us*.

^c18 Here *flesh* is a reference to Christ's state of humiliation. See Romans 1:3; 1 Timothy 3:16.

^d18 Here *spirit* is a reference to Christ's state of exaltation. See Romans 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:16.

^e21 Or *legal claim, or assurance*

Pastoral reviewers have expressed appreciation for the way the EHV handles texts involving the sacraments. Another example is 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, the EHV chose the familiar “heritage” term “communion” here:

¹⁶The 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? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

^a16 Or *joint partaking*

^b16 Or *joint partaking*

The EHV translation of the Great Commission is unique:

¹⁸Jesus approached and spoke to them saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore 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, ²⁰and 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.”

^a19 Or *into*

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

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

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 Objective Justification...

¹⁷So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. The new has come!^a ¹⁸And all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹That is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. And he has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, inasmuch as God is making an appeal through us. We urge you, on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him, who did not know sin, to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

^a17 Some witnesses to the text read *All things have become new!*

Conclusion

In Bible translations people can get caught up in their likes and dislikes of 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.

At the Wartburg Project our motto has always been “purely positive.” We do welcome differences 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 that makes upholding the integrity of the text the highest priority.

The best thing about the project so far is the way in which brothers and sisters who have different preferences in translations are able to work together to increase their knowledge of the Bible and to provide a gift to the church. The project is one of the biggest continuing education opportunities which we have in our church. It is not just for linguists. Other skills we can use include reading for sense and

sound, checking punctuation and consistency in formatting, checking for accidental deletions in the text, creating a metric version for use in other countries (and maybe a red letter or capitalized pronoun version or a psalter for musical use). There are opportunities for everyone to participate. Regardless of how the project turns out in the end, it is already providing pastors with growth that will be reflected in their teaching and writing. It is providing pastors, teachers, and laypeople with what may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work together on a project to advance knowledge of the Bible. We are thankful for all the blessings it has already provided for us, and we pray that it will provide many more blessings and that we can continue to practice our motto “Purely positive.”

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 preference 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, they always will 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 game. Of all the texts and resources we have used in working on the EHV we have never found any that had no mistakes. So try as we may, we do not expect to be exempt either. Though the authors of Scripture were protected from error, translators and editors are not.

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, and we are working to try to produce a good product, but to do it as quickly as possible, so it can be of use to the church.

Further Reading from our Website

Guidelines and Rubrics, 3rd Edition

Past presentations and essays in the Resource Section

FAQs especially:

FAQ 11 Is the Wartburg translation of the Bible a literal translation?

FAQ 8 Is the Wartburg Project sectarian? Will the Bible it produces be sectarian?

FAQ 10 How is the text of EHV determined?

FAQ 16 How does archaeology help in the EHV translation?

FAQ 15 The name EHV