

Report to the Districts

Translation Evaluation Committee

Friday, May 11, 2012

In their assessment of the current status of Bible translations, the Wycliffe organization estimates that there are over 2000 languages in the world that are entirely lacking any portion of the Scriptures in them.¹ Similar things might be said regarding the accessibility of the Bible in most of the languages of Europe prior to the Reformation.² As we sing in one of our Reformation hymns:

O God our Lord, your holy Word
Was long a hidden treasure
(CW 204)

Undoubtedly the poet primarily is referring to the rediscovery of the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith. But Luther's biblical insight filled him with powerful zeal and urgency to put that hidden treasure out in plain view for all to see. His translation of the Bible into a strong and vigorous German inspired others across Europe to carry out the same task in their own mother tongues.

For nearly five hundred years sons and daughters of the Reformation have enjoyed unparalleled access to the Scriptures. Today we have well over one hundred translations to choose from in English. Compare this state of affairs with what was mentioned earlier, that millions of people today don't even have a single verse of the Bible translated into their own heart's voice and birth tongue! This is worth noting before we say anything more, so that we can give to God the honor due his name. While we do not wish to minimize the concerns people have expressed regarding various Bible translations, the fact remains that God's Word can only be a hidden treasure to speakers of English today if we willfully refuse to read the versions God has so abundantly provided for us. We have truly been blessed above and beyond all that we could ask or imagine! It is our earnest prayer that this sense of grace received will fill our hearts as we pursue the discussion of which translation to use in our publications.

We also humbly ask that we all bear in mind that the decision we are working towards is a matter of Christian freedom. As long as we are choosing among translations that are faithful to God's truth, there is no choice we can make that is sinful. We all expect that any translation eligible for selection will handle the verbally inspired text in a proper, God-fearing way, with a focus on Jesus Christ (see #1 of Translation Evaluation Principles). Versions that deliberately distort the truth of Scripture are to be rejected. We have in mind here translations such as the New World Translation (which uniformly pollutes the doctrine of the deity of Christ) or the NRSV (which removes the Holy Spirit from the pages of the Old Testament).

¹ <http://www.wycliffe.org/about/statistics.aspx>.

² There were, of course, vernacular translations of the Bible prior to Luther. But their poor quality made them hard to understand. Besides this, their cost and the widespread illiteracy of the times made them largely inaccessible to the common people.

None of the translations we have been considering falls in that category, however. Certainly, we have noted in every translation renderings we consider doctrinally weak, or based on exegesis with which some in our circles—including members of TEC—do not agree. The same was known to be true of the first NIV.³ But passages that are doctrinally weak are not to be considered sufficient reason to reject a translation entirely. Despite its known weaknesses, our synod embraced the old NIV in the 1970's. That's no doubt because Scripture is so filled with testimonies to the truth that any doctrine that is somewhat unclearly presented in one place will be found clearly stated in another.

In calling this decision a matter of Christian freedom, we do not wish to be understood as saying that the decision is unimportant and our discussion insignificant. This is obviously a matter over which people have strong feelings and reasons for their preferences. They have a right to them. We are merely saying that this is a matter over which we can honestly disagree. Above all, we don't wish to demonize people who come to a different conclusion than we do. God has blessed us with a rich array of translations that we can choose from, all of which are acceptable and all of which have their varying strengths and weaknesses.

A Look Back

1. Direction Given by the 2011 Convention

In the summer of 2011, the Translation Evaluation Committee (TEC) reported to the synod that, after careful study, we believed that the NIV11 would be a usable translation, one that was suitable for our publications. While not unaware of its weaknesses, we stated that we believed it was a “faithful and accurate translation...the best of all the versions for public reading in our churches.”⁴ We also stated our belief that “no other current translation would be a significant improvement over the NIV, one that addresses all the NIV's weaknesses without adding its own new ones to the mix.”⁵

Although the committee had reached this consensus, we nevertheless felt that more time was needed for synod-wide agreement to develop regarding such an important decision. At the time we thought that there was some urgency in the matter, because we were concerned about how Northwestern Publishing House would handle copyright issues if it would continue to use the NIV84 in the meantime. We therefore urged the floor committee to propose a mechanism whereby the districts could vote on the question in the summer of 2012.

In response, the floor committee on Bible translation declared that it had “reacted to the report of the TEC with approval.” The convention then formally thanked us for our faithful work and directed us to “continue to function in order to educate the synod on the general principles that we ought to use to evaluate the Bible translations mentioned in its reports, and so to help build a consensus among us on

³ See “Suggested NIV Changes,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 79:1 (Winter 1982), pp. 51-57, and 79:2 (Spring 1982), pp. 143-148.

⁴ *Translation Evaluation Committee: Supplemental Report for the 2011 WELS Convention*, p. 12. .

⁵ *Ibid.*

which translation to use for synod publications.” In addition, we were asked to “specifically address the concerns about gender inclusive language and messianic prophecy in connection with its proposal to use NIV11 in synod publications.”⁶ We were to receive input from others during the process of evaluation for inclusion in our “final report.” Finally, the synod adopted the floor committee’s proposal to set the matter before the 2012 district conventions for a vote in order to discover whether the NIV11 or any other version enjoyed the approval of two-thirds of those polled. If so, then that version would be considered approved for use in our publications. If not, the final decision on the matter was to be deferred either to a special synod convention or to the regular 2013 convention.⁷

2. The Committee’s Activities

Since the synod convention, the TEC has carried out its assignment by writing, by making presentations, by hosting a translation workshop, by teaching, and by interviewing representatives from Broadman & Holman (publishers of the Holman Christian Standard Bible—the HCSB) and Crossway (publishers of the English Standard Version—the ESV). The following section of the report provides details of these activities.

Writing

The committee has maintained a webpage on which they have made available reports, essays, articles, Bible studies, and other tools for evaluating and comparing the various versions of the Bible.⁸ They include:

Articles and Essays

- [“Translation 101”](#) and [“Translation 102”](#) John Braun
- [“On Bible Translation and Choosing a Bible”](#) Kenneth Cherney Jr.
- [“Evaluating Translations”](#) Paul Wendland
- [“Gender Inclusive Pronouns and Contemporary Usage”](#) John Braun
- [“Gender-Neutral Language, with Special Reference to NIV 2011”](#) Kenneth Cherney Jr.
- [“Messianic Prophecy and English Translations”](#) Thomas Nass
- [“Evaluating the NIV11’s Translation of αἰθερτεῖν in 1 Timothy 2:12”](#) Paul Wendland
- [“Some Thoughts on the ESV and Bible Translation”](#) Thomas Nass
- [“An Introduction to the Holman Christian Standard Bible \(HCSB\)”](#) Thomas Nass
- [“Translations and the Text of the Greek New Testament”](#) Paul Wendland
- [“Doctrinal, Exegetical, Translational”](#) Kenneth Cherney Jr.

Bible Studies

- [A congregational Bible study on translation in four lessons](#) Joel Petermann

⁶ *Proceedings 2011*, p. 57.

⁷ *Proceedings 2011*, p. 58.

⁸ <http://www.wels.net/translation>.

Other Essays and Articles

We have dedicated an entire page to the thoughts and opinions of others. Though the resources listed on the page do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Translation Evaluation Committee, we believe it to be important to understand all points of view, including those that differ from ours. With one of the papers, the TEC has prepared a response that is posted. The page is found at:

- [Link to other essays](#)

Other Tools for Comparing Translations

- [NIV 2011 comparison with NIV 1984 and TNIV](#)
- [Pros and cons of six English translations](#)
- [Comparison of 200 passages used in Luther's Catechism in seven English versions](#)
- [Comparison of important salvation passages in seven English versions](#)

TEC Committee Reports

- [Initial Report](#)
- [Supplemental Report for the 2011 Synod Convention](#)

We will continue to add materials to the site as the synodical discussion continues.

In addition the TEC has had opportunity to read and respond to numerous letters and emails from pastors and laypeople.

Presentations

Since the convention, the TEC has made presentations at:

- Fall and winter pastors' conferences
- District meetings
- Circuit meetings
- District workshops
- National OWLS convention and other larger gatherings of laypeople
- Congregational Bible studies

We have been to all 12 districts in person and are starting to make second appearances in some districts. It is our hope to have a member of our committee at many of the district conventions this summer.

WLS Symposium on Bible Translation

On January 3-5, 2012, the TEC hosted a two and a half day symposium on translation at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The workshop was dedicated to a study of translation theory and practice.

Each district president was asked to appoint two men to attend from their districts. Members of the Translation Feasibility Committee (TFC) were also invited as well as representatives from each area of

ministry. Holding a smaller workshop allowed for more discussion and the free exchange of ideas, as well as small group task work.

All who attended were given ample opportunity to speak about their translational preferences and concerns, especially as those concerns applied to the NIV11. The overall goal was to have a productive conversation on the complexities of evaluating and doing translations.

The TEC believes that the goal was very much achieved. United in the belief that the Bible is God's inspired word and in our conviction that Christ is the center of the Scripture, we were able to discuss our preferences in a frank, and yet in a very fair and brotherly way. It was never envisioned that the workshop as such would draw any conclusions or make any recommendations to the synod or to the districts about a preferred translation. But all came away with a deeper understanding of the complex choices that need to be made in translating God's Word into English.

Teaching

Besides responding to invitations from local congregations to teach Bible classes on the subject, two members of the TEC are offering a course on contemporary issues in Bible translation at WLS' 2012 summer quarter.

Meetings with Representatives of the ESV and the HCSB

The more that the TEC wrestled with the translation issue, the firmer we became in thinking that the two most viable options, apart from the NIV11, were the ESV and the HCSB. The ESV became an option for consideration in a special way once the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod began using it in its publications. The HCSB is a more recent entry into the field of English translations. One member of the TEC learned more about it by talking with representatives of Broadman & Holman at a conference of the Evangelical Theological Society. The HCSB has a number of features that make it a candidate worthy of consideration.

As we listened to suggestions from others in our synod, these two were the most frequently nominated for consideration. If WELS decides not to make use of the NIV11 as our publication translation, the TEC is convinced that either the ESV or the HCSB would be an acceptable choice.

Once all this became clear to us, the TEC wanted to practice due diligence and meet with representatives of these two other translations, just as we had met with Dr. Douglas Moo, head of the committee that oversees the NIV.⁹ Those meetings took place in October and December of 2011.

Meeting with Crossway

On October 21, 2011, the TEC was privileged to have a face-to-face meeting with five ESV representatives, including Crossway President Dr. Lane Dennis and one of the chief ESV translators, Dr. C. John Collins. At this meeting, the ESV representatives impressed us as fine Christian gentlemen.

⁹ For a report of that meeting, see *Supplemental Report*, pp 7-9.

Everything that they said led us to conclude that they would be easy for our publishing house to work with.

But Dr. Dennis and Dr. Collins both made it clear that the translation philosophy of the ESV is different not only from the NIV11, but also from the NIV84, which we have been using in WELS for the past 30 years. The origin of the ESV was not with people concerned about the TNIV and “the direction the NIV was moving.” Rather, the ESV at its very beginning originated with people who were dissatisfied with the NIV84 and wanted something more literal. The ESV representatives stressed their conviction that a literal translation is to be preferred by people who have a high view of Scripture. In saying this, the ESV representatives stated a position that the TEC does not agree with—a position that we think contradicts the translation philosophy of Martin Luther.¹⁰

The translators self-consciously wish to position themselves—and the ESV—within “the great tradition”¹¹ of English translation, beginning with Wycliffe and Tyndale and continuing with the King James Version. The translation itself is based upon the RSV, which in turn was a revision of the King James. Christians who are familiar with and who love the King James Version will likely also appreciate the ESV.

To produce the ESV, a team of 12 was put together to oversee the project. There were more than 100 scholars who worked on the revision in one way or another, and the revising process took 2½-3 years. Reviewers compared all the verses of the RSV with the Hebrew and Greek and noted suggestions for change. Then the committee of 12 looked at all the proposed changes, and a two-thirds majority vote was needed to approve a change. The ESV was first published in 2001 and cost \$2.3 million to prepare.

At the meeting, we also learned more about the oversight of the ESV text. There is an orderly process, with a Translation Oversight Committee (TOC) that intends to meet every five years. There are no Lutherans on the TOC, but people from all denominations are welcome to submit suggestions. The ESV representatives invited us in WELS to offer our input.

This TOC is taking a very conservative approach to revisions, however, because it doesn’t want to “destabilize the text.” In July 2010 the TOC met and approved 272 changes that have appeared in ESV Bibles published in 2011. We on the TEC were able to see the 272 changes, and it is fair to say that they were very slight, with a number of them made in the interest of making the translation more literal. So for those who think that the ESV has a fair amount of archaic and awkward language, there is not much hope that there will be substantial changes.

¹⁰ For more on this subject, see the essay, “[Martin Luther--Father of Confessional, Functional Equivalence Bible Translation](#)” by E. R. Wendland.

¹¹ Leland Ryken, *The ESV and the English Bible Legacy* (Crossway, 2011), p. 18. See also the *Preface to the ESV*, paragraphs two and three. <http://about.esvbible.org/about/preface/>

To summarize, the TEC acknowledges that the ESV is a translation that we could use with a high degree of confidence. Whether or not it is better than the NIV11 for our purposes can be debated. The ESV definitely represents a more literal approach to translating.

Meeting with Broadman & Holman

Just as the TEC arranged a meeting with ESV representatives, we also were privileged to have a meeting with three representatives of the Holman Christian Standard Bible, including Dr. Ray Clendenen and Dr. Jeremy Howard. This meeting was held in Milwaukee on December 20, 2011. It was a very cordial meeting in which the HCSB representatives also impressed us as Christian gentlemen who would be happy to work with the WELS.

At this meeting we gained some new information about HCSB. Most significantly, a HCSB Translation Oversight Committee (TOC) was established in 2011. Two of the nine members of the TOC are conservative Lutherans. This committee is just starting to function, and nothing has yet been determined about how they will proceed. Perhaps they will work on suggestions for improvement for a few years, and then meet in 2015, issuing a revised HCSB afterward. The HCSB representatives made it clear that they want to make the HCSB the very best that it can be. There is a person at Broadman & Holman assigned with the job of keeping a running file of all suggestions. The best suggestions will be considered by the TOC. The HCSB representatives invited WELS to submit its suggestions for improvement.

To produce the HCSB required 10 years and over \$10 million dollars. Broadman & Holman decided to go all in to create it. The process included identifying at the outset translational goals and level of language to be used. Then there were challenging database management issues and the hiring of a proofing agency. Finally, special marketing was required to launch the new version as well as ongoing advertising expenses to keep it in the public eye.

The HCSB does nothing controversial in the way it handles gender, retaining the generic “he,” for example. We were told that all of the members of the TOC are complementarians.¹² We were also told that there is an inclination among the HCSB translators and the TOC to see direct messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

The HCSB translators call their philosophy of translating the pursuit of “optimal equivalence.” In effect, this positions their version as a translation located somewhere between the NASB and the NIV on the literal/free scale. The translators believe that the form of the original is significant and valuable and shouldn’t be dispensed with. But the translators also want English that is natural and contemporary. Of course, it can be debated to what extent it is possible to fulfill both of these goals in the same translation.

¹² A “complementarian” is an evangelical Christian who believes that God has given complementary but not identical roles to men and women in creating them. Their position contrasts with “egalitarians” who believe that such distinctions are without Scriptural support.

The HCSB has some features that will be new to us in WELS. For example, the HCSB regularly has “slave” in the New Testament where we are used to “servant.” The HCSB also translates the Tetragrammaton¹³ as “Yahweh” in about 600 places in the Old Testament. The HCSB representatives defended this translation by emphasizing the fact that it is the Lord’s personal name in the Hebrew Scriptures. As such it was obviously pronounced in Old Testament times. They think that it is appropriate for Christians to be aware of God’s personal name and to use it. As for the pronunciation, they believe that “Yahweh” represents the scholarly consensus today. Here we might just point out that such a translation departs from the consensus of most Bible translators for 2200 years, and it would require explaining to our people.

Though the original translation team included scholars from many different denominations, it would be good to check all the passages that could be a concern in regard to Baptist theology. While the Holman people have done a great deal to ensure their translation *is not* the “Hard Core Southern Baptist” version,¹⁴ the fact remains that Baptists have had a great deal of influence in producing the final product. It only makes sense then to carefully examine passages that deal with Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, conversion, and millennialism. Note the plans for such a study in the near future under “A Look Ahead.”

3. Principles for Evaluating Translations

In closing out this section, we feel it is important to restate the principles the committee has developed for evaluating translations. Developing them and discussing them with others was a key part of the TEC’s assignment. Over the past two years the TEC believes that, as a synod, we have reached widespread consensus regarding these criteria, even though differing opinions still exist over which translation we should use. They are not listed in any particular order of priority with the exception of the first. Choosing a translation that reflects a high view of Scripture is a principle that precedes and governs all the rest.

The other principles exist in tension with one another. They cannot all be perfectly implemented in every passage. Choosing one often comes at the expense of another. In carrying out their stated principles, translators often end up making decisions case-by-case. Thus the charge that a translation is “inconsistent” with its goals is an easy one to make. Perfect consistency is impossible to achieve. The fact is, the translator’s task is a complex and delicate balancing act. Translators must constantly make decisions over which features of the source text to preserve and which ones to let go in order to communicate the meaning as fully as they can in the target language. They must also consider the

¹³ The technical term for the personal name of God in Old Testament Hebrew. Most English versions followed the lead of the early Greek translation of the Scriptures by translating this name with “Lord,” and in addition the English versions have set the name apart by using all capital letters: “LORD.”

¹⁴ In our meeting the Holman representatives made a joking reference to this play on their version’s name.

purpose of their translation, asking, “Who is this translation for?” and “How will it most commonly be used?” Asking such questions often clarifies the decisions translators must make.¹⁵

In short, we consider these principles to be goals, not inviolable commandments. We simply have to be realistic about what we can expect from a translation.¹⁶ As we continue to wrestle with the question over which translation to adopt for our synod’s publications, we will want to bear these principles¹⁷ in mind.

1. We expect a translation to conform to the presuppositions of faith. These include a firm conviction that we are dealing with God's verbally inspired, inerrant Word. Though speaking through many different human authors, one single divine Author addresses us in every word. The Scriptures find their center and beating heart in Jesus Christ our Savior. The whole Bible testifies of him and in his name proclaims repentance and remission of sins.
2. We expect, with Luther, that a translation will communicate in the language of the people, using idioms and expressions that are understandable and in common, current use.
3. We expect that a translation will understand itself as a "direct quotation" of an ancient document, rather than merely supplying the "gist" of the original's meaning in a contemporizing paraphrase.
4. We expect, with Luther, that when theologically necessary a translation will adhere closely to the exact wording of the original.
5. We expect that the translation will be aimed at native English speakers who can handle Standard American English at a late primary school or early high school level, people who are neither professional theologians nor biblical illiterates. They can appreciate the difference between texts that don't aim at literary beauty, and those that do, and they have some appreciation for the latter.
6. We expect that the primary way in which most WELS people experience most of the Bible most of the time is by hearing it read in the context of the public worship service. Consideration must therefore be given to a translation's suitability for being read aloud.

A Look Ahead

Much has changed since the last synod convention; much remains the same. The TEC still considers the NIV11 to be our best option. Key areas of concern regarding the version remain its handling of biblical

¹⁵ See principle no. 5 and 6 for our view of translational audience and purpose.

¹⁶ As John McFarlane put it, “We demand that [a translation] reconcile the irreconcilable and then gloat over its necessary failure” as qtd. in Theo Hermans, *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and Systemic Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1999), p. 17.

¹⁷ For a slightly fuller exposition of them, we refer you once again to an article published in [Forward in Christ](#), December 2011, pp. 28-29.

prophecy and its overuse of gender inclusive language. It seems clear that our church body still hasn't had enough time to arrive at a consensus on whether or not we want to use the new NIV in our publications. A number of pastors feel that we should not.

What has changed is that we now appear to have a better consensus on principles to be used in evaluating translations. Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) also has contingency plans in place to deal with the copyright matter during this time of transition. It has decided to produce the Sunday school curriculum so that congregations can use the translation they prefer. It has also decided to revise the Lutheran elementary school version in the same way. So the pressure to make a decision quickly—perceived at the last synod convention—is no longer there to the same degree.

The question before us now is this: Is it wise for us to attempt to make a final decision this summer? As a committee, we have had a couple of years to consider these matters and make comparisons. We've done our best to educate the synod on general principles to be used in evaluating translations. But we have to admit that there are many—indeed perhaps most of the delegates to district conventions this summer—who have just begun to study the issues involved and to apply the principles to the various versions under consideration.

What is more we feel that a too-hasty decision in this matter might appear to be dismissive of the genuine concerns many feel regarding the use of the NIV11. Since we believe that this decision is an matter of Christian freedom, we do not want it to become a source of division among us where some are left feeling that a choice was forced on them without an adequate time for discussion or for a consideration of the alternatives. We firmly believe that this entire matter is to be approached with wisdom, tact, and love. We would therefore be happy if districts should decide to postpone making a final decision, leaving the matter in the hands of the next WELS convention.

Side-by-Side Comparison of the ESV, the HCSB, and the NIV11

The TEC has often heard the comment: "How can we decide on a translation if we haven't looked at choices other than the NIV11?" We are sympathetic to this thought. Although we have done a preliminary study of other choices for ourselves, we acknowledge that there has not been any official, systematic review by WELS pastors.

With the thought that a decision on which version to use might be deferred until the next synod convention, the TEC decided to initiate a comparative study of English versions likely to be adopted for publication use. We believe a study like this is important for a number of reasons. First, for its own sake, since it hasn't been done yet. Secondly, such a study allows time for reflection. It's one thing for someone to say, "I'm for the NIV11" or "I'm against it." It's another to answer the question, "Compared to what?" One of the TEC's assigned tasks was to work for greater consensus; we are convinced that a study like this will help greatly in working toward that goal. Finally, if districts should decide to defer the decision this summer, a study like this would offer helpful guidance for delegates to the 2013 synod convention.

As already mentioned, three translations recommend themselves as justifiably belonging to the top tier of candidates for consideration. They are the English Standard Version, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, and the New International Version. Each of these translations has been prepared by committees of evangelical Christians who hold to the inerrancy of Scripture. Each of these translations has an oversight committee for future revisions, and they all have welcomed input from WELS. Each of these translations is readily available in print and electronic formats, and each is among the six top selling English translations in America according to the Christian Booksellers Association.¹⁸ We are including the NIV11 in this review because the data will be most useful if the NIV11 is reviewed side-by-side with the others in the same way. The review of the NIV11 undertaken in January-February 2011 did not involve the reading of the entire NIV11. It only looked at the changes from NIV84.

In February of this year, we sent out a letter of invitation to 122 WELS pastors. The response was excellent—only 20 declined. We wanted the invitees to represent all sections and ministries of the synod. At the same time, we wanted to keep the numbers reasonable so that the data would be manageable. Those invited were:

- The 41 participants at the translation symposium held in Mequon in January 2012
- The people who participated in the preliminary review of the NIV11 in January-February 2011, together with the members of the Conference of Presidents and synodical administrators
- A group of young pastors who graduated from WLS in 2000 or later, from a variety of ministry settings

A word of explanation for the last category of invitees: If this decision is similar to the one our synod made in the 1970's regarding the NIV, we are looking at a choice that might affect our church body for the next 35 years, that is, for nearly the entire ministry of these young pastors. They are the ones who will, so to speak, have to live with it. It is only right, therefore, that they have a say in the decision. Our younger pastors, who number about 450, are underrepresented in the other two groups of reviewers.

We are happy to report that 102 pastors accepted the invitation to participate. Subsequently we divided the Bible into 34 sections. Then, using an alphabetical order scheme, we randomly assigned sections to reviewers so that each section would be examined by three different reviewers—one from each of the three groups mentioned above. We hope in this way to ensure that the study's outcome is as fair and as representative of synodical consensus as it can be.

Reviewers have until August to complete their work. Once we receive it, the TEC will make the results available in both its "raw" form and in a form that is more evaluative, providing some statistical analysis. We believe it will be possible to disseminate the results as well as provide time for their study well in advance of the WELS convention in 2013.

¹⁸ http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/documents/BSLs/Bible_Translations.pdf.

Concluding Words

The TEC is happy to continue to serve in order to achieve the goal we know we all long for, a lasting and harmonious consensus. We are convinced that any of the versions discussed above could be used for the building up of God's people.

We are grateful to the Lord Jesus for the opportunity he has given us during the past two years to serve our synod in this matter. Through it, he has greatly deepened our appreciation for the majesty of his Word and for the work of faithful translators. He has also deepened our appreciation for our brothers and sisters in WELS as we have heard them express again and again their abiding love for the only Word that will abide after these heavens and this earth have passed away. To God alone be the glory!

Pastor John A. Braun

Professor Kenneth A. Cherney Jr.

Professor Thomas P. Nass

Pastor Joel V. Petermann

Professor Paul O. Wendland