



# The Wartburg Project

## July Report

### 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 called the *Evangelical Heritage Version™* or

EHV™.

## July 2016 PROGRESS CHART

### Key:

✓ = completed for publishing

× = Tech review complete

**Bold** = completed initial draft

**Blue** = recently completed

\*Asterisk = assigned or in progress

## 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 Chronicles	× Ezra Nehemiah × Esther	* Job ✓ Psalms × Proverbs × Ecclesiastes ✓ Song of Songs	Isaiah Jeremiah *Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos × Obadiah * Jonah Micah × Nahum × Habakkuk × Zephaniah × Haggai * Zechariah × Malachi

## NEW TESTAMENT

Basic editorial process complete. We are on track to publish a New Testament and Psalms special preview edition in 2017.

Completed OT Drafts are in various phases of review and editing. The Wartburg Project process is rigorous and will take time. Some books are being carefully checked by “technical reviewers.” Other books are being read by “popular reviewers.” After all of this input, we seek to produce the most accurate and clear translation we can.

## SUMMARY REVIEW of PROGRESS REPORTS

**OT** We hope to have complete draft translations of every book of the Old Testament by the end of 2016. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are now in the hands of Northwestern Publishing House, and the other historical books are expected to follow on a regular basis. This means that our editorial process has been completed for about half of the Bible. Our focus is now on completing editing from Joshua through Chronicles.

**EHV** Our trademarks have all cleared the first stage of USPTO review and are now in stage two.

**PASSION HISTORY** The 2017 *EHV Passion History* © will be available on our website and through NPH in plenty of time for next Lent. Congregations may continue to use the older editions if they wish, since changes are minor.

**PRODUCTS** An updated edition of Matthew (*EHV* © 2016) is available on Amazon. In the near future, a new study edition of Psalms with more extensive notes will appear on Amazon too.

**LECTIONARIES FOR 2016-2017.** We plan to make EHV Scripture lessons available to pastors and congregations in time for Advent 2016. From that point on, we expect to provide Scripture lessons for worship on our website. Congregations may use these without charge.

**WEBSITE** See our website ([wartburgproject.org](http://wartburgproject.org)) for more information relating to the EHV. See FAQ #15 on the Bible name. A paper explaining our name is posted in the “Library” section.

Sign up on the “Contact” page to receive free e-reports. Like us on Facebook to receive the latest updates posted there. (The purpose of our Facebook posting is not debate, but we’ve been able to share information with many people very quickly that way.) We continue to be a “purely positive” effort, avoiding debates and controversy. We are just quietly and humbly 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!

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.

**Thanks To All** We also take this occasion to thank all those who have given their time and gifts to help in the completion of the project and especially to their calling bodies. We are thankful for the vision of the kingdom of calling bodies that look beyond their own boundaries for ways in which their pastors and congregation may be a blessing also to their brothers and sisters in Christ in the district and synod, and even beyond. We continue to be in a strong financial situation to complete the project.

## NEW RESOURCE

### EHV Catechism Memory Work Program for WELS Catechism

A memory work system for Bible passages based on the EHV translation for use with WELS catechism classes is now available for free download from *ON MY HEART Lutheran Memory Work Program* at [on-my-heart.com](http://on-my-heart.com). From the download section choose *WELS* and *EHV* and the number of the set you want. A *WELS/EHV* version is now available. An *ELS/EHV* version will soon be finished as well. It is designed for the Sunday School level.

### “Outside Help” *Concordia Commentary OT*

At the Wartburg Project we are very conscious of the fact that our work rests on the foundation of centuries of Bible study and translation work in the Christian church. In our reports we intend to regularly refer to resources which we have found helpful in our work. Our resource for this month is the *Concordia Commentary*. Since we are heavily involved in Old Testament work right now, we will focus on the Old Testament volumes of the series.

Here is the list of published Old Testament volumes:

*Leviticus* by John W. Kleinig

*Joshua* by Adolph L. Harstad

*Ruth* by John R. Wilch

*Ezra–Nehemiah* by Andrew E. Steinmann

*Proverbs* by Andrew E. Steinmann

*The Song of Songs* by Christopher W. Mitchell

*Ecclesiastes* by James Bollhagen

*Isaiah 40–55* by R. Reed Lessing

*Isaiah 56–66* by R. Reed Lessing

*Ezekiel 1–20* by Horace D. Hummel

*Ezekiel 21–48* by Horace D. Hummel

*Daniel* by Andrew E. Steinmann

*Amos* by R. Reed Lessing

*Jonah* by R. Reed Lessing

All of these volumes are the best exegetical commentaries on these books for Lutheran pastors. Because they provide an in-depth exegesis of the text, these volumes are an extremely valuable resource for translators and for writers who are producing popular Bible study materials for general use.

Concordia just published the 30<sup>th</sup> volume in the series, *Romans 9–16*. The current plan is for the completed series to have a total of 72 volumes, so at the current pace of two volumes per year, it will be another 20 years or so, *Deo volente*, before the entire series is finished.

I don't have any data or research to support this opinion, but the *Concordia Commentary* may well be the largest Lutheran publishing project of new material ever done, surpassing the Concordia/Fortress edition of Luther's works not only in the number of volumes but in the amount of work needed to produce each volume.

To put the immensity of the task into perspective: those of you who have been working on the Wartburg Project know what a big job it is to produce a translation of a book of the Bible. For the authors of volumes in the *Concordia Commentary* producing a translation is only the first step of their assignment.

Though the Wartburg Project can benefit very much from the scholarship of the *Concordia Commentary*, our translation work and theirs serve quite different purposes. Their translations serve the purpose of assisting in a close study of the Hebrew or Greek texts. Our translation has the same concern for faithfulness to the original text, but it must emphasize clear idiomatic English, suitable for public reading and for Bible study by all age groups in the church. Individual volumes of a commentary series do not require the same degree of synchronization of style and vocabulary that a Bible does. So the two projects each have their own goals and timetables. The two projects are complementary, not competitive, in serving the welfare of the church. We expect, for example, that Lutheran pastors who ultimately use the *Evangelical Heritage Version* will be using the *Concordia Commentary* as their main Old Testament exegetical commentary, and we see the *Lutheran Bible Companion* as compatible for use with our EHV translation, and we have no plan to try to have our own edition of such resources.

So where does the Concordia Old Testament go from here? The plan is for the following Old Testament volumes to appear in the next couple of years:

- 1 Samuel* by Andrew Steinmann, in November 2016
- 2 Samuel* by Andrew Steinmann, in November 2017
- 1 Kings* by Walter A. Maier III, in May 2018.

Concordia also anticipates being able to publish the following Old Testament volumes in the next few years, but with no dates set as yet:

- Deuteronomy*, by Prof. Adolph L. Harstad (Bethany Seminary)
- Micah*, by Dr. Jason Soenksen (Concordia Wisconsin)
- Psalms 1–50*, by Dr. Timothy Saleska (Concordia Seminary)
- Judges*, by Dr. Mark Braun (WLC)
- Joel*, by Prof. Thomas Nass (Martin Luther College)

## **ARTICLE**

The purpose of this series of articles is to allow our readers to understand the type of issues we are wrestling with at various points in the translation process and to contribute to the discussion if you have opinions you wish to share.

### **To Synch or Not To Synch? That Is the Question**

*Synoptic books* are a set of books that offers two or more views of the same biblical event, often in very similar language. There are two main groups of synoptic books in the Bible:

- 1) The synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, provide parallel views of many of the events in Jesus' life. Some of these events are described in all three gospels. Some events are described in two or even in only one of these gospels. Sometimes the wording of the parallel accounts is very similar. Sometimes the accounts are quite different in the way in which they describe the event.  
(In the New Testament Ephesians and Colossians could be called synoptic epistles since they parallel each other quite closely in subject matter.)
- 2) In the Old Testament the historical accounts from 1 Samuel to 2 Chronicles provide a synoptic view of the history of the Israelite monarchy.

1 and 2 Samuel provide one view of the beginning of the Israelite monarchy during the reigns of Saul and David. The second half of 1 Chronicles provides a second view of the same history.

1 and 2 Kings provide one view of the rest of the history of the Israelite monarchy. A second view of the same history is provided by 2 Chronicles.

These two parallel accounts of the history of the Israelite monarchy are quite different in the material they select to report. The books of 1 and 2 Samuel give a rather complete account of David's rule. 1 Chronicles omits the more negative aspects of David's rule, such as David and Bathsheba, David and Absalom, etc.

1 and 2 Kings focus on the way in which Israel's unfaithfulness led to the downfall of both Judah and Israel. They provide a lot of information about events in the northern kingdom of Israel. In contrast 2 Chronicles focuses on the history of Judah, with very little attention to the history of the northern kingdom of Israel. It focuses on the grace of God, which is displayed in his actions to preserve and restore the priesthood and the monarchy, which would both be fulfilled in Christ. In addition 2 Chronicles provides much information about certain kings of Judah which is not present in Kings.

The first part of 1 Chronicles parallels some of the genealogies from Genesis and other early books.

Some events that are reported in one of the two parallel views of the history of Israel are completely absent from the other account. Sometimes both versions of the history contain reports of the same event, but the accounts are quite different in the points they choose to report and in the language they use to report it. But there are some events that are described in both accounts by very similar words. The Hebrew is nearly (but not quite) identical in both accounts. It may well be that the author of Chronicles had the text of Kings in front of him and was using it as his main resource.

It is this third class of parallel passages that is our main concern here. When the Hebrew of a passage in Chronicles is almost a verbatim match with the Hebrew of a passage in Samuel or Kings, should we try to make the English of the translation in Chronicles a verbatim match with the English of the translation of Samuel or Kings?

The EHV has a number of rubrics that have a bearing on this issue.

1. Try to be consistent in the translation of technical terms.
2. Though "one Hebrew/Greek 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.
3. When a person has two or more personal names, preserve distinctions like *Jehoiachin/ Jeconiah/ Coniah*. In general, keep the distinct names as they appear in the Hebrew text. Alternate names of important figures can be footnoted. If the main text has *Coniah*,<sup>b</sup> the footnote would have: <sup>b</sup>Also called *Jehoiachin*.
4. Harmonize minor spelling changes of familiar names and different pre- and post-exilic spellings of the names of individuals like Hezekiah (*Hizkiyahu* and *Hizkiyah* both = *Hezekiah*).
5. A special problem case is *Joash/Jehoash Joram/Jehoram* because there are kings with the same two names in each kingdom (cf. 2 Kg 12). Use whichever name the text has, with a footnote when necessary.
6. The various Hebrew spellings of *Nebuchadnezzar* can be harmonized to this one English spelling.

Looking for the consistency behind our inconsistency I would say it is this: We try to balance a concern for what will be easiest for the reader (usually that would be uniformity and homogenizing of names) with a respect for the original authors' preference for diversity of spelling, diversity of names, etc.

### *So What Should We Do?*

A point in favor of trying to make the parallel translations as close in English as the original texts are in Hebrew is that this practice will alert the reader to the fact that the Chronicler may be using Samuel or Kings as his source. This same effect could, of course, also be accomplished by a footnote that said: *In this account Chronicles follows the text of Kings very closely.* So the question we must ask is whether an effort to make the two parallel English translations identical in wording is useful to the reader and faithful to the intent of the authors.

Some of the points that make this practice questionable include the following:

1. If Samuel was written in about 900 BC, shortly after the reign of David, and Chronicles was written in the 400s at the time of Ezra, the distance between the two accounts was as great as the distance between us and the King James Version, so we would expect some differences in grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.
2. It does not seem that the author of Chronicles was very concerned to have a verbatim reproduction. Even the closely parallel accounts are not exact reproductions.
3. The Chronicler updates grammar, spelling, and vocabulary:
  - a. The Tetragrammaton *LORD* is sometimes changed to *God*.
  - b. The pre-exilic spelling of names like *Hizkiyahu* may be updated to *Hizkiyah*.
  - c. The pre-exilic spelling of David *dvd* may be updated to *dvyd*.
  - d. The account in Chronicles substitutes different names. *Araunah* in Samuel is *Ornan* in Chronicles.
  - e. The term *cohen*, usually translated *priest*, refers to a *government minister* in 1Kings 8:31. By the time of Chronicles this use of the term *cohen* was apparently no longer current. In 1 Chronicles 18: 17 these officials are called *chief advisors at the side of the king*.
  - f. There are many textual variants in the texts, especially in texts like the lists of David's elite warriors. This makes it more difficult to establish the original reading in every case.
  - g. The different scribes of the two parallel accounts do not always divide and punctuate the two parallel texts the same way in both accounts. Different additions and omissions to the text mean that identical words do not have the exact same context in both versions.
  - h. There are no really reliable sources to help do exact synching. A book like Abba BenDavid's *Maqbilot ba Miqra (Parallels in Scripture)* makes side-by-side comparisons of parallel texts, in which spelling variants are marked in red letters, but it does not always mark omissions of words.
  - i. Trying to produce an exact synch, which also preserves all the differences between the parallel texts, is therefore very time consuming and costly.
4. One of the most important considerations is that the author of Chronicles does not seem to be concerned to produce an exact synch with Samuel or Kings. He was interested in preserving and even creating differences from his source account, even when the contrast was quite jarring.
5. Another important consideration is that an exact synch is not particularly useful to readers. Will a pastor who is producing a Bible class on an event in David's life benefit more from reading two identical translations of the text or from reading two different translations of the text by two translators who worked independently.

The EHV base translations of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were made by different translators who worked independently. Where two translators gave slightly different shadings to a translation of the same account, it does not seem like good stewardship to discard one of the translations or to bury all the variations in footnotes. The reader will benefit more from seeing that there may be more than one good way to translate a phrase and that each rendering gives insight into the meaning of the text.

### *So Where Does That Leave Us?*

Our tentative rubric, based on our preliminary study, is: In synoptic passages such as the parallel accounts in Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the translations will be synchronized for key terms and expressions, but the translations will not necessarily be made 100% identical, even when the Hebrew texts are almost exactly alike. While there is a general drawing of the two translations closer together, the efforts of the independent translators may be preserved in the parallel translations to give readers two views of the passage. The two translations will be close enough to each other that it should be clear to the reader when the two Hebrew texts are very close to each other.

Since the goal of the Chronicler is to produce a second view of the same events recorded in Samuel or Kings, it seems wise that his goal should be ours also.

Most of the work of synching will be done in August and September. In the meanwhile, we will do further study of our tentative conclusions. If you have any thoughts on the matter submit them through our response form or to the editor's email [wpbrugj@gmail.com](mailto:wpbrugj@gmail.com).

**NEXT REPORT** Our next report will contain an article on the myths people believe about English grammar and a report on our developing library section.