



ANNOUNCEMENT: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TO UPDATE NRSV

At the SBL-AAR annual meeting, the National Council of Churches announced an update of the NRSV scripture translation, in partnership with the Society for Biblical Literature.

Scholars have conducted a considerable amount of work in text criticism since 1989, the year the NRSV was published. The last three decades have provided significant new discoveries, including new manuscript witnesses, text-critical methodology, and philological insight. A thirty-year review is not only necessary in the light of scholarly work, but will result in an English translation that is based, without exception, on the most up-to-date textual analysis.

The update will focus on three areas:

1. Text-Critical and Philological Advances - The primary focus of the thirty-year review is on new text-critical and philological considerations *that affect the English translation*. The philological review will draw upon the fruits of historical-critical scholarship that affect expressions in English. For the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, text-critical developments in the last thirty years have been especially significant. The publication of the majority of Judaean Desert biblical texts and fragments has led to a revolution in understanding readings that differ from medieval Hebrew traditions in the Masoretic Text, which was the basis of the NRSV.
2. Textual Notes - SBL's initial review of the NRSV suggested that the current text-critical footnotes are not complete and are inconsistent. There are cases when the translation adds words not conspicuously in the sources or does not indicate when a reading is not following the sources. To address this deficiency, reviewers will be asked to identify text-critical issues that should have been documented in the notes but were not.
3. Style and Rendering - The translation philosophy of the NRSV will be maintained, including its overarching commitment to being "'as literal as possible' in adhering to the ancient texts and only 'as free as necessary' to make the meaning clear in graceful, understandable English." That being said, if a reviewer judges a particular translation awkward, inaccurate, or difficult for general readers to understand, the reviewer may suggest a more elegant rendering.

The SBL editorial board includes Sidnie White Crawford (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Ron Hendel (University of California-Berkeley), Michael Holmes (Bethel University), Robert Kawashima (University of Florida), Judith Newman (University of Toronto), Jennifer Knust (Boston University), and Eugene Ulrich (University of Notre Dame).

Contributors responsible for each books' review will submit their changes by December 31, 2019 and the editorial board will review those changes and submit a final version to the NCC by

December 31, 2020. The NRSV files and revisions will be carefully managed on a platform overseen by Scribe, which has been contracted to distribute the current RSV and NRSV translations to publishers.

In early 2020, NCC will review current licenses for new licensing opportunities of the updated translation. The editorial board will deliver all recommended changes to the NCC for approval by December 30, 2020.

After NCC's Biblical Translation Utilization Committee approves the updates, files will be provided to licensees for product creation. An official launch date will also be determined.

Prior to and after launch of the updated NRSV, the NCC and SBL will support the brand and licensing partners with press releases and marketing. New licensing partnerships will also be explored. Our desire is to propel the beloved NRSV brand to its deserved market share.

Serving as a leading voice of witness to the living Christ in the public square since 1950, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) brings together 38 member communions and more than 35 million Christians in a common expression of God's love and promise of unity.