

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 1:1-2

Original text:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:
וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְהוֹמוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹמוֹ וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:

HCSB rendering:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.^a Now the earth was^b formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

^a Or *created the universe*

^b Or When God began to create the sky and the earth, ² the earth was

Suggestion:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.^a Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

^a Or *created the universe*

[Drop footnote “b”]

Rationale:

We will grant that the translation in the footnote is not a grammatical impossibility (J-M §129 p3), and even that it has some very strong advocates (*e.g.* Holmstedt, VT 58 [2008] 56-67). We ask, however, that HCSB consider removing the footnote for these reasons:

1. In a discussion of word order in the Hebrew verbal clause, GKC §142g says that in Genesis 1:1 בְּרֵאשִׁית is a “prepositional specification of time,” like בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (“in that day”), and that it precedes the verb בְּרָא for this reason. Joüon-Muraoka, while granting the translation “When...” as a possibility, sides with the traditional understanding (§137k). Waltke-O’Connor grants that a construction that would justify the translation “When God began...” does exist in biblical Hebrew, but finds it “extremely rare” (9.6e.n38), and it is clear how the authors feel about the likelihood that Genesis 1:1 is an instance of this construction. Thus, advocates of “When God began” cannot claim support from the three most respected Hebrew grammars that treat the issue.
2. The Masoretes placed a disjunctive accent on בְּרֵאשִׁית, making it unlikely that they understood the form as “construct” in its meaning (“beginning of”).

3. The Septuagint's translation ἐν ἀρχῇ and its apparent echo in John 1:1 both support the traditional understanding, as do all of the ancient versions. In fact, with the exception of Rashi, the translation "When God began" seems to have gained little traction until recently. As Gordon Wenham noted, "Most modern commentators agree that v 1 is an independent main clause to be translated, 'In the beginning God created...'" (*Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 1 [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1987], p. 43; we suggest also Rooker, M., *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 [1992] 316-23 and 411-27). The translation "When God began" or the equivalent does appear in some recent versions (JPS, NEB), but that this is the correct translation is still the view of a small minority. Whether the possibility deserves mention even in a footnote is therefore questionable, to say the least.
4. The translation "When God began..." has sparked considerable controversy in recent English Bible translating. In 1975, in the project that became the *Good News Translation*, the publisher (the American Bible Society) overrode the decision of the translation committee and rejected the translation "When God began..." on the grounds that the ABS's constituency would never accept a Bible with this rendering. In our own circles, HCSB's footnote suggesting "When God began..." was flagged by one reviewer ("Report of the 102") as cause for concern. We suspect that not a few WELS readers might feel the same way, meaning that anything that might be gained by including the footnote is simply not worth the cost.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 6:5

Original text:

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי רָבָה רַעַת הָאָדָם בָּאָרֶץ וְכָל-יַצָּר מַחְשְׁבַת לִבּוֹ רָע כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

HCSB rendering:

When the LORD saw that man's wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every scheme his mind thought of was nothing but evil all the time,

Suggestion:

When the LORD saw that man's wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time,

Rationale:

When most 21st century Americans hear the word “schemes,” what will come to mind? Bank robbers scheming (plotting) a high-tech, dare-devil bank heist? Desperate college students scheming for ways to find copies of the final exam ahead of time, so as to cheat? Aren't all “schemes” evil? Isn't that negative connotation part and parcel of the word as used by so many in everyday American English?

But doesn't Genesis 6:5 say something far more damning about the human race before the flood? We think the word “schemes” is too limiting, because of the connotations it often carries in the target language.

None of the lexicons we consulted suggested “schemes” as a gloss for יַצָּר. Instead, HALOT, for example, suggests “inclination.”

No other English translation we consulted used the word “schemes” as the gloss for יַצָּר. NIV11 has “every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.” The NET translates, “Every inclination of the thoughts of their minds was only evil all the time.” ESV has “every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Still others, including the KJV, opt for something like this: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

We would also suggest that you consult how HCSB handled יַצָּר in Genesis 8:21, a verse very similar to 6:5. HCSB translated “inclination.”

Every thought of a person does not involve “scheming.” But to say every “inclination (or intention) of a man's mind is evil”—that accurately reflects the total depravity of the sinful human mind that God saw before the flood, and that our Lord still sees in the human race after the flood (Isaiah 64:6). With the word

“schemes,” the HCSB unduly limits the scope of this verse. We urge changing the translation to “inclination”—a word that is somewhat broader in scope.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 10:25

Original text:

וּלְעֵבֶר יָלֵד שְׁנֵי בָנִים שֵׁם הָאֶחָד פֶּלֶג כִּי בַיָּמָיו נִפְלְגָה הָאָרֶץ וְשֵׁם אֶחָיו יֶקְטָן:

HCSB rendering:

Eber had two sons. One was named Peleg, for during his days the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan.

Suggestion:

Eber had two sons. One was named Peleg^a for during his days the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan.

^a = Division

Rationale:

When reading the HCSB, one thing stands out. There are a lot of footnotes. In Genesis 10, the HCSB has eight footnotes. Given there are so many footnotes, it is surprising that there is no footnote for “Peleg.” Other translations, including the NIV 2011 and ESV, use a footnote to help the modern reader understand why Peleg got his name. We urge the HCSB to do the same.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
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Bible Reference:

Genesis 11:9

Original text:

עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמֹהּ בָּבֶל כִּי־שָׁם בָּלְלָ יְהוָה שְׁפָתַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הִפְיֹצָם יְהוָה עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:

HCSB rendering:

Therefore its name is called Babylon,^a for there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and from there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

^a In Hb, the name Babylon sounds like the word “confuse.”

Suggestion:

Therefore its name is called Babel,^a for there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and from there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

^a In Hb, the name Babel is the same as “Babylon” and sounds like the word “confuse.”

Rationale:

Some Bible stories are classics, well known by their title alone. “The Tower of Babel” is one of those stories. We fear the translation “Babylon” for “Babel” might do nothing but add unnecessary “confusion” to this familiar Bible story. We suggest following the translation path of NIV, ESV, NASB, KJV, NKJ, GWN, GW, and many other English translations. Let’s keep the “Tower of Babel.”

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
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Bible Reference:

Genesis 12:3

Original text:

וְאַבְרָמָה מְבַרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֶאְרָר וְנִבְרָכוּ בְךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחֵת הָאֲדָמָה:

HCSB rendering:

I will bless those who bless you,
I will curse those who treat you with contempt,
and all the peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.

Suggestion:

I will bless those who bless you,
I will curse the one who curses you,
and all the peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.

Rationale:

We have two concerns with the HCSB rendering of וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֶאְרָר.

First: why change the singular to a plural? Many other translations retain the singular (NIV11, ESV, GWN, KJV, NKJ, GW). Did our Lord switch from the plural, “I will bless those who bless you,” to the singular “I will curse the one who curses you,” to emphasize his gracious blessing? Surely there wouldn’t be many who dared to curse his dear friend, Abram!

Second: though two different Hebrew words are used in the phrase וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֶאְרָר, “curse” is a well-attested gloss for both. “Curse” is much more forceful than “treat you with contempt,” because “curse” is far more drastic in scope.

In addition, the translation “curse” causes the sentence to retain a more pleasing symmetry.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
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Bible Reference:

Genesis 14:15

Original text:

וַיִּחַלֶּק עֲלֵיהֶם לַיְלָה הוּא וְעַבְדָּיו וַיִּבְּרוּ וַיִּרְדְּפֵם עַד־חֹבֶבָה אֲשֶׁר מִשְׁמַאל לְדַמָּשֶׁק:

HCSB rendering:

And he and his servants deployed against them by night, attacked them, and pursued them as far as Hobah to the north of Damascus.

Suggestion:

And he divided his servants against them by night, defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah to the north of Damascus.

Rationale:

One first concern is with the rendering of the verb וַיִּחַלֶּק. “Deploy” is certainly a military term that will resonate with modern American readers who pay any attention to news broadcasts. However, the dictionaries we consulted indicate that “deploy” simply means “To position (troops) in readiness for combat, as along a front or line.” That’s not what the original says. Abram’s military strategy involved dividing his servants so as to attack on several fronts.

Another concern is with how the verb וַיִּבְּרוּ was handled: “attacked.” Does that say nearly as much as the original? We think “defeated,” or even “routed” would be preferable, because that helps to explain how it happened that Abram and his forces were able to chase the enemy so far. “Defeated” is how the HCSB translates the same verb in the immediate context (Gen 14:5,17).

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
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Bible Reference:

Genesis 15:10

Original text:

וַיִּקַּח-לֵן אֶת-כָּל-אֵלֶּה וַיְבַתֵּר אֹתָם בְּתֹנֶךְ וַיִּתֵּן אִישׁ-בְּתָרוֹ לְקַרְאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאֶת-הַצֶּפֶר לֹא בָתֵּר:

HCSB rendering:

So he brought all these to Him, split them down the middle, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut up the birds.

Suggestion:

So he brought all these to Him, cut them in half, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut the birds in half.

Rationale:

God graciously established his covenant with Abram, doing this in a way that was likely familiar to Abram, a way that was similar to other covenants (contracts) made at that time, particularly among the Chaldeans. And what was the method? That you already know. Animals are cut in two. The halves are arranged opposite one another, and the two parties walk between those halves. Of course, as the Lord proceeded with this particular covenant, only the Lord passed between these halves (verses 17-18). For this was a one-sided covenant, one of pure grace.

We have two concerns with the HCSB rendering of this verse. The first concerns “split them down the middle.” Was this rendering your way of trying to modernize, “divide them in the midst?” The problem is that this holds the potential for confusing the reader, doesn’t it? What exactly was “split down the middle?” “Cut them in half” is much clearer and minimizes the opportunity for misunderstanding.

The second relates to the birds. Why shift to “cut up the birds,” when the same verb is used, בָּתֵּר, as was used earlier in the same verse (וַיְבַתֵּר)? We believe keeping the translation consistent, simple, and direct would help the modern reader better understand this ancient practice that comes from a culture so different from our own.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
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Bible Reference:

Genesis 16:9

Original text:

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאֲכָי יְהוָה שׁוּבִי אֶל-גְּבִרְתְּךָ וְהִתְעַנִּי תַחַת יְדֵיהָ:

HCSB rendering:

Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, “You must go back to your mistress and submit to her mistreatment.”^a

^aLit to mistreatment under her hand

Suggestion:

Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, “You must go back to your mistress and submit to her.”

Rationale:

We strongly disagree with the Holman decision to include the idea of “mistreatment” in the gloss for הִתְעַנִּי. Granted, in other instances in the Scriptures the idea of “affliction” is included in the term as noted by HALOT, BDB, Holladay and others. But for Genesis 16:9, those same authorities suggest either “humble yourself” or “submit.”

What was the Lord telling Hagar? To go back to her mistress and submit to (put herself back under) Sarai’s authority. The Lord was enjoining Hagar to be satisfied with her station in life. He was not urging her to endanger her life in an abusive environment!

And as for the footnote? How does a literal rendering include the word, “mistreatment?” That strikes us as highly interpretive (and a dubious interpretation at that). A literal rendering would simply be “submit yourself under her hands.” But we hardly think the footnote is needed.

No other translation we consulted included the word “mistreatment.” Only a few, including the CEV “harsh treatment,” CEB “slave,” and the MSG “Put up with her abuse,” decided to emphasize this same idea in the target language. But these are translations that rather regularly make highly interpretive translational decisions. Is this the model for the HCSB?

There were many other translations who decided to emphasize תַּחַת יְדֵיהָ by rendering the final phrase as “submit to her authority.” That would also be an acceptable rendering of the Hebrew.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
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April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 18:7

Original text:

וְאַל־תִּבְקַר רַגְלֵי אֲבִרָהָ

HCSB rendering:

Meanwhile Abraham ran to the herd

Suggestion:

Then Abraham ran to the herd

Rationale:

The rendering “meanwhile” is jarring when reading through this section. It breaks the natural flow of the account, as we read about Abraham running to the tent to give Sarah instructions, “then” running off to the herd to fetch a calf. “Meanwhile” forces the reader’s mind to make an awkward contrast between Abraham’s running and Sarah’s bread-baking. Does the original necessitate such a forced contrast? No other translation we reviewed used the gloss “meanwhile” for the וְ in this verse. We recommend changing “meanwhile” to “then” or perhaps “next.”

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 18:12

Original text:

וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ לְאָמֹר אַחֲרַי בְּלִתִּי

HCSB rendering:

So she laughed to herself: “After I have become shriveled up

Suggestion:

So she laughed to herself: “After I have become old and worn out

Rationale:

Our initial reaction to the HCSB gloss for בְּלִתִּי was “Too much information!” We wonder how many stifled giggles this rendering might prompt from readers? Are the giggles justified? BDB and HALOT suggest the gloss of “worn out” for this term. No other English translation we consulted went down the same highly-interpretive path of the HCSB for this word. We urge that the HCSB editors remove the excess information and simply stick with “old and worn out,” or “worn out.”

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 21:18

Original text:

קוּמִי שְׂאִי אֶת־הַנֶּעֱר וְהַחֲזִיקִי אֶת־יָדוֹ בְּךָ כִּי־לִנְוִי נִדְוָל אֲשִׁימֶנּוּ:

HCSB rendering:

Get up, help the boy up, and support him, for I will make him a great nation.

Suggestion:

Get up, help the boy up, and take him by the hand, for I will make him a great nation.

Rationale:

By using the gloss, “support,” for **חֲזַק** is the HCSB trying to go down a translational path parallel to the GNT, TLB, and NTL who render **וְהַחֲזִיקִי** as “comfort him?” Or is the HCSB thinking along the lines of modern marriages gone bad where a parent may be ordered to pay child “support?” Or is the HCSB thinking of “support” as another way of saying “protect someone,” which is the suggested gloss that HALOT offers for this verse?

Wouldn't it be so much simpler to preserve the colorful image of the original? There's a terrified little boy under a bush. He needs his mother to go and “*take him by the hand*,” and his Heavenly Father will take care of the rest.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 23:6

Original text:

שְׁמַעֲנֵנוּ אֲדֹנָי נְשִׂיא אֱלֹהִים אֶתְּהָ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ

HCSB rendering:

Listen to us, lord. You are God's chosen one^a among us.
^a Or prince of God, or mighty prince

Suggestion:

Listen to us, lord. You are a prince of God^c among us.
^a Or mighty prince

Rationale:

We won't dispute that Abraham was God's chosen one. However, we don't see how that thought can be drawn from נְשִׂיא. None of the lexicons we checked hinted at such a gloss. No other English translation we consulted opted for this choice. Many English translations opt for "mighty prince" or a variation of that ("eminent man," "important man," "mighty leader"). Others translations decide against understanding אֱלֹהִים as a superlative here (though that is the suggestion of HALOT), and instead opt for "prince of God." We note that both of those options are covered in the current HCSB footnote for this verse.

We urge dropping the translation "God's chosen one." Since the current HCSB rendering seems to be a variation of "prince of God," we urge shifting to that as a more defensible gloss and offering "mighty prince" as an option in the footnote.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 24:10

Original text:

וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-אַרְם נַחְרָיִם אֶל-עִיר נַחֹר:

HCSB rendering:

Then he set out for Nahor's town Aram-naharaim.

Suggestion:

Then he set out for Aram-naharaim and the town of Nahor.

Rationale:

We're surprised that you understand Aram-naharaim as the town of Nahor. Almost all the English translations understand this to be a region and translate accordingly. The Septuagint and the Vulgate both understand this as "Mesopotamia." BDB and the NET commentary are among many who offer this definition for the term: "*Aram Naharaim* means in Hebrew 'Aram of the Two Rivers,' a region in northern Mesopotamia." For that reason we suggest the translation above, or perhaps even "the region of Aram-naharaim."

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 27:7

Original text:

הַבִּיאָה לִּי צֵיד

HCSB rendering:

Bring me the game

Suggestion:

Bring me some game

Rationale:

It may be a minor issue, but we wonder why the HCSB decided to add the definite article in front of “game.” No other translation opted to do this, and it seems a bit jarring to hear the term used in this way. Later in this same chapter, verse 33, you simply translated “game.” We’d urge you to drop the definite article here and render צֵיד as we have suggested above, or perhaps even “Bring me game.” Such usage better reflects our modern idiom. Such a rendering also stays closer to the Hebrew.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 27:8

Original text:

וְעַתָּה בְּנֵי שְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹלִי לְאִשְׁרֵי אֲנִי מִצְוָה אֶתְּךָ:

HCSB rendering:

Now obey every order I give you, my son.

Suggestion:

Now, my son, listen to me and do what I tell you.

Rationale:

Our concern with this verse is largely the tone in the target language. The HCSB translation sounds more like a drill sergeant barking orders at a private than a caring mother giving careful instructions to her son. Does this translation do justice to the Hebrew idiom here? Our suggested translation carries a far different tone and also mirrors what many other translations do (NIV11, NET, GWN). Our suggestion also mirrors the way you yourself handle the same Hebrew phrase later in this same chapter, verse 43, where you have Rebekah say, “listen to me.”

We also think it helps set the tone to leave “my son” at the front of the sentence, where it stands in the Hebrew, rather than moving this address to the end of the sentence.

We do realize that the same phrase שְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹלִי is also used in verse 13. There you translate, “just obey me.” Perhaps for the sake of consistency you’d want to change that to “just listen to me.”

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 27:20

Original text:

וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי הִקְרָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנַי:

HCSB rendering:

He replied, "Because the LORD your God worked it out for me."

Suggestion:

He replied, "Because the LORD your God gave me success."

Rationale:

The issue is how to handle the verb הִקְרָה. Doesn't the gloss "worked it out" lead the reader down a slightly wrong thought path? Some dictionaries offer "deduce" or "calculate" as the definition for "work it out." A meaning like that would not fit in this context. Earlier, in Genesis 24:12, you translated this same verb with "give me success." We urge you to do the same here. It is clearer.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
February 2015**

Bible References:

Genesis 37:20, 22, 24, 28, 29

Original text:

Gen 37:20 – וְנִהְרְגוּהוּ וְנִשְׁלְכוּהוּ בְּאַתְדַּת הַבְּרוֹת

Gen 37:22 – תִּשְׁלִיכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַבּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִדְבָּר

Gen 37:24 – וַיִּקְחוּהוּ וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֹתוֹ הַבְּרָה וְהַבּוֹר יָק אֵין בּוֹ מַיִם:

Gen 37:28 – וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִן־הַבּוֹר

Gen 37:29 – וַיָּשָׁב רְאוּבֵן אֶל־הַבּוֹר

HCSB rendering:

Gen 37:20 – let’s kill him and throw him into one of the pits.

Gen 37:22 – Throw him into this pit in the wilderness,

Gen 37:24 – Then they took him and threw him into the pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Gen 37:28 – his brothers pulled Joseph out of the pit

Gen 37:29 – When Reuben returned to the pit

Suggestion:

Gen 37:20 – let’s kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns.^a

^a Or *pits*

Gen 37:22 – Throw him into this cistern in the wilderness,

Gen 37:24 – Then they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

Gen 37:28 – his brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern

Gen 37:29 – When Reuben returned to the cistern

Rationale:

There are two choices for the Hebrew word בּוֹר here: “pit” or “cistern.” Throughout the OT the HCSB translates בּוֹר as “pit” about 35 times and “cistern” about 17 times.

We think there are good reasons for preferring “cistern” in this context. Chiefly, we are struck by the addition of the phrase “there was no water in it.” Would this phrase be expected if the בּוֹר were just an ordinary pit? We notice that in the two other contexts where the expression אֵין מַיִם (“there was no water”) occurs with בּוֹר in the OT, the HCSB has “cistern.”

- Jer 38:6 – So they took Jeremiah and dropped him into the cistern of Malchaiah the king’s son, which was in the guard’s courtyard, lowering Jeremiah with ropes. There was no water in the cistern (וּבַבּוֹר אֵין מַיִם), only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.

- Zech 9:11 – As for you, because of the blood of your covenant, I will release your prisoners from the waterless cistern (מְבוֹר אֵין מַיִם בּוֹ).

According to archaeologists, cisterns were a common thing in ancient Israel. Certainly a cistern, with smooth walls carved into rock and a narrower opening at the top, could have provided a good temporary prison for Joseph.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 39:10

Original text:

וַיְהִי כִּדְבַרָּהּ אֶל־יֹסֵף יוֹם יוֹם וְלֹא־שָׁמַע אֵלֶיהָ לְשָׁכַב אִצְלָהּ לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּהּ:

HCSB rendering:

Although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her.^a

^a Lit *refused to lie beside her, to be with her*

Suggestion:

Although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her^a or to be with her.

^a Lit *refused to lie beside her*

Rationale:

The HCSB has chosen not to represent the words לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּהּ (“to be with her”) in the translation. It seems to us, however, that these words are not saying the same thing as the previous words לְשָׁכַב אִצְלָהּ (“to lie beside her”), but they are adding something different and significant. Not only did Joseph refuse the sexual advances of Potiphar’s wife, he also tried to avoid contact with Potiphar’s wife altogether.

The great majority of published translations represent לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּהּ as a separate idea, and many Christian teachers have used the expression when teaching people how to overcome temptation. Following the example of Joseph, it is wise to avoid situations where a person might be tempted. We would prefer to see the phrase represented in the HCSB text.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 40:20

Original text:

וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים וְאֶת־רֹאשׁ שֵׁר הָאֲפִים בְּתוֹךְ עֲבָדָיו:

HCSB rendering:

He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker.

Suggestion:

He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his servants.

Rationale:

We are surprised that the HCSB does not represent the words בְּתוֹךְ עֲבָדָיו in its translation of this verse, and we recommend that they be included.

We know that when the Hebrew text is redundant to such an extent that it would be awkward in English to represent all the Hebrew words, the HCSB often omits some words. But that does not seem to us to be the case here. It is a detail worth knowing that what Pharaoh did to the two men was not done secretly, but was done “in the midst of his servants.”

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015**

Bible References:

Genesis 41:5,7,22,24,26

Original text:

Gen 41:5 – שִׁבְעַת שִׁבְלִים עֹלֹת בְּקִנְיָה אֶחָד בְּרִיאֹת וְטֹבֹת:

Gen 41:7 – אֵת שִׁבְעַת הַשִּׁבְלִים הַבְּרִיאֹת וְהַמְּלֹאֹת

Gen 41:22 – שִׁבְעַת שִׁבְלִים עֹלֹת בְּקִנְיָה אֶחָד מְלֹאֹת וְטֹבֹת:

Gen 41:24 – אֵת שִׁבְעַת הַשִּׁבְלִים הַטֹּבֹת

Gen 41:26 – וְשִׁבְעַת הַשִּׁבְלִים הַטֹּבֹת

HCSB rendering:

Gen 41:5 – Seven heads of grain, plump and ripe, came up on one stalk.

Gen 41:7 – the seven plump, ripe ones

Gen 41:22 – seven heads of grain, plump and ripe, coming up on one stalk.

Gen 41:24 – the seven plump ones

Gen 41:26 – the seven ripe heads

Suggestion:

Gen 41:5 – Seven heads of grain, plump and good, came up on one stalk.

Gen 41:7 – the seven plump, full ones

Gen 41:22 – seven heads of grain, full and good, coming up on one stalk.

Gen 41:24 – the seven good ones

Gen 41:26 – the seven good heads

Rationale:

In Pharaoh's dream in the HCSB, there is inconsistency in the rendering of the adjectives describing the good ears of grain. Here is how the HCSB renders the three adjectives:

- בְּרִיאֹת v. 5 = plump
v. 7 = plump
- טֹבֹת v. 5 = ripe
v. 22 = ripe
v. 24 = plump
v. 26 = ripe
- מְלֹאֹת v. 7 = ripe
v. 22 = plump

With טובות it seems to us that the simple meaning “good” would work fine, without need for further embellishment. We notice that the HCSB translates “good” in Genesis 41:26 when that adjective is used for the healthy cows: “The seven good cows (שִׁבַּע פָּרֹת הַטֹּבֹת) are seven years.”

With מלאות it seems to us that the simple meaning “full” would work fine in describing heads of grain.

So our suggestion would be as follows:

- בריאות v. 5 = plump
v. 7 = plump
- טובות v. 5 = good
v. 22 = good
v. 24 = good
v. 26 = good
- מלאות v. 7 = full
v. 22 = full

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 41:12

Original text:

נָשָׂם אֶתְמוּן נַעַר עִבְרִי עֶבֶד לְשָׂר הַטַּבָּחִים

HCSB rendering:

Now a young Hebrew slave, a slave of the captain of the guards, was with us there.

Suggestion:

Now a young Hebrew slave, a slave of the captain of the guard, was with us there.

Rationale:

We assume that the plural here is a typo, since in the five other Genesis passages where שָׂר הַטַּבָּחִים occurs, the HCSB always translates “the captain of the guard.”

- Gen 37:36 – Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and the captain of the guard.
- Gen 39:1 – An Egyptian named Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and the captain of the guard,
- Gen 40:3 – put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard
- Gen 40:4 – The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to them,
- Gen 41:10 – he put me and the chief baker in the custody of the captain of the guard.

The English collective noun “guard” works well in these contexts.

We will have further comment about this phrase in our suggestions for Jeremiah and 2 Kings. Currently the HCSB translates the phrase differently in most places in those books.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 41:19

Original text:

וַהֲיֵאָה שִׁבְע־פָּרוֹת אַחֲרוֹת עֲלֹות אַחֲרֵיהֶן דְּלוֹת וְרַעוֹת הָאֵר מֵאֹד וְרַקוֹת בְּשָׂר

HCSB rendering:

After them, seven other cows—ugly, very sickly, and thin—came up.

Suggestion:

After them, seven other cows—weak, very sickly, and thin—came up.

Rationale:

The English adjective “ugly” does not seem to us to be an ideal English equivalent for the Hebrew adjective דְּלוֹת. Something that is דָּל is lowly and without riches or strength. Regularly דָּל is translated “poor” in the HCSB (when referring to people), and twice “weak” (when referring to families or clans). The English adjective “ugly,” on the other hand, refers to something that is not pleasant to look at.

Another reason for not using “ugly” as the translation of דְּלוֹת is the fact that HCSB uses “ugly” as its rendering for a different word in this context (רַעוֹת), when that word is used by itself. Notice verse 20 (“the thin, ugly cows” – הַפָּרוֹת הַרַקוֹת וְהַרַעוֹת) and verse 27 (“the seven thin, ugly cows” -- וְשִׁבְעַת הַפָּרוֹת הַרַקוֹת וְהַרַעוֹת).

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 41:22

Original text:

וַאֲרָא בַחֲלֹמֵי וְהִנֵּהוּ שִׁבְעַ שְׂפָלִים

HCSB rendering:

[In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile...seven cows. Then I woke up.]

In my dream I had also seen seven heads of grain,

Suggestion:

In my dream I also saw seven heads of grain,

Rationale:

We see no reason to translate the verb here with an English past perfect. We know that Pharaoh dreamed two dreams and that he woke up after each of them. The expression “Then I woke up” at the end of verse 21 is naturally understood as Pharaoh waking up after his first dream about the cows. So there is no need to have the second dream be understood as prior to this. We don’t see any other English published translations that render the verb here as a past perfect.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 41:43

Original text:

וַיִּרְכַּב אֹתוֹ בְּמַרְכָּבֵת הַמִּשְׁנָה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְפָנָיו אֲבֹרָךְ

HCSB rendering:

He had Joseph ride in his second chariot, and servants called out before him, “Abreck!”^a
^a Perhaps an Egyptian word meaning “Attention” or a Hb word meaning “Kneel.”

Suggestion:

He had Joseph ride in his second chariot, and servants called out before him, “Kneel!”^a
^a Or perhaps an Egyptian word meaning “Attention”

Rationale:

We fail to see the benefit of transliterating the word אֲבֹרָךְ, since it communicates nothing meaningful to the English reader.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 41:51

Original text:

וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת־שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי־נִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־עֲמָלֵי וְאֵת כָּל־בְּיַת אָבִי:

HCSB rendering:

Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, meaning, “God has made me forget all my hardship in my father’s house.”

Suggestion:

Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, meaning, “God has made me forget all my hardship and my father’s house.”

Rationale:

We know that there are a few commentators who suggest that there is a hendiadys at the end of this verse (Sarna, p. 289, Hamilton, p. 512). However, we do not see any other English translations that understand it that way, and this interpretation seems unlikely to us.

After 13 years of servitude and frustration in Egypt, does it make sense that Joseph, when blessed with success and a son, should forget only the hardship that he endured during his first 17 years while living in his father’s house? Wouldn’t it make sense that he also forget, and maybe especially forget, the 13 years of troubles in Egypt? Why limit the hardship to his father’s house? Actually, we never hear that his life was filled with hardship in Canaan, where he was the favored son of his father. But in the next verse Joseph talks about Egypt as “the land of my affliction.”

We consider it more likely that there are two things that Joseph was able to forget, once he started his own family: 1) He could forget his years of hardship—especially in Egypt, but also in Canaan to the extent that he experienced it. 2) He could give up looking for any help from his family in Canaan, as well as any thoughts of going back home.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 41:51-52

Original text:

וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת־שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי־נִשְׁחָה כִּי־נִשְׁחָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־כָּל־עַמְלִי וְאֵת כָּל־בֵּית אָבִי: 51
וְאֵת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי קְרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי־הִפְרִי אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי: 52

HCSB rendering:

Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, meaning, “God has made me forget all my hardship in my father’s house.”⁵² And the second son he named Ephraim, meaning, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

Suggestion:

Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, saying, “God has made me forget^a all my hardship in my father’s house.”⁵² And the second son he named Ephraim, saying, “God has made me fruitful^b in the land of my affliction.”

^a In Hb, the name Manasseh sounds like the phrase “making forget”

^b In Hb, the name Ephraim sounds like the phrase “twice fruitful”

Rationale:

With the word “meaning” introducing the quotation, we are afraid that the average reader will presume that the meaning of the name Manasseh includes all of the content of the quotation: “God has made me forget all my hardship in my father’s house.” Similarly one could presume that the name Ephraim includes all of this content: “God made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.” There is a potential for misunderstanding about these names.

The formula with קרא and שם followed by כי occurs in several other passages in Genesis, and we notice that the HCSB never translates with “meaning” in any other context.

Our suggestion handles the construction in a way that is similar to the HCSB in other passages (including the footnotes), and it will not risk misunderstanding about the names.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 43:34

Original text:

וַיִּשְׂתּוּ וַיִּשְׂכְּרוּ עִמּוֹן:

HCSB rendering:

They drank, and they got intoxicated with Joseph.

Suggestion:

They drank and had their fill with Joseph.

Rationale:

This verse is difficult. The verb שָׁכַר often is used in contexts of sinful excess, and in those contexts it naturally is translated as “became drunk.” In this context, however—Joseph hosting a feast for his brothers on their second trip to Egypt—there is nothing that would demand a sinful overindulgence. Maybe they did become drunk, but there are no indicators in the text that would demand such an interpretation.

In a context like this, perhaps it is best to provide a translation that would leave open the possibility that they became drunk, but would not demand it. We notice that some translations say “they feasted and drank freely with Joseph.” This seems like a wise choice. Our suggestion is similar to our suggestion for Haggai 1:6 (“You drink but never have your fill”), where the word לִשְׂכָּרָה is used in a context where blessings from God are listed.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015**

Bible Reference:

Genesis 45:19

Original text:

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-יוֹסֵף אָמַר אֶל-אֶחָיךָ זֹאת עֲשׂוּ מַעֲנֵנוּ אֶת-בְּעִירְכֶם וּלְכוּ-בָאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: 17
וּקְחוּ אֶת-אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶת-פְּתִיכֶם וּבָאוּ אֵלַי וְאֶתְנֶנָּה לָכֶם אֶת-טוֹב אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶכְלוּ אֶת-חֶלֶב 18
הָאָרֶץ:
וְאֵתָה צְוִיִּתְהָ זֹאת עֲשׂוּ קְחוּ-לָכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עֲגָלוֹת לְטַפְכֶם וּלְנִשְׁיֵכֶם וּנְשֵׂאתֶם אֶת-אֲבִיכֶם 19
וּבָאתֶם:

HCSB rendering:

¹⁷ Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and go on back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Get your father and your families, and come back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you can eat from the richness of the land.’ ¹⁹You are also commanded, ‘Do this: Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your young children and your wives and bring your father here.

Suggestion:

¹⁷ Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and go on back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Get your father and your families, and come back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you can eat from the richness of the land.’ ¹⁹You are also commanded to tell them, ‘Do this: Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your young children and your wives and bring your father here.

Rationale:

Without some additional help, it will be very easy for the English reader to go wrong with the phrase “You are also commanded” at the beginning of verse 19. The “you” pronouns that immediately precede in verse 18 all refer to the brothers. So it will be very natural for the English reader to presume that the “you” in verse 19 is also referring to the brothers. But the Hebrew וְאֵתָה צְוִיִּתְהָ of course is referring to Joseph. The HCSB does the right thing by not putting “You are commanded” into the quotation to be spoken to the brothers. But the change in punctuation, we think, is too subtle to be of the greatest help, and it won’t help people who are hearing the text read.

Of course the problem here is caused because English has the same pronoun “you” for singular and plural, unlike Hebrew, which has different forms. In a case like this, we need to do something extra in English to compensate for the lack of clarity that does not exist in the Hebrew.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 46:6

Original text:

וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־מִקְנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ מִצְרָיִם וַיַּעֲקֹב וְכָל־זָרְעוֹ אִתּוֹ:

HCSB rendering:

They also took their cattle and possessions they had acquired in the land of Canaan. Then Jacob and all his children went with him to Egypt.

Suggestion:

They also took their cattle and possessions they had acquired in the land of Canaan. Then Jacob and all his children went to Egypt together.

Rationale:

The English prepositional phrase “with him” is improper as it stands. Since Jacob is part of the compound subject, the sentence would make sense only if the “him” were someone different than Jacob, which is not the case. If you want to represent אִתּוֹ, that could be done with the adverb “together.”

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 48:9

Original text:

וַיֹּאמֶר קְהֵם-נָא אֵלַי וְאֶבְרַכְכֶם:

HCSB rendering:

So Jacob said, “Bring them to me and I will bless them.”

Suggestion:

So Israel said, “Bring them to me and I will bless them.”

Rationale:

It is helpful to add a proper name here, but in verses 8, 10, and 11 the name יִשְׂרָאֵל is used. You might as well use the name that appears consistently in this section.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 48:20

Original text:

וַיְבָרֶכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאֹמֹר בְּךָ יִבְרַךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יִשְׁמַעְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־
אֶפְרַיִם לִפְנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה:

HCSB rendering:

So he blessed them that day with these words:

The nation Israel will invoke blessings by you, saying,
“May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh,”
putting Ephraim before Manasseh.

Suggestion:

So he blessed them that day with these words:

The nation Israel will invoke blessings by you, saying,
“May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.”

In this way he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

Rationale:

The HCSB rendering, especially with its layout, gives the impression that “putting Ephraim before Manasseh” was part of what Israel spoke. The impression could be given that “the nation Israel” would put Ephraim before Manasseh when they would invoke blessings. The vav consecutive imperfect (וַיִּשֶׂם), however, makes it clear that this thought follows the verb וַיְבָרֶכֶם (“and he blessed them”), and Israel is the subject.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Genesis 50:24

Original text:

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו אֲנֹכִי מֵת וְאֱלֹהִים פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעִלָּה אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל-הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיַּעֲקֹב:

HCSB rendering:

Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will certainly come to your aid and bring you up from this land to the land he promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Suggestion:

Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will certainly come to your aid and bring you up from this land to the land he swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Rationale:

“Promised” seems too weak for the Hebrew verb **נִשְׁבַּע**. Almost always the HCSB has “swear” or “swear to give” with this verb, especially when speaking about God’s oath to the patriarchs about the land. In connection with Joshua 14:9 we wrote up a recommendation similar to this one. Perhaps you should quickly check all the occurrences of **נִשְׁבַּע** and make sure they are consistently “swear.” Our quick search has located something other than “swear” also in Exodus 33:1, Deuteronomy 34:3, Joshua 6:22, and Judges 2:1.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Exodus 14:14

Original text:

יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם תִּחַרְיִשׁוּן

HCSB rendering:

The LORD will fight for you; you must be quiet.

Suggestion:

The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be quiet.

Rationale:

Here is another instance where we are somewhat concerned with the tone of the HCSB translation. In the second half of the sentence, is the Lord barking a command or is he acting like a caring parent seeking to calm his children?

A gentler tone in the translation, like we suggest above, is also what is favored by translations like the NIV11, the ESV, and others.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Exodus 32:25

Original text:

וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הָעָם כִּי פָרַע הוּא כִּי-פָרַעַה אֶהְרֵן לְשִׂמְצָה בְּקִמְיָהֶם:

HCSB rendering:

Moses saw that the people were out of control, for Aaron had let them get out of control, resulting in weakness before their enemies.

Suggestion:

Moses saw that the people were out of control, for Aaron had let them get out of control, causing mockery among their enemies.

Rationale:

We recognize there is a challenge in handling the hapax, שִׂמְצָה. BDB unabridged suggests “(derisive) whisper, derision.” HALOT leans on how ancient translations handled this hapax and offers the following assessment:

2. Vrss.: SamP. variant לשמצו *alsäammeòsšū*, also inf. pi., pa., Samaritan Tg. **Gn 42**₁₁ משמצין; Sept. ἐπίχαρμα τοῖς ὑπεναντίοις αὐτῶν as malicious joy, gloating, ridicule against his enemies; Vulg. *propter ignominiam sordis et inter hostes nudum constituerat*; Pesh. *sēmaò saryaò* dishonour, disgrace (Payne-Smith *Lex.* 499a); Tg. *səom biòsə ldaòreòhoòn* a bad reputation for their generation.

3. the Versions allow for two possibilities, see Gesenius-Buhl *Handw.*: a) with Sept. gloating, mockery, ridicule; b) according to Vulg., Pesh. and Tg. disgrace, dishonour, bad reputation, which agrees with the meaning of MHeb. שִׂמְצָה and JArm. שִׂמְצָה. Most of the more recent commentators and translators prefer the first of these (a); see for example, with special enthusiasm, G. Dillmann *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus*³ (1897) 378; see further B. Baentsch *Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri* (GHK 1/2, 1903) 272; G. Beer *Exod.* (HAT 3, 1939) 154; Noth *Ex.* (ATD 5) 199; ZüB; TOB; also König *Wb.* 514b; however Zorell *Lexicon* 864b is unclear; b) Hölscher *Hiob*²)1952(18 on **Jb 4**₁₂ gives the translation bad reputation with reference to JArm. שִׂמְצָה; c) (even though the second solution (b) cannot be excluded as a possibility, probably the first is to be preferred; in any case it is no longer necessary to maintain the position of KBL and leave the word as “unexplained”. †

The current HCSB rendering “resulting in weakness before their enemies,” looks like an effort to include both the ideas of “gloating, mockery,” and “disgrace, dishonor, bad reputation” in the translation by focusing on the result that would come to Israel from either of those options. But we don’t see how this translation makes that at all clear.

What will the words on the page actually say to the reader? Will the reader wonder “Did the Israelites ‘play’ so feverishly that they were exhausted and ripe for attack by their enemies?” Or will the reader pause for a moment and think, “Did the ‘play’ of the Israelites result in their enemies perceiving them as being weak?” Though we are guessing your translation implies the latter, we doubt modern American readers, without a Hebrew lexicon in hand, will come to that conclusion.

Other translations opt for a rendering that is much clearer for the reader, while also sticking more closely to the linguistic evidence offered by the lexicons.

- NIV11: Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies.
- NET: Moses saw that the people were running wild, for Aaron had let them get completely out of control, causing derision from their enemies.
(Many translations handle the last clause in this same way as the NET.)
- GWN: Aaron had let the people get out of control, and they became an object of ridicule to their enemies. When Moses saw this,
- GNT: Moses saw that Aaron had let the people get out of control and make fools of themselves in front of their enemies.
- ISV: When Moses saw that the people were out of control—since Aaron had let them get out of control, something that incited ridicule from their enemies—

We urge the HCSB to abandon the current translation and opt for our suggestion, or something similar that will be somewhat clearer for the target audience.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Exodus 34:14

Original text:

כִּי לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לֵאלֹהֵי אֲחֵרִים כִּי יְהוָה קַנָּא שְׂמוֹ אֵל קַנָּא הוּא:

HCSB rendering:

You are never to bow down to another god because Yahweh, being jealous by nature.^a is a jealous God.
^a Lit *Yahweh—His name is Jealous, or Yahweh is jealous for His name, He*

Suggestion:

You are never to bow down to another god because Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Rationale:

Translating שְׂמוֹ with “being jealous by nature,” is a highly interpretive translation. It is also a gloss that the HCSB never uses in any other verse where אֵל is used in the Old Testament. We find it odd to use it in this single instance.

You can line up translation after translation that is satisfied to translate the phrase in question as “whose name is jealous.” We would urge the HCSB to do the same. When you do that, there is also no need for the footnote.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Exodus 36:27

Original text:

וּלְיַרְכְּתֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַן יָמָה עָשָׂה שֵׁשֶׁת קָרְשִׁים:

HCSB rendering:

and for the west side of the tabernacle he made six planks.

Suggestion:

and for the back of the tabernacle, on the west side, he made six planks.

Rationale:

We wonder why you decided to drop וּלְיַרְכְּתֵי from your translation. Most modern translations opt to keep this thought in the translation, either by the use of “back” or “rear of,” or “far side.” With the small adjustment we are suggesting, you can retain this thought in your translation as well.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015

Bible Reference:

Leviticus 1:3 (and dozens more times in the book of Leviticus)

Original text:

אִם-עֹלָה קָרְבָּנוֹ מִן-הַבְּקָר זָכָר תָּמִים יִקְרִיבֵנוּ אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד יִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְרִצְנוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

HCSB rendering:

If his gift is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to bring an unblemished male. He must bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting so that he may be accepted by the LORD.

Suggestion:

If his gift is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to bring an unblemished male. He shall bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting so that he may be accepted by the LORD.

Rationale:

When the Hebrew imperfect has modal force, the HCSB translates with “must” much more often than “shall” (ESV and NASB) or “let him (bring),” (KJV). The HCSB uses the word “must” 212 times in the book of Leviticus, compared to just 4 times in the ESV and 3 times in the NASB. Clearly, the Lord’s instructions regarding the sacrifices in Leviticus were not to be viewed as optional, but the overuse of the word “must” can become wearisome.

In our “global recommendations” for the HCSB, we suggested that the HCSB look at its use of “must” in the New Testament. In that recommendation we didn’t comment on the use of “must” in the Old Testament, since we are willing to allow the Old Testament, as God’s revelation to his immature children (Gal 4:1-2), to have a slightly different tone than the New Testament. Still, we think that the HCSB could benefit by increased variety in Old Testament passages like this, and a decrease in the use of “must.”

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015**

Bible Reference:

Leviticus 1:5,11; 3:2,8,13; 7:2,14; 8:19,24; 9:12,18; 17:6

Original text:

וְשָׂטַט אֶת־כַּבֵּן הַבְּקָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אֹהֶלן הַקֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַדָּם וְזָרְקוּ אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
סָבִיב אֲשֶׁר־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:

HCSB rendering:

He is to slaughter the bull before the LORD; Aaron's sons the priests are to present the blood and sprinkle it on all sides of the altar that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

Suggestion:

He is to slaughter the bull before the LORD; Aaron's sons the priests are to present the blood and throw it against all sides of the altar that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

Rationale:

זָרַק means to “to toss or throw (in a volume),” according to BDB. It is the verb used when a priest has a bowl of blood and he dashes the blood against the altar by “splashing it sideways” from the bowl (Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 55).

There is another Hebrew word to refer to the action of sprinkling: נִזָּה. This verb is used in Leviticus 4:6,17; 5:9; 14:7,16,27,51; 16:14,15,19. It would be helpful to distinguish between the two ritual actions, throwing (or splashing) and sprinkling.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
September 2014**

Bible References:

Leviticus 25:42
Leviticus 25:55

Original text:

Lev 25:42 – כִּי־עֲבָדֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

Lev 25:55 – כִּי־לִי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים עֲבָדֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

HCSB rendering:

Lev 25:42 – because they are My slaves that I brought out of the land of Egypt.
Lev 25 55 – For the Israelites are My slaves. They are My slaves that I brought out of the land of Egypt;

Suggestion:

Lev 25:42 – because they are My servants that I brought out of the land of Egypt.
Lev 25 55 – For the Israelites are My servants. They are My servants that I brought out of the land of Egypt;

Rationale:

In “Slave or servant?”—a translation suggestion for the HCSB from the WELS Translation Liaison Committee in May 2014, we recommended that the HCSB use “servant” instead of “slave” whenever service is rendered to the Lord. If that recommendation is followed in the New Testament, it would be appropriate to change the wording in these two Old Testament passages.

It can also be argued that “slave” in these passages is out of sync with the rest of the HCSB Old Testament. In all other passages where the word עֶבֶד is used with reference to believers in the Lord, the HCSB consistently uses “servant.” Here are some examples:

Deut 32:36 – The LORD will indeed vindicate His people and have compassion on His servants

Ezra 5:11 – We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth

Neh 1:6 – Let Your eyes be open and Your ears be attentive to hear Your servant’s prayer that I now pray to You day and night for Your servants, the Israelites.

Ps 90:13 – LORD—how long? Turn and have compassion on Your servants.

Ps 105: 25 – Whose hearts He turned to hate His people and to deal deceptively with His servants.

Isa 54:17 – This is the heritage of the LORD’s servants.

Isa 65:8 – I will act because of My servants. (see also Isa 65:9, 13-14)

In Leviticus 25:42 (and 55), the other major evangelical English translations all have “servants.”

NKJV – For they are My servants

NASB – For they are My servants

ESV – For they are my servants

NIV – Because the Israelites are my servants

NLT – The people of Israel are my servants
GW – They are my servants

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015

Bible Reference:

Numbers 6:23

Original text:

דִּבֶּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תִבְרְכוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמֹר לָהֶם:

HCSB rendering:

“Tell Aaron and his sons how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

Suggestion:

“Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

Rationale:

לֵאמֹר typically introduces a direct quotation, and the 2nd person verb תִּבְרְכוּ within the quotation suggests a direct rather than indirect quote.

In the HCSB recasting into an indirect quotation, the subject seems to be wrong. If it is recast as an indirect question, it should be: “Tell Aaron and his sons how they are to bless the Israelites.” But this, of course, does not reflect the Hebrew verb.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015**

Bible Reference:

Numbers 6:24-26

Original text:

בְּרַךְ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:
יְאֹר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּךָ:
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

HCSB rendering:

May Yahweh bless you and protect you;
²⁵ may Yahweh make His face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
²⁶ may Yahweh look with favor on you
and give you peace.

Suggestion:

Yahweh bless you and keep you;
²⁵ Yahweh make His face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
²⁶ Yahweh look with favor on you
and give you peace.

Rationale:

Grammatically, the jussive verbs could be translated with “may.” However, the context of these verses makes clear that the verbs constitute a blessing (cf. 6:23,27). “May” implies that the action of the verb is a wish, something that potentially may or may not happen. Removing “may” allows these verses to sound more like a blessing.

This Aaronic benediction is spoken in many churches and is familiar to many Christians. The most common form (as far as this reviewer is aware) of the benediction does not include the word “may.”

Both “protect” and “keep” are acceptable translations of יִשְׁמְרֶךָ. We suggest “keep” for the same reason as above: it is more familiar to Christians who hear the benediction each week.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015**

Bible Reference:

Numbers 6:27

Original text:

וְשָׂמוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָנִי אֲבָרְכֶם :

HCSB rendering:

In this way they will pronounce My name over^a the Israelites, and I will bless them.
^a Or put My name on

Suggestion:

In this way they will put My name on^a the Israelites, and I will bless them.
^a Or pronounce my name over

Rationale:

“Put” is the more basic translation of שָׂמוּ, and “pronounce” is more of an interpretation. Plus, we think that the Lord “putting his name on” people includes more than just having his name pronounced over them.

We suggest switching the text and the footnote. We would also be fine if the footnote were simply omitted.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
January 2015**

Bible Reference:

Numbers 12:8

Original text:

פֶּה אֶל-פֶּה אֶדְבַר-בּוֹ וּמְרֹאֶה וְלֹא בְחֵידָת וּתְמִנָּת יְהוָה יִבְיט

HCSB rendering:

I speak with him directly,^a
openly, and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD.

^a Lit mouth to mouth

Suggestion:

I speak with him face to face,
openly, and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD.

Rationale:

In all other places in both the OT and NT where the idiom “mouth to mouth” is used in connection with speaking, the HCSB translates “face to face.” We think that “face to face” is an excellent English equivalent—capturing the essence of the ancient idiom in a phrase that is evocative and memorable in English. We recommend that the HCSB do the same here, also for reasons of consistency.

The other passages are:

- Jer 32:4 – וְדַבְּרֻ-בְּפִי עִם-פִּי וְעִינֵי אֶת-עֵינֵי תִרְאֶינָה:
HCSB – They will speak face to face and meet eye to eye.
- Jer 34:3 – וְעִינֵיךָ אֶת-עֵינֵי מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל תִּרְאֶינָה וּפִיהוּ אֶת-פִּיךָ יְדַבֵּר
HCSB – You will meet the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak face to face;
- 2 John 12 – ἀλλὰ ἐλπίζω γενέσθαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ στόμα πρὸς στόμα λαλήσαι,
HCSB – I hope to be with you and talk face to face
- 3 John 14 – ἐλπίζω δὲ εὐθέως σε ἰδεῖν, καὶ στόμα πρὸς στόμα λαλήσομεν.
HCSB – I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

We do not see the need for a footnote, since “mouth to mouth” could take an English reader down a wrong path conceptually. (See our recommendation on 2 John 12.)

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015**

Bible Reference:

Numbers 18:16

Original text:

וּפְדוּתוֹ מִבְּנֵי-חֹדֶשׁ תִּפְדֶּה בְּעֶרְוֶה כֶּסֶף תִּמְשֵׁת שְׁקָלִים בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה הוּא:

HCSB rendering:

You will pay the redemption price for a month-old male according to your assessment: five shekels of silver by the standard sanctuary shekel, which is 20 *gerahs*.

Suggestion:

You will pay the redemption price for a month-old male according to your assessment: five shekels^a of silver by the standard sanctuary shekel, which is 20 *gerahs*.

^a A shekel was about 2/5 of an ounce

Rationale:

The HCSB routinely converts standards of measurement into units familiar to Americans. While this is usually done in the text itself, it appears that would be difficult in this verse because of the added explanation of the “standard sanctuary shekel.” However, it seems that a footnote would conveniently inform the reader about the weight of a shekel in American terms. A footnote very much like this is used in Exodus 30:13.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015

Bible Reference:

Numbers 21:3

Original text:

וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה בְּקוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי וַיַּחַרֵם אֹתָהֶם וְאֶת־עָרֵיהֶם

HCSB rendering:

The LORD listened to Israel's request, the Canaanites were defeated, and Israel completely destroyed them and their cities.

Suggestion:

The LORD listened to Israel's request and handed the Canaanites over to them, and Israel completely destroyed them and their cities.

Rationale:

The HCSB translates the active verb **וַיִּתֵּן** with a passive (“were defeated”). The same Hebrew word is used in the previous verse when Israel said, “If you will deliver this people into our hands, we will completely destroy their cities.” It seems wise to translate **וַיִּתֵּן** in verse 3 in a way that is similar to the previous verse, and also to make clear that God is the subject of this active verb. He is the one who won the victory and delivered the Canaanites into the hands of Israel. It was not coincidence that the Canaanites were defeated.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
March 2015

Bible Reference:

Numbers 23:19

Original text:

לֹא אִישׁ אֵל׃ וְיִכְזֹב בְּבֶן־אָדָם וְיִתְנַחֵם תְּהִיָּא אָמַר׃ וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה וְדַבָּר וְלֹא יְקִימֶנָה׃

HCSB rendering:

God is not a man who lies,
or a son of man who changes His mind.
Does He speak and not act,
or promise and not fulfill?

Suggestion:

God is not a man, that He might lie,
or a son of man, that He might change His mind.
Does He speak and not act,
or promise and not fulfill?

Rationale:

The HCSB rendering with a relative clause (“a man who lies”) could lead readers to wonder if a differentiation is being made between man who lies and a man who doesn’t lie. Of course, that is not in play. The Hebrew is implying that all men lie or can lie, but that God can’t.

For this verse, BDB says that vav with a voluntative (jussive, in this case) “expresses an intention, **that** or **so that**” (p. 254). This is the common rendering in published English translations, and we recommend it also for the HCSB.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Deuteronomy 18:11

Original text:

וְחָבַר תְּבַר וְשָׂאֵל אוֹב וְיִדְעֹנִי וְדַרְשׁ אֶל-הַמָּתִים:

HCSB rendering:

cast spells, consult a medium or a familiar spirit, or inquire of the dead.

Suggestion:

cast spells, consult a medium or a spiritist, or inquire of the dead.

Rationale:

The issue is how to handle יִדְעֹנִי. We grant that the lexicons offer “familiar spirit” as a gloss for this term. Unfortunately the term will be anything but familiar to the modern American reader. Additionally, a “familiar spirit” is the spirit that a spiritist or a witch summons. But the noun here seems to refer to the human being that is doing the summoning.

What other options are there? HALOT’s suggestion of “soothsayer” is likely a bit dated. The ESV’s choice of “necromancer” may be popular with some who play certain types of games, but perhaps not the general public. We think “spiritist,” as chosen also by NIV11, NKJV, and others, may be a better option.

We notice that in the 10 other occurrences of this noun in the Old Testament, the HCSB translates “spiritist,” so there is a strong consistency argument to do that here as well.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Deuteronomy 19:5

Original text:

וְאִשֶּׁר יָבֹא אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ בַיַּעַר לְחַטֹּב עֵצִים וְנִדְחָה יָדוֹ בַּגִּרְזֵן לְכַרֵּת הָעֵץ וְנִשְׁלַח הַבְּרָזֶל מִן־הָעֵץ וּמָצָא אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וּמָת הוּא יָנוּס אֶל־אַחַת הָעָרִים־הָאֵלֶּה וַחֲיוּ:

HCSB rendering:

If he goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings the ax to chop down a tree, but the blade flies off the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies, that person may flee to one of these cities and live.

Suggestion:

If he, for example, goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings the ax to chop down a tree, but the blade flies off the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies, that person may flee to one of these cities and live.

Rationale:

The opening verses of this chapter provide some necessary guidelines for the “avenger of blood” and “cities of refuge” system of justice the Lord God put into place for his people. That system was to provide sanctuary for the one who committed involuntary manslaughter, but not for the deliberate murderer. Verse 4 explains, “Here is the law concerning a case of someone who kills a person and flees there to save his life, having killed his neighbor accidentally without previously hating him.”

But how were the people to know the difference? Verse 5 gives one example of a proper application of the law concerning the cities of refuge. Numbers 35:22-25 provides some other examples.

The HCSB translation of “if” doesn’t make it clear to the reader that verse 5 is merely an example of how the law was to be interpreted. Many other translations, including NIV11, NET, GWN, and even ESV do a much better job of making it clear that verse 5 isn’t the whole scope of the law, but merely one example of how to apply God’s law.

We think the HCSB should be tweaked to make the connection between verses 4 and 5 more clear. We feel our suggestion does that.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible References:

Deuteronomy 20:7; 22:23, 25, 27, 28; 28:30
Exodus 22:16
2 Samuel 3:14

Original text:

Deut 20:7 – ומי־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־אַרְשׁ אִשָּׁה וְלֹא לָקַחָהּ יָלֵךְ וְיָשֵׁב לְבֵיתוֹ פֶּן־יָמוּת בַּמִּלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אֲחֵר יִקְחָנָה:
Deut 22:23 – כִּי יִהְיֶה נָעַר בְּתוּלָה מֵאֲרָשָׁה לְאִישׁ וּמִצָּאָהּ אִישׁ בְּעִיר וְשָׁכַב עִמָּה:
Deut 22:25 – וְאִם־בְּשָׂדֶה וּמִצָּאָהּ הָאִישׁ אֶת־הַנָּעֵר הַמֵּאֲרָשָׁה וְהַחֲזִיק־בָּהּ הָאִישׁ וְשָׁכַב עִמָּה וּמֵת הָאִישׁ – אֲשֶׁר־שָׁכַב עִמָּה לְבָדּוֹ:
Deut 22:27 – כִּי בְשָׂדֶה מִצָּאָהּ צָעָקָה הַנָּעֵר הַמֵּאֲרָשָׁה וְאִין מוֹשִׁיעַ לָּהּ:
Deut 22:28 – כִּי־יִמָּצֵא אִישׁ נָעֵר בְּתוּלָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אֲרָשָׁהּ וְהִפְשִׁיחַ וְשָׁכַב עִמָּה וּנְמָצָאוּ:
Deut 28:30 – אִשָּׁה תֵאָרֵשׁ וְאִישׁ אֲחֵר יִשְׁגְּלָנָהּ בֵּית תְּבֻנָהּ וְלֹא־תֵשֵׁב בּוֹ בְּרֵם תִּטָּע וְלֹא תִחַלְלֶנּוּ:
Exod 22:15 – וְכִי־יִפְתָּהּ אִישׁ בְּתוּלָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אֲרָשָׁהּ וְשָׁכַב עִמָּהּ מִזֶּרֶם וּמִהֲרִנָּה לִן לְאִשָּׁה:
2 Sam 3:14 – וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים אֶל־אִישׁ־בִּשְׁתַּבְּן־שָׂאוּל לֵאמֹר תִּנְנָה אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי אֶת־מִיכָל אֲשֶׁר־
אֲרָשְׁתִּי לִי בַמָּאָה עָרְלוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים:

HCSB rendering:

Deut 20:7 – Has any man become engaged to a woman and not married her? Let him leave and return home. Otherwise he may die in battle and another man marry her.'
Deut 22: 23 – If there is a young woman who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man encounters her in the city and has sex with her,
Deut 22:25 – But if the man encounters an engaged woman in the open country, and he seizes and rapes her, only the man who raped her must die.
Deut 22:27 – When he found her in the field, the engaged woman cried out, but there was no one to rescue her.
Deut 22:28 – If a man encounters a young woman, a virgin who is not engaged, takes hold of her and rapes her, and they are discovered,
Deut 28:30 – You will become engaged to a woman, but another man will rape her. You will build a house but not live in it. You will plant a vineyard but not enjoy its fruit.
Exod 22:16 – If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and he has sexual relations with her, he must certainly pay the bridal price for her to be his wife.
2 Sam 3:14 – Then David sent messengers to say to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, "Give me back my wife, Michal. I was engaged to her for the price of 100 Philistine foreskins."

Suggestion:

Deut 20:7 – Has any man been pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him leave and return home. Otherwise he may die in battle and another man marry her.'

Deut 22: 23 – If there is a young woman who is a virgin pledged to be married to a man, and another man encounters her in the city and has sex with her,
Deut 22:25 – But if the man encounters a woman in the open country who is pledged to be married, and he seizes and rapes her, only the man who raped her must die.
Deut 22:27 – When he found her in the field, the woman pledged to be married cried out, but there was no one to rescue her.
Deut 22:28 – If a man encounters a young woman, a virgin who is not pledged to be married, takes hold of her and rapes her, and they are discovered,
Deut 28:30 – You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another man will rape her. You will build a house but not live in it. You will plant a vineyard but not enjoy its fruit.
Exod 22:16 – If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married, and he has sexual relations with her, he must certainly pay the bridal price for her to be his wife.
2 Sam 3:14 – Then David sent messengers to say to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, "Give me back my wife, Michal. I was pledged to be married to her for the price of 100 Philistine foreskins."

Rationale:

We recognize that the HCSB is not alone in using “engaged” as a gloss for אָרֵשׁ. Unfortunately, “engagement” as understood by 21st century Americans is very different from the ancient Israelite practice of “betrothal,” and confusion will ensue by trying to force our modern term into the ancient practice. Since “betrothal” may be deemed somewhat archaic, we suggest using “pledged” as a simpler term for the modern reader.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Deuteronomy 21:8

Original text:

כִּפֹּר לְעֵמֻדֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־פָּדִיתָ יְהוָה וְאַל־תִּתֵּן לָהֶם נֶלְמִי בְּקִרְבַּ עֵמֻדֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִכְפַּר לָהֶם הַדָּם:

HCSB rendering:

LORD, forgive Your people Israel You redeemed, and do not hold the shedding of innocent blood against them.' Then they will be absolved of responsibility for bloodshed.

Suggestion:

LORD, accept this atonement for Your people Israel You redeemed, and do not hold the shedding of innocent blood against them.' Then the bloodshed will be atoned for.

Rationale:

Our concern is with the way וְנִכְפַּר is handled in this verse. BDB suggests “cover over” as the gloss for this term. Holladay suggests “atone for” when citing this verse. Very many translations opt to keep the gloss “atone” for כִּפֹּר (NIV 84, NIV 2011, ESV, NKJ, NET, ISV). We think that wise.

Why? “Atonement” is such a prominent word in the Old Testament. It is the word used in connection with the animal sacrifices that were performed every day at the tabernacle (Lev 1:4, 4:26, 5:10). Every autumn, on the Day of Atonement, the priest made atonement for himself and his family by offering a bull as a sin offering. Then he made atonement for the nation by slaughtering a goat as the sin offering for the people (Lev 16:11, 15). Through these sacrifices the Lord taught his people that he forgave their sins by transferring the punishment from guilty sinners to an innocent substitute.

That transference of guilt is also the key thought underlying the unusual law described in verses 1-9 of this chapter. The elders of the people were appealing to the Lord for “atonement” for an unsolved murder. The atonement ritual here involved the heifer, unplowed land, and a flowing stream. The heifer had never been harnessed to pull a plow, the field had never been prepared for planting, and the water from a flowing stream had never been collected into a cistern or storage jars. All three were unused, therefore undefiled. The flowing stream would also carry away the blood guilt that the elders washed off their hands, so that the defilement of this unsolved murder would be taken away.

The HCSB translation, “forgive” or “absolved of responsibility” for וְנִכְפַּר, breaks the obvious connection to all the other atonement verses in the Old Testament. Was there a compelling reason to do this? We find this translation decision all the more puzzling, because this is only time when the HCSB chooses to render this word כִּפֹּר with “absolved of responsibility.” We count 88 other instances where the HCSB has chosen to retain the gloss “atone” in some form. In all those other instances, you felt the term important enough to retain. Why not here?

Many other translations, including the NIV 2011, ESV, NET, and NKJ, retain a form of the word “atonement” in their rendering of this verse. We urge the HCSB to do the same.

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Deuteronomy 23:2

Original text:

לֹא־יָבֹא פְּצוּעֵ־דָכָא וּכְרוּת שִׁפְכָה בְּקִהְלֵ יְהוָה:

HCSB rendering:

“No man whose testicles have been crushed^a or whose penis has been cut off may enter the LORD’s assembly.

^aLit *man bruised by crushing*

Suggestion:

No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the LORD’s assembly.

Rationale:

It looks to us that the Holman is following in the footsteps of the KJV in the handling of this verse: “He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.” That was a fairly blunt way of translating this verse, but the archaic nature of the KJV masks that a bit for the modern reader.

We also will readily grant the point that our Lord is not always so delicate in the way he has worded things in his Scriptures.

Yet, if ever this verse were to be read in public worship, we shudder to think of the response!

We think it preferable to handle this verse in a way that is faithful to the original, but a bit more delicate for reading in public worship or usage in a Bible class. We have noticed that the HCSB has backed off from a graphic original in other places. For example, in Samuel and Kings the one who “urinates against the wall” is regularly translated as “male” in the HCSB.

Our translation is similar to the NKJV and NIV11. We have also chosen to drop the footnote, because we see it as offering precious little help to the reader.

Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015

Bible Reference:

Deuteronomy 32:4

Original text:

הַצּוֹר תָּמִים פְּעָלוֹ כִּי כָל-דַּרְכָּיו מִשְׁפָּט אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין עוֹל צְדִיק וְיִשָּׁר הוּא:

HCSB rendering:

The Rock—His work is perfect;
all His ways are entirely just.
A faithful God, without prejudice,
He is righteous and true.

Suggestion:

The Rock—His work is perfect;
all His ways are entirely just.
A faithful God who does no wrong,
He is righteous and true.

Rationale:

Our concern is with the way you have handled עוֹל. “Without prejudice” is a rather interpretive meaning that isn’t contained in any of the lexicons we consulted. Nor do other modern English translations choose to walk down this translational path.

On the other hand, quite a few translations do what we suggest above. A few opt for “who is never unjust,” so as to provide a closer counter-balance to “just” in the first half of the verse. Either option would be preferable to “without prejudice.”

**Translation Suggestion for the HCSB
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
April 2015**

Bible Reference:

Deuteronomy 32:21

Original text:

הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְּלֹא־אֵל כַּעֲסוּנִי בְּהַבְלִיָּהֶם וְאֲנִי אֶקְנִיאֵם בְּלֹא־עֵם בְּגוֹי נָבָל אֲכַעִיסֵם:

HCSB rendering:

They have provoked My jealousy
with their so-called gods,^a
they have enraged Me with their worthless idols.
So I will provoke their jealousy
with an inferior people,^b
I will enrage them with a foolish nation.

^a Lit with no gods

^a Lit with no people

Suggestion:

They have provoked My jealousy
with what is not a god;
they have enraged Me with their worthless idols.
So I will provoke their jealousy
with those who are not a people;
I will enrage them with a foolish nation.

[Omit footnotes.]

Rationale:

We cringed the first time we read “an inferior people” as the translation for בְּלֹא־עֵם. Have you thought about the baggage this term contains in the target language? Doesn't the term “inferior people” scream out “racist” to the modern English reader? But is that what the Hebrew says? We don't see how. That's why we think it best to eliminate this rendering that contains so much baggage. We think it better to stay with a more literal translation of the phrase בְּלֹא־עֵם.

Many other translations, including the NIV11, NASB, NKJ, ESV, and others opt for some variation of what we suggest above. Staying closer to the original here, also allows the reader to more easily see a connection to what the prophet Hosea would say some seven centuries later:

Hos 1:9 – Then the LORD said:

Name him Not My People,^a
for you are not My people,
and I will not be your God.^b

^a Or *Lo-ammi*

^b Lit *not be yours*

Hos 2:23 – I will sow her in the land for Myself,
and I will have compassion
on No Compassion;
I will say to Not My People:
You are My people,
and he will say, “You are My God.”

Finally, we also suggest that you change your translation of “their so-called gods” to “what is not a god.” This better preserves the parallelism of the verse, where Moses uses almost identical language in the two parts of the verse. This is also what the NIV11, NASB, NKJV, ESV, and others have opted to do.

With these changes, you can drop both footnotes.