

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION TRANSLATION PROJECT: ITS CONCEPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Is there really a need for another translation of the Bible?

In the early 1950s a group of evangelical Bible scholars concluded that such a need did in fact exist. This paper is an attempt to explain how and why they came to that conclusion, to discuss the aims and goals that were established for the new translation (the *New International Version*), and to describe the translation procedures—including a unique system of checks and balances—that were utilized to help attain the quality of the final product. Surveys of the planning and progress of the project, and the problems of financing it, are also included. They are essential to an understanding of the magnitude of this endeavor, which eventually involved more than a hundred scholars working in excess of 200,000 man-hours over a period of twenty-five years at a cost of more than two million dollars.

I. BACKGROUND

"The Reformers of the Protestant Reformation gave great impetus to the truth that the Bible belongs to the common man."¹ Until the late fourteenth century, however, it was inaccessible to all but scholars who were trained to read Hebrew, Greek or Latin. There were no translations in the vernacular until John Wycliffe, in the 1380s, rendered the entire Bible into simple and concise English for ordinary people. In spite of his good intentions, printing presses were not yet in existence and very few for whom his Bible was intended could afford it in manuscript form.

One hundred forty years later it was illegal to buy, sell or possess a Bible in the English language, and consequently practically no one had access to one. William Tyndale felt so strongly about this deplorable situation that on one occasion he proclaimed to a learned churchman, "If God spare my lyfe ere many years, I wyl cause a boye that dryveth ye plough, shall knowe more of the scripture than thou doest."² God did spare his life, and in 1520 Tyndale began his translation of the Scriptures into English. It was a dangerous and daring undertaking in those days, and eighteen years later he died as a martyr.

In contrast to the perilous situation in which Tyndale worked the sovereign of one of the most powerful nations of the seventeenth century, King James I of England, authorized in 1609 the translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek texts into English. Completed in 1611, the *King James Version (KJV)* has been the most beloved and widely used English Bible for some 350 years. It has been

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¹S. Kubo and W. Specht, *So Many Versions?* (Zondervan, 1975) 21.

²D. W. Burdick, "Bible Translation: Why, What, and How?", *The Seminary Review* 21/1 (March 1975) 1.

called a masterpiece of English literature. "The translators had an instinctive appreciation of prose, rhythm and general euphony."³ Its "poetic cadence (and) beauty of expression (are) unmatched in other translations."⁴

In their preface to the *KJV*, the translators state that the task of translating is one "which helpeth forward to the saving of souls. Now what can be more available thereto, than to deliver God's booke unto God's people in a tongue which they can understand? . . . How shall men meditate in that which they cannot understand?"⁵ In recent years the question of how people can "meditate in that which they cannot understand" has been with increasing frequency directed toward the *KJV* itself. After so many years of prominence it is becoming more and more apparent that this version, with its archaic language, does not communicate to modern man.

At various times through the years—particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—versions of the Bible or portions of it in more contemporary English have been published. Among the better known that were completed before 1950 are *Weymouth's New Testament*; Moffatt, *A New Translation of the Bible*; Smith-Goodspeed, *The Bible: An American Translation*; and the *Revised Standard Version New Testament*. Whatever the merits and/or inadequacies of these works (which will be discussed below), not one of them achieved the literary appeal or usurped the place of prominence that the *KJV* held for so many years.

And so in the early 1950s a group of evangelical Bible scholars, acutely aware of the fact that the language of the *KJV* was difficult for modern man to comprehend and that no subsequent translation had achieved its universal acceptance, began to envision a version of the Bible in contemporary English that would do for our day what the *KJV* had done for its day.

This, then, is the goal that the translators of the *New International Version* (*NIV*) sought to achieve: to produce a version worthy of acceptance for public worship in churches, for personal Bible study, and for Scripture memorization. Such had been the roles of the *KJV* for over three centuries.

To obtain such wide acceptance, the new Bible must of necessity be done by scholars from a broad spectrum of evangelical communions who held to a high view of Scripture. From the very beginning of the project, however, concern was expressed that the translation avoid sectarian biases and "that this venture might issue not predominantly in gain for any person or group but in the widest possible dissemination of God's Word."⁶ Considering the dividedness of the evangelical community, the question arose as to whether scholars from many denominations could cooperate in the production of a work of quality, free of sectarian bias.

II. INITIATING ORGANIZATION

One of the many participating denominations, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), was the principal initiator of the chain of events that eventually

³F. F. Bruce *et al.*, "Which Bible Is Best for You?", *Eternity* (April 1974) 28.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵From a lengthy preface in the *KJV* of 1611 as quoted in Kubo and Specht, *So Many Versions?*, p. 22.

⁶"Summary of Proceedings, Conference on Bible Translation, Moody Church," Chicago, 1966, p. 3 (mimeographed).

led to the production of the NIV.

The CRC originated in 1857, when it withdrew from the parent Reformed (Dutch) Church in America. "The chief issues of disagreement were doctrine and policy regarding membership in secret societies."⁷ The splinter group strongly opposes a membership in Masonic or similar organizations. After a slow start, it began to grow as Dutch immigrants and others became dissatisfied with what they felt were the liberal tendencies of the parent denomination.

The local congregations of the CRC are grouped into 32 governing classes. A general synod, composed of two ministers and two laymen from each classis, meets annually.

The denomination gives high priority to education. It maintains Calvin College and Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where its headquarters are also located. Its parochial schools have a large enrollment that is exceeded only by Lutheran and Seventh-Day Adventist schools among Protestant denominations.⁸

Along with this intense interest in education, the CRC became concerned with whether present Bible translations communicated the Word of God accurately to the common people. The synod in 1953 appointed a committee to study the *Revised Standard Version (RSV)* "with a view to determine the attitude of our church toward the RSV. . . . This committee is to report to the Synod of 1954."⁹

The committee's recommendation, which the 1954 synod adopted, was "that Synod advise our consistories that, on account of a number of passages, the RSV shall not be used in our pulpits as a translation approved by Synod in public worship."¹⁰

This study of the *RSV* and of other translations resulted in a proposal by the Seattle consistory to the synod of 1956 that the CRC endeavor to enlist other conservative churches in a cooperative venture of a faithful translation of the Scriptures into contemporary English. The proposal was referred to the professors of Bible at Calvin Seminary for study and report.

III. ENLISTING TRANSDENOMINATIONAL SUPPORT

The committee of professors endeavored immediately to challenge other evangelical organizations and institutions with this question: "Is your denomination or group prepared to make a concerted effort to convince the people that the production of a Bible translation in the above-designated sense (i. e., a faithful translation in the common language of the American people) is an urgent requirement for the effective use of God's Word, and that it must consequently receive the support of all those interested in the use and study of that Word?"¹¹

Even as replies to this inquiry were forthcoming, the professors at Calvin af-

⁷T. C. O'Brien, ed., *Corpus Dictionary of Western Churches* (Corpus Publications, 1970) 153.

⁸Ibid.

⁹*Acts of Synod, Christian Reformed Church, 1953*, Article 164, V, C, 11, p. 158.

¹⁰Ibid., 1954, Article 85, D, 2, p. 42.

¹¹S. Paine, "Background of This Bible Translation Project," Chicago, 1966, p. 1 (mimeographed).

firmed their opinion at the synod of 1958 that there was indeed a need among evangelicals for a modern version of the Bible. They recommended that all groups that had thus far indicated an interest in the project be approached to cooperate in drawing up tentative plans for further action.

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was one of the first organizations to respond to the CRC challenge. At its annual meeting in April, 1957, its commission on education appointed a committee to study the possibility of NAE's involvement in such a translation project. This committee immediately contacted the CRC committee to explore the possibilities "of a workable combination of evangelical forces for the approaching of a task such as this."¹²

IV. PLANNING SESSIONS

It was not until April, 1961, however, when the NAE convention was held in Grand Rapids, that the committees of these two organizations met in an informal session. From the beginning the NAE committee members were handicapped by distance and a lack of financial resources. Consequently their work sessions were limited to the schedule of the NAE annual conventions.

Nevertheless, progress continued. The two committees met in a very productive session at Calvin Seminary on December 22, 1962. Preparations were made to gather together a group of scholars to consider first of all whether a genuine need for a new translation existed and then how to proceed with such a monumental task. A principal concern expressed was that if such a project should develop it must constitute the work of a broad range of evangelicals and not that of any specific denomination or interdenominational group. It was decided to issue invitations to scholars to attend a meeting at a later time in the Chicago area.

This meeting, called the Palos Heights Conference on Bible Translation, took place on August 26-27, 1965, at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois. The thirty scholars in attendance represented a wide variety of denominations including Assemblies of God, Christian Churches, Church of the Nazarene, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and CRC.

Two significant decisions resulted from this conference. First, after an analysis of existing translations and a discussion of the qualities that should be expected of a new endeavor, the following declaration was made: "It is the sense of this assembly that the preparation of a contemporary English translation of the Bible should be undertaken as a collegiate endeavor of evangelical scholars."¹³

The second decision was to establish a continuing committee of fifteen (subsequently to be referred to as the Committee on Bible Translation) to begin implementation of the above declaration. The joint committee of CRC and NAE members was delegated to select the fifteen, of which at least five were to come from its own membership.

The new Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) held its first meeting at the Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville on December 29, 1965. The members

¹²Ibid., p. 2.

¹³J. H. Stek and M. H. Woudstra, "Brief Report of the Activities of the Bible Translation Conference, Trinity Christian College," Chicago, 1965, p. 3 (mimeographed).

decided to call a general conference on Bible translation for the following purposes: (1) to involve at the earliest possible moment representatives of Christian denominations and other organizations having a high view of Scripture and involved in a major way in the use of Bibles in the English language; (2) to bring the program to the attention of potential Bible publishers; (3) to consummate a full organization for the program; and (4) to publicize the venture.¹⁴

Moody Church, Chicago, hosted this conference on Bible translation in August, 1966. About fifty officers of Christian organizations and thirty scholars were in attendance in response to invitations issued.

The need for an advisory group to give counsel in practical and financial matters was discussed. Membership in this group would be subject to termination by any member at any time. The prayer support of members was considered to be of prime importance. Many of those present indicated a desire for membership on such an advisory board.

A board of some two hundred members was formed, composed of "(1) officers of national Christian organizations and denominations, (2) schoolmen, and (3) Christian leaders, without precommitment to the resulting translation. The members will be apprised of progress and will be asked for advice and reaction as to items of procedure and as to the text of the proposed translation while it is in progress."¹⁵

At this Chicago meeting, CBT again expressed the desire that this be a cooperative evangelical venture not to result in gain for any person or group.

Analyzing several existing translations was part of the process the planners of the NIV used to determine the need for a new translation. An evaluation of the *New American Standard Bible: New Testament* by a CBT member, Stephen Paine, led him to the conclusion that this revision of the *American Standard Version* of 1901 showed little if any improvement over the original product. He cited examples of passages that showed an overly conservative bias, others that strained at text accuracy, and a general inconsistency in the use of idiom.¹⁶

V. ANALYZING EXISTING TRANSLATIONS

As mentioned previously, a committee from the CRC assigned to study the RSV advised its synod in 1954 not to recommend it for public worship in their churches. The basic reasons for such a decision were that in various key passages the RSV did not do justice to the unity of Scripture, the deity of Christ, messianic prophecy, or (in the OT) ordinary Hebrew syntax.

Another CBT member, R. Laird Harris, in an article written for *Christianity Today* supported the view of the CRC scholars, particularly with regard to the problem of the unity of Scripture and the nature of messianic prophecies. In the same issue, Stanley Hardwick gave an opposite point of view. He felt that the criticisms of the RSV were in most cases overstated, especially with regard to the unity of Scripture. He also seriously questioned the need of a new translation.¹⁷

¹⁴Paine, "Background," p. 2.

¹⁵S. Paine, "Why We Need Another Translation," *United Evangelical Action* (October 1967) 24.

¹⁶Stek and Woudstra, "Report," p. 3.

¹⁷S. E. Hardwick and R. L. Harris, "Do Evangelicals Need a New Bible Translation?", *Christianity Today* 12 (September 27, 1968) 10-15.

As stated earlier, the main objection to the *KJV* was that because of its archaic language it no longer communicates to the common people. There has been some opposition to this opinion about the *KJV* and the need for another translation.

Former president Harry S. Truman presented his viewpoint with characteristic force:

We were talking about the Bible, and I always read the King James Version, not one of those damn new translations that they've got out lately. I don't know why it is when you've got a good thing, you've got to monkey around changing it. The *KJV* of the Bible is the best there is or ever has been or will be, and you get a bunch of college professors spending years working on it, and all they do is take the poetry out of it.¹⁸

Others are equally adamant against new translations. "At the present time, only two translations are recommendable: the King James Version and the New American Standard Bible," says Stewart Custer. He laments the fact that many undiscerning Christians are reading new translations *instead of* the Word of God.¹⁹

Other versions, including the *American Standard Version*, the *Berkeley Version*, and the *New English Bible*,²⁰ were also studied, revealing a variety of inadequacies. Burton Goddard (a CBT member) summarized the need for a new translation for evangelicals. The inability to settle on a single version leads to confusion "in pulpit, congregational and Bible class reading and in Scripture memorization."²¹ He felt it unlikely that any existing version might be adopted to meet the need for a standard text for the following reasons: (1) the growing failure of the older versions to communicate; (2) the informality of some of the newer ones; (3) the extensive use of paraphrase whereby translators' interpretations are injected into the text; (4) inferior literary quality; (5) failure to indicate where the traditional text is not supported by proper textual authority; (6) theological bias reflected in the translations; (7) failure to expose the translations to widespread criticism before publication.²²

VI. ESTABLISHING GOALS

As a result of the study of these existing versions and their deficiencies in various areas, the goals and aims for the proposed new translation continued to come into focus. According to CBT the *NIV* must be in American English that will communicate to the man in the street but at the same time be in good literary style—avoiding slang, colloquialisms and Americanisms that would inhibit its use wherever English is spoken. It must endeavor to combine the dig-

¹⁸M. Miller, *Plain Speaking* (Berkley Publishing Corp., 1973) 231-232.

¹⁹S. Custer, "Twisted Translations," *Faith* (March/April 1974) 6-7.

²⁰I was unable to obtain reports on the findings of these studies.

²¹"Summary of Proceedings . . . Moody Church," p. 2.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

nity requisite for public use, the intimacy needed for private use, and the accuracy necessary for study.²³

Translators must stress faithfulness to the original texts and the unity of the various parts of Scripture. They must strive to avoid theological and ecclesiastical bias, and through cooperative efforts they must produce a translation that will be widely accepted and used as a standard version in English-speaking churches throughout the world.²⁴ The translators also convey in their preface to the NT that "they trust that the wide use of the NIV will encourage the wholesome practice of memorizing Scripture."

VII. ENLISTING TRANSLATORS

Such high goals could be achieved only by much dedicated labor. The fifteen-member CBT had already worked many hours in planning sessions and organizational meetings. In 1968 outstanding Bible scholars from leading evangelical seminaries and Christian colleges throughout the United States were invited to participate in the project. Over a hundred scholars accepted, representing a "broad spectrum of Christianity, a diversity which serves as an effective safeguard against sectarian bias."²⁵ "The scholars working on the project make up a wider representation of church communions than ever before attempted in the history of the church."²⁶

As the work of the translation picked up momentum, the expertise of scholars from other countries was enlisted. Translators from Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands aided in the work. It was at this time that the name of the project was changed from *A Contemporary Translation (ACT)* to the *New International Version*.²⁷

In spite of the diversity of backgrounds of the scholars, each personally acknowledges Jesus Christ as God and Savior and each holds his task of translating to be a sacred trust to honor the Bible as the inspired Word of God. All participating scholars were asked to subscribe to the following affirmation, which is identical to the doctrinal basis statement of the Evangelical Theological Society: "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and is therefore inerrant in the autographs." Alternately they were to affirm the statement on Scripture in the Westminster Confession, the Belgic Confession, the New Hampshire Confession, the creedal basis of NAE, or some other comparable statement.²⁸

The task of organizing and coordinating the translation teams became an involved and time-consuming process. Edwin H. Palmer, a theologian and former pastor of a Christian Reformed church, was installed as fulltime executive

²³Paine, "Background," p. 5.

²⁴"The Bible . . . for our times," a promotional pamphlet published by the New York Bible Society (n. d.).

²⁵"News Release No. 8," New York Bible Society, May 1970.

²⁶"News Release No. 3," New York Bible Society, November 1968.

²⁷I have used the abbreviation *NIV* throughout this paper to avoid confusion.

²⁸Printed agreement from CBT to translators for their signature before participation in the project.

secretary of the project in 1968. He became responsible for coordinating the teams, each of which had to possess a balance of scholarly expertise. Scheduling a time and meeting place for several teams of five scholars apiece, each of whom was otherwise employed as a fulltime teacher, became a challenging and often frustrating experience. Palmer assigned the translation materials to each team at various levels and followed its progress on the materials. He was also very much involved in fund raising, public relations and enlisting the help of additional scholars as the need arose.

VIII. ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES

The translators now had to determine what procedures would best implement the aims and goals of the project. CBT began as early as 1965, at the Palos Heights conference, to set up preliminary ground rules and principles for the work of the translation committees. Eventually a manual was composed, establishing guidelines for translators all the way from very general rules to details regarding punctuation.

With the translators' manual as a guide, a team of two or three scholars would work together to produce a preliminary rendering of a Biblical book. It was then sent to one or two consultants, who made suggestions. These in turn were taken into consideration by the team members and either accepted or rejected by them.

Such team translations were then reworked by various Intermediate Editorial Committees (IEC) of approximately five translators each. At this stage in the process the team translations were carefully reviewed and reshaped verse by verse. Each suggested change had to receive a majority vote within an IEC to be accepted.

Next, the IEC translations were reviewed by General Editorial Committees (GEC). They were again studied and revised verse by verse. These committees included one or more English stylists who were also voting members.²⁹

At this stage the translations of the various books were reproduced and sent to pastors and teachers who were asked to use them in their work and then send in criticisms or suggestions relating to how they were understood and received by their congregations or students. Manuscripts of the book of John, for example, were "read and criticized from a language standpoint by more than 200 carefully selected lay people—both in and out of churches. This selection is intended to cut across racial lines and to include young and old, . . . businessmen and housewives." ³⁰ Gang members from the Hell's Gate area of New York City who were contacted through Jim Vaus were also asked to be "consultants," to read and then underline words or passages they did not understand. The translators could thus determine whether they had achieved their goal of communicating God's revelation in the language of the people.

Before the translation was considered ready for publication the governing body, CBT, thoroughly reviewed and edited the product a final time and one or more English stylists checked it for smoothness.

²⁹Information regarding the translation procedure is concisely described by Burdick in "Bible Translation," pp. 15-16.

³⁰"News Release No. 5," New York Bible Society, April 1969.

IX. OBTAINING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A conservative estimate given is that approximately 170 man-hours per chapter of the Bible were required to follow so extensive a translation procedure as this. The process was indeed thorough, but it was also expensive. Sources of financial backing were considered in the early planning stages of the project. At the conference held in Moody Church in 1966, several possibilities were suggested, including (1) the formation of a corporation and sale of stock, (2) a syndicate of publishers interested in Bible translation, (3) the selection of a single publisher, and (4) financing through private gifts or by grants from foundations and/or trusts.

In 1967, just as all other aspects of the project were ready to proceed, the New York Bible Society, one of the world's oldest Bible societies, agreed to sponsor the project and to raise funds on its behalf. By 1974, due to the costly process of translation and an inflationary economy, the NYIBS (known by now as the New York International Bible Society) began to face extreme pressures in the financing of the *NIV*. As of May, 1974, the Society had expended \$750,000. Contributions from interested donors and advance royalties by Zondervan Bible Publishers still left the NYIBS with a large sum of money to finance. This situation necessitated a decrease in their staff and a curtailment of their other ministries. There was some pressure from their constituency to abort the OT portion of the project.

New efforts were made on the part of the translators as well as the Society to raise funds through direct appeals and to curtail expenses by an attempt to speed up the pace of translation. Executive Secretary Palmer started the 450 Club, which was an attempt to find 450 people who would contribute \$250 per year for four years. The translators assisted not only by soliciting members for the club but also in many cases joining the club themselves and/or returning their remuneration to the NYIBS, even though they had already been "working sacrificially at an hourly rate below any normal standard."³¹

The crisis became even more severe by November of 1975, so the NYIBS called a special meeting of CBT to discuss the financial situation. "The question was: to abort or not to abort?"³² The debt for the *NIV* had risen sharply, and some of it was being financed at an interest rate of nine per cent a year. The Society had cut its staff and also mortgaged its properties in both New York City and New Jersey. It could not borrow any more funds.

"What are we going to do? Abort? Or struggle? We opted for the latter."³³ The translators were urged to tap their denominations for funds, encourage membership in the 450 Club, accelerate the pace of translation and arrange fund-raising dinners. Many made personal loans, others did not charge for transportation expenses, and still others donated their time. All these endeavors indicated the degree of their commitment to and faith in the product.

X. GIVING SACRIFICIALLY OF TIME AND TALENT

The NYIBS as an organization and the translators as both scholars and as

³¹Letter to Bible translators and editors from Youngve Kindberg, president of NYIBS, May 2, 1974.

³²Memo to translators from Executive Secretary Edwin H. Palmer, November 22, 1975.

³³*Ibid.*

members of families sacrificed not only financially but also with regard to the time that they set aside for the work. Since nearly all of the scholars who translated for the *NIV* were fulltime teachers or administrators (some have since retired from teaching), their work for the project had to be done during vacation breaks or in the summer. In some cases individuals used their sabbatical leaves. Many put aside other writing and research projects, giving priority to the *NIV*. The translators came from all over the United States, from Canada and from many English-speaking countries abroad. Consequently, in order to work in committee sessions they had to spend a considerable amount of time away from their homes and families.

The *NIV* NT was published in the autumn of 1973, but it soon became apparent that the target date of 1976 for publication of the OT was unrealistic. Due to financial pressures for completion, CBT made plans for intensive ten-to-twelve-week sessions during the summers of 1974 through 1977. It was felt that the only certain way of having ten or twelve weeks of uninterrupted sessions of translating would be to schedule the work in locations abroad, where the scholars would not be easily accessible for phone calls, meetings or other interruptions.

The NYIBS sent several committees to work at St. Andrews University in Scotland in the summer of 1974, to a branch of the University of Athens in Greece in 1975, to the University of Salamanca in Spain in 1976, and to the Belgian Bible Institute in Heverlee, Belgium, in 1977. Many of the translators took their families with them.

These were extremely rewarding experiences for the wives and children in terms of travel, exposure to different cultures, and fellowship with one another. Although many denominations were represented, a common bond as children of God brought the wives as well as the children together in prayer and Bible study.

During these summer sessions the men usually worked in committee for nine or ten hours per day plus another three or four hours in private study in preparation for the following day. This proved to be an exhausting schedule. The wives, however, planned weekend trips to places of historic interest and scenic beauty to refresh the minds and bodies of the scholars and their families.

Such dedication of time and talent by the translators of the *NIV* is an indication of their belief in the quality of the product. Most of them feel it a privilege to have had a part, however small, in the project. One of the participants wrote to Youngve Kindberg, president of the NYIBS: "And be assured of our continued prayers for what I sincerely believe to be the most important publishing venture undertaken by the Lord's people in our generation."³⁴

In April the members of CBT (ten of the fifteen have been on the committee since its inception) completed the final editing and checking of the OT, which is scheduled for publication in October.

XI. CONCLUSION

Will the *NIV* become *the* Bible for general use? Will it do for our day what the *KJV* did for its day? It is, of course, too soon to know how widely it will be accepted.

The translators have taken great pains to use current idiomatic English that

³⁴Letter to Youngve Kindberg from translator Ronald Youngblood, May 24, 1974.

will communicate to the man in the street. They periodically checked their accomplishment in this area by submitting portions of their work to lay people with various degrees of education for criticism and suggestions.

The project's advisory board, a sizable cross section of evangelical leadership, has also given continuous reactions to the work. CBT feels that no "evangelical committee has yet offered a translation which has been (so) thoroughly and widely pre-criticized and disciplined."³⁵

To insure accuracy acceptable to scholars, the *NIV* translators used a four-tiered committee approach (first-draft team, IEC, GEC, CBT) with meticulous checking and cross-checking of every verse of the Bible. At least one English stylist reviewed every portion to aid in achieving the desired dignity that the translators feel is essential to the lofty character of God's Word.

With very few exceptions the reviews of the NT have been favorable, an indication that the aims and goals for the *NIV* have to a great extent been achieved. It is not perfect, as those who worked on it are well aware. But it is an admirable and truly ecumenical version, proving that, in spite of the dividedness of the evangelical community, scholars from many denominations could and did in fact cooperate in producing a Bible translation of high quality and free of sectarian bias.

³⁵Paine, "Why We Need Another Translation," p. 24.