

**General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022
Archives' Research Report**

Resolution No.: 2022-D071
Title: Refer the NET (2019) Translation of the Bible to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music for Review
Proposer: The Rev. Dr. Robert Prichard
Topic: Bible

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A063 Amend Canon II.2 [Of Bible Translations] to Add Translation Criteria

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

D071 - Refer the NET (2019) translation of the Bible to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music for Review

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: The Rev. Dr. Robert Prichard

Endorsed by: Mr. J. P. Causey, The Rev. Nina Vest Salmon

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 12 - Prayer Book, Liturgy & Music

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That in accordance with Title II, Canon 2.2. the NET translation of the Bible (2019 edition) be referred to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music for review (using the Criteria for Recommending New Biblical Translations for Use in Public Worship) for possible inclusion in Canon II.2.1.

Explanation

Recent General Conventions have expressed concern about the perceived anti-Semitism of certain biblical references to Jews, particularly in the gospel lessons for Holy Week. The 2019 NET translation, which can be seen at netbible.org, offers a thoughtful way to deal with that issue. In John's Gospel, for example, it distinguishes positive (e.g.: John 4:22, "salvation is from the Jews") or neutral references (e.g.: John 2:6, "Jewish ceremonial washing," and 6:4, "the Jewish feast") to Jews from "the Jewish leaders" and "the Jews who were hostile to Jesus" (e.g.: John 6:41 and 52). On occasion the translation uses "Judeans" to refer to Jews in Jerusalem (e.g.: John 8:31, "those Judeans who had believed in him"), and on one occasion it uses "a certain Jew" (John 3:25) to avoid the connotation that an individual was somehow a representative of all the Jewish people.

General Convention Resolution 2015-A063 established the Criteria for Recommending New Biblical Translations for Use in Public Worship. This translation does not meet Guiding Assumption 4 of the criteria—inclusion of the Apocrypha—but that criterion is modified by the word “ordinarily.” The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music will have to determine whether the perceived anti-Semitism in the Holy Week lessons calls for approval of a translation that does not meet that ordinary expectation.



Resolution Number: 2015-A063
Title: Amend Canon II.2 [Of Bible Translations] to Add Translation Criteria
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention adopt the following Criteria for Recommending New Biblical Translations for Use in Public Worship:

I. Guiding assumptions:

1. There is no perfect translation. It is impossible to render the full meaning of a text in its original language and context into another language and context.
2. All translations make interpretive choices; there is no “neutral” translation. However, some translations conform more closely than others to the specific criteria listed below.
3. The goal of these criteria is not to advance any particular interpretations; but, rather, to help ensure that amendments to Canon II.2 will be generally received as reasonable, responsible, and suitable.
4. Ordinarily, for a translation to be considered, it must include the books of the Old and New Testament and the Apocrypha or Deuterocanonical Books as listed in the Articles of Religion.
5. No translation will be universally received as fully meeting all of these criteria. To be recommended, a new translation should be widely received as meeting most of these specific criteria.

II. To be recommended for use in public worship, a translation should meet the specific criteria of being:

1. Based on academically or historically accepted editions of the Hebrew and Greek texts;
2. Technically competent in approximating the meaning of the base text; Comprehensible to the target audience;
3. Fluid when spoken aloud;
4. Stylistically suitable to approved services.

III. While some translations obviously fail to meet these standards, measuring a text by these criteria is far from an exact science. We can, however, look for certain kinds of positive reception to indicate whether or not a text meets most of these criteria:

1. Academic reception. Do most biblical scholars recognize the translation as technically competent and comprehensible to the target audience? Do most liturgical scholars recognize the translation as fluid when spoken aloud and stylistically suitable to approved services?
2. Pastoral reception. Does a significant number of clergy consider the translation comprehensible to their congregations, fluid when spoken aloud, and/or stylistically suitable for their services?
3. Anglican reception. Have most other Churches in the Anglican Communion made provision for the use of the translation in public worship?
4. Full Communion Partners’ reception. Have most of The Episcopal Church’s Full Communion Partners made provision for the use of the translation in public worship?

5. Ecumenical reception. Have other Churches made provisions for the use of the translation in public worship?; and be it further

Resolved, That Canon II.2 is hereby amended by adding two new sections:

Canon 2: Of Translations of the Bible

Sec. 1. The Lessons prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer shall be read from the translation of the Holy Scriptures commonly known as the King James or Authorized Version (which is the historic Bible of this Church) together with the Marginal Readings authorized for use by the General Convention of 1901; or from one of the three translations known as Revised Versions, including the English Revision of 1881, the American Revision of 1901, and the Revised Standard Version of 1952; from the Jerusalem Bible of 1966; from the New English Bible with the Apocrypha of 1970; or from The 1976 Good News Bible (Today's English Version); or from The New American Bible (1970); or from The Revised Standard Version, an Ecumenical Edition, commonly known as the "R.S.V. Common Bible" (1973); or from The New International Version (1978); or from The New Jerusalem Bible (1987); or from the Revised English Bible (1989); or from the New Revised Standard Version (1990); or from the Contemporary English Version (1995); or from the Contemporary English Version Global (2005); or from the Common English Bible (2011); or from translations, authorized by the diocesan bishop, of those approved versions published in any other language; or from other versions of the Bible, including those in languages other than English, which shall be authorized by diocesan bishops for specific use in congregations or ministries within their dioceses.

Sec. 2. All translations proposed for inclusion in Canon II.2.1 must conform to the Criteria for Recommending New Biblical Translations for Use in Public Worship adopted by General Convention.

Sec. 3. All translations proposed for inclusion in Canon II.2.1 must first be referred to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music for review according to the Criteria for Recommending New Biblical Translations for Use in Public Worship.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 723-725.