

Faith Report

Renewing: The Transition to Using the English Standard Version (ESV)

By Stan Long

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Col 3:16

The sanctifying word of truth is the food that strengthens our souls. God renews our minds through His written and preached word. Acts 2:42 teaches that one of the marks of the apostolic church, indeed of spirit-filled believers, is a commitment to “the teaching of the apostles.” We are committed to fulfilling Christ’s Great Commission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Matt 28:18-19

We believe that the original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible are without error. God brought them to us through people who were “carried along by the Holy Spirit” to be the instruments of special revelation (2 Peter 1:21). Thus, pastors in our denomination are required to have a certain level of proficiency with the original languages.

FCF’s transition to using the ESV reflects our commitment to encourage the use of the most clear and readable translation available. One of the results of the Protestant Reformation was the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages so that everyone could read Scripture. The history of translations reveals that the most popular one in any generation eventually becomes obsolete. Why?

Better original text copies

Textual critics are scholars who analyze various Greek and Hebrew copies to determine accuracy. As better copies are discovered and analyzed, greater textual accuracy emerges. There are still questions regarding approximately 2-3% of Bible text. E.g. “How is the text translated?” or “Does this passage belong in the canon (the list of authoritative books of scripture)?” However, honest theologians also understand that these disputed portions in no way significantly change the core theology of the New Testament. We can trust our English translations as God’s trustworthy word. But why are portions of Mark 16 and John 8 merely footnoted in modern translations? Because textual critics have concluded that the 1611 Authorized Version erred in including them.

Changes in language

Languages—both ancient and modern—are dynamic. Translations of the classical Greek of the

aristocracy and the biblical (Koine) Greek of the common folk are impacted by regional dialect, socio-economic style and historical development. But moving from Greek or Hebrew to English is only part of the process. Which English? The cockney English of East London? Louisiana Cajun English? Consider the difference between the language in a Wall Street boardroom and a North Avenue convenience store. Finally, word meanings change over time. Adjectives like *black*, *redskin*, *gay*, and *handicapped* have changed significantly over the years. We see this change in word meanings in the Authorized (King James) Version: Gen. 6:6 says that “*it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth.*” Can God repent? No! “*Repent*” means something different to us than it did to the 1611 translators.

God saves lost people through His word. He uses less-than-perfect people to do so. While scholars seek to provide the best translation possible, God also uses less-than-perfect translations. As we strive to be holy, pure people, we are charged to pursue holy, pure translations of His word. It is our prayer that changing to the ESV will awaken in each of us a deeper desire to know not just the Book but to know more deeply the divine Author of the book. ♦



**FAITH
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

505 E. 42nd Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: 410.323.0202
Fax: 410.435.5075
E-mail: fcf.church@
verizon.net
www.fcfchurch.org

*United that the
world would
know*

*¹⁸ Where there is no
revelation, people cast
off restraint;
but blessed is the one
who heeds wisdom's
instruction.
Proverbs 29:18*

Easter Thanks from Pastor Stan

Easter 2011 was indeed a great day for FCF. Many thanks to all who volunteered and worked behind the scenes to make this year's service at Goucher College a great success: rehearsing; hauling equipment back and forth; providing child care; manning the PowerPoint; running the sound booth; providing photography and videography; creating the postcard design; helping with hospitality and parking; ushering... And we can't forget the many who passed out invitations to friends, neighbors, and co-workers. This was truly another wonderful picture of the body of Christ working together for one cause...that God might be glorified, the saints might be edified and lost seekers might hear and experience the good news of the risen Christ. Watch for photographs on our website soon. ♦

Farewell to the Ivaskas

We are sorry to say farewell to J.J. and Courtney Ivaska and their children, who are moving to Bulowayo, Zimbabwe, with World Vision at the end of the month. J.J. has served as a youth leader, PLYP coach, PLYP Sports Director, and Interim Director of PLAN. Courtney worked for FCF briefly as the capital campaign coordinator, as a youth volunteer, and with the nursery. J.J. and Courtney are co-facilitators of the Selah covenant group.

J.J. is no stranger to Africa, having lived for eight years in Kenya as a child, and studying abroad in college in Zimbabwe. Courtney is also familiar with the mission field, having spent a couple of years in Kazakhstan working on a USAID-funded health reform project before she and J.J. were married in 2004. We are going to miss J.J., Courtney, Zadie and Harper. May the Lord go with you as you start this new phase of your lives in Africa. ♦

Bits and Pieces

- Congratulations to Tim and Angela Horjus on the arrival of Otto Steven on March 22.
- Congratulations to David and Casey Wunderink on the arrival of Asa Julius on April 24.
- Several new members were presented to the church in April: Rachel Acree, Joy Bacon, Su Yeon Lee, and Natalie Sanders. Welcome everyone!

Women's Retreat

Once again a group of 50 women escaped Baltimore for a peaceful weekend at Black Rock Retreat in Lancaster, PA. We were blessed this year with speaker, writer, poet and pastor's wife Maria Garriott, who shared her heart and journey **Walking Through the Valleys with Jesus**. By listening to Maria's struggles, wisdom and trust in the Lord through her valleys and the stories of others in our midst, and by sharing in our small groups, we came away with a richer understanding of God's deep love for us as we walk through the valleys in our lives. ♦

CALENDAR

- May 5 Concert of Prayer, 7 p.m. (on Thursday May 5 to coincide with the National Day of Prayer. Rev. Charles Garriott will be leading us in prayer for our nation and our president)**
- May 7 Slugs and Bugs Concert, 6 p.m.**
- May 11 Faith Leadership Night**
- May 30 Office closed for Memorial Day**