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.