



Transforming lives through God's Word

Update Status/Timeline

Q. What is the status of the NIV revision?

The Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) has completed the translation process. The text was made available online for public viewing at www.Biblegateway.com and www.Biblica.com on November 1, with print products scheduled to release in March 2011.

Q. When did the translation process begin?

From its inception in the 1960's, the team behind the NIV has recognized that Bible translation is a never-finished work. As more and more information becomes available about the biblical world and biblical languages, and as English usage develops and changes, the NIV also needs to change to maintain and strengthen its focus on transparency to the original text and ease of understanding for readers. Under the terms of the NIV charter, the CBT meets every year to monitor these changes and to reflect them in periodic updates to the text. The 2011 update is the latest fruit of this process.

Q. When will the updated NIV be available/in stores?

The first wave of updated NIV products will be released in March 2011.

Q. Are you planning to release any digital products prior to March?

Our digital publishing plans are not yet finalized, but we are looking at options for releasing digital products prior to the release of physical products in March 2011.

Q. I love my NIV. I memorized verses in the NIV and use it in my study and preaching. Why change it?

In this update, about 95% of the text remains exactly the same as the 1984 NIV that it replaces, based on the number of word changes. In instances where the text differs, we completely understand that this may raise an issue for long-standing NIV readers who have committed passages to memory. Many of us on the NIV team are in the same boat.

Despite this issue, however, the CBT has a larger responsibility to the original NIV charter that requires them to monitor developments in biblical scholarship and changes in English usage and to reflect these changes in periodic updates to the text. Without these periodic updates the NIV would be unable to maintain the focus on providing transparency to the original text and ease of understanding for readers that we all appreciate so much.

Publishing & Product

Q. When will the updated NIV be available?

The updated text is available for review online at www.Biblegateway.com and www.Biblica.com, and we plan to release the first wave of updated NIV products at the beginning of March 2011.

Q. Will the revised edition be called NIV or NIV 2011?

The 2011 update of the NIV will be called, simply, the NIV.

Q. Are you going to continue to publish the current NIV or the TNIV?

As we stated at the NIV update announcement in September 2009, we will not be releasing any new products in either the 1984 or TNIV texts after the updated NIV has been published.

Q. What happens to all the old NIV Bibles that you don't sell or that churches replace with the updated NIV?

We plan to donate out-of-stock NIV Bibles once the updated version is available, and we will work with churches and ministries to get their Bibles into the hands of people in need. This honors the ministry mandate of the publishing partnerships behind the NIV – Biblica, the worldwide publisher and copyright holder, Zondervan, the North American publisher, and Hodder, the U.K. publisher – each of whom contributes to donating millions of Bibles every year to people around the world.

Q: Will all NIV products be immediately converted to the new text? How long will the transition take?

We have hundreds of NIV-related products that will need to be migrated to the new version, so the introduction of the updated NIV will involve a carefully managed transition process. When we shifted from the 1978 version of the NIV to the 1984 version, the process took 24 months to complete, so you should expect something similar this time.

We plan to release a wide array of text and digital Bibles beginning with the updated NIV text in March 2011, and have an aggressive schedule for getting all of our NIV products converted to the new text.

Translators/Committee on Bible Translation

Q. What is the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT)?

The CBT was formed in 1965 to create a modern English Bible translation from the oldest and most reliable biblical manuscripts available. Since then, the committee has continued to meet each year to monitor developments in biblical scholarship and English usage and to reflect these developments in periodic updates to the text. The committee represents the very best in evangelical biblical scholarship. Its members – a self-perpetuating, independent body of 15 – are drawn from various denominations and some of the finest academic institutions in the world.

Q. Who is on the Committee on Bible Translation?

A complete list of the CBT members can be found together with brief biographical information at the Committee on Bible Translation's website, www.NIV-CBT.org.

Q. Can you share any of the NIV/CBT's translation philosophy?

When the books of the Bible were first written, they captured exactly what God wanted to say in the languages and idioms used by the ordinary people of the time. This is the reading experience that the NIV seeks to recreate, as closely as possible, for present day readers. The NIV aims to provide the optimum combination of transparency to the original documents and ease of understanding in every verse.

To learn more about the NIV translation philosophy and its application to the recent update, see the [Translators' Notes](#).

Q. What is the original charter given to the CBT for the NIV?

The NIV charter laid the groundwork for the creation of a Bible translation focused on bringing modern readers as close as possible to the experience of the original audience:

providing the best possible blend of transparency to the original documents and ease of understanding in every verse.

The NIV project was initiated by the formation of the Committee on Bible Translation in 1965, and the CBT's original constitution remains the same today.

COMMITTEE ON BIBLE TRANSLATION CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – Name

Section 1. The name of the Committee shall be COMMITTEE ON BIBLE TRANSLATION.

Section 2. The Committee, called into being by the Palos Heights Bible Translation Conference (August 26 and 27, 1965), shall be a self-perpetuating body, independent of all ecclesiastical organizations, educational institutions, committees, and other associations.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

Section 1. The purpose of the Committee shall be to prepare a contemporary English translation of the Bible as a collegiate endeavor of evangelical scholars, and to pursue matters related thereto.

ARTICLE III – Membership: Limitations/Qualifications, Admission, Tenure

Section 1. At the time of the adoption of this Constitution and its By-Laws, the membership of the Committee shall be declared to be:

E. Leslie Carlson, Earl S. Kalland, Francis R. Steele, Edmund P. Clowney, Kenneth S. Kantzer, John H. Stek, Ralph Earle, Charles F. Pfeiffer, J. C. Wenger, Burton L. Goddard, Stephen W. Paine, Marten H. Woudstra, R. Laird Harris, Charles C. Ryrie.

Section 2. The size of the Committee shall be limited to fifteen members.

Section 3. Only those shall be eligible for membership on the Committee who endorse the purpose for which the Committee exists, and who are willing to subscribe to the following affirmation of faith: "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and is therefore inerrant in the autographs"; or to the statements on Scripture in the Westminster Confession, the Belgic Confession, the New Hampshire Confession, or the creedal basis of the National Association of Evangelicals; or to some other comparable statement.

Section 4. Admission to membership on the Committee shall be by invitation of the Committee only.

Section 5. Membership on the Committee shall be for indefinite tenure as regulated by the By-Laws.

ARTICLE IV – Organizational Structure

Section 1. The officers of the Committee shall be: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, all of whom shall be elected by the Committee from its own membership.

Section 2. The officers of the Committee shall be elected to serve for a period of three years and shall hold office until their successors are installed. They shall be eligible for re-election.

Section 3. The officers of the Committee shall constitute its Executive Committee.

ARTICLE V – Election of Officers

Section 1. The officers of the Committee shall be elected at the last regularly scheduled plenary meeting of the Committee in the calendar year in which their terms expire.

Section 2. Newly elected officers of the Committee shall assume office January 1 of the next calendar year following their election.

ARTICLE VI – Meetings

Section 1. The time and place of regular meetings of the Committee shall be at the discretion of the Committee.

Section 2. Additional meetings of the Committee may be called at the discretion of the Executive Committee, with due notice to all the members.

ARTICLE VII – Projected Translation

Section 1. All those engaged by the Committee as translators or editors shall be required to affirm the following article of faith:

“The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and is therefore inerrant in the autographs”; or the statement on Scripture in the Westminster Confession, the Belgic Confession, the New Hampshire Confession, or the creedal basis of the National Association of Evangelicals; or some other comparable statement.

Section 2. The Committee shall see to the safeguarding of the integrity of the text of the projected translation by making adequate provision for its copyright.

Section 3. The Committee shall seek to make provision for the availability of the projected translation, apart from the normal channels of trade, to Bible Societies, and similar distributing agencies.

Section 4. The Committee shall for a reasonable time provide for a periodic review and revision of the projected translation with a view to improving its renderings, embodying the fruits of future biblical scholarship, and keeping its idiom current.

Section 5. This article shall be applicable also to any revision(s) of the projected version (NIV) under whatever name such revision(s) may be published.

ARTICLE VIII – Amendments

Section 1. The only parts of this Constitution not subject to amendment are articles II, III.1, .2, .3, .4, VII.1, and VIII.1.

Section 2. Amendments to the Constitution of the Committee shall be made only at a regularly scheduled, or properly called, plenary meeting of the Committee, and only when the specific proposal to amend has been submitted to the Committee at its last preceding plenary meeting, and has been recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Such amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members present.

Section 3. Amendments to the By-Laws of this Constitution may be made by the Committee at any of its plenary meetings by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

Q. Can you describe the translation process?

Members of the CBT work individually – each in their own particular areas of specialty – as well as in small groups and as a full committee. In addition to considering proposals from within the committee, the CBT solicits and receives input from Bible scholars, ministers, missionaries and lay-people. Every proposal is evaluated. Many proposals lead to revisions to the text, and others are tabled for discussion at future meetings for potential inclusion in later updates. And changes are not made easily. At least 70 percent of the committee members present at the time of the voting are required to agree before the text can be altered.

Q. What materials did the CBT use to translate the NIV?

The CBT uses what Bible translators call an “eclectic text” drawing on all the major published original texts, but making their own decisions about the textual variants found in those traditions.

For guidance in determining the nature and extent of change in English usage, especially in the area of gender language, the CBT initiated a relationship with Collins Dictionaries to use the Collins Bank of English, one of the world's foremost English language research tools. The Collins Bank of English is a database of more than 4.4 billion English words that provides objective, statistically significant data on the state of written and spoken English at any given point in the history of the language. Working with some of the world's leading experts in computational linguistics and using cutting-edge techniques developed specifically for the NIV update project, the CBT gained an authoritative, objective and previously unavailable perspective on contemporary linguistic norms. (See [Collins Research summary](#))

Q. Did the CBT use any of the suggestions that were submitted by scholars, pastors, etc.?

The CBT solicited and received input from scholars, pastors, missionaries and lay persons and reviewed every proposal. Many of these proposals have led to revisions to the text and others will be included in discussions at future meetings for potential inclusion in later updates. (See [Translators' Notes](#))

Q. How can I be assured that the CBT has accurately translated the Bible? How can I feel confident this is God's Word?

There are a number of reasons why you can place your full confidence in the process adopted by the CBT. The first is the CBT's independence. Biblica, as worldwide publisher and key sponsor of the NIV, has no seat on the translation committee and no means to influence translation decisions. Zondervan and Hodder, as commercial publishers of the NIV, have no seat on the translation committee and no means to influence translation decisions. The CBT is therefore free to focus on monitoring developments in English usage and Biblical scholarship and then reflecting these developments in a translation that faithfully articulates God's unchanging Word in contemporary English.

The second reason to feel confident in the NIV translation process is the composition of the CBT. The CBT is a multinational group that brings together some of the world's finest Bible scholars from a range of evangelical traditions. This breadth of membership guards its work from the accusation that it has been shaped by any kind of denominational influence and enables it to maintain the character of the NIV as a translation for all.

A third reason for confidence is the voting procedure to which the CBT adheres. No individual, indeed not even a large group of individuals, can hold sway in the committee because no change to the text can be ratified without a 70 percent majority vote. This ensures that the translation is inherently conservative and well-protected from ill-considered alterations.

Gender-Related

Q. Was the goal with the NIV update to make this version more gender inclusive?

The CBT's mandate under the NIV charter is to maintain the NIV as an articulation of God's unchanging Word in contemporary English. To the extent that gender inclusive language is an established part of contemporary English and that its use enhances comprehension for readers, it clearly was an important factor in decisions made by the translators.

In addition, particular attention was paid to external feedback in the area of gender language. (See [Translators' Notes](#): What was decided about inclusive language, page 4)

As the CBT stated in announcing the planned update, every single gender-related change made from the 1984 NIV to the TNIV was reconsidered. Some were preserved, some were rescinded in favor of the 1984 rendering, and many were re-worded in a third, still different way.

Q. How have you handled the controversial gender-related verses?

As part of the update process, the CBT committed to a complete review of every gender-related change that was made since the publication of the 1984 edition. They divided the entire Bible into six major sections, each of which was fully reconsidered by the committee, taking into account all the major published comments on their approach, as well as external submissions. (See [Translators' Notes](#): What was decided about inclusive language, page 4)

Q. Does the updated NIV follow the same philosophy on gender as the TNIV? Are the gender-related verses translated the same?

In accordance with the CBT's mandate under the NIV charter, the approach to gender usage in the TNIV represented the CBT's best efforts to articulate God's unchanging word in contemporary English as they understood it at the time.

As part of the process of revision for 2011, the CBT reviewed and reconsidered every single change introduced into the TNIV relating to inclusive language. Some changes were preserved, some were rescinded in favor of the 1984 rendering, and many were re-worded in a third, still different way.

The committee took all the major published comments on their approach into consideration, and particular attention was paid to external feedback in the area of gender language. As part of the update process, the CBT also initiated a relationship with Collins Dictionaries to use the Collins Bank of English, one of the world's foremost English language research tools, to conduct a major new study of changes in gender language. The Collins Bank of English is a database of more than 4.4 billion English words that provides objective, statistically significant data on the state of written and spoken English at any given point in the history of the language. (See [Collins Research summary](#))

Q. Did the CBT compromise on "controversial" verses to appease critics?

As a committee, the CBT's priority is to accurately translate God's unchanging Word into contemporary English, incorporating the best available biblical scholarship. In any instance where the CBT becomes convinced that past decisions failed to live up to this standard, the CBT did not hesitate to change them. If there was compelling new data on the state of contemporary English usage, or if a compelling exegetical argument was made – whether it involved moving backward or forward – the CBT made the changes that were necessary.

The CBT is not wedded to any particular verse as it currently stands or as it has stood in any previous edition of the text. What they are committed to is their responsibility under the charter: to render God's Word in English as it is spoken and understood by the broadest possible audience.

Q. Why is there a need for a revision? Don't most Christians understand that "man" means "woman and man"?

Like the NIV founders, the CBT is deeply conscious of the need that exists for a Bible that offers the whole church – from experienced Bible-handlers to interested newcomers and from older readers to younger ones – access to God's unchanging Word in language that

all can understand. The CBT's decision-making in the area of gender has been informed by objective data from the Collins study (See [Collins Research summary](#)) to ensure that comprehension is maximized for this broad audience in line with the NIV charter. This is the mission of the NIV, and we trust that all Christians who share our awareness of that need will support the process of continually updating the NIV.

NIV vs. Other Translations

Q: What are the differences between the NIV '84, TNIV and the updated NIV?

All the changes in the updated text are attributable to one – and in some cases, to more than one – of the following reasons: changes in English, progress in scholarship and concern for clarity (See [Translators' Notes: Updating the NIV for 2011](#)). About 95% of the text of the updated NIV is exactly the same as the 1984 text it replaces, based on the number of word changes.

As part of the process of revision for 2011, the CBT reviewed and reconsidered every single change introduced into the TNIV relating to inclusive language. Some changes were preserved, some were rescinded in favor of the 1984 rendering, and many were re-worded in a third, still different way.

The committee took all the major published comments on their approach into consideration, and particular attention was paid to external feedback in the area of gender language. As part of the update process, the CBT also initiated a relationship with Collins Dictionaries to use the Collins Bank of English, one of the world's foremost English language research tools, to conduct a major new study of changes in gender language. The Collins Bank of English is a database of more than 4.4 billion English words that provides objective, statistically significant data on the state of written and spoken English at any given point in the history of the language. (See [Collins Research summary](#))

Q. How will the updated NIV compare to other translations like the New Living Translation, the English Standard Version, etc.?

There certainly are many wonderful translations, and each has its own priorities and focus, but we're not interested in comparing one translation to another. What we can speak to is the translation philosophy for the NIV, which is to reproduce, as closely as possible, the reading experience of the original audience. The original Bible documents let people hear exactly what God wanted to say in language that was natural and easy for them to understand. That's the experience we want to give the Bible readers of our time, and that's what the NIV exists to do.

We understand, of course, that there are other translations for churches and individuals to choose from, and we welcome them. We live in a generation that is privileged to have access to some very fine and scholarly Bible translations. Our main concern is that people should be reading the Bible, not that they should be reading a particular Bible translation.

Q. How does the NIV compare to the TNIV?

The updated NIV builds on both the original NIV and the TNIV and represents the latest effort of the CBT to articulate God's unchanging Word in the way the original authors might have said it if they had been speaking in English to the global English-speaking audience today. About 95% of the text of the updated NIV remains exactly the same as the 1984 text it replaces, based on the number of word changes.

As part of the process of revision for 2011, the CBT also reviewed and reconsidered every single change introduced into the TNIV relating to inclusive language. Some changes were preserved, some were abolished in favor of the 1984 rendering, and many were reworded in a third, still different way.

Q: I love the TNIV. Why is it going away?

Whether you love the NIV or the TNIV, we think the updated NIV is going to meet your needs. It returns with fresh focus to the principles that stood behind the original NIV charter, seeking to reproduce, as closely as possible, the reading experience of the original audience. The original Bible documents let people hear exactly what God wanted to say in language that was natural and easy for them to understand. That's the experience we want to give the Bible readers of our time, and that's what the updated NIV exists to do.

The NIV seeks to say what the original authors said in the way they would have said it had they been speaking in English to the global English-speaking audience today. It aims at clarity and comprehensibility – so that understanding comes naturally and readers can quickly grasp the original authors' ideas and the cadence of their language. It is suitable both for in-depth study and for outreach – Christians can share it with their neighbors without hindrance, whether they are experienced Bible-readers or interested newcomers.

Q. With 2011 the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible, how does the NIV compare to the original modern English translation?

The goal with the NIV mirrors the balance of priorities held by the 17th century translators themselves. The NIV tries to bring its readers as close as possible to the experience of the original audience: providing the best possible blend of transparency to the original documents and comprehension of the original meaning in every verse.

Built on this philosophy, the NIV has experienced much the same reaction in the church and beyond as its beloved predecessor, the King James Version, whose values it seeks to emulate, and we trust that it will continue to do so for many years to come.