Why we have chosen to adopt the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible as one of the official translations for the Dayton Christian School System

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English-speaking Christians in an affluent society like ours suffer from an embarrassment of riches. We have access to God’s Word in unparalleled variety and diversity. While some people-groups are just now getting Scripture translated into their native tongues, there are literally hundreds of English translations of the Bible, dating back to the days of the fourteenth century scholar John Wycliffe.

In addition, the Dayton Christian School System has always represented families from many different branches of the evangelical community. Part of the genius of our ministry is its ability to distinguish between the central truths that we all hold in common and the secondary issues on which we respectfully disagree.

Students are free to use any English Bible they choose for personal study, but for the sake of unity and sheer logistics, we have had to select one or two translations for memorization quizzes and tests in our Bible classes. It has been almost thirty years since we have made a change in this policy (when we authorized the use of the New International Version in addition to the King James Bible).

Two factors have forced us to make a change now:

1. The English Standard Version (ESV) has begun to come on strong since its publication in 2001 and many local churches have begun to use the ESV in the pulpit. There is a growing chorus of leading Christian voices expressing strong support for the ESV.

2. More significantly, the NIV was revised in 2011. Not only do we have two versions of the NIV in circulation (the 1984 edition and the 2011 edition), but also the revisions made in the 2011 version are not acceptable to some of our people. However, this 2011 version is showing up in increasing numbers not just as our students purchase new Bibles but – more significantly – as many of our students are now going to digital Bibles.

Because there is growing unease with the changes made in the NIV11 and the NIV84 is no longer available, we have chosen to go with the ESV for the 2013/2014 school year. In the spectrum ranging from word-for-word accuracy to loose paraphrase, the ESV is more accurate and more faithful to the original than the NIV. Part of the appeal of the ESV is that it has managed to communicate clearly and elegantly without compromising fidelity and has struck a nice balance in the clarity-accuracy spectrum.

For these reasons we feel that using the ESV (along with the KJV) is the right choice for Dayton Christian School System. Effective 2013/2014 we will no longer be using any NIV translations and will only be using the ESV and KJV.