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 on BIBLICAL

Editor's Column

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"The life and fellowship of Christians in history is to be a foretaste of life in the Kingdom of God and is to reflect in the world something of what the eschatological reality will be," so wrote George Eldon Ladd nearly 30 years ago.[1] I have thought often, during the past nine months, about the truths reflected in this quote in light of the vigorous disagreement among evangelical Christians over the TNIV. It seems clear that Ladd was partly right, but partly wrong. You see, one (of many!) major difference between life this side of the eschaton and life then is that then – but not until then – we will have no more disagreements. What glory that will be! All of us, no matter what side we've taken in this life, will have our errors corrected. There will be no "four views" books in heaven! We will revel in the truth that has, finally and fully, set us free. But, this side of glory, we will differ, and here – in relation to the TNIV – it is clear, we *do* differ.

So, how shall we manifest, in our differences, "a foretaste of life in the Kingdom of God"? Two answers: 1) As we seek, before God, to advance the truth, we hearken to that day when the truth will have prevailed. As lovers of the truth, and lovers of the Word of truth, we exhibit now what we shall all experience unfettered in the full flowering of the Kingdom. Let it be clear: those of us who have tried to make our case that the TNIV is not sufficiently accurate to commend to the church have done so with a deep love for the truth and for the Word of truth. I have no doubt that many on the other side have also. In our differences, may we always seek to advance the truth, admit when we are wrong, and seek, before God, to embrace the conviction that knowing the truth (as truth) always and only is the path to true liberation. 2) As we seek, before God, to disagree with respect and charity, we manifest now the characters that will be fully formed in Christlikeness in that coming day. Differences on this issue are weighty – nothing less than the Bible itself, as read and studied by millions of English speaking Christians – and convictions are strong. But, we have consciously and prayerfully endeavored to be fair, respectful, and charitable, while disagreeing strongly with those with whom we differ. Emotions can flare, and frustrations can bring out our worst dispositions, but in God's grace, we must pray and work to evidence character that honors the gospel and manifests the kingdom, albeit "not yet" fully come.

In that spirit – pursuing truth with respect for and charity toward those with whom we differ – we offer this issue of *JBMW*. Readers will find our focus is on the recent TNIV controversy, and we present here what we hope will be thoughtful and compelling reasons to reconsider the wisdom of translating the Bible in the manner followed in the TNIV. Peter Jones reflects helpfully on some of the larger worldview issues that form the context of gender-inclusive language usage. His thesis is both important and sobering, and I trust readers will note carefully the wisdom of his perspective. Vern Poythress moves us from the big picture now to focus on a particular element of gender-inclusive translation theory, namely, the practice of avoiding the generic "he." Several difficulties arise in this avoidance, not the least is the unavoidable change of meaning conveyed. Since we share a common commitment to convey, as best we can, the intended meaning of each text, these criticisms should be seriously considered. Wayne Grudem then provides a thorough and careful response to recent defenses offered of the TNIV. With grace toward his opponents, Grudem makes an enormously compelling case that both the practice and defense of gender-inclusive translation theory, as carried out in the TNIV, cannot rightly stand. Along with these three articles, we include several documents pertinent to these past months' controversy as a kind of public witness to the many problems noted with the TNIV and the many supporters of the cause to encourage the church to proceed differently in our translations of Scripture.

Also in this issue, Peter Schemm engages Kevin Giles' recent *The Trinity and Subordinationism*, exposing difficulties with the thesis of an egalitarian trinity, while showing again some of the support for the historic view of the Son's eternal Sonship and submission to the Father. John Piper preached a sermon some time back on the challenge of interpreting difficult texts of Scripture. Might it be that one of the difficulties we face today is the very gendered language of Scripture itself, to which many in our culture take offense? Piper's approach to "difficult texts," offered here, has relevance, it would seem, to the TNIV debate before us. Finally, we gladly offer our 2001 annotated bibliography of gender-related books. Many thanks, again, to Rob Lister and Todd Miles, for hours of hard labor to make this resource available.

May God be pleased to use this issue of *JBMW* for the furtherance of truth, in the spirit of charity, as we joyfully await the fullness of Christ's kingdom come. ◨

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[1] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 541.

Executive Director's Column

Exposition of the Danvers Statement: Affirmation 7

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Affirmation 7

In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission—domestic, religious, or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.

This affirmation is a reminder that earthly authority is not the final authority. All of our behavior is governed by the clear instruction given by God in His Word. When instruction by an earthly authority contradicts that of Christ, then we must obey God rather than men. Several biblical texts bear this out. One familiar text is found in Daniel 3. In spite of the decree to bow down and worship the image of gold, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, issue their own decree, "we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." Although these young men were ultimately delivered from the furnace (3:26-27), it should be noted that this is not always the case and many over the years have lost their lives because they were compelled by the Spirit to disobey their earthly authorities in order to obey God.

Another familiar passage is found in Acts 4. Peter and John, after being reprimanded by the Sanhedrin and ordered to cease from speaking in the name of Jesus, gave this well known reply, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." Indeed, the Bible says that after they were released, they prayed with their "own people" and went right back to speaking the Word of God

"boldly," in direct disobedience of their earthly authorities. In another instance, shortly after this, the high priest angrily chastised the Apostles for teaching in the name of Jesus in spite of his command to cease this activity. Once again, their reply underscores the priority of God's Word over the ungodly rules of earthly authorities: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Sometimes those in authority have a tendency to over-extend their reach and end up abusing those under their auspices. This is not a natural by-product of having a clear structure of authority; rather it is the result of the effects of sin on the human heart. Affirmation 4 of the Danvers Statement teaches that in the home, one of the sinful perversions of male leadership is an urge to want to dominate. In the church, this same sinful perversion manifests itself by a worldly love of power.

So, the Danvers Statement follows the pattern of the Bible in giving clear instruction for the headship of men in the home and the church, while at the same time giving clear warnings about men misusing their authority. One example of this is found in 1 Peter 3:1-7 where wives are exhorted to be submissive to their husbands who are in turn warned about mistreating their wives. In fact, poor treatment of wives results in the hindrance of the prayers of the husband.

CBMW is greatly concerned about the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse and believes that the Bible speaks clearly and forthrightly on the differing responsibilities of men and women in marriage, while at the same time, it speaks with equal clarity against abuse. The biblical teachings on male headship in marriage do not authorize a man's domination or abuse of his wife.

Because many egalitarians claim that the teachings regarding male headship encourage abuse in the home, and also because we adamantly oppose abuse wherever it occurs, CBMW issued a formal "Statement on Abuse" in November 1994. Its key affirmations are as follows:

We understand abuse to mean the cruel use of power or authority to harm another person emotionally, physically, or sexually.

We are against all forms of physical, sexual and/or verbal abuse.

We believe that the biblical teaching on relationships between men and women does not support, but condemns abuse.

We believe that abuse is sin. It is destructive and evil. Abuse is the hallmark of the devil and is in direct opposition to the purposes of God. Abuse ought not to be tolerated in the Christian community.

We believe that the Christian community is responsible for the well-being of its members. It has a responsibility to lovingly confront the abusers and protect the abused.

We believe that both the abusers and the abused are in need of emotional and spiritual healing.

We believe that god extends healing to those who earnestly seek him.

We are confident of the power of God's healing love to restore relationships fractured by abuse, but we realize that repentance, forgiveness, wholeness, and reconciliation is a process. Both abusers and abused are in need of on-going counseling, support, and accountability.

In instances where abusers are unrepentant and/or unwilling to make significant steps toward change, we believe that the Christian community must respond with firm discipline of the abuser and advocacy, support, and protection of the abused.

We believe that by the power of God's Spirit, the Christian community can be an instrument of God's love and healing for those involved in abusive relationships and an example of wholeness in a fractured, broken world. ◨

A Brief Summary of Concerns About the TNIV

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The heart of the controversy is this: **In hundreds of verses the TNIV** *translates only the general idea* **of a passage and** *omits male-oriented details*. Such changes may sound more acceptable to modern culture, but details of meaning in the underlying Greek text are lost. I agree with removing male-oriented words when there is no male-oriented meaning in the original Greek or Hebrew text. But when there is a male meaning, we dare not under-translate and conceal that meaning just because that emphasis is unpopular today. Here are some examples where meaning (i.e. male meaning) in the original is lost in the TNIV translation:

A. Changes affecting singular "father" (Greek *pater*) and singular "son" (Greek *huios*):

> NIV: (1984) Hebrews 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what **son** is not disciplined by his **father**?

> TNIV: (2002) . . . what **children** are not disciplined by their **parents**?

The TNIV mistranslates the Greek terms *huios* ("son") and *pater* ("father"), which in their singular forms do not mean "child" or "parent," and surely not "children" or "parents." It also obscures the parallel with God as Father in this passage.

Is it true that children are disciplined by their parents? Yes. Is that what this verse says? No. The author is using a specific male example, yet the TNIV has changed it to a generalization.

In defending this rendering for Hebrews 12:7, the TNIV web site incorrectly claims that *pater* in the singular means "parent." Though the TNIV does not yet call God our "Parent," this claim opens a wide door for calling God "Parent" in Hebrews 12:9 and elsewhere in future editions. In fact, in line with "political correctness" in language, the new BDAG *Lexicon* has already added "Parent" as a definition of *pater* when used of God the Father (with no new evidence to support this new definition, p. 787). If we accept the TNIV in 2002, we should get ready for "Our Parent in heaven..." in 2010.

B. Changes affecting singular "brother" (Greek *adelphos*):

> NIV: Luke 17:3 If your **brother** sins, rebuke **him**, and if he repents, forgive **him**.

> TNIV: If any **brother or sister** sins against you, rebuke **the offender**; and if **they** repent, forgive **them**.

The TNIV inserts "or sister," which Jesus did not say. Jesus is using a single male individual ("your brother") as an example of a general truth, but the TNIV will not let him do this. I agree that the verse *applies* to sisters who sin, but that is *application*, it is not *translation*.

The Bible often points to a single individual to teach a general truth, as in the parable of the prodigal son – which *applies* to prodigal daughters, but it should not be *translated* prodigal "son or daughter" (as even the TNIV recognizes). Similarly, in the Ten Commandments, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" also *applies* to not coveting your neighbor's husband, but we should not change the words of God to *translate* Exodus 20:17 as "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife *or husband*." God's words are not ours to tamper with as we please.

C. Changes affecting "he/him/his" (with Greek 3rd person masculine singular pronouns):

NIV: 1 Corinthians 14:28 If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak **to himself** and God.

TNIV: 1 Corinthians 14:28 If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to God **when alone**.

The TNIV translators thought (mistakenly) that modern readers might read the word "himself" and decide that this verse did not apply to women, so they changed it to "when alone." But there is nothing that means "when alone" in the Greek text (the dative pronoun *heauto* here means "to himself"). The suggestion that this means "when the speaker is alone" may be some commentator's further *explanation* of the passage, but it is probably an overly restrictive explanation, and it is surely not an accurate *translation* of the passage. Prior to the TNIV, people could differ over whether Paul allowed uninterpreted prayer in tongues in small private groups outside the church meeting, but here the TNIV invents a new rule that Paul (and God) never said: someone praying in tongues must be "alone."

NIV: Revelation 22:18: If **anyone** adds anything to them, God will add to **him** the plagues . . .

TNIV: If **anyone of you** adds anything to them, God will add to **you** the plagues . . .

The TNIV implies that if any one person in your group adds to Scripture, "you" *all,* the whole group, will receive the plagues. The TNIV changes the meaning of the very verse that tells us never to change the words of Scripture!

D. Other changes

NIV Hebrews 2:6 What is **man** that you are mindful of him, **the son of man** that you care for **him**?

TNIV: What are **mere mortals** that you are mindful of them, **human beings** that you care for **them**?

The TNIV needlessly obscures the possible connection of this verse with Jesus, who often called himself "the Son of Man." It mistranslates the singular Greek words *huios* ("son") and *anthropos* ("man"). It no longer refers to the human race as a unity named "man" (the best translation of the name given by God in Gen. 5:2), but "mere mortals."

NIV: Hebrews 2:17: For this reason he had to be made like his **brothers** in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest . . .

TNIV: For this reason he had to be made like his **brothers and sisters** in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest . . .

Did Jesus have to become like his sisters "in every way" in order to become a "high priest in service to God"? All the Old Testament priests were men, and surely the high priest was a man. This text does not quite proclaim an androgynous Jesus (who was both male and female), but it surely leaves open a wide door for misunderstanding, and almost invites misunderstanding. Meditate on that phrase "in every way" and see if you can trust the TNIV.

There are many other problems, such as changing "Jews" to "Jewish leaders" in Acts 13:50 and 21:11 (and several times in John) with no justification in the Greek text, thus obscuring larger corporate responsibility. With respect to gender language, "he" is changed to plural "they" 271 times (and to so-called "singular they" 112 times), "he" is changed to "you" 90 times, to "we" 9 times, and simply omitted 48 times. "Father/fathers/forefathers" are removed 39 times. Singular "brother" is changed to "brother or sister" or something like "believer" 43 times. "Man" (when translating the male-specific term *aner*) is changed to things like "people" or friends" 26 times. In each case these changes remove details of meaning that are there in the Greek text.

The TNIV distorts the meaning of Scripture in hundreds of such changes, *not* because the original Greek words have changed, and *not* because the meanings of ancient Greek words have changed (they haven't!), but merely to avoid five simple words that many in our culture find offensive: "man," "father," "son," "brother," and "he/him/his."

E. Do New Testament quotations of the Old Testament support the TNIV?

Some TNIV defenders claim precedent for such changes in the New Testament authors' quotations of the Old Testament in verses like 2 Cor 6:18, where Paul adds "and daughters" to 2 Samuel 7:14 and says, "you shall be *sons and daughters* to me, says the Lord Almighty."

The problem with this argument is that the New Testament authors *freely adapt* Old Testament verses to apply to the situation at hand. Paul is not purporting to give an exact translation of 2 Samuel 7:14. We can see this from the fact that no Bible translation has ever taken Paul's adapted rendering and put it back into 2 Samuel 7:14 as the proper translation! That would give an impossible translation in which God says to David, "I will raise up your offspring after you. . . . He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to *you*, and *you* shall be *sons and daughters* to me. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men . . . " This makes no sense, and it is an impossible translation of the Hebrew. Paul is not translating, he is adapting and applying.

F. Widespread concern about the TNIV

Soon after the TNIV was released, thirty-seven evangelical scholars (the majority with Ph.D.'s in New Testament) signed a "Statement of Concern" saying: "In light of troubling translation inaccuracies - primarily (but not exclusively) in relation to gender language - that introduce distortions of the meanings that were conveyed better by the original NIV, we cannot endorse the TNIV translation as sufficiently accurate to commend to the church" (see statement and names in this journal).

Then in June, 2002, over 100 respected evangelical leaders signed a public "Statement of Concern" opposing the TNIV (see statement and names in this journal). And the Southern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church in America last summer overwhelmingly passed denominational resolutions opposing the TNIV. But the International Bible Society, which owns the copyright and makes the final decision, continues to promote the TNIV.

If the TNIV should gain wide acceptance, the precedent will be established for other Bible translations to mute unpopular nuances and details of meaning for the sake of "political correctness." The loss of many other doctrines unpopular in the culture will soon follow. And at every case Bible readers will never know if what they are reading is really the Word of God or the translators' ideas of something that would be a little less offensive than what God actually said. "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it" (Deut. 4:2). ◼

Translation Inaccuracies in the TNIV: A Categorized List of 901 Examples

Note: This list of translation inaccuracies in the TNIV now stands at 901 examples, and when we stopped collecting them we knew that more could be added. But this list seemed sufficient to indicate the scope and type of changes that have been made in Today's New International Version (TNIV), mostly in order to avoid using five words with masculine meaning or nuance: father, brother, son, man, and he/him/his.

It seems to us that in every case listed here the change eliminates masculine meaning or masculine nuances that are present in the underlying Greek terms, and also that these changes frequently go beyond the legitimate bounds of ordinary, well-established meanings for the common Greek words being translated (though in some cases there are differences among the lexicons, as noted in the individual categories below). These examples therefore seem to us to be "translation inaccuracies" that were included in the TNIV for the sake of producing a more "gender neutral" or "inclusive language" version.

This list was prepared under the general oversight of The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, and has been compared for accuracy against the Greek New Testament. In the event that readers find any corrections or additions that may need to be made, we would welcome your input sent to us at: office@cbmw.org.

All the changes noted are from the 1984 NIV to the 2002 TNIV.

A. Changes from singular to plural to avoid the use of he/him/his

he/him/his/himself changed to they/them/their/themselves (where Greek has singular verb and/or masculine singular 3rd person pronoun) (232)

MATT. 10:10, 24 (2x), 25 (2x), 38, 39 (2x); 12:35 (2x); 13:12 (3x), 19, 21 (3x), 23, 57 (2x); 16:24, 25 (2x); 18:15 (2x) 23:12 (2x); 25:29 (3x);

MARK 2:22 (2x); 4:25 (2x); 6:4 (3x); 8:34 (2x), 35 (2x); 13:13;

LUKE 4:24; 5:37; 6:40 (2x), 45 (2x), 47, 48; 8:18 (3x); 9:23 (3x), 24 (2x); 10:7; 12:21; 14:11 (2x); 14:27; 16:16; 17:33 (2x); 18:14 (2x); 19:26;

JOHN 3:20 (2x), 21; 4:14 (3x), 36 (2x), 44; 7:18 (2x), 53; 11:9, 10 (2x); 12:25 (2x), 35, 45 (2x), 47, 48; 13:10 (2x), 16 (2x); 14:12; 15:15, 20; 16:2;

ROM. 4:8; 14:4 (4x), 6, 22, 23 (2x); 15:2;

1 COR. 4:5; 6:18 (2x); 8:2 (2x); 11:29; 14:2 (2x), 4, 5, 13 (2x), 16, 37, 38;

2 COR. 9:9 (3x); 10:7 (3x), 18; 11:20;

GAL. 4:1 (2x), 2 (2x); 6:6, 7, 8;

EPH. 4:28 (2x); 5:29 (3x);

PHIL. 3:4;

COL. 2:18 (3x), 19; 3:25;

2 THESS. 3:14 (2x), 15 (2x);

1 TIM. 5:18;

2 TIM. 2:21;

TITUS 3:10 (2x), 11;

HEB. 2:6 (2x), 7 (2x), 8 (4x); 4:10;

JAS. 1:7, 8, 9, 10 (2x), 11 (2x), 12 (2x), 23, 24 (2x), 25
   (3x), 26 (4x); 2:14, 24; 5:19
2 PET. 2:19;
1 JOHN 2:4, 5, 10 (2x), 11 (3x); 3:3 (2x), 9 (3x), 10;
   4:15 (2x), 16; 5:12 (2x), 16, 18 (2x);
REV. 2:27, 28; 3:5 (2x), 12 (3x); 13:10 (2x); 14:10 (2x);
   16:15 (2x); 21:7 (2x);

**he/him/his/himself (with singular Greek verb and/or mascu-
line 3rd person singular Greek pronoun) changed to they/
them/their/themselves (with singular antecedent in English;
these are examples of the so-called "singular they") (112)**

   MATT. 5:39, 41; 11:15; 13:9, 43; 15:4, 5, 6 (2x); 16:27;
      18:6 (3x), 15 (2x), 16, 17 (3x); 24:18;
   MARK 2:21; 4:9, 23; 7:10, 11, 12 (2x); 9:42 (3x); 11:25;
      13:16;
   LUKE 2:3; 5:36 (2x); 8:8, 16; 14:35; 17:3 (2x), 4 (2x);
   JOHN 3:2 (Jesus), 4 (3x), 18, 36; 6:40, 44, 65 (2x);
      7:38; 10:9; 11:25; 14:21 (3x), 23 (3x);
   ACTS 2:6; 4:32 (2x); 25:16 (3x);
   ROM. 2:6; 4:4 (2x), 5; 8:9, 24; 11:35 ("who"?); 14:5;
   1 COR. 3:8 (2x); 8:10; 10:24; 14:24, 25 (2x);
   2 COR. 5:10;
   1 TIM. 5:8 (2x); 6:4 (2x);
   2 TIM. 2:4; JAS. 3:13 (2x); 4:11; 5:20 (2x);
   1 JOHN 2:5; 3:15, 17;
   2 JOHN 1:10 (2x), 11 (2x);
   REV. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 12, 13, 20 (2x), 22; 13:9; 22:12

**he/him/his/himself (singular verb and/or masculine singular
3rd person pronoun in Greek) changed to those (often
"those who") (39)**

   MATT. 7:8 (2x), 21; 10:22;
   LUKE 6:47; 11:10 (2x);
   JOHN 7:18; 15:23;
   ROM. 14:1, 6 (3x);
   1 COR. 1:31; 7:22 (2x); 14:4 (2x), 5, 38;
   2 COR. 10:17;
   EPH. 4:28;
   2 THESS. 3:14;
   1 PET. 4:1;
   1 JOHN 5:12 (2x);
   REV. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 22:7, 11 (4x), 17

he/him/his/himself changed to you/your/yourself (90)

   MATT. 6:24 (2x); 6:27; 7:9; 10:36; 16:26 (2x);
   MARK 7:15 (3x), 18, 19 (3x), 20; 8:36, 37, 38; 11:23
      (3x);
   LUKE 5:39; 9:25, 26; 11:8 (4x); 12:25; 14:28 (2x), 29
      (2x), 33; 16:13 (2x);
   JOHN 15:5 (2x), 6; 16:32;
   1 COR. 3:18 (3x); 6:1; 7:17 (2x), 20 (2x), 24; 16:2;

2 COR. 9:7 (2x);
GAL. 6:3 (4x), 4 (4x), 5;
EPH. 4:25; 6:8 (2x);
1 THESS. 4:4;
JAS. 1:5 (2x), 6 (2x), 14 (2x); 4:17; 5:13, 14 (2x),
   15 (3x);
1 PET. 3:10 (2x);
2 PET. 1:9 (3x);
1 JOHN 2:15; 3:17; 5:16 (2x);
REV. 22:18, 19 (2x)

he/him/his/himself changed to we/our/ourselves (9)

   ROM. 14:7 (2x-ourselves); 12 (ourselves); 15:2
      (ourselves);
   1 JOHN 4:20 (5x—we)

**he/him/his/himself changed to no pronoun (sentence
changed to other wording) (16)**

   MATT. 5:22; 18:4;
   LUKE 6:45; 9:62; 12:8, 15, 47 (2x); 14:26;
   1 THESS. 4:6;
   1 JOHN 2:9, 11; 3:15, 17; 4:20; 5:10

he/him/his/himself is omitted (29)

   MATT. 5:40; 10:32, 33, 42; 12:29 (2x); 16:26; 18:15;
   MARK 8:34; 9:35, 41; 10:28; 13:34;
   LUKE 9:48; 10:6; 11:8;
   JOHN 3:27; 7:17;
   1 COR. 2:14; 14:28;
   1 THESS. 4:6;
   2 TIM. 2:5, 21;
   HEB. 10:38;
   JAS. 4:11; 5:13, 14;
   1 PET. 3:11 (2x);

he/him/his/himself changed to other (3)

   MATT. 18:15 (omit "your" and "you");
   1 COR. 14:28 (when alone);
   1 JOHN 5:16 (any)

**"whoever" (singular) changed to those (often "those who")
(22)**

   MATT. 10:39 (2x); 13:12 (2x); 16:25 (2x); 23:12 (2x);
   MARK 4:25 (2x); 8:35 (2x);
   LUKE 8:18 (2x); 9:24 (2x); 17:33 (2x);
   JOHN 3:21; 4:14;
   1 JOHN 3:11;
   REV. 22:17

"anyone" (singular) changed to those (often "those who") (9)

> MATT. 10:38; 16:24
> MARK 8:34;
> JOHN 16:2;
> 1 COR. 14:2;
> JAMES 1:23; 3:2;
> 1 JOHN 3:10;
> REV. 13:18

"one" (singular) changed to those (often "those who") (8)

> LUKE 6:49;
> JOHN 12:48;
> 1 COR. 14:5;
> 2 COR 10:18 (2x);
> GAL. 6:8 (2x);
> 1 JOHN 3:9

"everyone" (singular) changed to those (often "those who") (7)

> MATT. 25:29 (2x)
> LUKE 14:11 (2x); 18:14;
> JOHN 3:20;
> 1 COR. 14:3

Other changes from singular to plural for the whole sentence (20)

> MATT. 10:10, 24 (2x); 13:19, 20, 57; 19:23, 24;
> MARK 2:22;
> JOHN 11:9, 10; 12:25 (2X), 35, 44, 47; 13:10
> ROM. 13:4; 14:23
> GAL. 4:7;
> 2 TIM. 2:21;
> 1 JOHN 2:4; 3:10
> REV. 21:7; 22:7

B. Changes to avoid the word "father" and related words

father (*pater*, singular) changed to parents (2)

> ACTS 7:20;
> HEB. 12:7

fathers (*pater*, plural) changed to parents or people (3)

> ACTS 7:11
> HEB. 12:9 (Though "parents" is sometimes acceptable as a meaning for the plural of *pater*, in this case the context is speaking of fatherly discipline. The TNIV continues the problem in vs. 10, where it repeats the word "parents," but the Greek has only a pronoun

which in this construction would ordinarily be translated "they.")

fathers/forefathers (*pater*, plural) changed to ancestors (34)

(The BDAG Lexicon, p. 786-787, gives "ancestors" as a possible meaning, but the LSJ Lexicon (p. 1348) only gives the meaning of "forefathers." We have included these verses in this list because they seem to us to fit the general pattern of excluding male nuances in the TNIV, and because the male nuance or connotation of the plural word *pateres* would have been evident to the original Greek readers, but "ancestors" has no evident relationship to the word "father" and no male connotation in English.)

> MATT. 23:30, 32;
> LUKE 1:55, 72; 6:23, 26; 11:47, 48;
> JOHN 4:20; 6:31, 49, 58;
> ACTS 5:30; 7:12, 15, 19, 38, 39, 44, 45, 51, 52; 13:17, 32, 36; 15:10; 22:14; 26:6; 28:25;
> 1 COR. 10:1;
> HEB. 1:1; 3:9; 8:9;
> 2 PET. 3:4

C. Changes to avoid the word "brother" (or to add the word "sister")

brother (*adelphos*, singular) changed to brother or sister (19)

> MATT. 5:22 (2x), 23; 18:15, 35;
> LUKE 17:3;
> ROM. 14:10 (2x), 13, 15, 21;
> 1 COR. 8:11, 13;
> 1 THESS. 4:6;
> JAS. 4:11;
> 1 JOHN 3:10, 17; 4:20; 5:16

brother (*adelphos*, singular) changed to (fellow) believer (5)

(The BDAG Lexicon, p. 18, lists "brother, fellow member, member, associate" as possible meanings for *adelphos*, but all the singular examples listed refer to male human beings. The earlier BAGD Lexicon, p. 16, did not give these meanings, and the new BDAG Lexicon (2000) gives no new examples or new arguments to justify these new meanings that it proposes. Neither BDAG nor BAGD gives "believer" as a possible meaning. The LSJ Lexicon (p. 20) gives the meaning "brother (as a fellow Christian)", but does not give the meaning "believer" either.)

> 2 THESS. 3:6;
> 1 JOHN 2:9, 11; 3:15; 4:20

brother (*adelphos*, singular) changed to (fellow) believers (4)

> 1 COR. 5:11;
> 2 THESS. 3:15;
> JAS. 1:9;
> 1 JOHN 2:10

brother (*adelphos*, singular) changed to other (15)

> MATT. 5:24 (that person); 7:3 (someone else), 4 (omitted), 5 (other person); 18:15 (them), 21 (someone)
> LUKE 6:41 (someone else), 42 (friend, other person);
> 1 COR. 8:13 (them);
> 1 THESS. 4:9 ("brotherly love" to "your love for one another");
> HEB. 8:11 (one another);
> JAMES 4:11 (them)
> 2 PET. 1:7 (mutual affection—2x);
> 1 JOHN 4:21 (one another)

brothers (*adelphos*, plural) changed to brothers and sisters (where sisters is uncertain or doubtful) (8)

> ACTS 1:16; 2:29; 13:26, 38;
> 2 COR. 11:9;
> HEB. 2:17;
> JAS. 3:1;
> REV. 19:10

brothers/brotherhood (*adelphos*, plural) changed to fellow believers (4)

> ACTS 15:22
> 1 TIM. 6:2;
> 1 PET. 2:17; 5:9

brothers (*adelphos*, plural) changed to believers (27)

> JOHN 21:23;
> ACTS 9:30; 10:23; 11:1, 29; 15:1, 3, 22, 32, 33, 36, 40; 16:2, 40; 17:6, 10, 14; 18:18, 27; 21:7, 17; 28:14, 15;
> 2 COR. 11:26;
> GAL. 2:4;
> 3 JOHN 1:3, 10

brothers (*adelphos*, plural) changed to other (9)

> MATT. 5:47 (own people); 22:5 (associates); 28:21 (our people); 1 COR. 8:12 (them);
> 1 THESS. 4:10 (dear friends); 5:26 (God's people);
> 1 JOHN 3:14 (each other), 16 (one another);
> REV. 22:9 (fellow prophets)

brothers (*adelphos*, plural) omitted (2)

> MATT. 7:4;
> 1 COR. 15:31 (TNIV uses less likely variant reading)

D. Changes to avoid the word "man"

man or husband (*aner*, singular) changed to other (7)

(The BDAG Lexicon (p. 79) gives as the general definition of *aner* the meaning, "a male person," and under that general definition it gives as meaning 2, "equivalent to *tis*, someone, a person." All the examples they list under meaning 2 either clearly refer to a male human being (as Luke 19:2, for example, "and there was a man named Zacchaeus"), or the context is not determinative but the meaning "man" makes good sense and the meaning "person" is not required. BDAG at the end of this entry also notes an idiom, *kat'andra*, which means "man for man, individually," and clearly includes women in some instances, but that idiom does not occur in the New Testament. The LSJ Lexicon (p. 138) also notes the idiom *kat'andra*, with a similar meaning. The LSJ Lexicon does not give the meaning "person" for *aner*, but rather, "man, opposed to women," "man, opposed to god," "man, opposed to youth," "man emphatically, man indeed," "husband," and some special usages. For further discussion on the word *aner*, "man" see Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem, *The Gender Neutral Bible Controversy* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), p. 101, note 2, and pages 321-333; see also, "Can Greek *aner* ("man") sometimes mean "person"? at www.cbmw.org/tniv/aner.html.)

> ROM. 4:8 (those);
> 1 TIM. 3:2, 12 ("husband" to "faithful" on both)
> JAS. 1:12 (those), 20 (our), 23 (people); 2:2 (someone);

man (*aner*, singular) omitted (2)

> JAS. 1:8; 3:2

men (*aner*, plural) changed to people (10)

> MATT. 12:41;
> LUKE 11:31, 32;
> ACTS 2:22; 3:12; 13:16; 17:22, 34; 19:35; 21:28

men (*aner*, plural) changed to other (5)

> ACTS 4:4 (believers); 14:15 (friends); 17:34 (people); 19:25 (friends); 20:30 (some)

men (*aner*, plural) omitted (2)

> LUKE 14:24;
> ACTS 15:22 (Judas Barsabbas & Silas);

man (*anthropos*, singular) changed to people or other plural nouns (9)

MATT. 12:35 (2x); 18:7;
LUKE 6:45 (2x);
ROM. 1:26; 4:6;
GAL. 6:7;
2 TIM. 3:17

man (*anthropos*, singular) changed to you/your (10)

MATT. 10:36; 15:11, 18, 20; 16:26 (2x);
MARK 7:23; 8:36, 37;
LUKE 9:25

man (*anthropos*, singular) changed to human being/ human/mere mortal when referring to a specific historical man (6)

ACTS 10:26 (Peter);
ACTS 12:22 (Herod);
1 COR. 15:21 (Jesus);
PHIL. 2:8 (Jesus);
1 TIM. 2:5 (Jesus);
JAS. 5:17 (Elijah);

men (*anthropos*, plural) changed to people when referring to male human beings (1)

HEB 5:1 (high priests)

men (*anthropos*, plural) changed to other (9)

(Neither the meaning "man" nor the meaning "person," is represented in these verses.)

MATT. 5:9 (underfoot); 10:32 (publicly), 33 (publicly);
LUKE 12:8 (publicly), 9 (publicly), 36 (servants);
JOHN 8:17 (witnesses)
1COR. 7:7 (you)

men (*anthropos*, plural) omitted(6)

MATT. 10:17; 19:12;
LUKE 12:8
ACTS 4:12 (no other name under heaven); 17:26 (all nations);
1 TIM. 5:24 (sins of some)

"man" (*anthropos*, singular) meaning the human race changed to people/mortals/human (6)

MATT. 4:4;
MARK 2:27 (2x);
LUKE 4:4;

JOHN 2:25;
HEB. 2:6 (mere mortals); 13:6 (human beings)

E. Changes to avoid the word "son"

son (huios,, singular) changed to child (3)

MATT. 23:15;
LUKE 14:5;
HEB. 12:6

son (huios,, singular) changed to children (3)

GAL. 4:7 (2x-sentence plural);
REV. 21:7 (sentence plural)

sons (huios, plural) changed to children (16)

MATT. 5:9, 45; 17:25, 26;
LUKE 6:35;
JOHN 12:36;
ROM. 8:14, 19; 9:26;
GAL. 3:26;
1 THESS. 5:5 (2x);
HEB. 12:5, 7 (2x), 8

sons (huios, plural) changed to people (2)

MATT. 13:38 (2x)

sons (huios, plural) changed to sons and daughters (1)

HEB. 2:10

F. Changes to avoid the phrase "the Jews"

(The 2000 BDAG Lexicon (pages 478-479) objects to translating *hoi ioudaioi* as "the Jews" because it claims that "many readers or auditors of Bible translations do not practice the historical judgment necessary to distinguish between circumstances and events of an ancient time and contemporary ethnic-religions-social realities, with the result that anti-Judaism in the modern sense of the term is needlessly fostered through biblical texts" (p. 478). In other words, we should no longer translate *hoi ioudaioi* as "the Jews" because many Bible readers today will not realize that the Bible is talking about ancient Judaism, not modern Judaism. So it favors the translation, "Judean."

However, we find this argument unpersuasive because we believe that the term "Judean" will wrongly imply a reference to people who simply live in a certain geographical area, whether Jews or not, and will not adequately convey the

religious and ethnic identification with the ancient Jewish people that the term "the Jews" implies.

On the next page, the BDAG Lexicon discusses the phrase *hoi ioudaioi* when it is used of people who are opposed to Jesus, and says the following: "Those who are in opposition to Jesus, with special focus on hostility emanating from leaders in Jerusalem, center of Israelite belief and cult; there is no indication that John uses the term in the general ethnic sense suggested in modern use of the word Jew, which covers diversities of belief and practice that were not envisaged by biblical writers . . . " (p. 479). In other words, John does not use the word "Jew" to speak of modern Judaism or anything like the diversity of modern Judaism.

The implication of this BDAG comment is, again, that modern readers will not understand that John is referring to ancient Jews in the first century and that these are different from modern Jews in the 21st century. While we agree that John did not use *hoi ioudaioi* to refer to modern Judaism, we believe that readers of the Bible are able to realize that they are reading about events that occurred in ancient history. To take another example, when Bible readers today read that "Jesus entered Peter's house" (Matt. 8:14), we don't avoid using the word "house" out of fear that people will think Matthew meant a modern house with electricity and air-conditioning and an automatic dishwasher. Readers automatically realize that they are reading an ancient document and that "house" refers to whatever kind of house people had in first century Palestine. Even if the BDAG Lexicon is correct in saying that *hoi ioudaioi* can be used "with special focus on hostility emanating from leaders in Jerusalem," that does not mean that only the leaders were involved in such opposition to Jesus, for no doubt many common people were involved as well. And there were some Jewish leaders, such as Nicodemus (see John 3) who did not join in the opposition to Jesus. In addition, the Gospel of John and other New Testament books have other Greek expressions that they use when they want to single out the leaders, such as "the chief priests and the Pharisees" (John 7:32 NIV), "the leaders" (John 12:42 NIV), "the chief priests and their officials" (John 18:6 NIV), "your leaders" (Acts 3:17 NIV), "the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders," and "the leaders of the Jews" (Acts 28:17 NIV).

So it seems to us that changing *hoi ioudaioi* from "the Jews" to "Jewish leaders" introduces an incorrect change of meaning into a translation.

The older BAGD Lexicon (1979) simply translates *hoi ioudaioi* as "the Jews" (p. 379). The LSJ Lexicon simply translates *ho ioudaios* (singular form) as "a Jew," and gives no special meaning for the plural form (p. 832).)

the Jew(s) (*hoi ioudaioi*) changed to Jewish leaders (16)

> JOHN 1:19; 5:10, 15, 16; 7:1, 11, 13; 9:22; 18:14, 36; 19:12, 31, 38; 20:19;

> ACTS 13:50; 21:11

the Jew(s) (*hoi ioudaioi*) changed to they or omitted (9)

> JOHN 2:20; 5:18; 8:52, 57; 9:18, 22; 10:33; 18:31; 19:7

G. Changes that lose the nuance of holiness in "saints"

"saints" (Greek *hagios*, plural) changed to "believers" (4)

> ACTS 9:32; 26:10 **(2)**
> ROM. 15:31; 16:15 **(2)**

"saints" (Greek *hagios*, plural) changed to "people" or "God's people" (31)

> ROM. 8:27; 15:25; 16:2, 15 **(4)**
> 1 COR. 6:1, 2; 14:33; 16:15 **(4)**
> 2 COR. 8:4; 9:1; 13:13 **(3)**
> EPH. 1:15, 19; 3:18; 6:18 **(4)**
> PHIL. 4:22 **(1)**
> COL. 1:4, 12, 26 **(3)**
> 1 TIM. 5:10 **(1)**
> PHILEM. 1:5, 7 **(2)**
> JUDE 1:3 **(1)**
> REV. 5:8; 8:3; 11:18; 13:10; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:8 **(8)**

"saints" (Greek *hagios*, plural) changed to "those" (1)

> ACTS 9:13 ("those") **(1)**

H. Other Gender Related Changes

Other gender related changes (11)

> JOHN 2:4 ("woman" to "mother", also at 19:26); 21 ("woman" dropped, also at 20:13, 15);
> ACTS 12:13 ("girl" dropped); 19:24 ("craftsmen" to "workers"), 25 ("workmen" to "workers"), 38 ("craftsmen" to "associates");
> 1 COR. 7:29 ("wives" to "husband or wife");
> 2 COR. 11:13 ("workmen" to "workers")

Other examples of unnecessary removal of masculine references to God or Christ (6)

> JOHN 1:33 (the one who); 6:33 (that which; margin: he who); 10:2 (the one);
> HEB. 2:6 (the "son of man," apparent Messianic prophecy or theme that the author of Hebrews sees fulfilled in Christ from Ps. 8:4, changed to "human beings")

The TNIV: Gender Accurate or Ideologically Egalitarian

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Much controversy has surrounded the *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) since its initial appearance in 2001. Naturally, the TNIV committee has sought to reassure the Christian evangelical community that its work is worthy of Bible readers' confidence. The publisher, Zondervan, affirms categorically that the TNIV "is not a gender-neutral translation."[1] This statement is strictly true in one important sense, and laudably so. Unlike some recent, liberal translations like Oxford University Press's *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*, which refer to God as Mother/Father, eliminate all male pronouns for God, and designate the eternal Son as "child,"[2] the TNIV has retained all the male references to God and kept "Son" for Christ. We are in the committee's debt for holding the line on this important issue.

However, it is fair to say that the TNIV *is* "gender-neutral" *in relation to human males and females*. A working translation principle is stated in the opening pages: "Among the more programmatic changes in the TNIV is . . . the elimination of most instances of the generic use of masculine nouns and pronouns. . . . [Also] the so-called singular 'they/their/them' . . . has been employed. . . to fill the vocabulary gap . . . . "[3]

It seems to me that this "gender-neutrality" with regard to male and female sometimes takes the TNIV in an unquestionably "egalitarian" direction. I affirm this not because there are Bible scholars on the translation team who have publicly identified themselves as egalitarian. As a matter of fact there are some complementarians on the team. I affirm this because, in eliminating generic male references, the TNIV, like the evangelical egalitarian movement in general, at this crucial point, appears to side with modern culture in its rejection of the very notion of male representation. I grant that where there is the possibility of serious misunderstanding, that is, where it looks like only males are referenced, though all are nevertheless addressed, "gender-accurate" translation can be justified. This is a judgment call. But a heavy-handed or inflexible application of "gender-accuracy" fails, I judge, to do justice to the subtle and nuanced character of much biblical language. What I do find disconcerting is the TNIV's automatic elimination of male-tagged biblical usage when the Bible seeks to communicate two complementary notions *at the same time*, namely, both the inclusion of all and the equally important notion of male representation through a specific male role.

A case in point would be Hebrews 12:4-9, especially verse 7, where the fatherhood of God and his discipline is compared to that of a human father. The NIV has: "For what son is not disciplined by his father?" The TNIV reads: "What children are not disciplined by their parents?" To be sure, both parents are doubtless in view, and, in preaching, that truth needs to be clarified, but there is surely more. There is the specific role of the father, symbolizing something of God's role as Father. This theological truth seems to be granted by the TNIV committee in its translation of Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children." Here the TNIV does not use "parents" for the plural of *pateres*. Paul's thought seems to suggest that the particular role of father leaves fathers open to the sin of "provoking their children to wrath." That very male weakness indicates different, valid roles within the parental function. This thought is doubtless in the mind of the author to the Hebrews, who describes fatherly discipline as not always "pleasant" and sometimes "painful" (Hebrews 12:11).

The elimination of any significant role difference between males and females represents the essence of evangelical egalitarianism. No one in the evangelical camp would deny that the Bible is all-inclusive. However, the Bible, since its inception, in spite of male-generic language, has successfully managed to include all—men and women, boys and girls. It is this biblical notion of inclusion through differentiation, enshrined in male-generic biblical language everywhere, that the TNIV eliminates. Though claiming that the removal is "gender accurate," there is reason to wonder whether the TNIV committee has imposed onto the inspired text, wittingly or unwittingly, an essential egalitarian principle, without debate or discussion. Future readers of this Bible will never be faced with the issue, because the Bible—that is, this Bible—by its omission, tells me so. In this subtle way, a theological opinion about the inappropriateness of male representation in language (or at least the theological conviction of its unimportance) is given the status of "biblical" authority.

Is male representation both in life and language such an unimportant subject that it can be sacrificed, without further discussion, to the over-riding concerns of contemporary "readability" and usage? Are male generic pronouns in the Bible merely quaint and insignificant fossils of a by-gone, male-dominated era, always unclear, always to be expunged from the biblical record for a more "gender accurate" rendition? Or are they part of the Bible's nuanced pedagogy on sexuality that our confused culture so desperately needs to hear? Can one wave goodbye to thousands of years of biblical usage without one word of explanation? With questions of human theological interpretation, ought not extreme caution be used before changing the very words of the inspired text?

Besides, in the Bible, male representation is not an infrequent or minor issue. It is in the warp and woof of Scripture from beginning to end. It is part of biblical pedagogy from Genesis to Revelation. Male headship and covenantal representation appear throughout both the Old and New Testaments as fundamental elements in the Bible's account of creation and redemption. In creation, the male Adam is "created first," and has a representative and leadership role in the original couple. That role is maintained throughout the Bible's long history, and is important enough to be reaffirmed in the New Testament in the headship of the husband in marriage and family. Male representation in the elders and fathers of Israel, in Abraham and his seed, is a constant element of the Old Testament biblical narrative, and is maintained in male leadership in the New Testament Church. In the drama of redemption, the first man, Adam, is the representative sinner, not Eve. Christ, the Last Adam, a man, is the Savior. Paul puts it this way: "Since death came through *one man*, the resurrection of the dead comes also through *a man*."[4]

The TNIV renders this seminal text: "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a human being."[5] In regard to the biblical

doctrines of creation and redemption, the TNIV adjudges insignificant the male gender of these two covenant heads, Adam and Christ. This is not just "gender-accuracy." This is a major *theological* decision affecting the Bible's teaching on the male role. Interestingly, the radically gender-free, gnosticizing *Inclusive Version*, cited above, states explicitly that there is no Christological significance in Jesus being a man, and that Jesus could just as easily have been a woman, and could have been called "daughter of God."[6] Their translation of 1 Corinthians 15:21 is word for word identical to that of the TNIV. So one must ask: Is the TNIV giving us "gender-accuracy" here or the expression, intended or not, of a certain "lite" version of egalitarian theology?

Obviously, this is not the place to develop a sustained argument on the subject of male and female in Scripture. That has been done many times elsewhere. Suffice it to say that there are major issues here that affect the home and the church, and ultimately the society, which the TNIV is solving, not by theological debate, but by translational policy. Though proclaiming the goal of "gender-accuracy," there seems to be more here than meets the eye. Complementarians are concerned that behind the claim of "gender accuracy," a particular theological agenda, doubtless inadvertently, is imported into the sacred text of Scripture, and in the process, a particular, novel interpretation is elevated to the level of biblical authority.

One must certainly acknowledge the inevitable phenomenon of language mutation, and hail the value of the committee's concern to produce a contemporary rendering of the timeless Word of God. However, at the same time, translation is not done in a theological or cultural vacuum. Especially in our day, many deliberate and strategic changes in language have arisen out of ideological attempts to reconfigure reality, in particular, sexual and gender reality. We are thus obliged to ask if something, however subtle, of that ideology is part of the present equation.

It might be useful to note what is occurring in the parallel universe of the secular academy. In a review of *Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing*, edited by Marilyn Schwartz and the Task Force on Bias-Free Language of the Association of American University Presses,[7] the secular journalist, P. J. O'Rourke notes a not-so-subtle attempt to redefine the world via the deliberate manipulation of language. Many of the examples of approved "bias-free language" found in this manual are obvious and deeply ideological expressions of the reigning, politically-correct, feministic world view of the post-Christian Western academy.

Thirteen pages of this book are devoted to finding alternatives to the generic "he." How important must be the elimination of this linguistic form in order to ensure the ideological success of the movement? Naturally, the word

"man," meaning humanity, is to be discarded, replaced by "people" or "person." What O'Rourke calls the "use of the obnoxious singular 'they,'" is extolled as the way forward.[8]

One cannot help but note that many of these very same concerns characterize the translation theories of the TNIV. Consciously or not, at this level, this fine group of Christian scholars seems to be momentarily in agreement with radical academic feminism, an ideology that has successfully convinced contemporary culture, including many evangelicals,[9] that male representation and generic male language are signs of male chauvinism and power-hungry patriarchy. Behind the dismissal of the generic "he" in these *Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing* lies a whole revolutionary agenda to redefine reality through intentional language alteration. This is not my idea.

The book's publisher, the Association of American University Presses, admits as much. In a position statement adopted by the AAUP Board of Directors in November 1992, it is programmatically stated: "Books that are on the cutting edge of scholarship should also be at the forefront in recognizing how language encodes prejudice. They should *be agents for change* (italics mine) and the redress of past mistakes."[10]

Language usage is not so much changing as being purposely and calculatedly changed! What are we changing, I ask, for what reason, and on what basis? Who defines what constitutes "mistakes"? Who is doing the changing? The answers to these questions are merely assumed by assuming the correctness of today's academic agenda.

The following examples of "bias-free norms" taken from *Guidelines* illustrate some of these unquestioned assumptions that make up this powerful, ideologically-consistent, but often unidentified, agenda.[11]

"Scholars normally refer to individuals solely by their full or their last names, omitting courtesy titles":

—*ideological translation*: in this world, one's marital status is no longer socially useful, because marriage itself has been seriously marginalized;

"Writers must resort to gender-neutral alternatives where the common gender form has become strongly marked as masculine":

—*ideological translation*: the feminist promotion of gender sameness must not be slowed down by terms like "mailman" and "fireman";

"Sensitive writers seek to avoid terms and statements implying or assuming that heterosexuality is the norm for sexual attraction":

—*ideological translation*: traditional moral norms for sexuality have been rejected;

"The term normal may legitimately refer to a statistical norm for human ability ("Normal vision is 20/20") but should usually be avoided in other contexts as ... invidious":

—*ideological translation*: even the idea of normal in general should be banished from language;

"Gratuitous characterizations of individuals, such as well-dressed, intelligent, articulate, and qualified... may be unacceptably patronizing in some contexts":

—*ideological translation*: all standards and norms in modern society must be eliminated.

We must not miss the deeply "spiritual" side of this socio-linguistic agenda, because all human thinking is ultimately religious and nothing is finally "bias-free." This is especially so in the present-day academy, where advocacy and spirituality have replaced debate and the search for objectivity.[12] Here there is thunderous bias—against the Creator and his handiwork. The intellectually brilliant Isis priestess, Caitlin Matthews, rolls back the academic/linguistic curtain to reveal the profoundly religious character of the movement. She predicts an imminent religious revival, what she calls the "Second Coming of the Goddess,"[13] and states:

> We are working towards better integration of the sexes and *that cannot come about until the spiritual values are given justice* [italics mine]. Sophia's androgeneity and her extensive repetoire of metaphors exemplifies her availability to both men and women; for she symbolically reconciles the left and the right halves of the brain — the intellectual and the intuitive sides which have been seen as masculine and feminine.[14]

This is the bottom-line agenda of "bias-free" ideology, here expressed in theological categories. In other words, the elimination of gender distinctions is not innocent but profoundly intentional. At its deepest level, the elimination of gender distinctions has nothing to do with democracy and "rights" but the facilitation of the expression of the "spiritual values" associated with pagan religion. Socio-sexual leveling and liberation into endless permutations of sexual and mental androgyny will not truly take place, according to this insightful Wiccan priestess, until pagan spirituality is generally believed and practiced. In other words, gender confusion and occult spirituality go hand in hand.[15] In such a world, biblical sexual distinctions and gender role differences are anathema.

It does appear that what is happening today in the politically-correct hot-house atmosphere of academic post-

modern advocacy feminism, which in so many cases covers itself in empowering pagan spirituality, has little or nothing to do with the kind of inevitable linguistic changes that occur over long periods of time in all languages. The TNIV translation committee rightly observes that "while a basic core of the English language remains relatively stable, many diverse and complex cultural forces *continue* (italics mine) to bring about subtle shifts in meanings . . . "[16] I stressed the word "continue" for it suggests the natural, normal mutation of all languages through long periods of history. In this natural process, a word like "prevent" (Latin—*prevenire*) which once meant "go before," as in "prevenient grace," over the centuries now comes to mean "stop" or "disallow."

There is nothing "natural" about today's language battles. They have to do with periods of rapid revolutionary change and determined ideological social engineering, periods like that of the French Revolution. Soon after 1789, the radicals renamed the months of the year (from January, February, etc, to Fructidor, Germidor, Floreal, Thermidor, Prairial, Pluviose, etc), began re-dating chronological history so that AD 1792 became Year I, declared a ten day week, and erected an altar to the Goddess Reason in Notre Dame cathedral. Understanding the power of language, the revolutionaries developed a "rhetoric of 'Liberty.'"[17] According to a historian of the period, it was this revolutionary rhetoric that "created 'The People,' (that is, the Revolution), not vice versa." [18] In other words, the much vaunted *vox populi* was actually the elitist voice of a few wild-eyed activists and academic theorists. The people were "sheeple." The Revolution was the work of the Revolutionaries. So sudden and radical were the changes that a few years later many of these revolutionary innovations had simply disappeared. Napoleon and the people had the last word.

There are fascinating parallels with our own time. After the Cultural Revolution of the Sixties, which was essentially a campus phenomenon, we have witnessed a determined effort by a cultural elite—"tenured radicals" and their disciples—in key places of power and influence to redefine morals, sexuality and spirituality for everyone. The Goddess is poised to take control. Says apostate Presbyterian theologian, Lloyd Geering, expressing the spiritual revolution in gender terms: "The loving care of Mother Earth is in many quarters replacing the former sense of obedience to the Heavenly Father."[19] "The time for glorifying the Almighty (male) God who supposedly rules *is now over* (my emphasis)."[20] In this world, everything male, and especially male representation, must be eliminated. Everything reminding us of that period must go. Geering, who is promoted by the Jesus Seminar, actually predicts that, in the future, society will rename the year AD 2000 as 1 GE, the first year of the global era.[21]

I do not believe I am exaggerating when I say that we are witnessing a social revolution that is determined to erase from the cultural memory of the "Christian" West both the

normativity of heterosexual gender and role distinctions and the patriarchal God of the Bible. Essential to this revolution is the control and manipulation of language. Interestingly, this revolution, which began with the sexual revolution and the rejection of male/female distinctions ends with the rejection of the male God of the Bible, for this Arch-Patriarch, Jahweh, stands in the way of final liberation. Naomi Goldenberg, a Jewish feminist who became a witch, already stated the agenda in 1979: "We women are going to bring an end to God."[22] She means, of course, the (male) God of the Bible.

We evangelicals are not translating the Bible in a cultural vacuum or in any old, "normal" time frame. We do it in the white heat of ideological and spiritual warfare. Thus, while it is absolutely paramount to let the word of God say everything it wants to say, including gender inclusive language, if that is what the Bible has to say, it would be a pity—no, a disaster—to translate the Bible according to the very contemporary revolutionary "norms" that have as their goal the ultimate silencing of the Bible.

It seems to me that the TNIV's translation theory—" . . . many diverse and complex cultural forces continue to bring about subtle shifts in the meanings and/or connotations of even old, well-established words and phrases"[23]— fails to account for the complexity and conflictual character of the *present* revolutionary situation, and seems naively unaware of where such a theory could take evangelical Bible translation in days to come. One member of the translation committee explicitly says that the TNIV has in mind "especially younger girls."[24] It is these readers, often brain-washed by secular egalitarian feminism, who need to hear the Bible's counter-cultural message concerning divinely created sexual differentiation.

With this principle of sensitivity to present cultural forces and language changes, such a theory sometimes seems more like capitulation than translation. In the evangelical publishing world generally, publishers are bending over backwards to fit in with the new ideology. One of the editors from Zondervan, Bob Hudson, and his wife, Shelley Townsend, who noticeably does not take her husband's name, published *The Christian Writers' Manual of Style* in 1988. In this guide for Christian writers, male representation in language is dismissed as "sexism." Writers "should avoid . . . language that expresses an inherent predominance of one sex over the other."[25] Male representation is dismissed with the negative term "predominance." It is rejected as language containing "subtle sexist messages."[26] This outright rejection of patriarchal language, so common to the Bible, collides with Hudson's and Townsend's call for care in language. They argue that, for Christian writers, "words have special significance . . . , (and, specifically) the words of Scripture (which) have shaped our civilization."[27] But on this crucial subject, these words of Scripture are no longer allowed to shape the culture, but made to fit with feministic liberation

ideology and the rejection of gender roles. Another evangelical publisher, Brazos, an imprint of Baker Books, makes this ideology explicit. "Editorially, we affirm women alongside men in church and leadership positions."[28]

This general "egalitarian" approach to generic male language sets itself up for serious compromise in the future. The TNIV committee rightly congratulates itself for "retain(ing) male terminology for all references to God— without exception."[29] Will the next generation of translators be able to hold this line, since the present committee's justification for changing male generic pronouns *for human relationships* is already the same one used by the *Inclusive Version* to remove all male gender references *to God*. Here is how the editors of this extremist, "cutting-edge" rendition of Scripture justify their work:

> The English language has changed in recent years in many ways . . . in the direction of greater specificity with regard to gender . . . (notice the claim to accuracy mine). The editors were committed to accelerating changes in English language towards inclusiveness in a holistic sense. The result is another step in the continuing process of rendering Scripture in language that reflects our best understanding of the nature of God, of humanity and divinity of Jesus, and of the wholeness of human beings.[30]

This statement recognizes not only changes in language, but the need to help change language in the direction of a specific ideology. Such a principle causes this translation team, as noted above, to suppress all male gender references to God, and substitute "child of God" for "Son of God."[31] This *Inclusive Version* claims to be "language-improved to more precisely reflect a universal concept of God and Jesus Christ."[32] With this addition of precision we get priceless offerings like: "We cry, Abba! Father-Mother"[33]; "Christ did not please Christ's self"[34]; "If God has been glorified in the Human One, God will also glorify that very one in Godself and will glorify that one at once."[35] This is precision tripping over itself to avoid committing the unpardonable sin of male references, but ends up in politically-correct gibberish. Such "translation" is worthy of the judgment of Jesus: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!"[36]

On the market since 1995, the *Inclusive Version* has already responded to the "complex cultural forces" which oppose generic male references by eliminating all gender-specific references to God and turning "the Man, Christ Jesus"[37] into a genderless child. But this kind of sensitivity to the culture is not only found in mainline liberal circles. Even now, I have been told, some evangelical egalitarian colleges discourage the use on campus of the term "Father" for God, for fear of offending certain women. This is maintained in spite of the fact that the term "Father" represents the very high-point of New Testament revelation, and the very depth of Christian spirituality. Our savior Jesus himself exemplified this.[36] At *the* crucial moment in the history of redemption, when everything was on the line, Jesus uttered this prayer of deep filial devotion: "Abba, Father, . . . everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."[39] Paul articulates this truth in two of his letters. To the Christians at Rome he says: "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"[40] The true function of the Spirit, achieved by the work of Christ, brings people into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In similar fashion, to the Gentile converts in the Galatian church, Paul says: "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'"[41] This is not just a New Testament idea. To know God intimately as Father is the great goal of God's saving project in the Old Testament:[42] "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Paul sees this goal already realized in the church in pagan Corinth.[43]

In spite of these essential Gospel truths, the "cultural forces" are stronger, and Scriptural terminology and theology must be modified to fit the social, gender-inclusive agenda, even for those who still claim the name Evangel. If generic male language does not mean what it textually says—"all represented through the male"—then why hold on to male language for God, since God is not "male"? If generic male language offends or excludes women, as many Christian publishers, in justification of their inclusive language policies now claim, surely male language for God is equally offensive for the same reason. Can we not already anticipate the argument from some future "evangelical" translation team: "Nowadays, many people no longer conceive of God in masculine terms, and so, having regard to the complex cultural forces which continue to bring about subtle shifts in the meanings and/or connotations of even old, well-established words and phrases, we have eliminated all generic masculine references to the Deity."

I do not believe this eventuality is too far down the road of Bible translation, and so I would plead with my brothers and sisters on the TNIV team to reconsider their methodology, especially where the double notions of male representation and inclusiveness are integrally combined, for the following reason: The masculine references to God, which the TNIV courageously maintains, do not stand alone. They are part of a complex web of interrelated notions, where the truths about God find some reflection in the creation he makes. For Paul, the relationship between God as Father and the male role as father in the family are deeply related.[44] God is not a single parent. He is Father. When the earthly role of father has been eliminated, or, less radically, merged into a general parental function, how can

people conceive of a heavenly Father,[45] and how does one resist the pressure to alter male biblical language about God to "reflect a universal concept of God and Jesus Christ,"[46] to produce divine titles like Mother/Father or heavenly Parent.

With the exception of a few metaphors ("like a hen," "like a mother"), the God of Scripture exclusively and consistently reveals himself via the masculine gender, as the TNIV recognizes. This is surely not the result of a sinful, patriarchal society imposing male terminology on the Deity, but the Creator's determined intention to employ the necessary and delicate balance of the male/female distinctions he created, which are also consistently revealed in Scripture, in order to recall his own role as transcendent and differentiated Creator. God as "male" and human male representation are like two supporting pillars in the construction of the biblical narrative. The TNIV is holding on to one, but self-consciously letting go the other. But, as the cultural/neo-pagan spiritual revolution all around us is demonstrating with utmost clarity, determined vigor and ominous success, when you remove one the other, sooner or later, will also fall.

Once human sexual relationships are no longer taken to represent meaningful role distinctions, nor seen as symbols of a higher, divine reality, then the disintegration of the Christian faith and the biblical world view is not far away. The nature and well-being of created humanity and the story of Gospel redemption are stake, for the way is opened for the biblical revelation of the person of God to be deconstructed along the lines we now already see in inclusivist translations of Scripture. God becomes an amorphous and impersonal He/She/It, the Spirit in and around all things, and Christianity moves closer to taking its place, as Lloyd Geering eerily and joyfully predicts it, as "a facet of a new global (pagan) religion."[47] ◼

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[1] A public e-mail from Zondervan, February 06, 2002.

[2] See *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) xi-xiii.

[3] "Word to the Reader," *Today's New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) vii.

[4] 1 Corinthians 15:21.

[5] TNIV, 1 Corinthians 15:21.

[6] *Inclusive Version*, xiii.

[7] P.J. O'Rourke, "A Review of *Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing*, by Marilyn Schwartz and the Task Force on Bias-Free Language of the Association of American University Presses," *The American Spectator* (August, 1995).

[8] Ibid., as it is by the TNIV Bible committee. According to the Zondervan e-mail, cited above, "The TNIV sometimes uses a generic plural pronoun in the place of a masculine singular pronoun, making it more consistent with contemporary English practice."

[9] See below the statements of evangelical writers, Bob Hudson and Shelley Townsend in their book, *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style*.

[10] Ibid.

[11] For quotations see O'Rourke "Review of Guidlines."

[12] I am not suggesting that every one in the academy signs on to the religious commitments, but that the various levels of the agenda can and do feed one another, so that those who do no want to go the whole way are incapable of stopping the rushing tide.

[13] Caitlin Matthews, *Sophia: Goddess of Wisdom: The Divine Feminine from Black Goddess to World-Soul* (London: The Aquarian Press, 1992) 332.

[14] Ibid., 333.

[15] I tried to show this in, Peter Jones, "Androgyny: The Pagan SexualIdeal," *JETS* 43/3 (September, 2000) 443-469. On the pagan side, this is similarly affirmed.

[16] TNIV, vii.

[17] Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of The French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1989) 166 and 168.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Lloyd Geering, *The World to Come: From Christian Past to Global Future* (Polebridge Press, 1999) 158.

[20] Ibid., 129.

[21] Ibid., 107.

[22] Naomi Goldenberg, *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979) 3-4.

[23] "Word to the Reader," *Today's New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) vii.

[24] Donald H. Madvig, "A Response to the 'Statement of Concern about the TNIV Bible," *Perspectives on Gender Accuracy and the TNIV* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 5.

[25] Bob Hudson and Shelley Townsend, eds., *The Christian Writers' Manual of Style* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988) 86.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 9.

[28] Cited in Sam Torode, "The Abolition of *Man*," *World* (July/August, 2002) 44.

[29] A public e-mail from Zondervan, February 06, 2002.

[30] *Inclusive Version*, ix.

[31] Ibid., xi and xiii.

[32] This statement appeared in the Oxford University Press catalogue, announcing the translation's appearance.

[33] Romans 8:15.

[34] Romans 15:3.

[35] John 13:32.

[36] Mark 7:9.

[37] 1 Timothy 2:5.

[38] John 14:6-14; 16:15; 17:1; 11; 25-26.

[39] Mark 14:36.

[40] Romans 8:15.

[41] Galatians 4:6.

[42] 2 Samuel 7:14 cf., 7:8.

[43] 2 Corinthians 6:18, which cites the above Old Testament texts.

[44] Ephesians 3:14.

[45] The radical theologian, Lloyd Geering, *The World to Come*, 124, even as he argues for the elimination of the biblical God, recognizes this biblical connection. He states: "When the divine male gender reigns supreme in the heavenly places as the Almighty, so the human male gender dominates the earth."

[46] This statement appeared in the Oxford University Press catalogue, announcing the translation's appearance.

[47] *The World to Come*, 154.

Avoiding Generic "He" in the TNIV

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Like earlier gender-neutral translations,[1] *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) consistently eliminates generic "he," and by doing so changes meanings.

The discussion of gender-neutral translations in the book *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy* (GNBC) continues to be relevant and applicable to this translation.[2] The TNIV, a revision of the *New International Version* of 1984, is definitely gender-neutral in its treatment of terms like "father," "brother," "son," and "man," as well as in its avoidance of generic "he."

In this article I consider only the policy of avoiding generic "he." "Generic 'he'" describes the use of the masculine singular "he," "his," "him," and "himself" in the context of a general statement, typically a statement starting with "anyone," "no one," "everyone," "whoever," or "each."[3] We exclude general statements beginning with "he who," because "he who" can legitimately be re-expressed with other phrases such as "the one who," "anyone who," or "whoever."[4] But in most other occurrences, generic "he" can only be eliminated by more extended rewording, rewording that inevitably introduces meaning changes. The book GNBC devotes considerable space to the topic, because many factors and several kinds of arguments and counterarguments need discussion.[5] I do not propose to repeat or review all the arguments at this time, but rather to inspect the details of how TNIV avoids generic "he."

We gather verses together into five categories according to the route that they use.

1. Pluralizing

First, TNIV converts many statements from third-person singular to third-person plural.[6]

Consider Revelation 2:26-28.

NIV: To **him** who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— '**He** will rule them with an iron scepter; **he** will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give **him** the morning star.

TNIV: To **those** who are victorious and do my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—**they** 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give **them** the morning star.

In these verses TNIV converts all the third-person singulars ("he/him") to third-person plurals ("they/them/those"). The meanings are fairly similar; but they are not completely identical. TNIV opens up a potential ambiguity between an individualizing and a corporate interpretation. In the individualizing interpretation, each individual victor rules. In the corporate interpretation, they exercise a single joint rule, with one "iron scepter" (singular). In the corporate interpretation they also jointly receive "the morning star," a single gift to all of them together. The retention of singulars for

"scepter" and "star" may push readers in the direction of a more corporate understanding.[7]

Because we are all united to Christ, who is the chief ruler, we can deduce that doubtless there is a corporate dimension to the rule of the saints. But that is the implication from other passages, not the explicit teaching of this passage.

Note also a more subtle effect. Even if we ignore the ambiguity, the use of the singular invites us to use as a starting point a sample case, "him," from which we infer a general principle applicable to every case. TNIV starts with the generality, "those," from which we infer applicability to any particular case. The directions of inferences are subtly different, and this is already a difference in meaning.[8]

Now consider 1 John 4:16.

NIV: . . . **Whoever** lives in love lives in God, and God in **him**.

TNIV: . . . **Those** who live in love live in God, and God in **them**.

The NIV again has a principle applicable to each individual. But the TNIV is ambiguous. It allows a corporate interpretation in which "living in God" and "God in them" refer to the totality of Christians together—the church lives in God and God in the church. This thought is theologically true (see 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 1 Thess. 1:1), but it is not the assertion of this verse, and the TNIV alters meaning by allowing it there.

Consider 1 John 3:3.

NIV: **Everyone** who has this hope in **him** purifies **himself**, just as he is pure.

TNIV: **All** who have this hope in **them** purify **themselves**, just as he is pure.

Again TNIV opens up a potential ambiguity between an individualizing and a corporate interpretation. In the individualizing interpretation, the purification takes place when each individual purifies himself. In the corporate interpretation, the purification takes place as each individual purifies everyone else as well as himself, or as each individual purifies the whole body through actions that help the body corporately. Corporate growth of the body of Christ is taught elsewhere (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12-14), so this latter interpretation is reasonable. But the singulars in Greek and in the NIV indicate unambiguously an individualizing interpretation (which, in the light of teachings elsewhere, will doubtless have some indirect corporate effects).

Consider 1 John 3:9.

NIV: **No one** who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in **him**; **he** cannot go on sinning, because **he** has been born of God.

TNIV: **Those** who are born of God will not continue to sin, because God's seed remains in **them**; **they** cannot go on sinning, because **they** have been born of God.

Once again, TNIV converts to plurals ("those"), and thereby allows a corporate interpretation, namely that the body of people whom God has brought together through spiritual birth do not continue to sin, *as a group, when looked at as a whole*. But there may be some few exceptions that do not ruin the observation with respect to the general whole. By contrast, the singular ("no one," "him," etc.) is more explicit about disallowing exceptions. Naturally, this is not an all-or-nothing issue. We must allow that, for certain verses, the context may indicate that there are exceptions even in a case that is formulated using the singular. The point is that the singular is stronger in pushing one away from allowing exceptions.

Revelation 3:12.

NIV: **Him** who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will **he** leave it. I will write on **him** the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on **him** my new name.

TNIV: **Those** who are victorious I will make **pillars** in the temple of my God. Never again will **they** leave it. I will write on **them** the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on **them** my new name.

TNIV again pluralizes and introduces the possibility of a corporate interpretation. Is the name of my God written on each person individually or once on the group as a whole? If one pictures literal pillars, one might most naturally think of the name being written on each one, but it is also possible that the name would be spelled across a group. In any case, the language of pillars is metaphorical, so it remains possible that in the reality to which the metaphor points, the name would be inscribed once on all of "them" as a group.

TNIV has converted to plurals every one of the seven promises to the "overcomers" (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28, 3: 5, 12, 21). The cumulative shift from single case to plural members of a group, over a considerable number of verses, is a fairly pronounced change.

Matthew 16:24-25.

NIV: . . . If **anyone** would come after me, **he** must deny **himself** and take up **his** cross and follow me. For **whoever** wants to save **his** life will lose it, but **whoever** loses **his** life for me will find it.

TNIV: . . . **Those** who want to be my disciples must deny **themselves** and take up **their** cross and follow me. For **those** who want to save their life will lose it, but **those** who lose **their** life for me will find it.

The retention of singular "cross" and singular "life" makes this saying ambiguous between a corporate and an individual interpretation.[9] (The parallel passage in Luke 9:23-24 shows a similar problem.)

John 14:12.

NIV: . . . **anyone** who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. **He** will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

TNIV: . . . **all** who have faith in me will do the works I have been doing, and **they** will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

John 15:20

NIV: **No servant** is greater than **his master**.

TNIV: Servants are not greater than **their** masters.

TNIV will not allow a male element even in this parable-like analogy to Christian living.

1 John 5:12.

NIV: **He** who has the Son has life; **he** who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

TNIV: **Those** who have the Son have life; **those** who do not have the Son of God do not have life.

The NIV could have been changed by using "one who" or "anyone who" instead of "he who." It is unclear why the TNIV pluralized the whole. Once again, the change opens up the possibility of a corporate interpretation, where all together have a life together. This is doubtless theologically true, but not the focus on the verse.

One could produce many more examples. As a sample of the frequency of this usage, I have found the following additional examples from the Gospels: Matt 10:10, 24, 25, 38, 39; 12:35; 13:12, 19, 21, 23, 57; 23:12; 25:29; Mark 2:22; 4:25; 6:4; 8:34; 13:13; Luke 4:24; 5:37; 6:40, 45, 47-48; 8:18; 10:7; 11:10; 12:21; 14:11, 27; 16:16; 17:33; 18:14; 19:26; John 3:20, 21; 4:14, 36, 44; 7:18; 11:9-10; 12:25, 35, 45, 47, 48; 13:10, 16; 15:15.

2. Change from third person ("he") to second person ("you")

On occasion TNIV substitutes "you" for generic "he." The general principle may still be the same, or similar, but the starting point for illustration is no longer someone "out there," but "you."[10]

Luke 16:13.

NIV: No servant can serve two masters. Either **he** will hate the one and love the other, or **he** will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

TNIV: No one can be a slave to two masters. Either **you** will hate the one and love the other, or **you** will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot be a slave to both God and Money.

The parallel in Matthew 6:24 has an analogous change.

The final sentence, "You cannot serve both God and Money," is second person in Greek and in the NIV. So far so good. But TNIV shifts into second person in the *second sentence*, one sentence *before* the Greek changes to second person. This change might not seem to be too bad, until one realizes that the first two sentences are presented as generalities about life. They picture for the listener a slave "out there." Only in the third does one hit the application, when one shifts from the generality "out there" to "you." TNIV ruins the surprise punch of the third sentence by prematurely making the second already "you."

TNIV also makes the second sentence awkward in another way. "Hate" and "love" are obviously hyperbolical when applied to a typical master-servant relation. The hyperbole can remain effective when applied to a servant "out there." But it is more likely to seem extreme when it is directly describing "you." The immediate reaction might be, "No, not me. That doesn't describe my actual experience." Again, the effectiveness of the whole saying is subtly damaged.

TNIV's change is all the less justified because this

verse is a kind of mini-parable. In Greek "no one" and "slave" are both masculine in gender. There is no reason why one should not think of a male slave as an example of a principle. When, in the third sentence, one leaves the realm of the parable and goes to the application to "you," the "you" is obviously inclusive of both men and women. There is no need to tamper with it.

Luke 9:26.

NIV: If **anyone** is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of **him** when he comes in his glory . . . .

TNIV: If any **of you are** ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of **you** when he comes in his glory . . . .

TNIV's change from "anyone" to "any of you" runs the danger of restricting the range of "anyone." Now it is no longer "anyone at all, throughout all ages," but "anyone of you present to hear." Perhaps one can still infer a broader application, but the broad sweep is not as unambiguous nor as directly and emphatically stated. (Mark 8:38 is similar.)

Matthew 16:26.

NIV: What good will it be for **a man** if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits **his** soul? Or what can **a man** give in exchange for **his** soul?

TNIV: What good will it be for **you** to gain the whole world, yet forfeit **your** soul? Or what can **you** give in exchange for **your** soul?

Mark 8:36 and Luke 9:25 are similar. (It would be allowable to use "a person" here instead of "a man" [Greek *anthropos*].[11] The problematic change lies in the shift to second person ["you"].)

1 John 2:15.

NIV: . . . If **anyone** loves the world, the love of the Father is not in **him**.

TNIV: . . . If **you** love the world, love for the Father is not in **you**.

1 John 3:17.

NIV: If **anyone** has material possessions and sees **his** brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in **him**?

TNIV: If any one **of you** has material possessions

and sees **a** brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in **you**?

1 John 5:16.

NIV: If **anyone** sees **his** brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, **he** should pray and God will give him life. ...

TNIV: If **you** see **any** brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, **you** should pray and God will give them life. ...

1 John 5:16b.

NIV: I am not saying that **he** should pray about that.

TNIV: I am not saying that **you** should pray about that.

In all the cases from 1 John "you" can refer to the immediate recipients of John's letter. It is not as clear as before that the principle holds in general, not just for the recipients.

3. Change from third person ("he") to first person ("we")

1 John 4:20.

NIV: If **anyone** says, "I love God," yet hates **his** brother, **he** is a liar. For **anyone** who does not love **his brother**, whom **he** has seen, cannot love God, whom **he** has not seen.

TNIV: If **we** say we love God yet hate **a fellow believer**, **we** are **liars**. For if **we** do not love **a brother or sister** whom **we** have seen, **we** cannot love God, whom **we** have not seen.

The third person, "anyone," leaves open the possibility that, in the historical context of the letter, John is thinking mostly of people who belonged to a dissident group and had already separated themselves from the church (1 John 2:19). Changing to "we" in the TNIV suggests instead that the issue at hand is primarily one of hypocrisy among those whom John is directly addressing. There is a difference of meaning here, affecting how we see the situation that John is addressing.

4. Dropping generic "he"

In some passages TNIV tries simply to drop generic "he." But this too can produce changes in meaning.

1 Corinthians 14:28.

NIV: If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak **to himself** and to God.

TNIV: If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to God **when alone**.

The NIV is correct in translating it "to himself." The phrase is parallel in structure to the phrase translated "to God."[12] TNIV's expression "when alone" not only leaves out completely the idea of speaking to himself, but adds the idea of being alone, which is not there explicitly in the Greek. And it is not clearly implied either, since the person in question could speak in tongues quietly, mumbling under his breath while still in the church setting. Or he could speak in tongues out loud in a context of a small number of other Christians who were each praying out loud to God, and with none disturbing another. (I understand that in some cultures, more given to expressing all prayers out loud, the practice of simultaneous vocal prayer by many is common, even outside the context of tongues.) The operative concern for Paul seems to be in not disrupting the church gathering by trying to address it in tongues, not in a literal restriction to being off by oneself.[13]

5. "They" with singular antecedent

Finally, TNIV uses "they" with a singular antecedent in order to avoid generic "he." Let us consider an example, John 14:23:

NIV: . . . If anyone loves me, **he** will obey my teaching. My Father will love **him**, and we will come to **him** and make our home with **him**.

TNIV: . . . Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love **them**, and we will come to **them** and make our home with **them**.

In the second sentence, TNIV substitutes "them" for "him" three times.[14] To whom does "them" refer? The context is set by the preceding sentence, which uses "anyone." "Anyone" is grammatically singular. It invites us to start with a particular case (one person), but that case is an example of a general principle applying to a whole group, namely all human beings, and then that large group is narrowed down to "anyone who loves me." The group is composed of a plurality of members, and "they" is sometimes used in contemporary English, as it has been for centuries, as the follow-up pronoun in such contexts.[15] We shall call this usage "'they' with singular antecedent."

How do we evaluate this kind of use of "they," which is

fairly frequent in TNIV? The question is complex, partly because different people may react differently to the same verse. A portion of the English-speaking public quite regularly uses "they" with singular antecedent, sometimes without realizing it. On the other hand, some people have heard from school grammarians that this usage is "wrong," and consciously try to avoid it. A portion perceives "they" with singular antecedent as improper, perhaps because of the influence of school pronouncements. A portion would see it as out of place in formal written English, but be more tolerant of its appearance in informal conversation.[16]

The potential for misunderstanding rears its head, because some people may look for a plural antecedent to "they." Others may interpret it as a fully plural usage, and conclude that the Father and the Son will make a single corporate home, "our home," with "them," that is, with all who love the Son. In that case the sentence is interpreted in a corporate sense, as having to do with "them" as members of the group to which God comes and which he loves, rather than as individuals.[17]

We can illustrate this possibility by imagining that Jesus had said something like this: "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them, and **they will share a new life together**." In this new statement, the wording "share . . . together" indicates unambiguously a corporate experience. A single person cannot "share" by himself. The word "they" must refer to Christians together, more than one at a time. It has plural *reference*, in spite of the earlier word "anyone," which refers to a single sample person within the group. But this means that, even *before* a reader comes to the key extra expression "share . . . together," he must allow for the possibility that the word "they" is referring to a plurality of members. And then one must also allow that this plurality of members might function *together*. And so the expression "our home with them" can mean a single "home" with them *together*, a corporate dwelling of the Father and the Son with "them" *together*, a dwelling of God in the church.

The use of "they" with singular antecedent does have one distinct advantage over all the other routes for avoiding generic "he." In the usual case, at least, it makes it possible for a sophisticated reader to reconstruct accurately what the actual meaning is. Substitute generic "he/his/him" for each occurrence of "they/their/them," and you have it! But of course that also raises a question. Why introduce the ambiguity of a corporate interpretation, when you can just use generic "he" and achieve your purpose immediately?! I know, I know, there are all kinds of concerns generated from ideological sources, and for those I must once again refer readers to the book GNBC.

Consider one more case, Revelation 3:20:

NIV: If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,

I will come in and eat with **him**, and **he** with me.

TNIV: If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with **them**, and **they** with me.

In this case, there is a potential plural antecedent, namely "those whom I love" in 3:19. If "they" refers back to this plural antecedent, then Jesus is saying that if anyone—even one person—opens the door, Jesus will come in and eat with "those whom I love," with the whole group of people in the Laodicean church, and by extension with any other church with similar problems. Such, of course, is not the meaning of the original.

One can hope that many people, because they remember this famous verse from *other translations*, will realize right away that this is not its meaning.[18] Others will quickly realize that the most obvious antecedent is the more immediate one, namely "anyone."

But even so, the potential for a corporate meaning does not disappear. Consider the following sentence: "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me, **and they will share a new life together**." The final occurrence of "they" has an unambiguously plural reference, and the other extra words speak unambiguously about a corporate experience. This result illustrates the fact that even the earlier words, "eat with them and they with me," *allow* a corporate interpretation. Under this interpretation, all the people who fit into the class indicated by the preceding occurrence of "anyone" may *together* have the experience of a communal meal with the Lord. And indeed, the Lord's Supper is just such a communal meal. As long as we do not add extra words like "share . . . together," the meaning is not unambiguously corporate. But neither is it unambiguously individual. Readers are automatically open to the *possibility* of a corporate function for "they," as the expression "they share" illustrates.[19]

Moreover, the thought of communal fellowship is a reasonable theological inference from teachings elsewhere about the Lord's Supper and about Jesus' fellowship with the church. But it is not directly the meaning of this verse, and opening up a corporate interpretation to this verse changes its meaning.

Evaluation

This collection of verses confirms what the book GBNC said two years ago. The techniques for avoiding generic "he" are roughly the same as in earlier gender-neutral translations, though with greater frequency for the use of "they" with singular antecedent. With respect to this last use, reactions may vary. For

the other uses, changes in meaning nuances are regularly visible, though the translators tried to keep them small.

My judgment remains what it was in GNBC: the translators should have discarded the underlying policy of avoiding generic "he." In translation, generic "he" is needed for maximal accuracy. The firm commitment to avoid it leads to unacceptable degradations of meaning. We lose a valuable resource in the English language, and with it a whole host of nuances in verse after verse.

The defenders of gender-neutral translation have a raft of replies, for which I must refer readers again to GNBC.[20] The appearance of the TNIV has led to a number of new papers, but for the most part they take up themes already discussed in GNBC (see the response below).[21] For now, let me be brief: generic "he" continues to be used in English in the secular press.[22] For Bible translation, we need it. Then let us use it. I continue to believe what I wrote in 2000 in *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy*:

> In fact, the "problem" with generic "he" is not with a single occurrence but with the pattern of thought in the Bible, a pattern that more often than not uses male examples as a starting point to express or illustrate truths that apply to both men and women. This pattern of thought a translator is not free to change or tone down in translation.[23]

Addendum: Response to Craig Blomberg and D. A. Carson

As we have seen, the TNIV changes person and number in order to avoid generic "he" (sections 1-3 above). In defense of the TNIV Craig Blomberg cites a number of cases where parallel passages in the Gospels differ in person or number (Matt. 5:3//Luke 6:20; Matt. 9:17//Mark 2:22; John 3:5//3:7), and passages where New Testament authors shift person or number in stating general truths (John 15:15; Rom. 4:7-8; 13:2; etc.).[24] Much could be said about these and other examples. For the sake of brevity I note only the following points:

First, in each of the passages that Blomberg cites, he perceives no meaning difference. But I find the usual subtle meaning differences due to person and number, just as GNBC did (pp. 112-124). The passages therefore prove nothing.

Second, Gospel parallels are not Bible translations. If they *did* give us a model for what is permissible in translation, then a modern translation could freely interchange the wordings and meanings found in *any* of the parallels, producing a "gospel harmony" without differences between the Gospels. Every New Testament scholar would find this completely unacceptable. Blomberg, who is a New Testament

scholar himself and is familiar with Gospel parallels, should see the fallacy in using these examples as if they provided a principle for *translation*.

Third, passages for which New Testament writers are the original authors are not translations. An original author is free to vary person and number. With the third person he makes a statement that directly focuses on the general case, while with the second person he makes a statement that directly focuses on the addressee(s). These complementary foci reinforce one another, rather than proving absolute identity of meaning. They therefore offer no principle by which to justify meaning alterations in translation.

Fourth, Blomberg needs not merely a few examples where (he alleges) person and number make no difference, but a general principle that will justify all the places where the TNIV makes changes. Such a general principle is clearly contradicted by any of the passages above that show subtle but demonstrable meaning changes.

In sum, Blomberg fallaciously uses Scriptural examples that are not about Bible translation in order to justify flawed translation.

Carson's article

Now let us consider D. A. Carson's recent article, "The Limits of Functional Equivalence."[25] Most of the article discusses the general subject of dynamic equivalent translation, and makes points many of which are compatible with GNBC 57-81. But when Carson comes to discuss gender, he misrepresents our position. We can only touch on the main problems.

First, Carson criticizes us for permitting some changes but not others: "They are making such changes . . . all the time, . . . But when others make similar changes with respect to the pronoun 'he,' Poythress and Grudem condemn them for distorting the Word of God" (p. 22; see also p. 26 and p. 24 n54). Carson's word "similar" makes it sound as if we have no standards or are making arbitrary judgments in permitting some changes but not others. But this is not true. We already explain this issue in GNBC, chapter 5, where we talk about "Permissible Changes"; and the Colorado Springs Guidelines mapped out areas of permissible change.[26] Roughly speaking, changes toward generic English are permissible when we are not losing a male meaning component in the original. And changes with respect to generic "he" are permissible when they do not produce significant meaning loss. (For instance, GNBC 111 permits "he who" being replaced by "anyone who" or "whoever," because there is no significant meaning loss from the original.) Carson is of course free to disagree with where we draw the line. But instead he describes us as if we give no reasons.

Carson also paints a harsh picture of us by saying that we "condemn them," that is, condemn the translators.[27] That is not true. We most pointedly do not do so. GNBC repeatedly makes a distinction between the translators and the resulting translation:

> We are not criticizing the personal motives of the translators. (GNBC 7) We must be careful not to jump to conclusions about individuals. For convenience we have spoken of what translators do, but all we actually have is the product, the resulting translation. We know neither what was going on in translators' minds nor the motives that underlay their thinking. . . . Thus, it is inappropriate to make this issue an occasion for personal attacks. We must beware of overreacting and firing ourselves with a zeal that "is not based on knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). (GNBC 293).

Carson overlooks these explicit statements in suggesting that we are attacking the *translators*.

Carson more than once complains about overheated rhetoric coming from people on our side. But this distortion of our position on his part is not only unfair—it is overheated, and may unwittingly encourage those on our side, if they believe Carson, to imitate the harshness that they mistakenly think we advocate, thereby further heating up the situation. Similarly, on p. 26, Carson says, " . . . their wrath knows few bounds when the TNIV deploys a plural instead of a singular." Colorful, no doubt, but also unfair and dangerous.

Second, Carson has this to say:

> I cannot help remarking, rather wryly, that in the light of the ESV, the argument of Poythress and Grudem sounds a bit like this: "The language is not changing, so we do not need to respond to the demands of inclusive language. But if it is changing, the changes are driven by a feminist agenda, so they are wrong and must be opposed if we are to be faithful to Scripture. Because of the changes, we will make some minor accommodations in our translations, but if others make any other changes, they are compromisers who introduce distortions and inaccuracies, and should be condemned, because changes aren't necessary anyway!" (p. 24 n54)

Carson here uses the unfair language "condemned" and "compromisers," again falsely accusing us of attacking the translators personally. In addition the picture that he paints is totally off-base. Carson's depiction repeats the errors of his earlier caricature of us in *Debate*, 183-184, which we pointedly refuted in GNBC 358-360, and now he produces an even more

distorted version, to which he adds our personal names!

Yes, it is intended to be humorous, but in the context of other misrepresentations the humor may manipulate readers. First it lowers the normal demands for fairness and evidence ("a bit like this"). Then by the effects of witty distortion it leaves a colorful, lasting impression that at bottom our position must be hypocritical and ridiculous. One wants to believe the picture because it is witty, not because it is true. And then, if objection is made, will we be told that it is "only a joke"?

Third, Carson says Poythress and Grudem "abuse their own theory by not admitting that basic translations really cannot frequently rise much beyond level 2." But this statement misrepresents us. Far from "not admitting" translation limitations, in the very chapter 4 to which Carson refers, we explicitly discuss at some length the limitations of translations in conveying meaning (GNBC 58-81, especially 79-80). The four levels laid out in GNBC 82-90 are *not* levels for translations to achieve, as Carson's wording here makes them out to be, but levels of *analysis of meanings*, whether the analysis is directed toward translations or toward other texts. (The whole section is entitled "Excursus: *Analyzing* linguistic complexity," GNBC 82.) Our point is not that translators can achieve perfect representation of meaning, but that they should not be content with "basic meaning" *in cases in which a fine-grained analysis shows that they can achieve more* (see GNBC 189-190). All this is clear in GNBC, and Carson abuses our position by making it sound otherwise.

Fourth, Carson misunderstands my statement that Carson and Strauss "could not frankly discuss the ideological connotation of generic 'he'" (Carson, p. 22). In context, I was obviously not saying that they would find it literally impossible to discuss (which would be a rather absurd claim), but that discussing it in any detail, and genuinely weighing the problems (as in GNBC 111-232, and especially 163-175), would weaken the case for gender-neutral translation, by removing some people's impression that it is all a question of "neutral" stylistic preferences or of adjusting to "neutral" facts about the current state of English. Interestingly, in his latest response Carson *still* does not discuss the ideological connotation of generic "he," and in particular, the fact that ideology continuously maintains some people's aversion to hearing it. Instead, he repeats generalities from his book about the influence of feminism, the reality of language change, and the lessening use of generic "he," all points to which we have already responded in GNBC 355-366. He has shifted the issue instead of discussing it frankly as he claims (p. 22). Ironically, his continued avoidance of this one particular topic confirms rather than undermines the point in my review.

Fifth, Carson has missed the point of the quote from GNBC 202, which says, "The underlying assumption in this objection is that *only what can easily be conveyed into all*

languages is worth conveying in English." On the preceding page (GNBC 201) we introduce an objection that appears to us to have been made in Carson's book and elsewhere: "Gender systems differ among languages. Therefore, you should not insist on mapping a masculine form in Hebrew onto a masculine in English." We then explicitly indicate that we agree that gender systems do differ (201). We also indicate (202) that we are not talking about *all* masculine forms in Hebrew, but "a third-person-singular masculine pronoun used in a generic statement." (But Carson in spite of this statement describes our position as perfectly general: "where we have the masculine pronoun in Hebrew," p. 25.) With respect to this special kind of use, we offer considerable evidence that the *meaning* match between Hebrew, Greek, and English is generally very good (GNBC 335-47). Our argument does *not* rest on the mere assumption that one should always use formal equivalence, as Carson suggests (p. 25; see GNBC 190-91, 202 n24, 61, etc.).

Carson's 1998 discussion of gender in other languages in *Debate*, chapter 4, is relevant and helpful as a general illustration of the form-meaning contrast, which we ourselves recognize (GNBC 61, 85, 86 n37, 190-91). But in and of itself it cannot settle the questions about how best to translate the *meaning* (not merely form) of masculine singular generics in Hebrew and Greek.

With respect to this narrow question, the discussion of other languages (outside Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and English) would have weight only if someone—not necessarily Carson personally—falsely assumed "that only what can easily be conveyed into all languages is worth conveying in English." Without this assumption, the fact that a particular loss of meaning nuance is inevitable in translating into Polish does not lead to the conclusion that a similar loss in English is O.K., *even though it is avoidable in English*. (I do not think that we differ substantively with Carson on this point, only that Carson misunderstands us.)

Of course, with respect to generic "he" Carson might want to claim that there is a trade-off between different kinds of loss, because generic "he" is "offensive" on university campuses (see Carson, p. 21). But this is another topic, to which we respond in GNBC 163-175, 180-182.

Sixth, Carson says that he provides many examples pertaining to nonequivalence of gender systems, but "Poythress and Grudem tackle none of them" (p. 25). This is not true. We discuss Numbers 5:6 (from Carson, *Debate* 97) in GNBC 341-43, and Carson's discussion on feminine subjects in Hebrew with masculine verbs (*Debate* 96) corresponds to GNBC 336 (but we mention singular subjects while he mentions plural). In addition, we explicitly indicate our agreement with the main point of Carson's discussion of gender systems in GNBC 86 n37. Carson's word "tackle" suggests that we need to refute his

examples. But this completely misses the point. The clear statement in GNBC p. 86 n37 indicates that our view is completely compatible with his examples.

Carson repeatedly misunderstood and misrepresented us in his book *Debate* (for documented cases, see GNBC 77 n22, 92 n1, 94 n3, 107-8, 130 n30, etc.). He continues to do so in this latest article. I can only tell readers not to draw conclusions until they read what we say in GNBC. ◾

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[1] On the term "gender-neutral," see Vern S. Poythress and Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy: Muting the Masculinity of God's Words* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000) 5-6 (henceforth, GNBC). This book is critical of many gender-neutral policies, while D. A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), and Mark L. Strauss, *Distorting Scripture? The Challenge of Bible Translation & Gender Accuracy* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), are for the most part favorable.

[2] Poythress and Grudem, GNBC.

[3] Ibid., 111-12.

[4] Ibid., 111.

[5] Ibid., chapters 7-11.

[6] See Ibid., 112.

[7] See Ibid., 117-23.

[8] Ibid., 112-15. In fact, the ambiguities produced in this and other verses probably arise primarily from the initial difference in the starting perspective between the singular and the plural. If one starts with an individual case ("whoever, he"), the individualizing character of the application is plain. If one starts with a reference to a plurality of members of a group, it may remain unclear whether the statement applies to each member separately or to the members' interaction with one another in a more corporate fashion. Even with a corporate interpretation, there is always *some kind* of application to each individual. But what kind? Does the individual receive the morning star himself, or is he part of the group that receives it *as a group* (the corporate interpretation)?

[9] See Ibid., 112-17.

[10] See the discussion in Ibid., 112-14, and the response to Craig Blomberg near the end of this article.

[11] Ibid., 354 n1.

[12] Mark Strauss ("Response to Vern Poythress," *Christianity Today* [Oct. 7, 2002], 45) claims that "the Greek dative *eauto* in 1 Corinthians 14:28 probably means 'by himself' (= 'when alone') rather than *to himself*." But this view must be rejected for several reasons: (1) the dative *eauto* ("to himself") is obviously parallel to the dative *to theo*, "to God," and the parallelism is reinforced by the word *kai* ("and") linking them together. Thus both datives indicate the addressee, and are properly translated with the English word "to." (2) The clause as a whole (verse 28b) does not fit together well under Strauss's interpretation. One would have to translate, "by himself let him speak *and* to God," or "by himself let him speak *also* to God," or "by himself let him speak *even* to God," all of which are awkward. The problem is to make sense of the word *kai* ("and"; sometimes "also" or "even"). In Greek it is clearly functioning to link the two datives ("to himself" and "to God"). But once Strauss reinterprets the first dative to mean "by himself," it is hard to account for its

presence. (3) "By himself" in a spatial sense is not a normal function of the dative in relation to a verb like *laleito*, "let him speak," while the dative of addressee is a normal function (for example, "I have spoken *to you*" in John 6:63).

Strauss compounds his error by citing Robertson and Plummer's and Fee's commentaries as if they supported the meaning "by himself." Actually, both commentaries *explicitly* contain the wording "to himself"! They then *infer* from this meaning that the speaker should wait until he is alone. The inference may or may not be correct, but in any case ought not to be pushed back into translation.

[13] From Vern S. Poythress, "Systematic Pattern in TNIV," *Westminster Theological Journal* 64/1 (2002) 187.

[14] TNIV also changes the NIV by changing a conditional sentence, beginning with "if," to a sentence with a restrictive relative clause, "who loves me." The NIV is a more literal representation of the Greek. The change has the effect of eliminating the offending "he" in the second clause, "He will obey my teaching." The meanings are very similar, but not identical. Using "anyone," the NIV starts with a potential pool of examples as wide as humanity. It considers what may be true, if a sample person out of this wide pool is in fact found to love Christ. The TNIV starts with the pool already narrowed to consider only the people who do in fact already love Christ. The NIV is slightly more open-ended, in suggesting a look at people who are not yet Christians but might become so. The TNIV focuses more on those who are already committed. This kind of change occurs in a number of other verses as well, and could easily be made into a sixth category along side the five in the main text of this article.

[15] See GNBC 216.

[16] The convention distinguishing formal writing from informal conversation may not be as arbitrary as it sounds. Face-to-face communication normally decreases the potential for misunderstanding, because much collateral information is supplied from the situation. Written communication cannot rely on the collateral information, and must take greater care to head off misreadings of potentially ambiguous uses. In some contexts, where both a singular and a plural antecedent offer themselves, "they" is potentially ambiguous. The maxim to allow only plural antecedents helps to disambiguate, if both writer and reader abide by it. The use of generic singular "he" also helps head off the potential ambiguities of "corporate" interpretations.

[17] See GNBC 117-118 for a further discussion of the problem of a corporate interpretation of plurals in John 14:23. The example in GNBC is from the NRSV, which begins with "those who . . . " rather than "anyone who . . . " (TNIV). "Anyone who . . . " is considerably more individualizing, but the danger of slipping into a corporate interpretation later on in the verse does not disappear (see the further discussion in this article).

[18] It should go without saying that it is unwise for translators to rely on the clarity of *other* translations as a consolation and a protection, covering the lack of disambiguation in the one they are producing.

[19] D. A. Carson thinks that the earlier word "anyone" guarantees individuality in this verse ("The Limits of Functional Equivalence in Bible Translation—And Other Limits, Too," manuscript distributed by Zondervan to ETS and IBR members, [Sept. 4, 2002], p. 27). But he fails to realize that the later occurrences of "they/them" reintroduce the possibility of a corporately-oriented interpretation of the part in which they occur.

[20] See GNBC, chapters 7-11 and appendix 3. Opposite to our viewpoint, for the most systematic defense of gender-neutral translation (though with some reservations here and there), see

Carson, *Debate*, and Strauss, *Distorting*.

[21] See also footnote 12 for a response to Mark Strauss.

[22] GNBC, 203-212.

[23] Ibid., 232. In some ways the single most significant datum confirming this conclusion is the oscillating use of generic "she" and generic "he" in some authors (GNBC 150, 170, 362). In these contexts, generic "he" is seen by feminists as acceptable, because it is accompanied by an equal weight of generic "she." This oscillating use also confirms the fact that, with both generic "he" and generic "she," readers easily understand that a general principle is being articulated that applies to both male and female. On the question of whether the Greek and Hebrew generic masculine forms suggest a male example, see the discussion in GNBC 142-146, 335-347.

[24] Craig Blomberg, "Today's New International Version: The Untold Story of a Good Translation," manuscript distributed by Zondervan to ETS and IBR members, Sept. 4, 2002.

[25] See note 18.

[26] There is even more support. It is not widely realized that in 1989 the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod requested one of its commissions to study inclusive language issues. Nine years later the Commission produced the report "Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language," A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (February 1998). The report is compatible with the Colorado Springs Guidelines in all the areas on which both speak, but it appears to have been produced independently. The report does quote once from an article by Wayne Grudem, from October 27, 1997 (p. 31). But there are no direct signs of interaction with the Colorado Springs Guidelines. In any case, most of the eight or nine years' work by the Commission was presumably done *before* the Guidelines appeared publicly on June 3, 1997. The Commission's report thus represents an *independent* witness to the fact that our principles have logical coherence, and do not arise merely from arbitrary personal whims.

[27] In the quote from p. 22, reproduced above, "them" might possibly refer to "changes," but is most naturally taken as referring to "others," that is, the translators.

Are the Criticisms of the TNIV Bible Really Justified?

An Interaction With Craig Blomberg, Darrell Bock, Peter Bradley, D. A. Carson, and Bruce Waltke

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Introduction

On September 4, 2002, Zondervan Publishing House sent to all members of the Evangelical Theological Society and all members of the Institute for Biblical Research a packet of information about *Today's New International Version* (TNIV). That packet contained articles written by Craig Blomberg,[1] Don Carson,[2] and Bruce Waltke,[3] all defending the TNIV in one way or another. In addition, the packet contained an interview with Peter Bradley,[4] the president of the International Bible Society, published in an edition of the IBS publication *Light Magazine* (July, 2002). In addition to these four articles, Craig Blomberg's article mentions a widely-circulated article by Darrell Bock, in which he supports the legitimacy of several of the passages that have been criticized in the TNIV.[5]

I count it a privilege to be able to interact with these five men, each of whom is highly respected in the evangelical world. Craig Blomberg, Darrell Bock, and Don Carson have contributed enormously to the work of evangelical scholarship in New Testament in our generation, and Bruce Waltke has likewise made enormous contributions to the academic study of the Old Testament. I have profited many times both from the academic writings of these men and from personal interaction with each of them.

Peter Bradley is president of a remarkable organization, the International Bible Society, that distributes Bibles in over 100 countries today, and that has been responsible for distributing many millions of Bibles since its founding in 1809. Peter Bradley himself, in several personal conversations

with me during the past year, has consistently exhibited personal graciousness and an eagerness to honor Christ in the way we deal with this controversy, as have others involved with Zondervan Publishing House and with the NIV's Committee on Bible Translation (CBT).

I am sure that people on both sides of this controversy wish that somehow it would go away. Yet people on both sides are convinced that important principles are at stake, and neither side has felt that it could, in good conscience before God, remain silent.[6]

Someone might ask, how could you think to disagree with men of such integrity, such commitment to the Word of God, and such academic expertise? For reasons I will explain in detail below, in spite of the high respect in which I hold the writings of these men on other subjects, I think they have reached an incorrect conclusion regarding a specific matter, namely, the translation into English of certain kinds of male-orientated details of meaning that are present in the original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible. This may at first sound like a small question, but, as those familiar with the controversy already know, it affects something like 4,000 verses in the entire Bible.

Is it possible that such esteemed scholars could have come to an incorrect conclusion on this matter? It is certainly possible, for no human teacher is perfect in this age. James says, "We all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle his whole body" (Jas. 3:2).

In fact, there are respected Christian scholars and other leaders on both sides of this question. So I simply ask that readers evaluate the reasons and evidence on both sides, including the material below, and come to their own decisions based on the evidence, not simply by following one personality or another in this dispute.

A. What is the main point of disagreement?

The heart of the difference can be summarized in one sentence:

Is it acceptable to translate only the general idea of a passage and systematically omit male-oriented details of meaning that are present in the original Hebrew or Greek text?

Our concern from the beginning has not been with the loss of *any* kind of male-oriented meaning in English translations, but with *the loss of male details of meaning that are present in the original Greek or Hebrew text*.[7]

Therefore it just confuses the discussion, and completely misunderstands what several of us have been saying since at least 1997, when Mark Strauss, for example, publishes an article, "The Gender-Neutral Language of the *English Standard Version* (ESV),[8] in which he compiles a long list of verses in Matthew and Romans where the words "men" and "man" are changed to "people" or "person" in the *English Standard Version* (ESV, a revision of the 1971 *Revised Standard Version*).[9] Strauss says,

> Below is a very small sampling of the gender-inclusive language of the ESV. . . . This list could be multiplied many times over . . . in this way, the ESV is very much like the recently published *Today's New International Version* (TNIV), which revises the *New International Version* (NIV) in a similar manner.[10]

What Strauss fails to mention in his paper is that the ESV makes such changes *where there is no male meaning in the original text*. These are cases that use *anthropos* (which everyone has known for centuries can mean either "man" or "person" depending on the context), or use pronouns like *tis* (which means "someone") or *oudeis* (which means "no one"), and so forth. *These translations of words that have no male meaning in the original Greek are not under dispute, and they have never been under dispute in this entire controversy.* Therefore it is misleading for Strauss to criticize "attacks against the gender language of the TNIV" as "coming from those who produced *similar gender changes* in the ESV."[11] The changes are not similar at all. The issue is whether there is a

male meaning in the original Greek text or not.

We are now five years into this debate. The Colorado Springs Guidelines (CSG) were released June 3, 1997. The CSG distinguished several types of translation where there was *no male meaning in the original text*[12] from several other categories of translation where there *was male-oriented meaning in the original text*[13] But Strauss's paper, five years after the CSG, still shows no awareness of this fundamental distinction that is at the heart of the controversy.

In 2000, Vern Poythress and I wrote,

> The real issue is not the *frequency* with which a translation uses masculine terms like "man" and "he" and "father" and "brother," etc. Nor is the issue whether changes in gender language are made to conform to modern English style. The issue is whether a Bible translation systematically excludes male components of meaning that are there in the original text. If it does, the translation is "gender-neutral," and we argue in this book that such a translation does not properly translate some of the details in the Word of God.[14]

Now if one wishes, one can choose, in a debate, to go on for five years responding to a position that nobody ever held, but it certainly adds no clarity to the debate. And it is misleading to charge that we approve of "similar" changes without indicating to readers that these are all changes where *everyone agrees* there is no male meaning in the original.

B. Other Bibles

1. Have 18 of 19 recent Bible translations used gender-neutral language like the TNIV?

In the special edition of *Light Magazine*, Peter Bradley says,

> Those who are critical of the TNIV often neglect to mention that since 1985, at least 19 Bible revisions and translations have been produced in English, of which 18 contain some type of inclusive language. In fact even the *King James Version* and the *New Holman Christian Standard Bible* [produced by an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention] make extensive use of inclusive language.[15]

That simply misleads ordinary readers. It is counting as "inclusive language" any kinds of change from "men" to "people" *even when there is no male meaning in the Greek text*. It is based on counting as "inclusive language" verses like

Matthew 5:15, which Mark Strauss quotes among dozens of examples of "inclusive language":

> RSV: Nor do **men** light a lamp and put it under a bushel,

> ESV: Nor do **people** light a lamp and put it under a bushel,

But there is no word for "men" at all in the Greek of this text. It simply has the plural verb *kaiousin* "to light, to cause to burn."

No one has objected to changes like this. All modern translations and all modern translators agree that these are correct. So why does Bradley, in an interview responding to criticisms that have only objected to changes *where there is a male meaning in Greek*, respond that everybody makes changes (referring to places *where there is no male meaning in Greek*)?

Let's say a high school student cheats on a test by opening the textbook and copying answers from it. The teacher catches the student and sends the student to the principal. The principal says, "I hear you copied answers from the textbook." Then the student answers, "I just checked with some other students and 18 out of 19 students copied answers from the textbook." Now the principal thinks this student is being singled out unfairly, and wonders if the teacher didn't give misleading instructions, since "everybody" is doing this. So the student gets away with it.

But what the student didn't reveal to the principal is that 18 out of 19 students copied answers *in last week's "open book" test*, not in today's test where they could not use any books or notes. So the student has answered the charges against him by making reference to another situation that nobody has ever said was wrong.

This is similar to what is happening in Bradley's statement about 18 out of 19 translations using "some type of inclusive language" and the KJV and HCSB making "extensive use of inclusive language." It can be summarized like this:

> TNIV critics: You are removing male meaning that is there in Greek.

> IBS: Everybody removes male meaning. [unstated: where it is not there in Greek]

For Bradley to claim that these other translations use "inclusive language," and to imply that the TNIV is doing nothing different, may be convincing to unsuspecting readers of *Light Magazine*, but it is misleading. He is not talking about the kind of verses where the opponents have challenged the TNIV. His statement fails to show an understanding of the very heart of the controversy.

What has actually happened in recent Bible translations? In fact, since the publication of the "Colorado Springs Guidelines" in 1997, I am aware of six new Bible versions that have been published in whole or part: the *English Standard Version* (ESV), the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB), the *International Christian Standard Bible* (ICSB), the *NET Bible* (NET), the *New International Reader's Version* (NIrV, 1998 revision), and *Today's New International Version* (TNIV). All of these versions conform to the *Colorado Springs Guidelines*, with the exception of the TNIV. These other recent translations use male-oriented terminology in English where there is a male meaning in Greek or Hebrew, and they avoid male-oriented terminology where there is no male meaning in Greek or Hebrew. To call them all "inclusive language" versions is simply to confuse the discussion.

2. Did even the King James Version use gender-neutral language like the TNIV?

Peter Bradley's statement says, "Even the *King James Version* and the *New Holman Christian Standard Bible* . . . make extensive use of inclusive language" (p. 9).

Does this mean that the King James Version itself provides a precedent that validates the TNIV? Did the King James Version make the kind of gender-neutral changes for which we have criticized the TNIV? The following table makes a comparison:

Did the KJV use gender-neutral language to leave out male meaning that is present in Greek?[16]

FROM (NIV)	TO (TNIV)	TOTAL TNIV	TOTAL KJV
son (*huios*, singular)	child, children, human beings	6	3 (odd verses)
father, fathers, forefathers (*pater*)	parents (where inaccurate), people, ancestors	39	0 (Heb. 11:23 has "parents" correctly)
brother (*adelphos*, sing.)	(fellow) believer, brother or sister, other	43	0
brothers (*adelphos*, plural)	associates, dear friends, believers [not counted here: "brothers & sisters"]	42	0
man (*aner*, in non-idiomatic uses)	people, friends, believers, someone, those, or omitted	26	0
he/him/his/ himself	they, you, we, or omitted	530	0 (not all checked)
TOTAL:		686	3

What this chart shows is that the King James Version accurately retained male-oriented meaning when it was there in the original Greek text. Even the three translations of the singular *huios* as "child" would be what the Colorado Springs Guidelines allow as "unusual exceptions in certain contexts." By contrast, the TNIV inappropriately omits male-oriented meaning for these terms 686 times. To claim that the KJV uses "inclusive language," and to use that as a justification for the TNIV, without telling readers that the KJV is 0.4% as "gender-neutral" as the TNIV in the kinds of changes criticized by the TNIV opponents, is again misleading readers who have no way of checking the Greek for themselves. In terms of removing male meaning that is there in the Greek, the KJV is not a gender-neutral Bible. But the TNIV is.[17]

C. Endorsements and Guidelines

1. Does the Forum of Bible Agencies endorse the gender language in the TNIV?

Peter Bradley says,

"The TNIV adheres to the Forum of Bible Agencies' translation principles and procedures."

And Craig Blomberg states,

" . . . the Forum of Bible Agencies, which represents roughly 90% of all contemporary Bible translation work, has gone on record stating that the TNIV "falls within the forum's translation principles and procedures." (4).

Two things are not disclosed to readers in these statements. First, it would at least seem fair to readers to insert a disclaimer stating that the Forum of Bible Agencies does not endorse any specific translation and has not endorsed the TNIV. When Blomberg says the FBA "has gone on record" stating that the TNIV "falls within the forum's translation principles and procedures," it sounds very much to the unsuspecting ear like an FBA endorsement of the TNIV, and no doubt many readers of the Zondervan packet took it that way.

But in fact the FBA has not endorsed the TNIV. What neither Bradley or Blomberg mention by way of disclaimer is the June 24, 2002, press release from the Forum of Bible Agencies that was issued for the very purpose of clearing up such misunderstanding:

FORUM OF BIBLE AGENCIES DOES NOT ENDORSE TNIV

NEW YORK-June 24 Contrary to June 11th news release issued by the International Bible Society (IBS) and Zondervan, the Forum of Bible Agencies (FBA) today announced it has neither approved nor disapproved *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) of the Bible.

In addition, the FBA emphasized it has never endorsed the TNIV, as strongly implied in the release issued by forum member IBS in conjunction with Zondervan. Other forum members are aggrieved by the release because of the confusion it has generated among their constituents, as it is not the policy of the FBA to approve, endorse, or support members' translations.

The forum has adopted basic "principles and procedures for Bible translation." This set of guidelines for best practiced translation is mutually agreed upon and accepted by all members . . . .[18]

It seems that the essence of this June 24 press release should at least have been mentioned in the September 2 mailing from Zondervan.

The second thing that is not disclosed to the readers is what the FBA principles actually say about the translation of gender language. In the context of this major public statement by the president of the IBS responding to a controversy over gender language, when he says that "the TNIV adheres to the Forum of Bible Agencies' translation principles and procedures," we naturally assume that those FBA principles make statements about the issue he is talking about, namely the issue of gender language. In fact, Bradley must understand that readers will *think* the FBA principles endorse the TNIV's use of gender language, or why would he highlight the FBA principles as his *response to criticisms about gender language*?

But when we read further in the July 25 press release from the Forum of Bible Agencies, we find this:

Recognizing that translation is a complex process for which there are widely differing opinions on appropriate methodology, the FBA adopted basic "principles and procedures for Bible translation" that were mutually agreed upon and accepted for all members. *These standards represent a broad tent*, in that they are not language specific and do not address issues of culture or gender (emphasis added).

What do these FBA principles say about the translation of gender language? Zero. They do not address it.[19] It is hard for me to understand why neither Bradley nor Blomberg mention this in their claims about the FBA principles, when

gender language is the whole point in dispute.

To take an example, let's say that you are planning to buy a used car from me without seeing it, because you trust me as your friend. When you call to ask me about the condition of the car, I assure you that it recently passed a safety inspection at the local Firestone dealer, including breaks, headlights, transmission, tires, and so forth. So you send me a check for the car and an additional $500 for shipping, and I ship the car to you across the country. When you get the car you see that the body has massive rust spots all over it, and has actually rusted through in several places. You call me in protest, saying that you thought that it had passed an inspection at the local Firestone dealer. And then I say, "Yes, but that was a safety inspection and it really didn't include anything about rust." You would rightly be upset with me and think that I had misled you. (And in fact I would never sell a car in that way!)

But in a similar way, when the International Bible Society and Zondervan put out materials saying that the TNIV "adheres to the Forum of Bible Agencies' translation principles and procedures," without mentioning that these principles are a "broad tent" that say *nothing* about gender language, and when they do that *in a packet of information that is focused specifically on the translation of gender language in the TNIV*, then I think readers are right to feel that they have been misled. The IBS and Zondervan make it look as though the FBA supports the translation of gender language in the TNIV, but in fact that is not true.

2. Do the translation principles of the Forum of Bible Agencies conflict with the Colorado Springs Guidelines?

After mentioning the Forum of Bible Agencies, Peter Bradley goes on to say that the IBS had to withdraw from the Colorado Springs Guidelines (CSG) because they were in conflict with the FBA guidelines and they could not endorse both. Here is his statement:

> . . . the TNIV adheres to the Forum of Bible Agencies' translation principles and procedures. And yet, we know, as do those opposed to the TNIV, that the TNIV does not adhere to the CSG. *The bottom line is that the Forum's translation guidelines conflict with the CSG*, and we firmly believe we have to abide by the Forum's. After all, the Forum is responsible for nearly 90 percent of translation work done worldwide—they know what they're doing (p. 8).

But is it true that these lists of principles are in "conflict" with one another? It is easy for readers to check this for themselves. I have listed below the FBA's principles and the Colorado Springs Guidelines. The FBA principles contain fifteen statements, not one of which says anything about the

translation of gender language. The Colorado Springs Guidelines contain thirteen statements, all of which relate to the translation of gender language. There is no conflict, because they are talking about different subjects. Consider both sets of statements:

Forum of Bible Agencies:
Basic Principles and Procedures for Bible Translation

After discussion over a period of two years and wide review within each member organization, the following joint statement on basic principles and procedures for Bible translation was unanimously agreed by all member organizations of the Forum of Bible Agencies, Translation section, at their meeting on April 21, 1999.

As member organizations of the Forum of Bible Agencies, we affirm the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures and commit ourselves to the following goals.

Concerning translation principles:

1. To translate the Scriptures accurately, without loss, change, distortion or embellishment of the meaning of the original text. Accuracy in Bible translation is the faithful communication, as exactly as possible, of that meaning, determined according to sound principles of exegesis.

2. To communicate not only the informational content, but also the feelings and attitudes of the original text. The flavor and impact of the original should be re-expressed in forms that are consistent with normal usage in the receptor language.

3. To preserve the variety of the original. The literary forms employed in the original text, such as poetry, prophecy, narrative and exhortation, should be represented by corresponding forms with the same communicative functions in the receptor language. The impact, interest, and mnemonic value of the original should be retained to the greatest extent possible.

4. To represent faithfully the original historical and cultural context. Historical facts and events should be expressed without distortion. At the same time the translation should be done in such a way that the receptor audience, despite differences of situation and culture, may understand the message that the original author was seeking to communicate to the original audience.

5. To make every effort to ensure that no contemporary political, ideological, social, cultural, or theological agenda is allowed to distort the translation.

6. To recognize that it is sometimes necessary to restructure the form of a text in order to achieve accuracy and maximal comprehension. Since grammatical categories and syntactic structures often do not correspond between different languages, it is often impossible or misleading to maintain the same form as the source text. Changes of form will also often be necessary when translating figurative language. A translation will employ as many or as few terms as are required to communicate the original meaning as accurately as possible.

7. To use the most reliable original language Scripture texts as the basis for translation, recognizing that these are always the primary authority. However, reliable Bible translations in other languages may be used as intermediary source texts.

Concerning translation procedures:

8. To determine, after careful linguistic and sociolinguistic research, the specific target audience for the translation and the kind of translation appropriate to that audience. It is recognized that different kinds of translation into a given language may be valid, depending on the local situation, including, for example, both more formal translations and common language translations.

9. To recognize that the transfer into the receptor language should be done by trained and competent translators who are translating into their mother tongue. Where this is not possible, mother-tongue speakers should be involved to the greatest extent possible in the translation process.

10. To give high priority to training mother-tongue speakers of the receptor language in translation principles and practice and to providing appropriate professional support.

11. To test the translation as extensively as possible in the receptor community to ensure that it communicates accurately, clearly and naturally, keeping in mind the sensitivities and experience of the receptor audience.

12. To choose the media for the translation that are most appropriate for the specific target audience, whether audio, visual, electronic, print, or a combination of these. This may involve making adjustments of form that are appropriate to the medium and to the cultural setting, while ensuring that the translated message remains faithful to the original message.

13. To encourage the periodic review of translations to ascertain when revision or a new translation is needed.

Concerning partnership and cooperation:

14. To organize translation projects in a way that promotes and facilitates the active participation of the Christian and wider community, commensurate with local circumstances. Where there are existing churches, we will encourage these churches to be involved in the translation and to carry as much responsibility for the translation project as is feasible.

15. To partner and cooperate with others who are committed to the same goals.

Colorado Springs Guidelines for Translation of Gender-Related Language in Scripture

A. Gender-related renderings of Biblical language which we affirm:

1. The generic use of "he, him, his, himself" should be employed to translate generic 3rd person masculine singular pronouns in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. However, substantival participles such as *ho pisteuon* can often be rendered in inclusive ways, such as "the one who believes" rather than "he who believes."

2. Person and number should be retained in translation so that singulars are not changed to plurals and third person statements are not changed to second or first person statements, with only rare exceptions required in unusual cases.

3. "Man" should ordinarily be used to designate the human race, for example in Genesis 1:26-27; 5:2; Ezekiel 29:11; and John 2:25.

4. Hebrew '*ish* should ordinarily be translated "man" and "men," and Greek *aner* should almost always be so translated.

5. In many cases, *anthropoi* refers to people in general, and can be translated "people" rather than

"men." The singular *anthropos* should ordinarily be translated "man" when it refers to a male human being.

6. Indefinite pronouns such as *tis* can be translated "anyone" rather than "any man."

7. In many cases, pronouns such as *oudeis* can be translated "no one" rather than "no man."

8. When *pas* is used as a substantive it can be translated with terms such as "all people" or "everyone."

9. The phrase "son of man" should ordinarily be preserved to retain intracanonical connections.

10. Masculine references to God should be retained.

B. Gender-related renderings which we will generally avoid, though there may be unusual exceptions in certain contexts:

1. "Brother" (*adelphos*) should not be changed to "brother or sister"; however, the plural *adelphoi* can be translated "brothers and sisters" where the context makes clear that the author is referring to both men and women.

2. "Son" (*huios*, *ben*) should not be changed to "child," or "sons" (*huioi*) to "children" or "sons and daughters." (However, Hebrew *banim* often means "children.")

3. "Father" (*pater, 'ab*) should not be changed to "parent," or "fathers" to "parents" or "ancestors."

C. We understand these guidelines to be representative and not exhaustive, and that some details may need further refinement.

It is difficult for me to understand, therefore, how Peter Bradley can say that "the Forum's translation guidelines conflict with the CSG," and to give that as the reason why the International Bible Society felt it had to withdraw its endorsement of the Colorado Springs Guidelines.

3. Were the Colorado Springs Guidelines forced on the International Bible Society in 1997?

Peter Bradley's article, in referring to the May 27, 1997 meeting at Focus on the Family headquarters in Colorado Springs, says,

During that meeting, IBS representatives and

other attendees were surprised by the presentation of the CSG, in first draft form, to all in attendance. By the way, the CSG were drafted under the guidance of a professor who represented a special interest group called the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Every party was asked to endorse them. However, the members of CBT who were present believed the guidelines were flawed. As a result, they chose not to sign the CSG until they could review and edit them. This process went on for a number of months . . . (p. 7).

I was a part of that meeting in 1997, and I suppose I am the "professor" to whom Peter Bradley refers. Bradley's statement makes the process appear adversarial and makes it sound as though the CBT members had serious objections to the Colorado Springs Guidelines from the beginning.

In order that Bradley's view of the CSG as flawed from the beginning not be established as a balanced report of the origins of the CSG, I present here a different account of that May 27, 1997, meeting at Dr. Dobson's headquarters in Colorado Springs. This account was written almost immediately after the meeting. But is it accurate? Before it was published, I sent it to all the participants to check it for factual accuracy (and some suggested corrections, which I made). Both of the NIV representatives who stayed for the whole meeting (Bruce Ryskamp, president of Zondervan, and Ken Barker, secretary of the NIV's Committee on Bible Translation) approved this account as accurate before I published it, as did those of us who came to the meeting with objections about the TNIV (Tim Bayly, Joel Belz, James Dobson, Charles Jarvis, John Piper, Vern Poythress, and R. C. Sproul).[20] This account was published in June 1997.[21]

I first described the opening discussions of the meeting, including brief statements that were presented by R. C. Sproul, John Piper, and Vern Poythress. Then the report says that "I presented a list of suggestions for guidelines involving the translation of gender-related language in Scripture" (p. 305). And then the narrative continues:

As our discussions continued through the morning, however, we found that we shared even more common ground . . . . *We found that Ken Barker had a list of translation guidelines that he had prepared in recent thinking about these issues, and his list was similar to the list that our group had presented.* Several of us saw this as evidence that God had prepared the way for us to reach agreement on a wide number of these issues. From that point on in the meeting, we began to work on a joint statement that could be issued as a press release from Focus on the

Family (p. 306, emphasis added).

. . . We reached substantial agreement on all of these points before the meeting broke up about 2:30 in the afternoon on May 27, but the document had to be circulated by fax and phone three times throughout the subsequent five days, before total agreement was reached on the final wording of all the guidelines. Then on Saturday night, May 31, complete agreement on the wording of the guidelines was final reached by phone. By Monday morning, June 2, all twelve participants had signed the finally document and faxed their signatures to the Focus on the Family headquarters. The press release was then issued on June 3 (pp. 311-312).

In fact, during that afternoon, the first draft of the "Colorado Springs Guidelines" was prepared by four of us working together: Ken Barker of the CBT, along with Vern Poythress, John Piper, and me. We did not use my first draft, but began instead with Ken Barker's notes that he had brought to the meeting (and of which I still have a copy in his handwriting). His draft statement was called "A Balanced, Mediating, Middle Ground Approach to Inclusive Language" and under "Practices to continue/Areas Not Open to Change" it included "generic use of he, his, him," and "don't change from singular to plural or from third person to second person to avoid man, he, his, him," along with several other points that were eventually included in the Colorado Springs Guidelines.[22]

I want to be very clear that I think the International Bible Society, and the NIV's Committee on Bible Translation, and all individual scholars, are completely free to endorse or not endorse the Colorado Springs Guidelines or any other set of guidelines they wish to formulate. I also believe that the Colorado Springs Guidelines are not perfect and are not set in concrete but are open to further refinement and revision, as we said in the last statement of the guidelines: "We understand these guidelines to be representative and not exhaustive, and that some details may need further refinement."

But I do not think it is correct to say that these guidelines contradict the Forum of Bible Agencies' principles, or to say that "the members of the CBT that were present believed the guidelines were flawed," when in fact Ken Barker was the only CBT member remaining in the meeting when they were formulated, and we used his handwritten first draft of principles as the foundation upon which the guidelines were built. Nor is it correct to say that the CBT members "chose not to sign the CSG until they could review and edit them" and then to say that "this process went on for a number of months," without mentioning that the president of the IBS, the president of Zondervan, and both CBT members (Ron Youngblood and Ken Barker) all agreed to the exact wording of the guidelines

within four days of the meeting and all signed that wording within six days of that meeting.

4. Are most New Testament scholars in favor of the TNIV?

Craig Blomberg's paper says, "An advertisement has circulated with the signatures of 100 well-known, largely American Christian leaders condemning the new translation, though few are bona fide New Testament scholars" (p. 3). In a footnote to this statement Blomberg says, "Approximately 10% are fully credentialed New Testament scholars." The impression given is that few genuine New Testament scholars oppose the TNIV.

What Blomberg fails to mention is that prior to the publication of an advertisement with the names of 100 evangelical leaders objecting to the TNIV there was a statement signed by 37 evangelical scholars. See later in the journal for both statements and lists.

Of the signers on the list of 37 scholars:

21 have Ph.D.'s in New Testament

3 have Ph.D.'s in Old Testament

11 have served as paid professional translators or translation consultants for three different English translations of the Bible

The initial letter asking for signers to this list was sent out from the CBMW office by Bruce Ware and me, and also included as initial signers William Mounce (whose *Basics of Biblical Greek* is the largest-selling Greek textbook in the US, and perhaps in the world), John Piper (who has a doctorate in New Testament from the University of Munich and whose dissertation was published in the prestigious SNTS Monograph Series), Vern Poythress (widely-published New Testament professor from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia), and Tom Schreiner (widely-published New Testament professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville).

In addition, J. I. Packer, who did not sign the statement, issued his own statement regarding the TNIV saying, "This is a retrograde move that the translators have made . . . . The gains that this translation seeks to achieve are far outweighed by the loss. I appreciate the NIV, and I think they have taken a wrong turn" (Baptist Press, Feb. 1, 2002; http://baptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?ID=12653).

If we move outside the field of New Testament to the field of linguistics, we might ask, is there some special competence in the field of linguistics, some "inside knowledge" that perhaps gives validity to the TNIV? Is there some special theory of linguistics that is unknown to seminary

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graduates and even to New Testament professors, which justifies the TNIV's removal of male-oriented language that is there in the original text? Some TNIV supporters seem to have suggested that, but there is an alternative perspective by an established professional linguist, one who was in fact the president of a professional society for linguists. Here is the endorsement of Vern Poythress' and my book, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy*, which was made by a woman who is both a professor of linguistics and an elder in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):

> In the present volume Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem have presented a well-reasoned and level-headed argument for their case. Indeed, they are a voice of reason in a dispute that is fraught with emotion and mis-information. *They clearly understand the fluid and changing nature of language and their arguments are based on sound linguistic principles* . . . (from "Foreword" to *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy*, p. xvii). Valerie Becker Makkai (Ph.D., Yale; Associate Professor of Linguistics, University of Illinois-Chicago; past president, Linguistic Association of Canada and the United States).

Of course I realize that the TNIV website also includes endorsement by a number of scholars. On both lists one can find some scholars who are less well known and some who are more well known. So where does that leave us? The bottom line is that there are competent scholars on both sides of this issue.

But is this issue really supposed to be decided by who has the "most famous" scholars? I hope that no one will decide this issue simply based on allegiance to one scholar or another like the Corinthians who were saying, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). Rather, I hope that people will look for themselves at the patterns of changes in the translation of verses, and will be like the noble Bereans who went back to the Bible for themselves, "examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Nor should we dismiss lightly the mature wisdom of 113 Christian leaders who signed a public statement saying the TNIV was not "sufficiently trustworthy" (www.no-tniv.com; also printed later in this journal). Many of these leaders have solid seminary training and continue to work daily with their Greek and Hebrew Bibles, ministering to thousands of people through solid, expository preaching. They do understand the issues well enough to make a responsible judgment, and they know that something is deeply wrong with the TNIV.[23]

5. Can only scholars understand this dispute?

Some of the TNIV materials give the impression that only scholars can understand this issue (and in fact, the tone sometimes sounds like they think that only pro-TNIV scholars can understand this issue). This seems to me to be a smokescreen. Most of the dispute has to do with some simple English words, and the very common Greek words behind them:

> father
> son
> brother
> man
> he/him/his

At times when lay persons have asked me, "How can I decide this issue when I am not a Greek and Hebrew expert?" I have pointed out that the issue is mostly over the meaning of those five words. And if a pro-TNIV scholar challenges them, "How are you qualified to make a decision on this?" I suggest that they ask the following questions:

(1) Have the *Greek words* behind these five terms changed since the 1984 NIV? (No.)

(2) Have the *meanings* of those Greek words changed since the 1984 NIV? (No.)

(3) So isn't the real question mostly one of English usage? (Yes.)

(4) So I speak English. Are you saying that I don't know English well enough to make a good decision on this?

In fact, the TNIV's preface places the focus on changes *in English*, because it introduces the changes in gender language by saying, "While a basic core of the *English language* remains relatively stable, many diverse and complex cultural forces continue to bring about *subtle shifts in the meanings and/or connotations* of even old, well-established words and phrases" (p. vii).

The question then is whether the English language today *requires* us to change "father" (singular) to "parents," or "son" (singular) to "children," or "he" to "they" or "we" or "you" in the hundreds of verses where the TNIV has made these changes (see the categorized list of 901 examples earlier in this journal). Ordinary English speakers have a good sense of these changes, and they quickly recognize that these changes follow the same pattern as the "politically correct" speech codes that object to any greater use of male examples than female examples.

In fact, the implicit claim that "only scholars can understand this dispute" (or even that "only pro-TNIV scholars

can understand this, anti-TNIV scholars don't understand it") sounds to me dangerously like the claim of the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation, the claim that only experts could understand the Bible rightly.

I don't agree with this view. I think that English-speaking Christians who know their Bibles and can see the evidence and arguments on both sides are very capable of making a right decision on this matter, and they are making it overwhelmingly on the side of rejecting the TNIV Bible.

D. The English language

1. Has English changed so much that gender-neutral Bibles are needed today?

Probably the fundamental claim of the TNIV supporters is that the English language has changed so much that a translation like the TNIV is needed, particularly to communicate to a younger generation of readers. Peter Bradley says,

> The fact is, inclusive language is simply the way English usage is rapidly moving. . . .The use of generic masculine language is rapidly fading. As a result, there is an entire generation of young people who don't use it and don't understand its usage (p. 7).

Similarly, Don Carson says, "I have been doing university missions for thirty years, and in such quarters inclusive language dominates. Not to use it is offensive" (p. 21). And Bruce Waltke says, interestingly, "Although I resent it, the English language has been impacted by secular (non-biblical) feminism and many students today are trained to hear 'man' and 'he' and their equivalents as referring only to males, excluding females" (p. 1-2).

The problem with these statements is that they are too vague. These authors do not specify what they mean by "inclusive language." Vern Poythress and I in our book, and the CSG, approve of several kinds of "inclusive language," such as saying "No one is justified by faith" instead of "No man is justified by faith." To speak of "inclusive language" in a general way is to blur the main point under dispute. Similarly, to say, "The use of generic masculine language is rapidly fading" is too vague. What kind of "generic masculine" is meant? Everyone has agreed from 1997 onward that we can remove "generic masculine language" like "he who" and "no man" and "any man" and "all men" when there is no male meaning in the original. So what does Bradley mean?

But if we assume for a moment that Bradley means that the use of "he/him/his" in generic statements is "rapidly fading," what does that tell us? The statement is still (a) an admission that this language is still used, and (b) an implicit prediction of the absence of such language in the future.

But the translators of the NIV ten years ago, back in 1992, were convinced that such language was "rapidly fading" and instituted policies that produced the ill-fated *NIV-Inclusive Language Edition* in 1996. Apparently ten years later such language is still rapidly fading. We begin to wonder if this "rapid fading" might continue for another twenty or fifty or one hundred years. Or if the personal perception of rapid fading is incorrect (see counter-evidence below).

A more sober evaluation is the last sentence in the 1996 *American Heritage Dictionary*. After it devotes an entire column to discussion about the use of "he" to refer to "a male who is to be taken as the representative member of the group," the last sentence says, "The entire question is unlikely to be resolved in the near future" (p. 831).

Here is the real point at issue regarding the English language:

> Do readers today *understand* male specific language correctly when it represents male-specific meaning in the original text, especially in statements that have a broader application to all people?

The question is not exactly frequency of use, because when people read, they *understand* all kinds of expressions they don't use frequently themselves. And high school and college English departments can arbitrarily force students to abandon certain expressions that are still used in the Bible and elsewhere, expressions that students still understand very well when they read it in literature that was written outside their own school setting.

For example, consider the following:

> NIV: Luke 17:3-4: "If your **brother** sins rebuke **him**, and if **he** repents, forgive **him**, and if **he** sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive **him**."

Jesus is using a single male individual ("your brother") as an example of a general truth. He wants the reader to envision a situation where a "brother" (a male human being who is a fellow believer) sins. He goes on to tell how to deal with such a situation. And he expects that his hearers will be able to extrapolate from that specific situation to a general principle that would of course apply to a "sister" who sins as well.

Now the question is, would a modern day reader

(whether the "young people" whom Bradley mentions or the university students whom Carson mentions) first picture a "brother" who sins, and second realize that the principle has application to a "sister" who sins as well?

I think it is beyond question that readers today would understand that the principle has a *broader application* to women as well as to men. I doubt that any significant group of readers in the English speaking world today would see that verse and reason, "That verse only applies to men, and it has no application to a situation where a woman believer has sinned."[24]

Now some people may *dislike* the fact that Jesus is using a male individual as an example. But that is different from not *understanding* that it *applies* to women as well as to men. And the fact remains that Jesus used a male-specific term (singular *adelphos*, "brother") and did not teach by using an example of a "brother or sister" or an example of a "person." He taught by using a concrete example of a "brother."

In fact, the Bible often points to a single individual as a way of teaching a general truth. Jesus uses the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), but surely people can understand that it also *applies* to prodigal daughters. That is the difference between *translation* and *application*. The parable of the "persistent widow" (Luke 18:1-8) also *applies* to men and teaches us all about persistence in prayer, but we should not *translate* it to be the parable of "the persistent widow or widower." And in the Ten Commandments, when we read, "You shall not covet your neighbor's *wife*," we can easily realize that the specific female example given here ("your neighbor's wife") teaches a principle that also *applies* to not coveting a neighbor's husband.

Do we have to change the parable of the prodigal son to make it the parable of the prodigal "son or daughter" in order for modern university students to understand that it has a broader application? Certainly not. Do we have to change the Ten Commandments so that they say, "You shall not covet your neighbor's *wife or husband*" in order to be sure that modern university students will realize that it also *applies* to wives not coveting husbands? Certainly not – not even in the university settings that Carson mentions, where "inclusive language dominates." Ordinary English readers can make such steps from translation to broader application quite well.

But in Luke 17:3, the TNIV imposed just this kind of change on Jesus' words. Jesus taught using a single male ("your brother") as an example of a general truth, but the TNIV will not let him do this:

NIV: If your **brother** sins rebuke **him**, and if **he** repents, forgive **him**, and if **he** sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven

times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive **him**."

TNIV: If any **brother or sister** sins against you, rebuke **the offender**; and if **they** repent forgive **them**. Even if **they** sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, "I repent," you must forgive **them**.

This is the kind of change to "inclusive language" that the TNIV translators say is necessary because of changes in modern English.

Readers today are perfectly capable of understanding that a male-specific example (or a female-specific example, such as the woman with the lost coin, or the persistent widow with the judge) has a broader application to people in general. No changes in English speech patterns today have taken away that ability. In fact, I doubt that any future changes in English will ever take away the ability to understand such statements readily. The ability to understand this kind of specific example used to teach a general truth is something inherent in ordinary human life.

Now someone may say that he or she does not *like* the fact that the Bible uses more male examples than female examples to teach such truths. But we cannot do anything about that, for the Bible is what it is, and while it does use both men and women as examples of general truth, it uses male examples more frequently. Should we try to conceal that fact from modern readers? The TNIV does so hundreds of times.

Another example is 1 Corinthians 14:28, about speaking in tongues in the church service:

NIV: If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak **to himself** and God.

The question here is, can modern readers understand that Paul's example here also *applies* to women who speak in tongues? Do the TNIV translators actually think that there are significant numbers of women in the English-speaking world who have read that verse and decided that it *only applies to men*, so that women are free to speak in tongues in church without interpretation as often as they wish? Do we know of cases where women have been speaking in tongues without interpretation in church services, arguing that this is just fine because Paul used the word "himself" and therefore the verse only applies to men? Of course this has not happened.

Now people may not *like* the fact that Paul uses a masculine pronoun that makes it more likely that the reader will first picture a male speaker and second realize that it has broader application to all people, but the fact is that in Greek as well as English, to use a singular pronoun to refer to persons,

one has to choose either a masculine or a feminine pronoun. If Paul had used a feminine pronoun, we would have to translate, "If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak **to herself** and God," and we would in that case first think of a female speaker and then immediately realize of course that it had broader application to a male speaker as well. But that is not what Paul wrote, and we do not have freedom to translate it as "to herself."

Nor is the issue here one of modern stylistic preferences for an author composing his or her own new writings. Many modern English style books would look at 1 Corinthians 14:28 and suggest that Paul should rewrite it with plurals, "The **speakers** should keep quiet in the church and speak **to themselves** and God." If modern writers are composing their own sentences and wish to recast a sentence in this way, or if they want to say "speak *to himself or to herself* and God," or if they want to change their sentence in some other way, then they are free to do so, *provided that they are writing their own sentences and not translating the words of the Bible*. But if we are translating what Paul wrote, then we are not free to change his male-specific example into a plural sentence or something else that fails to represent accurately what he wrote.

What does the TNIV do with this verse? It changes it as follows:

NIV: 1 Cor. 14:28: If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak **to himself** and God.

TNIV: 1 Cor. 14:28: If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to God **when alone**.

The problem is that there is nothing that means "when alone" in the Greek text (the dative pronoun *heauto* here means "to himself" in parallel with the dative phrase *to theo*, "to God"). The TNIV's interpretation that this means "when the speaker is *alone*" may be some commentator's further *explanation* of the passage, but it is probably an overly-restrictive explanation, and it is surely not an accurate *translation* of the passage. Prior to the TNIV, people could disagree over whether Paul allowed uninterpreted prayer in tongues in small private groups outside the church meeting, but here the TNIV invents a new rule that Paul (and God) never stipulated: Someone praying in tongues must be "alone."

The TNIV translators perhaps did not even realize how they were altering the meaning of this verse (or perhaps they did, I don't know). But the point is that they did so in an attempt to *avoid* the faintly male-specific example which Paul implied when he used a masculine singular pronoun meaning "to himself." That translation is accurate, it is faithful to what Paul wrote, and no changes in the English language have

occurred that take away people's ability to understand Paul's meaning and the broader application of the specific example.

Another example is found in Revelation 22:18:

NIV: I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If **anyone** adds anything to them, God will add to **him** the plagues described in this book.

TNIV: I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If **any one of you** adds anything to them, God will add to **you** the plagues described in this scroll.

Once again the question is this: does anyone seriously believe that any significant group of people were reading the NIV, "If **anyone** adds anything to them, God will add to **him** the plagues," and thinking that the warning *did not apply to women*? Have there been any groups of women who have decided that they were free to add to the words of the book of Revelation, because this warning did not apply to them? Of course not.

I realize that we may find people who do not *like* the fact that the verse hints first at an example of a male human being who would add to these words, because it does use the pronoun "him." But the Greek text as the apostle John wrote it also used a masculine singular pronoun, and also suggested in the first instance a picture of a male human being adding to these words, with the realization that people would automatically understand that it also *applied to* any women who would think of adding to the words of that book. The fact that someone might not like something that is in the Bible does not give warrant for changing what it says.

And the TNIV has in fact changed the meaning of the verse. Previously the verse warned that God would add the plagues only to the specific individual who added to the words of the book ("God will add *to him* the plagues"). But now the TNIV has God adding the plagues to the whole group! When the sentence starts out, "If any one of you," the "you" has to include all of the readers in the group to which John is writing (for the "any one" refers to one person out of the whole group of "you"). But the TNIV does not say God will add the plagues to "that person" or "that one," but, in a way that should terrify us if we think about it, the TNIV has God adding the plagues to the whole group: "If any one *of you* adds anything to them, God will add *to you* the plagues described in this scroll." And so, under cover of the argument that "the English language has changed" the NIV has unnecessarily and inappropriately changed the meaning of the very verse that tells us not to change the words of this book of Scripture! And there are hundreds of such changes like this in the TNIV.

2. Do people think that generic "he" does not apply to women today?

Because the use of "he/him/his/himself" is so frequently changed in gender-neutral Bibles, especially in examples like the ones given above, the argument that "the English language has changed" provides an important defense for the removal of such words. Blomberg says,

> . . . in spoken English I almost never hear anyone any more completing a sentence of the form, "Everyone who comes to class tomorrow should bring _____ textbook with _____," with anything other than "their" and "them" respectively" (pp. 22-23).

And Carson says,

> . . . if for the envisaged readership of TNIV the pronouns "him" and "he" have the effect . . . of excluding approximately half of humanity, one could responsibly argue that the TNIV is, for such a readership, a *more accurate, more faithful* translation than the NIV or the ESV (p. 28).

But the question is not how frequently people say, "Everyone should bring their textbook with them" in spoken English today. The questions are rather: (1) What English translation most accurately represents what the biblical text actually said? and (2) Will people understand the meaning of such a translation?

As far as most accurately representing what the Biblical text actually said, I agree with Blomberg who correctly says (in this very context), " . . . there is no question that a change of person or number renders a translation less than fully literal" (p. 23).

Will people understand the use of "he" in a statement of a general principle like, "If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to **him** the plagues described in this book"? I think it is beyond question that people today *do understand* the generic use of "he" in sentences like that. What is the evidence that people will understand it? It is still found in ordinary English publications from a wide variety of sources. Just this month the following sentence appeared in *Christianity Today*:

> If the translator doesn't know what *he's* talking about, why should *he* be translating? (Eugene Nida, in "Meaning-full Translations," a report of an interview by David Neff, *Christianity Today*, October 7, 2002, p. 49).

Does anyone seriously think that readers thought Eugene Nida's sentence did not *apply to* women translators? Or that he

was implying that women translators who do not know what they are talking about should be translating, men who do not know what they are talking about should not be translating? Of course not.

> " . . . a passenger assisting in an emergency, for example, could put **himself** in the line of fire of an armed air marshal" (*USA Today,* September 17, 2002, p. 9E, in an article on how passengers should react in the case of an airline hijacking).

Did readers of *USA Today* misunderstand that sentence? Did the women airline travelers reading *USA Today* think, "Oh, then I am free to try to assist by attacking a terrorist because USA Today said that only men who did this would put themselves in the line of fire of an armed air marshal"? Of course not. Such usage is ordinary English.

> "First, the person who buys the policy reports on **his** tax return only a small portion of what **he** really paid in premiums. . . .The buyer is allowed to declare on **his** tax return the insurance company's lowest premium for that amount of insurance" (*Arizona Republic* July 28, 2002, p. A2, quoting an article by David Cay Johnston in the *New York Times* about wealthy people who buy certain types of life insurance to avoid taxes.)

There is no possibility that readers would think this article does not apply to wealthy women who buy such insurance policies.

> "Mr. Baer's CIA is a place where . . . anyone who takes the initiative runs the risk of derailing **his** career" (*Wall Street Journal* February 7, 2002, p. A15).

Again, would any reader think that this means there are no women working at the CIA? Or that the sentence means that a woman who takes the initiative to point out a problem in intelligence gathering would not ruin her career? Of course not.

> "Should you quit work to stay home with the baby? No, wait till **he's** eleven" (headline in *Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2002, p. D1).

Do Bradley and Blomberg and Carson actually think that readers of the *Wall Street Journal* did not realize that the article applies also to baby girls (whatever we may think of the strange advice given in the article)?

> "Wal-Mart is a reflection of America. . . . [I]f [a manager has] three shifts of people working for **him**, it's going to be a real challenge to know everyone" (*American Way Magazine* [American

Airlines], June 15, 2002, p. 50, quoting Wal-Mart spokesman Jay Allen.)

Does this imply to modern readers that there are no women managers at Wal-Mart? Or that women managers have no challenge getting to know their employees but men managers do have a challenge? Of course not. People today do not really *misunderstand* such sentences. Some self-appointed guardians of "politically correct" speech may object to such sentences, of course, but they do not misunderstand them.[25]

> "Next time your friend wants to drive drunk, do whatever it takes to stop **him**" (radio advertisement by the advertising council, on news radio KXEM [1010 AM] in Phoenix, June 30, 2002, at 4:06 p.m.).

I wonder if Peter Bradley would say that teenagers hearing that ad thought that it did not apply to a high school girl who wanted to drive drunk? Or if Don Carson would say that this sentence has the "effect . . . of excluding approximately half of humanity"?

Or would they say that the Advertising Council, a secular ad agency, doesn't understand how to use current English? If "the English language has changed" so much that people cannot understand such sentences correctly, then why do secular writers in all sorts of formats still use such statements?[26]

Now someone may answer that some of these sentences actually hint slightly at a male representative example, because it is men who are more likely to drive drunk, and men are more likely to work for the CIA, and men are more likely to attack a hijacker. I would respond that I agree completely. Those three sentences do hint slightly at a male representative example. And that is exactly the pattern of speech that we find in the New Testament where Jesus and the New Testament authors were accustomed to teaching a general truth by speaking of or hinting at a male representative example. We should translate their sentences using "he" in this "representative generic" sense and convey exactly the meaning of what they wrote.

But what about generic "they" and generic "she"? Aren't these also used today? Of course they are (and I could provide many quotations like that as well). But it is not enough to demonstrate that the English language *also* allows for "they" and "she" in such constructions. The fact of the matter is that English today uses and allows for at least four kinds of statements: generic "he," generic "he or she," generic "she," and generic "they." As Vern Poythress and I said in our book in 2000:

> In matters of usage in modern English, we see nothing necessarily wrong with a whole spectrum of typical modern uses. Some people may continue to use generic "he" while others may avoid it, and instead use "he or she" or "you" or "they." Some people may use "man" to designate the human race, others may not . . . .a writer today has authority over what he or she writes. A Bible translator does *not* have this authority because the meaning belongs not to him but to God.[27]

The question is, *Out of these legitimate and understandable options*, which one most faithfully represents the Bible's use of masculine singular pronouns in such statements? The answer is that generic "he" represents the usage of the biblical authors most accurately in these sentences (where there is a masculine singular pronoun in the original).

The 2002 edition of the *Associate Press File Book and Briefing on Media Law* says,

> . . . use the pronoun *his* when an indefinite antecedent may be male or female: *A reporter attempts to protect his sources*. (Not *his or her* sources . . .).[28]

We may ask Bradley and Blomberg and Carson and others, If "the English language has changed" so much that you cannot use generic "he" in Bible translation, then why does the Associated Press, probably the largest association of news writers in the world, not realize that the language has changed in this way? And why do *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Arizona Republic* (the largest newspaper in Arizona) and *Christianity Today* and the writers for the passenger magazine for American Airlines (the largest airline in the United States) not realize that the language has changed in this way?

In addition, these writers are writing their own new sentences today, not *translating* the words of an author who wrote 2000 years ago and who used masculine singular pronouns in sentences that have generic application to men as well as women.

3. Does the common use of "singular they" in English today validate its use in the TNIV?

I recognize that in spoken English today, and somewhat in written English, people use "they" to refer to a singular antecedent. This is thought to justify the TNIV's change to "they" in sentences such as Luke 17:3:

NIV: If your brother sins, rebuke **him**, and if **he** repents, forgive **him**.

TNIV: If any brother or sister sins against you, rebuke **the offender**; and if **they** repent, forgive **them**.

Or, similarly, in James 5:20:

NIV: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of **his** way will save **him** from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

TNIV: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of **their** way will save **their** soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

But does good written English require such a use of "they" in order to be understandable, or even in order to be consistent with current English idiom? Craig Blomberg apparently thinks so, for he claims:

And since the late 1980s, the Modern Language Association, the primary American organization that pontificates on what is or isn't acceptable in written English, has approved of and even encouraged the use of plural pronouns to refer back to generic singular antecedents.[29]

But is this claim true? The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Fifth Edition, edited by Joseph Gibaldi (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1999), says:

. . . many writers no longer use *he, him,* or *his* to express a meaning that includes women or girls: "If a young artist is not confident, he can quickly become discouraged." The use of *she, her,* and *hers* to refer to a person who may be of either sex can also be distracting and momentarily confusing. . . . Both usages can often be avoided through a revision that recasts the sentence into the plural, or that eliminates the pronoun. . . . Another technique is to make the discussion refer to a person who is identified, so that there is a reason to use a specific singular pronoun. *They, them, their,* and *theirs* cannot logically be applied to a single person, and *he or she* and *her or him* are cumbersome alternatives to be used sparingly (112, underlining added).

Far from approving and encouraging the TNIV's use of "singular they," as Blomberg claims, the MLA specifically says it is not logical to do so. So today's high school students reading the TNIV will find over a hundred times in the New Testament alone that their Bible uses grammatical constructions that their MLA style book says cannot logically be used, constructions like, "Whoever turns a sinner from the error of **their** way will save **their** soul from death . . . "

We should also notice that the MLA does not say the use of "he" in such generic statements is wrong, only that "many

writers" no longer use this construction. And they are talking about constructing one's own sentences today, so it certainly does not imply that *English translations* from a writer in another language who uses masculine singular pronouns in this way should avoid such similar expressions in English.

My primary concern in this issue is not grammar, of course, but accuracy in Bible translation. If Zondervan and the IBS wish to publish a Bible with constructions that many today find to be grammatically incorrect, that is their decision and I will not object to it on the basis of grammar alone, nor would I take time to write an article about it, much less a book, if grammar were the only issue. But when the TNIV advocates claim that such usage is *required* because "the English language has changed," then some analysis of that claim is called for.

The TNIV web site (www.tniv.info, under Luke 17:3) also claims support for such changes from two English reference works:

Respected dictionaries and style guides such as *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* and *The Chicago Manual of Style* also affirm its use.

I agree that there are some dictionaries that approve this use, and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2001 edition) does approve some types of singular they. But what the TNIV web site does not tell us is: (a) This dictionary only approves such use "to refer to indefinite pronouns (as *everyone, anyone, someone*)" (p. 1220). It does not approve the use of "they" to refer to definite nouns, as in the TNIV's "Whoever turns **a sinner** from the error of **their** way" (James 5:20) or "rebuke **the offender**; and if **they** repent, forgive **them**" (Luke 17:3). So this dictionary should not rightly be cited to support the TNIV's rendering of Luke 17:3. It gives no support for such use. (b) The entry goes on to approve generic "he" in such sentences as well: "This gives you the option of using the plural pronouns where you think they sound best, and of using the singular pronouns (as *he, she, he or she*, and their inflected forms) where you think they sound best" (p. 1221). And under "he," their second meaning is "used in a generic sense or when the sex of the person is unspecified" (p. 533).

Then what about the other work cited, the *Chicago Manual of Style*? It did recommend using singular "they,"[30] but the editors have since withdrawn that recommendation on their web site. Here are the two relevant quotations from their "Frequently Asked Questions" guide:

Chicago Manual of Style Web Site (FAQ's) (May 16, 2002)

Q. I would swear that I saw a reference in your latest manual that approved of the use of "their"

instead of a gender-biased singular pronoun. For example, "If the user has completed installing the program, **they** should put the CD-ROM back in the package," instead of "If the user has completed installing the program, s/he should put the CD-ROM back in the package," but on your on-line FAQ, you dance around the answer to the question and suggest that you do NOT approve of the singular "their." Can you tell us what is acceptable?

A. Yes, you saw it at 2.98 (note 9), but there is some regret at having written it and we may change our minds in the next edition. I personally would rather avoid this usage, but occasionally it's so difficult to find a way around it that I take comfort in this note of approval and rather dread its removal. (I should add, however, that we will do almost anything to avoid using "s/he.")

Q. PLEASE tell me what you are recommending when people need a gender-neutral singular possessive pronoun. In order to avoid saying "his mind" or "her mind" (or, God forbid, "his/her mind") people are saying "their mind"——and it blows MY mind——unless, of course, those people could be sure "they" are "of one mind"! If you have a discussion on this issue, I'd be most happy to receive it or be directed to it.

A. I'm afraid your gender-neutral pronoun (at least in the sense you need) does not exist in our lexicon. I agree that the **plural pronoun** with a singular noun seems inadequate; I would suggest that you recast the sentence altogether or at least make "mind" plural for agreement: their minds. Other writers alternate between using "his" and "her" in such constructions in order to give equal status to each pronoun. (http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq.html (Search under "singular they")

So the current *Chicago Manual of Style* editors "would rather avoid" using "singular they" and say it "seems inadequate." But this "inadequate" construction is what is used so often in the TNIV, and this "inadequate" construction is what the IBS tells us has to be used for a younger generation because "the English language has changed." In fact, when we look at the reversal in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, we may wonder if our culture is now shaking off some of the influences of radical feminism and the "politically correct" language police, and if common sense and freedom to use words the way we choose is being restored, and if the "rapid decline" mentioned by Peter Bradley is actually being reversed. Predicting the future of language change is a risky business.

Building a Bible translation on one's predictions of the future is even more doubtful.

Other highly respected English authorities reject "singular they" and consider it unsuitable for standard written English. For example, the 2000 edition of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, perhaps the most widely-acclaimed and most respected handbook for good writing in the English language, says,

> Do not use *they* when the antecedent is a distributive expression such as *each, each one, everybody, every one, many a man*. Use the singular pronoun.
> [incorrect:] Every one of us knows they are fallible.
> [correct:] Every one of us knows he is fallible.[31]

As noted in the earlier question, the current edition of *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (2002) directs, "use the pronoun *his* when an indefinite antecedent may be male or female: *A reporter attempts to protect his sources.* (Not *his or her* sources . . .)." While it also says that a sentence may be best recast as plural, as *Reporters attempt to protect their sources*, there is no mention of any possibility of a mixture such as *A reporter attempts to protect their sources*, which is the style we find throughout the TNIV.[32]

William Zinsser, one of this country's most highly regarded English stylists, in his book *On Writing Well*, says that simply changing "he" to "they" is not adequate. He says, "But let's face it: the English language is stuck with the generic masculine. . . . I don't like plurals; they weaken writing because they are less specific than the singular, less easy to visualize" (William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, 5th ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 123).

Wilson Follett, *Modern American Usage*, revised by Erik Wensberg (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), agrees that people use plurals to refer to a singular antecedent in colloquial speech, but he then says, "But no esteemed writer of English, early or late, has been cited as using this oddity page after page, in work after work" (p. 31). (We might add, no esteemed writer of English until the TNIV translators.)[33]

The *American Heritage Dictionary* (2000 edition) notes that of more than 200-member "Usage Panel," consisting of a wide range of well known writers, critics, and scholars, "Eighty-two percent find the sentence *The typical student in the program takes about six years to complete their course work* unacceptable" (p. 1796).[34]

We must remember, also, that these style manuals and dictionaries are talking about how they want people to write their own sentences today, *not about how people should*

translate sentences from an ancient author who actually used masculine singular pronouns to speak of an example of a general truth. *None* of the English manuals quoted tells us to translate another writer's masculine *singular* pronouns as gender-neutral *plurals*! (We can only suppose that the percent of Usage Panel experts who found that procedure "unacceptable" would be higher than 82%.) But this is the standard usage of the TNIV.

The IBS tells us the gender language of the TNIV is necessary in order to have a Bible to reach a "younger generation." But when this younger generation begins to read the TNIV in high school, they will find the IBS has given them a Bible that repeatedly uses a construction that the *MLA Handbook* rejects, and that *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* does not approve, and that the *American Heritage Dictionary* tells them is "unacceptable" to 82% of its Usage Panel experts. When they take advanced English composition classes in high school, they will find their Bible speaks in a way that Strunk and White tell them is wrong. When they reach college, they will have difficulty quoting a Bible that the next edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* tells them is wrong, and that William Zinsser's *On Writing Well* tells them is wrong. And if they perhaps aspire to be journalists and write for the secular press, they will be embarrassed to quote a Bible that the *Associated Press Stylebook* tells them is wrong.[35]

When the IBS and Zondervan defend a rendering such as "rebuke the offender; and if **they** repent, forgive **them**" by saying it is *necessary* because "the English language has changed," I think it can safely be said that their claim is not true. Such a construction may be *acceptable* in modern informal spoken English, but in *written* English it is not *necessary*, and many think it is not even *acceptable*. To say that the TNIV's changes in gender language are necessary because "the English language has changed" turns out to be a remarkably weak argument.

4. Is there really a loss of meaning when "they" is used as a singular pronoun?

English speakers recognize that there remains something strange, something that seems vaguely plural, when we read "they/them/their" used in a so-called "singular" sense. That is because in the vast majority of cases we use it as plural in distinction from a singular. So when we try to use it as singular, even when the context would require a singular sense, it just does not work. Think of these sentences:

They is happy.

They is singing.

Is your husband home? Yes they is.

I am not taking phone calls this morning, but if Peter calls, I will talk to them.

In every case, the context tries to force a singular meaning, but the sentence just won't work. "They" remains stubbornly plural.

So I doubt that "they" is truly an adequate substitute for singular "he/him" even in sentences like the TNIV's "rebuke **the offender;** and if **they** repent, forgive **them**." To change "him" to "them" removes the particularity of the specific male example ("your brother . . . him" in Luke 17:3) and creates a broadening of the statement to a thought of all the possible people who could fall in the category of "the offender." This is why we would naturally think it strange to read,

If your brother sins, rebuke *them*.

or even

If any brother sins, rebuke *them*.

The word "them" just does not function well as a true singular in English, but leaves room for some ambiguity as to whether it is referring to a singular person or more than one.

This is relevant for the TNIV's change in Revelation 3:20:

NIV: I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with **him**, and **he** with me.

TNIV: I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with **them**, and **they** with me.

Is "they" truly singular? Readers will wonder. The antecedent "anyone" may make them think it is singular, but then in this context Jesus is speaking to a whole church. Consider this sentence:

If anyone comes to class today, I will teach them.

Is "them" singular or plural? We can't be sure, because the situation seems to allow for several students coming to class, and we think that maybe the "anyone" potentially includes several people. Or consider this sentence:

If anyone comes to class today, I will teach them for the first half hour and put them in discussion groups after that.

Here "them" is clearly plural, and we have no problem processing the sentence because we attribute to "anyone" a

plural sense, referring to all the students who might come.

Now in Revelation 3:20, the context is "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:" (vs. 14), and the previous verse said, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent" (vs. 19). Therefore Jesus is addressing the whole church. In such a context, it is very possible to take "them" in verse 20 as referring to the whole church: "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with **them**, and **they** with me."

Carson says of this sentence, "But with the best will in the world, it is difficult to see how this change loses 'the teaching that Jesus has fellowship with the individual believer,' precisely because the preceding 'anyone' is preserved in both instances" (p. 27). And Blomberg says, regarding plural statements generally in the Bible, "I know of no one who assumes these do not apply to individual believers" (p. 23).

But this misses the point. Of course a promise that Jesus would eat with a whole group of people (a whole church, if readers take "them" as plural) means that the readers would be in the group, and so the promise of a "church dinner" with Jesus *applies* to them. But *what* applies to them is no longer a promise of individual fellowship between Jesus and a single person ("I will eat with *him*"). What applies to them is the changed TNIV sentence, "I will eat with *them*." The assurance of individual fellowship with Jesus is no longer there. If it is a "church supper" in view, readers who have attended a church supper with an honored guest will think, "Who knows if Jesus will even notice me in such a context, much less have extended fellowship with me?" Readers will think, "Maybe it promises me personal fellowship with Jesus, but maybe the 'them' means it is fellowship with Jesus in the context of the whole church together." They cannot be sure. There is a loss of meaning for an important, well-loved verse.

People may say, "So what? That's only one verse." But the TNIV changes "he" to plural "they" 271 times in the New Testament alone, and change "he" to "singular they" another 112 times. "He is changed to "you" 90 times (and we often cannot tell if "you" is singular or plural), and to "we" 9 times, and simply omitted 48 times (in every case where Greek has a singular verb or a 3rd person masculine singular pronoun).[36] Such systematic changes constitute a significant change of emphasis in the whole New Testament, a significant loss of emphasis on individual responsibility and individual relationship with God.

E. Justifications for the TNIV

1. Do the New Testament authors' quotations from the Old Testament validate the use of gender-neutral language in the TNIV?

Darrell Bock gives several examples "where Scripture is quoted within Scripture by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit" (p. 15 in my printout from Bock's web site) and mentions several examples. A consideration of Acts 4:11 (quoting Psalm 118:22) and Second Corinthians 6:18 (quoting 2 Sam. 7:14) will illustrate his argument.

2 Samuel 7:14 says, "I will be to **him** a father and **he** shall be to me a **son.**" Bock points out (p. 16-17) that Paul changes this in 2 Corinthians 6:18 to: "I will be a father to **you**, and **you** shall be **sons and daughters** to me, says the Lord Almighty." Paul thus changes third person "he, him" to second person "you," and changes "son" to "sons and daughters." Does this not give justification for the TNIV translators today to make the same kind of changes as Paul did under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

To take another of Bock's examples, Psalm 118:22 says,

The stone that **the builders rejected** has become the cornerstone.

But when Peter quotes it in Acts 4:11 he says,

This Jesus is the stone **that was rejected by you, the builders**, which has become the cornerstone.

Here Peter inserts the word "you" and changes the active verb to passive. Does this not give justification for changing third person statements to second person in translating the TNIV Bible?

The answer in both of these cases is no. New Testament scholars have long recognized that there is a wide variety in how freely the New Testament authors quote or change the Old Testament text. But this varied procedure does not provide us with a new theory of translation, in which we can freely alter the meaning of the original text of the Bible to suit our purposes.

People who claim this fail to take into account what the New Testament writers were doing.[37] In quoting the Old Testament, they are like preachers making an application. They are not translators producing a base translation on which everyone will rely. A preacher who functions in this way is not *claiming* to give the most accurate translation for general purposes, but is rather giving an interpretive rendering that brings out some of the implications of the original and applies it to the situation at hand. Similarly, the New Testament often gives us interpretive renderings rather than a uniform model that provides us with a pattern for how to translate the Old Testament.

This distinction between a New Testament use of an Old Testament passage and a translation has been recognized for a

long time. In the nineteenth century, opponents of biblical inerrancy were using a similar argument to this objection, saying that we do not need to insist on the truthfulness of every word of Scripture, because even the New Testament authors adapt and quote freely when using the Old Testament. But defenders of inerrancy, such as A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield replied in 1881 as follows:

> Nor is quotation to be confounded with translation. It does not, like it, profess to give as exact a representation of the original, in *all* its aspects and on *every* side, as possible; but only to give a true account of its teaching in *one* of its bearings. There is thus always an element of application in quotation; and it is, therefore, proper in quotation to so alter the form of the original as to bring out clearly its bearing on the one subject in hand, thus throwing the stress on the element for which it is cited. This would be improper in a translation. The laws which ought to govern quotations seem, indeed, to have been very inadequately investigated by those who plead the New Testament methods of quotation against inspiration.[38]

We can see very easily that New Testament citations of the Old Testament do not show us how we should translate the Old Testament. To take these two examples which Bock quotes, if these were providing us with a pattern for *translation*, then we should be able to take the New Testament "quotation" and put it back into the Old Testament text *as the best English translation of that text*. But no translator of any version would do that in cases like these, for it would make nonsense of the original Old Testament statement, and it would be an impossible translation of the Hebrew.

For example, here is what would happen to Psalm 118 if we put Peter's quotation back into the Psalm as the accurate "translation":

> I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that was rejected by **you, the builders**, which has become the cornerstone (Ps. 118:21-22, if the New Testament citation is made into a translation of the Old Testament text).

This is of course impossible as a translation. By inserting "you" into verse 22, it makes the Psalmist say to God that *God* has rejected a stone but that stone has become the cornerstone anyway! The Hebrew text simply doesn't mean that, and this simply is not a legitimate *translation*.

The same thing would happen if we put Paul's citation of 2 Samuel 7:14 back into God's statement to David. It would read as follows:

> When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to **you**, and **you** shall be **sons and daughters** to me. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men . . . (2 Sam. 7:12-14).

Once again this is impossible as a *translation*. It has God saying to David that after he dies, "I will be a father to you [that is, to David], and you shall be sons and daughters to me." It has God telling David that after his death he will be "sons and daughters" to God! It completely omits the meaning of the Hebrew text, which is a promise that God will be a father to David's son. Once again, in 2 Corinthians 6:18 Paul *adapts* and *applies* the Old Testament statement for his own purposes in writing to the Corinthian church. But he is not purporting to give an exact *translation* of the original text, nor could this ever possibly work as a translation of the original text.

Bock argues, in addition, that Paul's introductory formula in 2 Corinthians 6:16, "As God said" (Greek aorist *eipen*) means that Paul is claiming that this is what God said in the past and "not God is now saying it as a matter of current revelation" (p. 17). But this misses the point, which is that the form in which New Testament authors cite Old Testament quotations still allows for much intermingling of adaptation and application in the midst of the citation. The phrase "as God said" in verse 16 tells the reader that Paul is citing from the Old Testament, not that he is purporting to give an exact *translation* of the Old Testament statement, but that he is citing it in the way New Testament authors commonly do, mingling with it adaptation and application to the situation at hand.

Nor is Carson's argument on this point persuasive. Referring to this same verse (2 Cor. 6:18), Carson says, "The apostle himself does not think that Hebrew singulars must always be rendered by Greek singulars, or that the Hebrew 'son' should never be rendered by the Greek 'sons and daughters.' No one, I think, would quickly charge Paul with succumbing to a feminist agenda."[39] Once again, Carson misses the point that Paul is not attempting to give us an exact *translation* but is freely adapting and applying the Old Testament text to his situation. Paul's citation simply cannot be put back into Second Samuel 7:14 as a translation.

2. Do the New Testament authors change singulars to plurals and third person to second person and thus justify such changes in the TNIV?

Craig Blomberg apparently agrees at least in part with

what I have said in the previous section, for in discussing New Testament quotations from the Old Testament he says,

> Yet at the same time, Poythress and Grudem correctly observe that the New Testament many times goes beyond mere translation to interpretation and application in its "quotations" of the Old Testament. So perhaps these examples are not as conclusive as they might at first appear. (p. 25, with reference to Poythress and Grudem, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy* 198-201, where we discuss this question.)

But Blomberg returns with another argument. He says there are "places where within the Greek New Testament itself, an inspired author shifts between singulars and plurals or between second and third persons, in contexts that suggest no demonstrable difference in meaning. Some of these afford strikingly close parallels to the grammatical constructions the TNIV has employed" (p. 25).

As one example, Blomberg quotes James 2:15:

> If a brother or sister are (pl.) naked [or "poorly clothed"] and lack (pl.) daily food, and if any of you says to *them*, 'go (pl.) in peace, be (pl.) warm and be (pl.) well fed,' and does not give *them* . . ." (Blomberg's literal translation, p. 25).

Blomberg correctly points out that after the first phrase "brother or sister," James shifts consistently to plural verbs and pronouns. Apparently he sees this as justification for the TNIV's translating singular pronouns as plurals and thus changing "he" to "they" hundreds of times.

But the example is not parallel for two reasons:

(1) The sentence is an unusual grammatical construction in any case, and is cited by the grammars as an exception, and not as a general pattern. The reason is that once James has started the sentence with "If a brother or sister," then to follow it with either a singular masculine adjective or a singular feminine adjective would have sounded strange to a Greek ear, so James simply translates "according to the sense" (understanding his hypothetical situation to include more than one person) and makes the rest of the sentence plural. The Blass-Debrunner-Funk *Grammar* refers to the passage as follows: "Exception: Ja 2:15 *ean adelphos e adelphe gumnoi hyparchosin* (*gumnos* or *gumna* would have been harsh)."[40]

Interestingly, in 1934, A. T. Robertson commented on this verse as follows: "We have a similar difficulty in English in the use of the disjunctive and other pronouns. One will loosely say: "If anyone has left their books, they can come and get them.""[41] What this shows is that Robertson also recognized

the unusual and rather awkward nature of this individual example. But it also shows that nearly 70 years ago people realized that "singular they" was heard in ordinary speech (it is by no means a new phenomenon!), but no Bible translation ever felt that justified using it in the accurate translation of biblical texts.

(2) There is a difference between *translating* what an author wrote and *changing* what an author wrote. If James changed from singulars to plurals, we should translate it that way. So, in translating James 2:15, translators should translate it as James wrote it, shifting in the middle of the sentence from singular to plural (it makes good sense in English, as Robertson noted in 1934), thus accurately rendering James' plural pronouns as plurals:[42]

> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to *them*, "go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving *them* the things needed for the body, what good is that? (ESV).

But translating James' *plural* pronouns accurately as plurals here does not give us the justification to translate *singular* pronouns as plurals elsewhere, and thus change what the New Testament writers said!

Another example that Blomberg gives is the list of Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-11), where most of them are in the third person ("Blessed are the poor in spirit, for *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven," for example). But then in the last one Jesus shifts to the second person: "Blessed are *you* when others revile *you* and persecute *you* . . . . " Blomberg claims this as support for changing third person statements to second person statements in the TNIV *in places where the Greek makes no such change*.

But the answer here is the same: We should translate Jesus' third person pronouns as third person pronouns, and translate his second person pronouns as second person pronouns, and if Jesus wishes for whatever reason to shift to the more direct "you" in the last Beatitude, then we should let him do that and translate the pronouns faithfully.[43] We should *translate* what is there in the Greek, but this does not give us license to *change* what is there in the Greek to something else!

None of Blomberg's examples gives us justification for *changing* the pronouns that the New Testament author used in *any* verse, far less in the hundreds of cases where this has been done in the TNIV.[44] As I mentioned earlier, the TNIV does this in a sweeping, systematic way, so that third person singular statements that were accurately translated as "he" in the NIV text have been changed in the TNIV to "they" 271 times, to "singular they" another 112 times, to "you" 90 times, to "we" 9 times, and simply omitted 48 times. This is not faithful or accurate translation. Will readers really trust a Bible where

third person masculine singular pronouns ("he") have been translated as "they" or "you" hundreds of times, with no way for readers to know where these are?

3. Should translations exercise "translational gender sensitivity" in order to make clear the "gender scope" of passages?

This question comes from the paper by Darrell Bock, "Do Gender Sensitive Translations Distort Scripture? Not Necessarily." Bock distinguishes between "*ideological* gender sensitive renderings," which is a radical approach that removes even male metaphors for God and Jesus because it is an attempt to "degenderize" the Bible, on the one hand, and "*translational* gender sensitivity" on the other hand which "renders terms to make clear the *gender scope* of passages" (p. 2). Bock thinks that this "translational gender sensitivity" is especially appropriate when passages "use an all encompassing reference to man or mankind to address both men and women" (p. 2).

I have two difficulties with this approach as Bock explains it. First, to use the phrase "gender sensitive" to describe what the TNIV has done is unnecessarily to prejudice the discussion in favor of the TNIV. For who wants to be insensitive? I would argue that a truly "gender sensitive" translation is one that is *sensitive* to the exact meanings and nuances of the Greek terms and thus translates those precisely and faithfully into English. And if we believe that God is infinitely wise and infinitely loving and kind, then to translate his Word as accurately as possible is the most sensitive thing in the world to do, for it is giving both men and women an accurate rendering of God's words to them.

Second, to say that translations like the TNIV are justified because they "make clear the *gender scope* of passages" is to state the case in such a vague way that it fails to represent clearly the actual issue at hand. For example, take Exodus 20:17: "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." Now what is the "gender scope" of this passage? Judging from the rest of Bock's paper, he seems to think that a passage has an inclusive "gender scope" whenever it states a general truth that applies to both men and women. But in that case the "gender scope" of this passage also includes not coveting your neighbor's husband. Should we then change the Ten Commandments and translate this, "You shall not covet your neighbor's *wife or husband*"? Surely not, and I expect that Dr. Bock would say we should not do so either. But using the vague idea of "gender scope" as a wedge with which to broaden the gender-specific statements of Scripture would seem to do exactly this. Bock's criterion of "gender scope" is too vague, and improperly confuses *translation* with *application*.

With regard to Psalm 34:20: "He keeps all **his** bones, not one of them is broken." Bock rightly understands that "the

individualizing language of the verse is an illustration that picks up on how God defends one person, a man, as an example of how he defends any who are among the class of the righteous (Jesus included, since this verse is also mentioned in John 12:46)" (*sic*, p. 10; I think this is a misprint and Bock means John 19:36).

But after rightly noticing that this verse uses an individual man as an example of a general truth, then Bock goes on to say that "either rendering 'his' or 'their' can work here conceptually" (p. 10). He says, "The advantage of the plural is that it reminds the reader that a class of people is in view theologically which serves as the base behind the individual example" (p. 10). Thus he thinks the reading of the 1997 NIVI, "He protects all **their** bones, not one of them will be broken," is also acceptable.

My objection here is that in the original Hebrew text of this verse, David, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, chose to teach this truth by use of a specific male example. If God decided to teach us by use of a specific male example, then we have no right to change it into a general statement about a general truth. There are other statements in the same Psalm that make clear the broader application to people generally (see vv. 15, 17-18, 22), and the broader application will not be lost.

But why would we even think to try to change verse 20, which teaches by means of a specific male example, into a gender-neutral broader truth ("He keeps all *their* bones")? Why do we find something objectionable about verses in God's Word that use a male example to teach a general principle? Quite frankly, I think it is because in the current culture we feel a vague uneasiness about the use of such male examples. We feel they are somehow "insensitive," especially if they are not balanced with an equal number of individual female examples used to teach a general truth. But that means that our objection is really to the fact that the example is male. Yet if God used a specific male example, we should leave it, and translate it accurately. That is the truly "gender sensitive" thing to do, and only that procedure accurately and faithfully makes clear the true "gender scope" of the passage as God originally inspired it.

4. Is the TNIV acceptable because some loss of meaning is necessary in all translations?

A common theme in D. A. Carson's paper is that all translation work involves judgment and careful balancing of alternatives, and frequently some aspects of meaning have to be lost in order for others to be preserved. He argues that the TNIV should not be criticized for doing just what other translations have done, since the TNIV is just making somewhat different judgments on the details of what is preserved and what is lost in each case. Carson says:

While the goal is certainly to preserve as much meaning as possible, translation is an inexact discipline, and something is invariably lost in any basic translation. One is constantly forced to make decisions. That is one of the fundamental reasons why there are commentaries and preachers. But somewhere along the line, Poythress and Grudem start referring to any loss of any meaning at any level as a "distortion" and an "inaccuracy" . . . But all translators, including Poythress and Grudem, are inevitably bound up with making choices about "nuances" they get across. . . . Poythress and Grudem articulate reasonably sound theory, but every time a decision goes against their favorite "nuance," they accuse their opponents of distorting Scripture and introducing inaccuracies (pp. 19-21).

I find I cannot agree with this assessment for two reasons. First, it is not true to say that "Poythress and Grudem start referring to any loss of any meaning at any level as a 'distortion' and an 'inaccuracy.'" What we actually say is this:

Because the task is so complex, no translation can attain the ideal and communicate into the second language absolutely *everything* that is meant in any speech or writing in the first. So what do translators do in practice? They try to do the best they can. They make hard choices and settle for compromises.[45]

We go on to say,

We must face a central fact: at a fine-grained level translators cannot avoid trade-offs. . . . All translations should endeavor to include as much as they can. But differences of priorities among the different translation strategies will sometimes lead to different solutions in detail.[46]

So we explicitly recognize that there is a loss of nuance at various places in translation, and sometimes difficult choices have to be made. Never do we make the foolish claim that *any* loss of *any* meaning at *any* level is a "distortion."

Second, we are not criticizing just any loss of meaning or nuance that goes against our preferences, but rather (a) a systematic program of excluding a certain kind of male-oriented meaning that is in the original text, when (b) the English language is clearly capable of representing that meaning in translation today. Thus, we are criticizing *a systematic and unnecessary removal of male aspects of meaning that are in the original text*. We say:

The issue is whether a Bible translation systematically excludes male components of

meaning that are there in the original text. If it does, the translation is "gender-neutral," and we argue in this book that such a translation does not properly translate some of the details in the Word of God. . . .We ought not to tolerate these losses of meaning as long as a way exists of avoiding the losses.[47]

It is hard to understand how Carson can miss this point. We give literally hundreds of examples in our book, all of which focus on the loss of male components of meanings that were represented quite well in the original NIV and can still be represented well in English today.

For example, consider Matthew 7:3:

NIV: Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your **brother's eye** and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

TNIV: Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in **someone else's** eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

Here the Greek text has *tou adelphou sou*. The word adelphos ("brother") can mean either "(1) a male from the same womb as the reference person, *brother*" or, in an extended sense, "(2) a person viewed as a brother in terms of a close affinity, *brother, fellow member, member, associate* figurative extension of 1" (BDAG, p. 18). All the meanings and uses of the term carry the sense of someone who has a personal relationship with another, a relationship strong enough that it can be thought of in terms of the familial language of "brother." And the genitive pronoun *sou* is rightly translated by the possessive pronoun "your."

Jesus is using a specific example of "your brother" to express a general principle. This is the way he often teaches, using a specific example to teach a general truth. It will not do to say "the English language has changed" and to use that as a reason for changing the verse, for it is perfectly understandable and perfectly clear English to speak of "the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye."

Why then did the TNIV change it to "the speck of sawdust in *someone else's* eye"? Not because of any change in English, and not because the meaning of the Greek words have changed, but simply because Jesus' use of a male-specific example was objectionable. This is an example of a loss of meaning that is both systematic and unnecessary in the TNIV.

It gets worse in the next verse, Matthew 7:4:

NIV: How could you say **to your brother** "let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time

there is a plank in your own eye?

TNIV: How can you say _____ "let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

Here again the Greek specifies that Jesus said, "to your brother" (*to adelpho sou*) and the NIV got it exactly right. But the TNIV left the phrase out completely. In Jesus' statement, he specified the indirect object: "to your brother." He emphasized once again the personal relationship of the one to whom the person is speaking, one who is considered "your brother." But the TNIV translators apparently did not think that these three words of Jesus had any importance whatsoever, for they simply omitted them.

Why? Not because "the English language has changed," for the expression, "How can you say to your brother . . . ?" is simple, clear English. But "to your brother" was left out because it was a male-specific example by which Jesus was teaching a general truth.

When we find several hundred examples like this in the TNIV, then we object that this is not just the kind of "loss of nuance" that is necessary in any translation, and this is not just Poythress and Grudem complaining because something goes against their personal preferences, but it is rather a thoroughgoing, systematic removal of a certain kind of male-oriented meaning, a removal that is unnecessary and that could easily be avoided with ordinary English (as the NIV itself clearly shows). It is not true to say that we are objecting to any loss of nuance at any level. We are objecting to a systematic and unnecessary removal of a male-oriented meaning that is in the original text.

5. Is this just an argument between advocates of two legitimate views of Bible translation, formal equivalence and dynamic (or functional) equivalence?

The claim that critics of the TNIV are simply trying to preserve "formal equivalence" comes up again and again. For instance, Carson says,

That is not to say that preservation of formal equivalence is *always* a bad thing; it is to say, rather, that appeal to loyalty and faithfulness toward the Word of God as the ground for preserving formal equivalence is both ignorant and manipulative, precisely because the significance and range of use of a masculine pronoun in Hebrew are demonstrably not the same as the significance and range of use of a masculine pronoun in English (pp. 25-26).

But that is not at all what we claimed in our book. With regard to a spectrum of translations from "more preservation of form" (or "more literal") to "more changing form" (or "periphrastic"), we say,

We think that there is room for a spectrum of approaches here, *provided that readers understand the limitations as well as the advantages of the different approaches* (GNBC, pp. 79-80).

In fact, in that 2000 book, we responded directly to a similar charge that Carson had made earlier, that we were simply trying to preserve "formal equivalence" and that that was an incorrect approach to translation. We pointed out that the Colorado Springs Guidelines themselves in several places encourage the change of "form" (namely, masculine grammatical gender) in order to adequately represent *meaning*. If our concern were simply the preservation of grammatical "form" we of course would not approve such changes. But our concern is preservation of meaning, not preservation of form.

Here is the statement we made earlier:

What these two guidelines do claim is *not* that Hebrew, Greek, and English are "exactly" the same in pronoun use but that in the generic constructions mentioned they are *substantially* the same—so much so that (with few exceptions) generic third person singular masculine pronouns in Hebrew in Greek are best translated by generic third person singular masculine pronouns in English. . . .What we have claimed is that a translation of a personal pronoun that uses the same gender and number often conveys the maximal amount of meaning. And this is nothing new—it has been followed for all English translations until the advent of gender-neutral Bibles beginning in 1986.

 . . . the CSG did not insist on "formal equivalence" but on preserving meaning. It is surprising that Dr. Carson can write this [a statement that we were "blinded" to the fact that "formal equivalents are often impossible"] when the CSG themselves affirm at least six examples of translation that do not preserve formal equivalents:

Guideline	Heb. or Greek word or phrase	Grammatical gender in Heb. or Greek	Approved English translation	Sex indicated by English translation
A.1	*ho pisteuon*	Masculine	the one who believes	unspecified
A.5	*anthropoi*	Masculine	People	unspecified
A.7	*oudeis*	Masculine	no one	unspecified
A.8	*pas*	Masculine	all people, everyone	unspecified
B.1	*adelphoi*	Masculine	brothers and sisters	male and female
B.3	*banim*	Masculine	Children	unspecified

Carson has simply attributed to the Guidelines a position that exists only in his own mind, and one that is explicitly contradicted by the Guidelines.[48]

Though we wrote this in our 2000 book, and though we wrote it in explicit response to a similar claim by Carson, in his 2002 paper he continues to raise the same objection.

Another way to answer the objection that this is just a controversy between "dynamic/functional equivalence" and "formal equivalence" is to note that the kind of male-specific meaning that is left out of the TNIV can easily be represented in a translation that is far over on the "dynamic/functional equivalence" end of the spectrum. For example, the *New Living Translation* (NLT) in Matthew 7:3, says:

And why worry about a speck in *your friend's* eye when you have a log in your own?

Now there is nothing in the theory of functional equivalence that would prevent the change of one word so that the verse would read:

And why worry about a speck in *your brother's* eye when you have a log in your own?

Or, to take another verse from the NLT, consider Luke 17:3:

If another believer sins, rebuke *him*; then if *he* repents, forgive *him*.

Here the NLT, clearly a "dynamic/functional equivalence" translation, has used "he" and "him" in a representative generic statement, thus preserving the singular force of Jesus' example. So a "dynamic equivalence" translation *can* do this, and it preserves the singular and the male component of meaning. As far as the phrase "another believer," there is nothing in this translation theory that would prevent such a translation from rendering the verse as follows:

If your brother sins, rebuke him; then if he repents, forgive him.

In fact, the NLT in its marginal note says "Greek *your brother.*" Now the policy of the NLT toward gender language probably led to their decision not to put the literal translation "your brother" in the verse itself, but it was a policy regarding gender language which led to that decision, not anything about the difference between "dynamic/functional equivalence" and "formal equivalence" in translation theory.

Therefore, as Vern Poythress and I indicated in our book in 2000, our objection is not against a certain theory of translation. Our objection is against the systematic and unnecessary removal of male-oriented components of meaning that are there in the original text. Any kind of translation can include these.

6. Are the TNIV critics angry, incompetent, and ignorant?

I was somewhat surprised to see the choice of words that Dr. Carson used in his paper to describe those who disagreed with him or to describe their arguments. Here are some examples:

"positively cranky" (p. 7)

"betrays linguistic and . . . theological naiveté" (p. 9)

"hopelessly naïve" (p. 10)

"astonishing naiveté" (p. 11)

"shockingly ignorant" (p. 11)

"linguistically indefensible . . . even worse . . . inexcusable" (p. 12-13)

"deceptive and manipulative" (p. 15)

"manipulative rhetoric" (p. 15)

"theological naiveté" (p. 15)

"uninformed and misdirected" (p. 16)

"reactionary wing" (p. 16)

"demonized functional equivalence" (p. 16)

"linguistically uninformed" (p. 16)

"rarely balanced and . . . sometimes shrill" (p. 16)

"thoughtful and informed" (p. 17)

"patiently explains its authors' position" (p. 17)[49]

"scathingly" (p. 21)

"a rather heated review" (p. 22)

"increasingly shrill polemic that so roundly condemns fellow complementarians" (p. 24)

"both ignorant and manipulative" (p. 25)

"their wrath knows few bounds" (p. 26)[50]

In addition, there are some comments that imply that those who differ with Carson do not really understand Hebrew or Greek very well. He says, "Even many teachers of Greek and Hebrew in colleges, seminaries, and universities do not enjoy much facility in the languages they are teaching. These are precisely the kinds of people who are least likely to be sensitive to the demands of functional equivalence" (p. 46). On the next page he says, "It is the student of Greek and Hebrew who has a mechanical view of language who will have most difficulty grasping these elementary points, and who in the name of fidelity will demand more 'direct' translations . . . " (p. 47).

With regard to the motives of those who are saying we need more accuracy in translation, Carson has this comment:

> As one very sophisticated linguist wryly said, after reading his way into this debate, perhaps one of the reasons that impels some people to lay more stress on "accuracy" (by which they usually mean a greater tilting to more direct translation, though in all fairness accuracy is a more complicated matter than that) is that what they really want is not so much a better translation as a "crib" on the original languages (Carson, p. 7).

Now a "crib" is "A word-for-word translation of a foreign language text, especially one used secretly by students as an aid in studying or test taking" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). The implication of this sentence is that Carson's opponents do not know Greek and Hebrew very well and really want a more literal translation so they can cover up their ignorance.

The net effect of these comments scattered throughout Carson's paper is to build up an impression of his opponents as academically incompetent to understand or discuss the complexities of these issues, incapable of making balanced judgments, driven by wrongful anger against those who differ ("scathingly," "heated," "wrath"), and secretly motivated by a desire for a literal translation that will help them hide their ignorance of Hebrew and Greek.

Such characterizations of one's opponents are known as *ad hominem* arguments, that is, arguments "against the person" rather than against the arguments that the person is making. Such *ad hominem* arguments should find no place in this discussion (and, I am glad to say, such language is not found in the papers by Blomberg, Bock, Bradley, and Waltke). It is disappointing to see it in Dr. Carson's essay, and it is also disappointing that Zondervan would include it in a packet that was mailed to all members of the Evangelical Theological Society and the Institute for Biblical Research.

Now some of the phrases I quoted above are not directly applied to persons but to positions that Carson says these persons hold. But as I read through Dr. Carson's paper, it seemed to me in a number of cases that the use of such language occurred in cases where Carson was not responding to a position that his opponent actually held, but to a position that Carson wrongly attributed to the opponent. For example, Carson discusses Tony Payne's argument that Romans 1:17 should be translated "righteousness of God" in order to preserve the ambiguity that is in the original genitive *theou*, rather than the NIV's translation "righteousness from God" (which excludes the other possible meaning of the genitive, "righteousness that belongs to God" or "God's righteousness"). Carson reports Payne as saying that in allowing only the one sense "righteousness *from* God," the NIV "places the responsibility for interpretation in the hands of the translator, rather than the reader" (p. 11). Carson's response is to say, "Surely we are not to return to the astonishing naiveté that thought that translation could be done without interpretation? . . . The notion that one can translate responsibly *without* interpretation is, quite frankly, shockingly ignorant of the most basic challenges facing translators" (p. 11).

But did Payne ever say that translation can be done "without interpretation"? Certainly not in the sense that translators first have to understand a text clearly ("interpret it") before they can translate it rightly, and certainly not in a sense that every translation is in some sense an "interpretation" (even the translation that leaves the ambiguous expression "righteousness of God"). What Payne was objecting to was translations that *could* translate in a way that left open for English readers both possible interpretations, so that readers today would have to do the same thing that the original readers had to do, namely, decide from the sense of the context which interpretation was appropriate. A sympathetic reading of Payne would have made that clear, but instead Carson attributes to him a foolish position that he never held (that translation can be done with no interpretation at all), and then criticizes Payne as if he in fact did hold that position.[51] So this procedure first misrepresents Payne and then maligns him.

As to whether Vern Poythress and I use language that is

"shrill" and speaks "scathingly" of others and whether our "wrath knows few bounds when the TNIV deploys a plural instead of a singular" (p. 26), it may be helpful to quote again what we said in 2000:

> We are not criticizing the personal motives of the translators. Only God can judge people's hearts. We do not know our own motives perfectly, let alone the motives of others (p. 7).

> It is inappropriate to make this issue an occasion for personal attacks. We must beware of overreacting and firing ourselves with a zeal that is "not based on knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). "For man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires" (Jas. 1:20). The law of love requires us to hope for the best concerning other people's motives (1 Cor. 13:7). . . .However . . . it is not amiss to warn others about temptations that we see impinging (pp. 293-294).

In this more recent controversy over the TNIV, we have continually sought to exclude from our website (www.no-tniv.com or www.cbmw.org) any *ad hominem* statements or any negative comments about the persons involved on the other side of this issue. We have attempted never to write or speak out of anger. If we have failed in this attempt and have wrongfully spoken of others or said anything in anger at any point, then we certainly want others to call us to account for it. But it is troubling to be charged with acting in "wrath" when we are not aware of that attitude toward others in our own hearts.

F. Questions about specific verses

Although I have discussed a number of specific verses up to this point, there are some important and representative verses that received extended discussion in the September 2, 2002, Zondervan packet, and it is appropriate to include a brief discussion of them here.

1. In Hebrews 2:17, is it appropriate to say that Jesus was made like his "brothers and sisters"?

Here is the TNIV change in Hebrews 2:17:

NIV: For this reason he had to be made like his **brothers** in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest . . . .

TNIV: For this reason he had to be made like his **brothers and sisters** in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest . . . .

I agree that the plural Greek word *adelphoi* can mean "brothers and sisters" when the context supports that understanding (and the Colorado Springs Guidelines allow this). But here the change to "brothers and sisters" is not appropriate. All the Old Testament priests were men, and surely the high priest was a man. So it is appropriate to keep the NIV translation, "like his *brothers* in every way."

The problem with "like his *brothers and sisters* in every way" is that it hints at an androgynous Jesus, one who was both male and female. The TNIV translation does not actually require that sense, but it surely leaves open a wide door for misunderstanding, and almost invites misunderstanding. Meditate on that phrase "in every way" and see if you can trust the TNIV. As the TNIV's readers begin to meditate on the phrase "in *every* way" and to preach on "in *every* way," it will be hard to avoid thinking that Jesus was somehow both male and female.

Carson's response is to say that even the phrase, "like his brothers in every way," which is the 1984 NIV's translation, "does not mean that Jesus must be like each 'brother' in every conceivable way: as short as all of them, as tall as all of them, as old or young as all of them . . . " (p. 29). Of course not, but it *does* mean that he shared "in every way" in the characteristics common to "brothers."

Second, he says, "if the focus is on being human, then for Jesus to become 'like his brothers and sisters in every way' is not contextually misleading" (p. 30). Carson's line of reasoning here is representative of what we find often in defenses of the TNIV: (1) appeal to the vague, general meaning ("being human") and (2) then say that the male-specific details ("like his brothers") do not matter. That brings us back to the exact question with which we began this paper, the question at the heart of the controversy:

> Is it acceptable to translate only the general idea of a passage and omit male-oriented details of meaning that are present in the original Hebrew or Greek text?

Here the specific male meaning ("brothers") is excluded by appeal to the vague general meaning ("being human"). The original readers, however, in reading *adelphoi* in connection with Jesus' becoming a high priest, would have thought of being "like his *brothers*," not of being "like *human beings*" generally. The TNIV omits the male-specificity of the original.

Third, Carson says the phrase "brothers and sisters" is a "unified pair that must be taken together" (p. 30), somewhat like the phrase "flesh and blood" in verse 14, "Since the children have *flesh and blood*, he too shared in their humanity . . ." In response, I agree with Carson that "flesh and blood" will be understood by TNIV readers as a helpful parallel to the phrase

"brothers and sisters" just three verses later in verse 17. But just as verse 14 clearly implies that Jesus had "blood," and just as saying he had "flesh *and blood*" has additional meaning that "flesh" alone would not have, so by this parallel we have further reason to say that "brothers and sisters" has additional meaning that "brothers" alone did not have: it affirms that Jesus was somehow like his "sisters" in every way as well, and that being like his "sisters" added something to him that he did not have in merely being "like his brothers in every way." The more readers look at this parallel, the more they will wonder if the verse teaches an androgynous Jesus.

But what is the point of this change in the TNIV? What is objectionable about saying that Jesus, in order to become a high priest, had to become "like his brothers in every way"? What is objectionable is the male-specific meaning. So the TNIV removes it. Once again, this has nothing to do with any claims that "the English language has changed," for modern English is perfectly capable of saying that Jesus was made "like his brothers in every way." The reason is not a change in English but a systematic and unnecessary removal of male-specific meaning that is there in the original text.

2. In Hebrews 2:6, is it legitimate to remove the phrase "son of man"?

The TNIV in Hebrews 2:6 changes "son of man" to "human beings":

NIV: What is man that you are mindful of him, **the son of man** that you care for **him**?

TNIV: What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, **human beings** that you care for **them**?

Our objection to this change has been that the TNIV needlessly obscures the possible connection of this verse with Jesus, who often called himself "the Son of Man." (This verse is a quotation from Psalm 8:4.) And in changing "son of man" to "human beings," it incorrectly translates the singular Greek words *huios* ("son") and *anthropos* ("man").

Carson's response to this is to argue that the majority of commentators on Hebrews do not think that "son of man" here is a messianic title:

Scanning my commentaries on Hebrews (I have about forty of them), over three-quarters of them do not think that "son of man" here functions as a messianic title, but simply as a gentilic, as in Psalm 8 (pp. 28-29; Carson explains that "in Hebrew gentilic nouns are often singular in form but plural in referent").

There are at least three problems with this explanation.

First, all the "gentilic" nouns listed in the grammars by Gesenius and by Waltke and O'Connor are formed in a different way from what we have in Psalm 8:4: they are constructed by adding a *hireq-yod* to the end of a noun, and they "frequently (often even as a rule) take the article" (Gesenius, section 125d; see also 127d), as in *ha'ibri* "the Hebrew" or *hakkena'ani*," "the Canaanite." Waltke-O'Connor say, "Names with the *-i* suffix are called gentilics" (5.7c; see also 7.2.2). And they say, "Both singular and plural gentilics regularly take the article in referring to the entire group" (13.5.1f). So if Carson wishes to claim *ben-'adam* is a "gentilic" noun in Psalm 8:4 (vs. 5 in Hebrew), he at least needs to explain how he can know this, since it has no article and no *hireq-yod* ending, and thus is different from both the examples and the rules listed in these standard grammars.

Second, when Carson says that three-quarters of the commentators on Hebrews do not see "son of man" as a messianic title in Hebrews 2:6, while admitting that "there are competent interpreters" who do see it as messianic (p. 29), he actually indicates the problem with the TNIV rendering "human beings." The problem is that *this legitimate interpretive possibility is excluded by the TNIV*. The original readers of Hebrews could see that Hebrews 2:6 had the Greek phrase *huios anthropou* ("son of man"), and they could realize that that was the same phrase as *huios anthropou* ("son of man") in the Septuagint of Psalm 8. The original readers could also realize that Jesus used these same two words when he called himself "the Son of Man." Then they could ponder whether there was a connection between Psalm 8:4, and Jesus' calling himself "*the* Son of Man," and Hebrews 2:6. But none of these options is open to readers of the TNIV, for the phrase "son of man" has disappeared.

In addition, we should realize that there are other possibilities than "this is a messianic title" or "this is not a messianic title" in Psalm 8:4. Psalm 8 points to the creation plan of God to have human beings ruling over creation: "You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet" (Ps. 8:6). Even if "son of man" is not specifically a messianic title in Psalm 8:4, it still uses a singular expression in the second line ("the son of man" or "a son of man"), and it thus invites the reader to narrow the focus from the whole race in the first line ("What is man, that you are mindful of him") to a singular example in the second ("the son of man"). The Hebrew parallelism in this case (as often) is not exactly synonymous, but repeats the idea of the first line with increased specificity in the second line.

Thus, even if readers don't see "son of man" in Psalm 8:4 as a messianic title, surely Jesus saw himself as the fulfillment of the world-rule intention of God spoken at creation (Gen 1:28) and reaffirmed in Ps. 8 (and the author of Hebrews affirms in Heb. 2:9 that Jesus does fulfil that role). As Blomberg correctly says, "Jesus has come and proved to be the

perfect human that Adam and Eve failed to be: 'But we do see Jesus' (v. 9)" (p. 20). Therefore, whether "son of man" is strictly a messianic title, or whether for some other reason it just speaks in the singular of "a son of man" whom God planned to have dominion over the earth, it is likely that Jesus saw himself as the fulfillment of Psalm 8. This means that when Jesus called himself "the Son of Man" it is likely that he had in mind not only the prophecy in Daniel 7:13 but also other "son of man" themes in the Old Testament, including that of Psalm 8:4. The TNIV should not prevent readers from seeing these possibilities.

Third, the TNIV's plural expression "human beings" in Hebrews 2:6 is simply not an appropriate translation of the singular Greek expression *huios anthropou*. Two components of meaning are unnecessarily left out: (a) The TNIV does not even have "human being" but "human beings," thus unnecessarily translating the singular phrase as plural. But the singular phrase is part of the inspired text.[52] (b) The sonship component of meaning in both the singular Hebrew *ben* and the singular Greek *huios* is lost. Even if *huios anthropou* ("son of man") referentially indicates a human being, it does so by means of a specific phrase which includes the indication of descent from another human being, which I suspect is why even the gender-inclusive NRSV in Ps. 8:4 adds a footnote, "Heb *ben adam*, lit. *son of man*."[53]

What is the reason for such a loss of meaning in the TNIV? The reason is not that the phrase "son of man" cannot be understood today due to changes in the English language, for the words "son" and "man" are not difficult words. The reason is that "son of man" is male-specific, and so the TNIV changed it to something "gender-neutral." Such a change is again part of a systematic and unnecessary loss of male-specific meaning that is there in the original text.

3. Can *aner* ("man, husband") sometimes mean "person"?

We have objected to changing verses such as Acts 4:4:

NIV: But many who heard the message believed, and the number of **men** grew to about five thousand.

TNIV: But many who heard the message believed, and the number of **believers** grew to about five thousand.

Of course, this makes quite a difference, for if there were 5,000 men, then the size of the church was 10,000 or more.[54] The Greek word is *aner* (in this case plural). Whereas earlier Bible translations regularly translated *aner* as "man" or "husband," the TNIV translates it in some gender-neutral way like "people" 26 times.

Craig Blomberg defends this translation by saying, " . . . one well-attested meaning of the word is as a synonym for *anthropos*" (p. 15). He then cites definitions from the standard BDAG lexicon (p. 79) as well as two theological dictionaries.[55]

But these entries have to be read carefully, and it is not clear that the citations they provide actually demonstrate that *aner* can take the meaning "person," for several reasons:

(1) Where is the convincing data from citations of ancient sources? It is still not clear that there are any examples in the New Testament where the sense "person" is required instead of the sense "man." As for literature outside the Bible, what are the new data on *aner* that anyone has produced in the last five years that shows that Bible translations have understood *aner* wrongly up to this point? It has been well-known by Greek scholars for centuries that the term *anthropos* can mean either "person" or "man," depending on the context, and *aner* always (outside of special idioms) means "man" or "husband." Nobody in the last several years of the gender-neutral Bible controversy has "discovered" any new examples that prove a new meaning for *aner*. (And when we check the evidence for the meaning "person" given in some reference works, it turns out to give no new support for the supposed meaning "person"; see below.)

(2) *Anthropos* and *aner*: Given the way language works, it is highly improbable linguistically that Greek would have two different words, *anthropos* and *aner*, and that *both* words would mean both "man" and "person." That would leave Greek an amazing linguistic vacuum of having no common noun that could be used to speak specifically of a male human being.[56]

(3) Liddell-Scott: The standard reference work, the Liddell-Scott *Lexicon* (p. 138) for all of ancient Greek, gives no meaning "person," but only "man, husband," and some specific variations on those. This is very significant because *aner* is not a rare word: it is *extremely* common in Greek. Thousands upon thousands of examples of it are found in Greek from the 8th century BC (Homer) onward. If any meaning "person" existed, scholars likely would have found clear examples centuries ago.

(4) BDAG: The Bauer-Danker-Arndt Gingrich *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), needs to be read carefully so that it is not misquoted. Although they list one meaning as "equivalent to *tis*, someone, a person" (p. 79), we should note first that that is subordinate meaning (2) under the general meaning at the beginning of the entry, "a male person."

And in this entry under "equivalent to *tis*, someone, a person," every one of the examples they cite can easily be understood to refer to a man or men (such as Luke 19:2, "a

man named Zacchaeus"; Acts 10:1 "a man named Cornelius"; or Luke 5:18 "some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed"). So the entry in BDAG really shows that *aner* can mean "someone, a person (but always male)."

Now someone could argue, "But maybe there was a woman helping to carry the paralytic." The answer is that lexical definitions cannot be built on maybe's. There is no factual evidence that a woman was helping. And the clear pattern of other examples pushes us to say *aner* (plural) here must have meant "men" to first-century readers as well, unless we find some clear counter-examples.

The situation is similar in Rom. 4:8, "Blessed is the man (*aner*) whose sin the Lord will never count against him." The context does not require the sense "person," and this is a quotation from Ps. 32:2 where David is speaking (as several times in the Wisdom Literature) of the "blessed man" who is an example for all the godly to follow, as in Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked."

Of course these verses *apply* to women as well as men, just as the parable of the prodigal son applies to women as well as men, and the parable of the woman with the lost coin applies to men as well as women, but in none of these cases should we *translate* it to be the parable of the prodigal *child* or the parable of a *person* with a lost coin.

There is one other verse that people have sometimes mentioned, but it is ambiguous at best. Acts 17:34 says, "A few men (*aner*, plural) became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others" (NIV). This verse does not mean that Damaris is included in the "some men" (*aner* plural), as both F. F. Bruce's commentary and the BDAG *Lexicon* itself make clear (p. 79; note the word *kai*, "also"). It just means some men (on the Areopagus where Paul spoke and addressed them as "men of Athens," vs. 22) believed, and some others like Dionysius and Damaris were added to them.

BDAG also cite several references to extra-biblical literature in this entry. I have looked up every reference and they all either clearly refer to male human beings (as 1 Maccabees 13:34, "Simon also chose *men* and sent them to Demetrius the king with a request to grant relief to the country . . . "), or the context is not determinative but the meaning "man" makes good sense and the meaning "person" is not required (as Psalms of Solomon 6:1, "Happy is the man (*makarios aner*, in likely imitation of Psalm 1:1) whose heart is ready to call on the name of the Lord").

There is an idiomatic use, *kat'andra*, which BDAG also notes at the end of this entry, with several references. This idiom means "man for man, individually," and clearly includes

women in some instances, but that idiom does not occur in the New Testament. The LSJ Lexicon (p. 138) also notes the idiom *kat'andra*, with a similar meaning. The LSJ Lexicon does not give the meaning "person" for *aner*, but rather, "man, opposed to women," "man, opposed to god," "man, opposed to youth," "man emphatically, man indeed," "husband," and some special usages.[57]

(5) Louw-Nida: The Louw-Nida Lexicon does not treat *aner* by itself, but defines both *aner* and *anthropos* in the same two entries (9.1, under the category "Human Beings" and 9.24, under the category "Males"). It is surprising that they make no distinction between these two words, about which other lexicons regularly recognize a difference, with *aner* being a male-specific term.

In entry 9.1, with respect to *aner*, Louw-Nida quote Romans 4:8 as meaning, "happy is the *person* to whom the Lord does not reckon sin." They then say, "The parallelism in this quotation from Ps 32:1-2 indicates clearly that the reference of *aner* is not a particular male but any person." They then quote Matt. 14:35 as meaning, "when the *people* of that place recognized him," and then say, "one may argue that *hoi andres* refers specifically to males, but the context would seem to indicate that the reference is to people in general" (p. 104).

What has happened here? They have given a new meaning for *aner* with no new evidence. Translators and authors of lexicons have known about Rom. 4:8 and Matt. 14:35 for centuries, and those two verses in their contexts have not been sufficiently clear to persuade them that a new meaning for *aner* should be established. Louw-Nida have just asserted this new meaning while producing no new evidence to prove that meaning.

As we indicated above, in Rom. 4:8, the context does not require the sense "person," because "man" makes perfect sense, especially since this is a quotation from Ps. 32:2 where David is speaking, as often in the Wisdom Literature, of the "blessed man" who is an example for all the godly to follow, as in Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked." As for Matt. 14:35, when Jesus landed at Gennesaret (vs. 34) it would be natural that the first people to see him and recognize him, and then send people to bring the sick to him, would be the men out working along the shore or in nearby fields. The translation "the men of that place" makes good sense.

The principle that would keep us from adopting the additional sense "person" for *aner* is that *if a well-established meaning makes sense in the context, then we should not adopt a previously unattested meaning in its place*. Such a general principle of lexicography is well stated by Cambridge lexicographer John Chadwick, whose book *Lexicographica Graeca: Contributions to the Lexicography of Ancient Greek* is

a collection of specialized studies that reflect his years of experience on the team overseeing a supplement to the Liddell-Scott *Lexicon*:

> A constant problem to guard against is the proliferation of meanings . . . .It is often tempting to create a new sense to accommodate a difficult example, but we must always ask first, if there is any other way of taking the word which would allow us to assign the example to an already established sense . . . . As I have remarked in several of my notes, there may be no reason why a proposed sense should not exist, but is there any reason why it must exist? (John Chadwick, *Lexicographica Graeca: Contributions to the Lexicography of Ancient Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 23-24).

In other words, the burden of proof is on the person who postulates a new sense. If an already established sense can account for a particular use, one must not postulate a new sense.

So the Louw-Nida *Lexicon* has asserted a new meaning for *aner*, but has not supported that claim with any new or convincing evidence.[58]

(6) Other reference works: Blomberg also mentions two other reference works. With regard to the NIDNTT entry, perhaps Blomberg just cited the entry without checking the supporting citations from ancient literature, because they do not support the meaning "person." The meaning "adult" which Blomberg (p. 15) mentions from NIDNTT (p. 562) is supported by just one piece of evidence, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*. 8.7,6, in which Cyrus, king of Persia, is recounting his life, telling about "when I was a boy," then "when I became a youth," then "when I became a mature man (*aner*)." The fact that Cyrus calls himself an *aner* hardly proves that aner can include women!

With regard to the entry in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, the situation is the same as with the Louw-Nida *Lexicon*: no new, decisive examples are cited from extra-biblical literature, but the same New Testament verses we have always known about are claimed as evidence that *aner* "can denote any *human being*" (p. 99). The verses given as evidence include Matthew 14:35 (the men of Gennesaret); Luke 5:18 ("some *men* were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed") and Mark 6:44 ("those who ate the loaves were five thousand *men*"). This last verse in Mark about the feeding of the five thousand is said to be a different meaning from the use of *aner* in the parallel account of the same event in Matthew 14:21, "And those who ate were about five thousand *men*, besides women and children." But if this is right, then Matthew and Mark have vastly different reports of the number who were fed at the same event: with Mark (according to this entry in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*), there were 5,000 people, total, but according to Matthew there were 5,000 men, plus (we suppose) at least an equal number of women and children, giving a total of more than 10,000 people. These accounts would thus stand as significant factual discrepancies in the Gospels. And all in order to demonstrate that sometimes *aner* can mean "person." I have to admit that I do not find such evidence convincing. I return to the question with which I began: If *aner* really does mean "person," and not just "man," where is the convincing data from quotations of ancient sources?[59]

(7) But could new information change my mind about *aner*? I do not wish to deny the *possibility* that the plural of *aner* could take on a wider sense such as "people" in the fixed idiomatic expression, *andres* + plural noun, such as "men of Athens," "men of Israel," etc. If substantial evidence is forthcoming, I would be happy to change my understanding of plural *andres*, and I recognize that there may be such evidence that I have not yet seen, especially with regard to fixed idioms such as "men of Athens," etc. (In any case the CSG allow for unusual exceptions in certain cases.) But I have not yet seen clear evidence that this is the case. So I cannot at this point agree with the claim on the TNIV web site that *aner* "was occasionally used as a generic term for human beings."

I think the perspective of Steve Baugh, an expert in the history and culture of the ancient Greek world, is helpful at this point. Baugh writes (in an e-mail to Wayne Grudem on Feb. 20, 2002, quoted with permission):

> The ANDRES EPHESIOI ("Gentlemen of Ephesus") in Acts 19 is pretty standard type of formal public address to an assembly. So, for instance, the "W ANDRES ATHHNAIOI" ("O gentlemen of Athens") with which Socrates opens his address in the Apology.
>
> That women might be present in such a crowd does not take away from the fact that ANDRES (as also "gentlemen") addresses the preponderant male constituents. I've always thought that Pliny the Younger's letter (4.19) regarding his wife's practice of attending his public readings "seated discretely behind a curtain nearby" (in proximo discreta velo sedet) to be quite telling on ancient practice. Any respectable women in public venues were expected to be discretely out of the spotlight. Hence the traditional "gentlemen" opening to a public address.

So it seems to me that the burden of proof is still on those who say that *aner* could lose its male meaning. Before I would agree that *aner* can sometimes mean "person," I would

hope to see some unambiguous examples from the Bible or from other ancient literature. This kind of evidence is simply what is required in all lexicography, especially concerning such a common word. Unless such examples are forthcoming, it seems unjustified to translate *aner* as "person" or the plural form *andres* as "people."

And even if someone produces some unambiguous examples that *aner* can mean "person" without implying a male person (as there are many unambiguous examples with anthropos), this would still be an uncommon sense, not the "default" sense that readers assume without contextual specification. And even in such cases the male-oriented connotation or overtone would probably still attach (with the sense that the people referred to are mostly or primarily male). But until substantial evidence in that regard is found, we cannot agree with the procedure of systematically changing many NT examples of *aner* to "person" or "persons." What seems to be driving the decision at this point is not the preponderance of evidence but an attempt to eliminate male-oriented meanings.[60]

4. Other verses

There are, of course, disputes about many other verses, several of which I have treated in the earlier part of this paper. Others are treated more fully on the CBMW web site (www.cbmw.org), especially in the section "CBMW interacts with TNIV explanations of changes," and readers can consult those discussions. Many verses are discussed in detail in our book, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy*. But perhaps what I have said to this point is sufficient to understand the kind of concerns I would have about other passages in the TNIV as well.

G. Other concerns about factual accuracy

As I read the articles in the Zondervan packet on the TNIV, I wondered about care for factual accuracy in a few other places. I mention them here by way of asking for documentation to support these claims, all of which portray TNIV critics in a negative light, and none of which is supported with any documentation.

1. Do we say there is nothing to be learned from feminism?

Carson writes:

" . . . it is important, in the face of feminist demands, not to tar the entire movement with one broad brush. One must try to assess where, in the light of Scripture, feminist agendas make telling points . . . and where they seem to fly in the face

of Scripture . . . . But that is a far cry from saying that there is nothing to be learned from feminist cries, from feminist writings. . . (Carson, p. 23, with reference to Poythress and Grudem).

But we say in our book, in the beginning of the chapter on feminist influence on language:

Early feminism contained some very legitimate concerns, but also some wrongheaded ideas. But God can bring good results even out of wrong human intentions (Gen. 50:20). And some good results *have* come. Not only society as a whole but also Christians in particular have received a wake-up call to pay more attention to the needs and concerns of women, and to value women as highly as they value men. As a result, we hope, Christians have become more alert to the dangers of male domineering and pride, and have gone to the Scriptures to learn and obey more thoroughly God's standards for male-female relations (p. 135).

2. Do we say the English language is not changing?

Carson writes:

I cannot help remarking, rather wryly, that in light of the ESV, the argument of Poythress and Grudem sounds a bit like this: "The language is not changing, so we do not need to respond to the demands of inclusive language. But if it is changing, the changes are driven by a feminist agenda, so they are wrong and must be opposed if we are to be faithful to Scripture. Because of the change, we will make some minor accommodations in our translations, but if others make any other changes, they are compromisers who introduce distortions and inaccuracies, and should be condemned, because changes are not necessary anyway! (p. 24).

The fact that we appreciate many of the influences from feminism was stated in the previous section. As far as the claim that we say "the language is not changing," the official statement issued with the Colorado Springs Guidelines June 3, 1997, said,

. . . we all agree that modern language is fluid and undergoes changes in nuance that require periodic updates and revisions (GNBC, 302).

Why does Carson repeat this accusation in 2002, an accusation he also made in his 1998 book, without mentioning that we already responded to it directly in our book in 2000? Here is the relevant citation from our 2000 book:

We first quoted Carson's 1998 book, in which he said:

At the risk of caricature (in which on this issue I really do not wish to indulge), their argument runs something like this: (1) The English language is not changing, or not changing much. (2) If it is changing, we should oppose the changes because the feminists are behind the changes. (pp. 183-184)

In response we said,

First, let us assure readers that Carson's description is indeed a caricature. The accompanying statement that we published with the Colorado Springs Guidelines and that was signed by all participants said, "We all agree *that modern language is fluid and undergoes changes in nuance* that require periodic updates and revisions" (*CBMW News* 2:3 [June, 1997]: 7, emphasis added). In addition, the Colorado Springs Guidelines themselves contain Guidelines that approve some changes. The following all approve changes in translations due (at least in part) to changes in English: Guidelines A.1 (approving "the one who.." rather than "he who"), A.5 (approving "people" rather than "men" for plural Greek *anthropoi*), A.6 (approving "anyone" rather than "any man" for Greek *tis*), A.7 (approving "no one" rather than "no man" for Greek *oudeis*), and A.8 (approving "all people" rather than "all men" for Greek *pas*).

More accurately stated, our position would be: (1) Many changes in the use of gender language in current English should be reflected in modern translations, and these changes can be made with no significant loss of meaning (see Chapter 5). . . .

We discussed the question of feminist influence on changes in English in Chapter 8, but it should be noted here that the CSG give approval to several changes in translation that reflect changes in English due at least in part to feminist influence. To say that we "ascribe whatever gender changes that are developing in the language to feminist influence and then heartily oppose them" (p. 183) is simply untrue. But Carson says in the very next sentence, "The latter course is being pursued by the critics of gender-inclusive translations" (p. 183). Furthermore, to say we hold that "If [the English language] is changing, we should oppose the changes because the feminists are behind the changes" (p. 184) is

also simply untrue, in light of our explicit endorsement of many changes in translation due to these very changes in English.[61]

Perhaps Carson thinks it makes no difference that we denied this same caricature in 2000, and said it was simply not true. Perhaps he thinks it is valuable to repeat it anyway for rhetorical effect. Perhaps he thinks it is most forceful if he then includes no footnote informing readers that we have already responded in print by quoting this caricature and saying that it is untrue. Perhaps he thinks it is most helpful to his case to go on making the caricature and ignoring anything that we, the targets of his caricature, might say in hopes of clarification. I really don't know why Dr. Carson has done this again. I can only say, as I have said many times when people have asked me about Carson's book, that it is impossible for readers to understand the position of the TNIV critics simply by reading about us in Carson's book.

By contrast, here is what linguistics professor Valerie Becker Makkai says about our book:

Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem . . . clearly understand the fluid and changing nature of language and their arguments are based on sound linguistic principles (GNBC, p. xvii).

We do not claim, and have never claimed, that the English language is not changing.

3. Do people repeatedly claim that Dr. Carson profits financially from the TNIV?

I find it puzzling that Carson says, " . . . my views have been repeatedly dismissed on the grounds (it is said) that I was a translator for the NIV and therefore benefit financially from my arguments" (p. 32; he answers with a note that he did provide free consultation regarding one book of the NIV).

I am reasonably familiar with this debate and what has been written about the issues, and I have never heard anyone claim this, much less have I heard it "repeatedly." Dr. Carson provides no documentation for this claim.

4. Have entire denominations been torn asunder in this debate?

Carson writes, "Entire denominations have been torn asunder in debate [over the issue of gender-inclusive language]" (p. 17). Again, I am reasonably familiar with the events of this debate, and I know that the Southern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church in America passed resolutions against the TNIV by substantial margins (see www.cbmw.org for details). But I am not aware of any

denominations that have been "torn asunder in this debate." Perhaps Dr. Carson is aware of events unknown to me, but he provides no documentation, so as it stands the claim is unnecessarily inflammatory.

H. Cultural pressures on language are not always neutral

I realize that for several decades, some English style rules imposed on students, especially in universities, have told them to avoid generic "he" (and other male-oriented expressions) and to rewrite their sentences in other ways. Of course people *can* rewrite their sentences with plurals, or change to the second person, or clutter them with "he or she," but then the sentences say something different and they sound different and their meaning is different. But if the author does not want to say the "something different," but wants to use a pronoun to hint at a *specific male example of a general truth*, then a generic third person masculine singular pronoun is needed. Since "he" is the only recognized English word that functions that way, if this use of "he" is ruled out, the result will be that the would-be rulers of the language will have told us that *there are certain things that we cannot say, even in the Bible*. We are permitted by them to say something similar, something related, something that sounds nearly the same, but we cannot say precisely this idea. It is not surprising that wise writers have resisted such a mandate, for if this kind of rule should ever prevail, our thinking would be impoverished.

This is because the pressure to conform to "politically correct" speech is primarily a pressure *not* to use certain expressions. But when our freedom to use certain expressions is taken away, then our ability to *think* in certain ways is also curtailed. For example, if all masculine generic singular statements are removed from the Bible, then the ability to *think* of such a representative male who stands for a whole group will have been removed — for we will have no acceptable words in which to formulate our thought. There will be no way to say, "If any one loves me, **he** will keep my word, and my Father will love **him**, and we will come to **him** and make our home with **him**" (John 14:23), and thus there will be no way to think of that precise idea. Restricting certain types of expression is restricting certain types of thought.

George Orwell understood this well in his novel *1984*. One of the government functionaries who is rewriting the dictionary explains what is really happening when he revises English into the Newspeak that is required by Big Brother:

> You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words — scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone . . . . It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.

> Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well . . . Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it . . . . Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller . . . . (pp. 45-46).

I. Conclusion

It is appropriate to end where we began. The heart of the difference can be summarized in one sentence:

> Is it acceptable to translate only the general idea of a passage and systematically omit male-oriented details of meaning that are present in the original Hebrew or Greek text?

I have argued in this article that it is not appropriate to do this, as the TNIV has done.

I believe much is at stake. If the TNIV should gain wide acceptance, the precedent will be established for other Bible translations to mute unpopular nuances and details of meaning for the sake of "political correctness." The loss of many other doctrines unpopular in the culture will soon follow. And at every case Bible readers will never know if what they are reading is really the Word of God or the translators' ideas of something that would be a little less offensive than what God actually said. These words of the Bible are not ours to tamper with as we please. "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it" (Deut. 4:2). ◼

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[1] Craig L. Blomberg, "*Today's New International Version*: The Untold Story of a Good Translation." Blomberg includes a very helpful section on translational improvements in the TNIV (pp. 4-14).

[2] D. A. Carson, "The Limits of Functional Equivalence in Bible Translation—and Other Limits, Too." (forthcoming in *The Task of Bible Translation: Essays in Honor of Ronald F. Youngblood*, ed. by Glen Scorgie, Mark Strauss and Steven Voth [Zondervan, 2002].)

[3] Bruce Waltke, "Personal Reflections on the *TNIV*."

[4] "Peter Bradley and the Truth About the TNIV," *Light Magazine* (July, 2002) 6-11.

[5] Darrell L. Bock, "Do Gender Sensitive Translations Distort Scripture? Not Necessarily," available at www.tniv.info.

[6] In addition, the five men with whom I differ in this article all share with me a common commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible as the Word of God, and to the "complementarian" conviction that God created men and women equal in value yet different in our roles in the home and in the church. Therefore we approach this difference both with a considerable measure of good will and with much common ground in our convictions. Yet our differences persist.

[7] That is why the "Colorado Springs Guidelines" (released June 3, 1997, and revised September 9, 1997) *approved* things like changing "any man" to "anyone" for Greek *tis,* and changing "men" to "people" for Greek *anthropoi*, and why the CSG approved the translation "children" instead "sons" for the plural Hebrew word *banim*, and so forth.

[8] Quoted by Carson (pp. 17, 21) and posted online at www.Biblepacesetter.org/bibletranslation/files/gender-inclusive-ESV.doc. Although I interact with Mark Strauss only at this one point in this present paper, I have appreciated his Christian graciousness in my two public debates with him on this matter, and his book *Distorting Scripture? The Challenge of Bible Translation and Gender Accuracy* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998) is one of the two main books supporting the TNIV's position regarding gender language. Vern Poythress and I interacted with Strauss' book extensively in our book, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy: Muting the Masculinity of God's Words* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000). (cited henceforth in this article as GNBC)

[9] In the interests of fair disclosure I should note here that I was a member of the Translation Oversight Committee for the ESV. I was paid for this work but I do not receive any ongoing compensation from sales of the ESV.

[10] Strauss, Ibid., 1.

[11] Ibid.

[12] For example, *tis*, *oudeis,* forms like *ho pisteuon,* and *anthropoi* when referring to mixed groups.

[13] For example, singular *adelphos* ("brother"), singular *huios* ("son"), singular *pater* ("father"), or the male-specific word *aner* ("man, husband").

[14] GNBC, 116.

[15] Peter Bradley, "Truth About the TNIV," 9.

[16] For further details on these verses see www.cbmw.org/tniv/categorized_list.html. The three verses where the KJV translated the singular term *huios* ("son") as "child" are: Matthew 23:15 ("child of hell"); Acts 13:10 ("child of the devil"); and Revelation 12:5 ("a man child"), all of which are unusual and probably idiomatic cases (and the Colorado Springs Guidelines allowed for "unusual exceptions in certain contexts"). But the KJV translated singular *huios* as "son" 307 times. The KJV also translated the plural *huioi* as "children" 47 times, which probably reflects understanding of the plural as a Hebraism reflecting the Old Testament's frequent use of Hebrew *banim* to mean "children." I have not put plural *huioi* in the chart because Vern Poythress and I see the translation of plural *huioi* as "children" or "sons" as a difficult question requiring a judgment call (GNBC, 262) and this has not been a central focus of our concerns about the TNIV or gender-neutral translations generally.

[17] The TNIV website (www.tniv.info, under Luke 17:3 and elsewhere) claims precedent in the KJV translation of Philippians 2:3, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than *themselves*." But this is not an instance of changing a singular Greek word to plural, because the entire last clause is plural in Greek, and "themselves" translates the genitive plural pronoun *heauton.*

Nor should Matthew 18:35 from the KJV be used to justify changing singulars to plurals, "If ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses," because the Byzantine text tradition, which the KJV translators use, had *ta paraptomata auton*, a plural expression which the KJV translated literally as "their trespasses."

[18] On July 25 the FBA followed this statement with a caution that the ongoing debate about the TNIV "is obscuring more critical Scripture translation and distribution needs worldwide, of which most Christians in the United States are unresponsive or unaware." It also reaffirmed, "contrary to recent news reports, by charter the FBA neither approves nor disapproves of specific English translations of the Bible—including *Today's New International Version* (TNIV)." The June 24 press release can be seen at www.no-tniv.com or www.cbmw.org, under the TNIV section.

[19] I have reprinted these FBA principles in full in the following section.

[20] Due to prior conflicts, Ron Youngblood of the CBT and Lars Dunberg, then president of the IBS, had to leave the meeting early and so did not have first-hand knowledge of the development of the guidelines through that afternoon.

[21] Wayne A. Grudem, "NIV Controversy: Participants Sign Landmark Agreement," *CBMW News* 2/3 (June 1997) 1, 3-6. The account has been reprinted in GNBC, 304-315.

[22] After our June 3, 1997, press release, we received considerable comment from many other scholars, and as a result made three modifications to the Colorado Springs Guidelines on September 9, 1997, including endorsing the legitimacy of translating Greek *adelphoi* (plural) as quote "brothers and sisters" where the context allowed it.

[23] On a personal note, I can say that in the process of circulating emails and faxes asking if people would sign a statement of concern about the TNIV, what surprised me was how seriously people felt about this issue. Many scholars and pastors and other Christian leaders who seldom put their names on any endorsement of anything (to say nothing of a criticism of a Bible!) felt they had no choice but to take a stand against the direction taken by the TNIV. There were also some people (both scholars and others) who declined to add their names but who said to us privately that they thought the TNIV was wrong. What surprised me was how so few people (almost no one, but a few) declined to sign our statement because they thought the TNIV was right in what it was doing.

[24] I realize that children may misunderstand such a statement, just as children misunderstand many things in the Bible and in other things they read. Blomberg makes much of a young girl's misunderstanding of a Bible text (pp. 29-30), but the verse he quotes is the 1611 KJV's rendering of 2 Cor. 5:17, "If any **man** be in Christ, he is a new creation." The Greek has *tis* and all modern translations have "anyone" or equivalent. Why quote a place where the KJV is wrongly male-oriented, where the CSG would say to change to "anyone," as a criticism of the CSG?

In another article in *Light Magazine*, Phil Ginsburg tells of a third-grade girl who asked, "Daddy, why is the Bible only written to boys?" (p. 16). He gives no explanation of what passage or what translation prompted this question. It may have been the archaic KJV, in which overly male-specific language should of course be corrected. Or it may have been the warnings from a father to a son about relationships to women in Proverbs 5-7, which we cannot change. Surely it was not Proverbs 31, about the excellent wife. Surely it was not the story of Ruth, or Esther, or Sarah, or Rebecca, or Mary. Our response to such a story should be to translate the Bible accurately. If we begin to change our Bible translations because of stories of misunderstandings by children, the process will never stop.

[25] As a matter of fact, my nephew's wife is a manager at Wal-Mart, and there are many women mangers at Wal-Mart.

[26] For several pages of additional examples like this, see GNBC, 203-213.

[27] GNBC, 7.

[28] Norm Goldstein, editor *Associate Press File Book and Briefing on Media Law* (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus, 2002) 114. The entry goes on to recommend consideration of the option of chaning the sentence to plural, but it gives no endorsement for the use of "she" or "they" in such sentences.

[29] Blomberg, 23 (he gives no documentation except to refer to an online article he wrote, which contains the same claim, with no documentation or other support).

[30] See *The Chicago Manual of Style*, Fourteenth Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 76 (section 2.98, note 9).

[31] William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000) 60.

[32] Norm Goldstein, ed., *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus, 2002) 114.

[33] At least some TNIV supporters apparently hope the use of English in the TNIV will influence the way English is used in the future, for Timothy George says, "I predict the *TNIV* will have a shaping influence on the English of the future, even as it reflects today's contemporary idiom" (www.tniv.info, under "Endorsements"). Unless I misunderstand him, I think he means that he thinks some of the usages in the TNIV are not established in the English of today, but are part of informal speech ("contemporary idiom"), and he hopes they become part of "the English of the future."

[34] Under the entry for "he," the dictionary informs us that 37% of Usage Panel members preferred the word "his" in the sentence *A taxpayer who fails to disclose the source of _____ income can be prosecuted under the new law.* As far as other responses, they say, 46 percent preferred a coordinate form like *his or her;* 7 percent felt that no pronoun was needed in the sentence; 2 percent preferred an article, usually *the;* and another 2 percent overturned tradition by advocating the use of generic *her"* (p. 807). They report *no* experts who actually preferred the plural "their" in such a sentence, yet this is the standard usage of the TNIV, and the usage the IBS tells us is *necessary* for modern English readers. (As far as informal speech, as opposed to writing, this dictionary says that 64 percent accept the sentence *No one is willing to work for those wages anymore, are they?* in "informal speech." But it does not report anyone as preferring this construction in writing, and even in informal speech they give *no* support for such a usage with a definite noun as an antecedent, as in the TNIV.)

[35] We may wonder why Zondervan and the IBS would choose to publish a Bible with a grammatical usage that is so widely labeled as incorrect even though everyone admits that it is found in informal speech? If common use in informal speech is the deciding factor, then one might suggest that the TNIV could include some other things found in informal speech, such as "Let's not have any quarreling between you and I" (a modern informal speech rendering of Abram's statement to Lot in Genesis 13:8; the NIV actually has the correct form, "between you and me"). We could even find dictionary support for such a rendering, for the *American Heritage Dictionary* says,

> When pronouns joined by a conjunction occur as the object of a preposition such as *between, according to,* or *like,* many people use the nominative form where the traditional grammatical rule would require the objective; they say *between you and I* rather than *between you and me,* and so forth . . . . the phrase *between you and I* occurs in Shakespeare . . . . But the *Between you and I* construction is nonetheless widely regarded as a marker of grammatical

ignorance and is best avoided (1996 edition, p. 892).

The parallels to "singular they" are interesting: Both constructions are found in informal speech, both are found in writers going back several centuries, and both are found unacceptable by the dictionary. Why not put such commonly heard "informal speech" in the TNIV? Because no issue of male-specific meaning is at stake, so in that case what is generally acceptable in *written* English, not what is found in informal speech, becomes the standard.

[36] See the categorized list of 901 examples of problem translations in this journal.

[37] This paragraph and the next two are taken from Poythress and Grudem, GNBC, 199.

[38] A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, "Inspiration," The Presbyterian Review 2/6 (April 1881) 256, emphasis in the original. I wish to thank Tim Bayly for calling my attention to this quotation.

[39] D. A. Carson, *The* Inclusive *Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 20.

[40] BDF, 75 (section 135 (4)).

[41] A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 406.

[42] I am not of course saying that grammatical plurals always have to be translated as plurals and grammatical singulars as singulars, for I recognize that various languages have different collective nouns where a singular form expresses a plural sense, for example. But here the sense changes to plural in Greek, and it should be translated that way.

[43] Again, there is a shift from third person to second person, not just in grammatical *form* but in *meaning,* in Jesus' original statements.

[44] Vern Poythress and I recognized in our book, and the Colorado Springs Guidelines recognized in mentioning "unusual exceptions in certain contexts," that there are some cases, especially in the Old Testament, where sudden switches back and forth in pronouns present scholars with a difficult challenge even to understand the meaning, to say nothing of then translating it into understandable English. But I am speaking here of the ordinary cases, not of such difficult exceptions.

[45] GNBC, 70.

[46] Ibid., 79-81.

[47] Ibid., 116-117.

[48] Ibid., 130-132.

[49] I note with appreciation that these two descriptions on page 17 are used by Carson to refer to Vern Poythress' and my book *Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy*.

[50] Unfortunately, this description is also applied to Vern Poythress and me.

[51] Carson uses a similar approach on page 15 where he responds to Payne's statement, "Better to have something simple, the NIV seems to think, even if it is not what the original text actually says." Carson says that is "deceptive and manipulative" because "the original text does not actually *say* "flesh" and "walk" and the like; it says *sarx* and *peripateo* and the like . . . .What the original text actually says is in Aramaic and Hebrew and Greek . . . " (p. 15). But Payne was not denying that the original text is in Hebrew and Aramaic and Greek, nor was he unaware of that. When he used the phrase "what the original text actually says," the context of his discussion makes clear that he was simply speaking in ordinary English about what a literal translation of the Greek text would say.

In fact, Carson himself speaks this way on page 31, note 61, where he says, "Most emphatically this does *not* give us the right to

change *what the Bible actually says*, as if the agendas of contemporary culture could ever have the right to domesticate Scripture" (second emphasis added). In context he is referring to translation, not of course to the original Hebrew or Greek texts. But in referring to translation he speaks of what the Bible "actually says." And frequently in his other writings he can refer to what the Greek literally says, as in his outstanding commentary on Matthew (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 405, where he says, "The Greek is literally 'how many times will my brother sin against me and I will forgive him?'" But here Dr. Carson uses *English* words to tell us what "the Greek is literally." (And so frequently throughout his commentary.) Even Paul himself talks about what the Scripture "says" and then reports this in Greek translation, not by writing the original Hebrew words, as when he says, "It does not *say* (Greek *legei*) 'And to offsprings (Greek *spermasin*),' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring (Greek *spermati*), 'who is Christ" (Gal. 3:16; see also Rom. 9:17, 25; 10:11, 16; 11:2, 15:12). And so it seems to me unduly harsh for Carson to criticize Payne for using the phrase "what the original text actually says" when it is clear that what Payne is talking about is a literal rendering of the Greek text.

[52] Even if TNIV supporters believe that "son of man" in Psalm 8:4 refers to the human race as a whole, it is incorrectly confusing the meaning of the phrase with the thing it refers to say that therefore it makes no difference to translate it "human beings." As the "Statement of Concern" by 113 Christian leaders said in another context, it is "like justifying translating 'sweetheart' as 'wife' because that's who it refers to." The specific meaning of the phrase "son of man" is lost, and the possible connections to that phrase in the rest of Scripture.

[53] It is interesting that in Carson's book, *The Inclusive Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), he says that "the constant use of the expression ["son of man"] in the Old Testament to refer to a human being is precisely what lends some of the ambiguity to Jesus's use of it," and he then says, "As cumbersome as it is, therefore, on the whole I favor a retention of "son of man," at least in the majority of its Old Testament occurrences . . . " (p. 173).

[54] The TNIV footnote "Or *men"* allows for that possibility but does not see it as most likely, since it is not in the text.

[55] *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), vol. 2, 562-563; and *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), vol. 1, 98-99.

[56] There is the word arsen, but it is most frequently used as an adjective, and is far less common.

[57] For further discussion on the word *aner*, "man" see Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem, *The Gender Neutral Bible Controversy* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 101, note 2, and pages 321-333.

[58] For further information on some blurring of meanings generally in Louw-Nida, see Vern S. Poythress, "Comparing Bauer's and Louw-Nida's Lexicons," *JETS* 44 (2001) 285-296.

[59] The same considerations apply to the entry in Kittel, TDNT 1, 360-361. The papyrus references, when checked, turn out to be ambiguous and in some cases (BGU 902,2) so fragmentary that one cannot even be sure that the word *aner* is in the text.

[60] For further discussion of the meaning of *aner*, see GNBC, 321-333.

[61] GNBC, 358-359; see also p. 92 where we approve of the loss of the plural word "men" to mean "people," a loss that we attribute to the influence of feminism on the language.

Kevin Giles's *The Trinity and Subordinationism*:

A Review Article[1]

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Introduction

Recently Thomas R. Schreiner, a respected complementarian scholar, made this comment about the proliferation of books written by egalitarian authors:

> Sometimes I wonder if egalitarians hope to triumph in the debate on the role of women by publishing book after book on the subject. Each work propounds a new thesis that explains why the traditional interpretation is flawed. Complementarians could easily give in from sheer exhaustion, thinking that so many books written by such a diversity of authors could scarcely be wrong.[2]

Schreiner goes on to ask, "Is the goal of publishing to write what is true or what is new?"[3] This is a crucial question and one that this article bears in mind in reviewing Kevin Giles's recent work, *The Trinity and Subordinationism*.

The first half of this review article examines Giles's thesis and theological method, then surveys the content of the book's three parts: "the Trinity tradition," "the woman tradition," and "the slavery tradition." The second half evaluates Giles's understanding of the issue, his thesis and method, his usage of terms and trinitarian concepts, his representation of a few key theologians, and his trinitarian model for gender relations.

Content of the Book

Purpose and Thesis

Giles's primary purpose in writing *The Trinity and Subordinationism* is to explain the orthodox view of the doctrine of the Trinity and then show its significance for male-female relations. The thesis of his work is built largely around the rejection of what some believe to be a legitimate expression of the doctrine of the Trinity, the concept of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Specifically, Giles's thesis may be put this way: *tradition plays a formative role in the development of three critical theological issues each related to the concept of subordination and each developing in a unique cultural context* (6-8). Arguing that tradition is on his side, the author claims that orthodox expressions of the Trinity reject every form of the eternal subordination of the Son. To ignore theological tradition in this case is to step out of the boundaries of orthodoxy. The opposite is the case with regard to the issues of gender and slavery. The traditional views of male-female relations and slavery ought to be rejected. Proposing a "contextual evangelical hermeneutic" (249), Giles suggests that the reason one should affirm a nontraditional view of gender relations and slavery is that cultural values have changed and with that change has come a fresh reading of the text on these issues.

Theological Method

Giles introduces his work by explaining the importance of theological method as it relates to the doctrine of the Trinity.

He says that in his research he "discovered that the debate about the Trinity was in essence a debate about theological method, something right at the forefront of evangelical thinking today" (2). By theological method, Giles means the approach one takes in order to settle difficult theological questions that are not directly answered in Scripture. Both the relations within the Trinity and the relations between men and women illustrate the same type of methodological problem. These are complex theological disputes that Scripture does not anticipate. Further, it will not do to simply quote biblical texts and give one's interpretation of them. As it was in the fourth century trinitarian debates, so it is today—simply quoting texts will inevitably lead to a "textjam" (3).

Citing Athanasius, Giles suggests that the Bible is to be read theologically rather than as a string of proof-texts. Arius made the methodological mistake of simply quoting texts in order to support his views. However, reading the Bible theologically means one grasps the "scope" of Scripture—"the overall drift of the Bible, its primary focus, its theological center" (3). This scope of Scripture is not something an individual comes up with on his own. Rather, it agrees with the tradition of the fathers. Evangelicals who suggest that "all theology springs immediately from the Bible" deny the significance of the role of tradition as a theological source and in so doing "they set themselves outside of the orthodoxy the creeds and the Reformation confessions define and put themselves at odds with most other Christians, past and present" (6).

Giles further develops his method by explaining the relationship between theology and culture. He says that his book "is predicated on the view that the Bible can often be read in more than one way, even on important matters" (8-9). Though this statement is controversial, he believes it is undeniable since history gives innumerable examples of learned theologians who have differed in their understanding of almost every imaginable doctrine. According to Giles, this means that cultural context is part of the exegetical outcome. The cultural context is not that of the author of Scripture but rather that of the interpreter of Scripture. Modern interpreters with new scientific data see the inadequacies of old interpretations that argued, for example, that the sun revolved around the earth or that creation happened in six "literal" days (9). Interpreters with new information in different cultural settings discover different readings of Scripture. And though they are different, they are nevertheless equally valid readings since the new readings are due to a changed understanding of the world that God himself has brought to pass.

This hermeneutical rule, that cultural context contributes to the exegetical outcome, is said to be illustrated in the Bible's teaching on women and slavery. Slavery and the oppression of women both came to be seen as unjust. Reading the Bible, then, in an emancipated context requires the rejection of the

traditional reading. Thus, "the change in culture led to a change in interpretation" (10). Many evangelicals will not approve of this hermeneutical rule because they have been taught that there is only one proper interpretation of any given passage of Scripture. This typical response, however, has been challenged by modern hermeneutical theory. It is now recognized, Giles continues, that texts are not self-interpreting and every human interpreter comes to the text with theological and cultural presuppositions. Therefore, more than one interpretation is possible. Giles summarizes his hermeneutical rule this way: "*Context contributes to meaning*" (11)*.* In sum, the Bible is not to be understood as a book of timeless, transcultural propositions. Rather, it is "a Spirit-book that can speak for God in different contexts when things of necessity are seen in a different way" (11).

Part One: The Trinity Tradition: Affirmed by All but Actually Rejected by Some

In the first chapter, "Conservative Evangelicals Head Off on Their Own," Giles begins with what he believes to be the orthodox understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity expressed in the contemporary discussion. The three persons of the Godhead are reciprocally related. None of the persons is "before or after another . . . none is subordinated in being or function to another" (21). Several theologians are said to support this claim (David Cunningham, Millard Erickson, Wayne House, and Ted Peters), while many conservative evangelicals wrongly suggest the idea of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father (H. Scott Baldwin, John V. Dahms, Wayne Grudem, George W. Knight, Andreas J. Köstenberger, Stephen D. Kovach, Robert Letham, William D. Mounce, Werner Neuer, John Piper, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Peter R. Schemm). The latter group, says Giles, attempts to make a case for the "permanent subordination of women" (23) based on the eternal subordination of the Son. The intra-trinitarian relations are used as a rationale for how equality in being/essence and subordination can be endorsed without contradiction.

Giles devotes his second chapter to the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Athanasius is the most important contributor to the early development of that doctrine because he, unlike Arius, properly understood the entire scope of the Bible. Athanasius argues from two theological presuppositions: "the eternal oneness of being of the Father and the Son and the temporal subordination of the Son in becoming man" (35). Thus, according to Giles, Athanasius rejects any possibility of an eternal subordination of the Son. The Cappadocians likewise wanted to exclude subordinationism though they were not completely successful in their doctrinal expressions. They were wrongly wedded to the concept of the Father as the one source or origin of the Godhead (43). Also in opposition to Arianism, the Creed of Nicea set forth the significance of the oneness of the Father and

Son. It categorically endorsed the equality of the Father and Son and the temporal subordination (only) of the Son for the purpose of salvation.

John Calvin's understanding of trinitarian doctrine is also surveyed. Calvin begins his treatment of the Trinity in the *Institutes* by explaining what "the three" ought to be called (53). He suggests that the term *person* be understood as a subsistence in God's essence. Though Calvin does not explain exactly what this differentiating subsistence is, he is clear that the three subsistences share equally in the divine being or essence of God. From this Giles concludes, "the word *subsistence* for Calvin, rather than implying the subordination of the Son or the Spirit to the Father, excludes this very idea" (54).

Chapter three, "Subordinating Tradition," outlines seven categories of subordinationism, five of which Giles finds in evangelical literature today (derivative subordinationism, numerical subordinationism, nineteenth- and twentieth-century ontological subordinationism, operational subordinationism, eternal role subordinationism). Derivative subordinationism views the deity of the Son and the Spirit as that which is derived from the Father. Giles says, "because the primary idea is that derivation of being implies diminution of being and authority, I call this error 'derivative subordinationism'" (65). The work of Dahms, Kovach and Schemm, and the 1999 Sydney Doctrine Report are each examples of derivative subordinationism.[4] Kovach and Schemm are also used as examples of numerical subordinationism, as Giles puts it, which sees the members of the Trinity in an order of authority or hierarchical ranking (69).

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century ontological subordinationism is most notably expressed in the work of Princeton theologian Charles Hodge. Giles views Hodge's proposal as making the Father ontologically superior to the Son and Spirit. Thus, says Giles, the "divine being (essence) flows downward from the Father in diminishing measure. For this reason the Son is subordinated ontologically and functionally to the Father" (73). In contemporary evangelical literature Knight is a widely recognized hierarchicalist who asserts this view while Dahms is one of the most explicit representatives among contemporary proposals. Letham, Kovach and Schemm, D. B. Knox, Robert Doyle, and Tony Payne are each said to affirm ontological subordinationism. The 1999 Sydney Doctrine Report, however, is "the most detailed presentation of the case that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in being and role" (78).

Giles last category of subordinationism is eternal role subordinationism. Wayne Grudem is cited as the most detailed expression of this view. This approach differs from nineteenth-century arguments for operational subordinationism by asserting functional or role subordination "*without* subordination of being" (83). The concept of role subordination

is a new concept. "No one ever spoke of the subordination in *role* of the Son (or of women) prior to the mid 1970s" (83). Giles suggests that this new way of speaking of the Trinity has several implications, none of which, he says, find their basis in historical orthodoxy.

In the fourth chapter, "The Retrieval and Refinement of the Nicene Trinitarian Tradition in the Twentieth Century," Giles asserts that most evangelicals who argue for the eternal subordination of the Son seem to be "oblivious" not only to the retrieval of trinitarian doctrine but also to the significant trend among those formidable trinitarian theologians responsible for initiating the renewal—namely, Karl Barth and Karl Rahner (87). Barth, Rahner, Thomas F. Torrance, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Vladimir Lossky, John D. Zizioulas, and Erickson are each examples of the undisputed trend to retrieve and refine Nicene orthodoxy. In Giles words, "the goal has been to eradicate any implications in the primitive tradition that could detract from the full equality and unity of the three distinct persons of the Trinity" (87). As the rest of the chapter makes clear, Giles suggests that none of these trinitarian theologians affirms the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in any sense.

The final chapter of part one argues that conservative evangelicals who teach the eternal subordination of the Son are a small minority "sitting out on the end of a very thin branch" (106). Trinitarian tradition is not on their side as they suggest. Summarizing his findings Giles says, "evangelicals who claim that their doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son is historical orthodoxy show both an ignorance of what the great theologians of the past and the creeds and confessions actually teach and an ignorance of the recognized inadequacies of many expositions of the doctrine of the Trinity from the time of the Reformation to the 1960s" (108). The root cause of the error of those affirming the subordination of the Son is their starting point, the equal yet different model of male-female relations. They work from fallen human relations back to divine relations and in so doing commit the very error that Barth warned against. Instead of moving from divine relations to human relations by analogy, they move in the opposite direction. In virtually every element of a hierarchical presentation of trinitarian theology, the determining factor is not the Bible properly understood throughout church history but an all-consuming drive for male headship (115).

Part Two: The Woman Tradition: Reinterpreted by Some, Rejected by Others

In part two, Giles claims that all evangelicals have changed their theology of the sexes based on the profound cultural pressure of the post 1970s women's movement. The new cultural context has required a new reading of the Bible and evangelicals on both sides of the gender issue have done so either wittingly or unwittingly. Like the debate over the doctrine of the Trinity, the contribution of tradition as a

theological source is very important (142). Those who argue for "the permanent subordination of women" insist on calling their view the "historic" or "traditional" view when in fact, according to Giles, they actually break with tradition and have a "novel" view (143). This is yet another justification for Giles's hermeneutical rule that "*a change in culture often leads to a change in the interpretation of the Bible*" (145).

In order to make his case, Giles first surveys women in the Christian tradition. Chapter six, "Women in the Modern World and in Christian Tradition," covers some of the great exegetes of church history who have interpreted the Bible's teaching on women. John Chrysostom, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, and Charles Hodge all fit the category of those who teach that "God has made women as a race or class inferior to men, excluding them from leadership in the home, the church and the world" (146). Commenting on Gen 1:27 and 1 Cor 11:7, Augustine and Aquinas fit the category of those who claim that women do not equally bear the image of God. Irenaeus and Tertullian are both examples of those who teach that women are more prone to sin and deception based on Gen 3 and 1 Tim 2:14. For the past nineteen centuries the history of interpretation has uniformly argued for the subordination and inferiority of women such that they have been excluded from leadership in both society and the church.

In the seventh chapter Giles explains why he has chosen the terminology "hierarchical-complementarian" and "egalitarian-complementarian" to describe the two opposing views. He says, "As I cannot concede their case is traditional or historic and as I like to call myself a complementarian, I have decided to call those with whom I differ 'hierarchical-complementarians'" (157). The term hierarchical, even though those it describes prefer not to use it, seems justified, claims Giles, since they frequently do use it in one of the seminal works representing the view, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Giles devotes the bulk of this chapter to supporting his contention that hierarchical-complementarians have a novel view since they do not agree with the historic view that teaches the inferiority of women, i.e., "the woman tradition."

The next chapter, "Exegesis or Eisegesis?" asserts that hierarchical-complementarians are committed to a recently developed hermeneutical construct built by an elite group of men over the past thirty years. The three basic components of this construct are: "a novel understanding of what is meant by the expression *the order of creation*, a novel use of the word *role* and a novel and problematic meaning given to the word *difference*" (170). According to Giles, when these three components are brought to bear on a text of Scripture eisegesis inevitably follows. An attempt is made to illustrate numerous examples of eisegesis most of which come from Piper and Grudem's *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* and

Köstenberger, Schreiner and Baldwin's *Women in the Church* (188-93).

The final chapter of part two offers an egalitarian-complementarian theological reading of the Bible. In Giles's words, the Bible can be read "to endorse the full emancipation of women—indeed, I would say, to demand the full emancipation of women *in our age and culture*" (194). Confessing his own presuppositions Giles explains that he comes to the Bible much like Athanasius and Augustine did concerning the question of the Trinity and the eternal subordination of the Son. As they saw the danger in devaluing the Son through subordination so he wants to avoid the danger of subordinating women. In other words, in light of male-female equality, any reading of the Bible that devalues women must be categorically rejected. In addition, Giles's life experiences have confirmed another presupposition—the rejection of male headship. He believes that "all the assertions of male headship by men are self-serving" (200).

Rather than surveying Giles's egalitarian-complementarian treatment of key texts (203-08), the three hermeneutical principles that bring him to his conclusions are noted here:

Rule 1: The proper starting point in any discussion on the man-woman relationship is the starting point given in canonical revelation, Genesis 1:26-28. At the climax of the prologue to the whole Bible, we are told God made one species, humankind, differentiated not by roles but by their God-given nature . . . .

Rule 2: The Bible is always to be interpreted in line with its own primary forward-looking eschatological perspective. This means that God's ideal for the man-woman relationship is to be seen not in the Garden of Eden, where the devil was present and sin was a possibility, but in the perfection of the new creation in Christ that will be consummated in the last day. This rule demands the rejection of normative orders-of-creation theology because in looking backwards it contradicts what is foundational to biblical theology.

Rule 3: From these two hermeneutical rules the most important rule follows: All texts that imply the equality of the sexes speak of God's ultimate eschatological ideal; all texts that speak of the subordination of women are culturally limited, time-bound, practical advice to women living in a culture that took for granted the subordination of women. This means that all the exhortations to women to be subordinate do not apply in our age and culture (202-03).

In outlining this approach to reading the Bible, Giles is not simply suggesting a way of reading the Scriptures. Rather, he argues this is "how the *Bible should be read in our age* if we are to grasp its liberating moral and christocentric thrust"

which affirms the equality of men and women (203).

Part Three: The Slavery Tradition: Rejected by All—Some in Ignorance

In part three, Giles attempts to show the significance of the biblical parallel between the subordination of women and the subordination of slaves. The Bible takes for granted both the subordination of women and slaves and does so in such a way as to never directly question their legitimacy because of the cultural context of the day. It could not have been otherwise. Thus, as in the women's issue, some interpreters have wrongly argued that the Bible can be read to endorse a qualified form of subordination in the slave-owner relationship (216).

Chapter ten, "The Tradition," surveys the history of biblical interpretation on slavery. "Until modern times, most Christians believed that the Bible regulated and legitimated slavery" (219). Among others, Giles claims that Chrysostom, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and many Puritans endorsed slavery. Even as late as 1957, Reformed theologian John Murray argues for the biblical institution of slavery (221). "The Rejection of the Proslavery Tradition" is the title of the next chapter. Here Giles explains that some contemporary evangelicals suggest that though the Bible does not legitimize slavery, it does regulate the abuse of slavery. Attempts to argue that the Bible only regulates slavery, however, miss the point. An entirely new hermeneutic—one that recognizes today's cultural context as well as the failure to properly interpret the text for the first eighteen centuries of church history—is required (240-41).

The final chapter, "Lessons to be Learned & Concluding Thoughts," suggests what is to be learned from the historical experience of the emancipation of slaves and women. The six lessons given are:

1. No social order should be taken as God-given and inviolable.
2. Culture is forever changing.
3. Theology divorced from social ethics is bound to be erroneous.
4. The Bible should not be read as though it were a set of timeless, transcultural precepts all saying virtually the same thing.
5. It is possible for evangelicals with the Bible in their hand to get the wrong answer from the Scriptures to the questions facing them in their age.
6. One must take great care not to undermine or deny explicitly or implicitly, the equal dignity, worth and potential of every human being (260-62).

Concluding the chapter, as well as recapitulating the book's thesis, Giles identifies what he calls "the harmony line" that runs through the background of all three parts of the book (265). How to read the Bible theologically, the contribution of tradition as a theological source, and the culture's effect on interpretation together form the harmony line that runs through the melody line of the Trinity, women's subordination, and slavery.

Evaluation of Giles's Work

Understanding the Issue

Giles speaks repeatedly about a "debate" over the doctrine of "the Trinity" (2, 5, 11, 14, 17, 25) when, in fact, this debate is emphatically not over the doctrine of the Trinity. The debate is actually over a more precise expression of trinitarian doctrine.[5] His thesis is greatly hindered by this fundamental flaw. One might suggest that Giles simply means that this is a trinitarian discussion in that it touches on questions concerning the doctrine. However, Giles makes clear that he means more than this. His goal is to show the "orthodox" view of the doctrine of the Trinity, and in so doing, to prove that the eternal functional subordination of the Son falls outside of the boundaries of orthodoxy (25).[6] But the question of whether or not the Son is temporarily or eternally subordinated to the Father is not a matter of trinitarian orthodoxy. Numerous scholars have shown this either explicitly or implicitly— whether in agreement with eternal subordination or not.[7] There is room in trinitarian orthodoxy for both views. Those who argue for the eternal functional subordination of the Son do not claim that those rejecting it are outside of the boundaries of trinitarian orthodoxy.[8] Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Giles in his criticism of those who do affirm the eternal functional subordination of the Son.

Thesis and Theological Method

There are several weaknesses in Giles's thesis and theological method. First, he builds his thesis on the relationship between tradition (as a theological source) and the concept of subordination rather than on the more important question one must ask regarding the concept of subordination—that is, what does the Bible teach about the concept of subordination? He intentionally neglects this question because of his hermeneutical commitments. But, in the end, evangelicals ought to agree that there is something intentionally good, by God's design, about the biblical concept of one-way submission or subordination found in all three areas under discussion—trinitarian relations, male-female relations, and master-slave relations. The biblical emphasis on the value of one-way submission in relationships (seen, for example, in John's Gospel on the Trinity, in Paul on male-female relations, and in Peter on master-slave relations) is completely obscured in Giles's treatment. In other words, tradition properly understood as a theological source should

never obscure the clear teaching of a biblical concept.

Second, tradition as a source or contributor in theology has been invested with far too much hermeneutical value. For Giles, tradition means the way the Bible has been read or interpreted by the best theologians of church history (5). However, this is not a new concept. Theologians have long recognized four major sources for doing theology: Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.[9] But, affirming tradition as a theological or hermeneutical source does not necessarily require that there be a variety of valid readings of a text of Scripture. It is one thing to say that the history of interpretation assists in the pursuit of *the* proper interpretation of a text. It is quite another to say, as Giles does, that there are many valid interpretations of a particular text simply because church history evidences a variety of readings (9-10).

Third, the cultural context of the interpreter has been invested with far too much hermeneutical value. Giles is correct to point out the growing hermeneutical awareness among evangelicals regarding the two horizons of biblical interpretation, the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter (10). However, this does not justify a variety of textual meanings or valid interpretations. Rather, an awareness of presuppositions (or of one's own pre-understanding) is required in order to be critical of one's own tendencies and biases when determining the biblical author's intention.[10] It is certainly helpful to recognize that cultural context has frequently hindered the interpretive process. However, the hermeneutical solution to this problem is not to exalt the hermeneutical source of cultural experience as does Giles, but rather, to refine the process through something similar to what Grant Osborne calls "the hermeneutical spiral," which continually revisits the biblical text to determine the author's intended meaning.[11]

Fourth, the most pressing question regarding Giles's hermeneutical method is this: Who decides which cultural context determines the meaning of the text? Knowing someone will raise the obvious question regarding homosexuality as an additional test case for his method, Giles says, "Well what about homosexuality? Your position must mean the acceptance of homosexuality, since contemporary Western culture now accepts gays and lesbians" (269). He goes on to say that this criticism would be a fair one had he argued that culture should "determine" theology (269). But instead of arguing that culture is determinative, Giles claims that he only means that the impact of culture on the biblical writers and on all subsequent Christians must be considered in the hermeneutical and theological process. This qualification is anything but convincing. Giles has just argued for two-thirds of his book (parts two and three) that culture is determinative (cf. p. 203). He has clearly stated that there is not one correct interpretation of a biblical text. Ultimately then, the cultural experience of the interpreter is determinative in Giles's hermeneutical method.

What else is the reader to conclude?

Finally, Giles's hermeneutical rules on gender related texts require a response (202-03). His attempt to read Gen 1:26-28 (Rule 1) through an eschatological perspective which assumes that the ideal for the man-woman relationship was *not* the Garden of Eden before the Fall (Rule 2) runs counter to the general Pauline appeal to the pre-Fall Genesis account (see 1 Cor 11:2-16, Gal 3:28, Eph 5:21-33, Col 3:18-19, 1 Tim 2:8-15). In this way, then, Giles is inconsistent with his own proposal since he thinks it is significant to begin where "canonical revelation" begins (Rule 1). Köstenberger calls this hermeneutical mistake the fallacy of "underrating the importance of the use of the OT in the NT."[12] He says,

> Evangelical hermeneutics affirms the significance of authorial intention in determining meaning. If one seeks to understand the Pauline gender passages with regard to authorial intent, one must not take lightly the fact that Paul in virtually every instance refers to one or the other passage from Genesis 1-3.[13]

If Paul is looking backwards, as it were, to make a "canonical" case for his view of gender relations based on the creation order, then Giles's particular expression of a forward-looking eschatological ideal has missed Paul's intended meaning.

"Historic" or "Novel"

Another element of the author's thesis deserves separate treatment because of related literature he has published. Giles's thesis rests significantly on the claim that even complementarians have changed their theology of the sexes based on the cultural pressure of the modern women's movement. Complementarians reject the ontological inferiority of women, contrary to Giles's suggestion that exegetes of the last nineteen centuries have asserted that view. According to Giles, then, complementarians do not represent the "historic" view but have departed from tradition and actually have a "novel" view (143).

Giles originally made this argument in his two-part review article of *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, edited by Köstenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin.[14] In the article, as in the present publication, Giles claims that the contributors to *Women in the Church* do not line up closely enough with the historic position taken by previous commentators so as to be properly labeled "historic." Köstenberger has responded in detail to Giles's review.[15] His response sufficiently calls into question Giles's thesis in the present publication. In sum, Köstenberger lodges a twofold response. First, Giles's charge is based on an exaggerated claim that is not made in the book. The contributors to *Women in the*

Church never suggest "their view aligns itself with various corollaries of a traditional interpretation, such as the affirmation of women's ontological inferiority to men."[16] Whether or not the position is properly labeled "historic," it is certainly closer to previous interpretations than an egalitarian approach to the text. Second, in the end the main concern is not about labels but rather "which position—egalitarian or non-egalitarian—more closely adheres to the scriptural message itself."[17] As Köstenberger suggests, perhaps Giles's argument that complementarians have a "novel" view is a novelty itself.

Usage of Important Terms

There are at least three important categories of technical terms Giles uses repeatedly that fail to bring clarity to the discussion. The categories are: 1) evangelical and conservative evangelical; 2) subordination and subordinationism; 3) egalitarian-complementarian and hierarchical-complementarian.

In the first set of terms, "evangelical" and "conservative evangelical," Giles uses the term conservative evangelical as a caricature for what he views as a minority of naïve, biblical literalists who do not have a well developed hermeneutic and are often guilty of proof-texting like the heretic Arius (3, 5-6, 10, 11, 53, 261, 264). Apparently this is wrapped up in the qualifier "conservative." As for "evangelical," Giles may think of himself as one, but apparently not in the sense that most self-identified evangelicals would understand the term.[18] He says, "I confess, naturally, that the Bible is the Word of God, but this confession can mean different things to different people" (232, n. 73). Curiously, this statement is relegated to a footnote in which he further states that he does not equate "the words in the text with God's words." Following Donald Bloesch's statement that "the Bible is not in and of itself the revelation of God but the divinely appointed means and channel of this revelation," Giles makes clear that he does not hold an evangelical view of Scripture (n. 73). An evangelical view of Scripture is not to be equated with a neo-orthodox view of Scripture because evangelicals affirm that the text of Scripture *is* God's revelation, not simply a vehicle for divine revelation.[19]

The second set of terms, "subordination and subordinationism," are used frequently in the context of trinitarian discussion, and have a clearly defined usage. Theologians of the past have spoken in some sense of the subordination of the Son and the Spirit within the boundaries of orthodoxy. Subordination*ism*, however, describes a heretical formulation of the doctrine of God, usually referred to as ontological subordinationism. Ontological subordinationism is recognized as heresy because it says the Son and Spirit do not share directly in the very being or essence of God the Father. The term subordinationism, then, is not used functionally (eternal or temporal) but rather ontologically (regarding being and essence only). This usage is well attested.[20]

Giles intentionally ignores the accepted distinction between these terms from the very first page of the book. Reflecting on his previous studies, he says, "from what I remembered of my undergraduate studies, the subordination of the Son had been deemed a heresy in the early church" (1). Giles does not say "subordinationism" was deemed a heresy as the title of the book suggests he should. Rather, he says the "subordination" of the Son was deemed a heresy. Instead of offering an objective assessment of the possibility of the doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son, Giles ignores the very helpful categorical distinction made between subordination and subordinationism (22, 24, 26-28, 44, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60). Chapter three, "Subordinating Tradition," contains several examples of how Giles's dismissal of these accepted distinctions has negatively affected his reading of modern evangelical writings on the subject. Grudem, Kovach and Schemm, and Letham all affirm the ontological equality of the Son with the Father and in so doing reject the heresy of ontological subordinationism.[21] Furthermore, those who like Dahms and the 1999 Sydney Doctrine Report argue for an ontological basis of the subordination of the Son (66, 79), yet another expression within the bounds of orthodoxy, also affirm the complete equality of being/essence of the Son even if it is expressed in a more Eastern (derived) sense.[22] In short, most of the theologians cited in Giles's third chapter have been unfairly represented, if not misrepresented.

The third set of terms requiring clarification is "egalitarian-complementarian" and "hierarchical-complementarian." Giles intentionally avoids the generally accepted distinctions that accompany the terms egalitarian and complementarian. Since at least 1995, egalitarians Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, among others, have been willing to identify the two main competing theologies of the sexes with these categories.[23] Even though they recognize that some egalitarians question whether or not complementarity lies at the center of the opposing view, out of respect for those who hold the view, and who wish to identify it as such, they are willing to retain the designation. More recently, *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, edited by James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg, follows the generally accepted categories of egalitarian and complementarian, though not without qualification. The editors readily accept the term egalitarian but they are more hesitant about the term complementarian, suggesting that "hierarchical" is the more natural counterpart to "egalitarian."[24] Schreiner, however, writing as a representative of the complementarian view still prefers the term and even suggests that Blomberg, who prefers to be called neither hierarchicalist or egalitarian, "is still a complementarian, for he believes in role differences between the sexes."[25]

It is understandable that both egalitarians and complementarians may want to qualify these labels. After all,

who on either side is comfortable with saying that one word perfectly summarizes their view? The solution, however, is not to link both views to the particular term complementarian which has been accepted as representing one of the views. This does not bring clarity to each view, only more confusion. Further, in what sense does "egalitarian" retain its distinctive meaning when attached to "complementarian"? Giles is free to use whatever language he wishes to describe his view. In the end, however, it would be best for him not to use the term complementarian since more than a decade of evangelical literature on the subject identifies complementarians as those who understand that role distinctions in masculinity and femininity are ordained by God as part of the created order.

Trinitarian Concepts: Rahner's Rule, the *Filioque*

Two important trinitarian concepts that Giles uses inappropriately in part one are Rahner's rule and the *filioque* clause.[26] First, according to Giles, Rahner's rule is misunderstood by theologians who argue for the eternal subordination of the Son. Giles cites Dahms, Grudem, Kovach and Schemm, Letham, and the 1999 Sydney Doctrine Report as examples of theologians who do not fully understand the significance of Rahner's rule. As Giles puts it, these "seem to have heard of Rahner's rule, but their understanding of what it teaches seems to be as mistaken as their understanding of historical theology" (29). Dahms, Letham, and the Moore College theologians all "think Rahner's rule logically implies the eternal subordination of the Son" (29). Yet Dahms, Letham, and the 1999 Sydney Doctrine Report never even connect their argument to Rahner's rule directly—not one of them.[27] While they each speak in terms of the relationship between the economic and the immanent Trinity they never do so on the basis of Rahner's axiom, nor do they even refer to Rahner. Is one to conclude that every reference to the economic/immanent Trinity is a reference to Rahner's axiom?

Compounding the problem, Giles claims "Grudem fast concludes that Rahner's rule teaches that in the Trinity there is 'ontological equality but economic subordination'—exactly the opposite of what Rahner is arguing!" (30). Again, checking the reference, one finds that there is no mention of Rahner or his axiom in the context of Grudem's argument. Kovach and Schemm are said to "audaciously claim that Grudem's conclusion 'captures the foundational notion' behind the contemporary understanding" of ontological equality and economic subordination (30). In fact, the quote from Kovach and Schemm on capturing the foundational notion of ontological equality and economic subordination refers not to Grudem, but rather, to Gregory of Nazianzus. Additionally, the note in which Grudem is mentioned in this context makes clear that "Grudem does not make this connection to Gregory."[28] The phrase "ontological equality and economic subordination" is cited from Grudem simply as a reference to a possible modern expression of Gregory's thought. Mistakes like these cast a shadow of doubt over the rest of Giles's work.

Second, the *filioque* clause is significant because of statements Giles makes about an Eastern view of the doctrine of the Trinity. He suggests that acceptance of the *filioque* is required in order to guarantee the unity of being (and thus equality) among the members of the Godhead. As Giles puts it, the *filioque* addition "safeguards the vital truth established in the Nicene Creed that the Father and the Son are one in being/substance, and it disallows any disjunction between the Son and the Spirit that would be contrary to Scripture" (50)—as if Eastern views never attempted or succeeded in guarding the unity of being based on the *monarchē* of the Father.[29] Further, Giles says, "In contrast to the Eastern church, the Western church has always been more concerned about the danger of subordination implied by making both the Son and the Spirit dependent on the Father than it has been concerned about maintaining the *monarchē* of the Father" (50). Aside from such sweeping generalizations and lack of historical precision, Giles's statements end up relegating all who reject the *filioque* to the slippery slope of ontological subordinationism—as if the Cappadocians, and even Athanasius, were not protecting the *monarchē* of the Father (see the discussion below on Athanasius and the Cappadocians). Apparently, for Giles there is little room in trinitarian orthodoxy for those who reject the *filioque* clause.

Theologians on the Eternal Subordination of the Son

Space does not permit commenting on every theologian that Giles uses to argue against the doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son. However, what follows should be sufficient evidence to call the reader to a more thorough investigation of the theologians Giles uses to make his case. Several such concerns regarding Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and Calvin are introduced here.

Athanasius is the most important theologian in this discussion not only because of his understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son but also because Giles claims to be following his lead hermeneutically. As far as interpretive method goes, Giles repeatedly claims to be following Athanasius's "scope" (Gk. *skopos*) of Scripture (3-4, 8, 35-37, 46). By scope of Scripture, Giles understands Athanasius to mean "the overall drift of the Bible, its primary focus, its theological center" (3). In as much as Giles presents the scope of Scripture as the proper way to view the incarnation of the Word for the purpose of human salvation, he is correct.[30] However, Giles's use of Athanasius's concept of the scope of Scripture is problematic in at least two ways.

First, Athanasius's concept is not so much a hermeneutical method that distinguishes the incarnational nature of the Son from the ontological nature of the Son, as Giles suggests, as much as it is a hermeneutic that unites the

incarnational nature with the ontological—or better, that grounds the incarnational nature in the being of God for the purpose of human salvation.[31] Thus it does not necessarily follow that Athanasius categorically rejects the eternal functional subordination of the Son. It is arguable that Athanasius envisages an eternal order in the Godhead that harmonizes well with the concept of eternal subordination.[32] Additionally, it is important to recognize that Athanasius's understanding of the Father as "unoriginate" and "uncaused" in the divine being suggests an eternal irreversible order in the Trinity.[33]

Second, Giles overstates the contrast between Athanasius's theological method (scope of Scripture) and Arius's proof-text method. While Arius ends up in the wrong place, it is not so much due to making the Bible mean whatever the "clever theologian" wants it to mean (3)—the point being that those who disagree with Giles over the subordination of the Son do the same thing. Rather, Arius, like Athanasius has significant theological presuppositions driving his interpretation of the text. Arius starts theologically in the wrong place.[34] One does not get this sense from Giles and thus the reality of the textual battle over Nicene orthodoxy has not been presented accurately. There is much more to say about Patristic exegesis both before, during, and after Nicea, but suffice it to say that the parallels between Arian heretics and those arguing for the eternal functional subordination of the Son may not be quite as obvious to others as to Giles.

The Cappadocian fathers wanted to exclude ontological subordinationism, but according to Giles, were not completely successful because of their prior commitment to the Father as the single source of deity (43). Yet their expression does not fall outside of the boundaries of trinitarian orthodoxy. In fact, some would suggest that seeing the Father as the fount of deity may be particularly instructive regarding a proper sense of subordination in the Trinity. Geoffrey Wainwright indicates the importance of this idea with respect to worship that is destined for God the Father through God the Son, as in Phil 2:9-11 where the proclamation that "Jesus Christ is Lord" is "to the glory of God the Father," and similarly in 1 Cor 15:24-28, where he states:

> The same principle is expressed in *temporal* terms in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, where the Lordship of Christ or 'the Son' is *pen*ultimate in relation to the final kingdom where God will be all and in all. On these lines, the worship addressed to Christ *is* therefore addressed *katachrēstikōs* even when it is offered to him in his divinity . . . in so far as it is not offered directly to the Father. But that need not carry the arian implication of 'worship of a creature'. It could properly fit either with that measure of subordinationism which has its place in orthodox

trinitarian doctrine, where the Father remains the 'fount of deity' [note 143], or with a bultmannian willingness [note 144] to confess the saving Christ as God *pro me* while refusing to go beyond his value or his function into the ontology of his person. To take the ontological risk: I myself go for 'subordinationism'. I understand that the Son is *God as self-given* (the divine self-giving takes incarnate form in Christ), while the Father is *God as inexhaustibly self-giving*. This may not be far removed from Athanasius' position that the Son is God in all things, except that he is not the Father [note 145].[35]

There are two points Wainwright makes that are particularly insightful. First, he makes clear that there is an acceptable degree of subordination (he even says "-ism") in orthodox trinitarian thought, particularly for those who see the Father as the fount of deity in the Godhead. Second, he suggests that there is also room in orthodoxy for a sense of subordination that is grounded in the being of God and yet does not lapse into a heretical form of "ontological subordinationism" (my words) where there is a diminution of the divine being of the Son. Giles simply does not present the Cappadocians, or a more Eastern approach, in a balanced way. Perhaps, then, his statement that the Cappadocians so opposed any form of ontological and functional subordinationism that it "cannot be questioned" ought itself to be questioned (67).

To use Calvin to argue against any sense of the Son's subordination to the Father is equally questionable. Giles is correct to point out that Calvin rejects subordinationism to any degree that would lessen the deity of the Son (58). However, it is not so easily demonstrated that Calvin rejects a subordination or relational order among the persons of the Trinity. The opposite appears to be the case. For example, Calvin calls the Father the "first in order," and identifies him as "the beginning and fountainhead of the whole divinity."[36] Again he says, "we admit that in respect to order and degree the beginning of divinity is in the Father."[37] Calvin explains that the distinctions of the persons carry peculiar qualities such that there is an irreversible order among them. The three persons share in the same essence and yet a reasoned order is kept among them—such an order, however, does not take away from the deity of the Son and Spirit.[38]

Hodge understood Calvin to teach that in some sense the Son is subordinate to the Father. After citing a lengthy section of Calvin, Hodge summarizes, "We have here the three essential facts involved in the doctrine of the Trinity, namely, unity of essence, distinction of persons, and subordination without any attempt at explanation."[39] Robert L. Reymond, who goes to great lengths to explain exactly what it is he thinks Calvin means by the eternal generation of the Son, is more careful than Giles in his assessment of Calvin's view of the

Son's subordination. He says, Calvin contends against all subordination with respect to the Son's "divine essence."[40] Concluding his treatment of the generation of the Son, Reymond explains that he is in agreement with Calvin's view that the Father precedes the Son by reason of order—however, going beyond what "order" means he cannot say. Like Calvin, however, he is sure about rejecting ontological subordinationism—"there is no essential subordination of the Son to the Father within the Godhead."[41]

A Trinitarian Model for Gender Roles

Giles believes that those who affirm the eternal subordination of the Son do so on the basis of an all-consuming drive for male headship (115). The root cause of their heretical subordinationism is that they begin with fallen human relations and, by way of analogy, work back to divine relations. This model, says Giles, moves in the wrong direction reading back into the Trinity prior beliefs about the sexes (109-110). Giles offers three strands of evidence that supposedly indicate this analogical movement from the human to the divine. However, he never explains what this analogical process is, nor what an analogy incorporating humanity's *fallen* relations could possibly say about divine relations. The reason is, simply, because those who affirm the eternal subordination of the Son are not guilty of what Giles claims.

For example, Wayne Grudem does not argue from the human to the divine. Rather, he makes clear that based on the image of God humanity reflects unity and diversity in relationships.[42] Robert Letham is certainly not suggesting a move from the human to the divine analogically. In fact, he argues just the opposite. Male headship is not only compatible with human relations that reflect the divine image but also is grounded in the very being of God.[43] Finally, the 1999 Sydney Doctrine Report does not claim to move analogically from the human to the divine. Instead, it makes clear that certain "biblical controls of the procedure" are required in order to make such a connection between the human and the divine—one such control is the textual evidence of Gen 1:27 which makes clear that the relationship between the sexes somehow reflects the intra-trinitarian relations of God (135). Thus Giles has gone to great lengths to oppose a trinitarian model for gender relations that, in fact, does not exist.

Giles suggests a pattern for social and gender relations that is found in the intra-trinitarian relations of the Godhead. He follows Erickson's proposal for "mutual submission" among the members of the Trinity (103).[44] Giles sees this pattern in both church and home as one of symmetry, mutuality, and community, leaving little room for any sense of asymmetry, one-way submission, and authority (105). But, two weaknesses of this approach are as follows. First, the concept of mutual submission is problematic both on the human and the divine level. Regarding the divine level,[45] one may ask in what

way does the Father submit to the Spirit or to the Son? Giles cites Pannenberg's emphasis on the mutual dependence of the Father, Son, and Spirit as evidence of how the Father subordinates himself to the Son (96). Pannenberg, however, does not speak in the language of mutual "submission" or "subordination," but rather of "mutuality" and "dependence" and is quite careful to protect the relational priority of the Father.[46] There is a considerable difference between the intra-trinitarian idea of dependence and reciprocity, seen for example in the concept of *perichoresis*, and the idea of mutual submission. Nowhere does Scripture evidence such an idea that the Father "submits" himself to the Son or the Spirit. Second, a trinitarian pattern for social and gender relations that completely removes the relational priority of the Father must explain why it is that he is still called "Father." As Bruce Ware has shown, this is a particularly difficult position for egalitarians since they affirm the predominance of masculine biblical references to God and yet deny the unique significance of that language in terms of "authority."[47] What exactly does the name "Father" signify in the Godhead if not relational priority and relational authority?

Some Other Concerns

There are other concerns that ought to be addressed as well. Some of them are theological in nature while others are more rhetorical. Theologically: 1) It would be interesting to know how Giles handles the eternal generation of the Son in light of his thesis regarding the subordination of the Son; 2) Does an emphasis on the unity of being and action in the Godhead (on which Giles bases his argument), of necessity, oppose the distinct roles appropriate to each divine person (appropriations)? 3) Is there no sense in which one can speak biblically about the irreversible roles of Father, Son, and Spirit in the Trinity? 4) Is it impossible to harmonize the concept of *perichoresis* with the eternal functional subordination of the Son? 5) To what degree should Giles have interacted with the Spirit in light of his thesis regarding subordination? Rhetorically: 1) Why does Giles argue his case with such inflammatory language? 2) Why does he speak of the "permanent subordination of women" when most complementarians would reject such language? 3) To what end does Giles identify complementarians with Arians, or oppressors of women's rights, or cruel slave owners?

Conclusion: On the Son's Subordination

Giles claims that in order to maintain an orthodox view of the doctrine of the Trinity one must reject the possibility of the eternal functional subordination of the Son to the Father. He argues that the history of trinitarian doctrinal development affirms his view. Further, he suggests that all modern trinitarian expressions that harmonize with the Nicene tradition reject the possibility of the eternal subordination of the Son, whether in

being or in function. The primary purpose of this article, however, has been to show that Giles often overstates his case and in some instances simply misrepresents the facts. The question of the eternal subordination of the Son is not a question of trinitarian orthodoxy. Further, the evidence given ought to encourage readers to investigate more thoroughly the way Giles represents each theologian he uses to present his claims. Apparently, this reviewer sees the boundaries of trinitarian orthodoxy as a bit wider than does Giles—something for which traditionalists are not normally known. In the end, Giles's intention to expose the "heresy" of the eternal functional subordination of the Son has not been successful. ◼

[1] Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002).

[2] Thomas R. Schreiner, "William J. Webb's *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals*: A Review Article," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6/1 (Spring 2002) 46; also published in the *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (Spring 2002) 41.

[3] Ibid.

[4] The official title of the Sydney report is, *The 1999 Sydney Anglican Diocesan Doctrine Commission Report: "The Doctrine of Trinity and Its Bearing on the Relationship of Men and Women."* Giles has included the report in its entirety as his Appendix B.

[5] That Giles does not understand the "debate" as a more precise expression of trinitarian doctrine is seen in these words, "Those on one side of this doctrinal dispute point to texts that subordinate the Son to the Father, and those on the other point to texts that speak of the oneness or equality of the Father and the Son" (25). This is simply not the case. Those who argue for the eternal functional subordination of the Son consistently attempt to explain this doctrine in light of the full equality and oneness of the three persons—this is the very point of "trinitarian" doctrine.

[6] The "eternal functional subordination" of the Son is to be distinguished from the "eternal subordination" of the Son. Without the qualifier "functional," it is possible, though not correct, to read the word "eternal" as synonymous with "ontological." I prefer the phrase "eternal functional subordination" because it makes clear that the Son's subordination is not "ontological subordinationism." See n. 20.

[7] Cf. A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology,* 3 vols. in one (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907) 343-44; Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 60; Craig S. Keener, "Is Subordination within the Trinity Really Heresy? A Study of John 5:18 in Context," *Trinity Journal* 20/1 (Spring 1999) 39-51; and John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002) 719-22.

[8] I am unaware of any evangelical who affirms the eternal subordination of the Son and in so doing also declares that those who do not support the same view are outside of the boundaries of trinitarian orthodoxy. The purpose of Kovach and Schemm's article, for example, was to defend the view in light of an apparently revisionist reading of the history of the doctrine, not to argue that "functional" subordination is outside of the boundaries of orthodoxy. See Stephen D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm, Jr., "A Defense of the

Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42/3 (September 1999) 461-76.

[9] See Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 3d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 159.

[10] See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., eds., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993) 87-151.

[11] See Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991) 6-8.

[12] See Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Gender Passages in the NT: Hermeneutical Fallacies Critiqued." *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994) 267-68.

[13] Ibid., 268.

[14] Cf. Kevin Giles, "A Critique of the 'Novel' Contemporary Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:19-15 Given in the Book, *Women in the Church*. Part I." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 72/2 (2000) 151-67; also see Giles, "Part II," in *The Evangelical Quarterly* 72/3 (2000) 195-215.

[15] Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Women in the Church: A Response to Kevin Giles," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 73/3 (2001) 205-24; Cf. Kevin Giles, "Women in the Church: A Rejoinder to Andreas Köstenberger," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 73/3 (2001) 225-45.

[16] Köstenberger, "Women in the Church: A Response to Kevin Giles," 216.

[17] Ibid., 206.

[18] Members of the Evangelical Theological Society must affirm the following statement about the Bible: "The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs." See the inside cover of any issue of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society.*

[19] For other evangelical critiques of Giles's doctrine of Scripture, see Köstenberger, "Women in the Church: A Response to Kevin Giles," 224; and Robert W. Yarbrough, "The Hermeneutics of 1 Timothy 2:9-15," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) 185-90.

[20] See "Subordinationism" in Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, eds., *Dictionary of Theology*, 2d ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Millard Erickson, *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986); Frances Young, *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, Dermot A. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987); see also Michael E. Bauman, "Milton, Subordinationism, and the Two-Stage Logos," *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986) 177-182.

[21] See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 251; Kovach and Schemm, 462-63; Robert Letham, "The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment," *Westminster Theological Journal* 52 (1990) 67.

[22] Cf. John V. Dahms's articles on this: "The Generation of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32/4 (December 1989) 493-501; and "The Subordination of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37/3 (September 1994) 351-64.

[23] Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995) 17-18.

[24] James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg, *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 16-17.

[25] Thomas R. Schreiner, "Review of *Two Views on Women in*

Ministry," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 6/2 (Fall 2001) 28.

[26] For Rahner's famous axiom, see Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Crossroad, 1997) 22.

[27] I am here depending on Giles's references, which, when checked show that those cited are simply discussing the concepts of the economic and immanent Trinity. They make no effort to interpret or even to refer to Rahner's axiom.

[28] Kovach and Schemm, 467, n. 45.

[29] For a more balanced introduction to the *filioque* question, see Gerald Bray, "The Double Procession of the Holy Spirit in Evangelical Theology Today: Do We Still Need It?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41/3 (September 1998) 415-26.

[30] See James D. Ernest, "Athanasius of Alexandria: The Scope of Scripture in Polemical and Pastoral Context," *Vigiliae Christianae* 47 (1993) 341-62.

[31] Ibid., 342, 351.

[32] See Kovach and Schemm, 466-67.

[33] Alvyn Pettersen, *Athanasius* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1995) 164-67.

[34] See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1978) 227.

[35] Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford, 1980) 60. In light of what Giles says regarding Athanasius's view of the Father as the "unoriginate" source of deity, I find the final sentence of the Wainwright quote interesting.

[36] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.13.25.

[37] Ibid., 1.13.24.

[38] Ibid., 1.13.20.

[39] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 1:467; cf. 528-29.

[40] Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 2d ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 326.

[41] Ibid., 335.

[42] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 256.

[43] Letham, 73-74.

[44] Millard J. Erickson, *God in Three Persons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) 333.

[45] Wayne Grudem offers sufficient evidence to call into question the legitimacy of the concept of mutual submission on the human level, between husband and wife. See Wayne Grudem, "The Myth of 'Mutual Submission,'" *CBMW News* 1/4 (October 1996) 1, 3-4.

[46] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 1:311-13.

[47] Bruce A. Ware, "Tampering with the Trinity: Does the Son Submit to His Father?" *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 6/1 (Spring 2001) 8.

Why God Inspired Hard Texts

(Romans 3:1-8)

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> Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "that You may be justified in Your words, and prevail when You are judged." But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.
> (Rom. 3:1-8, NASB updated)

Last week I tried to lead us through an exposition of this text and how the argument of Paul flows. We tried to get inside his head and think his thoughts after him. We heard behind his own words the words of his objectors and how he answered them. And we tried to see how this paragraph fits in with his overall purpose in the letter. So I am not going to repeat all of that here this morning.

Instead, I want to do something I haven't done before in the eleven months we have been working through this letter. I want to step back from the text and ask: what are some of the implications – for life and culture and history and worship – of the sheer fact that God has given Christianity a Book and a text like this and built the Church on it?

Christianity Is Declared through a Book – through Words

What was unleashed in the world by the fact that Christianity not only declares salvation from sin through faith in Jesus, but that Christianity also builds its message and its ministry and its mission on a Book, the Bible, and on books in the Bible like the Letter to the Romans, and on paragraphs in the letter like Romans 3:1-8? What personal and cultural and historical impulses were unleashed on the world when God inspired Paul to write a paragraph like Romans 3:1-8 the way he did?

Now you may ask, Why are you asking that question here? Couldn't you ask it at any paragraph in the book, or in the Bible? What is stirring you to ask that question here? There are two answers at least. One is this: I found this passage to be about as hard a paragraph to deal with as any in this letter. The difficulty of following the train of thought in this paragraph is enormous. I just listened to a sermon on this text by Martyn

Lloyd-Jones from forty years ago in London. He commented at the outset that this is one of the most difficult paragraphs not only in Romans, but also in the whole Bible.

I wrestled so hard trying to figure out how Paul's argument worked here, and I prayed so fervently that God would give me light and guard me from error, that I felt forced to ask, "God, what does this mean, that you have ordained that such a difficult paragraph to be in your Word? What am I to learn from this?" Someone might say, The difficulty is our problem, not God's; if we were more spiritual, and more docile, we would not find God's Word so difficult (which is true up to a point). You must remember, however, that the apostle Peter said in his second letter, "Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him [*not* in folly of intellect, but in wisdom given by God!], wrote to you, as also in all his letters . . . in which are some things *hard to understand*, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they *do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Note four simple and obvious things: 1) Paul wrote with wisdom "given to him" – and Peter means wisdom given by God (as 1 Corinthians 2:13 says). 2) Therefore, Peter says Paul's writings are in the category of the "other Scriptures"; the apostles' writings are in the same category as the inspired Old Testament Scriptures. 3) Nevertheless, some of what he wrote was "hard to understand." God, the perfect communicator (because he is perfect in every way), does not make everything easy when he guides a writer in what to write. 4) This is an apostle talking, not John Piper. So I feel in good company when I say that Romans 3:1-8 is a hard paragraph to understand.

So my first reason for stepping back and asking what a text like this unleashed on the world is that I found it very difficult and I was impelled to ask what God might be up to in inspiring such a difficult train of thought.

My second reason for asking this question here is that there is a kind of warrant for it in verses 1-2: "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." If you stop and think about it, verse two beckons us to ponder what is the great benefit of being entrusted with the oracles of God (which we are!). So here at the beginning of one of the hardest "oracles of God" in the Bible, we are reminded by God that having the oracles of God entrusted to us in a Book (as they were to the Jews in the Old Testament) is a great thing. So even the context itself urges me on to ask: What does it mean that God should speak this way? What does it mean that God should inspire paragraphs like this in his Book? What did God unleash in the world by building his Church on the foundation of writing like this (Ephesians 2:20)?

What God Unleashed with a Word Foundation

Let me mention four things and then balance them with the less complex side of the gospel. Four things: desperation, supplication, cogitation and education.

1. Desperation (A sense of utter dependence on God's enablement). I see this in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." The natural man (all of us without the Spirit's work in our lives) should feel desperation before the revelation of God. He needs God's help. Well the same thing is true of spiritual – but finite and fallible and sinful – people like me, when I meet difficult texts of God's Word. I should feel desperation – a desperate dependence on God's help. That is what God wants us to feel. That is something he has unleashed by inspiring difficult texts.

2. Supplication (Prayer to God for help). This follows from desperation. If you feel dependent on God to help you see the meaning of a text, then you will cry to him for help. I see this in Psalm 119:18, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law." Seven times in one psalm the psalmist prays, "Teach me your statutes" (119:12, 26, 64, 68,124, 135, 171). Or as Psalm 25:5 says, "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me." By inspiring some things hard to understand, God has unleashed in the world desperation which leads to supplication – the crying out to God for help.

3. Cogitation (Thinking hard about Biblical texts). You might think, "No, no, you are confused, Pastor John. You just said that God wants us to *pray* for his help in understanding, not to *think* our way through to a solution." But the answer to that concern is, No, praying and thinking are not alternatives. I learn this especially from 2 Timothy 2:7, where Paul says to Timothy, "*Think over* what I say, for *the Lord* will grant you understanding in everything." Yes, it is *the Lord* who gives understanding. But he does it through our God-given thinking and the efforts we make, *with prayer*, to think hard about what the Bible says. So when God inspired texts like Romans 3:1-8, he unleashed in the world an impulse toward hard thinking. Alongside desperation and supplication there is cogitation. Which leads finally to . . .

4. Education (Training young people and adults to pray earnestly, read well and think hard). If God has inspired a Book as the foundation of the Christian

faith, there is a massive impulse unleashed in the world to teach people how to read. And if God ordained for some of that precious, sacred, God-breathed Book to be hard to understand, then God unleashed in the world not only an impulse to teach people how to read, but how to think about what they read – how to read hard things and understand them, and how to use the mind in a rigorous way.

Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." Impart understanding to others, Timothy, in a way that will enable them to teach others also. In other words, the writings of the apostles – especially the hard ones – unleash generation after generation of education. Education is helping people understand something that they don't already understand. Or, more accurately, education is helping people (young or old) *learn how* to get an understanding that they didn't already have. Education is cultivating the life of the mind so that it knows how to grow in true understanding. That impulse was unleashed by God's inspiring a Book with complex demanding paragraphs in it.

Practical Impact of the Word Foundation

The personal, cultural and historical impact of these impulses is enormous over the last 2,000 years.

- Wherever Christianity has spread, the Bible has spread, and with it the impulse to translate it into other languages – with all the intellectual disciplines that go with effective translation.

- And with that goes the impulse to cultivate a literate people who can read the new translation. And with every new generation, there is the ongoing impulse to teach young people how to read, so they have direct access to God's Word.

- And with that goes the impulse to found schools as well as churches.

- And in time, since translating and reading the Bible involve thinking hard about many issues, there arises the impulse for higher learning, and colleges and universities follow in the wake of a culture founded on meeting God through his Word in a Book.

- And in all of this there is the impulse to write down insights into these more difficult things, and so a commitment to scholarship emerges.

- And over time there is the impulse to preserve these treasures of insight and so libraries emerge and

various means of copying and then printing.

- And since accuracy matters so much in handling sacred texts and passing on precious insights, a discipline of exactness and carefulness in our work is unleashed over the centuries. And so on.

That is some of what God unleashed on the world by inspiring a Bible with hard passages in it like Romans 3:1-8.

Balanced by Simplicity

Now, I said earlier that I wanted to balance this with another kind of impulse from the Bible that flows from the less complex side of the gospel. How shall we do this? Perhaps it would help to do it like this: consider that *God is love* (1 John 4:8,16), and that *God is God* (Isaiah 45:22; 46:9). In the truth that God is God is implied that God is who he is in all his glorious attributes and self-sufficiency. But in the truth that God is love is implied that all of this glory is moving our way for our everlasting enjoyment.

Now those two truths unleash through the Bible very different impulses. And we will see that a balance is introduced here, lest we make of Christianity an elitist affair, which it definitely is not.

That God is love unleashes the impulse of simplicity, and that God is God unleashes the impulse of complexity.

That God is love unleashes the impulse of accessibility, and that God is God unleashes the impulse of profundity.

That God is love encourages a focus on the basics, and that God is God encourages a focus on comprehensiveness. One says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). The other says, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

That God is love impels us to be sure that the truth gets to *all* people, and that God is God impels us to be sure that what gets to all people is the *truth*.

That God is love unleashes the impulse toward fellowship, and that God is God unleashes the impulse toward scholarship.

That God is love tends to create extroverts and evangelists, and that God is God tends to create introverts and mystics.

That God is love helps foster a *folk* ethos, and that God is God helps foster *fine* ethos. One ethos revels in the intimacy of God and sings softly,

Lord, You are more precious than silver.
Lord, you are more costly than gold.
Lord, you are more beautiful than diamonds,
Nothing I desire compares with you.

(*More Precious than Silver*, Lynn DeShazo, 1982,
Integrity's Hosanna! Music.)

And the other ethos revels in the transcendent majesty of
God and sings with profound exultation,

Far, far above thy thought
His counsel shall appear,
When fully He the work hath wrought
That caused thy needless fear.
Leave to his sovereign will
To choose and to command:
With wonder filled, thou then shalt own
How wise, how strong His hand.

(*Give to the Winds Thy Fears*, Paul Gerhardt, 1653.)

But Why Separate God's Complexity and Simplicity?

If any of you is saying to yourself, I don't like this
separation between God is love and God is God, between folk
and fine, evangelists and mystics, fellowship and scholarship,
accessibility and profundity, simplicity and complexity, well,
GOOD!

Because, in my mind, every one of these things is
precious, and both sides of all these pairs are indispensable in
the ministry and mission of Christ in the world.

My prayer for this sermon is this: first, for believers, I
pray that seeing these different impulses in Christianity – and
particularly in the inspiration of a Bible with hard things and
simple things – you will embrace both of them. If you lean
toward one side (as all of us do), that you will be respectful and
affirming to those toward the other side. And that you will
cherish the fuller manifestation of God in his Church and in the
world. And may we help each other embrace all that God
means to unleash by his Word in the world.

And finally, to those of you who came this morning
without love to Christ in your heart, my prayer is that what we
have seen will perhaps remove some caricatures or stereotypes
from Christianity and the Bible, and open the way for you to
see all that God is for you in Christ, and to believe on him. ◼

Annotated Bibliography for Gender Related Books in 2001

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Here is our profile of gender related books from the year 2001. As always, this list is not comprehensive, but we do hope that it is helpful. Once again, we begin with a brief explanation of what we intend by the following four headings.

By **Complementarian**, we intend to classify those authors/books who uphold the full equality of male and female personhood while also recognizing a God-given ordering of roles in the home and church. By **Egalitarian**, we intend to classify evangelicals who do not see male headship in the church or the home taught in Scripture. Under the **Non-Evangelical** heading, we have classified important secular works as well as books that broach the subject of biblical gender issues from a non-evangelical point of view. Once again, though many in this category deny complementarity, we feel that it would be a misrepresentation to classify them alongside evangelical feminists. Finally, under the **Undeclared** heading, we have listed those volumes that do not give sufficient indication of their fundamental stance for us to classify them more specifically.

Complementarian Authors/Books

Beck, James R. and Craig L. Blomberg, eds. *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

This book includes essays by complementarians Thomas R. Schreiner and Ann L. Bowman and egalitarians Craig S. Keener and Linda L. Belleville. This volume was summarized in *JBMW* 6/2 (Fall 2001).

Also in *JBMW* 6/2 is a response essay written by Schreiner, responding to the essays of the other contributors.

Clarke, Greg and Amelia Clarke. *One Flesh: A Practical Guide to Honeymoon Sex and Beyond*. Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2001.

The Clarkes provide a very capable and thoughtful discussion of sanctified sexuality. They honor sex as God's good gift within the restraints that God has intended. They base their advice and practical counsel on a solid theology of sex that is laid out in the early chapters of their book. Christians newly, and not so newly, wed will benefit from this book.

Cutrer, William and Sandra Glahn. *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001.

Cutrer and Glahn provide thoughtful and tasteful treatment of one of the great joys of married life. Discussing everything from biology to romantic tips, the authors engage in a treatment that acknowledges sex as God's good gift to married partners. In so doing, they answer a host of questions, and honor sex the way God (not contemporary society) intended.

Davies, Bob and Lela Gilbert. *Portraits of Freedom: 14 People Who Came Out of Homosexuality*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

Davies and Gilbert chronicle the work of the Lord in the lives of 14 people who came out of homosexuality. Compassionately written and eminently readable, each narrative offers a different story that explores the complicated causes of homosexuality, the struggles of those seeking to leave the lifestyle, and a testimony of victory that is a credit to the Lord who saves. The book does not offer simple formulas, but it does provide a wealth of information and a Christ-centered hope that change is possible.

DeMoss, Nancy Leigh. *Lies Women Believe and the Truth That Sets Them Free*. Chicago: Moody, 2001.

DeMoss takes on the current cultural trends that are poisoning the lives of women by exposing the falsity of the prevailing ethos. In all, DeMoss places forty statements that the modern feminist movement would have women believe under the scrutiny of Scripture and finds them wanting, deceptive, and destructive. Grouped under the major headings of Lies about God, Lies about Themselves, Lies about Sin, Lies about Priorities, Lies about Marriage, Lies about Children, Lies about Emotions, and Lies about Circumstances, DeMoss concludes with a section on the transformative power of walking in the truth. Each chapter includes a

very helpful summary of the lie juxtaposed with the biblical truth that exposes and defeats it.

Dobson, James. *Bringing Up Boys*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2001.

Dobson brings his characteristic wisdom to bear on the challenging issue of raising boys in the contemporary atmosphere. With his long appreciated parental insight, Dobson treats the range of concerns from discipline to homosexuality to single-parent tactics. Loaded with practical examples and juicy tidbits, every parent of sons will benefit from Dobson's advice.

Doriani, Dan. *The Life of a God-Made Man: Becoming A Man After God's Heart*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

Doriani writes this book from the conviction that the best way to promote godly manhood is not by a list of techniques but via a consideration of man's character in his godward relation. His concern is the way of godliness from the inside out. Thus his exhortations start with the gospel and move towards practical and concrete applications in the lives of men.

Farrar, Steve. *Gettin' There: How a Man Finds His Way on the Trail of Life*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001.

Steve Farrar believes that the Psalms offer a marked trail through life. The Psalms contain guidance necessary for successfully navigating the paths and enduring the trials of life, particularly for men. This readable book provides excellent teaching and advice for men with chapters on the sovereignty of God, divine guidance, forgiveness, male headship in marriage, sacrificial living, and leading a family. The book also contains a study guide.

Hughes, Barbara. *Disciplines of a Godly Woman*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

A companion volume to her husband's *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, Barbara Hughes applies the concerns of spiritual discipline specifically to women. Throughout, she is concerned to demonstrate the posture of submission as it applies in various public and private arenas. Scripturally centered, Hughes' volume will provide a rich blessing to those women longing to grow in grace.

Hughes, R. Kent. *Disciplines of a Godly Man*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

In this revised Tenth Anniversary Edition of Kent Hughes' classic, Hughes re-issues his clarion call to men to pursue the disciplines of godliness with vigor.

Rightly distinguishing between legalism and spiritual discipline, Hughes reminds Christian men that such discipline is manifestly not a constraint but a liberation to fulfill our created design. On that basis, he then moves into a discussion of discipline applied variously to both the private and corporate dimensions of life. This then, is a "manly" book for those who would seek to be truly "manly" in the biblical sense.

Impson, Beth. *Called to Womanhood: The Biblical View for Today's World*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

Impson demonstrates the confusion left in the wake of feminism. What's more though, she goes on to point out that evangelical feminists, while perhaps well-intended nevertheless "primarily offer the same answers as the world's feminists, with a scriptural veneer" (22). The scriptural mandate is manifestly different. Impson argues that God's created design simultaneously points to personal equality and functional differences. With that in mind, Impson is then able to point to a renewed appreciation of the vital task of motherhood and distinctive avenues of ministry for women within the life of the church.

Inrig, Elizabeth. *Release Your Potential: Using Your Gifts in a Thriving Women's Ministry*. Chicago: Moody, 2001.

Inrig lays out a fairly comprehensive vision for a flourishing women's ministry. Her vision is carefully thought out and set against the backdrop both of the home and the church. Scripturally saturated throughout, Inrig's book offers great insights and will be of substantial benefit in cultivating the "Titus 2" atmosphere in our churches.

Jamison, Heather. *Reclaiming Intimacy: Overcoming the Consequences of Premarital Relationships*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001.

Jamison provides a frank discussion of the consequences of premarital sex by revealing the story of her (and her future husband's) own failure. Yet, as strong as this feature stands out, this is also a book of grace. For Jamison readily points to the cross and the way of free grace and restoration. As such, its value extends to all sinners.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. *Studies on John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

This volume reprints essays by Köstenberger over the past decade in two major divisions. The first half of the book treats various studies in the Gospel of John. Of primary interest to the present review is the second half of the volume where Köstenberger's contributions to

the gender debate unfold. Primarily these essays treat different aspects of interpreting 1 Timothy 2:9-15, and several of them are drawn or adapted from *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*. Here, we again benefit from some of the finest and most thorough scholarship on this pivotal passage.

LaHaye, Beverly and Janice Shaw Crouse. *A Different Kind of Strength: Rediscovering the Power of Being a Woman*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2001.

LaHaye and Crouse use the lives of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary to teach women how to face the complications of life and grow into a godly woman of strength. Narratives, loosely based upon the lives of the five biblical women, are written to illustrate the authors' points.

Mather, Cotton. *A Family Well-Ordered*. Edited by Don Kistler. Morgan: PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2001.

Initially printed in 1699, this updating of Mather's classic provides a wonderful glimpse of Puritan family life. Divided into sections regarding the duties of parents to children and then the duties of children to parents, Mather provides a host of valuable insights and strong exhortations with respect to both sets of duties. 21st century families would do well to read and heed the advice of their Puritan forebear.

Rogers, Joyce. *Becoming a Woman of Wisdom*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

Writing from a strong complementarian perspective, Rogers writes a practical book for women on the theme of wisdom. Included are sections on wisdom, being under authority, motherhood, and ministering as a woman. Rogers draws substantially from Scripture as well as her own experiences as a wife, homemaker, and mother which she sprinkles throughout the book.

Saucy, Robert L. and Judith K. TenElshof, eds. *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*. Chicago: Moody, 2001.

Born out of a class on women and ministry at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, the volume is written by faculty from Talbot. It strives to answer the questions surrounding gender and ministry, seeking to strike a middle ground between the one extreme of eliminating all gender distinctions in the roles of men and women in the church and the other extreme of entirely denying women the opportunity to utilize their gifts in the ministry of the church. The book includes sections on Old Testament teaching, New Testament teaching, femininity and masculinity, gender in human history, and gender in church ministry.

Sproul Jr., R. C., ed. *Family Practice: God's Prescription for a Healthy Home*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001.

In short form and popular style the contributors of this volume provide a biblically astute glimpse of what the home should look like. Focusing, in turn, on fathers, mothers, children, and finally pastors, this work offers a host of insights into the God-centered home. Families, at any stage, will benefit from a consideration of their counsel.

Wilson, Douglas. *Future Men*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001.

Doug Wilson believes that raising masculine sons requires faith. He writes that parents are to believe God for their sons. To that end Wilson has written sections devoted to the general nature of masculinity, the commitment in the home necessary to raise future men, the inner trials that war against future men, and the interpersonal training that a boy needs to grow to be a godly man. Although some of his applications may cause disagreement, the book has strong coverage, practical insight and is well written.

Egalitarian Authors/Books

Brouwer, Douglas J. *Beyond "I Do": What Christians Believe about Marriage*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Brouwer offers a series of pastoral reflections on marriage. As such, his book is filled with personal anecdotes and illustrations. Some of Brouwer's observations are both accurate and helpful. But in some cases, he is given to reading his theology of marriage off of contemporary culture as opposed to the Scriptures themselves. This leads him, for instance, to jettison any notion of role differentiation on the basis of the vast differences in culture between our day and biblical days.

Grenz, Stanley J. *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

It is not Grenz's intention in this volume to interact primarily with the question of gender in relation to ministry and the home. He has done that elsewhere. Here, however, he does interact with some prominent feminist thought as well as various interpretations of the *Imago Dei* that do have bearing on the "gender debate." In the end, while he does not spell out his stance in this book, it is not difficult to see how his egalitarianism would coalesce with his unique

interpretation of the *Imago Dei*.

Kroeger, Catherine Clark and Nancy Nason-Clark. *No Place for Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

This book condemns domestic violence by blending the sociological analysis of Nason-Clark with exegesis of Kroeger. While we would disagree with the authors' egalitarian presuppositions (that do raise their heads from time to time), we too repudiate domestic violence of any sort and readily condemn it as a sinful abuse of authority.

Storkey, Elaine. *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Storkey examines the history of gender differences in culture by looking at society's attitudes toward gender and its construction of gender-in-theology in the premodern, modern, and postmodern eras. In particular, she seeks to uncover the presuppositions and assumptions that act as a foundation for gender issues in society and the church. Storkey's critique of the epistemologies in the aforementioned eras is sometimes helpful and her commentary on the foundations of feminist ideology is insightful. She rightly concludes that proper understanding of the human male-female relationship must start with the Bible, rather than the premodern, modern, or postmodern position. Unfortunately, Storkey dismisses complementarian exegesis of the biblical texts without argument, providing an egalitarian understanding. In a confused finish, apparently unable to completely shake the postmodern influence, Storkey recommends that the Church need not fear deconstruction, positing Jesus as the model deconstructionist of gender relationships, presumably because he bucked societal trends in many of his interactions with women.

Thompson, John L. *Writing the Wrongs: Women of the Old Testament Among Biblical Commentators from Philo Through the Reformation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Feminists have long decried the biblical narratives that tell of the maltreatment of women. For them, this is positive proof that the Bible overtly teaches a patriarchalism that has been damaging to women ever since the writing of the narratives. Feminists also point to the lack of condemnation by the ancient commentators as further proof of the church's indifference toward women. Thompson, however, analyzes dozens of commentaries from the time of Philo up to the Reformation on Hagar, Jephthah, the Levite's wife and Lot's daughters and finds that the church has not ignored the maltreatment of women in these texts. In

this strong critique of modern feminist biblical commentary, Thompson finds that some commentators of the past fulfilled the stereo-type presented by feminists, while most certainly did not. He concludes that "precritical commentators were not necessarily uncritical in their handling of biblical texts, nor in their consideration of narratives filled with actions and actors that are morally suspect, to say the least."

Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women, & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

Webb proposes a "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" as the interpretive tool for determining what in Scripture is transcultural and what is not. The key is to look for the redemptive trajectory of the biblical text which then enables the biblical interpreter to discern what is applicable today. The "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" is contrasted with a static hermeneutic which fails to take into consideration the redemptive movement within and surrounding the text. Webb explains that a static hermeneutic could be used to justify some forms of slavery endorsed in the Bible. Clearly, such justification is not promoted by the godly exegete who recognizes the redemptive trajectory of the text. Webb argues that the redemptive-movement hermeneutic can not be used to justify acceptance of homosexuality, but that the hermeneutic, properly applied, should lead to the rejection of the "patriarchy" promoted by the complementarian position. Complementarians would agree that redemptive history is critical to rightly interpreting the biblical text, but it is questionable that Webb utilizes redemptive history correctly to establish his hermeneutic. In particular, Webb seems to advocate a trajectory that not only moves from its historical grounding but is completely untethered from it. Such was not the appeal to history that Paul made in his teaching on women's ministry roles in 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians. A full review and critique by Thomas R. Schreiner is published in *JBMW* 7/1 (Spring 2002) 41-51.

Non-Evangelical Authors/Books

Biezeveld, Kune and Anne-Claire Mulder, eds. *Towards a Different Transcendence: Feminist Findings on Subjectivity, Religion and Values*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2001.

The contributors to this volume are proposing a way (or ways) to wed feminist and postmodern insights. The central theme of the book is a discussion of the proposal that women need a new and different transcendence (different from the older "patriarchal"

model that is) in order to be authentic female subjects. Part of this mandate is fleshed out through a proposal of renaming this transcendence in feminist terms and imagery with a view to cultivating a distinctively feminine "house of language."

Comstock, Gary David. *A Whosoever Church: Welcoming Lesbians and Gay Men into African American Congregations*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Comstock interviews twenty Black religious leaders who "welcome and affirm lesbians and gay men." The purpose is to provide an atmosphere of "listening" to the issues concerning the troubles Black gay men and lesbians are experiencing in becoming included in Black churches. Comstock believes that the Black church is at least a generation "behind" the white church in their acceptance of homosexuals into the church. The book is written in dialogue form and contains virtually no interaction with the relevant biblical texts. Rather, the book assumes the legitimacy of homosexuality and the religious leaders discuss their struggles in coming to terms with the "necessary" inclusion of Black lesbians and gay men into the church.

Essex, Barbara J. W*omen In The Bible*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.

This Bible study for women analyzes the lives of 15 biblical women divided into the six areas of wives and mothers, widows, victims, prophets, harlots, and royal women. A brief study is presented with reflection questions following the major sections. The lengthiest portion of the book is the introductory chapter where Essex's theological method and hermeneutical strategy are broadly explicated. Essex has a very low view of the inspiration of Scripture and has accepted the conclusions of literary and redaction criticism. She is also very sympathetic to feminist criticism of Scripture and uses its conclusions to explain away what she considers to be problematic and troubling passages.

Fiorenza, Elizabeth Schüssler. *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*. New York: Continuum, 2001.

Fiorenza critiques the politics of Historical Jesus scholarship, noting that in their attempts to gain an accurate picture of Jesus (albeit behind the text), they too exhibit "elitist, anti-Jewish, colonialist, racist, and anti-feminist tendencies" (14). This concern for objectivity and facticity is ultimately a concern for authority, which she sees as being in league with the fundamentalists at that point. Ultimately then, she is concerned to judge the value of a theology on the basis of whether or not it ushers in liberation.

Hilkert, Mary Catherine. *Speaking with Authority: Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today*. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.

Written from a strong Catholic perspective, Hilkert argues that the life and ministry of Catherine of Siena should inspire women to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit in places "where they have not been expected or welcome in the past - in pulpits, in schools of theology," etc. The emphasis of the book is that Catherine of Siena received a special "charism of wisdom" that granted authority to Catherine to speak in special settings to special situations. It is taken for granted that the Holy Spirit would gift and anoint an individual for a ministry that the Bible (written under the inspiration of the same Spirit) restricts to other individuals.

Jung, Patricia Beattie and Joseph Andrew Coray, eds. *Sexual Diversity and Catholicism: Toward the Development of Moral Theology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.

In this collection of essays, the topic of the legitimacy of "heterosexism" is addressed under the rubric of the Roman Catholic authority structure. Citing postmodern hermeneutical theory, Roman Catholic natural theology, and the necessity of the Catholic Church to mediate scriptural teaching in dialogue with science and culture, a series of articles are presented covering church dogma, biblical interpretation, secular disciplines, and human experience. The result is a collection of essays emphasizing emotional argumentation, social construction, and homosexual advocacy that are weak in biblical exegesis. For example, in an essay entitled "The New Testament and Homosexuality?", Bruce J. Malina concludes that the apparent NT condemnation of homosexuality can be explained by prohibitions on idolatry, a desire for ethnic purity, and a concern that Israelite seed would be wasted in the homosexual sex act.

Keefe, Alice A. *Woman's Body and the Social Body in Hosea*. New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.

Feminists have long attacked Hosea for promoting patriarchal and misogynist attitudes that have shaped Christianity and religion in the West. The reason is that Hosea advances a metaphor that parallels God with male and sinful humanity with female. Keefe suggests that in Hosea's writing, female sexuality, personified in Gomer, is not analogous to theological prostitution in the Canaanite fertility religions, but is actually representative of the profaning of the sacred, manifested in the relationship between the people and their land - "the materiality of their existence." Therefore, female sexuality should not symbolize the

profane, but the essential materiality of human existence - which Hosea lamented as being lost.

Loades, Ann. *Feminist Theology: Voices from the Past*. Cambridge: Polity, 2001.

Loades explores the value of Mary Wollstonecraft, Josephine Butler, and Dorothy Sayers for the feminist movement. She suggests that it was their religious convictions that set these women apart. While acknowledging that it would be anachronistic to identify any of these women as feminist, Loades maintains that their respective work and insights maintain value for contemporary feminists. While still contending for a feminist vision, Loades' volume is generally more judicious and less venomous than some other feminist fare.

Mace, Nancy. *In the Company of Men: A Woman at The Citadel*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

Interesting and even amusing at times, this book is the autobiographical account of Nancy Mace's stint at The Citadel. Mace was the first female graduate of the formerly all male military college in South Carolina. Some of her reminisces are humorous. Some are a bit more vulgar. And others appear concerned to have the last word. In the end, however, it is not the interesting nature of some of the accounts that sticks with the reader. Rather, the prevailing assumption that evidences itself throughout is the misguided modern notion that the equality of the sexes entails (or even necessitates) identicality in every respect. And in this case, it led to a denial of the value of single-gender education.

Maguire, Daniel C. *Sacred Choices: The Right to Contraception and Abortion in Ten World Religions*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

Maguire surveys ten world religions in an effort to defend his thesis about the viability and indeed the necessity of family planning. As such, he suggests that each of these religions offer a solidly pro-choice stance. Thus in his view, to restrict the right to an abortion is a violation of religious freedom.

Malone, Mary T. *Women and Christianity: The First Thousand Years*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2001.

A self-identified Catholic feminist, Malone is undeniably bitter about the portrayal (or lack thereof) of women in church history and the scriptures as well. She goes so far as to state that "the Bible was rooted in a patriarchal context and was androcentric and sexist in its attitudes toward women" (61). In response, she affirms the privileging of a canon within the canon, namely the more "inclusive vision of Jesus" as a sort of hermeneutical key for reading the unduly masculine Scriptures. The fruit of Malone's exegetical gymnastics is a historical revisionism that plays fast and loose with the evidence.

McClintock, Karen A. *Sexual Shame: An Urgent Call to Healing*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

McClintock's thesis is that the church is suffering the effects of a long reigning sexual repression. She goes on to suggest that the church will experience healing if we allow ourselves to get over these repressive tendencies. In many respects, according to McClintock, this unhealthy repression stems from the deeply ingrained attitude of the church and even from the Scriptures themselves. In her view, the apostle Paul is one of the prime offenders, though she suggests that in spite of all the harm Paul did, he is at least more understandable when he is "seen as a man struggling with his own sexuality . . . " (64). Although McClintock states that we should not abandon sexual boundaries altogether, she goes on to affirm that it would be wrong to impose our own sexual values onto others. In the end, her approach is heavily psychologized, values are relativized, and spirituality is rampantly sexualized.

Morse, Jennifer Roback. *Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work*. Dallas: Spence, 2001.

Morse, an economist, provides a fascinating account of why the laissez-faire approach to family life (though useful in economic theory) is ineffective. More than just recognizing that children, in their helplessness, need to be guided into maturity, Morse also argues that families are uniquely suited to this task. In the end, the kind of society we have hinges on the kind of job that families do; so much so that the argument comes down to this: "Without loving families, no society can long govern itself" (5). What this necessitates then is the kind of love from spouses and parents that is committed to the ultimate good of the other individuals—a kind of love that cannot be replicated by the government or even childcare.

Stein, Arlene. *The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle Over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

The Stranger Next Door attempts to tell the story of "Timbertown," the pseudonym for a rural Oregon town embroiled in a political battle over homosexual rights. Stein, a lesbian university sociology professor, presented herself as a neutral sociologist in order to

gain access to evangelical Christians involved in the political struggle. (In a telling statement at the beginning of the book, Stein confesses that she had never talked to an evangelical prior to the book project.) She presents her interviews, findings and opinions in a somewhat interesting narrative, but too often lapses into condescending caricature mixed with an insufferable and smug, yet utterly misplaced, moral and intellectual elitism.

Stone, Ken, ed. *Queer Commentary and the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.

Queer Commentary and the Hebrew Bible is a collection of essays that employ "queer reading strategies." What follows are interpretations that use the text of Scripture as a platform for commenting on sexual practices and sexual identities. This is not an apologetic effort to legitimize homosexuality by arguing against the biblical prohibitions on homosexual activity. Rather, finding textual meaning, not in the intent of the biblical author, but centered in the reader, the essayists draw from their personal experiences to produce works that are both offensive and blasphemous. This is a deeply troubling book.

Swan, Laura. *The Forgotten Desert Mothers*. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.

Swan recounts the stories of numerous desert mothers (a.k.a. ammas) from the third century forward. One motivating factor for her is the desire to re-present the spirituality of these ammas as an encouragement to her readers to emulate them and retreat to the inner recesses within. Another motivating factor for Swan, however, is a clear egalitarian impulse. She claims that women were leaders of the early church (e.g. presbyters), but that as the church grew increasingly institutionalized, the men grew increasingly power hungry and thus relegated female leadership and spirituality to the margins. According to Swan, many of these women then headed to the desert so as not to endure these cultural restrictions. To that end, Swan dabbles in some revisionist claims.

Tigert, Leanne McCall and Timothy Brown, eds. *Coming Out Young and Faithful*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.

Coming Out Young and Faithful is meant to offer encouragement to youth and their parents as they struggle with their sexual identity as Gay/Lesbian/ Bisexual/Transgendered persons. The two authors share their personal testimonies in "coming out" and finding a place in the religious community. The majority of the book is composed of twenty-one essays written by young people who are struggling with homosexuality.

Biblical teaching that condemns homosexual behavior is dismissed as legalistic interpretation. Although the authors raise some valid concerns about hate crimes, they illegitimately conflate teaching the biblical condemnation of homosexuality with those same hate crimes. This book shows no regard for the biblical testimony and assumes that whatever *is* with regard to sexual orientation, is necessarily right and good.

Undeclared Authors/Books

Gagnon, Robert A. J. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

The Bible and Homosexual Practice is a clear and extensive argument for the conservative position on homosexual practice. Gagnon provides an excellent blend of biblical exegesis and historico-cultural analysis combined with an understanding of both modern philosophical and hermeneutical movements and the current arguments put forward by those who seek to move homosexual practice into the mainstream with religious acceptance. Gagnon covers the Old Testament, early Judaism, the teaching of Christ, and the New Testament. He concludes with an excellent chapter on the arguments put forward by pro-homosexual forces which he counters with reasoned analysis and a manifest understanding of the hermeneutical, philosophical, social, medical, and scientific issues at hand.

Keane, Christopher. *What Some of You Were: Stories About Christians and Homosexuality*. Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2001.

This fascinating little book—the winner of the Australian Christian Book of the Year Award—is composed of two parts. The first is an array of personal testimonials presented by those who have struggled against homosexual desires or by those close to them. Some of these stories are painful. Some of them offer good insights into how the church can better minister to those who struggle with homosexual desires. Though they each do not possess equivalent theological sophistication, all of them are worth reading. The second part of the volume (presented in four appendices) presents the theological, scriptural, biological, and cultural diagnoses of the homosexual debate. Each of these chapters offers an even handed and capable assessment of homosexuality from its stated perspective.

Kearney, R. Timothy. *Caring for Sexually Abused Children: A Handbook for Families and Churches*. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2001.

This short book provides information on how churches and Sunday school teams should respond in the event that a sexual abuse situation is made known. Kearney includes a variety of short case studies to explicate the material. He covers the necessary response from the establishment of the facts all the way through to long-term follow up.

Kimel Jr., Alvin F., ed. *This is My Name Forever: The Trinity and Gender Language for God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

Several authors collaborate in this volume to get at the question of whether or not the masculine language and imagery of God in the Scriptures ultimately misrepresents God and alienates women. The book does not purport to give a unified answer to this question. Clearly, some of the authors would disagree with some of their fellow contributors. Additionally, some are less conclusive in their own minds than others. Some of the chapters offer valuable insights. The biggest weakness of the book, however, is its overall inconclusiveness that leaves the reader with the impression that while these issues may be interesting to discuss they are nevertheless ambiguous enough that a strong stand in defense of God's self-revelation is either unwarranted or unachievable.

Mohney, Nell W. *From Eve to Esther: Letting the Old Testament Women Speak to Us*. Nashville: Dimensions for Living, 2001.

Written at a popular level as a Bible Study for women, Mohney provides narratives based on the life of individual women from the Old Testament. She then draws applications from those narratives. Applications include such things as "Running ahead of God is never a good idea" from the life of Sarah and "Don't play the blame game" from the life of Eve. The principles in general are fine, although it is questionable whether they flow from the Scripture. Mohney's narratives (from which she draws the principles) are only loosely based on the biblical text. The chapters on Jochebed, Zipporah, and Keturah are based almost entirely upon conjecture and Mohney's imagination.

O'Grady, Ron. *The Hidden Shame of the Church: Sexual Abuse of Children and the Church*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001.

This short book chronicles the world-wide problem of deliberate sexual abuse by religious clergy. Written prior to the recent revelations of rampant sexual abuse by clergy in the Catholic Church, O'Grady's work is technical, brief, but thorough. He provides statistics coupled with both hard and anecdotal evidence. It also offers some very general guidelines that churches can follow to establish protocols for an accusation or suspicion of child abuse.

Svendsen, Eric D. *Who is My Mother: The Role and Status of the Mother of Jesus in the New Testament and Roman Catholicism*. Amityville, NY: Calvary Press, 2001.

Svendsen provides the definitive treatment on the question of the role and status of Mary, Jesus' mother. His effort combines the best of exegetical and historical examination. Careful and thorough, Svendsen has meticulously examined the data and established his case. He thus honors the true biblical portrait of Mary as an honored but redeemed disciple, while honoring Jesus as uniquely our redeemer.

Whitley, Katerina Katsarka. *Seeing for Ourselves: Biblical Women Who Met Jesus*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2001.

Whitley writes a series of imaginative monologues, told from the perspectives of New Testament women. The subjects range from the Samaritan woman at the well to Prisca. The monologues are highly speculative, but are not meant to teach as much as to provide a dramatic recounting of what happened to women when they met Jesus, "told in the manner of women."

Zahl, Paul F. M. *Five Women of the English Reformation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Zahl is concerned to present these five women (Anne Boleyn, Anne Askew, Katharine Parr, Jane Grey, and Catherine Willoughby) in an entirely new light. Specifically, he attempts to show that they were astute Reformational lay theologians. Indeed, he concludes that they "were the mothers of the English Reformation" (97). Without calling into question the intelligence and even courageousness of these women, one gets the impression that Zahl is overclaiming in order to make his point. ◼

Scholars' Statement of Concern About the TNIV

In February 2002, 37 Scholars issued the following statement:

In light of troubling translation inaccuracies - primarily (but not exclusively) in relation to gender language - that introduce distortions of the meanings that were conveyed better by the original NIV, we cannot endorse the TNIV translation as sufficiently accurate to commend to the Church.

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Over 100 Christian Leaders Claim that the TNIV Bible is Not Trustworthy

In May 2002 over 100 Christian leaders issued the following statement:

Recently, the International Bible Society (IBS) and Zondervan Publishing announced their joint decision to publish a new translation of the Bible, known as *Today's New International Version* (TNIV). The TNIV makes significant changes in the gender language that is in the NIV. The TNIV raises more concern in this regard than previous Bible versions because, riding on the reputation of the NIV, the TNIV may vie for a place as the church's commonly accepted Bible. We believe that any commonly accepted Bible of the church should be more faithful to the language of the original.

We acknowledge that Bible scholars sometimes disagree about translation methods and about which English words best translate the original languages. We also agree that it is appropriate to use gender-neutral expressions where the original language does not include any male or female meaning. However, we believe the TNIV has gone beyond acceptable translation standards in several important respects:

- **The TNIV translation often changes masculine, third person, singular pronouns (he, his and him) to plural gender-neutral pronouns.** For example, in Revelation 3:20, the words of Jesus have been changed from "I will come in and eat with **him**, and **he** with me" to "I will come in and eat with **them**, and **they** with me. " Jesus could have used plural pronouns when He spoke these words, but He chose not to. (The original Greek pronouns are singular.) In hundreds of such changes, the TNIV obscures any possible significance the inspired singular may have, such as individual responsibility or an individual relationship with Christ.

- **The TNIV translation obscures many biblical references to "father," "son," "brother," and "man. "** For example, in Hebrews 12:7, the NIV says "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as **sons**. For what **son** is not disciplined by his **father**?" But the TNIV translates Hebrews 12:7, "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his **children**. For what **children** are not disciplined by their **parents**?" The reference to God as Father is lost. In numerous other verses male-oriented meanings that are present in the original language are lost in the TNIV.

- **The TNIV translation inserts English words into the text whose meaning does not appear in the original languages.** For example, in Luke 17:3, the translators changed "If your **brother** sins, rebuke **him**" to "If any **brother or sister** sins **against you**, rebuke the **offender**. " The problem is, the word "sister" is not found in the original language, nor is "against you," nor is 'offender. '

Thus, in hundreds of verses, the TNIV changes language with masculine meaning in the original Greek to something more generic. It does this in many ways, such as changing

- "father" (singular) to "parents";

- "son" (singular) to "child" or "children";

- "brother" (singular) to "someone" or "brother or sister," and "brothers" (plural) to "believers";

- "man" (singular, when referring to the human race) to "mere mortals" or "those" or "people";

- "men" (plural, when referring to male persons) to "people" or "believers" or "friends" or "humans";

- "he/him/his" to "they/them/their" or "you/your" or "we/us/our"; and

- switching hundreds of whole sentences from singular to plural.

We wonder how the TNIV translators can be sure that this masculine language in God's very words does not carry meaning that God wants us to see.

Gender problems are not the only serious problems with the TNIV. For example: How do the TNIV translators know that changing "Jews" to "Jewish leaders," for example in Acts 13:50 and 21:11, does not make a false claim, and obscure a possible corporate meaning? How do they know that changing "saints" to "those" in Acts 9:13 or to "believers" in Acts 9:32 or to "God's people" in Romans 8:27 does not sacrifice precious connotations of holiness which the Greek word carries? To justify translating "saints" as "believers" because it refers to believers is like justifying translating "sweetheart" as "wife" because that's who it refers to.

Because of these and other misgivings, we cannot endorse the TNIV as sufficiently trustworthy to commend to the church. We do not believe it is a translation suitable for use as a normal preaching and teaching text of the church or for a common memorizing, study, and reading Bible of the Christian community.

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