An Evaluation of the 2011 Edition of the New International Version

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1. Introduction

Evaluating a new English translation of the Bible can be extremely difficult. [1] That is due to at least three factors. First, we have such a wealth of options already accessible in our language that any new offering seems superfluous; we are jaded by the abundance. Second, there is a cynical view that attributes all such productions to greedy commercial publishers. Third, translations are often controversial due to theological or social issues. In our day the question of inclusive language for gender reference is a hot-button topic that colors the discussion. A major factor that has generated heat in this area is the rhetoric of "single-issue, watchdog groups," who tend to view any variation from their canonical party line to betray the gospel.

In light of factors such as these, perhaps it would be helpful to step outside our American culture and consider the responses to new translations in non-Western settings. Dick France recounts his experience in attending an English-speaking church service in a remote area of Nigeria. A new translation had recently been published, one designed specifically for settings such as this in which most of the audience spoke English only as a second language "at best." During the service the Scripture was read from the new translation. After doing so "the Nigerian leader of the service put the book down, saying, 'Now we will hear it from the real Bible,' and he proceeded to read the same passage from the KJV." On another occasion France tells of a new translation in a tribal language of Zaire, the first attempt to put Scripture directly into their own language as it was spoken (i.e., rather than an archaic version based on the KJV). When the new translation was first read to the people "the hearers commented favorably on the ease of understanding but then pointed out that, of course, it wasn't the Bible!" France observes, "It almost seems that, by definition, the Bible must be remote and unintelligible." [2]

We may be amused by such reactions, judging them to be simplistic and poorly informed, but sometimes our reactions to new translations and revisions of existing ones are no better. We may not like to think of our favorite translation as "remote and unintelligible," but what seems comfortable to us due to long familiarity and use in fruitful ministry in our familiar settings may not be unlike the reactions that France describes in the settings of Nigeria and Zaire. An outside observer might notice what we do not: the older translations that we use do not communicate in our culture much better than did the KJV in Nigeria.

From our location on the timeline of English-speaking history, the ability of an older translation to communicate God's inspired, inerrant revelation is no longer limited to the KJV. The oldest of our "modern" translations are now long enough "in the tooth" that they are showing their age. In neither the case of the KJV (celebrating its 400th anniversary this year) nor the NASB or NIV (both now in their 30s) is this due to deficiencies in the translation itself. The KJV translators sought to make their words speak directly to

Tyndale's plow boy; 3 in their own words, "we desire that the Scripture may speake like itselfe, as in the language of *Canaan,* that it may be understood even of the very vulgar" (i.e., even by the uneducated). 4

The NIV translators sought to communicate clearly to their generation. But English stops for no one. Our language has continued to change, and it has changed much more rapidly during the past hundred years than it did in the seventeenth century. The swirling vortex of technological and social transformation that has surrounded us with increasingly swift winds of change has impacted our language. Our language *has* changed. Oh, perhaps you speak largely the same way you did in the middle of the twentieth century (at least if you are near my age or older). That is quite possible if you've lived in relatively conservative areas of our country or ministered in conservative churches that have long since celebrated their golden anniversary (and perhaps their centennial or even their bicentennial). But English *has* changed. That is undeniable. (I will return to this subject a bit later in this article.) That is why new translations appear periodically and older ones are revised. 5 Whether we like it or not, we do not live in an era where a translation can reign as sole monarch for several centuries. 6 Perhaps such a time will once again be enjoyed by our heirs should the Lord tarry; but it is not this day, and it does not appear to be tomorrow either.

New translations, of course, often face considerable opposition if they attempt to replace long-cherished traditional versions (e.g., the reception of the KJV in 1611!), 7 but so do revisions of existing translations. "Keep your hands off my Bible!" is a common perspective—and for good reason in some cases. At the best this attitude could reflect long years of memorization and meditation on words that have become so ingrained in the minds and hearts of its readers that they seem second nature, while different words and phrasing seem out of sorts. But this attitude may also simply reflect an obstinate resistance to change. Change, in itself, is not, of course, a *summum bonum*. But when change can result in greater accuracy and more ready comprehension of the Word of God, at that point inflexibility serves, not to protect fidelity to Scripture, but to hinder effective discipleship and ministry.

The current occasion for such discussion is the recent release of the 2011 revision of the New International Version (henceforth NIV11). 8 The NIV NT was first published in 1973 and the complete Bible in 1978. 9 It was the only "modern" translation of the time that became widely accepted in conservative circles. 10 In more recent years, of course, there have been many more versions, 11 though few have achieved the widespread popularity of the NIV. 12 The NIV was revised in 1984 (henceforth NIV84), making the 2011 revision the third edition by that name. 13 Unfortunately, the latest revision has already engendered contentious responses.

2. *Factors That Engender Controversy*

The controversy regarding the NIV11 is due to at least four factors. First, the revision poses serious questions regarding linguistics and translation theory. Second, it raises the questions of language change and the use of gender-related language—a volatile issue due to concerns regarding the radical feminist social agenda. Many are concerned that the NIV11 attempts to mollify such radical concerns. Third, personality issues are involved. Entrenched positions have been staked out by well-known biblical scholars and high-profile advocacy groups. Fourth, theological boundaries and doctrinal bias impact the nature of Bible translations. Before I assess the NIV11, we must think about each of these factors since they color one's view of any new translation that touches on any of these areas. 14

2.1. Linguistics and Translation Theory 15

To paint with very broad strokes, there are two general approaches to translation. The first is best described as formal equivalence, the second as functional equivalence. 16

1. *Formal equivalence* seeks to reproduce the grammatical and syntactical form of the donor language as closely as possible in the receptor language, making only such changes as are necessary for intelligibility. Thus for each word in the donor language, the same part of speech is used in the receptor language and, as much as possible, in the same sequence. The guiding principle is "as literal as possible, as free as necessary."

2. *Functional equivalence*, by contrast, focuses on the meaning and attempts to accurately communicate the same meaning in the receptor language, even if doing so requires using different grammatical and syntactical forms. Although the form may differ in functional equivalence, the translation functions the same as the original by accurately communicating the same meaning. 17

These two approaches are not mutually exclusive categories. All translations include both formal and functional equivalents; there is a spectrum with formal equivalence on one end and functional equivalence on the other. Any individual translation may be judged to use a greater or lesser degree of formal or functional equivalence and thus fall on a different part of the translation spectrum. The following diagram shows one possible view of such relationships among translation philosophies. 18

Form and Function in Translation

	KJV	HCSB		
	NKJV	NIV84		NLT
NASB	RSV	NIV11		NCV
	ESV			

←———————————————————————————————→

More Formal   More Functional

No translation can completely ignore the form of the original. If it did, one would not have a translation at all but a new work altogether. On the other hand, no translation can be completely formal if it is to communicate with any degree of accuracy in another language. The NIV attempts to balance both approaches, and most analyses concur that it does, indeed, occupy a middle position between formal and functional. The NIV11 does not appear to differ significantly from the NIV84 in this regard. The ESV and NLT, the two major alternative translations (i.e., currently the most popular modern translations), take their respective positions closer to either end of the translation spectrum relative to the NIV.

Due to the advocacy of the ESV by both the publisher and some well-known users who promote it, 19 the ESV is sometimes viewed as more accurate or reliable because it supposedly uses formal equivalence. 20 Some have even argued that this translation approach is more consistent with verbal inspiration—a conclusion that reflects a problematic understanding of both inspiration and translation. 21

2.2. Language Change and Gender-Related Language

As I note in §1, it is undeniable that the English language has been changing. All languages, of course, change continually, though the rate of change may vary in different social contexts. It appears that some identifiable changes have taken place over the last several decades that are relevant to Bible translation.

Of particular relevance is the issue of gender language. 22 The terminology here is diverse. What "inclusive language" or "gender neutral" mean to one person are not necessarily the same as what they mean to others. At one end of the spectrum, one or both of these terms describe feminine language to address God as in "God the Father and Mother." 23 At the opposite end of the spectrum, these terms describe using "gender accurate" language to maintain the same gender reference as the original text, especially when a statement refers to both men and women. 24 There are a range of options between these two poles.

Some such changes in English usage may have been initiated by those with a political/social agenda in an attempt to force changes in the language that reflect their views on matters of gender, but we should "be exceedingly careful about monocausational analyses of the changes taking place, with simple wrong-versus-right prescriptions." 25 Changes that have taken place in English in this regard, whether through feminist pressure or otherwise, have prompted strong reactions. Poythress and Grudem, for example, refer to the "'politically correct' language police," 26 certainly a rhetorically charged description (even if someone agrees with that sentiment).

Bible translations that change gender language are sometimes suspected of complicity with the feminist agenda. Both the NIVI and the TNIV have been so charged as have other translations such as the NRSV. It is certainly possible that some translations have changed gender language for just that reason, but it should not be assumed to be the case without evidence. 27 In this case the Committee for Bible Translation responsible for the NIV11 has been quite specific regarding their motivation. 28 They point out that 95% of the NIV11 is identical with the NIV84. Changes are due to one or more of three factors:

1. Changes in English
2. Progress in scholarship
3. Concern for clarity

They do not include a social agenda, and we should take them at their word. When change in gender language is involved, it almost always involves the first item: changes in English. *Why* English has changed is not the issue; rather, they have made such changes only where they have determined that English has, indeed, now changed. It is not an effort to influence change or to appease a feminist agenda. 29

How was change in English usage determined? In earlier debates regarding the NIVI and the TNIV, it was charged that too many gender-related changes had been made without evidence that these changes were necessary due to language change. 30 With the NIV11, the translators have taken special pains to address this question. They commissioned a study of gender language based on the Collins Bank of English—a 4.4 billion-word database of English usage worldwide based on both print and audio recordings. 31 The CBT explains,

Research of this type is just one tool in the hands of translators, and, of course, it has no bearing on the challenge of preserving transparency to the original text. But hearing God's Word the way it was written is only one part of the NIV's overall mission. If readers are to understand it in the way it was meant, translators need to express the unchanging truths of the Bible in forms of language that modern English speakers find natural and easy to comprehend. And this is where a tool like the Bank of English comes into its own. 32

The nature of the changes made in this area are considered later in this essay.

2.3. Personality Issues

My summary here will be brief and deliberately not documented. It is no secret that the issues involved in Bible translation have engendered considerable debate. This has resulted in a polarization between positions, often perceived as the difference between the ESV and the NIV. Entrenched positions have been staked out by well-known biblical scholars and by high-profile advocacy groups. Having made their stand in public, often using rather "vigorous" language, it is extremely difficult to admit that there might be good intentions and even truth on the other side. Particularly when the issues are portrayed as tantamount to defending the gospel, there is little room for discussion. My *perception* of the debate over the last dozen years is that my description here is more characteristic of one side of the debate than the other. 33

2.4. Theological Boundaries

If every association or denomination produced their own translation, the matters discussed in this paper would be quite different. English translations, however, have not been done that way (except for sectarian groups). They have always been produced for large swaths of the church. Over the past century this has typically been for Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, or evangelical use. 34 Relatively few "one-person" translations have been published in English. 35 None of these has ever become a "standard" translation, and churches have seldom used them. Instead our English tradition has been that of translations by committee— committees deliberately comprised of a range of denominational and theological perspectives. Every widely used English translation during the past century has been prepared by just such a committee. The intent of such a structure is to produce a translation that a wide swath of the church can use and that does not cater to one particular perspective. This has proven to be a wise approach. I might like to have a Baptist translation

(one that makes the biblical basis for my Baptist heritage very clear!), but others would surely prefer one with their (Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, etc.) distinctives!

This background is relevant to the discussion of the NIV11: For whom is this translation intended? The CBT is comprised of a multi-national, multi-denominational group of fifteen scholars who represent a wide spectrum of conservative evangelical theology. As of 2010, the CBT consists of twelve American scholars, two British scholars, and one Indian scholar, and they are members of Baptist, Presbyterian, Reformed, Anglican, Pentecostal, and independent churches. [36] Within this group there are premillennialists and amillennialists, Calvinists and Arminians, Presbyterians and Baptists, etc. In any of these (or many other) doctrinal positions, there are texts that could be translated in such a way as to make the preferred interpretation appear to be the only (or at least the more likely) conclusion. We may like to think that our own theological system is certainly the correct one, but more careful reflection suggests that such a conclusion is inevitably overstated. [37] It is therefore wise to prepare our standard translations so as not to prejudice disputed questions. It is not the task of a translation to press a particular theological agenda.

If a translation is intended to serve conservative, evangelical Protestants, then it is only fair that all major positions have a balancing input to a translation. We have recognized this in terms of millennial systems, denominational polity, and even soteriology. We draw the line when a position becomes non-evangelical (e.g., salvation apart from knowledge of Jesus) or outright unorthodox (e.g., open theism). The question comes in where other positions are judged to be in relation to the evangelical constituency. Is it possible to hold with integrity to the inspiration and authority of Scripture and not agree with, say, the consensus doctrinal position of members of our own church fellowship? Any church group that is not proposing to prepare their own exclusive version needs to expand their doctrinal criteria for whom and what is considered acceptable in a translation. Since we recognize others who would not be comfortable as part of our own church fellowship as genuine Christians, the potential doctrinal positions that would be allowed input to the translation process must be a wider circle than our own.

It may even be that some evangelicals committed to the inspiration and authority of Scripture hold different views than do I in regard to the role of women in the church. I am not an egalitarian, but I wonder if the differences such a position entails in contrast to a complementarian view with reference to Bible translation are greater than the differences between, say, amillennialism and premillennialism, covenant theology and dispensationalism, or Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist polity.

3. An Overview of Changes in the NIV11

The NIV has always attempted to balance transparency to the original text with ease of understanding for a broad audience (i.e., balancing formal and functional equivalence). Doing so inevitably results in losing some transparency to the structure of the original text, but it is more than compensated by the resulting access to the meaning. [38] As the CBT says, "the NIV is founded on the belief that if hearing God's Word the way it was written and understanding it the way it was meant were the hallmarks of the original reading experience, then accuracy in translation demands that neither one of these two criteria be prioritized above the other." [39] This has not changed in the new revision. The vast majority of the text is unchanged from the existing NIV; only about 5% of the text has changed, and most of this "involves comparatively minor matters of vocabulary, sentence structure, and punctuation." [40] Someone who knows the wording of the NIV quite well can read large chunks of the new edition without noticing any differences whatsoever.

The changes that have been made have as their primary goal bringing the NIV "into line with contemporary biblical scholarship and with shifts in English idiom and usage." A few illustrations of these changes will be helpful.

3.1. Changes Due to Developments in English

Changes in English (other than matters related to gender language, which we consider separately in §4) may involve changes in English word meanings or improving word choice. "Alien" occurs 111 times in the

NIV84, but alien has come to be used most commonly in English to refer to an extraterrestrial being (e.g., "ET"). As a result, the NIV11 now uses "foreigner" (or a similar expression).

- NIV84, Gen 19:9, "Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge!"
- NIV11, Gen 19:9, "Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as a *foreigner*, and now he wants to play the judge!"

An archaic choice of wording in Isa 16:6 has been improved considerably. Although *overweening* is still in the dictionary, it is rarely used in contemporary English. (It was probably already archaic when the NIV was first published in 1978!)

- NIV84, Isa 16:6, We have heard of Moab's pride—her *overweening pride* and conceit, her pride and her insolence-but her boasts are empty.
- NIV11, Isa 16:6, We have heard of Moab's pride—how great is her *arrogance!*—of her conceit, her pride and her insolence; but her boasts are empty.

3.2. Changes Due to Progress in Scholarship

The NIV11's translation of Phil 2:6 illustrates progress in scholarship. The NIV84 translates ἁρπαγμός as "something to be grasped" (KJV, "robbery"). 41 More recent study, however, has shown that we should understand this text as the NIV11 renders it: "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God *something to be used to his own advantage.*" 42

3.3. Changes Due to the Need for Greater Clarity

Clarity has been the aim in the following examples. The change in Matt 1:16 is based on explicit grammatical relationships. The NIV84 makes it possible to argue that Jesus is the physical son of Joseph, but since the relative pronoun used here is feminine (ἧς, *whom*), such a conclusion is invalid. The NIV11 clarifies this by supplying the antecedent of the pronoun.

- NIV84, Matt 1:16, "Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, *of whom* was born Jesus."
- NIV11, Matt 1:16, "Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and *Mary* was the mother of Jesus."

Likewise the clarification in Phil 4:13 avoids a common misunderstanding. Paul does not claim an unqualified ability to do absolutely anything. Rather, he anaphorically refers to what he has just discussed in the context: being content in all circumstances.

- NIV84, Phil 4:13, "I can do *everything* through him who gives me strength."
- NIV11, Phil 4:13, "I can do *all this* through him who gives me strength."

3.4. Changes Related to "Messianic" Texts

Some have criticized the NIV11's rendering of "Messianic" passages. The issues here are not the same as with the RSV 43 since all the members of the CBT accept the reality of OT predictive Messianic prophecy. 44 I suspect that many of the issues arise due to issues of typological texts, that is, OT texts that do not themselves prophesy Messiah directly but that the NT identifies as typological in relation to Jesus. That is certainly the case in the most commonly cited example: the use of Ps 8 in Heb 2. The relevant texts are as follows.

NIV84

What is *man* that you are mindful of *him*,

the *son of man* that you care for *him?*

⁵You made *him* a little lower than the heavenly beings

and crowned *him* with glory and honor.

TNIV

What are *mere mortals* that you are mindful of *them,*

human beings that you care for *them?*ᵃ

⁵You have made *them*ᵃ a little lower than the heavenly beings

and crowned *them*ᵃ with glory and honor.

a 4 Or *what is a human being that you are mindful of him, a son of man that you care for him?*

a 5 Or *him*

NIV11

What is *mankind* that you are mindful of *them,*

human beings that you care for *them?*ᵃ

⁵You have made *them*ᵃ a little lower than the angels

and crowned *them*ᵃ with glory and honor.

a 4 Or *what is a human being that you are mindful of him, a son of man that you care for him?*

a 5 Or *him*

NIV84

But there is a place where someone has testified:

"What is *man* that you are mindful of *him,*

the son of man that you care for *him?*

⁷You made *him* a little lower than the angels;

you crowned *him* with glory and honor

⁸and put everything under *his* feet."

In putting everything under *him,* God left nothing that is not subject to *him.* Yet at present we do not see everything subject to *him.*⁹But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower

TNIV

But there is a place where someone has testified:

"What are *mere mortals* that you are mindful of *them,*

human beings that you care for *them?*

⁷You made *them* a little lower than the angels;

you crowned *them* with glory and honor

⁸and put everything under *their* feet."ᵃ

In putting everything under *them,* God left nothing that is not subject to *them.* Yet at present we do not see everything subject to *them.*⁹But we do see Jesus,

NIV11

But there is a place where someone has testified:

"What is *mankind* that you are mindful of *them,*

a son of man that you care for *him?*

⁷You made *them* a little lower than the angels;

you crowned *them* with glory and honor

⁸and put everything under *their* feet."ᵇ

In putting everything under *them,* God left nothing that is not subject to *them.* Yet at present we do not see everything subject to *them.*⁹But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than

than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

a Or *"What is a human being that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?* [7]*You made him lower than the angels for a little while; you crowned him with glory and honor* [8]*and put everything under his feet."*

the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

b 7,8 Or [7]*You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor* [8]*and put everything under his feet."*

The original objection was to the TNIV. Poythress and Grudem contend that by changing *man* and *son of man* (and the subsequent pronouns *him/his*) to *mere mortals* and *human beings* (followed by *them/their*) the TNIV "needlessly obscures the possible connection of this verse with Jesus," thereby excluding "this legitimate interpretive possibility." These changes were allegedly made because the NIV84 is "too male-oriented"; the changes are "part of a systematic and unnecessary loss of male-specific meaning that is there in the original text." [45] The same charge is repeated in the CBMW review of the NIV11 and in Poythress's recent article in *WTJ*. [46] The WELS study also expresses some concern about the TNIV rendering at this point but judges the NIV11 as an improvement. [47]

The issues in this use of the OT in the NT are hermeneutical. I happen to think that the TNIV/NIV11 more accurately reflects the text than the NIV84 and other similar translations. Exegeting Ps 8 on its own (i.e., without reading any NT use back into the OT text [48]) would show that the entire reference of the psalm as originally written and intended refers *only* to human beings. [49] The TNIV actually expresses the contextual meaning of אֱנוֹשׁ (*ĕnôš,* v. 4; LXX, ἄνθρωπος) quite well. In contrast to the "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (v. 1) for whom the heavens are finger work (v. 3), humans are appropriately described as "mere mortals." The point of the psalm is that even though we humans are puny beings in comparison with God, we are God's special creations with privilege and responsibility over the rest of creation (vv. 5-8). God has given us a position lower than angels, [50] yet still one of glory with dominion over the animal kingdom. Both "man" (אֱנוֹשׁ, *ĕnôš*) and "son of man" (בֶּן־אָדָם, *ben-ʾādām*) generically refer to the human race, not to any specific person. As such, using English plural pronouns following is not only valid, but preferable. [51] There is no hint here of anything Messianic. If we had only Ps 8, we would never suspect that it had any relevance to Jesus.

Then we turn to the NT. The paragraph in Heb 2 begins with a similar angel-human contrast (v. 5), though this time the angels have the lower position in relation to the "world to come." The writer then quotes from Ps 8. His explanatory comment in v. 8b continues the same referent as Ps 8: everything has been placed in subjection to humans, *but* there is an unfulfilled element here: "at present we do not see everything in subjection" (v. 8b). Through the end of v. 8, the antecedent of the pronouns is consistent: human beings. There *is* a christological reference beginning in v. 9, introduced with the contrasting/developmental conjunction δέ: *but* we see Jesus (δέ . . . βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν). At this point the author begins to show how Jesus is the One who became human to fulfill the typology of Ps 8: he will show us "how it's done"; that is, the dominion over the creation given to humans has never been properly administered, though it will be in "the world to come." The incarnation began demonstrating how someone who is fully human should and will exercise the dominion God intended.

If these exegetical conclusions can be justified (as I think they can be), then there is nothing obscured in Ps 8. Even in Heb 2 there is nothing obscured since the reference is only to humans through the end of v. 8. Generic reference is thus valid for Ps 8:4-8 and Heb 2:5-8. Only in Heb 2:9 does the reference become christological and singular, and at that point the NIV11 (and the older TNIV) is perfectly clear.

The current rage in some circles of christological exegesis of the OT, though it sounds pious, is too often (though not always) misleading. One should not criticize translations that are serious about the original meaning of a psalm or other OT passage, even if there is later evidence of typological use of those texts. Even in oracular texts where the reference is explicitly Messianic, there may well be a level of, say, Davidic reference, that should not be obscured by translating in such a way that makes the opposite mistake of what Poythress and Grudem think the TNIV and NIV11 make. But that is another can of hermeneutical worms!

3.5. Other Changes

A number of other changes were made throughout the text. These include the use of "Messiah" for Χριστός when used as a Messianic title and "God's/the Lord's people" (or something similar) in place of "saints" to avoid the usual connotation of special holiness (especially in a Roman Catholic sense).

- NIV84, Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus *Christ,* the Son of God."
- NIV11, Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the good news about Jesus *the Messiah,* the Son of God."
- NIV84, 1 Cor 6:2, "Do you not know that *the saints* will judge the world?"
- NIV11, 1 Cor 6:2, "Or do you not know that *the Lord's people* will judge the world?"

Many people have criticized an earlier decision to translate σάρξ as "sinful nature" (esp. in Paul), and that expression has now reverted largely to the traditional translation "flesh." 52

- NIV84, Rom 13:14, "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the *sinful nature*."
- NIV11, Rom 13:14, "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the *flesh*."

The NIV11 more often explicitly represents the conjunction γάρ compared with the NIV84, which often left γάρ untranslated for reasons of English style.

- NIV84, Rom 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God."
- NIV11, Rom 1:16, "*For* I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God."

Also some passages that have been debated and for which there are multiple options have been left open.

- NIV84, Rom 1:17, "For in the gospel a righteousness *from God* is revealed."
- NIV11, Rom 1:17, "For in the gospel the righteousness *of God* is revealed."

The vast majority of these sort of changes are, in my opinion, very good ones that contribute to understanding the Word of God in English. Even those individual decisions that I might have decided otherwise are justifiable and valid.

4. Gender Language in the NIV11

The most controversial changes in the NIV11 involve gender language. This paper is not the place to resolve all the issues involved. Entire books are written on the subject, some providing helpful discussion, others generating considerably more heat than light. 53

4.1. Principles

As I indicate in §1 and §2.2, the motivation for updating gender language is predicated on the conclusion that the English language *has* changed. If a translation intends to communicate in contemporary English, then that translation is fully justified to make changes that reflect current usage. Some translations do not attempt to use contemporary language and are content with dated English that is still, hopefully, intelligible, even if it is not natural written or oral English. 54

The principle involved in the NIV11, as is the case with a number of other evangelical translations (e.g., ESV, HCSB, NET, NLT), is that wording in the donor language that is *not* gender specific should not *become* gender specific in the receptor language. The issue involved is not *if* some form of inclusive language should be used, but what specific types of language are legitimate and how extensive they should be.

I suspect that all translators would agree in principle that translations should represent the donor language in regard to gender language as accurately as possible in the receptor language. That is, if the NT makes a statement that refers to men and women, the translation should do the same to the extent possible. The rub comes not with the principle, but with deciding exactly where such reference is used and how best to express it in English. 55

Since the NIV is receiving the most criticism—often from advocates and/or translators of other translations that themselves use inclusive language!—a few examples may be helpful to set the stage for the discussion to follow:

- ESV, Matt 7:9, "Or which *one* of you, if *his* son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?" (ἢ τίς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν *ἄνθρωπος,* ὃν αἰτήσει ὁ υἱὸς *αὐτοῦ* ἄρτον, μὴ λίθον ἐπιδώσει αὐτῷ;) [ESV uses generic "one" for ἄνθρωπος even though it is followed by a masculine pronoun.]
- HCSB, 2 Tim 3:13, Evil *people* and impostors will become worse (πονηροὶ δὲ ἄνθρωποι καὶ γόητες προκόψουσιν). [HCSB uses the least inclusive language of all recent translations, but here uses generic "people" for ἄνθρωπος.]
- NET, 1 Thess 1:4, "We know, *brothers and sisters* loved by God, that he has chosen you" (εἰδότες, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν).
- NLT, 1 Tim 2:1, "I urge you, first of all, to pray for *all people"* (Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις . . . ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων).
- ISV, 1 Tim 2:5, "There is one God. There is also one mediator between God and *human beings—a human,* Christ Jesus" (Εἷς γὰρ θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς).

4.2. Basis

The basis on which the NIV11 has addressed the inclusive language question is the Collins study (see §2.2 above). It is crucial to grasp the significance of the Collins Report to understand why the CBT has made certain decisions. This is the first time ever, so far as I am aware, that a study of the English language of this magnitude has been undertaken to provide objective input for decisions by a translation committee. Previous translations have checked their dictionaries and style guides, but have never attempted to verify actual English usage. Due to the length and complexity of that report only, some representative items are included here.

By far the most significant conclusion of the study is that the most common way in which people currently express a generic reference in English is the use of a plural or neutral pronoun. The use of generic "he" has declined significantly over the past twenty years. This can be seen on the right-hand graph below. 56

A second noteworthy item is the current frequency distribution of the following synonyms: *man*, *mankind*, *humankind*, *humanity*, *the human race*, *human beings*, *humans*, and *people*. In this instance there is a dramatic difference in general written English usage and usage in "Evangelical English." The two pie graphs

below make the contrast very evident. 57 It appears that evangelicals use an "insider" vocabulary and do not reflect the norms of the wider culture in this area.

Mankind, man and synonyms in (2005-2009) General written

Mankind, man and synonyms in (2005-2009) Evangelical English
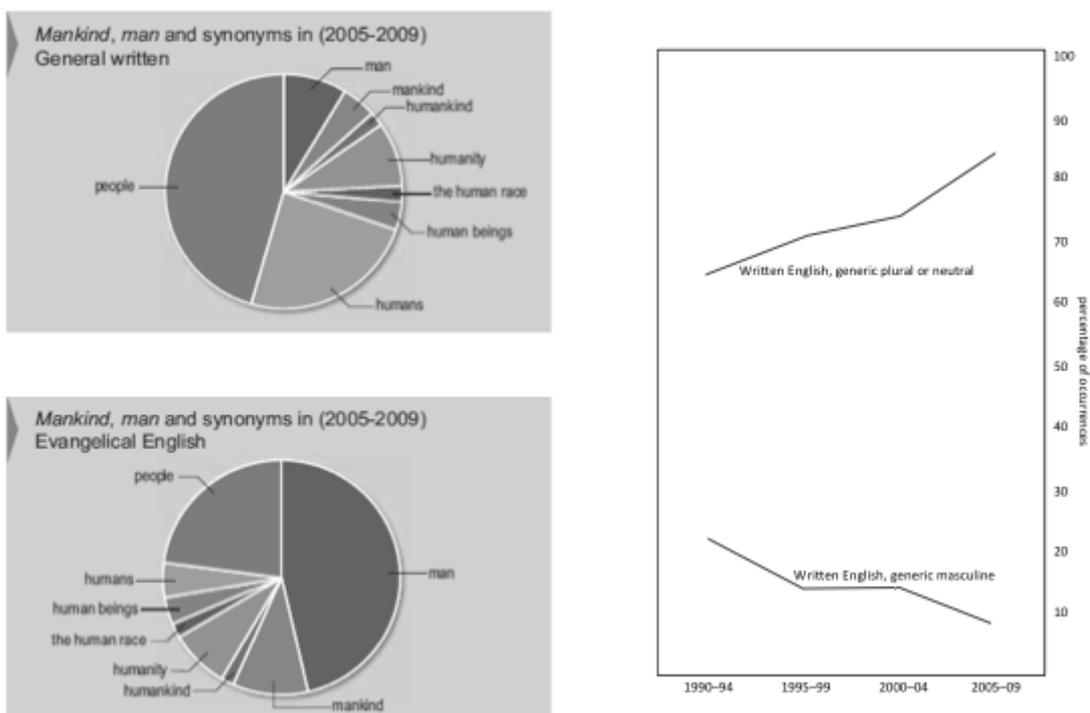
4.3. Implementation

What has the NIV11 done to implement their conclusions regarding language change in relation to gender language?

4.3.1. Seven Guidelines

The CBT adopted seven guidelines for revising gender language. They do not rigidly apply any of these, so passages vary due to factors such as oral cadence and context. The guidelines are listed below with examples. 58

1. "Using plurals instead of singulars to deal with generic forms *was avoided*" (p. 5).

2. "Using second person forms instead of third person forms to deal with generics *was avoided*" (p. 5).

These first two guidelines do not mean that the NIV11 does not ever make such changes. Many examples of the use of both second person and plurals can be cited, but these are often when a text intersects with another of the guidelines below or for purposes of English locution. In particular, the use of "their" (and related forms) is often treated as a *singular* in the NIV11 (see #3 below). 59

3. "Singular 'they,' 'them' and 'their' forms were widely used to communicate the generic significance of pronouns and their equivalents when a singular form had already been used for the antecedent" (p. 6).

It is important to notice that guideline #3 explicitly refers to using "they," "them," and "their" as *singular.* This does not mean that these words are always singular, but that they can be used as either singular or plural depending on the context. 60 This reflects how the English language has changed, and the Collins Report provides the evidence. Though it makes many English teachers cringe, for better or worse, English usage no longer restricts these forms to plural reference. Contemporary English commonly uses expressions like the following: "If *anybody* had a right to be proud of *their* accomplishments, it was Paul."

- NIV11, Jas 3:2, *Anyone* who is never at fault in what *they* say is perfect, able to keep *their* whole body in check.
- NIV11, Mark 4:25, *Whoever* has will be given more; *whoever* does not have, even what *they* have will be taken from *them*" (ὃς γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ· καὶ ὃς οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ).

This is the usual pattern, though the Translators' Notes (p. 6) explicitly point out, "at the same time, recognizing the diversity in modern English, a generic 'he' was occasionally retained: 'If I have rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune or gloated over the trouble that came to him . . .' (Job 31:29)."

4. "'People' and 'humans' (and 'human beings') were widely used for Greek and Hebrew masculine forms referring to both men and women. A variety of words—'humanity,' 'human race,' 'man,' 'mankind'—were used to refer to human beings collectively" (p. 6).

Given the massive preponderance of this usage in general written English (see the graphs from the Collins Report above), this is an obvious choice. If nearly 70% of such references use "people" or "human" and approximately 10% use "man" or "mankind," it is hard to criticize a translation for similar usage unless we argue that the insider language of evangelicalism must be the only usage allowed. 61 One would think that a concern to make the Bible intelligible to both Christians and non-Christians would recommend the use of "standard English" rather than the usage of a minority group.

- NIV11, Mark 8:24, He looked up and said, "I see *people;* they look like trees walking around" (καὶ ἀναβλέψας ἔλεγεν· βλέπω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὅτι ὡς δένδρα ὁρῶ περιπατοῦντας). 62
- NIV11, Rom 5:12, Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one *man,* and death through sin, and in this way death came to all *people,* because all sinned (Διὰ τοῦτο ὥσπερ δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διῆλθεν, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον).

In this example ἄνθρωπος is translated two different ways based on the meaning of each use. The first says "man" since it refers to Adam; the second says "people" since it refers to everyone, not just men. It is appropriate that ἄνθρωπος is used in both instances in Greek since ἄνθρωπος is the most common generic term to refer to the entire human race, but in English this sort of reference is normally expressed by "people." 63

5. "'Ancestors' was regularly preferred to 'forefathers' unless a specific, limited reference to the patriarchs or to another all-male group is intended" (p. 6).

NIV11, John 6:31, Our *ancestors* ate the manna in the wilderness (οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τὸ μάννα ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ).

The basis for this change is the Collins Report (pp. 49-56), which shows that "ancestor" is by far the most common word to use in such contexts; "father" or "forefather" occur infrequently in contemporary written English. There is no inherent "male meaning" that is voided by using a contemporary synonym in place of the traditional English gloss "fathers," which English rarely uses now. In the example from John 6, there is certainly no "male meaning"; the point that Jesus' Jewish contemporaries are making is that ancient Israel ate manna, not that the males ate it. Rhetorically asking "Why does the new NIV seek to eliminate male meaning that is present in the Hebrew or Greek text?" 64 makes an unwarranted semantic assumption. 65

6. "'Brothers and sisters' was frequently used to translate *adelphoi* in the New Testament, especially in the vocative, when it was clear that both genders were in view" (p. 6).

This is one of the generally accepted changes adopted in several recent translations. Some place it in the text (e.g., NET, NIV11) and others in the margin (e.g., ESV). 66 Agreement, however, is limited to the plural form, appeal typically being made to BDAG's note that "The pl. can also mean brothers and sisters." For example,

NIV11, Phil 3:1, Further, my *brothers and sisters,* rejoice in the Lord (Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ).

Although BDAG does not comment specifically on the singular form in this regard, there are about thirty instances in the NT where the referent of the singular ἀδελφός is not limited to males. 67 To argue that these uses must be translated as "brother" seems at odds with the same referent of the plural form. That the difference between singular and plural limits the semantic domain, though possible, seems highly unlikely given the parallel nature of the statements. Consider the use of ἀδελφός in both the singular and plural forms in 1 John 3:13-17. (I have retained the traditional "brother(s)" in my translation below to represent ἀδελφός.)

13. μὴ θαυμάζετε, ἀδελφοί	Do not marvel, *brothers* (plural)
14. ὑμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι . . . ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς	We know that . . . because we love the *brothers* (plural)
15. πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ	Everyone who hates his *brother* (sing.)
16. ῾ὑμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι	We ought for the brothers (plural) to lay down our life
17. ῝ὃς δ᾽ ἂν ἔχῃ τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ᾽δελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρείαν ἔχοντα	Whoever has the goods of the world and sees his *brother* (sing.) having a need

Is it reasonable to think that five references in five verses, all talking about the same general subject, really have two different meanings? Do three of them refer to all believers (i.e., "brothers and sisters") while two refer only to male believers? Does v. 15 refer to hating only male Christians? Or is it only male Christians for whom we are to have compassion and share our material possessions (v. 17)?

The NIV11 has been criticized for taking the singular ἀδελφός as generic in on the basis of how it translates Luke 17:3: "If your *brother or sister* sins against you, rebuke them" (Ἐὰν ἁμάρτῃ ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἐπιτίμησον αὐτῷ). The CBMW report says,

Jesus gave a specific example of a brother who sins. He could have said "brother or sister" if he had wanted to, because elsewhere the New Testament says "brother or sister" in James 2:15, "Suppose a brother or sister (Greek adelphos ē adelphē) is without clothes and daily food." But Jesus did not say "brother or sister" in Luke 17:3. He gave a specific example of a brother. Should we feel free to "correct" what Jesus said? (p. 13)

But this is tendentious and ill-informed. If ἀδελφός means "fellow Christian" (i.e., a metaphorical use of the word), then nothing has been "corrected." Just because Greek *can* say ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἀδελφή   does not mean that it must always use that expression. If anything, it would appear that this phrase is the exceptional way to say what is normally expressed simply with ἀδελφός. 68 Although the plural form of ἀδελφός is the most common reference with the meaning "brothers and sisters," there is no reason to reject the same meaning for the singular form. In either case (singular or plural), there must, of course, be contextual justification for the metaphorical use.

7. "While the Greek word *anēr* ('man' or 'person') was frequently translated with masculine forms in English, it is clear in several contexts that the word refers to men and women equally (an option endorsed by major dictionaries of the Greek NT)" (p. 6).

The usual word used in the NT to indicate that a person is a male is ἀνήρ. Even this word, however, does not have a "default" English gloss. It cannot be mechanically translated as "man" in every case. In many cases that does work, but in other instances it should be translated as "husband," also a male word, but with very different connotations. Other more formal uses might best be represented as "gentlemen" (e.g., Acts 14:15) or perhaps "brothers" (e.g., Acts 15:13, in which both NIV and ESV translate the phrase ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί as simply "brothers").

In other texts ἀνήρ appears to have the same generic meaning as ἄνθρωπος. Although this is not common, there are some examples in which the context seems to justify this conclusion. The text explicitly defines it as inclusive in Acts 17:34:

NIV11, Acts 17:34, "Some of the *people* 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" (τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν, ἐν οἷς καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης καὶ γυνὴ ὀνόματι Δάμαρις καὶ ἕτεροι σὺν αὐτοῖς).

Acts 17:34 specifies a general group (τινές . . . ἄνδρες) and then gives several examples from the larger group (ἐν οἷς καί), which includes a man (Διονύσιος), a woman (γυνὴ ὀνόματι Δάμαρις), and other people who remain unnamed (καὶ ἕτεροι σὺν αὐτοῖς). The text clearly specifies that a woman is included as part of the reference of ἀνήρ.

An inclusive referent seems quite sure in Rom 4:8; Jas 1:12, 20.

- NIV11, Rom 4:8, "Blessed is *the one* whose sin the Lord will never count against them" (μακάριος ἀνὴρ οὗ οὐ μὴ λογίσηται κύριος ἁμαρτίαν).
- NIV11, Jas 1:12, "Blessed is *the one* who perseveres under trial" (Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν).

It is possible in Luke 14:24. BDAG (79.2)—but not the NIV11—proposes it in Luke 5:18, and Carson wonders about it in Matt 14:35. 69

4.3.2. Sample Comparison: 2 Timothy in the NIV84 and NIV11

In this section I have randomly selected a NT text, 2 Timothy, and examined all the changes from the NIV84 to NIV11. 70 Appendix 2 (§7) includes a complete catalog, and this section summarizes it with a few examples to provide some flavor for the changes in the NIV11.

Of the thirty "revision units," 71 the great majority are matters of (relatively) simple changes in English wording, some of which might reflect a slightly different analysis of the Greek text. 72 By my judgment, twenty-one of the thirty revision units are only matters of English wording, seven are wording changes that involve gender language, and two are matters attributable to a different analysis of the Greek text. 73 This means that 70% of the changes are English wording, which might be related to the CBT's explanations for change: English usage (e.g., #18, 2 Tim 2:20, "ignoble" > "common") or clarity (e.g., #23, 3:6, "weak-willed" > "gullible"). These are the seven passages that involve gender language:

1. 1:3, forefathers > ancestors
2. 2:2, reliable men > reliable people
3. 2:15, workman > worker
4. 2:21, a man > those who
5. 3:13, evil men > evildoers
6. 3:17, the man of God > the servant of God
7. 4:21, the brothers > the brothers and sisters

I do not think that any of these seven changes are controversial. The wording of each is paralleled in other recent translations (ESV, NET, HCSB). 74 Most of what I have read in the NIV11 is similarly noncontroversial, 75 but some passages have drawn particular criticism.

4.3.3. Three Controversial Passages

Before we tackle the controversial passages it is worth pointing out that all translations have warts. Every translation of the Bible ever produced in any language is a human production, and not one of them is perfect. 76 Whether we are talking about the ancient translations (e.g., Old Latin, Syriac, or Coptic), historical translations in English (e.g., Wycliffe, Tyndale, Bishop's Bible, or KJV), or contemporary translations such as the ESV or NIV, the Holy Spirit has superintended none of them in the way he did Scripture. The original text was inspired. Translations *qua* translations are not. Thankfully, most translations are reliable and accurate, despite their differences. 77 The differences are not usually matters of error, but of variations in how the translations express the meaning of the original text in English. Every translation must choose what to include and what to omit because languages as different as Hebrew and Greek on the one hand and English on the other communicate meaning in such different ways. If a translation could convey every semantic element of the original and add nothing extraneous, then we would not need to study the biblical languages. But every translation both omits and adds information due to the structural mismatch of the donor and receptor languages. It is not that the same meaning cannot be communicated; it can be, but the resulting structure will always vary in form and usually in length.

All translations have warts in the sense that there are texts in all translations that disappoint us. Of course what disappoints you may not disappoint me! As they say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. So as not to step on your particular toes, let me use an example that most of us (at least the original audience to whom I presented this paper) classify as a wart. In 1 John 2:2, the RSV translates ἱλασμός as "expiation" rather than the traditional "propitiation." Granted, propitiation will not win awards for clarity these days, it is still my opinion that using expiation calls for a "wart rating" at this point. Why? Because the two words have different meanings: *propitiation* means that God is satisfied that Christ's sacrifice has paid the penalty for sin. On the other hand, *expiation* means that sin has been forgiven. The focus is very different: one focuses on God, the other on sin. Although both are true statements, expiation does not accurately represent what John said; the ἱλασμός word group is God-focused.

If we assume for the moment that this is a valid "wart" (you may well disagree with me!), is it such a problem that in and of itself would render the RSV unusable? I don't think so. 78 The question comes in how many warts are tolerable? How big are they? Where are they located? If you will tolerate my extending this metaphor a bit further, it is possible that a single translation wart, if it is large enough and ugly enough and especially if it is located dab on the front of the translation's nose, could be judged serious enough to cause one to look for another suitor (if I may change analogies altogether!)?

What are the potential warts in the NIV11? There are not many, and the CBT has been very upfront in identifying several of them—though of course they do not call them warts! The potentially controversial passages all involve gender language. There are major issues in only three specific texts: Rom 16:1-2; 16:7; and 1 Tim 2:12. 79 The CBT discusses Rom 16:1-2 and 1 Tim 2:12 as "some of the most famous texts on gender roles." 80

Rom 16:1-2

There are two specific words involved in questions regarding Rom 16:1-2: διάκονος and προστάτις.

Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὖσαν καὶ διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς, 2ἵνα αὐτὴν προσδέξησθε ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως τῶν ἁγίων καὶ παραστῆτε αὐτῇ ἐν ᾧ ἂν ὑμῶν χρῄζῃ πράγματι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ προστάτις πολλῶν ἐγενήθη καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ.

> NIV84: I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a *servant^a* of the church in Cenchrea. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a *great help* to many people, including me.
>
> ^a Or *deaconess*

> NIV11: I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a *deacon^a* of the church in Cenchreae. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the *benefactor* of many people, including me.
>
> ^a Or *servant*

It is probably not a major issue whether προστάτις is a technical term ("benefactor") or a general descriptive ("great help"). And the translation "deacon" may not be controversial in some churches. There is quite a variety of roles and structures among churches, even conservative churches, regarding deacons. Some will object to the translation, but that likely depends on how deacons function in that person's church. I am more inclined to prefer the alternate translation that is found in the marginal note: "Or *servant.*" All that NIV11 has done is to reverse the text and marginal translations that were found in the 1984 edition. 81

1 Tim 2:12

The second potentially controversial passage (and most likely to be debated) is 1 Tim 2:12—a flashpoint text in recent years.

διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ᾽ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ.

> NIV84: I do not permit a woman to teach or *to have authority over* a man; she must be silent.

> NIV11: I do not permit a woman to teach or *to assume authority over* a man; she must be quiet.

The Translators' Notes explain the reasoning behind this change.

Much debate has surrounded the rare Greek word *authentein*, translated in the 1984 NIV as "exercise authority" [*sic*; NIV84 = "have authority"]. The KJV reflected what some have argued was in some contexts a more negative sense for the word: "usurp authority." "Assume authority" is a particularly nice English rendering because it leaves the question open, as it must be unless we discover new, more conclusive evidence. The exercise of authority that Paul was forbidding was one that women inappropriately assumed, but whether that referred to all forms of authority over men in church or only certain forms in certain contexts is up to the individual interpreter to decide. (p. 7)

Some of us may strongly prefer the NIV84 (or the KJV) here. I cannot even begin to discuss the issue here. 82 From a translation perspective, however, the CBT's position is defensible. Since the word αὐθεντέω is hotly debated—and it is a *hapax legomenon* (even outside the NT the TLG shows only about 300 uses) 83— there is little data on which to build a lexical-semantic defense of a particular meaning. One's conclusions regarding this text must come not from one word but from the immediate context, Paul's teaching elsewhere, a biblical theology of the subject, and ultimately a theological integration at the level of systematic theology. Given the scarce attestation of the word and the lexical uncertainty involved, it is most appropriate for a translation *not* to decide the issue. The choice of the CBT at this point is, I think, defensible in that regard. I would do it differently, but that does not mean the CBT's decision is invalid or indefensible, even for a complementarian. Nor is this a feminist-driven translation choice 84—a charge that the CBT explicitly denies 85—unless we also want to charge Calvin with that crime since his Latin commentary and translation say the same thing. 86 It is, indeed, a translation that allows multiple interpretations ("assume" may be read in either a positive or negative sense), but that may be a wise choice in this case. Those who want to proof-text certain positions (whether that position is valid or not) may not be happy, but we must be honest with

the text and acknowledge that this is an issue that must be resolved on a much broader exegetical and theological basis. 87

Rom 16:7

The third specific passage is Rom 16:7. There are two issues here, though only one of them is new in the NIV11; one is unchanged from the NIV84.

ἀσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνιᾶν τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, οἳ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ.

NIV84: Greet Andronicus and *Junias*, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are *outstanding among* the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.	NIV11: Greet Andronicus and *Junia*, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are *outstanding among* the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

The primary issue involves only one letter in English: Junia rather than Junias. This is partly a text-critical question. But it hinges on the accent, and accents were not part of the original text. If the text is accented as given in NA/UBS, Ἰουνιᾶν, then this is a man's name; Junias is a masculine form of Ἰουνιᾶς, ᾶ, ὁ. If it is accented Ἰουνίαν, then it is a woman's name; Junia is a feminine form of Ἰουνία, ας, ἡ. Resolving an obscure question on the basis of the correct accent involves a number of additional considerations. 88 There are arguments for either accent pattern. Contemporary NT scholarship (including the ESV, which changed the RSV's Junias to Junia!) appears to favor the feminine form since some MSS have this accent, 89 but it is not certain. 90

The second issue in this verse is *not* an NIV11 issue at all since the translation in question, "outstanding among the apostles," is unchanged from the NIV84. If it was not a deal-breaker before, it isn't now either. To use this as an argument against the NIV11 is not valid, especially when listed as a *change* in the revision. 91

Scholars have considered the phrase οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις to be ambiguous since it could imply *either* that the parties named *are* apostles—and particularly noteworthy ones at that—*or* that the apostles thought highly of these two people. (More recent study has seriously challenged that assumption. 92) Both options have been given in most recent translations. 93

- NIV84 text: "outstanding among the apostles" (no marginal note)
- NIV11 text: "outstanding among the apostles"; margin: "Or *are esteemed by*"
- NET text: "well known to the apostles"; margin: "Or 'prominent, outstanding, famous [apostles]'"
- HCSB: "They are noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles"; margin: "Or *are outstanding among*"
- NASB: "who are outstanding among the apostles" (no marginal note)
- ESV: "They are well known to the apostles" (no marginal note) 94

In texts with multiple issues such as these, it is precarious for a translation to attempt to resolve all possible implications, and it is certainly not appropriate methodology to decide what is acceptable translation based on preconceived theological positions. As always, the text must determine our theology, not our theology the text.

A recurrent problem with criticisms of the NIV11 is the expectation that a translation should do more than it is possible to do. Not all issues can or should be resolved by translation, especially *one* translation. Many of the questions raised are those of the biblical languages and can best be discussed in that context. Readers without such ability dare not lean exclusively on any one translation. Even if a church has adopted a standard translation (and that is wise for consistency in ministry), readers must be taught that carefully studying difficult issues requires using multiple translations. They need to know that all translations will have some "warts." Perfection should not be expected, though this should not raise questions regarding

reliability and accuracy overall. The pastor's job, after all, is that of teacher. He must train his people how to think about such translation issues and how to compensate for them.

4.4. Evaluation

Translations tread a reactionary, theological minefield when they implement changes in gender-related language. This is unfortunate since the issues addressed are legitimate matters related to the clarity of Scripture. Because there has been a deliberate feminist secular agenda in the social/political sphere, there is suspicion that such pressures are what drive changes in translation. [95] It is true that there has also been an evangelical feminism in the form of an egalitarian view of women's roles in the home and in the church. Egalitarianism has been influenced by the secular ideology, though acknowledging that influence does not mean that these evangelicals have adopted the entire feminist creed. Though it may seem to be an awkward combination to some, many evangelical egalitarians still hold to the authority of Scripture and usually to its inspiration and inerrancy. [96]

In response to evangelical egalitarianism, conservatives have mobilized to push back against what they view as faulty in significant areas of theology. That has often been a helpful corrective and has served to maintain a credible defense of the traditional, conservative position of the church in these areas. Unfortunately, single-issue groups, as helpful and necessary as they sometimes are, run the risk of becoming myopic, one-string-fiddle players who view everything through a narrow window of priority. The results can include blindness to legitimate concerns in related areas, misrepresenting other positions, rhetoric, and invalid argumentation. I am afraid this is reflected in some of the attacks on the NIV11 in which the CBT has been accused of capitulating to the feminist agenda.

Though translating gender language in Scripture *could* be handled so as to comply with the secular feminist creed, [97] recent evangelical translations (particularly the NIV11) attempt to express accurately the meaning of God's revelation. As two members of the CBT clearly say, the NIV does not advocate "the blanket replacement of masculine terms with inclusive language. This is not about gender 'neutrality' (as some have claimed), but about gender 'accuracy.' The goal is not to eliminate gender distinctions in Scripture, but to clarify them." [98] Whereas inclusivist versions intend to eliminate any patriarchal reference in Scripture, the goal of gender accuracy "is to reflect as accurately as possible the original meaning of the text. Gender accurate versions seek to introduce inclusive language only with reference to human beings and only when the original meaning included both sexes." [99]

Changes are needed because *English has changed* in the past quarter century. This means that any of the recent evangelical translations that reflect inclusive language (ESV, NET, HCSB, NIV11, etc.) are first steps in that direction. Different approaches have been implemented, and all translations will benefit as such efforts are evaluated and used. Earlier approaches such as the NIVI and TNIV were pioneer attempts that proved unsatisfactory, but translators have learned from them. The HCSB has been the most reticent to make many such changes; the ESV is more generous (though within certain strict limits); the NET and NIV11 have worked with slightly broader parameters.

Criticisms of the TNIV have produced one of the most significant influences on the gender language of the NIV11: the documentation of what changes have actually taken place in English in the past quarter century. The Collins Report provides an objective baseline for the NIV11 in the area of gender language. [100] The results appear to me to be justifiable and in almost all cases helpful. Yes, there are a few warts (as any translation has), but I do not think that they are of sufficient quantity or seriousness to detract from the far greater gains in clarity (in all areas) in the NIV11.

5. Conclusion

Is the NIV11 a viable, usable translation in conservative churches? In order to decide that, we should first ask on what bases such a question should be evaluated.

5.1. Criteria

Fee and Strauss propose four criteria for evaluating a translation: accuracy, clarity, naturalness, and appropriateness. [101] Although proposed in a book written by two members of the CBT, it appears to me that these are appropriate criteria for any translation, not just the NIV. Some translation teams would respond differently as to the importance of each or might understand the criteria differently, but the issues would nevertheless remain. What is not included is any direct evaluation of the formal/ functional spectrum. That, I think, is deliberate since we are seeking to evaluate the results, not the means by which they were achieved. If we were to apply these four criteria to the NIV11, what would be the result?

5.1.1. Accuracy

First, is the NIV11 accurate? If accuracy is defined as communicating God's revelation in such a way that we understand what God intended us to understand, [102] then I would rate the NIV11 (as the NIV84 in its time) high in terms of accuracy. The NIV does not attempt to reproduce the donor text primarily in a word-for-word fashion, but were it to do so, the result would usually be less accurate since the donor and receptor languages express meaning so differently. The meaning, however, is communicated accurately. That is the goal of translation: accurately communicating the intended meaning of the donor text.

In the area of gender language, the efforts of the NIV11 to accurately represent generic/inclusive reference in the donor language with suitable equivalents in the receptor language accurately conveys the intended reference in contemporary English. Though not every choice will meet the approval of the critics, the CBT's choices in this regard are defensible and express the Word of God accurately in English.

5.1.2. Clarity

Second, is the NIV11 clear? For God's revelation to function in a revelatory manner, it must be understandable in the receptor language. Using unclear language compromises the revelatory goal of Scripture. The text as originally written was clear to its original readers. That does not mean that all parts were equally easy to understand, but the obstacles to comprehension were not in the language used but in the profundity of the concepts involved. Even though Paul claims that everything he wrote to the Corinthians could be read and understood (2 Cor 1:13), Peter admits that some of the things Paul wrote were hard to understand (2 Pet 3:15-16). This should be the case with a translation also. It should represent the meaning accurately in clear language so that the reader does not stumble due to obscurities of lexicon or syntax.

By taking a mediating position between formal and functional equivalence (though tending, I think, closer to the formal end of the spectrum), the NIV has been able to produce a text that is clearer than many translations, especially those weighted more heavily with formal equivalence. "Formal equivalent versions have a tendency to alter the forms of the original until they are just comprehensible. Unfortunately, what is comprehensible to a translator may be obscure, awkward, or even meaningless to the average reader." [103] People who have sufficient training in the biblical languages may tend to judge clarity more generously than the "average reader," who does not understand the range of options available for many of the formal elements in Hebrew and Greek. If we are serious about making the Word of God a vital tool in the lives of English-speaking Christians, then we must aim for a translation that communicates clearly in the language of the average English-speaking person. It is here that the NIV excels.

5.1.3. Naturalness

Third, is the language of the NIV11 natural? The questions of clarity and naturalness are related. Clarity asks if a text can be easily understood. Naturalness asks if the translation communicates in the receptor language using expressions that a receptor-language speaker would use. We may well understand English statements that we would never think of using in our own speech and writing. As one example, Acts 11:22, Ἠκούσθη δὲ ὁ λόγος εἰς τὰ ὦτα τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς οὔσης ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ, might be translated as "The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem" (ESV) or "News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem" (NIV84). Neither of these translations are formal equivalents, [104] but neither do they use natural English idiom. We do not speak of information "reaching the ears." Instead we would say,

"News of this reached the church in Jerusalem" (NIV11). Despite not reproducing the idiom involving the ears, the NIV11 accurately reproduces the meaning and does so in much more natural English. It is the little changes like this that make the NIV11 sound much more natural than many other translations.

5.1.4. Appropriateness

Fourth, is the result appropriate for the intended audience? This criterion may be more subjective than the first three since there are many variables. It acknowledges that there is not one translation that is best for every purpose. Though a church may adopt one translation as a standard for their "in house" ministries (e.g., Sunday School, worship services, etc.), they might well consider a different translation if they were reaching out to a group of immigrants whose English skills were very limited. Likewise, if an established church with a large population of seniors (e.g., some churches in Florida, though this may often be true in the north as well, though for different reasons) decided to change from their traditional KJV to a modern translation, they would likely make a different choice than a new church plant reaching young adults in a university town or families in an inner city. What is appropriate for one may not be as suitable for another.

In light of factors such as these, I cannot give a simple answer to Fee and Strauss's fourth criterion. Based on many years of using the NIV84 and my initial exposure to the NIV11, I would suggest that the NIV11 is still one of the more versatile choices. It not only communicates the meaning of God's revelation accurately, but does so in English that is easily understood by a wide range of English speakers. It is as well-suited for expository preaching as it is for public reading and use in Bible classes and children's ministries. It may not be as well-suited for use in some very traditional churches in socially conservative parts of the country. Though its use could potentially increase comprehension in such settings, the cost in terms of rejection based on it "not sounding like the Bible" might outweigh the potential gains. Some churches also deliberately prioritize an "old sound" in the public reading of Scripture to invoke the weight of tradition. In such cases the NIV11 will not have the same effect. Nor is it as useful for discerning the formal structure of the biblical text. This is not of concern to many Christians, but some who consider themselves "serious students" like the biblisch cadences of more formal translations. Yet even here students should make use of multiple translations that reflect various emphases: both the formal ones for structure (to the extent that can be gleaned from an English translation), the functional ones to jar the mind long accustomed to traditional phrasing, and also those mediating translations like the NIV (and NET, HCSB, etc.) that attempt to balance both concerns. A case could be made that a translation like the NIV11 is one of the better choices as an all-around tool for ministry, supplemented for serious Bible study by a translation that flanks the NIV on either side.

5.2. Reactions

Just as the KJV in 1611, any new translation faces certain challenges. The NIV11 is no exception to such attacks. The charge has been led by the CBMW. The potential issues in this regard have already been mentioned at several points in the paper. CBMW is essentially a very vocal single-issue [105] group that has determined that one of the primary ways to champion their position is to advocate a single approach to translation: formal equivalence with explicit objection to "gender-neutral" translation. [106] There is also potential for conflict of interest at this point since some of the key players in CBMW are also responsible for a competing translation, the ESV. [107] The tone of their official review of the NIV11 is unhelpful, and the methodology employed is designed more for rhetorical effect than it is for a substantive engagement in the issues. [108]

Other opposition has come from the Southern Baptist Convention, which passed a resolution opposing the NIV11 at their annual convention in June 2011. This was not a recommendation from the resolutions committee, but a motion from a pastor on the floor. The heart of the 2011 resolution claims, "this translation alters the meaning of hundreds of verses, most significantly by erasing gender-specific details which appear in the original language." It also references a 1997 resolution on translation that condemns "gender inclusive translation." Unfortunately, neither "gender-neutral" (in the title of the 2011 resolution) nor "gender inclusive" in the 1997 resolution are defined. Definition is the heart of any such statement (though rarely included in formal resolutions). By the definitions used by the CBT, both the HCSB and the ESV use

"gender inclusive" language. It appears that the resolution assumes a very broad definition of the term and applies it to a translation that itself uses a very narrow definition. As explained above, the only changes in the NIV11 that may be termed "gender inclusive" are those that the translators understood to be inclusive of both men and women in the original text. That is hardly objectionable. It is unfortunate that the SBC has not issued a more accurate statement, but given the size and influence of that denomination, it will have wide impact. Had the motion come from the resolutions committee, or better, a committee appointed to spend a year studying the issue, it is possible that it might have been considered more carefully. Matters of this significance and the magnitude of the influence of the largest Protestant denomination would suggest that the matter deserves greater care and time than a short floor discussion allows. The CBT has issued a formal response to the SBC's resolution objecting strongly to the claims made in the resolution. 109

An exemplary approach to considering the NIV11 may be seen in the deliberations of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). 110 Although they have not made a final decision yet, their preparation and consideration of the issue is a model from which other groups could learn much. After detailing their extensive study and deliberations, the recommendation of the Translation Evaluation Committee to the WELS synodical convention this past summer concludes,

As we have considered all these matters, the committee has become firmer in its consensus regarding the new NIV. We believe it could be used as a translation for our synod's publications. Before going any further, we ask all to understand what we are saying and what we are not saying in advancing such a thesis. We are not suggesting that this is the only way to go. Nor are we saying that there aren't other good translations out there. We are certainly not suggesting that the new NIV become the "official version" of WELS. In fact WELS has never adopted an official version. Congregations and individuals are free to adopt and use such versions as most suit their needs.

But we do wish to advance the proposition that the new NIV could serve us adequately as a translation for our synodical publications. At the same time we are far from certain that those feelings are shared by a majority of WELS members. That is why we also believe that the thesis needs to be tested by further discussions held among a wider audience until we reach a more general agreement. Before we make some suggestions for broadening the conversation, permit us to list the main reasons why we believe the new NIV, despite its flaws, is still workable:

1. As noted above, while there are some notable weaknesses, there are also even more notable improvements. Does the good outweigh the bad? We do not advocate reading the chart above simplistically by saying, "The fact that improvements are in the majority ends all debate." Yet we can suggest that its many improvements should be considered as one factor tipping the scales in the new NIV's favor. We believe it is a faithful and accurate translation, for the most part, and that it is the best of all the versions for public reading in our churches.

2. We believe that no other current translation would be a significant improvement over the NIV, one that addresses all the NIV's weaknesses without adding its own new ones to the mix. No matter what version a person proposes, it will have both its weaknesses and its strengths. There is no perfect translation of the Bible. Above we have noted some of those strengths and weaknesses among the likeliest runners up. The same could be done for any other version that a person would nominate for consideration. When we apply the evaluative criteria we have set forth above, we believe that the NIV emerges as the best option.

3. Our synod is used to the NIV. To continue using it in its revised form would provide the greatest continuity and cause the fewest disruptions among us. Many of us can remember, for example, what it was like to memorize our catechism verses as children in the KJV and then teach them as pastors to our catechism classes in the NIV. We learned how easy it was to get confused and mix the two up. That would not happen if we adopted the new NIV. In fact we are of the opinion that if a church began using the new NIV in public reading tomorrow, most congregation members wouldn't even notice the change. 111

The decision at the 2011 convention was to continue their study for another two years with a process in place to involve a wider range of people and churches as they move forward toward making a final decision.

The Translation Evaluation Committee will prepare additional study materials for use in the synodical districts that will make their recommendations in 2012. If there is not a two thirds majority consensus of the districts at that time, a decision will be made at the synodical convention in July 2013. This is a careful, studied, and commendable process. It is not sufficiently flamboyant to make headline news, but it bodes well for the long-term health and ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

As summarized above, there have been both positive and negative reactions to the NIV11. 112 Whatever one decides, they will have plenty of company. 113

5.3. Recommendations

Making a specific recommendation regarding any Bible translation is always a hazardous enterprise. There is no one translation that is best in every situation. Any counsel that I suggest here must be weighed carefully against specific needs and settings, but hopefully this article and my concluding comments can suggest the relevant factors.

My judgment is that the NIV11 *is* a usable translation in many situations. It continues the NIV tradition largely unchanged, though improved in many small ways across the breadth of the canon. It is not perfect. No translation is. (Have I mentioned that before?!) It has a few warts. All translations do. Overall, however, it improves an otherwise fine translation.

The major sticking point for some will be the use of inclusive language, yet *all* recent translations (including the ESV) do exactly this. The difference is the extent of such expressions. So long as one realizes that the purpose of such language is to accurately reflect inclusive language in the original texts of Scripture, it is hard to fathom objections. Since contemporary English has changed in this regard, it is only reasonable that translations that operate on a principle of ongoing revision (as does the NIV 114) reflect current usage when they are revised.

Are the gender-related revisions perfect? No. Would I choose to word some of them slightly differently? Of course, and so would you. That, however, is not the issue since it would be true of any of us if we were revising any translation, and not just in matters related to gender. One must look at the broader picture: the translation as a whole. Does the NIV11 have sufficient commendable qualities and minimal detracting warts to make it usable? I conclude that it meets those criteria.

I think that many churches would find it helpful in ministry. It is of sufficient quality and accuracy to serve as the primary Bible in the local church, just as was the NIV84. Of course, those churches that have balked at using the NIV84 will not likely find the NIV11 of interest either. There could be many reasons for that, some legitimate, others not. For those churches still using the KJV, a change to the NIV11 is a broader leap than to a revision of a more recent version in the same KJV lineage (e.g., the ESV). 115 That broader leap, however stretching it might be, has the potential to provide greater gains since the result is clear, normal, accurate English rather than less clear, somewhat archaic English. Whether a pastor is willing to lead his people through such a transition will depend on the particular local church setting and atmosphere. It may not be a wise choice at a particular time, especially early in a pastor's ministry when the necessary trust has not yet been established and the essential teaching foundation has not yet been laid.

Regardless of the setting, it behooves a pastor to spend time teaching his people regarding the issues involved in translation, including the issue of gender language. 116 Ordinary Christians who have no knowledge of the biblical languages 117 need to learn the limits of what a translation can and cannot do. They also need to learn how to use multiple, complementary translations in their study. Without such teaching from their pastor, any transition to a new translation will find rocky going. Even churches that are presently using the NIV84 need an introduction to the questions raised by the NIV11. If these are considered carefully and alternate positions described fairly, Christians can understand and profit from any of the new translations that use some form of inclusive language. If a pastor demonizes opposing positions and treats either the ESV *or* the NIV84 *or* the NIV11 as evil, then he may sway his congregation to his point of view, but he will also do them a severe disservice—as well as accrue more serious judgment to himself (Jas 3:1).

Pastors who cannot work with the biblical languages are at a disadvantage in dealing with these questions, but they can and should draw on fellow pastors or trusted scholars to help them work through these issues.

We ought to rejoice in the wealth of reliable English translations that are available to God's people today. The NIV11 is a welcome addition to that list.

6. Appendix 1: Links to Related Materials

6.1. Collins Report

- Summary, http://www.niv-cbt.org/information/collins-corpus-report
- Full report, http://www.niv-cbt.org/information/collins-language-study-full-report or in PDF at http://www.niv-cbt.org/wp-content/uploads/Collins-Report-Final.pdf

6.2. SBC Resolutions

- 2011, NIV11, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1218
- 1997, Bible translation, http://sbc.org/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=284
- 2002, TNIV, http://sbc.org/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1118

6.3. CBT Responses

- To SBC resolution: http://www.niv-cbt.org/wp-content/uploads/cbt-response-to-sbc.pdf
- To CBMW review: http://www.niv-cbt.org/wp-content/uploads/cbt-response-to-cbmw-review.pdf

6.4. WELS Translation Evaluation Committee Report

- http://www.wels.net/news-events/forward-in-christ/bible-revision-new-international-version-2010
- Video summary (4.5 min.) of the Synod convention discussion of the TEC Report, http://www.wels.net/streams/video/content/2011-wels-convention-wrap-day-four

7. Appendix 2: Changes from NIV84 to NIV11 in 2 Timothy

Key

w   wording and/or punctuation change, probably for purposes of English style, though some may reflect minor nuances of the Greek text

wg   wording change involving gender language (a subcategory of 'w')

k   minor changes in how the Greek text is understood (often involves case function, etc.)

#	Ref.	NIV (1984)	NIV11	Key	Notes
1.	1:1	according to the promise of life	in keeping with the promise of life	w	
2.	1:3	forefathers	ancestors	wg	118
3.	1:5	I have been reminded	I am reminded	w	
4.	1:7	For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-	For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline	k	

		discipline			
5.	1:8a	do not be ashamed to testify	do not be ashamed of the testimony	w	
6.	1:8b	But join with me	Rather, join with me	w	
7.	1:8c-9	the power of God, who has saved us	the power of God. He has saved us	w	
8.	1:12a	Yet I am not ashamed	Yet this is no cause for shame	w	
9.	1:12b	what I have entrusted to him for that day	what I have entrusted to him until that day	k	
10.	2:2	entrust to reliable men	entrust to reliable people	wg	[119]
11.	2:3	Endure hardship with us	Join with me in suffering	w	
12.	2:4	gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer.	gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer	w	
13.	2:5	if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes	anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing	w	
14.	2:13	he will remain faithful	he remains faithful	w	
15.	2:14	Keep reminding them of these things	Keep reminding God's people of these things	w	[120]
16.	2:15	a workman who does not need to be ashamed	a worker who does not need to be ashamed	wg	[121]
17.	2:18	who have wandered away from the truth	who have departed from the truth	w	
18.	2:20	some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble	some are for special purposes and some for common use	w	[122]
19.	2:21	If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes	Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes	wg	[123]
20.	2:24	the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind	the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind	w	[124]
21.	2:25	Those who oppose him he must gently instruct	Opponents must be gently instructed	w	[125]
22.	3:5	Have nothing to do with them	Have nothing to do with such people	w	
23.	3:6	weak-willed women	gullible women	w	
24.	3:7	never able to acknowledge the truth	never able to come to a knowledge of the truth	w	
25.	3:8	these men oppose the truth—men of depraved minds	these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds	w	[126]

26.	3:13	while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse	while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse	wg	127
27.	3:17	so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped	so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped	wg	128
28.	4:6	the time has come for my departure	the time for my departure is near	w	
29.	4:21	Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers	Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters	wg	129
30.	4:22	Grace be with you	Grace be with you all	w	130

1 This article was originally presented at the Bible Faculty Summit held at Faith Baptist Bible College and Seminary in Ankeny, IA, July 28, 2011.

2 Dick France, "The Bible in English: An Overview," in *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World; Essays in Honor of Ronald F. Youngblood* (ed. G. Scorgie, M. Strauss, and S. Voth; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 193.

3 Tyndale said to an English cleric, "If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost." His statement echoes the preface of Erasmus' Greek NT: "I would to God that the plowman would sing a text of the Scripture at his plow and that the weaver would hum them to the tune of his shuttle." Both citations from Tony Lane, "A Man for All People: Introducing William Tyndale," *Christian History vol. 6*, no. 4, issue 16 (1987): 7.

4 "Translators to the Reader," 11.

5 Indeed what some call "the 1611 KJV" has been almost entirely a phantom for more than 200 years because it was revised at least six times, though each time continuing the same name as its predecessor. The last revision to bear that name was the 1769 revision by Blayney that has now been printed for over two centuries, but it is not the same as what was printed in 1611. These various revisions were due to changes in the English language. Later revisions of the same tradition have changed the name. The 1885 was known as the (English) Revised Version, the 1901 as the American Standard Version (originally, the "Revised Version, Standard American Edition"), the 1952/1962/1971 as the Revised Standard Version (and NRSV, 1989), and the 2001/2007 as the English Standard Version.

6 The KJV, despite celebrating 400 years, has *not* reigned as sole monarch on the English Bible throne during all of that time. It was more than a half century *after* 1611 before it became the preferred translation, and for somewhat more than the last half century it has had to share that throne with other translations. The KJV dropped from the number one position as the best-selling English Bible in 1988; the NIV has held that position since then (email correspondence from Verne Kenney, Executive Vice President, Zondervan, October 17, 2011).

7 The KJV translators anticipated this: "whosoever attempteth any thing for the publike (especially if it appertaine to Religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himselfe upon a stage to be glouted upon by every evil eye, yea, he casteth himself headlong upon spikes, to be gored by every sharpe tongue. For he that medleth with mens Religion in any part, medleth with their custome, nay, with their freehold, and though they find no content in that which they have, yet they cannot abide to heare of altering" ("The Translators to the Reader," [p. 2], 1611 printing of KJV).

8 Although a digital edition of the text was made available on the web on November 1, 2010, the revision was not officially published until spring 2011.

9 Official data on the translation and its history can be found at http://www.thenivbible.com/translation and http://www.thenivbible.com/translation/history (thenivbible.comis a Zondervan site). See also the site of the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT): http://www.niv-cbt.org. (URLs cited in this paper were all accessed in June 2011.)

10 As of the 1970s the only three alternatives of significance were (1) the RSV (largely rejected by conservatives), a revision in the KJV/RV/ASV line of translations, (2) the NASB, which had just been published in 1971 (the NT had been released in 1963), and (3) the Modern Language Bible (1969, which revised the Berkley Version, 1959). The MLB never caught on, and even after its 1995 update, the NASB has managed only a niche market position (at one time #3 when choices were limited, it is now #10 in sales in the US), used primarily by those who perceive it to be "more accurate" since it is "more literal" (superficial judgments reflecting little understanding of what is involved in translation) and by first year language students who are comforted by the fact that it is the closest to their own attempts at putting the biblical text into something approximating English! (That in itself should say something about the quality of the translation.) Such perspectives are encouraged by the copyright owner, whose official web page declares, "At NO point did the translators attempt to interpret Scripture through translation. Instead, the NASB translation team adhered to the principles of literal translation. This is the most exacting and demanding method of translation, requiring a word-for-word translation that is both accurate and readable. This method follows the word and sentence patterns of the original authors" (http://www.lockman.org/nasb).

11 Since the 70s there has been a relative flood of new translations of which the NASB and NIV were the harbingers. These include the GNB (1976), NJB (Catholic, 1985), NCV (1987), NRSV (1989), REB (1989, which revises the NEB, 1970), CEV (1995), God's Word (1995, which succeeds Beck's AAT, 1976), NIVI (1996), NLT (1996), ESV (2001; 2nd ed., 2007), TNIV (2002), HCSB (2004; 2nd ed., 2010), NET (2005), NAB (Catholic, 1970; 4th ed., NABRE, 2011), ISV (2011), and CEB (2011).

12 The July 2011 Best Sellers List from the Christian Booksellers Association shows the NIV to be the number one selling Bible in the US (a position it has now held for quite a few years), followed in order by the NLT, KJV, NKJV, ESV, RV1960 (Spanish), HCSB, Message, NIrV, and NASB. This ranking is based on unit sales through May 31, 2011 (http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/documents/BSLs/Bible_Translations.pdf). Only the NLT and more recently the ESV have begun to see widespread use.

13 Two other related translations are based on the NIV: the British NIVI (1996 by Hodder and Stoughton) and more recently the TNIV (2005)—an unsuccessful attempt by the publisher to replace the NIV.

14 Both in this section and the remainder of the paper I focus almost entirely on the NT since that is my area of major study. I have not read the NIV11 OT other than a few scattered passages.
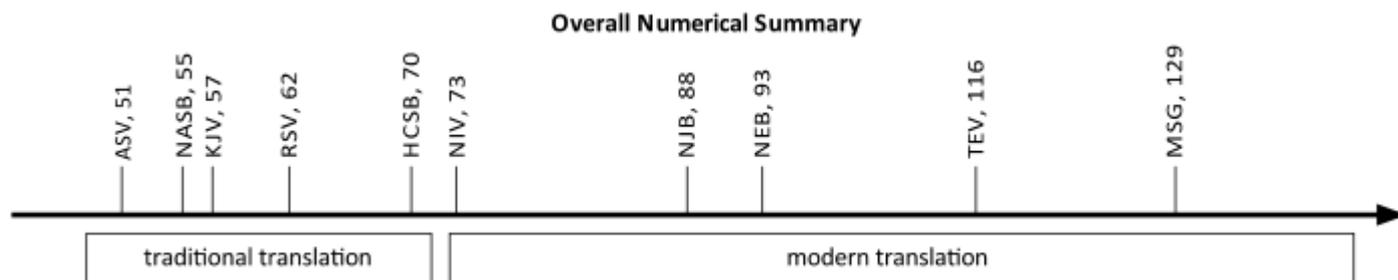
15 I have addressed this issue in much greater detail in "The English Standard Version: A Review Article," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 8:2 (2004): 5-56, earlier versions of which may be found at http://www.ntresources.com/esv.htm.

16 These two approaches have sometimes been called "literal" and "dynamic" equivalence. I have detailed the problems with such terminology in the article cited in the previous footnote.

17 This is not necessarily a "thought for thought" translation, but one that alters the grammatical form when necessary to preserve accurate meaning. In some cases form and meaning are interrelated, and in such cases functional equivalence attempts to preserve the necessary formal elements. But in most instances the form is language-specific and is not essential to expressing the meaning in another language. In many cases it cannot be maintained. Every translation, including the most formal, makes many substantial revisions to the form of the original.

18 This scale is not proportional; only the relative positions are significant. I have not attempted to distinguish the relative position of those translations at the functional end of the spectrum. Similar charts

that reflect roughly the same relative positions may be found in Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 42; Robert Milliman, "Translation Theory and Twentieth-Century Versions," in *One Bible Only* (ed. R. Beacham and K. Bauder; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 146. David Bell attempts to evaluate such factors with a numerical rating in his dissertation, and his conclusions are quite similar to this essay's summary chart. See "A Comparative Analysis of Formal Shifts in English Bible Translations with a View towards Defining and Describing Paradigms" (PhD diss., Universidad de Alicante [Spain], 2005). Bell's summary chart is as follows (p. 314; I have simplified the design, but values and relative positions are the same):

Overall Numerical Summary

ASV, 51 — NASB, 55 — KJV, 57 — RSV, 62 — HCSB, 70 — NIV, 73 — NJB, 88 — NEB, 93 — TEV, 116 — MSG, 129

traditional translation | modern translation

Bell's data compares primarily formal elements, so it is only a partial evaluation; but it provides a reference point for relative positions on the translation spectrum. But the labels that Bell assigns—traditional versus modern (problematic designations in my opinion)—are not distinguished accurately based on his own data. The division point should be between NIV and NJB, not between HCSB and NIV—two translations which are very similar in nature and that have only a three-point spread in Bell's data. Perhaps three categories would be better: formal (ASV-RSV), mediating (HCSB-NIV), and functional (NJB-MSG).

19 Some points of this review sound like it is comparing the ESV and NIV11 primarily because the most vocal critics of the NIV84 and NIV11 are strong proponents of the ESV. By responding to such criticisms, comparing the two translations is inevitable. I have already had my say on the ESV (see n. 15); it is a good translation and has its place, though it is not my personal preference even though I teach from it every Sunday due to the church setting in which I minster.

20 There is a surprising amount of functional equivalence in the ESV, far more than one would suspect from reading the publisher's PR material. Indeed, some of the best features of the ESV are those places where it has done just that. My review of the ESV points this out in a number of places. Mark Strauss has made a similar observation: "As I was reading through the ESV (in conjunction with another project), I came to the epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews contains some of the finest literary Greek in the New Testament and can be a very difficult book for my Greek students. I expected to encounter substantial problems in the ESV. Instead, I found that the ESV was quite well translated in Hebrews, with fewer of the kinds of problems I was encountering elsewhere. Then the reason dawned on me. The fine literary Greek of Hebrews—with radically different word order, grammar and idiom—is simply impossible to translate literally into English. To do so produces gibberish. Ironically, the ESV was at its best when it *abandoned* its 'essentially literal' strategy and translated the meaning of the text into normal English" ("Why the English Standard Version [ESV] Should Not Become the Standard English Version: How to Make a Good Translation Much Better," paper presented at the annual ETS meeting, 2008, p. 2).

21 For a discussion of this issue, see my article "Verbal-Plenary Inspiration and Translation," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 11 (2006): 1-37 (http://dbts.edu/journals/2006/Decker.pdf). Strauss makes a similar observation: "Some critics have claimed that the only way to protect the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture is to translate literally. This, of course, is linguistic nonsense. The translation that *best* preserves the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture is one that clearly and accurately communicates the *meaning* of the text as the original author intended it to be heard. The Greek idioms that Paul or John or Luke used

did not sound awkward, obscure or stilted to their original readers. They sounded like normal idiomatic Greek. Verbal and plenary inspiration is *most* respected when we allow the meaning of the text to come through" ("Why the English Standard Version [ESV] Should Not Become the Standard English Version," 32).

22 As a grammarian it pains me to talk about "gender language" since gender is a grammatical category, not a physiological one! But that is the way the discussion has been phrased, so I acquiesce to common usage and in so doing illustrate a point made earlier: words are not always used according to traditional dictionary definitions!

23 This sort of usage is pervasive, e.g., in *An Inclusive Language Lectionary* (NCC; the *Readings for Year B* volume; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1987). As an example, Lesson 2 is from Gal 4:4-7, "And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of the Child into our hearts, crying, '[*God! My Mother and*] Father!" (p. 42, brackets and italics in original).

24 Unless otherwise noted, all uses of "inclusive language" in this paper refer to this definition.

25 D. A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 186-87.

26 E.g., Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem, *The TNIV and the Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 37; the phrase "language police" occurs ten times. This book updates and expands idem, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy: Muting the Masculinity of God's Words* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000). The earlier edition responds to the NIVI.

27 There does appear to be such evidence in the case of the NRSV. The preface, "To the Reader," says, "During the almost half a century since the publication of the RSV, many in the churches have become sensitive to the danger of linguistic sexism arising from the inherent bias of the English language towards the masculine gender, a bias that in the case of the Bible has often restricted or obscured the meaning of the original text. The mandates from the Division [of Education and Ministry of the National Council of Churches of Christ] specified that, in references to men and women, masculine-oriented language should be eliminated as far as this can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture."

28 The following summary above comes from "NIV Translation Philosophy," http://www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview.

29 They explain in a Q&A format discussion: "Q: Was the goal with the NIV update to make this version more gender inclusive? [A:] The CBT's mandate under the NIV charter is to maintain the NIV as an articulation of God's unchanging Word in contemporary English. *To the extent that gender inclusive language is an established part of contemporary English* and that its use enhances comprehension for readers, it clearly was an important factor in decisions made by the translators" (emphasis added; http://www.thenivbible.com/experience/common-questions).

30 See the foreword by linguist Valerie Becker Makkai (University of Illinois-Chicago) in Poythress and Grudem, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy*, xvii-xxiv. (Makkai's foreword is unchanged in the 2004 revision, even retaining reference to the NIVI.) Poythress and Grudem explicitly single this out in regard to the generic "he" in the appendix (see pp. 356-57 in the 2000 NIVI edition; pp. 468-70 in the 2004 TNIV edition) responding to Carson's *The Inclusive Language Debate*.

31 A summary is available at http://www.niv-cbt.org/information/collins-corpus-report. The full report is available at http://www.niv-cbt.org/information/collins-language-study-full-report or as a PDF at http://www.niv-cbt.org/wp-content/uploads/Collins-Report-Final.pdf. Interestingly, this extensive study is now being challenged by those who asked for the data in the first place! Cf. Vern Poythress, "Gender Neutral Issues in the New International Version of 2011," *WTJ* 73 (2011): 79-96, esp. 91-95; Denny Burk, "The Translation of Gender Terminology in the NIV 2011," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*

(Spring 2011): 17-33, esp. 26-29. The essence of these two articles is that if it can be demonstrated that many people can still *understand* the use of generic "he," then the translator must use that form since it is the closest equivalent of many third person masculine pronouns in the Bible (apparently assuming that *αὐτός* *means* "he"). This misses the point that English has multiple expressions: some are current and in active use, and others are passing out of the language and usually are only matters of passive recognition. If a translation aims to put the NT into *natural* English, it ought to use the most natural expression for such generic terms more often than the older forms that are disappearing.

32 "NIV Translation Philosophy," http://www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview.

33 I may be wrong, but the rhetoric from one side sounds to me like the sabre rattling of the old "fighting fundamentalists" and some of their more belligerent descendants. (Thankfully, not all fundamentalists operate with that mentality.) But the issues in the debate are *not* of the same importance as the battles over the deity of Christ and the inspiration of Scripture that characterized the fundamentalist-modernist controversy a century ago.

34 Historically that was not always the case. Luther translated for the German Protestants, i.e., what came to be the German Lutheran Church. The earliest English Bibles were also one-person works (Wycliffe, Tyndale, etc.), but beginning with the Bishop's Bible and continuing in the KJV, these became committee works intended for the Anglican Church, though even then the KJV committee was comprised of both Puritans and High Churchmen. There are also differences in some mission translations in recent times when translation work has been done by one person or a small group from the same mission, though this is typically the case for tribal translations rather than for large language groups. Spanish, for example, has a similar translation tradition in this regard as does English. What has come to be known as the Reina-Valera translation began with Casiodoro de Reina in 1569, which Cipriano de Valera revised in 1602. Since that time it has become a committee-based translation, particularly in the 1960 edition, the most popular revision used today.

35 The most familiar are Moffat, Beck, Williams, Phillips, Montgomery, and (if paraphrases are included) Taylor and Peterson.

36 Over the forty-five-year history of the CBT, the diversity is even greater.

37 Though I do not consciously hold any beliefs that I believe to be erroneous, I recognize that as a finite being suffering the noetic effects of sin there are flaws in my thinking. It is usually very easy to spot such flaws in others. I just wish that I had such a clear view of myself!

38 The preceding two sentences are close summaries of the video by Doug Moo, chair of the CBT, "Introductory Video with Doug Moo," posted at http://www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview/video-featuring-dr-moo. The video transcript is a slightly abridged version of the first page of the "Translator's Notes" posted at http://www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview/translators-notes.

39 "Updating the New International Version of the Bible: Notes from the Committee on Bible Translation," http://www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview/translators-notes.

40 Ibid.

41 NIV84, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God *something to be grasped*." KJV: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not *robbery* to be equal with God."

42 Although the Translator's Notes do not specify, the scholarship mentioned is the work of Roy Hoover, "The *Harpagmos* Enigma: A Philological Solution," *HTR* 64 (1971): 95-119 (summary of his 1968 ThD diss. at Harvard). Although technically the dissertation had been written and the summary article published prior to the first edition of the NIV, the research had not yet been studied and was not widely known at the time. It has since been adopted in several major commentaries on Philippians (see, e.g., Moisés

Silva, *Philippians* [2nd ed.; BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 103-4; Peter T. O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 214-16). The idiom involved includes the following: (1) When ἁρπαγμός occurs as a predicate accusative withνομίζω, ἡγέομαι, ποιέω, or τίθημι, it is an idiomatic expression. Here the relevant phrase is ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο. (2) When ἁρπαγμός occurs in this combination as an idiom, it does not have the same sense as the ἁρπαγμός word group in other contexts; that is, there is no connotation of theft or violence. (3) ἁρπαγμός and ἅρπαγμα are interchangeable forms in this idiom. The -μος ending is a rare form (not used in LXX and only here in NT); -μα is the more common form (though used only seventeen times in LXX). As a result, the background for the idiomatic use must come from extra-biblical Hellenistic Greek.

43 For a summary of the issues regarding OT Messianic prophecy in the RSV, see R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), 58.

44 Interview with Doug Moo as reported by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) study committee (WELS Translation Evaluation Committee, Supplemental Report, p. 8 [hereafter cited as "WELS Report"]).

45 Poythress and Grudem, *The TNIV*, 58, 59, 60.

46 "An Evaluation of Gender Language in the 2011 Edition of the NIV Bible: A Report from the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood," rev. 6/6/11, hereafter cited as "CBMW Review," http://www.cbmw.org/Resources/Articles/An-Evaluation-of-Gender-Language-in-the , 12 and Vern Poythress, "Gender Neutral Issues," 82-84. Thanks to Andy Naselli for pointing me to a similar, though more detailed objection by Barry Joslin: "'Son of Man' or 'Human Beings'? Hebrews 2:5-9 and a Response to Craig Blomberg," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 14 (2009): 41-50. The article by Blomberg that Joslin takes issue with is "'But We See Jesus': The Relationship Between the Son of Man in Hebrews 2:6 and 2:9 and the Implications for English Translation," in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Context* (ed. R. Bauckham et al.; London: T&T Clark, 2008).

47 "Psalm 8 as quoted by Hebrews 2:6-8 also caused concern by the way it was handled in the TNIV. In fact it was very difficult to see in the TNIV why the holy writer had cited it as a messianic reference. After expressing our concerns to the CBT, we were relieved to note that in the new NIV, there were some improvements in the way those verses were rendered" ("WELS Report," 7n2).

48 I assume the hermeneutical autonomy of the OT and reject using the NT to reinterpret the OT (though I do not do this on critical grounds; I accept both direct predictive prophecy as well as typological references), though many who might disagree with my assumption would agree with my exegetical conclusions in the OT context as Blomberg's article illustrates (see n. 45).

49 I can only sketch my conclusions; there is insufficient space in an already-long article to provide the exegetical details for either the OT or NT texts.

50 Another exegetical issue here relates to the identity of the "angels." The Hebrew text reads מֵאֱלֹהִים *(mēʾĕlōhîm)*. The NIV11 reflects this in the marginal note, "or *than God.*" The translation "angels" is influenced by παρʾ ἀγγέλους in the LXX.

51 To argue that these pronouns must be singular because the Greek text has masculine singular pronouns (αὐτός, etc.) as Poythress does ("Gender Neutral Issues," 83) is not an adequate argument. The pronouns are masculine singular because Greek pronouns always match their antecedent in gender and number. The antecedents here are ἄνθρωπος and υἱός, both masculine singular. When a generic, collective term appears, subsequent pronouns often need to become plural in English to clarify the intended reference and avoid *misreading* the referent as singular.

52 This change encourages some people to think of the physical body as sinful; I am inclined to think the earlier choice was better in many cases, but σάρξ does not always have the same meaning. "Sinful nature"

remains in Rom 7:18, 25. Cf. Douglas J.Moo, "'Flesh' in Romans: A Problem for the Translator," in *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World; Essays in Honor of Ronald F. Youngblood* (ed. Glen S. Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, and Steven M. Voth; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 365-79.

53 For a sampling of the discussion, see Carson, *Inclusive Language Debate*; Mark Strauss, *Distorting Scripture? The Challenge of Bible Translation and Gender Accuracy* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998); idem., "Current Issues in the Gender-Language Debate: A Response to Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem," in *The Challenge of Bible Translation* (ed. G. Scorgie, M. Strauss, and S. Voth; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003); Poythress and Grudem, *The TNIV*, rev. ed. of *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy: Muting the Masculinity of God's Words,* 2000); and Gordon Fee and Mark Strauss, "Gender and Translation," ch. 7 in *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 97-108.

54 The NASB and ESV are the best examples of translations that make little attempt to use contemporary English. Although both are far more intelligible than the KJV (for which I am thankful), neither of these consistently use current, natural English idiom.

55 It is also sometimes argued that translating generic referents with English masculine nouns or pronouns is necessary to preserve important theological implications of masculinity (e.g., Poythress and Grudem, *The TNIV and the Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy,* 363-67; Burk, "The Translation of Gender Terminology in the NIV 2011,"25), but this reads theological significance into grammatical gender, apparently equating masculine gender with male physiological reference. If it is crucial to translate the masculine plural form of πατήρ "fathers" or "forefather(s)" rather than, say, "ancestors" (i.e., when it refers to, well, *ancestors!* e.g., John 4:20), then on the same basis one might wonder if the feminine gender of χείρ (e.g., Mark 3:1) or ἀκροβυστία (e.g., Acts 11:3) ought to be preserved somehow in English as well.

56 The graph shown has been redrawn from a much more complex one in the Collins Report, p. 5. Only the two relevant plots (of fifteen) have been included.

57 Both graphs are from the Collins Report, p. 6. If the data are plotted diachronically they show that the use of "man" and "mankind" has declined in frequency over the past twenty years in general, written English. There was a significant decrease in the frequency of "man" in Evangelical English in 1995-99, but that usage has rebounded in 2005-2009 to the same frequency as was present in 1990-2004.

58 The guidelines are taken directly from the PDF version of the "Translators' Notes," http://www.niv-cbt.org/wp-content/uploads/Translation-Notes-Final1.pdf .

59 It is unhelpful and misleading for CBMW to count all uses of "their," etc., as changes from singular to plural and argue that guideline #1 was not followed consistently ("CBMW Report," 15-17). See guideline #3 in this regard.

60 This introduces no more complexity than English "you" in regard to singular or plural. The sense of the context is usually obvious. I doubt that most readers would misunderstand the sense of a text on this basis.

61 The charts from the Collins Report (see above) show that in "Evangelical English" "man" is the most common word in such contexts with about 45%, followed by "people" with 20%. One possible reason that I entertained for such a predominance in this category is that one of the written works included in the sample corpus of Evangelical English was Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), but even Grudem prefers "people" to "man" for generic reference. In his *Systematic Theology*, the word "man" occurs 915 times, but "people" occurs 1,510 times—a proportion closer to general written English than the "Evangelical English" corpus in which it is included. (These figures are based on an Accordance search of the digital version of Grudem's *Systematic Theology.*) It might be argued that a contemporary writer has other alternatives than someone translating a previous text (Poythress makes just this argument: "Gender Neutral Issues," 90), but that argument is invalid. A translation should use natural, contemporary English. Meaning is constrained by the receptor language, and it must match the donor language in gender

reference. If the donor language is generic, then that must be expressed the way the receptor language works, not constrained by an artificial constraint of older/traditional forms of the language. "Man" formerly served this purpose in English, but it has increasingly been replaced by "people, etc." "Man" is not the only possible English gloss for ἄνθρωπος.

62 ESV translates "I see men," but since the man was blind and saw only shapes like trees, it is hard to understand how he could have identified the people he saw to be males.

63 To suggest that eliminating a "male-oriented" term (i.e., generic "man") is capitulating to the feminist agenda (as does the "CBMW Report," 12-13) is foolishness. Though this reference is not cited (their primary example is from the OT, Prov 27:17), the charge is applied to many such instances in the writings of CBMW and related writers. Ironically, the ESV frequently does the same thing; e.g., Matt 12:36, I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak (λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργὸν ὃ λαλήσου- σιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως). Likewise in Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, "forefather" occurs only twice and "fathers" only once in this sense, but "ancestor" seven times. ("Fathers" occurs seventy-five times, but most instances are in Scripture quotes [normally RSV], references to God, or are patristic references.) It appears that the *principle* of generic reference is accepted, but the dispute is in its application. At that point one ought to be discussing exegesis of the passage(s) in question, not accusing translations of eliminating maleness.

64 "CBMW Report," 11. Although the ESV usually maintains "father" or "forefather" in instances where NIV11 reads "ancestor(s)," note Heb 7:10 (ESV), "for he was still in the loins of his *ancestor* when Melchizedek met him" (ἔτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ ὀσφύϊ τοῦ πατρὸς ἦν ὅτε συνήντησεν αὐτῷ Μελχισέδεκ). One might, using the same argument as the "CBMW Report," suggest that the ESV has "eliminated the male meaning that is present in the . . . Greek text"!

65 NET also uses primarily "ancestor" in place of the older "fathers/forefathers" (though both the older terms are used occasionally). HCSB prefers "fathers," but "ancestor/s" is also quite common; "forefather/s" does not appear.

66 For example, the ESV margin note at Phil 3:1 reads, "Or *brothers and sisters;* also verses 13, 17." Grudem also uses this phrase consistently in his *Systematic Theology* in place of generic "brother," which occurs only once alone.

67 Matt 5:22, 23; 18:15, 21, 35; Luke 17:3; Rom 14:10, 13, 15, 21; 1 Cor 5:11; 7:15; 8:11, 13; 1 Thess 4:6; 2 Thess 3:6, 15; Jas 1:9; 2:15; 4:11; 1 John 2:9; 10-11; 3:10, 15, 17; 4:20-21; 5:16.

68 The exact expression ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἀδελφή is used only once in the NT (though ἀδελφοὺς ἢ ἀδελφὰς ἢ πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ἢ τέκνα occurs twice: Matt 18:29 ‖ Mark 10:29); it would seem unlikely that such a reference would only occur once given the subject matter of the NT.

69 Carson, *Inclusive Language Debate*, 124; his discussion on 124-25 is quite helpful.

70 My only criteria was that the book not be too long and not include any of the major controversy texts since I deal with them separately.

71 In §8, I list the thirty units separately even though some include more than one change. Determining how many changes have been made is difficult since it is often hard to determine which parts might have been changed separately. In this regard it is a bit like determining how many textual variants there are in a text. "Revision units" are thus somewhat like "variant units" in textual criticism.

72 Without specific comment from the CBT on each change, it is precarious to assign motives to such changes. The revision Guidelines (discussed above) clearly explain some of these changes. Others might be explained from several perspectives.

73 Neither of these two changes involves textual variants.

74 The notes for each passage listed in appendix 2 (§7) of this article identify which of the three translations have similar wording in each of the seven texts.

75 The use of "singular *their*" is not controversial theologically, though it has its share of English critics. This is discussed above and is not included in subsequent discussion.

76 For a discussion of the "warts" in the KJV, both textual and translational, see William W. Combs, "Errors in the King James Version?" *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 4 (1999): 151-64 (http://dbts.edu/journals/1999/Combs.pdf).

77 As Fee and Strauss put it, "although meaning can never be reproduced *perfectly,* it can be rendered *truly,* that is, with a high degree of accuracy. What Bible readers need to take from this is that all Bible versions— no matter how accurate—have certain limitations" (*How to Choose a Translation*, 31).

78 The issues with the RSV are more extensive than one wart, which is why it did not meet the approval of many conservatives. Generally speaking, however, the RSV is quite well done, especially in the NT. Its serviceability is evident in that the ESV is a very light revision of the RSV, differing in only about 6-8% of the text according to some estimates.

79 As in any translation there will be many smaller warts. Some will consider the use of singular "their" to be a wart; others any changes from the traditional renderings of specific terms, etc. Those, however, are systematic/programmatic changes rather than individual warts.

80 "Translator's Notes," 7.

81 Previously the NIV84 marginal note read, "Or *deaconess.*" The NIV11 uses *deacon* in this instance with reference to a woman. Churches with which I have been associated that had women in such an office always referred to them with the English feminine form *deaconess.* Such differences appear to be customary rather than semantic.

82 As a few samples, see *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (ed. A. Köstenberger, T. Schreiner, and H. Baldwin; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995; 2nd ed., 2005); Douglas J. Moo, "What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (ed. J. Piper and W. Grudem; Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 179-93; Douglas J. Moo, "1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance," *TJ* 1 (1980): 62-83; Philip Payne, "Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A Response to Douglas J. Moo's Article, '1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance,'" *TJ* 1 (1981): 169-97; Douglas J. Moo, "The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder," *TJ* 2 (1981): 198-222; the commentary on this exchange by D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 94-95; and the detailed syntactical study of an argument posed in Payne's article by Andreas Köstenberger, "Syntactical Background Studies to 1 Timothy 2.12 in the New Testament and Extrabiblical Greek Literature," in *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (ed. S. Porter and D. A. Carson; JSNT Supp 113; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 156-79.

83 For studies of the TLG data, see L. E. Wilshire, "The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2.12," *NTS* 34 (1988): 120-34; and H. Scott Baldwin, "A Difficult Word: αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (ed. A. Köstenberger, T. Schreiner, and H. Baldwin; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 65-103, 269-305.

84 This is the accusation of the "CBMW Report": "They have given legitimacy to a feminist interpretation that did not have legitimacy from any other modern English translation (except the discontinued TNIV)" (p. 6).

85 The CBT's response to the CBMW review says, "we object very strongly to the accusation that our gender translation decisions were motivated by a desire to avoid causing offense. Our concern is always, in every decision we make, to represent God's Word accurately and naturally in modern English—we have no other agenda" ("A Brief Response from the Committee on Bible Translation to the Review of the Updated NIV by the Committee on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood," June 9, 2011, paragraph 4; see the full text at http://www.niv-cbt.org/wp-content/uploads/cbt-response-to-cbmw-review.pdf).

86 I first learned this from CBT's "Response to CBMW," paragraph 5. See John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (trans. W. Pringle; original Latin commentary, 1556; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1843; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 68. Calvin's Latin phrase was *sumere auctoriatatem*; in English, "assume authority." The "Calvin Bible" uses the same terminology; in English: "But I suffer not the woman to teach, nor to assume authority over the man, but to be silent" (1855 translation by Calvin Translation Society; http://lookhigher.net/englishbibles/calvinbible/1timothy/2.html).

87 To say that "in one stroke [this translation] removes the Bible's main barrier to women pastors and elders" ("CBMW Report," 6) is ill-advised rhetoric. Paul Wendland agrees that "the CBMW overstates the case" in this argument ("Evaluating the NIV11's Translation of αυθεντειν 1 Timothy 2:12," http://www.wels.net/sites/wels/files/Evaluating%20the%20NIV11.pdf , 2011, p. 5). He offers as a counter example: "If I would say in a conversation, 'The president assumed office today,' would anyone think, 'He means the president is assuming office *on his own initiative*'? I have a hard time believing it" (4).

88 BDAG, s.v. Ἰουνία and Ἰουνιᾶς, 480; Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 475-76. Both of these sources cite the major bibliography on the question, though this should be updated with the works cited below in nn. 90 and 93.

89 According to Reuben Swanson's data (*New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Romans* [Wheaton: Tyndale, 2001], 256), there are three accent patterns on this name: Ἰουνῖαν (only 1837), Ἰουνίαν (Bc D2 Lc P Ψ 056 1 33 69 84 104 133 1243 1270 1424 1735 1874 1881 [+ 40 more minuscules]), and all the rest are unaccented (B* ℵ A C L* 049 D* D1 F G). There are also several variant spellings: Ιουλιαν (46), Ἰουλίαν (6), and Ὀυνίαν (618 1738).

90 The NET's lengthy note usefully surveys the issue: "The feminine name *Junia*, though common in Latin, is quite rare in Greek (apparently only three instances of it occur in Greek literature outside Rom 16:7, according to the data in the TLG [D. Moo, *Romans* [NICNT], 922]). The masculine *Junias* (as a contraction for *Junianas*), however, is rarer still: Only one possible instance of the masculine name is known in extant Greek literature (Epiphanius mentions Junias in his *Index discipulorum* 125). Further, since there are apparently other husband-wife teams mentioned in this salutation (Prisca and Aquila [v. 3], Philologus and Julia [v. 15]), it might be natural to think of Junia as a feminine name. (This ought not be pressed too far, however, for in v. 12 *all* three individuals are women [though the first two are linked together], and in vv. 9-11 all the individuals are men.) In Greek only a difference of accent distinguishes between Junias (male) and Junia (female). If it refers to a woman, it is possible (1) that she had the gift of apostleship (not the office), or (2) that she was not an apostle but along with Andronicus was esteemed by (or among) the apostles. As well, the term 'prominent' probably means 'well known,' suggesting that Andronicus and Junia(s) were well known to the apostles (see note on the phrase 'well known' which follows)." The evidence from Epiphanius is questionable (as the *NTS* article on which this summary is based indicates; see n. 92 below), but a discussion of that is beyond the scope of this review.

91 It is listed under "Examples of specific changes from the 1984 NIV to the 2011 NIV" in the "CBMW Report," 7.

92 The issue is not with Junia being a woman; that seems likely. Rather the grammatical construction ἐπίσημοι ἐν determines the nature of the statement made about her. My judgment is that if the evidence given in the below *NTS* article is valid, then it is almost certain that Paul refers to this otherwise unknown lady as being well known *to* the apostles. See Michael Burer and Daniel B. Wallace, "Was Junia

Really an Apostle? A Re-Examination of [Rom 16.7](#)," *NTS* 47 (2001): 76-91, which concludes, "the genitive personal modifier was consistently used [in biblical Greek, patristic Greek, papyri, inscriptions, classical and Hellenistic texts] for an inclusive idea [i.e., "well known among"], while the (ἐν plus) dative personal adjunct was almost never so used" (90; see also the summary in n. 92). If this conclusion is correct, then it would have been better if NIV11 had reversed the text and marginal readings, though including the alternative reading is an improvement over the NIV84 edition.

[93](#) The NET note again helpfully summarizes, "The term ἐπίσημος (episēmos) is used either in an implied comparative sense ('prominent, outstanding') or in an elative sense ('famous, well known'). The key to determining the meaning of the term in any given passage is both the general context and the specific collocation of this word with its adjuncts. When a comparative notion is seen, that to which ἐπίσημος is compared is frequently, if not usually, put in the genitive case (cf., e.g., [3 Macc 6:1](#) [Ελεαζαρος δέ τις ἀνὴρ ἐπίσημος τῶν ἀπὸ τής χώρας ἱερέων 'Eleazar, a man *prominent among the priests* of the country']; cf. also *Pss. Sol.* 17:30). When, however, an elative notion is found, ἐν (en) plus a personal plural dative is not uncommon (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 2:6). Although ἐν plus a personal dative does not indicate agency, in collocation with words of perception, (ἐν plus) dative personal nouns are often used to show the recipients. In this instance, the idea would then be 'well known *to* the apostles.' See Burer and Wallace, 'Was Junia Really an Apostle? 76-91, who argue for the elative notion here."

[94](#) It is interesting that the two major, conservative, formal equivalent translations reflect opposite conclusions with no marginal note regarding the alternative!

[95](#) Feminists have attempted to bring about change in the English language, e.g., by creating new forms for generic third person reference. More than eighty proposals have been tried including *co, 'e, en, ey, h', he'er, mer, per, phe, 'self, (s)he, shem, shim, yo, e/em/eir/eirself, e/es/em, en/es/ar, et/ets/etself, ha/hez/hem, he/hes/hem, hiser/himer, hu/hum/hus, hy/hym/hys/himself, ir/iro/im, ne/nir, ne/nis/ner, ot/ots/otself, po/xe/jhe, se/sim/sis, she/shis/shim, tey/term/tem, thir/thiro/thim, ve/ver/vis/verself, xe/xem/xyr/xemself, ze/hir/hirself, ze/mer/zemself, ze/zim/zees/zeeself, ze/zir/zem/zes/sirself,* and *zhe/zhim/zher/zhimself,* etc. The oldest such proposal of which I am aware is *thon* (an abbreviation for "that one," first proposed in 1884. (The preceding examples have been gleaned from a variety of websites.) But language is not easily manipulated for ideological ends. English speakers have been more practical in meeting the need, resurrecting the use of singular "their, etc.," which was formerly common in the language.

[96](#) As with any such position there is a spectrum of positions, and the leftward edge blends seamlessly into the secular ideology with the concomitant abandonment of the authority of Scripture. This attitude should not, however, be presumed to represent the more conservative wing of egalitarianism.

[97](#) E.g., *The Inclusive New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version* (ed. Victor R. Gold, Thomas L. Hoyt, Sharon H. Ringe, Susan Thistlethwaite, Burton H. Throckmorton, and Barbara A. Withers; Oxford University Press, 1995); *The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*(ed. Priests for Equality; Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2007). Neither of these are evangelical translations. See also the *Lectionary* mentioned in n. 23.

[98](#) Fee and Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation*, 101.

[99](#) Ibid., 102.

[100](#) The CBT says, "In the pursuit of this agenda [i.e., 'to represent God's Word accurately and naturally in modern English'], CBT used extensive research into the state of modern English as a basis for our decisions about gender translation. In all our public information about the update, we have stressed the importance of this research, the 'Collins Report,' for our work" (CBT "Response to CBMW Review," paragraph 4).

[101](#) Fee and Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation*, 36-41.

102 Fee and Strauss phrase it this way: "By accurate we mean that a translation reflects the meaning of the original text as closely as possible. It should transport modern readers back to the world of the Bible, enabling them to hear the message as the original readers heard it.

"Although accuracy relates primarily to properly transferring the linguistic meaning of the forms of the biblical languages, it also relates to biblical history and culture. Every book in the Bible was written at a particular place and time, and a translation should seek to reproduce the foreignness of the text. . . . Accuracy also relates to genre or literary form. . . . Reproducing the style of the original is also part of accuracy" (ibid., 36-37). The "foreignness of the text" relates to the items specified—the cultural and chronological distanciation of the text's setting and message—*not* to the language used in the receptor language to communicate this information.

103 Fee and Strauss, *How To Choose a Translation,* 39.

104 A formal equivalent of this clause in Acts 11:22 would read, "But the word was heard in the ears of the church that was in Jerusalem." Even this is not "strictly" formal since the word order has been revised to match English. A "word-for-word" translation would read, "it was heard but the word into the ears of the church of the one that was in Jerusalem"—neither clear nor natural.

105 Their single issue is defending a complementarian view of men and women and opposing egalitarianism. I personally hold a complementarian position, so my objection is not to the position itself but to some of the ways in which CBMW has attempted to advance that cause.

106 See the Mission and Vision Statement on the CBMW website at http://www.cbmw.org/Our-Mission-and-Vision, s.v. "What's at Stake, #5."

107 Wayne Grudem is a member of the Board of Directors of CBMW and also a member of the Translation Oversight Committee for the ESV and General Editor for the *ESV Study Bible*.

108 The methodology essentially collates a large quantity of data presented in summary form. This gives the uninformed reader the impression of thousands and thousands of errors. In reality there are a few basic issues in regard to how gender-related language should be translated. These get too little attention in the review. Previously published reviews of the NIVI and TNIV have employed the same basic method. One sometimes sees a parallel in the manner in which "KJV-only" advocates defend their preference against all comers.

109 See the links to relevant materials in appendix 1 (§6).

110 A variety of reports and related documents are posted on the WELS website: http://www.wels.net/news-events/forward-in-christ/bible-revision-new-international-version-2010 . See especially the Supplementary Report as well as the Q&A document. There are also reviews of the ESV, HCSB, and AAT.

111 "WELS Report," 11-12.

112 At the time of this writing I am not aware of any other major, published responses or official position statements regarding the NIV11. The blogosphere has been "relatively" quiet. Even *World* magazine has remained calm on this release; the editor, Marvin Olasky, printed a brief, mild review that says he is "not a fan," but that there are "some improvements" ("Another New NIV?" January 1, 2011, online at http://www.worldmag.com/articles/17442). Daniel Wallace has posted a four-part review at Parchment and Pen: http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2011/07/a-review-of-the-new-international-version-2011-part-4-of-4 , concluding, "it is a well-thought out translation, with checks and balances through rigorous testing, overlapping committees to ensure consistency and accuracy. . . . the scholarship that produced this version is excellent." He describes the translation as a "gem" that "for readability . . . has no peers."

113 And yes, I deliberately use a "singular *they*" in this sentence!

114 The NIV Charter explicitly says, "The Committee shall for a reasonable time provide for a periodic review and revision of the projected translation with a view to improving its renderings, embodying the fruits of future biblical scholarship, and keeping its idiom current" (Art. 7, §4).

115 The ESV revised the RSV, which revised the RV/ASV, which revised the 1769 KJV, which revised the 6th revision of the 1611 KJV (which revised the Bishop's Bible, which revised . . .).

116 The most helpful book on the subject that I have read is Fee and Strauss's *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth.* I recommend it highly.

117 Strong's numbers don't count!

118 This is a common change in recent translations; see the ESV, NET, and HCSB.

119 Although this has frequently been understood to refer to training pastors, the text is not that specific: πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις could well be generic. There is no reason in the context why it could not also refer to Timothy training women to be teachers (e.g., of other women in a complementarian view; egalitarians, of course, will take a wider view). The NET has the same wording.

120 The direct object of the verb is only implied; both the NIV84 and NIV11 supply the implied object for clarity, as do almost all English translations, though their specific choice varies.

121 An ἐργάτης is "one who is engaged in work, *worker, laborer"* (BDAG, 390.1). The reference is to Timothy in any case, so "worker" is not objectionable. My *guess* is that "workman" is not very common in English and when it is used it seems to imply in English something like "craftsman." This is a common change; see the ESV, NET, and HCSB.

122 "Ignoble" is an uncommon and awkward word.

123 Greek text has only an indefinite pronoun, τις, so change from "man" to "those who" is entirely justified (neither the ESV, NET, or HCSB use "man"). The original NIV "he" does represent a masculine pronoun, but only because the antecedent of the pronoun (τις) is also masculine as a generic (neuter would be inappropriate and the indefinite pronouns do not distinguish masculine and feminine by form, but the feminine is not used as a generic).

124 Although the two preceding verses are directed specifically to Timothy (a string of second-person singular imperatives), the language changes to third person in v. 24. The subject of the finite verb, δεῖ, is δοῦλον κυρίου; there is no pronoun or alternate subject, the thought being developed with two complementary infinitives. It may be that Paul deliberately shifts to a broader reference at this point such that "the Lord's servant" is parallel with "everyone who confesses the name of the Lord" (v. 19) rather than being an indirect reference to Timothy.

125 "Opponents" is an accurate translation for τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους; the only significant change is from active to passive voice due to breaking a long sentence into two shorter ones, but the meaning is unchanged. The phrase "*he* must gently instruct" is the translation of an adverbial participle. There is no explicit subject since it modifies the main verb δεῖ μάχεσθαι ἀλλά . . . εἶναι.

126 There is no explicit word for the first "men" (in NIV; cf. NASB, ESV) or for "teachers" (in NIV11). Either must be supplied for clarity. Other translations supply "people" (e.g., NET); HCSB uses simply "these."

127 Greek: πονηροὶ ἄνθρωποι (anarthrous adjective in first attributive position). The ESV, NET, and HCSB translate very similarly, recognizing the generic reference of ἄνθρωποι: "evil people."

128 The reference of ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος is certainly generic, but it is an awkward phrase to put into English. "Servant of God" may not be the best choice, but it is serviceable so long as people don't try to work backwards from English to Greek (always a dangerous route regardless of the translation used). The marginal note reads, "Or *that you, a man of God.*" The NET does something similar: "the person dedicated to God," with a note reading, "*tn* Grk 'the man of God,' but ἄνθρωπος (anthrōpos) is most likely used here in a generic sense, referring to both men and women."

129 The marginal note reads, "The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family." The NET uses the same expression; the ESV has "brothers" in the text, but a marginal note, "Or *brothers and sisters.*"

130 Clarifies that the second person pronoun, ὑμῶν, is plural.