

## The Improved Gender Accuracy of the TNIV Over the NIV

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July 5, 2002

NIV = New International Version  
TNIV = Today's New International Version  
KJV = King James Version  
NKJV = New King James Version  
TLB = Tyndale Living Bible  
NLT = New Living Translation  
NASB = New American Standard Bible  
RSV = Revised Standard Version

### Criticism with Sensationalism

A recent article in the Simi Valley *Star* newspaper recently ran an article by Rowland Nethaway on the *Today's New International Version* with this heading: "Politically correct gender-neutral Bible open to interpretation." Ed Vitaliano, news editor for the activist American Family Association Journal titled his article, "New TNIV translation plays fast and loose with God's Word." *World Magazine's* headline announced, "The NIV's Twisted Sister." Such headings make most conservative Evangelicals cringe, thinking someone has put a modern spin on God's Word that alters the original Greek meanings to fit the trends of our culture. In fact, when I decided to carefully examine the TNIV and compare it with the original Greek, I expected to find a liberal mistranslation because of the negative press it had received. To my pleasant surprise, I instead discovered an amazing improvement in gender accuracy over the NIV! Nethaway wrote, "It might be that this new Bible version is simply more accurate, not more politically correct." After checking it out for myself, I can remove the "might be" and endorse the TNIV as a version that truly is more accurate in its gender changes in the New Testament (the Old Testament is not available yet). While no translation is perfect, the TNIV is a marked improvement on the highly respected NIV. Beware of the sensational negative publicity. Some usually reputable conservative publications lowered themselves to tabloid-like headlines.

Read the TNIV for yourself before you make a judgment.

The TNIV website is factual as it answers the unwarranted gender controversy surrounding the new version:

*The term "gender-neutral" has often been used in error when used to describe inclusive language texts. The TNIV is in fact "gender-accurate." Gender neutrality suggests the removal of specific male or female attributes. The TNIV does not remove these attributes or "neuter" any passages of Scripture. The TNIV uses generic language **only** where the meaning of the text was intended to include both men and women. These changes reflect a better understanding of the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew.*

### Anthropos Usually Includes Both Genders

Two Greek words, *anthropos* and *aner*, are at the center of the controversy. The NIV generally translates them both as male gender. The problem is that *aner* is a more gender specific term usually pointing

to males (men or husbands), but *anthropos* is a more general term that most often means mankind in general — that is, a human being of either gender. We get our English term anthropology, meaning the study of mankind, from a combination of the two Greek words *anthropos* (mankind/human beings) and *logos* (word/study). Anthropology is the study of both male and female human beings, not just male homo sapiens. The NIV's frequent translation of *anthropos* as "man," or in the plural "men," is confusing and may unintentionally exclude women since *anthropos* is usually gender-neutral including both men and women. To be fair to the NIV, there are several passages in which the NIV improved upon the KJV and NKJV, translating *anthropos* in an accurate gender-neutral way. James 1:19 is a good example: *anthropos* in the KJV and NKJV is translated, "man," when it actually means human beings of either sex, so the NIV gives the more accurate translation of "Everyone."

KJV & NKJV— let **every man** be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: NIV—**Everyone** should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

James 2:24 is another example where the NIV translates *anthropos* with the accurate gender-neutral, "person," where the KJV and NKJV, unnecessarily and inaccurately constricts the male gender meaning to males, with the translation, "man." Other examples include Romans 2:9 ("every human being" for "every soul of man"), Romans 12:18 ("everyone" for "all men") and 2 Corinthians 3:2 ("everybody" for "all men").

Unfortunately, the NIV fails far too often to give the more accurate gender-neutral translation of *anthropos*, so the TNIV is a welcomed improvement. Since *anthropos* is used 550 times in the New Testament, and most of those uses are gender inclusive, the TNIV has corrected the mistranslations of the NIV far too many times to list them all here. The following list of passages is representative of the more linguistically accurate and more generically inclusionary TNIV in comparison to the less accurate and less inclusionary NIV (the English translation of *anthropos* is in bold):

1. Matthew 4:4

NIV— Jesus answered, "It is written: '**Man** does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

TNIV— Jesus answered, "It is written: '**People** do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

[Truth—Both men and women do not live on bread alone. Error—Only men do not live on bread alone and not necessarily women.]

2. Matthew 4:19

NIV— "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of **men**."

TNIV— "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to catch **people**."

[Truth—Jesus sent them to reach both men and women. Error—Jesus sent them to reach only men, and not necessarily women.]

3. Matthew 5:16

NIV—In the same way, let your light shine before **men**, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

TNIV—In the same way, let your light shine before **others**, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

[Truth— We are to shine our light before both men and women. Error—We are to shine our light before only men, not women.]

4. Matthew 5:19

NKJV— Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches

**men** so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

NIV—Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches **others** to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

TNIV—Anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches **others** accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

[Truth— We are not to teach either men or women to break the least of the commandments.

Error— We are not to teach men (women we may) to break the least of the commandments.

Question—why not an uproar when the NIV properly translated this *anthropos* as gender-neutral, “others”?]

5. Matthew 6:14

NIV— For if you forgive **men** when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

TNIV— For if you forgive **others** when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you

[Truth— We are to forgive both men and women. Error— We are forgive only men, not women.]

6. Matthew 22:16

NIV—They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by **men**, because you pay no attention to who they are.

TNIV—They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by **others**, because you pay no attention to who they are.

[Truth— The Pharisees meant that Jesus was not swayed against the truth by men or women.

Error— The Pharisees meant that Jesus was not swayed against the truth by only men, women may have swayed him.]

7. Romans 2:16

NIV—This will take place on the day when God will judge **men’s** secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

TNIV—This will take place on the day when God judges **everyone’s** secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

[Truth— God will judge the secrets of both men and women. Error— God will judge the secrets of only men, not women.]

8. Romans 3:4a

NIV—Not at all! Let God be true, and **every man** a liar

TNIV—Not at all! Let God be true, and **every human being** a liar.

[Truth—Every man and woman is a liar. Error—Only men are liars.]

9. 1 Corinthians 1:25

NIV—For the foolishness of God is wiser than **man's** wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than **man's** strength.

TNIV—For the foolishness of God is wiser than **human** wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than **human** strength.

[Truth— God is wiser and stronger than both men and women. Error— God is wiser and stronger than only men, not women.]

10. 1 Corinthians 11:28

NIV—**A man** ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

TNIV—**We** ought to examine ourselves before we eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

[Truth—Every man and woman should examine themselves before partaking of communion.

Error—Only men should examine themselves before partaking of communion.]

11. 1 Corinthians 15:39

NIV—All flesh is not the same: **Men** have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

TNIV—All flesh is not the same: **Human beings** have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

[Truth—Men and women have a different kind of flesh from animals. Error—Only men have a different kind of flesh from animals, but not necessarily women.]

12. 2 Corinthians 5:11

NIV—Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade **men**. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

TNIV— Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade **people**. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

[Truth—The apostles tried to win over both men and women. Error—The apostles tried to win over only men, not women.]

13. Galatians 2:16

NIV—know that a **man** is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. ...

TNIV—know that a **person** is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. ...

[Truth— Both men and women are justified by faith not works. Error— Only men are justified by faith not works, not necessarily women.]

14. 1 Timothy 2:4

NIV—who wants all **men** to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

TNIV—who wants all **people** to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

[Truth— God desires all men and women to be saved. Error— God desires all men to be saved, not all women.]

15. 1 Timothy 4:10

NIV—... we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of **all men**, and especially of those who believe.

TNIV—... we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of **all people**, and espe-

cially of those who believe.

[Truth— God is the Savior of both men and women who believe. Error— God is the Savior of all men who believe, but not women.]

16. Hebrews 9:27

NIV—Just as **man** is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

NIV—Just as **people** are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

[Truth—Both men and women die once and then are judged. Error—Only men die once and then are judged, but not necessarily women.]

### ***Anthropos* in James 5:17**

James 5:17 is of interest because *anthropos* is used after a male prophet, Elijah, yet the TNIV correctly translates it, “human,” not, “man.” Is this an attempt to make Elijah a genderless person? Of course not! The point of the passage is his humanity, not his maleness. The passage does not mean Elijah was a male just like the male readers, but that Elijah was a mere human person like we are human persons, and God answered his prayers. God wants to answer the prayers of ordinary people like you and me, including both men and women. Notice this clearer and more accurate meaning of James 5:17 in the TNIV over the NIV:

*Elijah was a **man** just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. (NIV)*

*Elijah was a **human** just as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. (TNIV)*

### ***Anthropos* Sometimes Means Males**

There are times *anthropos* refers to a male person or male persons. The context makes these occasions clear and the TNIV does not attempt to force a gender-neutral translation, but retains the correct masculine gender translation, “man” or “men.” The following passages from the TNIV illustrate the proper masculine gender use of *anthropos*:

1. Matthew 8:9a

For I myself am a **man** under authority, with soldiers under me.

2. Matthew 9:9a

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a **man** named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth.

3. Matthew 19:5

and said, ‘For this reason a **man** will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?

[It is worthy of noting that the TNIV in the next verse translates *anthropos* correctly without the masculine flavor, “what God has joined together, let not one separate,” rather than the less accurate NIV’s rendering, “ what God has joined together, let man not separate.”]

4. Matthew 25:14

Again, it will be like a **man** going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.

5. Matthew 27:57

As evening approached, there came a rich **man** from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus.

### ***Anthropos* in the Messianic Title “Son of Man”**

The TNIV retained the masculine translation of *anthropos* in the Messianic title of Jesus, “Son of Man,” as in Matthew 8:20, “Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” Based upon Daniel 7:13 (“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven...”), the Jewish people of Jesus’ day understood that when Jesus constantly referred to himself as the “Son of Man,” he was claiming a Messianic title.

Had I been on the translation team, I would have pushed for the translation of “Son of Mankind” or, better yet, “Son of Humanity” in every one of its 86 usages in the New Testament. There are two strong reasons for such a gender-neutral designation in the Messianic title—one is linguistic and the other theological. Linguistically, the Aramaic term, *enash* (Hebrew, *enosh*), like *anthropos* in the Greek, does not have a masculine gender as its primary meaning, but is more generic, like the Hebrew equivalent of *adham*, referring to both males and females. The Aramaic root of *enash* is from *nisu*, “people”, and *tenisetu*, “humanity, human race” (see B.D.B. p. 60). A related phrase *kol ‘enash* is found four times, and every time means “every man” = “everyone” (see T.D.O.T. vol. 1 pp. 347). Theologically, Jesus was not technically “the son of the man” (*ho uios tou anthropou*), which the Greek literally says if *anthropos* is translated, “man.” No man was Jesus’ father. Jesus was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4 TNIV). The Messiah came into this world without any male biological agency, but was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23 & Luke 1:27). Obviously, Jesus was born a male baby and lived his earthly life in the human gender of a male (Matthew 1:21-25 TNIV). But he was not the son of any human male! There were more precise terms for male that could have been used in both the Old Testament and New Testament, but the Holy Spirit chose terms that pointed to humanness, not maleness. The God-breathed Scriptures do not employ the other more gender specific terms for male, so why translate the title, “Son of Man,” when the terms point to “Son of Mankind?”

Given the flak the TNIV is getting for its other accurate gender improvements, one can only imagine the many screams of critics if the TNIV had properly translated Jesus’ Messianic title, “Son of Humanity.” But I will continue to honor the words the Holy Spirit chose in the original that better point to the virgin birth of Jesus the Messiah. I regret the TNIV didn’t go far enough in its improved gender-neutral translation to add support to the virgin birth of Jesus in his great Messianic title, “the Son of Humanity.”

### ***Anthropos* in 1 Timothy 2:5**

Another proper translation of *anthropos* in the TNIV is in 1 Timothy 2:5: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and human beings, Christ Jesus, himself human.” The Spirit chose the word *anthropos* intentionally to stress our Lord’s humanity, not his masculinity. The point of the passage is not that Jesus was a male, who mediates between God and males (i.e., the NIV’s “... one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”). Fuzzy translations make for fuzzy doctrine. The clear truth is that Jesus was truly human, and is the one mediator between the one deity and all humanity, both men and women. That’s what the Greek says and that’s how the TNIV translates it. Correct translations make for correct doctrine. That is why the

TNIV translation of *anthropos* in Philippians 2:7-8 also speaks of Jesus' humanity, not his masculinity— "... being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!" The point of Philippians 2 is not that Jesus became a male human, but that he became human! Again the TNIV gets the translation right so we get our doctrine right.

### **Aner Usually Means a Male Person**

If the TNIV translators had a politically correct agenda to alter the text to impose a gender-neutrality on New Testament, then they would have played loosely with the Greek word, *aner*. But they didn't. As mentioned previously, *aner* is the Greek term with a primary masculine gender meaning. While *anthropos* is more generic, *aner* is more specifically masculine, usually referring either to a male or to a husband. *Aner* is used a little less than half as often as *anthropos* in the New Testament, yet is still a common term at 216 uses. Most of the battles over the role of women in the home and church center around this term. Usually to translate *aner* as gender-neutral would violate the word's meaning and thereby change the intended meaning of a passage. The translators of the TNIV were careful to retain the masculine gender meaning of *aner* in almost every passage, except for a few valid rare exceptions. For example, Mark 6:44 in the TNIV reads, "*The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.*" Only the men were counted, which means many more were fed that day, adding the uncounted women and children (Matthew 14:21). This is also true of the later feeding of the four thousand "men" (Matthew 15:38).

But the TNIV has also felt the fiery attacks of critics for its rare generically neutral translations of *aner*. These attacks are based upon a mistaken idea that *aner* must absolutely always refer to only a male. For example, the respected scholar Wayne A. Grudem, Ph. D., of Phoenix Seminary has said that *aner* "occurs 216 times in the New Testament, and there is no case where it clearly includes women." While Grudem's opinion is worthy of note, it is to be noted that it is only his opinion, and that many conservative Greek scholars would disagree.

### **Aner in James 1:12**

The TNIV website offers the following legitimate explanation for the use of *aner* in its example of James 1:12:

*The TNIV uses gender accurate language to clearly reflect the meaning of this passage. James 1:12 uses the Greek word aner (usually translated "man") generically. Throughout James 1-3, the author uses aner and anthropos (a word that can mean "person" or "man") interchangeably—both without intended reference to biological gender:*

<b>Anthropos</b>	<b>Aner</b>
1:7	1:8
1:19	1:12
2:20	1:20
2:21	1:23
3:8	2:2
3:9	3:2

Almost all the respected commentaries agree that *aner* has no gender specificity to only males in James 1:12. The conservative Greek scholar, D. Edmond Hiebert makes this comment on *aner* in James 1:12: “The predicate noun “man” (*aner*) is again used in the same general sense as in verse 8 above, with no thought of restricting the beatitude to the male sex. The noun is without an article, thus making it of general application, ‘any one who’ has the indicated character.” (*The Epistle of James*, p. 9)

### Other Passages Where *Aner* Includes Both Genders

A side-by-side look at the NIV and TNIV’s translations of the word *aner* makes it clear that the TNIV correctly includes both genders, and the NIV proves to be confusing to translate *aner* in such a way that it might exclude women. Once such gender inclusiveness of the nouns is established, then the pronouns naturally follow for consistency. In the following passages the English translation of *aner* is in bold:

1. Romans 4:8

NIV— Blessed is **the man** whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

TNIV—Blessed are **those** whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

2. James 1:7-8

NIV—That **man** should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded **man**, unstable in all he does.

TNIV— Those who doubt should not think they will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> **they** are double-minded and unstable in all they do.

3. James 1:12

NIV— Blessed is **the man** who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

TNIV—Blessed **are those** who persevere under trial, because when they have stood the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

4. James 1:19-20

NIV— for **man’s** anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

TNIV—because **our** anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

5. James 1:23-24

NIV—Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like **a man** who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

TNIV—Those who listen to the word but do not do what it says are like **people** who look at their faces in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at themselves, go away and immediately forget what they look like.

6. James 3:2

NIV— We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect **man**, able to keep his whole body in check.

TNIV— We all stumble in many ways. **Those** who are never at fault in what they say are perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.



I believe Grudem's strict definition of *aner* violates the obvious meaning of all of the above passages. Forcing a male-only translation due to a mistakenly rigid male-only definition of *aner* logically leads to a male-only interpretation and application of the passage. The context of those passages is clear that God did not intend women to be excluded from the meaning of *aner*. Following Grudem's unyielding definition of *aner* in every passage makes the Bible say something God did not say. Claiming *aner* always excludes women means Grudem excludes women where God includes them. To be more gender exclusive than the text allows is just as erroneous as to be more gender inclusive than the text permits.

### Lexical Support for Aner Including Both Genders on Rare Occasions

Nearly all the lexical authorities (from the older and more conservative to the recent and more liberal) support the idea that at times *aner* is at times gender inclusive in the New Testament. The TNIV rarely translates *aner* as gender-neutral (only 26 times out of 216 occurrences – 12% gender-neutral and 88% masculine). This is consistent with all of the following lexicons and dictionaries which agree that *aner* is most often a reference to a male person, but they also agree that *aner* infrequently includes both genders. The following research from my personal library is tedious reading, but it makes a powerful point that the TNIV is not violating the meaning of *aner* when it infrequently translates it as gender-neutral due to the context.

1. Greek-English Lexicon, Liddell and Scott (1843)  
“VI. Special usages: ... 4. ... every one ...5. .. every one ... 7. individuals ...  
8. ... anyone ...” (p. 138)
2. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Thayer (1885)  
“4. when persons of either sex are included, ... : Mt xiv. 35; Acts iv. 4” (p. 45)
3. The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, Multon and Milligan (1930)  
“Naturally there is nothing particular to record in the uses of this everyday word, which has in NT and Hellenistic generally much the same range in class. Gr. ... under Grimm's (3) we have ... ἀνδρες “the persons ...” (p. 42)
4. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Kittel (1964)  
[Oepke, after giving the second definition of *aner* outside the NT as “2. The word is used for the human species. ... The original is discerned, however, when ἀνδρες is used for inhabitants or people,” then the use of *aner* in the NT is presented with these words, “it occurs in most of the senses mentioned [outside the NT].” Oepke then says of the second meaning of “human species” found outside the NT “is more influential than sometimes supposed.”]  
“2. ... ἀνδρες frequently denotes more or less the totality of population. ... ἀνηρ with adj. in general statements occurs frequently in the Epistle of James (1:8.12, 23; 3:2).” (vol. 1, pp. 360-62)
5. The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament. Balz and Schneider (1978-1980)  
“2. Human beings in general ... Ανηρ can denote any *human being*. Οι ἀνδρε are the *people*,” [EDNT then lists several NT references, some of which I would not open up to both genders and the TNIV is more restrictive as well]. ... “In Jas 3:2 the τελειος ἀνηρ is the *morally perfect person* ...” (vol.1, pp.98-99)

6. The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Brown (1975)  
 “CL *aner* ... (e) man, as genus (Homer, Il. 544:-> anthropos).”  
 “1. *aner* in the NT with meaning mentioned as under CL ... (e) Lk. 5:8; Jas. 1:20 (modeled on Gk. and also OT usage). ... Paul often uses *aner* to distinguish man from *gyne* (e.g. in 1 Cor. 7:1-16). Luke uses *aner* usually in the more general meaning of —> *anthropos* (as in Lk. 11:31; 19:7; Acts 2:5 an passim).” (vol. 2, pp. 562- 63).
7. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Bauer Gingrich and Danker (1979)  
 “6. equiv. to τῆς *someone* ... Lk 9:38; 19:2; John 1:30. Pl. some *people* (1 Macc 12:1; 13:34) Lk 5:18; Ac 6:11” [some of the examples are weak, but the definition remains as a possible one in this respected lexicon] (p. 67)
8. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Abridged in One Volume, Kittle (1985)  
 [under “*aner* in the NT”]  
 “2.b. This is a common usage for either humans in general, as in Mt. 14:21, or for population of a place as in Mt. 14:35.” (p. 59)
9. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based Upon Semantic Domains, Louw & Nida (1988-1989).  
 “A Human Being (9.1-9.32) 9.1. ἀνθρώπος, ...ἄνηρ, ἄνδρως: a human being (normally an adult) — (in the singular) ‘person, human being, individual,’ (in the plural) ‘people, persons, mankind.’ ... ἄνηρ... ‘happy is the person to whom the Lord does not reckon sin’ Ro 4.8. The parallelism in this quotation from Psalm 32.1-2 indicates clearly that the reference of ἄνηρ is not a particular male but any person. ... It is not uncommon in languages for a term which is often used to refer to an adult male to be employed also in a generic sense of ‘person.’” (vol. 2, p. 104).

There are only a few lexical authorities that do not allow for *aner* to mean anything other than a reference to a male. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words says, “*aner* ... is never used of the female sex” (p. 389). A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament (1877) by Bullinger defines *aner* briefly as “a man: Lat vir., i.e. an adult male person, a man in sex and in age, a more honorable title than [anthropos]” (p. 476). While both of these lexicons are handy references for the New Testament student with little understanding of the Greek language, both lack the scholarly depth and respect of the above nine lexical authorities that support a possible gender inclusive meaning for *aner*. Abbott-Smith’s, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (1937), defines *aner* in only masculine gender terms, “a man,... husband, a male person,” but then lists *anthropos* as its synonym, which he defines as “*man* 1. generically, a human being male or female” (pp.37-38). Abbott-Smith offers indirect support for a gender-neutral meaning of *aner*.

### ***Aner* in Acts 17:22**

Acts 17:22 has attracted attention of the critics of the TNIV because *aner* is translated “People “ of Athens, rather than “Men” of Athens. The Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood criticized the TNIV

here by saying it “suggests that there were women debating on the Areopagus” and “mistranslates Greek *aner*, [which should be translated] ‘men.’” Here, as with Acts 20:30, I believe the TNIV should have retained the male gender idea found in *aner*. But one should be careful not to exclude all women from Paul’s audience, because the fruit of Paul’s preaching included at least one prominent woman named Damaris (Acts 17:34). F.F. Bruce offers as a possibility Ramsay’s suggestion that Damaris was “perhaps one of the class of the educated Hetairi,’ in view of the unlikelihood of an ordinary Athenian woman being present at any public meeting addressed by Paul” (Commentary on the Book of Acts, p. 364). Everett F. Harrison says, “Her presence indicates others besides council members had been present.” (Acts: The Expanding Church, p. 273). Can anyone say for certain that Damaris was not present when Paul addressed the crowd in Acts 17:22? So the TNIV has contextual support for expanding *aner* to include people of both genders.

### ***Aner* in Acts 20:30**

While I agree with most of the infrequent times the TNIV translates *aner* in a gender neutral manner, as with Acts 17:22, I do not agree with it in Acts 20:30. The official TNIV website makes an attempt to defend its translation, but I remain unconvinced that the context demands a rare gender-neutral meaning for *aner*. I believe the emphasis in Acts 20:30 is that even within the select group of elders themselves there will come false teachers. As F.F. Bruce writes, “from the ranks of the leaders of the church itself some will arise to seduce their followers into heretical bypaths” (The Book of Acts, p. 417). However, there is room for disagreement here. John Stott’s commentary is in agreement with the TNIV translation (The Spirit, The Church and The Word: The Message of Acts, p. 327):

“<sup>29</sup> [Wolves] will arise even from within the church. By distorting the truth they will induce people to forsake it and follow them instead. <sup>30</sup> So the Ephesian pastors must be on their guard, as Paul had constantly warned them while he was with them.”

All translation work entails some subjectivity, thereby making it difficult for any serious student of the Word to agree with every translation of any version. Acts 20:30 is one place where I wish the editors of the TNIV would have retained the NIV rendering, keeping the emphasis that the elders he addressed were “men.” However, I would not use Acts 20:29-30 as a major plank in the defense of masculine eldership because the passage uses *aner*. That those elders happened to be all men is not a prescriptive standard for eldership. However, Acts 20:30 is another example of the reality that all those who served as elders in the New Testament were men. Obviously, no one could use Acts 20:30 even as indirect evidence for female elders using the TNIV! But removing the word “men” in Acts 20:30 removes indirect evidence for male-only elders at Ephesus. I must add that my disagreement here does not lend support to any hyperbolic accusations that the TNIV translators were on a radical feminist mission to feminize the eldership of the church government.

### **TNIV Does Not Do Away With Anything Masculine**

*World Magazine* writer, Joel Belz, said of the TNIV, “The editors of this Bible have a preoccupation of doing away with anything masculine.” Such a comment is not a mere sensational exaggeration, but a serious distortion of the truth. The TNIV preserve all masculine genders where that is the meaning of the text.

1. The TNIV makes no attempt to feminize or gender-neutralize God. In the TNIV God’s gender is always male as the original Greek requires. The TNIV makes no attempt to feminize or gender-neutralize God. The TNIV is not like the Oxford’s 1995 New Inclusive Translation with its “God the Father-Mother”.

2. The TNIV makes no attempt to feminize or gender-neutralize Jesus Christ. In the TNIV Jesus' gender is always male, as the original Greek requires. The TNIV makes no attempt to feminize or gender-neutralize our incarnate Lord.
3. The TNIV makes no attempt to feminize or gender-neutralize the Holy Spirit. In the TNIV the Holy Spirit's gender is always male. The TNIV makes no attempt to feminize or gender-neutralize the Holy Spirit.
4. The TNIV makes no attempt to feminize or gender-neutralize the husband's leadership role in the home or in the church. No radical feminist will find new biblical support in the TNIV to eliminate the husband's leadership role in the home. The TNIV provides no new equality of women and men in the leadership of the church. This accurate preservation of the male leadership role in the home and church will now be given more detailed attention in the following paragraphs to settle the fact that the TNIV editors did NOT "have a preoccupation of doing away with anything masculine."

### **The Husband's Role in the TNIV**

The TNIV carefully retains the proper masculine gender meaning of *aner* in the passages addressing the role of husbands in the home. In the following verses *aner* is translated in the TNIV as "husband(s)" without any altering of his role:

1. 1 Corinthians 7:2  
But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own **husband**.
2. Ephesians 5:22  
Wives, submit yourselves to your own **husbands** as you do to the Lord.
3. Ephesians 5:23  
For the **husband** is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.
4. Ephesians 5:24  
Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their **husbands** in everything.
5. Ephesians 5:33  
However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.
6. Colossians 3:18  
Wives, submit yourselves to your own **husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord.
7. Titus 2:4-5  
Then they can urge the younger women to love their **husbands** and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their **husbands**, so that no one will align the word of God.

8. 1 Peter 3:1

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your **husbands** so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,

9. 1 Peter 3:5

For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They submitted themselves to their own **husbands**,

### Gender and the Church in the TNIV

The TNIV also retains the masculine gender meaning of *aner* in the passages relating to the role of men in the church. Where the original Greek points to masculine church leadership, the TNIV never removes that masculine meaning:

1. Acts 1:21

Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the **men** who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, [no change from the NIV].

2. Acts 6:3

... choose seven **men** from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them.

3. 1 Corinthians 14:35

If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own **husbands** at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

4. 1 Timothy 2:8

I want **men** everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

5. 1 Timothy 3:2

Now the overseer must be above reproach, faithful to **his** wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

6. 1 Timothy 3:12

A deacon must be faithful to **his** wife and must manage **his** children and **his** household well.

7. Titus 1:6

An elder must be blameless, faithful to **his** wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

### In Titus 1:6 the TNIV Adds “Man”

Titus 1:6 is worthy of additional special attention because the original only says, “having children who believe,” but the TNIV adds “a man” to the passage, making the masculine identity of the elder even stronger than the original Greek. I base this point on a simple comparison of the NIV with the TNIV as follows:

(Titus 1:6 NIV) An elder must be blameless, the **husband** of but one wife, a **man** whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

(Titus 1:6 TNIV) An elder must be blameless, faithful to **his** wife, a **man** whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

The above comparison shows the translators added the word “man” in the TNIV as they did in the NIV. I believe the “his” in “faithful to his wife” is the place where the TNIV put their translation of *aner* as that is where they had “husband” in the NIV. There is no “his” in the original Greek in the literal phrase, “one woman man.” So they either added “his” or they added “man.” The use of commas to separate the phrases also lends support to the point that they added the word “man.” This passage is clear evidence that the TNIV has no intent to force a gender-neutral understanding on the church leadership office of an elder. The editors actually added “a man” to the passage where the Greek has none. That does not look like political correctness out of control to me!

Mark Strauss, in his excellent book on translating the Bible, *Distorting Scripture*, wonders why there has been no uproar over the many additions of the words “man” or “men” where there is no Greek term in the text to support it. Strauss writes, “in the NIV there are 1,357 verses where the English words ‘man’ or ‘men’ appear with no corresponding term in the Greek or Hebrew. Those who are so concerned about retaining the form of the original Greek or Hebrew should be outraged at such ‘additions’ to God’s word.” Isn’t it odd that there is such an uproar when women receive greater inclusion in the Bible than is in the original language form, but when men are given greater inclusion than the original language form states there is not a peep?

### **Gender and Elders in 1 Timothy 3 in the TNIV**

Some may wonder why in 1 Timothy 3:1 the NIV and the TNIV have “anyone” where the KJV, NKJV and TLB has “a man” in the list of qualifications for an overseer. The answer is simple, the Greek does not have the word *aner*, which means “man,” but uses the word *tis*, which means “anyone.” Does this mean the passage opens the door to women elders? Not necessarily, because the next verse makes it clear he is to be “faithful to his wife” (TNIV). But one cannot condemn the NIV and TNIV translators for not using the word “man” when the Greek has the word “anyone.” The recent NLT translates 1 Timothy 3:2a, “*For an elder must be a man whose life cannot be spoken against,*” but the word “man” is added and is not in the original Greek in that phrase.

While there is no evidence for intentional gender-tampering with the text with respect to the church leadership offices, I believe the TNIV phrase, “faithful to his wife,” in 1 Timothy 3:2 and 12 would be better translated, “a faithful husband to his wife.” The original Greek phrase has only three words—*mias gunaikos andra*: (1) *mias*, meaning “one,” (2) *gunaikos*, meaning “woman,” or “wife,” the context here is obviously “wife,” for Paul would not advocate fornication and (c) *andra*, meaning “man” or “husband”—as noted above, the context here is obviously a married man. I concur with the TNIV that the idea of faithfulness is in the phrase, even though the word is not. But since the word *andra* (from *aner*) is in the phrase, then I believe it best to include the word “husband.” If the TNIV wished to make it gender-neutral, they could have translated it, “faithful to one’s spouse,” but they chose the masculine emphasis of the phrase, “faithful to his wife.” The TNIV cannot be accused of attempting to make the church office of elder gender-neutral in 1 Timothy 3:2. However I believe “a husband faithful to his wife” is closer to the original and makes the masculine gender of the office of elder clearer than the shorter “faithful to his wife” in the TNIV.

An interesting parallel phrase to “faithful to his wife” in 1 Timothy 3:2 and 12 is found in 1 Timothy 5:9

where the qualification for widow to receive support is that she must have been “faithful to her husband.” The phrase “faithful to her husband” is only three words—*enos andros gunay*: (1) *enos*, meaning “one,” (2) *andros*, meaning “man” or “husband,” the context here is obviously “husband”, for Paul would not advocate fornication and (3) *gunay*, meaning “woman” or “wife”—as noted above, the context here is obviously a formerly married woman. If the feminine gender is clear for the widow in 1 Timothy 5:9 (“faithful to her husband”), then the masculine gender should be just as clear in 1 Timothy 3:2 and 12 (“faithful to his wife”) for the elder and deacon.

### **Gender and Deacons in 1 Timothy 3 in the TNIV**

One of the most controversial offices in the church is the female deacon or deaconess. The NIV translates 1 Timothy 3:11a: “*In the same way, their wives must be respected, and must not speak evil of others.*” The TNIV translates 1 Timothy 3:11a: “*In the same way, women who are deacons are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers...*” The NIV translates *gunaykas* as “wives,” not allowing for women in the deacon office, but rather is an additional wife standard for the male deacon to qualify. The TNIV translates *gunaykas* as “women who are deacons,” opening the door for women to serve as deacons. Clearly, the NIV is not the preferred translation, because it would set a higher standard for the deacon than the elder, since the elder’s wives have no standards. How odd it would be for God to require deacons’ wives to meet certain standards, but have no such standards for the wives of the overseer, which is a higher office than the deacon.

There is another contextual reason supporting the TNIV’s translation of 1 Timothy 3:11 that establishes a role for women in the office of deacon. The phrase, “In the same way,” in 1 Timothy 3:9 is used to introduce the new office of deacon after the office of overseer is discussed. The phrase, “In the same way,” is also used 1 Timothy 3:11, so it makes sense that it also points to a new office or a new category within an office. Since the office of deacon is clearly in the immediate context of 1 Timothy 3:11, in the preceding verse 8 and the following verse 12, then the plural, *gunaykas*, which means “woman” (not “wife” as explained in the previous paragraph) must relate to the office of deacon.

Because of the phrase, “In the same way,” I would have preferred the TNIV translate *gunaykas* as “deaconess,” because it seems to be a separate office within the office. However, the translation, “women who are deacons,” need not exclude using the term deaconess. Furthermore, calling women “deacons” who serve in this office does not necessitate this office be equal in authority to the men deacons and certainly does not mean they are over the men deacons.

### **Gender and Deacons in Romans 16:1 in the TNIV**

In a similar vein, I also concur with the TNIV’s translation of Romans 16:1 over the NIV. The NIV calls Phoebe “a servant of the church,” and the TNIV calls her, “a deacon of the church.” The NIV (the NAS as well) offers a footnote option of “deaconess”, and the TNIV gives the footnote option of “servant.” The NIV Study Bible study note on this verse reads, “*servant*. One who serves or ministers in any way. When church related, as it is here, it probably refers to a specific office—woman deacon or deaconess” (p. 1658). This passage will always be debated, because the similar Greek words can mean either servant or deacon, depending on the context. Our word “deacon” is a transliteration of its sound-alike Greek counterpart, *diakoneo/diakonos*. In fact, when I hit spell check on my computer, it offers the word “deacons” as the first suggested correct spelling for *diakonos*. The NIV and the TNIV translate *diakonos* as deacon in Romans 16:1. I would prefer the translation, deaconess, but then, I also still call female actors, actresses. It really doesn’t matter to me that every title

must have a feminine form. I see no need to call a woman senator, a senatoress. No translation of the Bible calls a woman servant a servantess, so we shouldn't insist on calling a woman deacon a deaconess.

### Gender Accuracy in 1 Corinthians 11 in the TNIV

1 Corinthians 11 is another chapter in the New Testament that has been targeted by many more liberal Christians as being politically incorrect with respect to the roles of men and women. The Greek term for male (aner) and female (gunay) are frequently found in this chapter and the TNIV never alters any of the terms to make them gender-neutral. A simple reading of selections from 1 Corinthians 11 show there is no diluting the gender roles:

But I want you to realize that the head of every **man** is Christ, and the head of the **woman** is **man**, and the head of Christ is God. <sup>4</sup> Every **man** who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. <sup>5</sup> And every **woman** who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. <sup>6</sup> For if a **woman** does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a **woman** to have her hair cut off or shaved, then she should cover her head. <sup>7</sup> A **man** ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the **woman** is the glory of **man**. <sup>8</sup> For **man** did not come from **woman**, but **woman** from **man**; <sup>9</sup> neither was **man** created for **woman**, but **woman** for **man**. <sup>10</sup> For this reason, and because of the angels, the **woman** ought to have authority over her own head. <sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, in the Lord, the **woman** is not independent of **man**, nor is **man** independent of **woman**. <sup>12</sup> For as **woman** came from **man**, so also **man** is born of **woman**. But everything comes from God. <sup>13</sup> Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a **woman** to pray to God with her head uncovered? <sup>14</sup> Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a **man** has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, <sup>15</sup> but that if a **woman** has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.

It must be admitted that the above passage is a challenge for anyone to interpret and to apply in our modern day, but one cannot say the TNIV mistranslated the passage to make it gender-neutral!

### Expanding “Brothers” to “Brothers and Sisters” in the TNIV

Another place where the TNIV has done us all a favor is in the expanded translation of *adelphoi*, “brothers” (from the singular, *adelphos*, “brother”). The term is found nearly 350 times in the New Testament. Sometimes it means literal biological brother(s) as in Matthew 4:18a and is translated as simply “brothers” in the TNIV: “As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two **brothers**, Simon called Peter and his **brother** Andrew.” However, *adelphoi* often was a figurative expression for spiritual brothers and sisters in the family of God. In this usage, *adelphoi* is not intended to exclude women, but is simply shorthand, mentioning only spiritual brothers, but including spiritual sisters as well. For this reason the TNIV correctly translates the word with the phrase, “brothers and sisters” to include spiritual sisters, since that is the meaning. The translation principle of dynamic equivalence makes this legitimate (although some reject dynamic equivalence as legitimate, in practice it is used to some degree by all translators). Every pastor and teacher of the Word has often had to stop after reading a verse that begins with, “Brothers,” and then quickly say, “This includes both brothers and sisters in Christ.” When I was a part of a Brethren denomination and used the KJV or NKJV (*adelphois* was translated, “brethren”), I used to make a little joke of the matter and say, “This word, brethren, includes all you sistern.”



The following well-known verses show how helpful, gender-inclusive and accurate the TNIV translation of *adelphois* is as compared to the NIV, which could be mistakenly taken to mean women are excluded from those addressed:

1. Romans 12:1

NIV—Therefore, I urge you, **brothers**, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

TNIV—Therefore, I urge you, **brothers and sisters**, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your proper worship as rational beings.

2. 1 Corinthians 15:58

NIV—Therefore, my dear **brothers**, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

TNIV—Therefore, my dear **brothers and sisters**, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

3. Galatians 6:1

NIV—**Brothers**, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore **him** gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

TNIV—**Brothers and sisters**, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

4. Philippians 4:8

NIV—Finally, **brothers**, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

TNIV—Finally, **brothers and sisters**, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

5. James 1:2-3

TNIV—Consider it pure joy, my **brothers**, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

TNIV—Consider it pure joy, my **brothers and sisters**, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

One of the strongest critics against the TNIV, Wayne Grudem, makes a strong defense for (not against!) frequently translating *adelphoi* as “brothers and sisters” in the RSV in his 1997 article, “What’s Wrong with Gender-Neutral Bible Translations?” Grudem writes:

“This situation seems to me to be one where the current controversy has caused us to look again at the reasons for our traditional translations and to ask if they are the best translations possible. In many cases they are, but in the case of *adelphoi* these more recent translations seem to have made a genuine improvement in accuracy. But I realize that not everyone will agree with me on this conclusion. Many translations may wish to leave the traditional “brothers” in these verses, out of a sense that

in the current controversial climate any such change may *appear* to be a concession to societal pressures to adopt gender-neutral Bible translation even when accuracy is sacrificed. I understand and respect that consideration. But in this case, it seems to me that accuracy is improved by “brothers and sisters,” since “brothers” in standard current English is not a term that includes women, as the Greek intends.”

In the above paragraph, Grudem makes several important points that support the TNIV. First, traditional translations with respect to gender must be reexamined periodically to see if they truly are the best. Second, it is not just permissible, it is sometimes a necessary for improved accuracy to add words (i.e., “and sisters”) not found in the original Greek form in order to provide a proper gender-neutral meaning the Greek intends. Third, accuracy of meaning is more important than merely appearing to make a concession to gender-neutral societal pressures. Fourth, when we differ with other sin these areas in the above three points, we should do so with understanding and respect. If Grudem would consistently apply the above four principles to an overall evaluation of the TNIV, he would have little to say against the TNIV, and any criticisms would be said without judging motives and without extremist innuendoes (as in Hebrew 2:17).

### **Brothers and Sisters in Hebrews 2:17**

The TNIV has taken some heat over its transition of “brothers and sisters” in Hebrews 2:17 because of the connection of the phrase to the Lord Jesus Christ. The TNIV reads: “For this reason he [Jesus] had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest...” Wayne Grudem in *World Magazine* makes this outlandish comment in the TNIV’s rendering of Hebrews 2:17: “Did Jesus have to become like a sister in every way? ...This text does not quite proclaim an androgynous Jesus, but it comes close...” Focus on the Family Vice President of Public Policy, Tom Minnery, went even further with this extreme prediction, “I can see, down the road, proponents of gay activism suggesting that Jesus is not fully man if he ‘became like his sisters in every way,’ and that would seem to even give biblical license to transsexuals to change their sexuality.” First off, the translation never says Jesus was to be made like his sisters in every way, but puts both terms together, brothers and sisters. Secondly, Jesus is called a “he,” not a “she” or a “he-she” (“**he** had to be made like... in order that **he** might”). The entire TNIV is clear that Jesus was male, not female nor a hermaphrodite. No sane person could read the TNIV New Testament and think Jesus was anything other than a Jewish baby boy who grew up to be Jewish man. Thirdly, the point of the passage is NOT that Jesus was made a male human with male genitals and male hormones who only can relate to males! The point of the incarnation is that Jesus became human, and can relate to all humanity, even women! Yes, in fact Jesus did become like his sisters in their humanity, but obviously not their sexuality. What if someone interpreted 1 John 4:17 (“in this world we are **like him**”) to mean women believers become like Jesus in his gender. Would that be a reason to reject the translation? It is as ridiculous to say Hebrews 2:17 in the TNIV means Jesus became androgynous as to say, 1 John 3:2 (“we shall be **like him**, for we shall see **him** as **he** is”) means women believers will turn into males at Jesus’ return. Suppose some guru claimed that 1 John 3:2 supported the Eastern reincarnation view that women must at some point be reincarnated as a man to reach nirvana, that bizarre interpretation would be no reason to discard the translation. Discard the wild interpretations, not the accurate translations. There is no “androgynous Jesus” in the TNIV anywhere! Neither is there any support for “transsexuals to change their sexuality” in the TNIV. On the other hand, Grudem and Minnery must beware of an over-emphasis on the maleness of Jesus with a blindness to his general humanity, lest they unintentionally present an unbiblical Jesus with whom women cannot relate as Gods’ Word intended.

### **“Brothers and Sisters” in James 3:1**

According to the “Concise List of TNIV Inaccuracies with Explanation” on the “no-TNIV” website, the

TNIV translation of James 3:1 opens the door to female pastors:

[In James 3:1 the TNIV] inserts “and sisters,” which is not made explicit in the Greek text. (The plural Greek word *adelphoi* can mean “brothers” or “brothers and sisters,” according to context, but in this case adding “and sisters” implies that James thought women could be Bible teachers in the early church. The Greek text does not require that idea, but the TNIV does.) When James says “become teachers,” he is likely referring to the official teaching office of the church, and many will use this TNIV verse to claim that James believed women could become pastors and teachers.

If the TNIV allows for women to be pastors and teachers, so does the NLT, because it also translates *adelphoi* as “brothers and sisters” as follows: “Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged by God with greater strictness.” Were the editors of the NLT on a feminist mission to promote women pastors? If so, why only pick on the TNIV? Of course, neither the NLT nor the TNIV have a gender-neutral agenda. Both versions are simply consistent in their translation of *adelphoi* in James’ fifteen uses. Since James uses *adelphoi* to mean “brothers and sisters” in the fourteen other uses, it is up to those who see a restrictive “brothers” only meaning in James 3:1 to come up with the evidence, not the other way around.

Furthermore, there is no compelling evidence in James 3:1 in the TNIV to support women serving as elders, or women as pastor-teachers or women holding a special teaching office in the church. Why? Because one cannot be dogmatically certain that James was referring to an official position or church office of teacher. While many fine expositors believe the “teachers” in James 3:1 were a church office (as I do and others like Peter Davids, Commentary on James p. 136 and Ralph Martin, Word Biblical Commentary: James p. 107 and Mitton The Epistle of James p. 120), many others believe it refers to a general teaching role that is not an office of leadership. Hiebert quotes Moffatt, writing, “James is seeking to curb ‘the danger of talkativeness, of reckless statements, of frothy rhetoric of abusive language, of misleading assertions’ on the part of aggressive members” (The Epistle of James p. 205). A. T. Robertson writes, “We are not here to think simply of official teachers... James here is thinking of the unofficial teachers in the churches” (Studies in the Epistle of James, pp. 104-105; see also J. Ronald Blue in The Bible Knowledge Commentary—James p. 187 and Lenski’s commentary on Hebrews and James, p. 599).

Even if James was referring to the office of teacher in James 3:1 (as I believe he does) the TNIV does not promote women pastor-teachers. The Jewish male and female audience James originally addressed would never have seriously considered a woman as a rabbi. Yet both the men and women deserved the warning that too many from the congregation were seeking the prestige of the position of church teacher. When the Jewishness of the book of James is considered, the above interpretation is much more likely than one that allows for women to be included in the “among you” even when *adelphoi* means “brothers and sisters.”

Anyone attempting to use the vague indirect evidence of James 3:1 in the TNIV to advocate women pastor-teachers would have to face the clear direct evidence in the TNIV of 1 Timothy 2:12 (unchanged from the NIV) – “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.” After reading 1 Timothy 2:12 in the TNIV, I find it hard to see any feminist agenda.

### **Translating “Sons of God” as “Children of God” in the TNIV**

The TNIV has also clarified the frequent gender-neutral meaning of the term *huios*, “son” (frequently in the plural, *huioi*, “sons”). As with the term “brothers,” the term “sons” is not meant to exclude women who are daughters of God. It is rare for the Greek New Testament to use both “sons” and “daughters” in the New Testament (Acts 12:17 & 2 Corinthians 6:18). Instead the shorthand “sons” is used to include both males and

females who are the spiritual offspring of God. This clarification by the TNIV over the NIV can be seen in Galatians 3:26:

NIV—You are all **sons of God** through faith in Christ Jesus,  
TNIV—So in Christ Jesus you are all **children of God** through faith.

### Sonship in Romans 8:14-16 in the TNIV

However there are times that the masculine sonship has a theological significance. The TNIV does a masterful job in Romans 8:14-16 of translating the first *huios* as “children”, but keeps the masculine idea in its translation of *huiiothesia*, “adoption to sonship.” Note the differences and similarities in the NIV and TNIV below:

NIV—Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**.<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of **sonship**. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

TNIV—For those who are led by the Spirit of God are **children of God**.<sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather the Spirit you received brought about your **adoption to sonship**. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

The TNIV in the above passage makes it clear that the Spirit of God leads all the children of God, both male and female. Yet it says both males and females gain an “adoption to sonship.” This is not an inconsistency, but a needed change to make an important distinction. The Greek term *huiiothesia* is derived from the combination of two words, *huios* (“son”) and *thesis* (“a placing”), thus the translation in the TNIV of this single Greek word into the English phrase, “adoption to sonship.” The Greek term *huiiothesia* is not found in the LXX (The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament used in Paul’s day) nor in any of the Hellenistic (culturally Greek) Jewish writing of Paul’s day, nor was the practice of legal adoption officially recognized among the Jewish people (see Romans by Douglas Moo, p. 501). This means Paul was not referring to any legal Jewish custom, but to a Greco-Roman custom. To understand Paul’s analogy one must understand Roman adoption and the high priority given to sons over daughters. Adoption was much more frequent and more honored in Roman society than it is in the USA today. Adoption meant the new son was chosen by the father, had all past debts cancelled, took on the new family name and was entitled to the inheritance of his new father. At the same time, the new father now owned all the adoptee’s property, had the right to discipline the son, assumed the responsibility for support and had final say in his relationships (see Backgrounds of Early Christianity by Everett Ferguson, p. 62). Daughters could be adopted, but in general, sons were much preferred to daughters to such a degree that even at birth many unwanted infant girls were left exposed to die. So the TNIV’s translation of “adoption to sonship” is necessary to give understanding to Paul’s point that both males and females are adopted into God’s new family, and both males and females get the same status of legal sonship. Bravo TNIV!

Conservative commentator John MacArthur interprets “son of God” and “adoption as sons” in Romans 8:14-15 as gender neutral with repeated variations of children of God. Here is a list of his gender-neutral phrases from his commentary on Romans 8:14-15 where he interprets “son(s)” as “child” or as “children” or as “boy or girl” (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 1-8, pp. 429-37):

“believers are eternally related to Him as His **children**” (p 429)  
“can be certain he is God’s **child**” (p. 430)

“God’s **children** are secure in Him” (p. 430)  
 “a **child** of God will not always feel secure” (p. 430)  
 “Even for the obedient **child** of God” (p. 430)  
 “our heavenly Father wants His **children** to be certain” (p. 430)  
 “Even the **child** of God cannot discern” (p. 431)  
 “God’s Spirit sovereignty leads His **children** in many ways” (p. 431)  
 “God leads His **children** by illumination” (p. 431)  
 “even God’s own **children**” (p. 433)  
 “the Spirit leads God’s **children**” (p. 433)  
 “The humble **child** of God knows” (p. 433)  
 “our Heavenly Father’s great desire for His **children**” (p. 434)  
 “our adoption as God’s **children**” (p. 434)  
 “Because God’s **children** share in flesh and blood” (p. 434)  
 “permanently adopted as **children** of God” (p. 435)  
 “adoption ... the action by which a husband and wife decide to take a **boy or girl**” (p. 435)  
 “the adopted **child** attains all the rights” (p. 435)  
 “God ... seeks out unworthy men and women ... and makes them His **children**” (p. 436)  
 “an adopted **child**, especially an adopted son” (p. 436)  
 “According to Roman law, a father’s rule over his **children** was absolute” (p. 436)  
 “believers ... are indeed God’s adopted **children**” (p. 437)  
 “just as every **child** does to his earthly father.” (p. 437)  
 “In Him ... we become a true **child**” (p. 437)  
 “being God’s adopted **children** was clearly understood” (p. 437)  
 “chose every believer to be His beloved and eternal **child**” (p. 437)

From the many quotes above (and in his reliable Study Bible note on “spirit of adoption” where he interprets “sons of God” as “His children”), it is clear that MacArthur believes that gender-neutral terms like “children of God” are the correct interpretation of “sons of God.” It seems odd that someone with such a strong and repetitive gender-neutral interpretation of “sons” as “children” would be against a translation that merely clarifies such an interpretation.

### “Fathers” Changed to “Parents” in Hebrews 12 in the TNIV

The TNIV changes the NIV’s “fathers” to “parents” in several passages, including Hebrews 12. The Greek word *pater(es)* is another one of those words with more than one meaning, one of which is primary and the other that is less common. The primary meaning of *pater(es)* is father(s), but a secondary meaning is parent(s), especially in the plural. Rather than quote the lexical authorities, I will quote the fundamentalist commentator, John MacArthur, on *pateres* from his commentary on Ephesians 6:4 (NIV—“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”). The TNIV retains the literal primary translation of “fathers,” in Ephesians 6:4, but MacArthur argues for the more liberal gender-inclusive definition of “parents” (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians, p. 316)

“Though *pateres* (fathers) usually referred to male parents, it was sometimes used of parents in general. Paul has been speaking about both parents in the preceding three verses, and it seems likely that he still has both in mind in this term in verse 4. The same word is used in Hebrews 11:23 to refer to Moses’ parents.”

Is John MacArthur to be castigated as some liberal theologian for promoting a gender-inclusive definition of *pateres* in Ephesians 6:4? Of course not! Is MacArthur in error in thinking that *pateres* means parents instead of fathers in Ephesians 6:4? I think he's wrong here, and so do the TNIV translators (but I highly recommend MacArthur's commentaries for the students who have no Greek or Hebrew language background). Paul just used the more specific Greek word for parents (*goneus*) in verse one, "Children, obey your parents..." and switched to *pateres* in verse four. It seems Paul wanted to focus upon the father's role as the leader-parent in the raising of the children. But there is room for disagreement here without accusing those who differ of having a liberal feminist agenda. One has no more right to accuse the TNIV editors of having a liberal feminists agenda than one has the right to accuse MacArthur of having such an agenda in his commentary on Ephesians.

As he interprets "sons of God" as "children of God" in Romans 8, MacArthur repeatedly does the same in Hebrews 12, but he also repeatedly interprets "father(s)" as "parent(s)." Notice how often he does this (I will put only "parents, but not "child(ren)," in bold for emphasis) in his comments on the phrase "We had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them" (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Hebrews, p 337).

It is the disciplined child who respects his **parents**. The surest way for **a parent** to lose, or never gain his child's respect is never to correct or punish him, no matter how terrible the child's behavior. Even when they are growing up, children instinctively know that **a parent** who disciplines fairly is **a parent** who loves and cares. They also realize that **a parent** who always lets them have their own way is **a parent** who does not care. "We had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them," because of what that discipline proved and produced.

If one of the most highly respected and highly conservative commentators uses the word "parent(s)" repeatedly and exclusively in his single paragraph interpretation of "earthly fathers," then why should there such a concern if the TNIV translated it that way? This hue and cry against the TNIV in this area is especially strange since it is universally agreed that *pateres* can mean parents!

Every version translates *pateres* as "parents" in Hebrews 11:23 ("By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months..."). Why? The context seems to require it. For the same reason the TNIV translated *pateres* as "parents" in Hebrews 12: 7,9-10, and not "fathers" as the NIV did:

NIV—Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by **his father**? ...<sup>9</sup> Moreover, we have all had **human fathers** who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!<sup>10</sup> **Our fathers** disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

TNIV—Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by **their parents**? ...<sup>9</sup> Moreover, we have all had **human parents** who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!<sup>10</sup> **Our parents** disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

I underlined "the Father of our Spirits" for emphasis in the above translations to show the TNIV had no politically-correct gender-tampering agenda, or they would surely have also changed "the Father of our spirits"

to “the parent of our spirits.” The TNIV official website explains, “In 12:7b and 12:9a, the Greek word *pater* is not a direct reference to God. Rather, the author draws an analogy to human parents. When the text refers to God in Hebrews 12:9b, the TNIV translates, “How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!”

## **Endorsing the TNIV Does Not Mean Denial of Conservative Evangelical Values**

The TNIV has many outstanding strengths, but one of its greatest strengths is its gender accuracy. The TNIV also has a few notable weaknesses (as all translations do), but forcing an unjustifiable gender-neutrality upon the Scriptures is not one of them. So after doing some quick research on the gender accuracy of the TNIV, I offered my endorsement to their TNIV website. It was direct and to the point:

*“The TNIV is not gender-sensitive, it is gender accurate.  
It simply says it like God said it. I’m ready to switch over!”*

From this endorsement of the TNIV I received some interesting attacks. The following diatribe was sent by e-mail to most of our church staff at the Church at Rocky Peak:

*“sounds like what the Jehovah’s Witnesses do ... maybe you think someone should write a new book to explain it better than the Bible does ... That’s what the Holy Spirit does, He makes sense of what can’t be made sense of. What’s next, Dr. David W. Miller? Is homosexuality okay, or maybe premarital sex, or pornography? ... Are you opening the door for the Devil, or is He or is She already a part of your church? ... Yes, the devil can raise a big church, just look at the Mormons. ... So don’t pat yourself on the back because of your big church, maybe the devil has his hand in it. ... Please don’t be offended, I had to write this and I didn’t do it out of hate, but from my heart.”*

It is difficult to know how to answer such illogical emotional outbursts. I teach what the Bible teaches about homosexuality, premarital sex and pornography—they are all sins. (By the way, in 1 Timothy 1:10 the NIV uses the unclear word “perverts” and the TNIV uses the much clearer phrase “practicing homosexuals.”) I also teach what the Bible teaches about the devil, that he is a fallen angel and that angels always appear as males, but are not physically sexual beings as we will not be in heaven in our glorified bodies (Matthew 22:30). I have never sought to raise a big church, only a biblical church that stands on the Word of God as its final authority. By God’s goodness, He has blessed us with many maturing disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the sad reality is that there will be many such irrational reactions to the TNIV as the above e-mail. In the long run, I am confident intelligent cool heads will prevail, not the reactionary hot heads. My best guess is the TNIV will become a best-selling, respected and trusted translation for English speaking believers for many years to come. Certainly there is room for debate as to which version is to be preferred, but many keen minds illuminated by the Holy Spirit and the holy Scriptures with sound translation principles will embrace the TNIV.

## **Respected Evangelical Leaders Applaud and Denounce the TNIV**

Fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell wrote in his National Liberty Journal, “This new publication is nothing more than acquiescence to feminists who are more concerned with the so-called language of ‘equality’ than they are with the message of the gospel of Christ.” John R. Stott, Rector Emeritus of All Souls Church in London writes, “Today’s New International Version is highly successful in combining both scholarly accuracy and linguistic relevance.”

I respect and love many who do not endorse the TNIV. Some of those who reject the TNIV are reputable theologians like R. C. Sproul. Others are outstanding Christian leaders like Dr. James Dobson. I am pained most by those committed conservative Christians who lack the linguistic schooling to evaluate the TNIV for themselves, but must make a decision based upon the studies of others. Dr. Dobson humbly admitted such dependence in his disapproval of the TNIV:

*“Being neither a theologian nor a linguist, I am not qualified to make an assessment of the translation accuracy of the recently released TNIV. However, I have now received sufficient feedback from a large number of evangelical scholars to convince me that this new work is a step backward in the field of biblical translation. Accordingly, I am now adding my name to the list of those who disagree with the liberties IBS has taken with God’s Word in the new translation.*”

I stand shoulder to shoulder with Dr. Dobson against the evil onslaught against the family today, including a politically-correct feminism that alters the gender of God or dilutes the headship of the husband in the home or denies the male spiritual leadership in the church. God has raised up Dr. Dobson and Focus on the Family as one of the most vital voices for truth in our land. But I believe Dr. Dobson’s well-intended comments against the TNIV were baseless when he announced, “I will continue to speak out against any effort that alters God’s Word or toys with translation methodology for the sake of ‘political correctness.’” As I have attempted to show in this paper, the TNIV does not impose a politically-correct translation methodology, but strives to provide an accurate translation that does not inaccurately exclude women. I strongly support Focus on the Family except for its stand on the TNIV.

The following list is just a few of the respected popular Evangelical leaders who endorse the TNIV: Philip Yancey, John R. Stott, Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Michael Green, Jim Cymbala, Jay Kesler, Stuart Brisco and Myron Augsburger. Of course *who* and *how many* back the TNIV are not as important as *why* and *what grounds* they have for their support. Craig Bloomberg, Ph.D., Professor of New Testament at the Conservative Baptist Denver Seminary and author of several books, including [The Historical Reliability of the Gospels](#), summarizes the sound rationale for welcoming the TNIV:

“The *TNIV* avoids the overly free translation of certain texts that previous gender-inclusive translations have included, while rendering gender-inclusive uses of “man,” “he,” “brothers,” and the like with appropriate, contemporary English exactly corresponding to the meaning of the original Greek or Hebrew. Not to do this leaves a Bible that increasingly misleads the modern reader; as the father of two daughters I know first hand how this works! And I remain a complementarian with respect to gender roles; the two issues are quite separate.”

### **The Official Statement of Opposition Against the TNIV and Swindoll**

Many prominent Christian leaders have signed their names on the following statement of disapproval of the TNIV:

“We cannot endorse the TNIV as sufficiently trustworthy to commend to the church. We do not believe it is a translation suitable for use as a normal preaching and teaching text of the church or for a common memorizing, study, and reading Bible of the Christian community.”

The living active pastor that I respect most has signed that statement—Chuck Swindoll. In my opinion, no man alive today has achieved the biblical balance of Chuck Swindoll. When I read he signed the above statement, I was surprised to say the least. When Chuck says a version is not worthy of use as a normal



teaching and preaching text, it means I had to take a serious second look at the TNIV. So I did. Yet even after a second reading of the TNIV New Testament, I still find it overall a worthwhile translation that is an improvement over the NIV I presently use. I look forward to hearing why my hero has rejected the TNIV. Frankly, I felt like removing my name from the endorsements simply because I did not wish to ever been seen to disagree with Pastor Chuck on anything! When I learn of his reasons, I may change my mind and withdraw my support of the TNIV. Perhaps I have missed something in my personal research. I tried to be thorough in my research, but I have been wrong before! Perhaps Pastor Chuck will change his mind after further investigation on his part. But I am confident that even if Pastor Chuck ends up being an opponent of the TNIV, he will never resort to unnecessarily divisive speech that impugns the moral character and biblical values of those who choose to use the TNIV. If I know Chuck, his words will be well-chosen.

Even though Pastor Chuck signed the above statement, I could not in good conscience sign the above statement at this time, with what I know. I use many versions and paraphrases in my “normal teaching and preaching” of God’s Word. Here are is a partial list of the versions and paraphrases I often quote and even memorize (i.e., “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into it’s own mold” —Romans 12:2 in the Phillips paraphrase):

- The King James Version
- The New King James Version
- The Tyndale Living Bible
- The New Living Translation
- The New American Standard Bible
- The Message (Peterson)
- The New Testament in Modern English (Phillips)
- The Amplified Bible
- The New International Version

### **The Vulgar KJV Okay, But Not the Linguistically Based Gender-Inclusive TNIV?**

Are the following verses from the King James Bible “*sufficiently trustworthy to commend to the church*” and “*suitable for use as a normal preaching and teaching text of the church or for a common memorizing, study, and reading Bible of the Christian community*”?:

1. Piss

(2 Kings 18:27 KJV) But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? Hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and **drink their own piss** with you? [**“drink their own piss”** is also found in Isaiah 36:12 in the KJV]

## 2. Pisseth

(1 Samuel 25:22 KJV) So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that **pisseth against the wall**. [**"pisseth against the wall"** is also found in 1 Samuel 25:34, 1 Kings 14:10, 1 Kings 16:11, 1 Kings 21:21 and 2 Kings 9:8 in the KJV]

## 3. Bastard

(Deuteronomy 23:2 KJV) **A bastard** shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD. [**"a bastard"** is also found in Zechariah 9:6 in the KJV]

## 4. Bastards

(Hebrews 12:8 KJV) But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are **ye bastards**, and not sons.

## 5. Whore

(Leviticus 19:29 KJV) Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a **whore**; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. [**"whore"** is also found in Leviticus 21:7, Leviticus 21:9, Deuteronomy 22:21, Deuteronomy 23:17-18, Judges 19:2, Proverbs 23:27, Isaiah 57:3, Ezekiel 16:28, Revelation 17:1, Revelation 17:15-16 and Revelation 19:2 in the KJV]

## 6. Whores

(Ezekiel 16:33 KJV) They give gifts to all **whores**: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom. [**"whores"** is also found in Hosea 4:14 in the KJV]

## 7. Damned

(Romans 14:23 KJV) And he that doubteth is **damned** if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. [**"damned"** is also found in Mark 16:16 and 2 Thessalonians 2:12 in the KJV]

## 8. Damnation

(Matthew 23:14 KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater **damnation**. [**"damnation"** is also found in Matthew 23:33, Mark 3:29, Mark 12:40, Luke 20:47, John 5:29, Romans 3:8, Romans 13:2, 1 Corinthians 11:29, 1 Timothy 5:12, and 2 Peter 2:3 in the KJV]

## 9. Ass

(2 Peter 2:16 KJV) But was rebuked for his iniquity: the **dumb ass** speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. [**"ass"** is also found 86 times in 76 verses in the KJV]

## 10. Asses

(Job 24:5 KJV) Behold, as **wild asses** in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children. [**"asses"** is found 64 times in 60 verses in the KJV]

From the above passages, one can see that many of our present common vulgar expressions are derived from words and phrases taken from the KJV. Notice how the following crude expressions find their origin in the KJV:

- “pissed off” and “piss ant” (“pisseth against the wall”)
- “you bastard” (“ye bastards”)
- “you whore” (“whore”)
- “damn it” and “damn you” (“damn”)
- “you dumb ass” (“dumb ass”)
- “kick ass” or “hard ass” and etc. (“ass” and “asses”)

Do those many respected Christian leaders who signed the statement claiming the TNIV was unfit as a “normal ... reading Bible for the Christian community” find no such problem with a normal reading of the many crude passages in the KJV? To my knowledge, there is no opposition statement against the KJV. Is it better to hear “pisseth against the wall” (KJV) read in church than “Elijah was a human just as we are” (TNIV)? Is it more fitting to hear in church, “then are ye bastards, and not sons” (KJV) than to hear, “then you are not legitimate children at all” (TNIV)? Would you rather hear in church, “the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice” (KJV) or hear “an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice” (TNIV)? I would rather read, “if you show special attention to the one wearing fine clothing” (TNIV—which changed the NIV “man” to “one”) than to hear the snickers of my congregation if I read aloud, “And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing” (KJV). In case you are wondering, even with all the crude language in the KJV, I would NOT sign a statement that said it is not “*sufficiently trustworthy to commend to the church*” or not “*suitable for use as a normal preaching and teaching text of the church or for a common memorizing, study, and reading Bible of the Christian community.*” I believe the good old KJV still has great value, but I also believe the TNIV has greater value in communicating God’s Word. Both the KJV and the TNIV have weaknesses, but I believe the KJV has greater weaknesses.

Interestingly enough, the NKJV found ALL of the above listed crude terms in the KJV too vulgar to be used in their revised translation. In so doing, the NKJV had to depart from a literal word-for-word translation, and was forced into dynamic equivalency when it came to the highly offensive phrase, “pisseth against the wall,” and simply translated it as “male(s),” as did the NIV. Male anatomy makes it possible for guys to stand and urinate against a wall. In that day without public restrooms, it would be normal to see a man step up to a wall and relieve himself. Such an action was actually a modest way of obeying nature’s call without showing one’s private parts. The Holy Spirit used two Hebrew words, one meaning “one who urinates” and the other meaning “against a wall.” Yet all modern translations simply translate those words into what they mean, “male(s)” or “men.” Those who demand word-for-word translation should be up in arms against such a loose translation! Now if the TNIV Old Testament editors have a radical feminist gender-neutral agenda, then we will expect to see the Hebrew phrase, “one who urinates against the wall,” translated with a gender-neutral term. Of course, I do not expect to see such a translation when the TNIV Old Testament arrives, because of the generally reliable job done in the New Testament.

### **My Personal Conservative Biblical Values and the TNIV**

I have already quoted the TNIV New Testament in church, and assuming the Old Testament in the TNIV improves upon the NIV without any serious flaws, then I will use it as well. In using the TNIV, what I hold as my biblically-based conservative convictions remain the same, which include the following (representative, but not comprehensive):

1. Practicing homosexuality is a sin. (The temptation and propensity is not sin, and I thank God I do not have this evil pull, but I have plenty of others!)
2. The office of elder is reserved for men, and excludes women. (I do not believe God's Word allows for women to be ordained for pastoral ministry.)
3. Women are to submit to their husbands, and husbands are to be the head of their homes as servant-leaders devoted to sacrificial love of their wives. ( I am a complimentarian, not an egalitarian.)
4. God is our heavenly Father, not our heavenly mother, but he loves with a mother-like love (Isaiah 66:13). Similarly the male missionary leader, the Apostle Paul, loved like a mother (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8).
5. Jesus is the God-man who became human to die for our sins and to be a human to whom we can relate.
6. Husbands are to be the primary providers in the home, not the wife, but the wife is not specifically prohibited from working outside the home (Proverbs 31).
7. God's word is inerrant in the autographs and has been providentially preserved in the extant manuscripts so that we have God's written word in its entirety in 66 books that are without error in all matters, including history, science and doctrine.
8. Unbelievers face an eternal separation from God that includes degrees of suffering forever based upon their sins in this life. (I do not find Stott's annihilationism in the Word of God.)
9. There are only two explicit biblical grounds for divorce—immorality and abandonment, and remarriage without biblical ground results in adultery.
10. Life and personhood begins at conception, and abortion is the taking of human life.
11. Capital punishment is proper by the government for murder, not vigilantism, including vigilantism against abortion doctors who kill babies in the womb.
12. There are just wars, including the present one against terrorism.
13. I believe being a registered Republican best fits my biblical moral values, but each candidate must be carefully evaluated whatever their party affiliation.
14. Time should be allowed in government schools (some call them public schools) for voluntary silent prayer or meditation.
15. God created the universe in six literal days, but he created it with age (i.e., the light from the distant stars was already there and Adam was a full-grown man).
16. Christian water baptism is by immersion and follows personal faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, and is the first step of discipleship, not the last step in regeneration. (I reject the so-called biblical support for infant sprinkling baptism set forth by R. C. Sproul and I reject the idea that baptism is a part of being justified or regenerated, but every believer who is already saved will willingly be baptized.)
17. The two basic criteria for inclusion in the Christian community are (1) belief in the same bodily resurrected God-man Jesus taught in the Scriptures; and (2) the same Gospel of grace apart from works taught in the Scriptures. (I reject Chuck Colson's belief that Roman Catholics are all part of the true Christian community because they believe in the same Jesus, even though they believe a different gospel polluted by sacramental works.)
18. The genuine believer is eternally secure, cannot become unsaved once born again, and gives evidence of authentic faith by a new life in Christ that results in a pattern of obedience to the Lord.
19. The gift of speaking in tongues, the gift of prophecy and other sign-gifts like the

working of miracles and healing, ceased with the completion of the New Testament canon, but God still works miracles today and heals directly apart from a person possessing a spiritual gift to do such a ministry. (I reject Pat Robertson's so-called prophetic gift and his misunderstanding of the word of knowledge often used during his TV program.)

20. Christians are to speak the truth in love (but I know I fall short many times).

While I consider John Stott, R. C. Sproul, Pat Robertson and Chuck Colson to be dear brothers in Christ, I also have convictions that differ from them, which may be deemed to be more conservative and less liberal (although this labeling is open to debate too). I list the above beliefs to show that I consider myself a biblical conservative. I find as much biblical support for all of the above values in the TNIV as in any other commonly accepted version.

### **The Challenge – Use the Whole TNIV to Change Any Doctrine or Gender Issue**

In my personal evaluation of the TNIV I played the devil's advocate and tried to use the TNIV as an English reader to alter any major doctrine or any major gender issue. Concerning sexual and gender issues, here is some of what I discovered from using the whole TNIV New Testament:

- (1) God is our heavenly Father, not our mother or father-mother or mere parent.
- (2) We are to address God as Father, not mother or parent.
- (3) Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, not his Daughter or merely his Child.
- (4) Jesus' incarnation as the God-man was an arrival as a Jewish boy, who grew to be a Jewish man, who was never a he or she or a he-she or a homosexual or married man or a sexually active heterosexual.
- (5) Jesus' incarnation was not primarily to become a Jewish male who relates to Jewish males, but to become a human who relates to all humanity of all races and both genders.
- (6) The Holy Spirit, although a spirit, is to be referred to as he, not she or it.
- (7) The wife is to be submissive to her husband.
- (8) Women are not to take a teaching authority role over men in the church.
- (9) The twelve disciples of Jesus were all males.
- (10) An overseer is to be a man who is faithful to his wife.
- (11) There are no examples of female elders or overseers.
- (12) Women can be deacons (but a footnote offers a different view).
- (13) God purposely created man (husband) first, then made woman (wife) from man to assure his leadership right by order of creation (1 Corinthians 11).
- (14) The husband is to be a servant-leader in his marriage with the primary responsibility of providing committed, sacrificial love to his wife.
- (15) Homosexual behavior is sin that marks the lifestyle of the unbeliever, as does adultery and pre-marital sex.
- (16) Both men and women in the church are included as being a part of the bride (a female-role analogy) of Christ, our groom.
- (17) Both men and women in the church are included as being a part of the sonship privileges (a male-role analogy) of God our Father.
- (18) While parenting is both parents' jobs, the father is to accept the primary responsibility of raising the children (Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:21).
- (19) The church, as the family of God, includes brothers and sisters who are often given directives on how to act as God's family.
- (20) Men are to lift holy hands in prayer, there is no place in the New Testament where women are

encouraged to do so.

My challenge to those who reject the TNIV is the same. Using the entire TNIV, is any major doctrine changed or any gender role be altered? Frankly, I could find none, and I seriously tried. Those who attack the TNIV usually fixate on extremely fine points that are easily overcome by a look at the clear truth throughout the TNIV.

Scripture twisters can use any version to force a false teaching into the Bible. I once debated a lesbian pastor on cable TV who used the NAS as her Bible, because she claimed it was very close to the Greek and Hebrew. She was absolutely right in her view of the NAS, but absolutely wrong in her interpretation of it. At the time, I also was using the NAS to refute her so-called biblical arguments. The NAS was not the problem with her gay theology. Likewise, many may wish to use the TNIV in their defense of all sorts of erroneous ideas, but that does not mean the TNIV is a faulty translation.

### **The TNIV Has Weaknesses like Revelation 3:20 and “Saints”**

In my support for the TNIV, I do not deny that there are many shortcomings. For example Revelation 3:20 reads in the NIV, “I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” The TNIV translates this passage as, “I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.” This weak translation removes the emphasis on the individual relationship with God. In changing the singulars into plurals, the personal intimate relationship with God is lost. A better translation of Revelation 3:20 would be, “I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person one-on-one.” To my thinking, the TNIV is unnecessarily too prolific in altering the singulars into plurals.

There are other weaknesses in the TNIV that are not related to the gender issue, which is the focus of the paper, so I will mention only one. The translation of “saints” usually as “God’s people” when they should have used their fine translation “God’s holy people” (Revelation 13:10) throughout in order to preserve the root meaning of the Greek term *hagios* ( ἅγιος ) which means “holy ones.” The TNIV (like the NIV, but not to the same extent as the NLT) usually avoided the use of the word “saint” for good reason. Modern usage of “saint” as defined by the most respected up-to-date dictionaries means: “1. a person of exceptional holiness, formally recognized by the Christian Church esp. by canonization 2. a person of great virtue or benevolence. 3. a founder or patron, as a movement. 4. a member of any of various Christian groups.” [[Random House Webster’s College Dictionary](#), pp. 1158-1159]. The closest meaning of the term to the biblical usage is fourth, dead last, and that meaning is even dangerously confusing, making outward organizational religious membership, rather than personal salvation the qualification for being a saint. Clearly, the popular usage of “saints” today has little to do with the biblical meaning of “people with a positional holiness through faith in God.” A change away from “saints” is needed, but one that includes the idea of holiness. I prefer “holy ones” over “saints,” not because “holy ones” would not need some explanation, but because it would not carry with it an automatic religious misunderstanding that comes today with the term, “saints.” I prefer “holy ones” over “God’s holy people” because “God” is not in the original, and in my mind is not necessary to be added. However, “God’s holy people” is still a vast improvement the term, “saints.” But even “saints” is to be preferred to the common TNIV translation of “God’s people” or “people of God,” because such translations remove the potent holiness idea in the term, *hagios*.

### **The Good and the Bad of the TNIV Controversy**

The TNIV debate is causing many to dig deeper into many issues, especially the meaning of certain Greek terms and valid translation methodology. When respected conservative Evangelical scholars are divided on a new translation, it spurs many to do more personal research into the Word of God. Many in my church

family have told me they have learned much due to this dispute over the accuracy of the TNIV. My own personal study over these issues has sharpened my understanding of many of the issues as well.

Another positive aspect of the TNIV debate is the potential it has for improving the TNIV. As with all new versions, there are many revisions along the way. It didn't take the Living Bible long to change it's original offensive "son of a bitch" phrase! As the NIV went through many revisions, so can the TNIV.

There is also a dark side to this debate. While Evangelical Christians should "agree to disagree" over the TNIV, it has already become more divisive than necessary. I fear those who reject the TNIV will be wrongly labeled as unbiblically anti-women arch-conservative reactionaries, and those who support the TNIV will be categorized as unbiblically politically-correct pro-feminist liberals. Lively debate is healthy, but demagoguery and mean-spirited name-calling is harmful to the body of Christ. We must take care not to judge the motives of those who take either side of the TNIV controversy. Translating the Word of God is serious business. Both sides should acknowledge that the other has no hidden agenda, but are people of integrity who desire the truth of God's inerrant Word to be correctly translated from ancient foreign languages into our present day English.

### **The TNIV and 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

I am unashamed of my enthusiastic endorsement of the New Testament TNIV. I thank the Lord for another accurate version of His Holy Scriptures in the TNIV. I recall the day I first read the NIV in the early 70's and came across 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." My initial reaction was exhilaration that a version finally said what God said about his word—it is "God-breathed!" After all, the original Greek word is the combining of two words, "God" and "breathe." There was no way the older term, "inspired," with all its many confusing meanings, could come close to the clear meaning of "God-breathed." Now the TNIV has made that passage even clearer, by accurately opening the application to both genders as the Greek says it. No longer must my wife or two daughters read the mistranslation of 2 Timothy 3:17: "that **the man** (*anthropos* = a human person of either gender) of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Thanks to the TNIV, everyone in my family and everyone in my church family, both male and female, can read what "God-breathed" for that passage: "that the **people** of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The finest translation of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 in the NIV just got better with TNIV!

I will continue to devote my life and ministry to doing my "best to present" myself to God "as one approved," being "a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15—TNIV).

## The TNIV's Translation of "The Jews"

Dr. David W. Miller

The TNIV is being vilified for many invalid reasons, one of them is its translation of the Greek phrase *hoi ioudaioi*. A literal word-for-word translation is "the Jews" (*hoi* = "the" and *ioudaioi* = "Jews"). In summary, here is how the TNIV handled that phrase:

(1) Where the NIV has "the Jews," the TNIV often changes it to "the Jewish leaders"\* or "the Jews there." The official TNIV website states the reason for this expanded translation is to "*reflect a better understanding of the meaning of certain terms in the original ...*" because "*the context indicates a more precise group of people.*"

(2) The TNIV also chose to omit translating "the Jews" when they felt the context was so clear that a simple "they" or "who" clearly pointed back to "the Jews" directly mentioned as such.\*\*

(3) The TNIV usually retained the word-for-word translation, "the Jews," because they evidently found the context required that more general reference. For example, of the 48 times "the Jews" is found in the NIV, it is retained in the TNIV 34 times.

I see no attempt to avoid mentioning "the Jews" in order to put the Jewish enemies of Jesus in a better light. The TNIV clarifies the reality that it was not *all* the Jews who were opposing Jesus, but only some. Those opposing Jesus were usually the religious leaders of the Jewish people. On several occasions the TNIV accurately portrays the context with the translations of "other Jews" (Acts 17:5 & 24:9) or "some Jews" (Acts 20:3 & 26:21), because there is a different Jewish group or only a portion of Jews to which "the Jews" refers. I applaud this attempt toward a more accurate clarification.

However, I do not believe the TNIV went far enough to remove the present anti-Semitic connotation of the phrase, "the Jews." For example, "We love and welcome the Jews at our church," says the same thing as, "We love and welcome Jewish people at our church," except for one important difference. The first statement is offensive to many Jewish people. Both statements clearly identify the identity of the group intended, but one is insulting to many and the other is not. To call Japanese people, "Japs," is a racial slur. Similarly, to call Jewish people, "Jews," is also insulting to many.

Many English words over time change their meaning and their connotations. Back in 1611, the translation of James 2:3 in the King James version, "ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing," meant something very different than it does in this century. Gay is now directly associated with the homosexual lifestyle. The New King James Version accurately changed "gay clothing" to "fine clothing." Was the NKJV attempting to be politically correct or morally soft? Of course not. Neither am I attempting put an inaccurate spin on the meaning of "the Jews" by recommending it be translated "the Jewish people." To remove the fact that Jesus was severely opposed by many of the Jewish people of his day would be twisting the Scriptures. But to leave the impression that all the Jewish people were against Jesus is just as wrong. And to try and do away with the Jewish identity of the Jewish opposition to Jesus would violate the truth taught in the New Testament. But it is just as wrong to add a negative racial slur never intended in the text. No one can read the TNIV and fail to see that Jesus was opposed and despised by many Jewish people, including the Jewish religious leadership. There is no mistranslation or misunderstanding in the TNIV when it comes to Jesus' interaction with Jewish people.

But the TNIV could have done better. Had the TNIV consistently translated *ioudaioi*, "the Jewish people" as it did in Acts 26:4, the Jewish identity of the group would be retained without adding any negative epithet. Jesus was a Jew who called Jewish disciples and primarily ministered to his own Jewish people. On the other hand, some of Jesus' own Jewish people, led by those who were the Jewish religious leaders of that day, hated him to such a degree that they plotted his death. But none of the New Testament is anti-Semitic, including the Gospel of John with its nearly 60 uses of *hoi ioudaioi*. I find it tragically inaccurate for the NIV in John's Gospel to use a literal word-for-word translation, "the Jews" some 59 times and for the TNIV to retain that harsh translation about 30 times. However, the TNIV is still an improvement over the NIV. I will continue to



use the phrase “Jewish people” in my personal translating and teaching of the New Testament to make sure the Jewish people know they are loved and welcome in our local church and, more importantly, loved and welcome in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

\* Passages where the NIV, “the Jews” (*hoi ioudaioi*), was changed by the TNIV to “Jewish leaders”— John 1:19; 5:10, 15, 16; 7:1, 11, 13; 9:22; 18:14, 36; 19:12, 31, 38; 20:19; Acts 13:50; 21:11

\*\* Passages where the NIV, “the Jews” (*hoi ioudaioi*), was changed by the TNIV to “they” or “them” or “who” — John 2:20; 5:18; 8:52, 57; 9:18, 22 (the only “who”); 10:33; 18:31; 19:7 [in Acts 17:12 and 18:6 the NIV adds the phrase “the Jews’ which is not in the original Greek, and the TNIV has “them” as it is in the original].

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