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'"People Do Not Live by Bread Alone"'[1]:

Issues in the Debate over Gender-Inclusive Language

David BURGER

[2]

The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)　The New Living Translation (NLT)　Today's New International Version (TNIV)　The Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)　The Third Millennium Bible (TMB)

Key words: *Inclusive language, Gender-inclusive language, Secular inclusive language, Gender-inclusive translations of the English Bible, Feminism*

Language is used both to enlighten and to obscure, to uplift and to tear down, to unite and to divide, to reconcile and to estrange. Many people believe that by changing the words we use, we can help facilitate reconciliation among groups in society that have felt estranged, that the language we use can foster the inclusion of previously excluded groups. Because of this potential outcome, secular proponents of this kind of language change consider it a worthy social goal, and Christian proponents think that it fits exactly with Christ's overall message of inclusivity. Secular opponents may not necessarily be against equality and inclusion, but for various reasons they do not subscribe to the idea that language must be changed in order to foster those goals. Christian opponents tend to focus specifically on language changes involving gender and to consider the secular ideal of equality of the

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sexes to be in conflict with their understanding of the Bible as mandating differentiation of gender roles both in the church and in society.

Inclusive language is the term that has come to be used to describe the kinds of language changes that reflect either the reality or ideal of greater equality and inclusivity in society. In both the secular and Christian worlds, the term *inclusive language* covers a wide range of groups who have been stereotyped or discriminated against, although, as noted above, Christian opponents focus almost exclusively on gender-inclusive language.

This paper will look at both the secular and Christian sides of the inclusive language debate. After reviewing the concept of inclusive language and placing it in its historical context in relation to other movements toward social equality and inclusivity, the secular inclusive language movement in English and Japanese will be examined, after which the controversy concerning gender-inclusive translations of the English Bible will be extensively reviewed. Finally, the findings will be summarized and conclusions offered.

Inclusive Language

In its simplest sense, inclusive language "clearly includes everyone it intends to include" (Maggio, 1997, p. 2). While the term has broadened today to include race, ethnicity, and "other personal traits or characteristics (such as sexual orientation, age, or a disability)" that have been subject to exclusion (Media Task Force, 1998, para. 2), it is most often associated with its earliest use in reference to gender. Margaret Doyle's (1998) description illustrates this point:

> Another term for sexist language is 'exclusive' language: using *he* as a generic pronoun, and using *mankind* and '-*man*' compounds as generic terms, excludes women. . . .   The opposite, non-sexist language, is thus also known as 'inclusive' language. There are many other types of inclusive language; truly inclusive language would attempt to include all groups that are marginalised by the presumption of a norm that is white, male, heterosexual, middle class. (p. 150)

The type of non-sexist inclusive language that Doyle is talking about is generally termed gender-inclusive language. It is language that "does not stereotype or demean men or women" (Rhodes College Writing Center, 2002, para. 1) and "does not exclude, either by direct reference or implication, one gender or the other" (Dumond, 1990, p. vi). Its influence in contemporary American society extends to the United States Government, which requires those doing business with it to "adhere to ter-

minology that includes both men and women" (Dumond, 1990, pp. v-vi).

Nevertheless, inclusion as a broader societal concept in the United States actually owes its greatest debt to the African-American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Perhaps the most significant linguistic achievement of the civil rights movement, apart from finally relegating the notorious epithet *nigger* to taboo status, was that, by the late 1960s, *Negro* and the less respectable *colored* had largely been replaced by *black* and later *African American* as the preferred terms to refer to this group of Americans.

The African-American civil rights movement in turn spawned movements for inclusion by other previously excluded groups, and it was one of these, the so-called women's liberation movement, that spurred the move toward the use of gender-inclusive language. As Cooper (1998) notes, "Inclusive language for humans has developed because gender equality and mutuality, widely embraced in the women's liberation movement, are increasingly influential values in our democratic society" (p. 27).

Proponents of inclusive language are motivated by the belief that language is an "essential part," as Doyle (1998, pp. 150) puts it, of tackling societal discrimination and that new terminology will either reflect or even perhaps help bring about newer, nondiscriminatory, and more inclusive thinking in society. The goal of eliminating sexist and other exclusionary language is viewed largely as a matter of changing the words we use. Dumond (1990) maintains, "Such an objective not only is possible to accomplish, it also is very simple to accomplish" (p. v).

Dumond represents the "strong" version of this position, as the following assertion further demonstrates: "Strong evidence is surfacing to support the suspicion that language directly affects behavior" (p. v). Doyle (1998), on the other hand, outlines a "weaker" version of this position: "In this view, language influences our attitudes and behaviour; watching our language goes hand in hand with being careful how we treat others" (p. 151). On the Christian side, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA, 2003) adopts a middle position:

> Language both reflects and forms human attitudes and actions. As language shapes and influences human perceptions, the language used in worship shapes and influences our perceptions of God. Because language is created and used by humans, it reflects the imperfections and limitations of humanness. (para. 4)

Cooper (1998) summarizes a similar position in reference to God-language[3]: "the use of traditional male terminology for God actually maintains and supports male domination. Inclusive language for God both ministers to those who have been wronged and in some ways contributes to changing the system that has hurt them" (p. 35).

The opposite view—that ridding our language of non-inclusive words will have little or no effect on ridding society of discrimination—is also widely held both in the secular and Christian worlds. Despite the statement above, Cooper (1998) himself actually takes this view: "Of course it will take much more than changing religious language to reform gender roles and restore healthy relations between the sexes in society" (p. 32).

Secular Inclusive Language in English and Japanese

In recent years, a number of guidelines on avoiding sexist and discriminatory language have been published in both English and Japanese. One English example, the guidelines of the Media Task Force of the Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women (1998), assume a "spirit of inclusivity in our culture" and attempt to "highlight a few areas where we still find exclusivity or a sense of hierarchy in the use of language to place one group of people below others, creating or perpetuating negative social stereotypes" (para. 1). Accordingly, the task force offers guidelines on avoiding derogatory language that can "serve to remind us of areas where language discrimination still exists and causes unnecessary misunderstandings in our daily communication with the general public" (para. 1).

Another, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001), is used widely by those writing in the social sciences. It contains the following statement of principle under the heading "Guidelines to Reduce Bias in Language":

> As an organization, APA is committed both to science and to the fair treatment of individuals and groups, and this policy requires authors of APA publications to avoid perpetuating demeaning attitudes and biased assumptions about people in their writing. Constructions that might imply bias against persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age should be avoided. (p. 61)

When discussing gender, English guidelines generally focus on so-called generic *he* and *man*, including the latter's use as an occupational ending (e.g., *policeman*), although many other specific usages are dealt with (e.g., changing unparallel nouns such as *man and wife* to *husband and wife*) (APA, 2001, p. 64). For example, the APA *Publication Manual notes* that there are "many alternatives to the generic *he*" (p. 66) and joins other guidelines for English usage (cf. Miller & Swift, 1980; Dumond, 1990; Maggio, 1997; Rhodes College Writing Center, 2002; etc.) in offering the following by now widely known alternatives:

- **Rephrasing**: from "'When an individual . . ., *he* is a much stronger person'" to "'. . ., *that per-*

son is much stronger'";

- **Using plural nouns or plural pronouns**: from "'A therapist . . . can lose *his* objectivity'" to "'Therapists . . . can lose *their* objectivity'";

- **Replacing the pronoun with an article**: from "'A researcher must apply for *his* grant . . .'" to "'A researcher . . . *the* grant . . .'";

- **Dropping the pronoun**: from "'The researcher must avoid letting *his* own biases . . .'" to "'The researcher must avoid letting biases . . .'" (p. 66).

Concerning *man*, the APA *Publication Manual* suggests that when used either as a generic noun or as an occupational ending it can be "ambiguous and may imply incorrectly that all persons in the group are male" (p. 66). The *Publication Manual* joins many other guidelines in suggesting the following alternatives:

instead of

- *man* and *mankind*: *people, humanity, human beings, humankind,* and *human species*;

- *man a project*: *staff a project, hire personnel,* and *employ staff*;

- *manpower*: *workforce, personnel, workers,* and *human resources*;

- *man's search for knowledge*: *the search for knowledge*;

- *foreman*: *supervisor* or *superintendent*;

- *mailman*: *postal worker* or *letter carrier*;

- *chairman*: *chairperson* or *chair*;

- *salesmanship*: *selling ability* (p. 71).

The APA *Publication Manual* and many other guidelines deal with written English, and studies suggest that there has been a degree of success in persuading writers to use this type of gender-inclusive language (Pauwels, 1998, p. 230). On the other hand, although gender-inclusive language is far more widely used in spoken English today than in the past, the frequency of its use does not appear to match that of written English. For instance, even a casual survey of radio and television newscasts indicates that generic *he* and *man* are still frequently heard in many situations where gender-inclusive language is called for by the written guidelines[4]. In contrast to the spoken language, the written language allows for greater conscious editing of one's words, and the fact that gender-inclusive English is now often a requirement for professional writing cannot be overlooked as factors in the presumptive greater frequency of its use in the written language.

In Japan, books have been written about *sabetsuyougo*, *sabetsugo*, and *sabetsu hyougen*. Just as

the English term *discriminatory language* originally had its strongest association with homegrown racism, these Japanese terms seem to have traditionally referred to Japan's own homegrown discrimination problem of *buraku sabetsu*. According to Takagi (1999), *sabetsugo* first became an important social issue in the 1970s with the so-called Youka (　　　) incident in Hyogo Prefecture and the *Tokyo-to no dowa gyosei mondai*. However, more recently, in Japanese, as in English, the term has been broadened to cover a variety of groups in society who suffer from unequal treatment, and *sabetsugo* has similarly come to include women, racial and ethnic minorities, and the mentally and physically disabled, although this author is not aware of any serious coverage of sexual orientation and age.

The Japanese Government has been instrumental in changing gendered titles for occupations that it regulates. While the 1999 Male-Female Equal Opportunity Employment Law revision (

　　　　　　) did not specify changes in occupational titles, provisions requiring equal treatment in recruiting resulted in the following types of suggested changes in loanwords from English:

- from *kameraman*　　　　　　(cameraman/photographer) to *satsuei sutaffu*　　　　　
  (*photography staff);
- from *serusuman*　　　　　(salesman) to *eigyou sutaffu*　　　　　　(sales staff);
- from *ueitoresu*　　　　　(waitress) to *furoa sutaffu*　　　　　　(*floor staff);
- from *suchuwaadesu*　　　　　　　(stewardess) to *kyakushitsu joumuin*　　　　
  (*passenger cabin flight crew); among others.

In at least two cases, the Japanese Government has mandated inclusive occupational titles. However, both involve traditionally female occupations, such as nursery school teacher and nurse, leading to an odd kind of male-centered inclusive language reform. Thus, following the revision of the law regulating the licensing of public health nurses, midwives, and medical nurses (*kokenfu josanpu kangofu hou*　　　　　　　　　　) in late 2001, *kangoshi*　　　replaced *kangofu*　　　as the official designation for a medical nurse, *hokenshi*　　　replaced *hokenfu*　　　as the official designation for a public health nurse, and *josanshi*　　　replaced *josanpu*　　　as the official designation for a midwife[5]. One reason for the change, according to Takasugi (2005), was that it was "inconvenient" ("　　　") to refer to female and male members of these professions by separate occupational titles.

There is an additional complicating factor in Japanese that does not exist in English; namely, the choice of Chinese characters for the revision. In Japanese there are two characters that are frequently used in revised occupational titles, and both are pronounced *shi*:　　　and　　　. The new titles above all contain the former, although, as Kokoma (2002, para. 6) points out, the latter character is

also well represented in the official names of a number of government-licensed occupations, including *bengoshi*　　　(lawyer), *kounin kaikeishi*　　　　　(certified public accountant), and *zeirishi*　　　(licensed tax accountant). According to Kokoma (para. 5), prior to the 2001 revision, male nurses were called kangoshi　　, using the *-shi*　character to distinguish them from female nurses and to "open the door" to the profession to men as well ("　　　　　　　　　　"). Kokoma speculates that the *-shi*　character was chosen for the new occupational title in the revised law to distinguish it from this pre-revision gendered title for males using the *-shi*　character. Kokoma also notes that to many people the *-shi*　character carries a greater male connotation.

Confusing the situation further, an earlier law revision, the 1998 revised Child Welfare Law (*jidou fukushi hourei kaisei*　　　　　　　　), declared that henceforward *hoikushi*　　　would be the official title for a nursery school teacher, replacing *hobo*　　(literally "care mother") and the less frequent *hofu*　　(literally "care father"). In this instance, the *-shi*　character had not been used prior to the revision to distinguish males in the profession. However, if Kokoma is correct that the *-shi*　character has a greater male connotation in people's minds, and kanji dictionaries support this contention, then it does not appear to be a genuine gender-inclusive language reform at all. This raises the question of whether government officials themselves even perceive these changes to be gender-inclusive language reforms. The fact that the two law revisions mentioned above both involve changes that are apparently designed to "open the door" to more males in these professions raises the more fundamental question of what these government officials are doing linguistically and otherwise to "open the door" to more females in traditionally male occupations.

In fact, there is some evidence that the *-shi*　character may currently be the preferred inclusive language character in occupational titles, despite its putative male connotations. For example, Japanese women have begun driving buses, taxis, and other public conveyances in recent years, and such drivers are now officially referred to as *untenshi*　　　instead of *utenshu*　　　, despite the fact that the *shu*　character itself does not connote a male.

All of these changes in occupational titles that were either mandated or inspired by Japanese Government action are of relatively recent origin and do not yet appear to have filtered down into popular usage to any appreciable extent.

The Controversy over English Bible Translations: Inclusive Language for Humans

The issue of inclusive language is arguably more contentious in the Christian church than it is in secular society. In the English-speaking world, and particularly in the United States, the areas of

greatest controversy are hymnal revision, revision of the liturgy, and Bible translation. This paper will confine its discussion to the latter.

In the United States, the so-called mainline Protestant denominations have been in the forefront in embracing inclusive language. The following is a partial alphabetical list of mainline Protestant denominations and is not intended to imply institutional support for inclusive language by any of these denominations: the American Baptist Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church (American Religion Data Archive, 2000).

As Strauss (1998, p. 35) has pointed out, inclusive language is not a modern phenomenon in English Bible translations. In fact, almost all English translations have used some inclusive language for Hebrew and Greek masculine generic terms, including the venerable King James Version (KJV) of 1611, which frequently translates the Hebrew *ben/bānîm as child/children* instead of *son/sons* (cf. Genesis 3:16 and Exodus 1:7). Strauss asserts that in translating the Greek plural *huioi* as *children* rather than *sons* in Matthew 5:9 ("Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the *children* of God") the KJV translators "correctly recognized that though these terms were masculine in form, their meaning in context was generic and inclusive" (2000, para. 4).

However, it was not until the 1980s that translations with a stated commitment to the use of inclusive language first began to appear. Three of those translations will be examined here: the New Revised Standard Version, the New Living Translation, and Today's New International Version.

The earliest of the modern inclusive language translations were the Roman Catholic Revised New American Bible New Testament in 1986 (St. Joseph Foundation Staff, 1994, "Inclusive English and Sacred Scripture" section, para. 1) and the Protestant New Century Version in 1987 (Strauss, 2000, para. 3). One year earlier, in 1985, the Roman Catholic New Jerusalem Bible, a revision of the Jerusalem Bible, was published. However, Strauss points out that it is "less comprehensive or consistent" (1998, p. 47) in its commitment to gender-inclusive language than the other versions discussed here.

The 1990 publication of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) was the most celebrated of the early gender-inclusive translations. The NRSV was the first inclusive-language translation of the complete Bible to be approved for use in both Protestant and Roman Catholic worship, although Catholic approval was later rescinded, in large part because of the controversy surrounding inclusive language (Whitehead, 1997, para. 15-16). Today, many churches in the mainline Protestant denominations use the NRSV for worship.

The NRSV is not an entirely new translation of the original texts, but rather a revision of the Re-

vised Standard Version of 1952. This places it in a line of revisions of the classic 1611 King James, or Authorized, Version (KJV) that includes the American Standard Version (1901) and the Revised Version (1881-1885) in Britain, which was the first updating of the KJV in 270 years.

One mandate given to the NRSV translation committee in 1980 was "to continue in the tradition of the King James Bible, but to introduce such changes as are warranted on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony, and current English usage" (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 1991, p. xi). This included inclusive language. As stated in the preface, the NRSV is "essentially a literal translation" with paraphrases used "chiefly to compensate for a deficiency in the English language—the lack of a common gender third person singular pronoun" (p. xi). In the preface, the translation committee acknowledges that many Christians have become sensitive "to the danger of linguistic sexism arising from the inherent bias of the English language towards the masculine gender, a bias that in the case of the Bible has often restricted or obscured the meaning of the original text" (p. xi). The committee was mandated "to eliminate masculine-oriented language references to men and women as far as this can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture" (pp. xi-xii). This led to the pronouns *he* or *him* "only very occasionally" being retained in passages "where the reference may have been to a woman as well as to a man" (p. xii). However, in the vast majority of cases, inclusiveness was achieved by rephrasing or by using plural forms when doing so did not "distort the meaning of the passage" (p. xii).

Despite the NRSV's mainline Protestant connections, many other recent inclusive language versions of the English Bible are the product of translators from so-called evangelical[6] Protestant denominations, including one of the earliest, The New Century Version (1987), and two of the most recent, The New Living Translation (1996, revised 2004) and Today's New International Version (2005). The following is a partial alphabetical list of evangelical Protestant denominations in the United States and is not intended to imply institutional support for any of the inclusive language translations that follow: Assemblies of God, Christian Reformed Church, Church of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Churches of God in Christ, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, National Baptist Church, Pentecostal Church of God, Presbyterian Church in America, and Southern Baptist (The Evangelical Wing of Christianity in North America, 2004, para. 4).

The New Living Translation (NLT) is a revision of the Living Bible (1971). While the Living Bible was translated by one man, Kenneth Taylor, the NLT is the work of some ninety evangelical scholars and, as such, is "in many respects . . . a completely new translation" (Strauss, 1998, p. 58). Like the translators of other recent versions, these scholars "set out to render the message of the original texts of Scripture into clear, contemporary English" (*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, p. A15). The in-

troduction notes, "To this end, we sought to use only vocabulary and language structures in common use today" (p. A16) and "to translate terms shrouded in history and culture in ways that can be immediately understood" (p. A17). Of the ten areas cited in this regard, inclusive language receives the longest explanatory passage and is worth reproducing in full:

> One challenge we faced was how to translate accurately the ancient biblical text that was originally written in a context where male-oriented terms were used to refer to humanity generally. We needed to respect the nature of the ancient context while also trying to make the translation clear to a modern audience that tends to read male-oriented language as applying only to males. Often the original text, though using masculine nouns and pronouns, clearly intends that the message be applied to both men and women. A typical example is found in the New Testament letters, where the believers are called "brothers" (*adelphoi*). Yet it is clear from the content of these letters that they were addressed to all the believers—male and female. Thus, we have usually translated this Greek word as "brothers and sisters" in order to represent the historical situation more accurately. (p. A18)

The NRSV and Today's New International Version (TNIV) also translate *adelphoi* as "brothers and sisters." Both the NLT and the NRSV add the footnote, "*Greek brothers*," but the TNIV leaves the translation unexplained.

Other inclusive language changes noted by the NLT translators include changing singular nouns into plural nouns followed by the pronouns *they/them* in place of *he/him*. For example, in Proverbs 22:6, non-inclusive "Train up a *child* in the way *he* should go, and when *he* is old *he* will not turn from it" becomes inclusive "Direct your *children* onto the right path, and when *they* are older, *they* will not leave it" [italics added] (p. A18). The TNIV and NRSV use the same strategy to translate this passage into inclusive language, differing only in the wording of the rest of the passage: (TNIV) "Start *children* off on the way *they* should go, and even when *they* are old *they* will not turn from it"; and (NRSV) "Train *children* in the right way, and when old, *they* will not stray" [italics added]. All three versions conform to the APA and other inclusive language guidelines mentioned earlier.

Another way the NLT translators have avoided the masculine third-person singular pronoun *he* is by using the second person pronoun *you*. For example, Proverbs 26:27 in non-inclusive language reads: "*He* who digs a pit will fall into it, and *he* who rolls a stone, it will come back on *him*." The NLT translation reads: "If *you* set a trap for others, *you* will get caught in it *yourself*. If you roll a boulder down on others, it will crush *you* instead" [italics added] (p. A18). In this instance, the NRSV and TNIV each make the passage inclusive by using different indefinite pronouns: (NRSV) "*Whoever*

digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on *the one* who starts it rolling"; and (TNIV) "If *anyone* digs a pit, *they themselves* will fall into it; if *anyone* rolls a stone, it will roll back on *them*" [italics added].

The newest inclusive language translation, Today's New International Version (2005), is also the most controversial because of its association with the non-inclusive New International Version (NIV, 1973, revised 1984). The NIV is widely regarded as "the Bible of choice" (Strauss, 1998, p. 23) by many evangelicals, and according to the TNIV translators, is the most widely read twentieth century English translation of the Bible (p. ix). Strauss claims that it may have as much as 45% of the English Bible market (p. 222).

Evangelical churches, as a rule, tend to be theologically, doctrinally, as well as socially more conservative than mainline churches, and the NIV's non-inclusive language reflects this stance. Nevertheless, the evangelical concern with making God's Word accessible to as many people as possible led the translators of the NIV, the Committee on Bible Translation, to begin planning an inclusive language revision of the NIV as early as 1992 (Morgan, 2002, para. 9). Three years later, in 1995, a British inclusive language version, referred to as the NIVI, was published. It was the NIVI that ignited the ongoing controversy among evangelicals over inclusive language, and the debate only intensified in 1997 when the copyright holder of the NIV, the International Bible Society (IBS), announced plans for an inclusive language revision of the NIV in the United States as well (Strauss, 2000, para. 3). The news that a revision of the NIV, rather than merely an inclusive language version, was being planned created a furor among evangelicals and caused the IBS to cancel plans for the revision. *Christianity Today* quoted the director of communications for the IBS as saying, "'It is clear that the evangelical church said: Don't mess with our NIV. IBS has said: We hear you'" (LeBlanc, 1997, para. 1).

Once the furor had died down, however, the IBS resumed plans for a gender-inclusive revision of the NIV, and, as expected, the 2002 release of the TNIV New Testament was met with renewed condemnation by the harshest critics, including Internet sites with testimonials by leading evangelicals attacking the new version of the NIV. Undeterred, the Committee on Bible Translation published the complete TNIV Bible in early 2005.

Although the evangelical periodical *Christianity Today* has tried to mollify critics of the TNIV by referring to it as "an independent update of the NIV (not a revision—the NIV will remain available)" ("Why the TNIV Draws Ire," 2002, para. 2), the preface to the TNIV itself states plainly that the TNIV "is a revision of the New International Version (NIV)" (p. ix). However, the TNIV's own information website, seeking to calm evangelical fears, states emphatically that the TNIV will not replace the NIV: "The TNIV offers a new choice in translations with contemporary language, but in no way diminishes

the need for the NIV. Because of its tremendous following, Zondervan and IBS will continue to publish the NIV without change" ("Common TNIV Bible Questions and Answers," ques. 4, "TNIV vs. NIV: Will This Text Replace the NIV?" 2005).

Strauss (1998) points out that all other inclusive-language revisions prior to the publication of the NIVI in 1995 had been presented as replacements of older translations, and publication of those earlier versions ceased. He contends that by continuing to publish the NIV and labeling the NIVI as an inclusive-language version, "the publishers invited accusations that they were being 'politically correct' and catering to feminist demands" (p. 23). He asks a question that is equally valid concerning the TNIV: "If inclusive language revisions were just part of the normal revision process, as they claimed, why should the publishers continue to publish the un-updated (and seemingly less accurate) version?" (p. 23). The answer, of course, is the pressure exerted by influential evangelical opinion makers.

Clearly because of this pressure, the preface to the TNIV appears to evade the issue of gender-inclusive language. Special note is made of only three changes from the NIV, one of which is inclusive language, although that term is never used. Instead, the preface refers to "shifts in English idiom" (p. xi), which it deals with in a matter-of-fact fashion without attempting to present any argument in support of the change. The translators merely inform the reader that

> so-called singular "they/their/them," which has been gaining acceptance among careful writers and which actually has a venerable place in English idiom, has been employed to fill in the vocabulary gap in generic nouns and pronouns referring to human beings. Where an individual emphasis is deemed to be present, "anyone" or "everyone" or some other equivalent is generally used as the antecedent of such pronouns. (p. xi) [cf. Proverbs 26:27 above]

Considering the often virulent opposition the TNIV has faced from evangelical critics, it is not surprising that the TNIV website seems designed for damage control. The following is a short list of anti-TNIV websites compiled by this author:

- TNIV Response Center—Register Your Concerns About This Bible Translation (previously active but currently "under construction");
- Statement of Concern About the TNIV Bible (currently off-line);
- TNIV Resource Center—Understanding the Problems With Today's New International Version (currently redirected to Gender-Neutral Bibles.com maintained by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood)
- Where Does It Err? TNIV Texts That Experts Say Miss the Mark;

- TNIV—the Controversy Or, the Straw That Broke the Camel's Back;

- Southern Baptist Convention Rejects the TNIV;

- A List of Translation Inaccuracies Primarily (But Not Exclusively) Related to Gender Language in the TNIV;

- TNIV's Pro Homosexual Translation;

- TNIV Translation Treason.

The last two sites represent the extreme fringe of opposition to the TNIV. Both are maintained by Dial-the-Truth Ministries, which endorses no English translation except the KJV: "We believe in the Genesis account of creation and it is to be accepted *literally, scientifically, and historically accurate*," and "We believe the King James Version is God's Holy word. It is the *preserved* word of God without *any error* according to Psalms 12:7" [italics in original] (About DTTM, 1995, "Statement of Faith" section, para. 1-2). Furthermore, the author of "TNIV: Translation Treason" makes the bewildering allegation that the non-inclusive language NIV is actually inclusive: "The fact is, the 'original' NIV was stuffed with 'gender inclusive' language. But unlike, [*sic*] the TNIV, the 'original' NIV was not advertised as a 'gender-accurate' Bible" (Watkins, n.d., para. 14). He sums up his uncompromising position on all versions of the NIV when he asks: "Could it be . . . the NIV-TNIV-NIrV-NIVI translators knew they were deliberately and incorrectly perverting the clear, masculine, God-given, Greek text for a false, man-made, 'gender-inclusive' neuter word?" ("The 'Gender-Inclusive' Translation Treason. . ." section, para. 9).

Feminism and Opposition to Inclusive Language Translations of the Bible

Opposition to gender-inclusive language appears to have been a raison d'etre for at least one new English translation, the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), which first appeared in 1999 with revisions in 2000, 2002, and 2003. The preface, in fact, states that this translation "was produced in accordance with" (p. viii) a set of guidelines known as the Colorado Springs Guidelines for Translation of Gender-Related Language in Scripture (1997). These guidelines were produced through the auspices of Focus on the Family and its director, Dr. James Dobson, as a reaction to the 1997 controversy surrounding the announcement that the TNIV was being planned.

In a separate section on the "gender language policy in Bible translation" (p. viii), the HCSB contends, in the most politicized language in the preface of any modern translation examined for this paper, that

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some people today ignore the Bible's teachings on distinctive roles of men and women in fam-
ily and church and have an agenda to eliminate those distinctions in every area of life. These
people have begun a program to engineer the removal of a perceived male bias in the English
language.

The goal of the translators has not been to promote a cultural ideology but to faithfully trans-
late the Bible. (p. viii)

An even more stridently conservative modern version, the 1998 Third Millennium Bible (TMB), is
an updating of the 1611 KJV (which this American version nevertheless insists on calling by its British
designation "Authorized Version"). The TMB eschews not only the use of gender-inclusive language,
but of modern English in general, or what the preface calls "secular English." An example is the re-
tention of the archaic pronouns *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, *thine*, and *ye*, which even the New King James Ver-
sion (1982) dispenses with in favor of contemporary English *you*, *your*, and *yours*. As for gender-
inclusive language, the TMB classes it among the areas in which contemporary translations have been
made "to conform in important respects to the ever-changing views of translators, social scientists,
and politicians." Thus, "the Word of God has become subject to the vagaries of any current state of
scientific knowledge and cultural trend." Gender-inclusive language, here called "gender-neutral lan-
guage" is condemned as "linguistic distortion" that has "no proper place in the sacred Scriptures"
(para. 25).

As uncompromising as the reactionary (in its dictionary sense) DTTM website and HCSB and TBM
versions of the English Bible are, "uncompromising" also seems to accurately represent the position
of even more mainstream evangelical opponents of gender-inclusive Bible translations. Opponents
are motivated by a number of issues, such as the absolute inerrancy of the Bible, which extends to the
original wording and grammar. However, without a doubt, the issue that generates some of the great-
est hostility is feminism.

When the furor over the announcement of an inclusive language revision of the NIV erupted in
1997, the *World Magazine*, a conservative Christian weekly, ran a cover story titled "Femme Fatale.
The Feminist Seduction of the Evangelical Church: The New International Version of the Bible—the
Best-selling English Version in the World—is Quietly Going 'Gender-neutral'" (Olasky, 1997). The ar-
ticle highlights several issues that evangelical Christian opponents have with feminism:

The result of the shift to unisex language may be to *cloud the uniqueness of men and
women*. And that reflects gains made by feminists over the past decades. It also underscores
the uphill nature of the battle being fought by those who seek to preserve a complementarian

view—that, for example, *women can be leaders in many spheres but must not be pastors* [italics added]. (para. 9)

"Complementarian" is a term used in evangelical Christian circles in opposition to "egalitarian," the view that men and women should have equal participation in the life of the church and the home. For an egalitarian, women's ordination and participation as elders and other leaders in the church are taken for granted. However, complementarians oppose women's participation based on their strict interpretation of certain passages in the Pauline letters. Secular feminism has helped to influence aspects of the egalitarian position in the church, and this is one reason that complementarians are generally vociferous in their opposition to feminism.

A leading complementarian voice is the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW). According to their website, their mission

> is to proclaim the truth of God's Word regarding God's[7] wise design for the *complementary* [italics added] differences between men and women who share equally in the image of God, in order better to equip evangelical homes, churches, academic institutions, and other ministries to be faithful to His Word and thus to experience the goodness of His created purposes for men and women. ("CBMW's Mission," 2005)

Complementarians believe "that men and women are of equal worth and are both equally created in the image of God, but have distinct roles in the church and at home" ("Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood," 2005). They believe that secular feminism has "clouded" the uniqueness of each sex, as Olasky (1997, para. 9) put it, and is leading to a "unisex" world that is opposed to God's plan as revealed in Scripture. Inclusive language, thus, becomes a rallying point against what complementarians see as much more than a secular social issue.

Nevertheless, many of the translators of recent inclusive language English Bibles are complementarians or can at least be termed "conservative evangelical scholars with a high view of the authority of Scripture" (Strauss, 2000, para. 3). The complementarian position in favor of inclusive language was laid out by Mark L. Strauss of Bethel Seminary in San Diego in an article in *Christian Research Journal* (2000). Strauss argues that

> The real issue of gender-inclusive language is not about the role of men and women, but it is about translating the Word of God as accurately as possible. It is about rendering the *meaning* of the original Hebrew and Greek into the most precise English equivalents possible. (para. 2)

Strauss offers the example of the Greek word *anthrôpos* in Romans 3:28. In non-incusive translations, this passage is rendered: "a man (*anthrôpos*) is justified by faith" (HCSB), but Strauss points out that *anthrôpos* actually means *a person* and that "Paul intended the reference to be generic and inclusive, referring to both men and women" (para. 2). The evangelical NIVI and TNIV as well as the mainline NRSV all translate this verse as "a person is justified by faith," while the evangelical NLT reads "we are made right with God through faith." Strauss points out that gender-inclusive translations seek to render the sense of the original languages of the Bible in accurate and precise English. He suggests that a gender-inclusive translation is one "that seeks to avoid masculine terminology when the original author was referring to members of both sexes" (para. 2). Strauss terms this "moderate inclusive language" (para. 3), presumably because it does not tamper with so-called "God-language," the masculine terms for God in the Bible (para. 5). As has been noted, this is an area of great concern to opponents of gender-inclusive language in the Bible. Strauss stresses that these translations use inclusive language "only with reference to human beings and only when the original author intended to include both sexes. These are not 'feminist' versions of the Bible" (para. 5).

As Strauss correctly points out, "empirical studies have demonstrated conclusively that the English language is changing and that generic terms like 'man' and 'he' are increasingly misunderstood today" (para. 7). To this end, Strauss ends his defense with reference to the strategy that Paul used of preaching the Gospel in the language and in the way best suited to his audience without compromising the truth of its message. Strauss concludes: "Gender-inclusive translations of the kind we are describing seek to accurately and precisely convey the sense of the original Hebrew or Greek, while using the common language of the day. That is the best possible goal for Bible translation" (para. 16).

In the same *Christian Research Journal* (2000) issue, David Wegener, an assistant pastor in Indiana and managing editor of the complementarian *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, argues the case against gender-inclusive language. Wegener disputes Strauss' claim that the aim of gender-inclusive language is to translate the meaning of the original languages "into the most precise English equivalents possible" (para. 2) and instead claims that the aim of what he calls a "gender-neutral Bible translation" is "a version of Scripture that systematically attempts to eliminate masculine terms (e.g., he, him, his, man) that are used to express general truths" (para. 2). In his rebuttal, Strauss (2000) points out that by using the terms "gender-neutral" and "degender," Wegener mistakenly implies that gender-inclusive translations intend to eliminate gender distinctions in the Bible. He argues, however, that the real intent is rather to "*clarify* the gender distinctions intended by the original authors," [italics in original] (para. 2) such as the times when Paul was referring to both men and women.

Wegener agrees that translating Greek *anthrôpos* as *person* in Romans 3:28 is "more precise" (para. 9). However, apparently in reference to the NIVI, he argues that "some of the more serious problems with gender-neutral translations" occur in the case of Greek *aner*, which does mean a *male person*, and that to translate it otherwise, for example, in Acts 1:21, "obscures the fact that the apostles sought a *man* to replace Judas as an apostle" [italics in original] (para. 11). Strauss agrees with this point, and, interestingly, the TNIV changed the earlier NIVI translation here from "Therefore it is necessary to choose *one of those* who have been with us" to "Therefore it is necessary to choose *one of the men* who have been with us" [italics added]. Interestingly, the mainline NRSV had earlier used "one of the men" to translate *aner* in this passage.

Wegener uses a different translation of *aner* to make a point about the complementarian emphasis on the differentiation of roles for men and women in the home and in the church. In 1 Timothy 3:2, both the Revised Standard Version and the NIV translate *aner* as *husband*: (NIV) "Now the overseer must be above reproach, *the husband of but one wife*." The evangelical TNIV and NLT translations also retain the male identity of the overseer/bishop: (TNIV) "Now the overseer is to be above reproach, *faithful to his wife*," and (NLT) "So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. *He must be faithful to his wife*." However, the mainline NRSV obscures the fact that the church leaders referred to were male: "Now a bishop must be above reproach, *married only once*" [italics added].

This is a key complementarian passage, and the differences between the translations of the TNIV and NLT, on the one hand, and the NRSV, on the other, reflect this different theological stance. Strauss (1998), who describes himself as a moderate complementarian, nevertheless defends the NRSV translation *married only once* by pointing out that the original Greek phrase is "much disputed by commentators" (p. 46) and that the NRSV translation is one of several possibilities, along with the NIV's *the husband of but one wife*. The NRSV translation captures what Protestants who no longer believe that women are excluded from leadership roles in the church might argue is the intended meaning of the passage. This underlines an important issue in gender-inclusive translation; namely, whether or not it is acceptable to take into consideration the modern understanding of Christians who consider this passage to merely reflect the times in which it was written, or whether, like the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, such passages still present the only true model for the church, by virtue of the fact that they this is how they interpret the meaning of the original language of the Scriptures.

As a result, this becomes one of the more vexing issues in gender-inclusive translations as well as the main crux of the disagreement between supporters and opponents of such translations. Wegener states the case clearly in his rebuttal to Strauss:

he claims that the issue is simply one of accuracy in Bible translation and not the role of women in the ministry of the church. . . . As I pointed out in my article, the Greek texts of Acts 1:21, 20:30, and 1 Timothy 3:2 make it clear [in spite of Strauss' point about the disputed meaning of the phrase in the latter passage] that only qualified *men* could serve as apostles and elders/bishops; women were not eligible to serve in those offices.

Yet gender-neutral versions obscure this truth, opening the way for women to serve in positions the original text of Scripture prohibited to them. . . . The very words inspired by the Holy Spirit—including their gender markings—pertain to our understanding of the nature and purpose of sexuality. The corruption of Scripture's teaching that men hold these church offices cannot be separated from the systematic removal of gender markings by scholars seeking to harmonize God's Word with the *feminist bias of our culture* [italics added]. Such scholars claim feminism does not influence them in their revisionist work, but this only demonstrates the lamentable naivete of these men whose calling is to handle the word of truth with accuracy. (para. 1-2)

For Wegener , "the real issue at the root of this argument" (para. 6) is this:

This debate is about the ideological clash of two worldviews. The worldview of the Bible is essentially patriarchal or father-ruled. Though God is beyond gender, Scripture refers to Him with masculine terms and pronouns. . . .

On the other hand, the *worldview of secular America is feminist* [italics added]. . . .

I would plead with Bible translators not to try to update the Scriptures by degendering them so that a *feminized world* [italics added] is more at home with them. . . . Let us not cave in to our culture and allow it to squeeze us into its mold. (para. 6-7, 9)

Despite the intense hostility that Wegener and other opponents of gender-inclusive translations have toward feminism, and although their belief in its overarching influence on modern society may be open to debate, Wegener's challenge to inclusive language Bible translators should not be dismissed as merely the ranting of a reactionary. Mindful of the Apostle Paul's admonition in Romans 12:2 ("Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" [TNIV]), gender-inclusive language proponents are faced with the question of whether what they are doing qualifies as "conforming to the world." On the other hand, it might be argued that by reacting so strongly against certain aspects of "the world" that run counter to their particular understanding of

the Bible some of the more vociferous opponents of gender-inclusive translations run the risk of losing sight of the positive contributions to understanding of the Bible's message that inclusive language can bring to the task of translating the Scriptures.

Conclusion

Secular inclusive language is top-down, engineered language change rather than bottom-up and spontaneous, as is the case with slang, for example. Therefore, proponents must convince users of the language that there is a good reason to change the way they speak and write. In addition, the underlying ideology that drives secular inclusive language—mainly egalitarianism and feminism—necessarily makes it political. Because of this, acceptance of inclusive language usually depends on at least a degree of acceptance of these underlying ideologies.

When inclusive language entered the Christian world, its ideological underpinnings found a receptive audience among many mainline Protestants, as well as among a number of progressive Roman Catholics. At the same time, it has encountered much harsher ideological opposition from evangelical Protestants, as well as from the Vatican (Hitchcock, 1997), than it has from secular opponents.

Debates, of course, are meant to sway the opinions of the undecided, not the true believers. Inclusive language—language change in general—evinces strong emotion for and against. Opponents argue that generic masculine nouns and pronouns are just that—generic—and, as such, do include women. Replacing these generics with gender-inclusive language is "inelegant," "awkward," "unnecessary," or worse. Wegener and other Christian opponents share these objections with secular opponents. However, because of their religious convictions, they believe, in addition, that generics "are used to express general truths" (2000, para. 2). This makes the Christian inclusive language debate much more intractable than the secular debate. Wegener views the debate as "the ideological clash of two worldviews" (para. 6), which he implies are the "patriarchal or father-ruled" (para. 6) worldview of the Bible, and the feminist worldview of equality of the sexes. However, it is not merely the Christian worldview versus the secular worldview. It is, in fact, "one" Christian worldview versus "another" Christian worldview. Though granting that God is beyond gender, Wegener's opposition to gender-inclusive language in the Bible, in the end, comes down to this: "Scripture refers to Him with masculine terms and pronouns" (para. 6).

This is a fundamentalist view of the inerrancy of Scripture, and, as such, is not open to argument. Rather than *in spite of*, we might more aptly say *because of* the "spirit of inclusivity in our culture" (Media Task Force, 1998, para. 1) and the fact that "gender equality and mutuality . . . are increas-

ingly influential values in our democratic society" (Cooper, 1998, p. 27), Christians such as Wegener are opposed to gender-inclusive language. At the same time, these same facts prompt other Christians to embrace and celebrate gender-inclusive language. Once again, theological, doctrinal, and social issues divide Christians. In the end, the absolute value that the Christian church places on "the Word of God" could lead to no other outcome.

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⑴　Matt. 4:4 (Deut. 8:3) (New Living Translation)

⑵

⑶　Inclusive language for God is a separate and far more divisive issue within the English-speaking church and is not dealt with in this paper.

⑷　e.g., ABC World News Tonight, November 9, 2005, "The Kansas School Board now says high school students should learn that evolution is controversial, including some of its basic tenets; apes evolving into men, for example."

(5) While *nurse* by itself can be inclusive in English, there does not appear to be an inclusive occupational title for *midwife*. One percent of the American College of Nurse-Midwives' members is male (Lindsay, 2004, para. 2), and *male midwife* is the term used in this article. As the article explains, *midwife*, in fact, means "with woman" (para. 4), referring to the patient rather than to the caregiver, so *midhusband is inappropriate.

(6) Although the term "evangelical" has historically referred to all Protestant churches, emphasizing their biblically based faith in contrast to the greater emphasis on church doctrine in the Roman Catholic tradition, in the United States since at least the late 1970s the term has been applied to more conservative Protestant denominations to contrast them from the more moderate or liberal mainline denominations.

(7) The masculine pronoun *His* might be expected here, as in lines four and five, which leads to the question of whether the CBMW's own mission statement was inadvertently influenced by the inclusive language movement.