

The Gender-Neutral Bibles

The problem of peculiar Bibles keeps deepening. The *Inclusive English Language Lectionary* is a dictionary used by modernist Bible translators and in many liberal churches. It totally eliminates male pronouns from the Bible, including those referring to God (changing “Our Father” to “Our Father/Mother”). Another is the *New International Reader’s Version* (NirV), designed mainly as a children’s Bible. The purpose is to introduce the smallest children to non-male Bibles. Yet another is the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, which is somewhat more literal.

Why is there such pressure to publish these truly weird Bible translations? It comes from lesbians and feminists who want to exalt the female image and downgrade anything to do with men—especially men in positions of leadership.

In 1997, Zondervan released, in Britain, the *New International Bible Inclusive* (NIVI). It was a market test, and seemed to be accepted satisfactorily enough in Britain without much protest.

Since then, Zondervan had been working toward a major publication release in the U.S.—a totally revised NIV, to replace the standard NIV.

In 1997, when word leaked out that Zondervan was planning to change its NIV (which has sold 80 million copies to date) into a gender-neutral Bible, there was a storm of protest. Zondervan decided to leave the NIV as it was and print a gender-neutral variant. Here is how it happened:

On May 27, 1997, James Dobson convened a meeting of Evangelical leaders, Bible scholars, and representatives from Zondervan at his Colorado Springs Focus on the Family headquarters. At the end of the meeting, Zondervan agreed not to revise the NIV as had been planned.

The participants signed a document, titled the “Colorado Springs Guidelines,” that specified how gender-related language in Scripture should be handled. (There are some instances where “men” obviously refers to both men and women. But there are others where it specifically refers only to men.)

But then on May 14, 1999, the *International Bible Society* (IBS), the group which prepared the NIV, announced plans for a new translation, to be sold in addition to the NIV. This new translation would be called *Today’s New International Version* (TNIV).

On January 28, 2002, the New Testament portion of the TNIV was published. It was immediately obvious that the TNIV violated the agreed-to Guidelines—for it contained gender-neutral language, even when it does not appear in the original Bible text. The “Colorado Springs Guidelines” had been flagrantly violated. Pressure from the Lesbians, feminists, and modernists had been intense. And the IBS had yielded to it.

In a July 2002 article in the IBS publication, *Light Magazine*, Peter Bradley, president of IBS, said the translators had to “withdraw” from the Colorado Springs Guidelines because they conflicted with the translation guidelines of the *Forum of Bible Agencies*, to which the IBS subscribes. That was more than an excuse; it was untrue. Wayne Grudem and Vern Poythress, in their book *The Gender Neutral Bible Controversy*, showed that the guidelines of the *Forum of Bible Agencies* includes no statement on the issue of gender-neutral language.

Zondervan vice-president, Paul Caminiti, then announced that his firm would reply to all criticisms of the forthcoming, very radical TNIV. But, after making that announcement, neither he nor anyone else at Zondervan will discuss the matter.

As mentioned earlier, the New Testament portion of TNIV has already been published. But, as of spring 2005, no one has yet seen any portion of the forthcoming Old Testament section. Normally portions are shared with scholars in advance of publication, but not this time. No one outside of IBS has seen the TNIV Old Testament.

So we turn to the already published New Testament portion, and we are shocked at the flagrant mistranslations. For example, when a male is obviously referred to, it is always translated by a neutral gender term. The word “Son,” applied to Christ, is translated “child.”

On behalf of Zondervan, Caminiti has announced that the complete TNIV, when released, will be “the biggest Bible translation launch in history,” including ads in youth magazines. He has told bookstore dealers that the TNIV would be supported by an “aggressive” marketing campaign. “The product rollout will be spectacular,” he told *CBA Marketplace* (the journal of the *Christian Booksellers Association*). Caminiti said nine different editions of the TNIV will be released at the same time. This will include devotional Bibles for men and women, a church edition, a novel-like edition (with only a small part of the Bible in it), and a “Scripture sampler” for evangelism prepared in conjunction with the Willow Creek Association, for the thousands of WCA churches (to which our denomination belongs).

The Southern Baptists have refused to carry it in their stores; and over 100 conservative Bible scholars have declared that they cannot recommend it.

Although Zondervan calls the TNIV “gender-accurate,” the new Bible horribly twists the text from its original meaning. And what is the objective? To please the lesbians and modernists, further confuse the sexes, and get people used to life in a mixed-up genderless Sodom. —vj