DISTORTING SCRIPTURE?

The Challenge of
Bible Translation &
Gender Accuracy

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What Is a Bible Translation?

The goal of a translator should be to reproduce the meaning of a text that is in one language (the *source language*), as fully as possible, in another language (the *receptor language*). Herbert M. Wolf writes, "The goal of a good translation is to provide an accurate, readable rendition of the original that will capture as much of the meaning as possible."[1] To do this effectively, the translator must understand both the meaning of the original text and the manner in which the target audience is likely to comprehend that meaning in the receptor language.[2]

Is a "Literal" Translation Best?

There is a very common perception among readers of the Bible that the more "literal" a translation is, the more accurate it will be. "Literal" in this sense usually means corresponding as closely as possible to the *form* of the original Greek or Hebrew text. This is also called "word-for-word" translation because the goal is to find an equivalent word in English for each word in Greek or Hebrew.

The problem with such an approach is that no two languages correspond exactly to each other. Each uses its own unique set of words, phrases and idioms to communicate a particular meaning. Agreement in form or wording does not necessarily mean agreement in meaning. Anyone who has ever studied a second language soon learns this. For example, the Spanish phrase "¿Cómo se llama?" translated "literally" comes out something like "How do you call yourself?" Yet no one would translate the sentence this way. In good idiomatic English it *means* "What is your name?" Though not a word-for-word equivalent, this is the correct meaning.

John Beekman and John Callow provide some humorous examples of just how misleading a literal translation can be. In some languages of northern Ghana the phrase meaning "he got married" translates literally into English as "he ate a woman." In this case a literal translation retains the form but completely misses its meaning. In another West African language a literal translation of Jesus' words to James and John, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?" (Mk 10:38), comes across as one drunkard challenging another to a drinking contest.[3] To translate "literally" in that language would portray Jesus and his disciples as drunkards! Eugene Glassman provides an example from the Urdu language. The phrase literally translated "My throat has sat down" means "I have lost my voice."[4] (The phrase "I have lost my voice" is actually an English idiom for "I cannot speak because of some irritation in my throat.")

This difference between form and meaning is easily illustrated in the biblical text. In table 4.1 a Greek expression is followed by a "word-for-word" equivalent and the actual meaning in English (thousands of similar examples could be provided).

A quick glance at these examples confirms that English and Greek use very different constructions to express the same meaning. *Form* does not here conform with *meaning*. Though contemporary literal translations do not usually translate in such a wooden, literal manner, obscurity or mistranslation can result from an overly literal approach. Compare, for example, the renderings of 2

Corinthians 10:13 in the ASV, the NASB and the NIV.

Greek expression	"Literal" rendering	Meaning in English
en tō speirein auton	"in the to sow him"	"as he was sowing" (Mt 13:4)
eti lalountos tou Petrou	"yet of speaking of Peter"	"while Peter was speaking" (Acts 10:44)
Pater hēmōn ho en tois ouranois	"Father of us, the in the heavens"	Our Father in heaven" (Mt 6:9)
eis to stērichthēnai hymas	"for the to be established you"	"so that you might be established" (Rom 1:11)
oute halykon glyky poiēsia hydōr	"nor salt sweet to make water"	"nor can a salt spring yield sweet water" (Jas 3:12)

Table 4.1

> ASV: But we will not glory beyond our measure, but according to the measure of the province which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even unto you.

> NASB: But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.

> NIV: We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.

The NASB improves on the very literal ASV by translating "glory" as "boast," "according to . . . the province" as "within . . . the sphere," and "even unto you" as "as far as you." Yet even the NASB is practically incomprehensible. What does it mean to "not boast beyond . . . measure"? What is "the measure of the sphere"? The NIV shows that this phrase means confining boasting "to the field God has assigned to us" and not boasting "beyond proper limits." Although the NASB is closer to the *form* of the original Greek,[5] the NIV more clearly represents the *meaning.* It therefore constitutes a more accurate translation. The addition of words or the alteration of Greek forms (for example, substituting a noun for verbs) in the NIV might bother some readers. It should not. This is the nature of translation. Indeed, in many cases it is the *only* way to translate accurately. Eugene Nida makes this point clear:

Perhaps some of our confusion comes from a purely quantitative perspective. We begin to think of translation in terms of the number of corresponding words. Such a mechanical view of things—straining at gnats and swallowing camels—is practically useless. It really should make no difference to us whether a translation of a term in Greek consists of one or five words; or whether, on the other hand, we render an entire phrase in Greek by a single word in an aboriginal language—a thing which often does occur. We are not concerned primarily with counting words and parts of words. Our objective must be in finding the closest equivalence in meaning.[6]

The quest for "literalness," though noble in principle, often results in poor translation. In John 2:4 Jesus' addressing his mother as "woman" (NKJV, NASB, NRSV), though literal, sounds rude to English ears. Unless Jesus intended to express disrespect for his mother, this translation is poor, since it miscommunicates to most readers. The NIV's "dear woman" mutes the sense of disrespect and so captures the sense of the original better. The CEV's "mother" is also appropriate, since it creates in the mind of the modern reader the same impression that the Greek "woman" did for first-century readers.

Similar examples could be multiplied. In the NKJV the Galatian believers have received the Spirit by the "hearing of faith," an incomprehensible English phrase (Gal 3:2, 5). The NRSV changes the nouns "faith" and "hearing" to a participle and a verb, respectively, for the more accurate rendering "by believing what you heard" (compare NIV).

English versions seek to stay literal by consistently translating a particular Greek or Hebrew grammatical form with the same English construction. One of the most problematic Greek forms is the genitive case. Beginning Greek students are often taught that the genitive case in Greek is the case of possession and may be translated with the English preposition "of." For example, in the Greek phrase *ho logos tou theou* ("the Word of God") the Greek genitive *tou theou* is translated "of God." The error occurs, however, when Greek students start thinking that the English word "of" represents a "literal" translation of the Greek genitive case. In reality, the Greek genitive has a much wider range of senses. Compare some examples of genitives (in italics below) in the NKJV and the NIV:

NKJV	**NIV**
you were sealed with the Holy Spirit *of promise* (Eph 1:13)	you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13)
that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father *of glory* . . . that you may know what is the hope *of His calling* (Eph 1:17-18)	I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *glorious* Father . . . in order that you may know the hope *to which he has called you* (Eph 1:17-18)
upholding all things by the word of *His power* (Heb 1:3)	sustaining all things by *his powerful* word (Heb 1:3)

In many instances the word "of" is a perfectly acceptable translation of the Greek genitive case. But careful examination confirms that in these examples the retention of the word "of" in the NKJV (compare NASB) results in an obscure or misleading translation. What, for example, does "the Holy Spirit of promise" mean? Here it means the Holy Spirit who was promised, or, as the NIV has it, "the promised Holy Spirit." We have here a descriptive genitive.[7] The NKJV phrase "Father of glory" may suggest that God in some sense begets glory. This is probably an attributive genitive, meaning "the glorious Father" (so NIV). The NKJV's "hope of His calling" seems to suggest that believers hope they will be called. But we are already called! The genitive here is probably a genitive of production,[8] "the hope produced by his calling." In the fourth example, the NKJV's "word of his power" is almost nonsensical (word that his power possesses?). This is

another descriptive genitive, "powerful word." While in many respects the NKJV is a fine translation, its consistent retention of the preposition "of" for the genitive case represents a misguided attempt at literalism. This is because the English form "of" does not correspond exactly with the meaning of the Greek genitive.[9]

Commenting on this kind of literal approach, Norman Mundhenk points out:

> A translator who gives the wrong meaning in this way has fallen into a very common trap: he thinks that as long as he keeps the "same" words he cannot be too far wrong with the meaning. Instead, what he has done is not translation at all—he has put a new, and therefore wrong message into the Bible. Whenever this happens, the problem has become very serious indeed.[10]

An overly literal approach can contribute to a misunderstanding of the biblical text, as the preceding examples show. Such misunderstandings are most obvious in the case of idioms. The Hebrew phrase translated literally to "cover his feet" in 1 Samuel 24:3 (ASV, KJV) actually means to "relieve himself" (for example, RSV, NASB, NIV, NKJV). Of course the English here is itself a euphemism; in another language the phrase would have to be translated differently. In this case a literal "translation" would be a mistranslation, since a normal English reader could not comprehend the sense from the Hebrew idiom.

In reality all Bible versions, to one degree or another, use both literal and idiomatic language. Even the most literal translations must at times abandon a word-for-word policy to accurately communicate meaning. In the example above both the NKJV and NASB use "relieve himself" (although the ASV and the KJV retain the literal "cover his feet"). Similarly, in John 2:4, Jesus' words in Greek read literally, "What is to you and to me?" The NASB has "what do I have to do with you?" and the NKJV, "what does your concern have to do with Me?" The Hebrew idiom "speak to the heart" (Is 40:2) in the NASB is "speak kindly" and in the NKJV is "speak comfort." The Hebrew phrase "an ox of the stall" (Prov 15:17), referring to an animal being fattened for slaughter, is rendered "fattened ox" in the NASB.[11] The issue is not whether a translation sometimes introduces idiomatic language (all do), but to what extent *meaning* is allowed to take precedence over *form.*

Formal Equivalence and Dynamic Equivalence
Corresponding to this distinction between form and meaning are two basic philosophies of translation. Formal equivalence ("literal" or "word-for-word" equivalence) seeks to stay as close as possible to the *form* of the original Greek or Hebrew. "Dynamic equivalence" (also called "idiomatic" and more recently "functional" equivalence) focuses first and foremost on the *meaning* of a text. From what has been said above, it should be clear that the primary goal of a good translation must always be meaning rather than form. Indeed, though we speak of a "translation debate" between these two methodologies, from the perspective of linguists and international Bible translators the debate was over long ago. The technical writings and research emerging from major international translation organizations like Wycliffe Bible Translators and the United Bible Society view it as a given that dynamic or functional equivalence is the only legitimate method of true translation. Precise formal equivalence is little more than imitation of a source language's form, not true translation into a receptor language. Evangelical scholar D. A. Carson noted in 1987 that "as

far as those who struggle with biblical translation are concerned, dynamic equivalence has won the day—and rightly so."[12]

This is not to suggest that formal equivalence versions have no place in Bible study. They are very useful tools (especially for those with only a basic knowledge of the original languages), since they give the reader a view of the formal structure of the Hebrew or Greek. They can be helpful in (1) identifying the structure of the original text, (2) identifying Hebrew or Greek idioms and formal patterns of language (some of which have cultural significance), (3) doing word studies, (4) identifying potential ambiguities in a text and (5) tracing formal verbal allusions (which might be obscured by idiomatic renderings). Literal versions are therefore tools (rather than translations) that can provide students with a check on the idiomatic renderings of other versions. Every serious student of the Word should own and use them. I encourage all my students to use a variety of Bible versions and to compare formal and functional translations. In this way they can see what the Greek or Hebrew *says* (its basic wording and grammatical structure) as well as what it *means*. The error, as we have seen above, is assuming that the form is the meaning and that "literal" means "accurate."

I am not suggesting that the form of the Hebrew or Greek should be disregarded. Retaining formal characteristics sometimes helps clarify the meaning of the text (but note that meaning still takes precedence). Greek word order, for example, is very flexible, and words can appear in almost any position in a sentence for emphasis.[13] Sometimes retaining this word order in translation brings out the sense of the original more clearly. The Greek word order in Luke 1:42, for example, is "blessed are you among women." Though English normally puts the subject first ("you are blessed among women"), most translations retain the Greek order to retain the poetic rhythm and the emphasis on "blessed" (for example, KJV, NIV, RSV).

Similarly, in John 1:4 the Greek word order is "in him life was." The Greek emphasis on "in him" is retained in most English translations: "In him was life" (KJV, NIV, RSV and others). The order of "was" and "life" had to be reversed, however, to make readable English, illustrating the fact that *form must give way to meaning.* In 1 Corinthians 2:7 ("for Christ did not send me to baptize") the word "not" appears first in the Greek for emphasis. It would be impossible to place the word first in English and retain the meaning. One could indicate emphasis through italicization, "for Christ did *not* send me to baptize," but this also illustrates our principle that a different English form is required to capture the Greek meaning.

In some cases it can be helpful to reflect certain formal characteristics of the Greek or Hebrew, but good translation never sacrifices meaning for form. Some Bible translators have adopted the slogan "as literal as possible, as idiomatic as necessary." *Inasmuch as there is no loss of meaning,* a translation should correspond as closely as possible to the form of the Greek or Hebrew. As soon as formal equivalence results in a loss of meaning, however, the translator must find a more appropriate word or phrase in the receptor language corresponding to the *meaning* of the original language. Eugene Glassman sums up this point well:

> Inherent in the definition of both *translate* and *interpret* . . . is the concept that regardless of the *form* used, what is carried across from one language to another is the *meaning* of the original writer or speaker. If that meaning is lost—whether by addition, omission or

distortion—then neither translation nor interpretation takes place.[14]

The main problem with the "as literal as possible" approach is that translators, especially those who are very familiar with the original Greek and Hebrew, often assume that their literal translation is perfectly clear to the common reader, although it represents very awkward or obscure English. A good illustration of this can be seen in the retention of the word "of" for the genitive case in the examples cited above. Those of us who spend our lives studying Greek and Hebrew and literal Bible translations come to read, think and speak in biblical idiom. We need to remember that, in many cases, these words and expressions do not represent real (clear, readable, contemporary) English. After translating a passage, a translator should stop and ask, "Is this how the biblical writer would have said this if he were writing in contemporary English?" The policy "as literal as possible, as idiomatic as necessary" could be sharpened to "as idiomatic as necessary to achieve clear and readable English."

Form, Meaning and the Inclusive Language Debate
The priority of meaning over form has great importance for the gender-inclusive language debate. Opponents of inclusive language sometimes take an overly literal approach, insisting on the retention of forms in order to maintain "accuracy" in translation. Wayne Grudem, for example, criticizes the NIVI for substituting English plural forms for Greek or Hebrew singulars, thereby changing "what the Bible said for what it did not say." He writes, "I strongly disagree with this procedure. The evangelical doctrine of Scripture is that every word of the original is exactly what God wanted it to be."[15]

While I would agree that "every word of the original is exactly what God wanted it to be," we are not talking about original texts here but about English translations of those texts. And every Bible translation involves word substitution, that is, substituting Greek and Hebrew words and phrases for English ones. Every translation must change what is *said* (in Hebrew and Greek) to capture what is *meant.* If changing a singular to a plural captures the sense of the original, then it represents an accurate translation.

The guidelines established at the Conference on Gender-Related Language in Scripture demonstrate this same confusion of form and meaning. Guideline A.2 mandates that "person and number should be retained in translation." Yet in many cases this is impossible. For example, the Hebrew term for "heaven(s)" *(shāmayim)* is actually a dual form and so "literally" should be translated "two heavens." Yet no one would consider translating Genesis 1:1 as "in the beginning God created `the two heavens' and the earth." *Elōhîm,* the Hebrew word for "God," is actually plural in form. Although the term sometimes carries the plural sense "gods" (for example, Ex 18:11; 20:3), in most cases it must be translated with the singular "God." Genesis 1:1 would seem heretical if the plural were retained: "In the beginning *the gods* created the heavens and the earth."

The same phenomenon occurs in the New Testament, where certain Greek words, like those for "Sabbath" and "heaven," often appear in plural forms. Retaining the plural in English translation would have Jesus proclaiming that "the kingdom of *heavens* is at hand" (Mt 3:2) and that he is the "Lord of the *Sabbaths*" (Mk 2:7).[16] Similarly, neuter plural nouns in Greek often take singular verbs. A "literal" translation of 1 John 3:10 would read "the children of God *is* manifested." Collective nouns and compound subjects can also take singular verbs in Greek. All three of these

constructions appear in a striking passage in James 5:2-3, where a "literal" translation would read: "Your riches [collective noun] *has rotted* and your garments [neuter plural] *has* become moth-eaten, your gold and silver [compound subject] *has rusted*." This English monstrosity results from retaining Greek number in translation.

Grammatical Versus Biological Gender
The inability to retain form is also significant with reference to gender itself. This is because languages like Greek and Hebrew have both grammatical gender, which is really just a formal characteristic of words, and biological gender, which refers to sexual identity. While all Hebrew and Greek nouns have grammatical gender (masculine or feminine in Hebrew; masculine, feminine or neuter in Greek), only rarely do they have biological gender. For Greek terms like *anēr* ("man" or "husband") and *gynē* ("woman" or "wife"), biological gender coincides with grammatical gender. In other cases, grammatical and biological gender are at odds.[17] The masculine Greek noun *diakonos* ("deacon," "minister" or "servant") is used to refer to the woman Phoebe in Romans 16:1. The Hebrew term for "preacher" *(qōhelet)* applied to Solomon in Ecclesiastes 1:1 is feminine, but no one would translate "the preacher . . . she said." The Greek term for "child," *teknon,* is neuter, yet we do not use the word "it" to refer to children. Similarly, the Greek word for the Holy Spirit, *to pneuma,* is neuter. But because the Spirit is a person, we use "he," not "it."[18] The Hebrew terms for "spirit" *(rûaḥ)* and "soul" *nep̄eš)* are feminine, but no one would suggest that the immaterial or spiritual part of human beings is essentially feminine.

In all these cases the form indicates grammatical rather than biological gender, and pronouns associated with this form must often be altered in English translation to capture the meaning of the Greek or Hebrew. Similarly, when the term "man" is used to mean "humanity" or "human being," its masculine form is obviously a grammatical feature rather than a sexual indicator. Not all persons are biologically male.

Those who produced the gender guidelines would probably argue that examples like these are precisely the "unusual cases" allowed for by the principle. But the point remains the same: The guideline "person and number should be retained in translation" is flawed because it mandates a particular form without considering the meaning in context. A sound principle should state something like this: *If retaining the form found in the original source language (whether person, number, gender, tense, voice, mood and so on) results in any loss of meaning in the receptor language, then that form should be altered to capture the sense intended by the original author.*

Thus to mandate a particular form without consideration of the meaning is inherently flawed. If a plural form in English conveys accurately the sense of a singular form in Greek or Hebrew, then that plural represents an accurate translation. The inverse is also true. If a plural form in English misconveys the sense of a plural form in Greek or Hebrew, then that English rendering, though formally equivalent, represents a mistranslation of the original. Mandating forms without consideration of meaning is always dangerous. This topic is addressed at greater length in chapter five.

The literalist argument of mandating form can actually be turned on its head and used against traditional translations. I surveyed various Bible versions and found that in hundreds of cases, English versions add the words "man" or "men" where there is no corresponding Greek or Hebrew

term. For example, 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 text.[19] Similarly, in the RSV there are 1,032 such verses and in the NASB, 917. The NRSV is by far the most "accurate" in this regard, since there are only 344 verses where English "man" or "men" appear with no equivalent word in 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. Of course in reality there is no problem at all with adding the English terms "man" or "men" *when these words accurately convey the sense of the original Greek or Hebrew.* It is the meaning rather than the form that must be retained in translation.

Every Translation Is an Interpretation

The importance of capturing the meaning instead of merely reproducing the form points to another important principle related to Bible translation: Every translation is an interpretation. When confronted with an original text, the translator must interpret the meaning of the original text before he or she can translate the meaning of it into another language.

Some literal translations insist that the translator intentionally avoid interpreting the text being translated. The surface structure of the text is retained in order to encourage the reader to interpret the text.[20] This, however, is a misunderstanding of the translation process. If the translator, through sound exegesis, has determined the most likely meaning of the text, why should this meaning be withheld from the reader? Intentional ambiguity invites misinterpretation. A translator should leave the meaning ambiguous only when (1) the original author was intentionally ambiguous or (2) the meaning of a text is so obscure that any interpretation is highly speculative. In the latter case, marginal notes are usually necessary to alert readers to the difficulty in arriving at a solution.

The fact that all translation is interpretation places an enormous responsibility on the translator, whose goal is to encourage the average reader to comprehend texts accurately. This is admittedly a difficult and painstaking task. If the translator interprets too little, the Bible will remain a closed book for most readers. Interpreting too much, on the other hand, risks imposing the interpreter's bias on the biblical text. The goal must always be to determine the sense intended by the original author and then to express that sense in language the common reader can readily understand. This brings up two important dimensions of the translation process—the world of the original author and the world of the contemporary reader.

Seeking the Author's Intended Meaning

Every piece of literature, whether ancient or modern, was produced in a particular historical context, or life setting. Understanding this context is essential for proper interpretation. It is impossible, for example, to comprehend the full significance of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address without understanding something of the momentous events of the American Civil War and Lincoln's role in that war. It is no different with the books of the Bible. Each biblical document must be understood within its own historical, cultural and religious context. Each of the letters of Paul, for example, was written to a particular church or individual at a particular point in Paul's ministry to address particular concerns or questions in that church. To understand Paul's writings, the reader must enter as fully as possible into the thought world of Paul and his readers.

For this reason the first goal of Bible study must always be exegesis, which means seeking to

determine as accurately as possible the author's intended meaning. What did this text presumably mean to the original author and to the original readers? This question is answered by analyzing the language of the text in its own historical and literary context. This is not an easy task, since the world we live in differs from the world of the original readers (historically, culturally, socially, politically, geographically). There is always a danger of reading the text through our own cultural eyes and so misunderstanding the author's original meaning.

For example, a modern reader might assume that sanitation is the issue when the Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of eating with unwashed hands (Mt 15:2), or that the "whitewashed tombs" of Matthew 23:27 are attempts at concealment (since to whitewash often means "to conceal" or "gloss over" in English). In fact the issue in Matthew 15 is ceremonial uncleanness, and tombs were painted white in Palestine to reveal their location so as to avoid ceremonial defilement by those who might accidentally touch them. Reading the Bible with understanding is not simply drawing out a first impression and then deciding it is the most natural and therefore the correct reading of the text. It is entering the very different world of the text and hearing a message that may be alien to our twentieth- (or twenty-first-) century ears.

If the first step of Bible study is to understand the author's intended meaning in the author's own cultural context, then the primary goal of translation must be to reproduce that meaning as clearly as possible for the contemporary reader. The translator must seek to enable the modern reader to hear the text as people living in the first century heard it. This means retaining the historical and cultural aspects of the original as much as possible while translating the language into contemporary idiom.

If obscurity and poor English are the failings of a literal translation, freer translations sometimes err by moving too far from the author's cultural context or by adding meaning that was not in the mind of the original author. The popular Living Bible (LB) at times loses the cultural setting in its attempt to use contemporary language. Translating "lamps" as "flashlights" (Ps 119:105 LB), a "holy kiss" as "handshakes" (1 Pet 5:14 LB), and "kissed" as "embraced him in friendly fashion" (Mt 26:49 LB) all move away from the historical context and hence away from the author's intended meaning.

There is also the danger of adding meaning not present in the original. In 1 Kings 20:11, for example, we find in the Living Bible, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch!" But the Hebrew proverb in this passage is "One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off" (NIV). We can be sure that King Ahab did not have chickens in mind when he spoke these words! As the TEV puts it, "A real soldier does his bragging after a battle, not before it." Even this, however, is not quite accurate. Although it conveys the general truth of the proverb more clearly, it loses the image of taking off armor. I prefer the NIV rendering (compare NRSV, NKJV), since proverbs, by their very nature, are meant to be understood through reflecting on the analogy drawn. Reflection on the proverb and an examination of the context makes its meaning clear. Perhaps the best translation would be something like "one should not boast while putting on armor before a battle but while taking it off afterward!" This retains the imagery and also makes the meaning clear. In any case, the Living Bible translation is inaccurate not because it is idiomatic but because it goes beyond the author's intended meaning.

The need for translators to capture the author's meaning has great significance for the gender-inclusive language debate. It is beyond dispute that the cultural contexts in which the Bible was produced (both Old and New Testaments) was patriarchal. Men generally took leadership roles in society, in the home and in religious life. If the goal of Bible translation is to retain the author's original meaning in its own cultural context, then it is important to retain patriarchal references in Bible translation.

Feminist versions (such as those surveyed in chap. three) often err seriously in this regard. In attempting to project the egalitarianism that they believe should characterize the church today, they have a tendency to distort the patriarchalism of the biblical period. When the NTPI begins Matthew's genealogy with "*Abraham and Sarah* were the parents of Isaac" (Mt 1:2), it ignores the Jewish culture of Matthew's day, where genealogical records were patriarchal, listing the male heads of the household. The INT strays even farther from the cultural context by placing Sarah's name first: "Sarah and Abraham begot Isaac." By following the Greek text and listing only the male names, translators of more accurate versions are not suggesting that Sarah was of no significance or that women are inferior to men, but only that in the cultural and historical context in which Matthew was written, it was through the male head of the household that the genealogy was traced. It is important to maintain this cultural distance in order to accurately reflect the author's intent. By including Sarah, Rebekah and Leah, these versions actually obscure the very real significance of Matthew's inclusion of other women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba.

Similarly, when rendering passages that address male leadership in the home, these two translations stray from the author's original intent. Whereas the NRSV renders Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord," the INT translates, "Wives, be committed to your husbands as you are to Christ." As we have seen, the NTPI goes even farther: "Those of you who are in committed relationships should yield to each other as if to Christ."

The question of whether Paul's commands here are meant to be universal mandates for the church of all time or are culturally specific to his first-century context is an important one. Although it is legitimate to debate the contemporary significance of these commands, the goal of Bible translation should be to capture the author's intended meaning in its own cultural context. It seems impossible to deny that in Ephesians 5, Paul's intention is to exhort wives to submit (or defer) to the authority of their husbands. Our Bible translations should reflect this command, together with all of its historical and cultural "baggage." Translations should reflect the meaning that the author intended, not the contemporary significance that Christians believe the text has for today.

We can illustrate this principle with another example. Most churches today do not require women to cover their heads during worship, despite Paul's mandate to do just that in 1 Corinthians 11. Most believe that Paul's command here is culturally specific, relating only to its first-century cultural context. Though these believers do not directly obey this command, they draw a universal principle from the passage relating to respect or submission (depending on the interpretation that is taken). Yet it would be wholly inappropriate to translate this passage in a way that eliminates any reference to head coverings. To do so would be to miss Paul's intended meaning in its cultural context. We must translate in a way that reflects the author's own context. Then through careful examination of cultural and historical factors, we must determine which aspects of these commands are directly applicable today and which must be applied at the level of principle.[21]

Who Is the Reader?

If the historical and cultural world of the original author represents one side of the translation process, the world of the reader represents the other. This brings up an important question: *Who is the reader?* Literal translations cater especially to the educated Christian public, using words and phrases that are incomprehensible to the wider public. I personally have few problems understanding the language of the KJV, the NASB or the NKJV, since I have spent most of my life immersed in their language and idiom. I think and speak in "Christianese." Yet the Bible was written for everyone. There is significant precedent for translation that is understandable to common people.

Jerome's Vulgate was so called because it was written in the "vulgar" (common) language of the people. William Tyndale is reported to have said to an opponent that "if God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives the plough in England to know more of Scripture than the pope himself!"[22] John Wycliffe was criticized by his opponents for having translated the Scripture so that it became "more open to the laity, and women who could read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy."[23] The King James translators themselves defended using the language of the common people. The preface to the original KJV reads:

> Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water; even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of Laban were watered. Indeed without translation into the vulgar [common] tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacob's well without a bucket or something to draw with.[24]

This idea of rendering God's Word into the language of the people has its primary precedent in the Bible itself. It was once believed that the language of the New Testament was a unique kind of Hebraic Greek or even a "Holy Ghost language" created especially for biblical revelation. Study of Egyptian papyri over the past one hundred years has demonstrated conclusively that New Testament Greek is actually an example of Koine (or "common") Greek, the everyday language of the people that spread throughout the Mediterranean region following the conquests of Alexander the Great (late fourth century B.C.).[25] There is nothing archaic, solemn or mystical about the kind of language used by the inspired authors of the New Testament. It is the Greek of the street. This says a great deal about the nature of God's revelation. Just as God took on the form of common humanity when he revealed himself as the living Word, so his written Word was revealed in language that the person on the street could understand. This fact alone should convince us to translate Scripture into contemporary, idiomatic English—not an imitation English that artificially mimics patterns and structures of either Greek or Hebrew.

The fact that the "average reader" plays a crucial role in the translation process has significance for the gender-inclusive language debate. Even if translators are perfectly comfortable with masculine generic terms like "man" and "he," they must consider how these terms will be heard by their readers. A translation should seek to give the contemporary reader the same impressions that the original readers presumably had. Take, for example, the Greek plural noun *adelphoi,* usually translated "brothers." We may assume from the context of Paul's letters that his readers heard this

address with a full sense of inclusion, referring to both male and female believers.[26] If, when hearing the English translation "brothers," contemporary readers perceive them to be male believers, then this English term is a poor translation. This is because it does not communicate to the common reader the same sense that Paul's readers had when they heard it. It matters little at this point whether the translator considers "brothers" to be an acceptable generic term or whether the term has a long and noble history in the English language. If many or most contemporary readers misunderstand its sense, it represents a poor translation.

The Meaning of Words
Since words make up the basic building blocks of any language, it is worthwhile to examine briefly the nature of words and their meanings. The study of word meanings, or "lexical semantics," has received a great deal of attention from biblical scholars recently.[27] The findings of these scholars will prove particularly significant to the discussion of gender-inclusive language in the following chapters.

Words generally have a range of "senses" (a "semantic range"). Some translations stay as literal as possible by translating a Hebrew or Greek word or phrase, inasmuch as possible, with the same English word or phrase each time it occurs. From the perspective of lexical semantics, this can create serious difficulties. One of the most common mistakes made in the analysis of biblical words is assuming that words carry a single all-encompassing meaning. This is sometimes identified as the "literal" or "root" meaning of a term. This meaning is then assumed to be present in every use of that word.

In reality, most words in every language can be used in a variety of *senses.* A dictionary definition of the adjective "fresh"[28] might look something like this:

1. New to one's experience; not encountered before: He came up with a fresh idea.

2. Novel, different: That is a fresh approach to the problem.

3. Recently made, produced or harvested; not stale or spoiled: I love fresh bread.

4. Not preserved, as by canning, smoking or freezing: Is that fresh fruit or canned?

5. Not saline or salty: That is a freshwater lake.

6. Not yet used or soiled; clean: I need fresh linen in my room.

7. Additional, new: Fresh evidence emerged late in the trial.

8. Having the glowing, unspoiled appearance of youth: She has a fresh face.

9. Revived or reinvigorated, refreshed: The general desperately needed fresh troops.

10. Fairly strong, brisk: That's a fresh wind!

11. Bold and saucy, impudent: That man is fresh!

Notice that this word (actually called a "lexeme," that is, a lexical unit) can have a variety of senses depending on the context. Another way of approaching this is to say that the lexeme "fresh" has various *referents*—objects or concepts in the real world—to which it may point or refer.

Is there one "root meaning" that connects all these senses? Someone might suggest the idea of "newness," but this would not apply at all to senses 5, 10 or 11, and would not help very much to explain senses 4, 6 or 8 ("fresh linen" could be old but clean; "fresh fruit" need not be newly picked; a youthful appearance can hardly be called "new"). Though it is certainly true that many of these senses share some features in common, each represents a distinct "sense" of the same lexeme.

The range of senses that a word can carry are called that word's *semantic range.* (Semantics is the study of meaning, so this means the range of potential meaning that a lexeme can carry.) The semantic range of the adjective "fresh" would include all of the senses above (as well as some I have not noted).

The idea that words have a range of senses is of course very basic English. Unfortunately it has often been ignored in the study of the biblical languages. Take, for example, the Greek word *sarx*. It is often said that the "literal" meaning of *sarx* is "flesh." In one sense this is true, if "literal" means nonfigurative. The Greek term originally referred to soft body tissue covering the bones. Yet in the New Testament, the term is used with a wide range of senses. Compare the following verses from the NASB:

And the rest were killed with the sword . . . and all the birds were filled with their flesh *[sarx].* (Rev 19:21)	*Sarx* here means "soft body tissue," "flesh'
For no one ever hated his own flesh *[sarx],* but nourishes and cherishes it. (Eph 5:29)	*Sarx* here means "physical body."
And unless those days had been cut short, no life *[sarx]* would have been saved. (Mt 24:22)	*Sarx* here means "life" or perhaps individual persons."
And the Word became flesh *[sarx],* and dwelt among us. (Jn 1:14)	*Sarx* here means "a human being."
If somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen *[sarx].*	*Sarx* here means "family," "race," "nation" or "countrymen."(Rom 11:14)
It is not children of the flesh *[sarx]* who are children of God. (Rom 9:8)	*Sarx* here means natural or physical descent.
In the days of His flesh *[sarx],* He	*Sarx* here means "earthly life" or "lifespan."

offered up both prayers . . . (Heb 5:7)

The spirit is willing, but the flesh *[sarx]* is weak. (Mt 26:41)	*Sarx* here means something like "limited human ability" or "human will."
For if you are living according to the flesh *[sarx],* you must die. (Rom 8:13)	*Sarx* here means something like "sinful nature" or "sinful sphere of existence."
These indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh *[sarx].* (Jude 1:7)	*Sarx* here means sexual behavior or proclivity; "going after strange sarx" is practicing deviant sexual behavior.

These various senses of the Greek lexeme *sarx* make up part of its first-century semantic range. The word may carry any of these senses, depending on the context in which it is used.

The English lexeme "flesh," on the other hand, in everyday English refers almost exclusively to soft body tissue covering the bones or to the skin. People do not normally refer to human beings as "flesh" or to their own race as their own "flesh" or to deviant sexual behavior as "going after strange flesh." Nor is "flesh" as "sinful nature" common, except in Christian circles.[29] To argue that *sarx* literally means "flesh" and must always be translated as "flesh" is to confuse the various senses of a word in one language (*sarx* in Greek) with the senses of a different word in a different language ("flesh" in English). Words do not generally have a single "root" (essential, true) meaning, but a range of potential senses. Furthermore, the various senses of words in different languages seldom overlap exactly.

Context determines which sense the author intended. It should be obvious from the preceding English and Greek examples that the *context* in which a word is used determines which sense the author intended. This does not suggest that a word can mean anything at all. The semantic range (the various ways the word is used in the contemporary language) limits the potential senses. But within that semantic range, context determines which sense is intended.

The NASB, attempting to follow a "literal" philosophy, translates *sarx* as "flesh" in all of the examples above except Matthew 24:22 and Romans 11:14, where it uses "life" and "countrymen" respectively. Even in these verses, however, a marginal note tells the reader that the word literally means "flesh." Such a note (though perhaps helpful for a word study) opens the way for misunderstanding. If the term "literal" here means "nonfigurative," then the note is simply telling the reader that this same lexeme can sometimes appear with the sense "soft body tissue." This does little to illuminate its meaning in this context. If "literal," on the other hand, means "actual" or "essential" meaning, then the note is simply wrong, demonstrating a misunderstanding of lexical semantics. The "actual" meaning of a word is its meaning in context. In Revelation 19:21 *sarx* means "soft body tissue" ("flesh"), but in John 1:14 it means "a human being." In Romans 8:13 it means "sinful nature." It is linguistic nonsense to speak of a "literal" or "essential" meaning apart from its context because words carry meaning *only* in context. Returning to our English example, this is like saying that the word "fresh" literally means "new," and so a "freshwater lake" is a lake with new water in it. This is obviously absurd. The word "fresh" means whatever sense it carries in the particular context in which it is used.

This point has important implications for Bible translation. There is no reason for always using one particular English word to translate a particular Greek or Hebrew word, especially if another word captures the sense of the Greek or Hebrew word better in a particular context.[30] Since every Greek word has a semantic range and that range of senses seldom overlaps exactly with any single English word, various English words *must be used* to translate accurately. To translate *sarx* as "flesh" in every case is to impose the wrong sense of the word (and hence the wrong meaning) on a particular context. That is mistranslation.

This point also has significance for the inclusive language debate. The English word "man" and the Greek word *anthrōpos* are two different lexemes in two different languages with two different semantic ranges. To say that the Greek word *anthrōpos* means "man" and thus should be translated "man" is both simplistic and, in some contexts, inaccurate. *Anthrōpos* is a Greek word with its own range of senses, which may or may not overlap in a particular context with the semantic range of the English "man." The only way to determine for sure is to examine the semantic range of *anthrōpos* in its contemporary setting (first-century Koine Greek), and the semantic range of "man" in its contemporary setting (in this case, late-twentieth-century American English). If in a particular context *anthrōpos* carries the clear sense "human beings" but the English term "man" does not, then other English terms must be used. In some cases the semantic ranges of the two terms simply do not overlap in particular contexts. (This issue is addressed in chapter five.) In the excursus we seek to determine the semantic range of "man" in contemporary English. How is the word heard and perceived today?

A word generally has only one "sense" in any particular literary context. It should be obvious from the preceding examples that a word generally carries only one sense in any particular context. If I say that a particular body of water is a "freshwater lake," I am referring only to the fact that the water is not salty; I am not also saying that it is new. If I tell you that I eat only fresh fruit, I may mean "newly picked" *or* "not canned," but it is unlikely that I mean both. This is because sentences in the real world (usually called "utterances")[31] appear in particular contexts, and the author or speaker generally has one thought in mind when forming that utterance. The only exception to this occurs when a speaker makes an intentional double-entendre, or play on words. If I poked one of my students with a stick as I said, "Are you getting my point?" I might be using the word "point" with a double meaning. Apart from puns and similar wordplays, speakers and authors generally have only one sense in mind when they use a word.

This point is also important for the inclusive language debate. It is sometimes argued that terms like *ʾādām* and *anthrōpos* always carry male overtones or connotations, even when they are used with reference to human beings.[32] But this argument confuses two distinct senses of a single lexeme. When a Biblical writer uses the term *anthrōpos* in a particular context (for example, "an *anthrōpos* is more valuable than a sheep"), that writer usually has in mind either a male human being or a person in general. He does not mean both (unless an intentional double-entendre is present). The claim that a male overtone or connotation is necessarily present in these terms confuses the sense of a word in a particular context with its broader semantic range.

The meaning of words changes over time. We have been speaking of the semantic range of words, but we should actually be referring to the *contemporary* semantic range, since the meaning of

words often changes over time. Take, for example, the English word *gay*. Because of the contemporary dominance of the sense "homosexual," the former sense of "cheerful" or "carefree" has almost disappeared from the language. To use the term with the sense "cheerful" is to invite misunderstanding. This, of course, is one of the greatest problems with the language of the King James Version. Word meanings have changed significantly since the seventeenth century, and words that occur in the KJV may well be misunderstood. In James 5:11 (KJV) we read that "the Lord is very pitiful." Such language (though heresy today) was perfectly acceptable in 1611, when the term still carried the sense "full of pity" or "compassionate."

This also has significance for Bible translation. First, the translator must seek to determine as precisely as possible the semantic range of biblical words in their original historical context. The meaning of many Greek words changed from the period of classical Greek to the Koine of the first century A.D. Many pastors and teachers have fallen into the error of assuming that the Greek word for the church, *ekklēsia,* actually means "the called-out ones," since its etymology *ek* = "out"; *kaleō* = "call") might suggest a "calling out." In fact, this sense, if it ever existed, had long since disappeared from the meaning of the word by the first century, when it was used in the sense of a "gathering" or "assembly."[33] The meaning of the Greek word in the New Testament must be determined not from its history or its etymology but from its contemporary semantic range and from the New Testament contexts in which it is used.[34]

The fact that the meaning of words changes over time has significance not only for the original meaning of words in the biblical languages but also for the other side of the translation process: the world of the reader. Translators must be attuned to the changing state of the English language—the way words are heard and understood—and must be prepared to adjust and revise their translations as word meanings change. This is a crucial issue in the gender-inclusive language debate. How much has the meaning of the generic masculine "man" changed in the English language? Is this an artificial change that is being imposed by a select few in the interest of an agenda? Or is it a more general tendency among the reading public? This issue is addressed in the excursus that follows chapter five.

Words have connotative as well as denotative meanings. A final point that must be made is that words can carry connotative as well as denotative meaning.[35] The word "dog" denotes in English a furry, four-footed animal. The Greek word for dog *(kyōn)* denotes the same thing. Yet when Paul warns the Philippians to "watch out for those *dogs"* (Phil 3:2), the *connotation* of the word is much more negative. First-century Jews detested dogs and applied the term to the hated Gentiles. The word "dog," therefore, had a particular connotative, as well as denotative, value. The same thing occurs in English, where connotative values are given to people and things. Peter Cotterell and Max Turner point out that for English speakers the fox is cunning, the mule is stubborn, and the elephant never forgets. Mothers-in-law are figures of fun and stepmothers are inevitably cruel.[36] These are connotative values for British and American culture that go beyond the denotative value of the words themselves.

The translator must constantly consider that Greek or Hebrew words may have connotative as well as denotative meaning. They also must be aware that the English words they are using have particular connotative meanings for their readers. A good example of this is John 2:4, discussed at the beginning of this chapter. While the connotation of addressing your mother as "woman" in

Greek is positive, in English it is negative. The translator must recognize that this negative connotation can cause the meaning of the text to be misunderstood and misconstrued. Recently I was given a piece of Islamic literature arguing that the Bible is inferior to the Qur'an because John 2:4 says that Jesus rudely called his mother "woman." The writers of this literature did not recognize that the connotation of the contemporary English word "woman" is very different from the Koine Greek *gynē*.

This point too has implications for gender-inclusive language. In a review of the 1992 revision of the Good News Bible, *Expository Times* editor C. S. Rodd writes concerning the use of inclusive language:

> "The masculine embraces the feminine," it used to be asserted, and no one was worried about this. Now that we have become more self-conscious about the gender of nouns and pronouns, however, the *connotation* of the words has altered, and masculines are felt to be restricted to males.[37] (italics mine)

This again highlights the need for translators to know their audience. If many or most readers draw the wrong connotation from a particular word or phrase, then that rendering represents a poor translation. Obviously it is impossible to discern and account for all connotative value in language. Connotation can be personal and individual as well as societal (the word "dog," for example, might even today connote a very negative image for one person [who has been bitten!] and a very positive one for another). However, when a large percentage of the translator's target population gives a particular connotative value to a word, the translator must take notice and adjust the translation accordingly.

Conclusion
This chapter on Bible translation recognizes the impossibility of translating a text from one language (the source language) into another (the receptor language) without interpreting that text. Languages, by their very nature, are idiomatic—unique in their use of words, phrases and clauses to express meaning. Translating is more than simply replacing each word in the original language with an equivalent word in the receptor language. It is finding the appropriate word or idiom in the receptor language that carries over the sense of the original. For this reason, form must not take precedence over meaning in Bible translation.

A similar principle of meaning over form also applies to individual words. Words do not have a single all-inclusive meaning that can be applied to every use of that word. They have a contemporary semantic range, a range of potential senses common to a particular language at a particular time. The literary context in which the word is used determines which sense the author intended. Since words in different languages have different semantic ranges (ranges that seldom overlap exactly), it is wrong to insist on using the same English word to translate each occurrence of a Greek or Hebrew term. In each instance, an English word (or words) must be chosen that captures the sense of the Greek or Hebrew in the context in which it is used.

These principles concerning the nature of language and translation have an important role in evaluating the accuracy of gender-inclusive language in Bible translation.

Notes

[1] H. M. Wolf, "When 'Literal' Is Not Accurate," in *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation,* ed. Kenneth Barker (New York: International Bible Society, 1991), p. 127.

[2] On the nature and process of Bible translation, see J. Beekman and J. Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1974); Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964); Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1982). See also the collection of E. Nida's essays in *Language Structure and Translation: Essays by Eugene A. Nida,* selected and introduced by Anwar S. Dil (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975). On a more popular level, see Eugene H. Glassman, *The Translation Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1981); Eugene A. Nida, *God's Word in Man's Language* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952).

[3] Beekman and Callow, *Translating the Word of God,* p. 22.

[4] Glassman, *The Translation Debate,* p. 57. I am indebted to Glassman for pointing me to some of the translation resources cited below.

[5] The NIV adds an adjective ("proper"), a verb ("confine") and a gerund ("boasting"), and it repeats the word "field." The NIV also chooses better English equivalents with the words "limits," "field" and so on.

[6] E. Nida, "Translation or Paraphrase," *The Bible Translator,* July 1950, pp. 105-6. The italics are mine.

[7] For this category and the following ones, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), pp. 77-107.

[8] Ibid., pp. 104-6. This suggestion was contributed by my former student Kelley Mata.

[9] For further discussion on the Greek genitive, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar,* pp. 72-136, or the other intermediate and advanced Greek grammars. For more on the failure to discern the meaning of the genitive distinct from "of," see Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating,* pp. 207-8; Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice,* pp. 35-37; Beekman and Callow, *Translating the Word of God,* chap. 16.

[10] Norman Mundhenk, "What Translation Are You Using?" *The Bible Translator,* October 1974, pp. 419-20.

[11] These examples are from Wolf, "When 'Literal' Is Not Accurate," pp. 127-36.

[12] D. A. Carson, "The Limits of Dynamic Equivalence in Bible Translation," *Notes on Translation,* October 1987, p. 1.

[13] For a discussion of Greek word order, see A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), pp. 417-25.

[14] Glassman, *Translation Debate,* p. 25.

[15] Wayne Grudem, "Do Inclusive-Language Bibles Distort Scripture?" *Christianity Today,* October 27, 1997, pp. 29, 30; Grudem, "What's Wrong" (rev. 1997), p. 11 (see chapter 1, n. 18).

[16] Other Greek plurals, such as *ta hagia* ("the Holy Place"), also must be translated with English singulars. For these and many other examples, see Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* pp. 403-9.

[17] The examples that follow are from Aida Besançon Spencer, "Power Play: Gender Confusion and the NIV," *Christian Century,* July 2-9, 1997, pp. 618-19.

[18] The Holy Spirit, of course, does not have biological gender. The pronoun "he" traditionally used for the Spirit in English indicates *personhood,* not sexual identity.

[19] This search was conducted with *Accordance.* I searched for all of the verses in these versions that

contain the words "man" or "men." From this database I searched for verses that did *not* contain the Hebrew words *ʾîsh, ʾādām, ʾenôsh, zākār,* or the Greek terms *anthrōpos, anēr, arsēn.*

[20]In an article opposing dynamic equivalence, Robert Thomas writes that "a certain degree of interpretation is unavoidable, no matter how hard the translator tries to exclude it. Yet a characteristic of formal equivalence is its effort to avoid interpretation as much as possible by transferring directly from the surface structure of the source language to the surface structure of the receptor language" ("Dynamic Equivalence: A Method of Translation or a System of Hermeneutics?" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1 [Fall 1990]: 149-75; quote, p. 154).

[21]For an excellent discussion of this issue of meaning and significance, see Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1981, 1993), chap. 4.

[22]*Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World* (Philadelphia: Charles Foster, n.d.), p. 351.

[23]Henry Knyghton, cited by Glassman, *Translation Debate,* p. 13.

[24]"'The Translators to the Reader,' Preface to the King James Version." Reproduced in Dewey M. Beegle, *God's Word into English* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), appendix C. The quote appears on p. 134.

[25]This discovery regarding the nature of New Testament Greek is especially associated with the work of Adolf Deissman. See his work *The New Testament in the Light of Modern Research* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.) and *Light from the Ancient East* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1922).

[26]See chapter six for a discussion of this term.

[27]See especially J. P. Louw, *The Semantics of New Testament Greek* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meanings* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1983); Don Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996); D. A. Cruse, *Lexical Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1989).

[28]These definitions are taken from the *American Heritage Electronic Dictionary,* 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992).

[29]Though a number of these senses of *sarx* do appear as part of the definition of "flesh" in a standard English dictionary, they surely arose from the influence of the KJV on the English language. Just because these senses exist in English (and so appear in a dictionary) does not mean that they represent common English.

[30]It is interesting to note that in the preface to the original KJV, the translators defend the policy of using a variety of English words for a single Hebrew or Greek term ("'The Translators to the Reader,' Preface to the King James Version," pp. 149-50). In many places this was done for stylistic reasons, not to capture a more accurate sense of the original.

[31]See Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation,* pp. 22-23, 63, 84-85.

[32]Wayne Grudem, for example, repeatedly argues that *ʾādām* has "male overtones," even when it refers to human beings in general. He claims from this that "man" should be used in translation to capture these male overtones. See Wayne Grudem, "Do Inclusive-Language Bibles Distort Scripture? 'Yes,' " *Christianity Today,* October 27, 1997, p. 28.

[33]For the various senses of *ekklēsia* in the New Testament, see W. Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 240-41. "Called out ones" is not one of these senses.

[34]This point was emphasized especially by J. Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1961). See also Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical*

Interpretation, pp. 113-15, 129-33; Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies,* pp. 28-32; Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meanings,* pp. 44-51.

[35]See Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation,* pp. 45-47.

[36]Ibid., p. 46.

[37]C. S. Rodd, "Talking Points from Books," *The Expository Times,* August 1994, p. 321.