

**News and Current Events :: gender inclusive NIV 2011****gender inclusive NIV 2011 - posted by proudpapa, on: 2012/9/2 18:47**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A major evangelical organization which supports a complementarian position on manhood and womanhood says the newest translation of the NIV Bible is a significant improvement over its predecessor, the TNIV, although the group says it still cannot endorse it because it contains many of the same problems.

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) released a statement Nov. 19 stating that the NIV 2011 has many of the same flaws that prevented the TNIV from gaining in popularity among the evangelical community. CBMW, though, did applaud the translators for the "openness and honesty" of the translation process.

The older translation of the NIV -- now called the NIV 1984 version -- is being phased out and eventually won't be published, its publisher, Zondervan, has said. The NIV 2011 will be in print next year and currently is available only online. (BibleGateway.com hosts it and many other translations.)

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood is an organization that believes men and women are equal but have different and complementary roles in the home and in the church. The CBMW withheld an endorsement of the TNIV in 2002 due to gender-neutral language, some of which the group said changed the theological direction and meaning of the text. The NIV 2011, as it is being called, maintains some of the TNIV language and some of the NIV 1984 language, and in some passages splits the difference.

"hough we are genuinely thankful for the many positive changes in the new NIV (2011), and though we are deeply appreciative of the very different process by which our friends at the CBT and Zondervan pursued and unveiled this new version, we still cannot commend the new NIV (2011) for most of the same reasons we could not commend the TNIV," the statement read. "Our initial analysis shows that the new NIV (2011) retains many of the problems that were present in the TNIV, on which it is based, especially with regard to the over 3,600 gender-related problems we previously identified. In spite of the many good changes made, our initial analysis reveals that a large percentage of our initial concerns still remain."

CBMW began its statement by saying the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) -- which translated the NIV 2011 -- "made some significant improvements in various areas" over the TNIV.

"For instance, in many passages 'man' and 'mankind' replace a gender-neutral equivalent, resulting in greater accuracy in translating the Hebrew or Greek text," the CBMW statement read. "This is also true in many cases for the words, 'he,' 'him,' 'his,' 'brother,' 'father,' and 'son.' In numerous passages that now contain these words, the CBT revised many of the most egregious passages that concerned us previously."

In some passages, the NIV 2011 uses the phrase "that person" instead of a specific pronoun. CBMW said such a rendering can make for an awkward sentence, such as in Revelation 3:20: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." The "they" in the passage actually is a "singular they." The NIV 1984 read: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." The TNIV translated the latter part of the passage as "I will come in and eat with them, and they with me."

In a statement, the Committee on Bible Translation said a "singular they" rendering is the "most common way that English-language speakers and writers today refer back to singular antecedents."

The CBMW said the translators' "desire to avoid the use of a generic 'him' has led to the use of a more distant-sounding 'that person.'" The rendering, the statement said, "has a very cold, impersonal feel" and will leave pastors and teachers "with the task of explaining the difference between a singular and plural 'they.'"

But more significant problems remain, CBMW said. A significant portion of the group's statement focused on the NIV 2011's translation of 1 Timothy 2:12: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." It is identical to the TNIV translation. The NIV 1984 translated it as "have authority."

The question is whether "assume authority" has a different meaning than "have authority."

It is one of the most-debated passages between those in the complementarian camp and those who hold to an egalitarian position (which asserts that male and female roles in the home and church are interchangeable). Christians for Biblical Equality, an egalitarian group, has articles on its website arguing the NIV 1984's "have authority" rendering is not the best translation.

CBMW said the NIV 2011 is "out on a limb" against other major translations, including the often-criticized NRSV, which also uses "have authority."

"The new NIV (2011)'s translation ... designedly lends itself to a common current egalitarian misinterpretation of this passage (i.e., that Paul is only addressing the case of women illegitimately 'assuming' authority, rather than prohibiting women from having/exercising authority as teacher/shepherds of the church)," the CBMW statement read.

The NIV 2011's translation of 1 Timothy 2:12 has been a major source of scholarly debate at BibleGateway.com, which is hosting a "Perspectives in Translation" forum regarding the new NIV. Denny Burk, dean of Boyce College in Louisville, Ky., has written articles criticizing the verse's translation, while Douglas Moo, chairman of the Committee on Bible Translation, and Craig Blomberg, a committee member, have defended it.

"I can tell you authoritatively that we did NOT choose this rendering to tip the scales one way or the other," Blomberg wrote. "Whether you are a complementarian or an egalitarian, you have some view of what Paul thinks women should not do here, in terms of exercising authority. When they violate that, whatever it is, they inappropriately assume authority. That's all we were saying."

Moo wrote, "the translators believed that 'assume authority' could be taken in either direction. We often use this phrase in a neutral way (e.g., 'When will the new President assume authority?'). ... It is our intent to provide a translation that is faithful to the text, bowing to no particular theological agenda."

Burk said "one cannot underestimate" the importance of 1 Timothy 2:12 "in the intra-evangelical debate over gender roles and women in ministry."

"Complementarians argue that Paul prohibits women from doing two things -- teaching Christian doctrine to and exercising authority over the gathered church," Burk wrote. "Egalitarians argue that Paul prohibits women from doing one thing -- a certain kind of teaching. They argue that there is no gender-based authority structure indicated in this text but that Paul means to prohibit women from 'teaching with authority,' from 'teaching in a domineering way' or from 'teaching false doctrine.' In their view, Paul doesn't prohibit all teaching by women over men, but only a certain kind of teaching."

Even before the NIV 2011 was released, some egalitarians were arguing for a translation of "assume authority," Burk said.

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Michael Foust is an assistant editor of Baptist Press. Read the CBMW statement at <http://www.cbmw.org/Blog/Posts/CBMW-Responds-to-New-NIV2011>. Read the discussion on 1 Timothy 2:12 at [www.biblegateway.com/perspectives-in-translation/](http://www.biblegateway.com/perspectives-in-translation/). Read the translators' initial statement on the NIV 2011 at [www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview/translators-notes](http://www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview/translators-notes)

<http://www.bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=34135>