THE FEMINIST QUEST FOR A NEUTER TRANSLATION

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To a genuine believer in Jesus Christ, nothing is considered a more sacred trust than the Bible. The Bible's own claim is that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (lit."God-breathed")
(II Tim.3:16; cp.Is.45:23; Mt.4:4). The Bible declares that it is a product of the Holy Spirit (II Pet.1:20,21; cp.Jn.16:13; Mt.12:36; Acts 28:25,26); that it is inerrant even in its minutest details (as originally given from the very mouth of God)(Lk.16:17; Jn.10:35); and that its words are never to be deleted or added to (Dt.4:12;12:32; Prov.30:6; Rev.22:19).

Quite recently, however, the division of Education and Ministry (DEM) working under the National Council of Churches (NCC), has been working to develop a "neutered Bible" to pacify the Feminist movement. An appeal has been made to the RSV Bible Committee "to move more boldly" in making a translation that will avoid masculine-oriented language. The committee is called upon to consider such "revisions" as substituting "God" for the masculine pronouns (ex. He; Him); to eliminate "man" or "men" in passages such as Psalm 143:2, Mark 10:18, Luke 17:34, Revelation 3:20, etc. (where the Hebrew & Greek pronouns are indefinite); to use inclusive phraseology (e.g., "those who", "everyone", etc.) in rendering the Hebrew ( ) and the Greek ( ); to change "father" to "parent"; and to change phrases like "son ofman" to "child of humanity", or "Son of God" to "Child or Offspring of God" (Edwards p.19-20). The Feminists assertion is that present versions are based on an "anthrocentric" (man-centered) tradition or male egotism, extending back into Bible times; that we, in contrast to former cultures are living in a society of "equality" & "fairness"; and because we live in such an indiscriminate society, chauvinistic language is one thing that must go! What is desired is a syncretistic ("adapted") Bible. Syncretism occurs whenever there is accommodation of the Gospel to premises or values prevalent in the culture which are incongruent with the Biblical message (Rene p.20).

The question must be asked: "If Biblical teaching is unacceptable to "modern" people, what is it that really needs changing? - people or the Bible?" Would not the real unfairness lie at the door of the Feminist who seeks to impose his or her own secularistic, unwarranted views into a historical document

that he or she did not write? When translators or interpreters approach Scripture from their own perspective and read their own worldand-life view into the text, this does injustice to the Author's original intention. This desire to alter the text clearly reveals a lack of respect, not only for the text and its Author, but also for the subject matter with which it deals. The proper aim of translation is "to express in another language the (precise) meaning of what the author said in his own language" (Marshall p.5). The interpreter's task is to let the text speak - whether he agrees with it or not. After the text is seriously interpreted in its own historical context, then one is at liberty to make applications of the eternal principles taught to fit the contemporary situation, not to change the text to fit the contemporary situation.

Satan's desire has always been to bring into question and then to alter the word of God (Gen.3:1-5). It is interesting to note that pagan religions have historically centered around female deities (goddesses & priestesses). Feminists who advocate an altered Bible, if they were honest, would admit a dissatisfaction with merely changing verses such as : "Our Father which art in Heaven..." to "Our Provider, Protector, Guardian (or whatever) which art in Heaven..." but they would eventually insist that it be retranslated "Our Mother which art in heaven!" The battle is not merely waged to produce a sexless Bible but ultimately it is a Satanic effort aimed at destroying Bible Christianity itself. The feminists ask: "Since God is in fact not a biological being and has no sex, what can it matter whether the Bible describes Him as "He" or "She, "Father" or "Mother", and Christ as "Son" or "Daughter"? A Biblebelieving Christian's reply is the confident assertion that "God Himself has taught us how to speak of Him in His inspired word - the Bible. To say that it does not matter is to say either that all the masculine imagery is not inspired (is merely human in origin), or else that, though inspired, it is quite arbitrary and unessential" (C.S.Lewis p.237). Therefore anyone who would intend to tamper with Scripture in this way is either an outright Bible denier or a Bible mocker (that is - he doe not take it seriously).

The results of such a version would be drastic! Theology directly effects ethics. In other words, a person's beliefs determine his lifestyle. Such an alteration of the holy Scripture would effect one's concept of God! For example "a child who has been taught to pray to a Mother in Heaven would have a religious life radically different from that of a Christian child" (C.S.Lewis p.237). Proper comprehension of Christ's incarnate nature is at stake if His gender is altered.

He would be reduced to the Docetist notion of being nothing more than a phantom without a human body and nature. However, the Bible explicitly states that "God sent forth His Son" (- masculine, singular), and this Son is specifically called a "**male child**" (,) (Rev.12:5,13).
Such an altered view of God would also change one's concept of worship, and then one's practice in the local church, which is one of the motives the feminists have. If the Bible was "neutered" as desired, the requirement for pastoral office -"the husband of one wife" - would be changed to read: "The partner of one mate".

The feminists seem to be frustrated people seeking to mend matters in life by confusing, even reversing the distinctive God- ordained roles. These innovators are really implying that sex (gender) is something superficial or irrelevant.
Ironically, while feminists seek by their views to elevate the feminine gender to something it is not, they in effect are lowering it from its height & distinctiveness as given by God. C. S. Lewis states: "One of the ends for which sex (male & female genders) wascreated was to symbolize to us the hidden things of God. For example, one of the functions of human marriage is to express the nature of the union between Christ and his Church" (p.238); (cp.Eph.5:22-33). Christian men & woman are not to be neutered homogeneous units, but different and complementary organs of Christ's Church.

Are the feminists justified in translating a "neuter Bible"?
The answer is no! Gender distinctions as well as every detail of God's word are to be kept the way He wrote them. While the Hebrew terms and when used collectively may refer to mankind (male & female) in a general sense, they do not in the singular, unless on rare occasion context clearly justifies this meaning. In like manner the Greek terms and can refer to human beings (male or female), without reference to sex (ex.Mt.4:4; 12:35; Jn.2:25), where context so indicates. However when God specifically uses the distinctive Greek word , for example, He does so to indicate a distinction from a woman (ex. I Tim.2:12; Tit.1:6). God could have just as easily used the Hebrew word (woman, wife) as He used to indicate "man" or "husband". In the Greek, He could just as easily have used instead of , which would have specifically referred to a woman (ex.Rom.7:2; I Tim.2:12,3:2). In the O.T. God could have just as easily employed a feminine pronominal suffix as He did the masculine, and in the N.T. He could have just as easily employed a feminine morphological

ending as He did the masculine! Both the Hebrew & Greek languages are unmistakably clear in their usages of gender. The issue is obvious. Either one accepts God's word as He gave it, or one unjustifiably alters it to conform to his own unwarranted presuppositions.

Is the Bible merely a source for "Christian insight", or is it the source for authoritative truth in all of its details? To change what the Bible means by incorrect interpretation from God's original intention is wrong. However to change what the Bible says by incorrect translation from God's original words is absolutely wicked! In doing so one has lost any reliable basis on which to interpret, and subsequently the souls of men and woman are blinded to what God really said. If liberty is taken to change the "he's" to "she's", what will hinder changing more or all of the Bibles contents, to fit personal whims? In all actuality anyone who would dare alter the translation of the words as originally penned (in the name of "equality & fairness") reveals an unconcern and unfairness to God and His word as He gave it!

Sources contacted:

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