

REVIEW OF: *ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION*

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The latest English Bible, the *English Standard Version* (Crossway Bibles; Wheaton, ILL.: 2001), is a disappointment for two reasons. First, it has followed the scholarly trend of translating a minority Greek text (a local Greek text, mainly confined to Egypt) over against the majority Greek text which lies behind the *Authorized Version* (1611) and the *New King James Version* (1994), so that we still lack an English translation of the Majority (or Byzantine) Greek NT which was the dominant Greek text in the Church for 1900 years until the Revised Version appeared in 1885. From that date onwards English translations have followed the shorter, Egyptian text. There is growing evidence that the Majority Greek text retains the original text even though its oldest manuscript evidence does not go back as far as the local, Egyptian text, because the dry climate of Egypt was more conducive to the preservation of the writing material with its distinctive text.

Secondly, the influence of a politically correct, feminist age is seen wherever the word “brothers” occurs in the NT. A ubiquitous footnote tells the reader to read *adelphoi* as “brothers and sisters” because this is what was intended when it was originally written (Preface, pp. viii-ix, xiii; and see the note under Acts 1:14 which is repeated at the start of Rom; 1-2 Cor; Gal; Phil; Col; 1-2 Thess; 1 Tim [4:6]; 2 Tim [4:21]; Heb [3:1]; Jas; 2 Pet; 1 Jn [3:13]; 3 Jn [3]; and Rev [6:11]).

Thirdly, the cavalier attitude shown toward the Hebrew text is reminiscent of the attitude of sceptical scholars of a by-gone age, where arrogance and disrespect for God’s Word dominated Old Testament studies. This disrespect manifests itself in subtle ways in the *ESV*. Often the meaning of some ancient version, such as the Septuagint or the Syriac, replaces the Masoretic Text (scores of examples could be cited). Sometimes the text of one Hebrew manuscript is preferred to the majority Masoretic text (cf. Pss 143:9; 145:14). Sometimes a minority Hebrew reading is preferred (cf. Pss 22:16; 28:8; 36:1; 54:3; 89:19; 90:1). Sometimes words are added which do not have a single Hebrew manuscript in support of them (Pss 77:6; 84:5; 89:50; 139:20). Sometimes the vocalisation of the Masoretic text is changed, resulting in a different meaning (cf. Pss 21:9; 29:9; 42:2; 58:1; 60:8; 69:22; 109:17(2x), 18).

The immediate object of this critique, however, is to draw attention to the influence of feminist theology in its translation of the New Testament Greek text.

INTRODUCTION

In Old and New Testament times men and women in all Near Eastern cultures, including Hebrew and Jewish, did not mix when they came together. There was always a physical separation of the sexes—a culture of modesty unknown in modern, decadent Western civilisations. A culture that God Himself instituted for His Church since the foundation of the world.

The Church grew out of the synagogue, where the Gospel was first preached all over the Roman empire. In the synagogue, men occupied the

centre portion and the women congregated out of their line of vision (often in a side room opening unto the main hall, or in a gallery, or at the back), so that the worship of God was carried on by the men with the women in a silent, submissive, helpmeet role. Christian congregations were still segregated in John Chrysostom's time (347-407). The governance of the synagogue-churches (some began in private houses) was entirely in the hands of men. The headship of man was a crucial factor in determining everything to do with gender relationships.

All Paul's epistles were written in the first instance to the men sitting in the body of the church. Christ was their direct head, whereas man was the direct head of woman. Men came before God with an uncovered head; women came before God with a covered head. There were clear, theological reasons why God established His worship in this permanent manner.

A close reading of Acts in light of its providentially ordained, cultural milieu reveals the startling (from a Western point of view) situation where the membership of the Church was seen primarily in its male members (even though there must have been as many women as there were men), if one is to go by the manner in which such gatherings are addressed. For example, in Acts 1:15, the 120 recorded names are all males who are addressed as, "Men, brothers." This total does not include the women and children, just as the 5000 who were fed were all men. The women and children were deliberately not included in both totals. Indeed, a careful examination of the NT writings shows that the focus is specifically on the men of the New Covenant.¹ This is seen not only in the male term "brothers," but in the grammatical gender used throughout to convey their, and the Spirit's, exhortations and commands. This is not surprising given that throughout the revelation given to the Church under the Old Covenant we meet with the same phenomenon: God addresses His Word primarily to the male members of His Covenants.

The precedent was set in the Garden of Eden where God knew perfectly well that Eve was the sinner, yet He called for Adam first as he was her head, and so he was responsible for her actions, which should have been under his control. Likewise, under the New Covenant, this male headship responsibility is still there. Consequently, it is the men who are totally responsible for the full ordering of the Christian Community and Church services, as it was also their sole responsibility under the Law. Only men could be Elders under both Covenants. Women—being asked to be silent and submissive in the Church meetings, and to enquire of their religion at home—would not have been viewed as being on the same level of responsibility for the good ordering of the Church as their menfolk were. Hence the Spirit addresses His Word to the men—the brothers—in the first place, and only rarely does He address the women directly. Thus *adelphoi* throughout the NT should be translated as "brothers" as only the men of the New Covenant have the right to speak in Church and to ask questions in continuity with the Old Covenant practices (1 Cor 14:34).

There is a linguistic device whereby the "unmarked" term may include the two genders of a species. Thus "lion" may cover both male and female *as a species* (it is therefore said to be "unmarked" when used in this manner), but "lion" will normally refer to the male of the species *unless the context determines otherwise*. However, "lioness" cannot include the male lion, therefore it cannot be an "unmarked" term. But this linguistic observation

¹ F. J. A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1897), p. 229, noted that in the apostolic age the Church was 'apparently the sum of all its male adult members.'

should be used with extreme caution when it comes to the term “brothers” and “sisters” because these are gender-specific terms and have no recognised “unmarked” use in biblical Greek. *There are no examples of “brothers” used in an unmarked manner in biblical literature.* Both gender-specific terms are like “lioness” in the above example. Therefore neither “brother” nor “sister” can be used in an “unmarked” manner as *ESV* is guilty of doing in the case of “brothers” unless it can bring forward clear proof that it has been used in this manner in the Greek language. Consequently the idea that “brothers” is an unmarked term is a pseudo-linguistic creation. As is the case in most languages there will always be exceptions to the rule, but they are just that—exceptions. Exceptions must not be turned into a general rule as *ESV* has done with “brothers.” The term “brother” means what it says, *male* brothers in Christ. Consequently, *ESV*’s policy to translate “brothers” as “brothers and sisters” was wrong.

Scholars had noted that: “The use of ἀδελφοί, . . . to describe the members of a guild, or the ‘fellows’ of the Serapeum at Memphis, may prepare us for, but does not exhaust, its definite Christian significance.”²

Unfortunately, *ESV* has lamely followed *NRSV*’s bad example of this linguistic blunder. See 1 Corinthians 15:6 where the 500 “brothers” is turned into 500 “brothers and sisters,” thus reducing the number of male witnesses by half (at least). Yet in its context Paul is only enumerating *legal* witnesses, and only males could be legal witnesses, never females. Ignorance of Paul’s Jewish background led to this numerical blunder. To understand Paul’s mind one needs to be steeped in the patriarchal and biblical concepts of God’s revelation to the Church of the Old Testament. In other words, to be an effective translator of the *Greek* New Testament (with its theologically conditioned culture) one needs to be a fully competent, Old Testament scholar because that is the direction the Lord Himself, Paul, the Apostles, and the Early Church (whose membership was 100% Jewish in the early years [Rom 11:18]) are coming from into the further light of the New Covenant age. We must come from the East, not from the West, if we want to avoid simple blunders like these in future English translations.³ There is no clear-cut example, either in the Septuagint or the NT, where “brothers” *must* include “sisters,” which bears out my cautionary note. “Brothers” should always be taken to mean *male* brothers wherever it appears in the OT⁴ or the NT.

² George Milligan, *The Autographs of the New Testament in the Light of Recent Discovery* (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1910), p. 15.

³ *ESV* is not alone in perpetuating the chronological blunder at 2 Kings 17:1 where the text should read: “In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah had reigned nine years in Samaria over Israel.” *ESV* reads: “Elah began to reign,” which extends the Northern Kingdom’s chronology by nine years. This error occurs in every English version to date. The correct translation was pointed out eleven years ago in, “A Translation Guide to the Chronological Data in Kings and Chronicles,” *BibSac* 148 (1991) 3-45, espec. p. 33. But an inexcusable error is caused by departing from the Hebrew which reads 22 not 42 years in 2 Chr 22:2. The 42 years is a dynasty reckoning, see *BibSac* 148 (1991) p. 22. No indication is given for this departure from the Hebrew text, which makes one suspicious that other departures have not been noted in the footnotes. This is very unsettling.

⁴ Deut 15:12, “When your brother is sold to you, a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, and he has served you six years, then in the seventh year you must send him out from you.” This is not a case where “brother” stands for “male and female,” but rather, the brother is the focus of the law and the addition of the female is by way of extension, not inclusion (and may have been added at a later date to the original), because the rest of the passage

We noted above the new, unsubstantiated suggestion in the footnote under Acts 1:14 which reads:

The plural Greek *adelphoi* (translated “brothers”) refers to siblings in a family. In New Testament usage, depending on context, *adelphoi* may refer either to men or to both men and women who are siblings (brothers and sisters) in God’s family, the church.

The first sentence has not been proved to be a common meaning of the term *adelphoi*. To find one questionable occurrence of *adelphoi* used in this fashion (Liddell & Scott give Euripides, *Electra* 536 as an example) and then impose this on all the NT writers is akin to what the enemies of Christ’s Church have been doing with Scripture for centuries. They avoid the plain meaning of a word and focus on an unusual application to create their new doctrine.⁵ It should be noted that there is no instance in the Septuagint or the NT where the word *adelphoi* refers to siblings in a family. From this non-biblical use of “brothers” as “siblings” (i.e., offspring without distinction of gender), the footnote quite arbitrarily applies this specifically created meaning to the biblical text.

Jesus said, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers [*adelphous*] or sisters [*adelphas*] or father or mother . . .” (Mt 19:29; cf. the same in Mk 10:30; Lk 14:26). If *adelphoi* embraced “brothers and sisters” in its meaning, then why does Jesus use *adelphoi* solely of males here, and refers to females using the female form of the word? This shows that both *adelphoi* and *adelphas* were clearly gender-specific terms in NT times and *neither* included the other gender.

It is suggestive that *ESV* applies the meaning “brothers and sisters” to the term *adelphoi* in the letters addressed to the Churches, because (one suspects) it is politically incorrect to address only males in the congregation today, as Peter, Paul, James and John clearly do in their church letters. That would appear to be the rationale for this departure from the older, literal translations, such as the AV and the NKJV. Inclusive language is a modern attempt to alter the dictionary definition of “brothers” to include “sisters.” *ESV* might itself be used one day in the future as *evidence*(!) of this use, resulting in a self-fulfilling wish. It also has the effect of rewriting the patriarchal culture of the Bible in terms of today’s politically correct, feminist culture.

In the Book of Acts, Paul uses *adelphoi* only of males. He addresses the citizens as, “Men, brothers [*adelphoi*]. . .” (cf. Acts 13:15, 26; 22:1; 28:17; also James in Acts 15:13; Peter in Acts 15:7; Stephen in Acts 7:2; and the rulers of the synagogue in Acts 13:15). But in his epistles *ESV* assumes that he is using “brothers” to include women. Paul could have said, “brothers and sisters” if he had meant to include both. The fact that he did not, shows that there is an underlying consistency in Paul’s theology of male headship and in addressing his letters directly to the brothers in the first instance. Once this is recognised then chapters like 1 Corinthians 14 (with its constant appeal to the “brothers”) means that there is no inner contradiction when Paul tells the sisters to be

speaks only about what happens to the male. I would place both references to the female (at 15:12, 17) in brackets to bring out the fact that the focus is on the male—the brother—and not on the female. The same law is repeated in Exod 21:5-6 without any reference to the female as an extension of this law.

⁵ See examples of this in “Excursus 2. Critique of Kroeger’s book” in my web-book, “Good Order in the Church: The Head of Woman is Man.” Web address: <http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12>

silent in 14:34. But if the term “brothers” means “brothers and sisters,” then Paul contradicts himself in 14:26 because there the “brothers and sisters” speak in church using a wide range of contributions, including psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, doctrines, Spirit-inspired speaking in tongues and prophecies, revelations, interpretations, praying, etc. This new definition of “brothers” means that there is no difference between men and women in the church meetings. They are all equal, as feminism teaches. *ESV* gives credence to this new definition (and doctrine).

However, note that in 1 Corinthians 14:26, *ESV* alters “teaching (διδάχην)” to “lesson” to avoid a contradiction with 1 Tim 2:12 where woman is not to teach (διδάσκειν). By altering “brothers” to “brothers and sisters” in 14:26, *ESV* created a contradiction in Paul’s theology over women teaching, which it then had to remove by altering “teaching” to “lesson.”⁶ Feminists will not be too pleased with this cover-up. They should protest loudly over this nifty bit of footwork given that in their Preface (p. viii) *ESV* states that they will keep to a consistent English translation for the same Greek word. *ESV* has handed feminists a powerful argument for getting rid of the Spirit’s injunction to the women to be silent in church (1 Cor 14:34), for if “brothers” means “brothers and sisters,” then women can bring a “teaching” into the church (according to 14:26) and have the authority of Scripture to share it on an equal footing with her brothers in Christ, after all, they are all siblings in God’s family, are they not (according to *ESV*’s ubiquitous footnote)?

I regard this version as a product of its age—a politically correct age, and one that has been heavily influenced by the leaven of feminist teaching. As such, it is not to be trusted because it radically alters the theological, background culture, and original focus on the men of the New Covenant. As such it will go the way of all other modern translations because the light sprinkling of feminist arsenic that pervades the entire NT will prove its downfall. *It is a poisoned translation.* A future literal translation will have to counter the feminist “brothers and sisters” of the *NRSV* and *ESV* with the translation “brother-males” to bring out the underlying, providentially created, cultural and religious background, against which, and in which, Paul wrote his Spirit-inspired letters.

The *New King James Version* (*NKJV* [Nelson, 1994]) is still the best Bible translation in English that we have on offer today, provided its alternative “M-Text” footnote readings are read in place of the main text. The *New King James Version* deliberately set out to avoid translating the Majority Greek text as established by two, independent parties of researchers, Hodges & Farstad (1982), and Robinson & Pierpont (2005). I have made my own extraction of the Majority Greek text from von Soden’s apparatuses for the four Gospels, and I can confirm that Robinson & Pierpont’s text (which differs mainly in orthography from Hodges & Farstad) is as close as we are likely to get to a faithful copy of the original writings of the New Testament documents, until such times as all the manuscripts of the NT have been computerised and a full history of transmission established for each manuscript. Once the distinctive four textual streams have been fully established (as far as humanly possible), then the stream represented by the Byzantine Text will stand out in its purist form.

⁶ The noun “teaching” occurs 30 times in the NT, which *ESV* always translates as “teaching” except here and in Rom 16:17 and Tit 1:9 where it is translated “doctrine,” and in Heb 6:2 where it is translated “instruction.” Feminists would be very happy to read “teaching, doctrine, instruction,” in 1 Cor 14:26 instead of the weaker “lesson.”

Two different approaches to the recovery of the most faithful representation of the original writings dominate textual studies today. The first, favoured by the vast majority since 1881, is a humanist approach. This takes the view that God has not taken any steps to preserve a pure, lineal descent of the original writings, despite the claim that all of these were fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, even down to the choice of its vocabulary. This humanist approach takes the view that the pristine inspiration of the original writings has been lost due to the large number of errors that crept into all copies, or if not lost, then seriously undermined by the chaotic state of many transmission streams, each claiming to be a faithful representation of the original writings. The *fact* that there are so many competing streams in itself lends credibility to their position. The four main competing streams (or text-types) in the NT are (1) Byzantine (or Universal), (2) Caesarean, (3) Egyptian (or Alexandrian), and (4) Western. Each of these text-types will have their core of representatives, and around them will be 'mixed' texts, which are generally a merging of two or more of these streams to form hybrid text-types.

The humanist approach was, and still is, to take the initiative, and using human reasoning, decide which of these competing streams of transmission is likely to represent the purist line of transmission of the original writings. Using human reason alone, Hort decided that one manuscript, Codex Vaticanus, was the sole surviving copy of the original writings of the Greek New Testament. Vaticanus was soon joined by Sinaiticus, and since Hort's day all the finds of papyrus copies (mainly fragmentary) in the Egyptian deserts are slightly 'wilder' copies of the text-type that Vaticanus represents. Hort then set about to demolish the claims of the other competing streams of transmission, especially the dominant, Byzantine stream, and in this, by claiming that it never existed prior to the fourth century, he won over his contemporaries, and these perpetuated his views, which completely dominate all textual studies to the present day. Man decides what is, and what is not, the likely wording of the originally (but no longer) inspired Word of God.

The alternative to the humanist approach to the recovery of the original text of the God-inspired writings of the NT, is known as the Majority Text approach. This approach drew inspiration from the manner in which God preserved the Hebrew Scriptures through His Hebrew Church for 1,500 years in such a pure manner that the Son of God trusted every jot and title that He read in the synagogue copy each Sabbath day. God entrusted His written revelations to man, and man made copy after copy of it, from the time that Moses literally wrote down God's words to the moment that Jesus read them in the synagogue. The line of transmission was never broken, such that one jot or one title was lost in transmission. Such was the attention given by a very long stream of copyists, who took such exceptional care not to lose a single word of what God conveyed through Moses and all the prophets who followed him, that Paul, writing to Timothy, could claim that "All Scripture [referring in particular to the Hebrew Scriptures] is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16). Paul had no doubt about the accuracy and purity of the line of transmission from Moses to his day. There were competing Hebrew text-types and versions in his day, but the synagogue copy was the only guaranteed text that he and the early church leaders would have trusted implicitly.

The Majority Text approach also drew inspiration from the fact that up until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the earliest complete Hebrew Bible dated to 1000 years after the time Paul wrote 2 Timothy 3:16. All the

synagogue copies were worn out on a continuous basis, and as each wore out it was replaced with an exact copy, and the old copies were reverently set aside to disintegrate into dust. The lesson drawn from this natural cycle of renewal, meant that there would be a lack of any ancient copies of the Hebrew Scriptures. The fact that there was a 1000-year gap between Jesus and Paul and the oldest surviving copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, did not undermine the faith of Byzantine textual scholars that the Jews had been faithful conveyors of the God-inspired Hebrew Scriptures.

The natural cycle of an inspired document is:

1. Original writing (God-inspired)
2. Continuous use in the synagogue
3. Wear and tear through constant handling and disintegration of the material on which it was written.
4. Preservation of the synagogue copy ensured by authorising a fresh copy to be made to replace it.
5. Reverent disposal of the worn out copy.
6. The new copy supersedes the old copy, which is not idolised.

The lesson learned from the manner in which the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures were treasured, preserved, and recopied as they wore out over 1500 years of transmission, suggested that a text that was read in the Churches of Christ and God would not leave very many ancient copies. We would expect the same natural cycle to reoccur in the Church as obtained in the Synagogue. So a text that is at the heart of a worshipping community, will wear out and be replaced from time to time, and then we would expect to find, "6. The new copy supersedes the old copy, which is not idolised."

The Majority Text approach drew inspiration from the three factors outlined above. First, God preserved His own inspired revelations to His people of the Old Covenant through human agents. He did not use angels to safeguard its transmission. However, nothing was lost in transmission. Second, venerable old copies were not preserved, or idolised, or kept for posterity. The new copy took the place of the old one. Thirdly, God's revelations were transmitted through the Sabbath reading of them in the synagogues; so they were in continuous use in the 'church of the wilderness,' and on this account became worn out.

Now, if that was the cycle of existence for God's sacred writings throughout the OT period, why would it be any different throughout the NT period? It was along this line of reasoning that Majority Text scholars examined Church history to find out what was the sacred text in continuous use by God's people. The only text which has been in continuous use is the so-called Byzantine Text. The vast majority of surviving lectionary texts contain the Byzantine Text. Neither the Egyptian, Western, or Caesarean Texts survived as living texts in the churches of God.

What Hodges & Farstad did was to recover the Byzantine Text using von Soden's isolation of the Koine Text (as von Soden termed it) in his critical apparatuses. They were followed by Robinson & Pierpont who used the same critical apparatuses, and arrived at virtually the same text as Hodges & Farstad. How could it be otherwise, seeing they were both dependent on von Soden's work? Von Soden was no friend of the Majority (Koine/Byzantine) Text, because he was a disciple of Hort, so while he isolated the Koine Text he did not give as much attention to finalising its text as he did to the other three streams. We await a more thorough isolation of the Koine Text using the full data base that scholars have put together. Until that day arrives the text of

Robinson & Pierpont is a credible stop-gap edition of the text that was used in the vast majority of the churches of Christ and of God down through the ages.

The lack of venerable old copies of the Majority Text surviving to the present day can be accounted for on the same basis that venerable old copies of the Hebrew Masoretic Text have not survived to the present day. History shows that venerable old copies survive only because they were hidden in caves (Dead Sea Scrolls) or buried in Egypt's sands or rubbish tips, or otherwise dropped out of use in the synagogue or the church.

Finally, in terms of text-critical principles, the age of a manuscript has absolutely no bearing whatsoever on the purity of its text. A rushed, sloppy, or bad copy can be made *directly* from the original writings of the New Testament writings. As these inferior copies started to wear out they would be recopied as though they were a perfect copy of the original, and they may be received and revered as perfect copies of the original as they are taken further away from the place where the original writings were written.

However, it is more likely that more perfect copies of the original were made and outnumbered the imperfect copies due to the reverence that one would expect to find in men who believed that the writings of the Apostles were God-breathed revelations for the New Covenant people.

Ultimately, as among the Hebrews, the copies that predominate in the reading tradition of God's synagogues and churches should be trusted more than a single copy, such as Vaticanus, which had been neglected by the Church, and survived only because it was discarded, while living copies were continuously replaced because they were worn out through use.

Codex Vaticanus was discarded twice, and on both occasions bookworms ate it from both ends (front and back) It has survived but with the loss of text from Hebrews 10 to the end of the Book of Revelation. Codex Sinaiticus was also discarded by the Church, and was in the process of being burnt when it was rescued by Tischendorf. If these two manuscripts had been allowed to disappear by bookworm and fire (as they were set to do), we would not have a Nestle-Aland text today. Both manuscripts were out of circulation. Both manuscripts were 'dead' to the Church. They were not regarded as God's 'living' Word to His people. They were rescued from the jaws of bookworms and the tongues of fire of a remote monastery's need to keep out the cold, to take central stage in the life of a cold and decadent church today.

Every English version of the New Testament is based on these two discarded manuscripts, including the *English Standard Version*, which is promoted as an evangelical Bible. This is not so. It is a feminist version, promoting feminist theology through its inclusive language. It is not to be trusted either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament.

The following critique examines just one aspect of the *ESV's* handling of God's Word as conveyed through the Majority Text, but it is sufficient to discard it as a pure conduit of the living water of life. It is a polluted version.

SOME TRANSLATION OBSERVATIONS

The object of the following survey was to examine every case where *ESV* has substituted “brothers and sisters” for the Greek “brothers” to see if there are any cases where the context is inclusive. Only possible or interesting cases have been commented on below.

EXAMPLE 1. In the Book of Acts, the address, “Men, brothers,” occurs 12 times (1:16; 2:29, 37; 7:2; 13:15, 26 [13:38, M-Text]; 15:7, 13; 22:1; 23:1, 6; 28:17 [In every instance, except possibly 22:1, only males are present.]). In every case *ESV* omits “Men” with no footnote. By contrast *NRSV* puts “Men, brothers” in the footnote everywhere it alters the main text to something more inclusive (except at Acts 13:15, 26; 22:1; 23:6; 28:17). Is it a coincidence that *ESV* accepted ten of the twelve *NRSV* readings? The two exceptions are at Acts 1:16 (Friends) and 2:29 (Fellow Israelites), but even here “Men, brothers” appears in the footnote of *NRSV*. It is interesting that wherever “Men, brothers” occurs, the element “brothers” refers to the physical, flesh and blood element, whereas in the Church letters it refers to their new brotherhood in Christ. Jew and Gentile are “brothers” in Christ.

There is a variant reading at Acts 1:16. NU reads “brothers” whereas MT reads “disciples.” The presumption is that the Egyptian text altered the broader term, “disciples” in the interests of strict historical accuracy to the narrower, more accurate descriptive term “brothers” because of v. 16, where the membership of the first Jerusalem Church consisted of 120 males, hence they are addressed as, “Men, brothers, . . .” But the switch from “disciples” to “brothers” reveals the presumption that males constituted the main body of the church and women and children were included under the broader term “saints” or “disciples.”⁷ Membership under the Old Covenant Church consisted of the circumcised male members with women and children assumed to be an integral part of the Church through their solidarity with their male heads or male relatives, and this understanding has been carried through into the New Covenant Church in this first list of its members. It was this same body of 120 males who elected Matthias to replace Judas in the Apostleship. It was upon these same 120 males that the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost.

EXAMPLE 2. In Acts 15:23 the *NKJV* reads, “The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch.” There is a descending order of authority here with the brothers mentioned last, but they are all united in sending out the Jerusalem decree. *ESV* reads, “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers [Or brothers and sisters] who are of the Gentiles . . .” The three tiers of authority are reduced to two. This reflects the Egyptian Text (E-Text) which omits “and the” before “brothers.” Thus the Egyptian Text has moved in the direction of locating authority further up the hierarchical ladder, depriving the brothers of their authority status alongside the apostles and elders. The Majority Text (M-Text) reflects a time when the ordinary male members of the Church were on a par with the apostles and elders in deciding theological disputes. According to the

⁷ There is another alteration in the NU text at Luke 23:55. The MT says that women came up from Galilee *with* Jesus to Jerusalem, which might permit a hint of scandal, so the NU text reads that they came from Galilee *to* Jesus in Jerusalem, thus removing the hint.

M-Text the Jerusalem church was democratic as far as all its male members were concerned, but according to the E-Text it was not, only the apostles and elders decided the issue in this case. The trend toward centralising authority in an episcopacy was certainly the situation in the post-Apostolic. Could it be that the M-Text reflects the Apostolic Period?

The E-Text at Acts 1: 16 shows a concern to identify the church with its male members. It reads “brothers” whereas the M-Text reads “disciples,” which could include female followers. The E-Text excludes the possibility that the 120 included women by altering “disciples” to “brothers.” In the event both “disciples” and “brothers” in this context refer only to males, because the 120 named members are addressed as, “Men, brothers.” If they had not been addressed in this way then it would have been ambiguous whether the first 120 names of the first Jerusalem Church of Christ included women or not. The address makes it certain that all 120 persons were males.

But *ESV* contradicts this by translating “brothers” in v.15 (following the E-Text) as “brothers and sisters.” The footnote is intended to be part of the translation, so that their text reads: “In those days Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,¹⁶ “Brothers, the Scripture had” The reader is confused by this second “Brothers” at the beginning of v.16. The Greek has “Men, brothers” making it clear that only males are being addressed. There is no footnote in *ESV* to say what gender is included. On the eleven other occasions where the Greek has “Men, brothers” it is left as “brothers” in *ESV* without a footnote, which means that it recognises that Peter is addressing only the men.

One is bound to ask two questions here. Why did Peter address his message only to the men? and, Why did the first register of the Jerusalem Church include only the male members?

The dominance of the male members of the Jerusalem Church is repeated wherever churches were established throughout the world. This can best be explained by the position God gave man in His world, and the preordained, subordinate, supporting role He created for Woman alongside Man. The Holy Spirit recognised the headship of Man both in the family and in the Church and He did nothing that blurred the gender lines, nor did He treat men and women as equal in authority. Rather He recognised that in every marriage the unity of the two becoming one flesh, with one head, ensured a harmony in the family and church that was unobtainable outside Christ’s headship of the Church.

Therefore, in controlling the head of each family, the Lord Jesus was in control of all His disciples—male and female—through His direct headship of Man, and through Man’s direct headship of Woman. It was sufficient for Christ to speak to His brothers to be in control of all the husbands, brothers and sons, because “the head of every man is Christ” (1 Cor 11:3). In Christ’s ordered world there was no need to address men and women at the same time, as though they were not in a hierarchical, headship relationship. It is because of this preordained, hierarchical arrangement that He addresses the heads—the males—of all the women in His Church. Therefore *ESV* and other inclusive language translations with their alteration of “brothers” to “brothers and sisters” overwrite the Spirit’s form of address to the Church, because they do not recognise the permanency of the hierarchical arrangement that the Creator predestined for the Church of His Son.

The loss of the knowledge of this hierarchical headship in the church has permitted feminism to flourish throughout the Western part of Christ’s visible church. Male headship was replaced by male leadership; then male

leadership was replaced with mutual submission. Now men and women are equal in all respects. Consequently, for the Holy Spirit to focus His attention on the male members is totally unacceptable in our politically correct churches. Even translations of the Bible are now altered to reflect this new equality of status and worth of all Christ's disciples. How better to achieve this than by altering "brothers" to "brothers and sisters"? And how better to achieve this than by a scholarly footnote purporting to be based on sound, conservative-evangelical research, which shows that the term "brothers" had a "specialized use" in New Testament Greek, which, by coincidence, included females in its use. Is it providential that this new meaning was discovered just in time as the church passed through the Feminist Age?

EXAMPLE 3. Acts 6:1-3 reads, "Now in those days, when *the number of the disciples was multiplying*, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution."² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.'³ Therefore, brethren, seek out among you seven men . . . whom we may appoint over this business'" (NKJV).

Note that the complaint was made by the men, not the women. So men complained to the Apostles and the Apostles told them to choose seven men to ensure there was fair distribution of the food to the widows. This accords with all we know of a male headship society. Men are the movers and shakers of all that happens and women are very much in a submissive role. This is especially so in public life.

It comes as a surprise, therefore, to find that *ESV* has transformed "brothers" into "brothers and sisters" as though today's lax climate existed back then, and that the sisters had a say in choosing the first seven deacons. This goes against all that we know in such a male headship society. The translation misrepresents the culture of Jesus' time. Nowhere in Acts is there an instance where men and women do something jointly, involving a decision. Leadership always comes from and through the male membership of the Church. In Greek, Roman and Jewish culture women had no public role among men and no vote in politics or the government of their cities and states. Everything we know about these cultures reveal male headship operating in their respective societies right down to the family level.

Language reveals the culture of its speakers. The dominant sequence of male-initiated activity throughout the Book of Acts (16:2;17:10; 18:27; 28:14-15, 21; cf. also 1 Thess 4:10; 5:27; 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 4:21), and the listeners being predominantly addressed as "brothers," tells us a lot about Jewish society in the time of Jesus. It shows that male headship was alive and dominant throughout the Roman world, and throughout the early Christian Church with its male Head, its male Apostles, and its male Elders.

EXAMPLE 4. Acts 11:1, "Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God" (NKJV). Here *ESV* replaces "brothers" with "brothers and sisters." But in v. 12 the six "brothers" who accompanied Peter to Cornelius' house are not replaced with "brothers and sisters." This is inconsistent translation of the plural form of the verb. Compare also 10:23 where "brothers" is not interfered with.

EXAMPLE 5. In Acts 11:29 the disciples sent relief to the "brothers" living in Judea. *ESV*, predictably replaces "brothers" with "brothers and

sisters” on the assumption that since this is what would happen today, it must have happened at that time. It is clear from the dominant part played by men throughout Acts that brothers would deal with brothers, even if their wives and daughters were supplying them with the material goods and food. The interface or exchange point would be at the male level in a patriarchal culture.

As these “brothers” travelled around Greece, Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Egypt and the Levant, they would, in the first instance, have contact with the “brothers” they were going to meet, and all their transactions would be done at a brotherly level. It is therefore not surprising to find that “they brought great joy to all the brothers” (Acts 15:3; cf. 16:40; 21:7) as they travelled around. No doubt they also brought joy to all the wives and daughters of the brothers they encountered, but language reveals just how male-orientated their world was. It is therefore imperative that every translation should capture the male headship world that the Gospel came into, which is very different from the headless world we live in today. To bring these two very different worlds together as if there was no major cultural difference between them is mischievous, which the *ESV* replacement of “brothers” with “brothers and sisters” does.

EXAMPLE 6. The world of Jesus was a male world, unlike the Western culture of the *ESV* translators. The majority of wives and young women would have been at home doing home-orientated tasks, and skills. As he walked around Jesus would see the familiar sight of men greeting men and he drew a lesson from it. “And if you greet your brethren only what do you more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?” (Mt 5:47). By changing “brothers” into “brothers and sisters” a false cultural background to the world of Jesus has been created.

EXAMPLE 7. Similarly, when the apostles write to the brothers they sometimes end by urging them to greet one another with a “holy kiss.” Given the culture of the times it would have been scandalous for a man to kiss a woman who was not his wife. No man in Greek or Roman culture would kiss his own wife in public never mind allow another man to kiss her. The apostles never intended their words to apply across the gender divide. Their words were addressed to men, and the men were to give their brothers a “holy kiss” or greeting (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Pet 5:14). Men kissed men, and women kissed women. Cross-gender kissing in the church today is a recent innovation having been carried over from the stage and television world.

The alteration of Scripture (“brothers” changed to “brothers and sisters”) and the overwriting of its male headship culture with a culture of mutual submission is a disservice to the Christian Church, as the altered “Scriptures” will then act as a substitute for its own pure words and its own headship culture.

EXAMPLE 8. Matthew 23:14 was spoken in the Temple. In the Temple the sexes were segregated, which means that Jesus spoke Matthew 23 to men, because no man was permitted to enter the Court of the Women. When, therefore, Jesus said, “You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers,” he was addressing only men. “Brothers” in this context can only mean men. *ESV* has Jesus saying to an all-male audience, “you are all brothers and sisters.”

EXAMPLE 9. Matthew 25:40. Men moved in a world of men and so had more contact with other men, rich and poor, than they would have had with females. In the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, the man calls all his *male* friends, relatives and neighbours (Lk 15:6), and the woman calls her *female* friends, relatives and neighbours (Lk 15:9), to rejoice with them. This reflects the segregated male-female world in which Jesus moved.

The same fixed, cultural situation is borne out in the Final Judgment scene where the King will say, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me" (NKJV). Men would not have had the same opportunity to minister to women in Jewish culture, and women would be expected to look after other women. Hence for *ESV* to substitute "brothers" with "brothers and sisters" is to overwrite the cultural context in which these words were said. In their NT cultural context "brother" means "brother" and not "sister." Here *ESV* has moved from a literal translation to a cultural transformation.

EXAMPLE 10. Luke 14:12, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbours, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid."

On the place of women in Roman society we have the account of Cornelius Nepos (end of first century BC) who notes that Greeks would be shocked by some Roman standards, for instance:

Who among the Romans is ashamed to take his wife to a party (*convivium*)? In whose household does the mother (*materfamilias*) not hold the place of honour and circulate in full public view? These things are quite otherwise in Greece. The woman is not invited to a party except with relatives, nor does she sit down anywhere in the house except in the inner part which is called the women's quarters (*gynaecoon*), where no men can approach unless closely connected by family ties (*Vitae* praef. 6-7).

In Roman and Greek society distinctions between public and private carried gender markings. The forum was a man's world, also politics, elections, the administration of justice and public speaking, were all activities which women would never dream of getting involved in.⁸ The domestic sphere was the sphere that women excelled in, and in which she might display the distinctive female virtues celebrated on so many tombstones: of modesty, chastity, fidelity and woolmaking, all of which are endorsed by the household codes of the New Testament.⁹ The entertainment area in the Greek home (*symposium*) never permitted men, external to the household, to mix with female members of the household, in contrast to the practice in the Roman home (*convivium*).¹⁰ This contrast in etiquettes has implications for the NT practice of house churches, where it is very unlikely that men and women mixed indiscriminately as is the practice today in Western churches. If men

⁸ Roman women were excluded from public participation in politics, for which see Shelly Matthews, *Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Stanford, CAL: Stanford University Press, 2001) pp. 42-46.

⁹ See Diana E. E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1996), p. 104. On the influence of gender in the architecture of the home in Roman and Greece society see pp. 104-115 and the extensive bibliography there. Separation of the sexes within the home (i.e., reserved zones) was observed for all sorts of reasons, not least, the need for modesty and privacy.

¹⁰ Diana E. E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1996), p. 109.

and women did meet in this way they would have conformed to the synagogue pattern of segregation.

Given this cultural background and the fact that all the categories mentioned by Jesus are composed of males, it is misleading to change the distinctively male term “brothers” into “brothers and sisters” in this context. If there were females present at Jewish dinners they would come under one of the other terms, but not under “brothers.”

EXAMPLE 11. Sometimes *ESV* replaces “brothers” with “brothers and sisters” for no apparent reason except to break up the monolithic male headship culture, as in Luke 16:28 (the rich man and Lazarus), “for I have five brothers,” becomes, “for I have five brothers and sisters.” Does this mean he had five brothers and five sisters, or is the total five?

EXAMPLE 12. Luke 18:29, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God” (*NKJV*). The absence of “sisters” in this list may have led *ESV* to think that “brothers” here stands for “brothers and sisters.” But this is a case where not all the items are recorded by Luke, because in the parallel record of what Jesus said, Jesus includes “sisters” as a separate category (Mt 19:29; Mk 10:29). So in Luke, “brothers” means “brothers” and not “brothers and sisters” as this would be adding to God’s word.

EXAMPLE 13. Luke 21:16, “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends.” Luke once again does not record the separate category of sisters, which is a deliberate omission and “sisters” is not to be understood to be included in “brothers” because Luke does not use “brothers” with this meaning. (See EXAMPLE 12.) Luke has consciously left out “sisters.”

EXAMPLE 14. John 2:12 (see also Acts 1:14), “After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples” (*NKJV*). *ESV*, predictably, reads “brothers and sisters” for “brothers” in both texts. This is very unlikely given that Jesus’ half-sisters would have been in the home of their husbands in Nazareth (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3, “are not his sisters here [in Nazareth] with us”), where they appear to have resided, whereas Jesus was in Capernaum when John 2:12 took place. Brothers, on the other hand, like Jesus, would have remained in the house of Joseph, their father (though it is likely that Joseph was dead by the time Jesus began his ministry) and looked after their mother.

In any case, *ESV* is inconsistent because only in Jn 2:12 and Acts 1:14 does *ESV* replace “brothers” with “brothers and sisters” in the case of Jesus’ own family. In all other occurrences there is no replacement. In Matthew 12:46 (and the parallel in Mk 3:32) it reads, “his mother and his brothers stood outside,” but *ESV* does not have the footnote here. It relegates the whole of 12:47 to the footnote whose parallel is Mark 3:32. In neither place is “brothers” replaced with “brothers and sisters.” *ESV* even has a footnote at Mk 3:32 noting that: “Other early manuscripts add *and your sisters*,” which, in itself, indicates that “brothers” was not understood to include sibling sisters.

It would seem that in all the places where Jesus’ mother and brothers are mentioned together, the “brothers” are his four half-brothers and the term does not include his half-sisters.

EXAMPLE 15. John 7:3, 5, 10. Jesus' brothers are replaced with his "brothers and sisters," because it is assumed that (1) his sisters were still living with him, which is extremely doubtful. They were likely married and under the headship of their own husbands by this time. And (2) that his sisters went up to the Feast of Tabernacles, which was not compulsory for any females to attend. Only males were obliged to attend this feast. On both points it is very unlikely that Jesus' sisters are included with his brothers in this context.

EXAMPLE 16. John 21:23, "Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die" (NKJV). Given the male headship culture of Jesus' day, and given the evidence from the Book of Acts that the Church, through its male members, communicated to their male colleagues in other churches throughout the Roman Empire, "brothers" here will mean the same as it does throughout Acts, where there is not a single case where "brothers" must include sisters as though they were on a par with men. This would be to impose our Western 'headless' culture on a thoroughly male headship culture. The dominant use of "brothers" throughout the NT to refer to the membership of the Church is in keeping with a male headship society. There was no secular society; the entire nation belonged to the Church of the Old Covenant through male circumcision. The theological truth from Creation to Calvary was that God had ordained *for all time* that the head of woman would be man. It follows from this creational subordination that all Church matters (under the Old and New Covenants) would be decided by the male members. Their sisters were to accept their decisions, being placed in a submissive role to man by God Himself.

EXAMPLE 17. Epistle to the Romans. Eleven times "brothers" is replaced by "brothers and sisters" (1:13; 7:1, 4; 8:12; 9:3; 10:1; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14; 16:14, 17).

It must be remembered that the world Jesus moved and had his existence in was completely different to the 'headless' culture we experience in the West today. Everywhere Jesus looked he would see a masculine-dominated culture; men in the open, women at home. Because the nation was also a Church, the Church was the State. Under King David's rule and also that of his son, Solomon, all the offices of State were given to men. There is not a single female in any position of authority over men anywhere in the Church-State. This was in keeping with an all-male headship introduced by the Creator.

The Apostle Paul was well aware of God's ways and decrees and it was given to him to articulate the three concentric circles of responsibility and control. First, God was head of Christ. Second, Christ was head of all men. Third, man (husband) was the head of woman (wife). The three are locked together under God the Father's authority.

The circle or sub-headship under threat today is the headship of man over woman. This is no longer acceptable in Western churches. Political correctness and a century of feminist propaganda has yielded the ultimate prize of destroying the male headship tradition in the church. Men and women are now equal. The male headship of the Apostolic Church is looked upon as un-Christian, and replaced with mutual submission. The drive for equality of office, role and authority in the church was once pressed for in the full knowledge that it was against Scripture. But now *ESV's* footnotes informs us that the word "brothers" had all along the meaning of "brothers and sisters," so that all Christians, male and female, had been treated as equals

and did all things jointly, and were addressed jointly, and jointly taught and instructed one another; that women taught men and men taught women with no male headship in operation throughout the Apostolic period. In all things they were equal. God loved all His siblings in His Son's Church equally.

Thus *ESV's* "discovery" undermines male headship and the theological and patriarchal culture that characterised the Apostolic Church. All the Church epistles are addressed to the males—the brothers—in the first place. It is the men who are to learn in Church and then teach their wives and children at home. It was only right that the females and offspring in each family should look to the head male for teaching and leadership. This is the way that God ordained that man should be head of his own household, and only those heads of houses who ruled and cared for their own families well were eligible to become Elders in the Church of His Son.

The truth in the circumstance that all the Church epistles are addressed to the males in the first place, should not be lost sight of, for it means that God would instruct the males directly and the females indirectly through what He had taught the males. Thus even in the manner in which He revealed truth to mankind, He respected the headship of man by giving him the Truth first, not jointly. He did the same when He created Adam. He revealed the truth to him first and he passed it on to Eve.

The fact that God's respect for man was captured in writing for all time, means that all men should see themselves being addressed directly as "brothers" as they read these first-century writings, and thus see in this circumstance God's respect for the special status He has conferred on each one of them. God's unique respect for man's leadership is lost if "brothers" is altered to "brothers and sisters."

The spiritual danger in *ESV's* footnote is that it removes the respect that God still has today for man's headship (which is encapsulated in the term "brothers") by putting man and woman on the same level. This reflects modern man's thinking. It does not reflect God's thinking.

The attempt to destroy the teaching on man's headship has gone on for the past century. The church is still not fully aware of the spiritual battle as it is slowly robbed of its theological traditions. *ESV's* unintentional (one hopes) contribution to this on-going destruction lies in the feminist leaven that sits at the foot of God's Word, silently shifting the focus away from man's special relationship to Him through the gift of headship.

EXAMPLE 18. Romans 7:14. Paul is not conscious of women and children when he addresses the men throughout this epistle. It is as if he knows that if every man comes under Christ's headship, then the rest of the man's family will follow his lead. Paul masculinises his theology. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 7:14). The corollary, if he were speaking to women, would be, "For all *women* who are led by the spirit of God are *daughters* of God." So there is no need to alter "brothers" to "brothers and sisters." Brothers means male brothers. But the solidarity of the family is such that it coheres with its head, and so the salvation that is offered to each brother is considered to be offered to the rest of his 'body.'

EXAMPLE 19. The *ESV's* translation style (Preface, pp. viii-ix).

The plain meaning of Scripture is that "son of God" refers to a male brother, and "daughter of God" refers to a female sister. But masculine terms, such as "son of God," are given a "specialized use" in New Testament Greek,

it is claimed. There is a strange oddity here. The statement reads, "As used by the apostle Paul, this term ["sons"] refers to the status of all Christians, both men and women, who, having been adopted into God's family, now enjoy all the privileges . . . of God's children." While it is undoubtedly true that all are God's children, in God's family He distinguishes between "sons" and "daughters," and so "sons" must not be confused with "daughters" or vice versa. It is unbiblical and inappropriate to call a female a "son of God," and unbiblical and inappropriate to call a male a "daughter of God."

The Spirit does not confuse the genders. The term "sons" is not an inclusive term. Rather, because the Holy Spirit is addressing His words *directly* to males (brothers) most of the time, the male listeners are called "sons," and by analogy females would be called "daughters" of God. We noted above that Paul is not conscious of women and children when he addresses the men throughout his epistles. So we conclude "sons of God" always refers to males, and "daughters of God" always refers to females. There may be exceptions to this grammatical rule, but they are just that—exceptions. If there are not so many references to "daughters of God" this is because of the intense focus on the men throughout the church epistles.

Western culture, in this regard, is open to the pitfall of assuming that "sons of God" is inclusive of "daughters of God," because of the huge disparity between the male headship outlook of the Apostles and the feminist outlook of Western cultures, or because those not in sympathy with the biblical male headship culture have not taken seriously the gender of the addressees and taken note that the only appropriate term to describe their adoption is the male one, "sons of God." If the addressees had been females, then the Holy Spirit would have described their adoption as "daughters of God." It just so happens that the addressees are seldom females to bring out this point. However, we read, "God has said . . . 'I will dwell in them . . . they shall be My people . . . I will be a Father to you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'" (2 Cor 6:16-18, NKJV). There are "sons of Abraham" (Gal 3:7) and "daughters of Abraham" (Lk 13:16; or "daughters of Sarah" 1 Pet 3:6). Jesus refers to a woman of faith as "daughter" not "son" (cf. Mt 9:22; Lk 8:48). The correct gender term is used because God respects the gender of each of His offspring, and He does not call females "sons," nor does He insult men by calling them "daughters," even though in each case the term refers to the *likeness* to God. A man is a "son of Abraham" if he behaves like Abraham, or has the same faith as Abraham. So the term "son" captures this "likeness" to Abraham. A woman is not a "son of Abraham," but a "daughter" because she, like the male, behaves through faith as Abraham behaved. But she is not a "son of Abraham."

So once again, as in the case of the use of "brothers" so with the use of "sons." Neither term can include the female. Rather we have to be aware of a different set of parallel terms that apply only to females, namely, "sisters" and "daughters." *ESV* has constantly misapplied these two distinct sets of gender terms.

There is a representative use of Adam and Christ and oftentimes the sin of a leader will bring punishment on his family or the nation, but these instances should not be confused with the gender pairs: brothers/sons, and sisters/daughters. Closer attention will have to be given to the gender being addressed in Scripture if we are to avoid the confusion that characterises the *ESV* and the *NRSV*. These are feminist-encouraging translations because they remove the theologically significant gender boundary that God placed in the family and the Church structures.

EXAMPLE 20. Romans 15:14, “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another” (NKJV). Here, according to *ESV* “brothers and sisters” admonish one another. It is highly unlikely that a wife would admonish the husband of another wife, or that she would admonish all the men in the Church. The addressees are men, and it was quite in order for men to admonish other men, as many Scriptures prove, but women admonishing men would be inappropriate action, because they are to be vocally silent and dispositionally submissive in the public meetings. Altering the text has created a contradiction in Scripture. Men, not men and women, are being addressed here, so only men should admonish men.

EXAMPLE 21. 1 Corinthians 5:11, “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother” (NKJV). The use of the singular “brother” here brings out the fact that this letter is focused solely on the male members of the Church. *ESV* does not have a policy to convert “brother” into “sister,” as its footnote applies only to the plural form “brothers.” Paul says nothing about sisters here because it is assumed that “anyone named a sister” would be disciplined within her own family under the principle that “the head of the woman is the man.”

EXAMPLE 22. 1 Corinthians 6:5-8. There is a switch from the plural “brothers” to the singular “brother” which shows that in both cases only males are in view. Also, sisters may take sisters to law today, but that would have been impossible in Paul’s day.

EXAMPLE 23. 1 Corinthians 7:29, “But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those with wives should be as though they had none” (NKJV). Here, “brothers” cannot be read as “brothers and sisters,” because what Paul says applies only to males. If “brothers and sisters” is the correct translation then “wives” would have to be altered to “spouses” to agree with the inclusive gender change.

EXAMPLE 24. Ephesians 6:5, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters . . . as servants of Christ” (*ESV*). Greek has different words for female (δούλας) and male (δούλος) slaves. Here the masculine form is used. Does this mean that δούλος, like αδελφος, has a “specialized use” in the NT which it does not have outside the LXX and NT? and that this specialized use encompasses male and female slaves? Did Christians coin this new, genderless “collective noun” for theological purposes? If so, why does God refer to them separately in Acts 2:18?

In other words, *ESV* supporters would argue, δούλος is a special collective noun that does not occur elsewhere in Greek literature. Is it not more likely, that Paul is speaking directly to male slaves, and we can infer from what he says to male slaves that this must also apply to female slaves, even though they are not directly addressed? It has to be the latter, given the unmistakable and massive focus on the male members, that dominates all the Church epistles.

EXAMPLE 25. Romans 9:3 (16:7, 11, 21), Paul wishes that he could be cut off from Christ for the sake of “my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh,” meaning his non-Christian fellow-Jews. Greek has different words

for female (συγγενίς) and male (συγγενής) kin. Does this mean that συγγενής, like αδελφος, has a “specialized use” in the NT which it does not have outside the LXX and NT? and that this specialized use encompasses male and female relatives? Clearly, by using the term “brothers” here, Paul is targeting only his Jewish male relatives in this context. It is tempting, in the abstract, to assume that under the male form of “kinsman” Paul intended to include his female kinswomen, but we must take into account the kind of literature in which words are found and the cultural outlook of the speaker if we are to convey his precise thought. Given Paul’s focus on the male members of the Church, (i.e., the “brothers”) throughout all his church epistles, it is certain that he is thinking only of his fellow-Jews in this particular context.

EXAMPLE 26. Romans 16:7. “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen [*ESV*, kinsmen] and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles” (*NKJV*). Paul calls Herodian, his kinsman because he was male, and not his kinswoman (Rom 16:11). He calls Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, his kinsmen, because they are all males (Rom 16:21). Consequently, Junia can only be a male person because of the masculine form of “kinsmen” used here. Special pleading is required to see Andronicus as male, Junia as female, and “kinsmen” used for both. The other occurrences of the masculine form of “kinsman” in the NT do not require female relatives to be included in their contexts, see Mk 6:4; Lk 14:12; Jn 18:26; Acts 10:24 (cf. 11:3). The occurrences of the feminine form of “kinswoman” do not require male relatives to be included in their contexts, see Lk 1:36, 58. Only the masculine forms in Lk 2:44; 21:16 are not indisputable male-only relatives. The presumption is that they are masculine, especially in Lk 2:44, because it was not compulsory for women to attend the three yearly feasts.

EXAMPLE 27. 1 Corinthians 8:12 is addressed to the “brothers” and in the next verse the singular “brother” is used. Does the singular “brother” stand for “sister” as well? Clearly not in this context. The ubiquitous use of masculine grammatical forms in the shape of nouns, adjectives and pronouns, following the term “brothers” cannot be accidental, given that no one would address only the males in a meeting today in the way that Paul addresses his letters to the Churches—certainly not in politically correct Western churches.

It is clear from Paul’s male language and the manner in which he addresses the Christians that he sees the Church in terms of its male members without denying the truth that it also consists of females (free and slave) and children, who appear to be embraced under the umbrella term “saints.” But all females and children are in a subordinate relation to the men who are in a subordinate relation to their Head, the Lord Jesus. Paul is clearly under the influence of his own doctrine of male headship as he writes. His whole outlook on life is dominated by the three headships in 1 Corinthians 11:3.

EXAMPLE 28. 1 Corinthians 11:33, “Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another” (*NKJV*). Even in a central event such as the Lord’s Supper, the Apostle’s focus is still on the male members and *their* behaviour is what is under scrutiny, not that of the females. If the previous passage (11:2-16) was seen as the Apostle correcting the behaviour of the women, this passage should be seen as the Apostle correcting the behaviour of the men in church. Consequently, “brothers” at 11:33 refers only to males in keeping with its consistent usage by Paul in all his epistles.

The culprits are the brothers, not the brothers and sisters. The sisters are innocent in this instance.

The first Lord's Supper arose out of Jesus' last Passover meal and was eaten by thirteen men on their own with no females present. Females did not have to come to Jerusalem to eat the Passover, but the men did. It was compulsory for them. It is not clear whether men and women ever ate in a communal manner in Judaism at a synagogue meal before the institution of the Church came about.

The strong impression given by the Church epistles is that Christianity was a man's religion and Christ and the Spirit expected everything to revolve around them. But the union between men and women through Christian marriage was stronger and more integrated through headship than anything seen on earth up to that point in time, yet paradoxically, the wife's expression of this deeper bond took the form of greater self-denial, less assertiveness and greater respect for her head than was seen before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

EXAMPLE 29. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. This whole passage was spoken to the brothers (v.1). The Trinity is involved in dispensing spiritual gifts to the members. The gifts of leadership "appointed in the Church" (v. 28), in particular, apostles, prophets (m. pl.), and teachers, would not have been given by God to women, as this would not be in keeping with man's headship over her. God is not a God of disorder.

EXAMPLE 30. 1 Corinthians 14. The addressees are the male members of the Corinthian Church (see vv. 6, 20, 26, 39), not the "brothers and sisters." The setting is in the church meeting. The assumption of an *ESV* reader, who had read the footnote under 14:6, would be that women as well as men contributed their gifts *in public* to the building up of the members' faith. Yet all the contributors are males; male tongue-speakers, male prophets, male participants (contributing hymns, revelations, interpretations, etc.). The Holy Spirit, writing for the Church in all ages and foreseeing all things (being the third Person of the Trinity), including the overthrow of man's headship, then explicitly rules out any participation of the sisters on the grounds that according to the Law of her Creator she is to adopt a silent and submissive position in the church services. Everything the Spirit has revealed in the Gospels and the NT writings is in harmony with this ruling. At no time does the Holy Spirit treat women on a par with men in respect of speaking in Church or having a public role on a par with men. *These spheres are restricted to men only for all time.* The Spirit addresses the brothers at all times in recognition of their right to rule themselves and teach themselves the faith. The Spirit's last word on this subject is, "it is shameful for a woman to speak in church" (14:34) because she has not been permitted by God to do so. The angels who observe, and the men with knowledge who witness it, know that public participation by women is a disorderly act and experience acute embarrassment at the dishonour done to Christ in open defiance of His explicit command. The *ESV's* overwriting of the Spirit's word, "brothers," with "brothers and sisters," will perpetuate and even multiply this dishonour for all time to come in the lives of those who think they are reading the Spirit's Word.

EXAMPLE 31. 1 Thessalonians 2:14, "For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you

also suffered the same things from your own countrymen" (NKJV). Note he says "countrymen" not some other term covering both genders. So that the persons he is addressing and the countrymen must both be male persons.

EXAMPLE 32. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-6, "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus . . . ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel [ESV, body] . . . that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter . . ." (NKJV). Two facts make it certain that "brothers" cannot include sisters here. (1) The male body is being spoken about, and (2) the singular "brother" can only be a male.

EXAMPLE 33. 2 Thessalonians 3:6, "But we command you, brethren, . . . that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly" (NKJV). The shift from the plural to the singular makes sense if Paul is addressing the same male members of the Church. Singular males are in view in vv. 10, 13. In v. 15, "Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother," bears out the observation that "brothers" here can only be males. The *ESV* has not created a policy of de-genderising the singular "brother" to mean "brother or sister," as this would expose the artificiality of their policy of de-genderising the plural form. But it is the constant use of the singular "brother" that reveals the male-orientated view of all the NT writers, and even the Lord Jesus Himself. *ESV* is inconsistent in de-genderising the plural form but not the singular.

EXAMPLE 34. Hebrews 2:11-12. Here Jesus calls all His male followers "brothers," which is the correct gender and grammatical form to use. But equally He would call all His female followers His "sisters" because that is the correct gender and grammatical form to use for them (cf. "you are my brothers and sisters if you do my will," Mt 12:50; Mk 3:35). What has determined the masculine gender in this context is the writer's audience: they are males—"brothers." But the quotation is from the Greek translation of Psalm 22:22 and if *ESV* were consistent then the Septuagint writers, as well as the NT writers, were using "brothers" with the meaning of "brothers and sisters." This is unlikely because as a translation of the Hebrew, the Hebrew term "brothers" does not include females. The Hebrew nation had its patriarchal culture created for it by God Himself through the Law, which only put in writing what had been in existence since the creation of Adam and Eve. Patriarchal culture is a permanent fixture among God's chosen people and is patent in both Old and New Testaments. This is lost when "brothers" is exchanged for "brothers and sisters."

A literal translation should be sensitive to pick up the patriarchal background and faithfully convey it into English even though Western culture has moved away from it and accommodated itself to the feminist view of human society. The Western Church has been quietly conditioned to accept "sexual equality" as a biblical doctrine, which it is not. Sexual quality, not sexual equality, is taught in Scripture. The *ESV* does God's revelation a disservice when it plays down its very strong focus on the masculine members of the Covenants to be in charge of the home and church spheres. The Western church is now clearly a feminist church having been relentlessly exposed to feminist pressure and conditioning for equality over the past century and the *ESV* translation committee represents this change of viewpoint. It was only natural, therefore, either by design or default, that they would read into the biblical text, where possible, a non-patriarchal

background but, inconsistently, they do so only in the NT. There was no attempt to alter the OT to read “brothers and sisters” in place of “brothers.” If the translation committee had been more representative of Christ’s world-wide Church, and especially where the Church has taken root in patriarchal cultures, their misleading footnote would have stuck out like a sore thumb.

The patriarchal Gospel was offered to the Jew first and *then* offered to the Gentile. A modern Jew would find a different Gospel being offered to him today in this translation. The *ESV* has removed the Gospel of the New Covenant from its patriarchal or male headship canvas and placed it on a feminist canvas. Consequently, the *ESV* will become a stumblingblock to the Jew and to all patriarchal societies with its obliteration of male headship and female subordination which God created for the good of marriage and human society. This preordained, creational subordination (of woman to man, and man to Christ) is an integral part of the *one* Gospel that was handed down to us. Feminism is a different gospel, whose key doctrine is reflected in the *ESV*’s footnote.

EXAMPLE 35. Hebrews 7:5. The Levites took tithes only from their “brothers.” Women did not have to pay tithes. Therefore to substitute “brothers and sisters” for “brothers” in this context shows ignorance of Hebrew culture and its theological foundation.

Some invest Western culture with a divine right to replace the theological headship culture that God ordained for His Church (Old and New) from the foundation of the world. Breaking down patriarchal barriers is seen as progress. Throwing off Christ’s easy yoke in the matter of women covering their heads when praying to God is done so with glee and relief throughout the Western Church. “The one faithful in the least, is also faithful in much; and the one unrighteous in the least, is also unrighteous in much” (Lk 16:10). Carelessness over the Master’s “least command” is a good indicator of a Christian’s true relationship to the Lord Jesus.

EXAMPLE 36. Hebrews 10:19. What is said to the “brothers” in the first instance will also apply to all females and children and slaves. This is the language and outlook of a patriarchal culture. It characterises the Church, Jesus the Jew, founded and is building today. All the NT writings show continuity with the OT in this headship revelation from the creation of the world. The Holy Spirit sent His messages specifically to the male stratum in each church He addresses, because man is the glory of God. Man constituted the finest thing that God created. He gloried, He exulted in man. He could create nothing better. Man was the pinnacle of His achievements—His crowning glory, His pride and joy. Woman, the weaker vessel, was given to man, and she is “the glory of man.” She is not the glory of God. She has a glory all of her own but she does not occupy the same place in God’s achievements as man does. She is not equal to man in being either with him, or jointly, the finest thing God created. Is it any wonder, then, that God always speaks to His crowning glory—to man—and seeks to bring him back into the relationship and standing that he once enjoyed in the Garden of Eden? Men do their Maker no service when they reject their creational, hierarchical position in God’s creation and behave like women or assume the role that He has assigned to woman. There is a submissiveness in men that is dishonouring to God and there is a submissiveness that is glorifying to Him. The Spirit has revealed that it is dishonouring for any man to submit to any woman, either at home or in the Church. He must submit to Christ alone

(through virtue of His headship) and to those leaders He has appointed (through the gift of leadership) in His Church. Church and family come directly under Christ's personal governance. The State belongs to His rival. Christians are obliged to obey secular rulers and governors (male and female, good and bad) as a command of Christ.

EXAMPLE 37. Hebrews 13:22-23. Here the plural and the singular of brother must have the same meaning of male persons. *ESV* makes no attempt to alter the singular "brother" to "sister" anywhere in the NT.

EXAMPLE 38. James 1:2. The letter is addressed to the "twelve tribes" of Israel throughout the world who accepted Christ as their Messiah. The first generation of Christians were Jews, and circumcised Gentiles ("God-fearers") who converted to Judaism. The Gospel went out from Jerusalem into all the world through the Jews and God-fearers who came up to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Most of the early churches would have been Christian synagogues. These Christian synagogues would have set the pattern for the Gentile churches which were later set up by the *Jewish* Apostles. James' letter must be set against this cultural backdrop. So instead of talking about "churches" James talks about Christian "synagogues." This is obliterated in most English translations where "synagogue" is translated as "assembly" in James 2:2 (except Young's Literal), thereby removing the strong, Jewish background that is important to read James against.

This indisputable, early Jewish/synagogue background is precisely what we meet with in Paul, Peter, James and John's writings, in that all four writers address the male members of the Church without denying that women and children constituted the "saints." Each is aware through revelation that man (not woman) is God's finest achievement, and consequently man is the focus of His attention, as it was from the Garden of Eden onwards. Consequently, when James uses the term "brothers" throughout his letter, he means the male members. Revelation also brought to light the subordinate relationship between men and women and this they lived with and conformed their lives and thinking to. It comes through in the constant address to the "brothers." He even uses the singular "brother" when he wishes to illustrate a point, as in 1:9; 4:11; 5:19. The switch from plural to singular at 4:11 is proof of this point.

It might be argued that equality in Christ did away with these revelations and that what was latent in Galatians 3:28 is made patent in *ESV*. This is a theological point, not a literal translation. It should not have been incorporated into a new translation in the form of a surreptitious footnote. By addressing only the male members of the churches directly, the Holy Spirit thereby maintains a constant and consistent viewpoint in the revelation He has given from the beginning of the world. *ESV* breaks this continuity and blurs the distinction God made between male and female and their respective roles in His plan for mankind.

EXAMPLE 39. 1 Peter. In this letter Peter addresses the male members directly and urges "brotherly love" (1:22; 3:8; cf. Rom 12: 10; Heb 13:1; 1 Thess 4:9; 2 Pet 1:7) and also that they "Love the brotherhood" (2:17). Peter's world is governed by special revelation and the full knowledge of the complex relationship that God has placed between man and woman, between man and God, and between woman and God. Neither Peter or any of the other NT writers knows anything of a doctrine of equal opportunities or equal

status in the way they, through the Holy Spirit, address the Church. Only men are in the frame. *ESV*, for theological reasons, puts women into the frame on an equal footing with men. However, the explicit, direct appeal to the male members throughout the whole of God's revelation to man from the creation of the world is in keeping with man's headship and his responsibility to maintain good order in God's creation. It is the loss of this hierarchy of authority and responsibility that has undermined the man-woman relationship in marriage and undermined male leadership in the church. *ESV* has considerably weakened man's privileged position by shifting the focus away from the "brothers" to the "brothers and sisters."

Capturing the cultural and theological world in which the Apostles lived and moved should be as much part of a translation as translating the actual words they used as defined by a dictionary. Greater sensitivity should be shown toward this important aspect of translation than in trying to adapt biblical concepts to fit into non-biblical cultures, which is illustrated in the translation "brothers and sisters" for "brothers." This translation eliminates the consistent, patriarchal standpoint of God's revelation. It is not so much a translation as a transformation of the patriarchal canvas on which God painted His truth. The Truth has been carefully lifted away from the divine canvas and set down on a modern canvas more acceptable to a non-biblical culture, and one that is deemed to be more enlightened than the old setting. Consequently, the battle has shifted from the text of the Bible to the background of the Bible. But special revelation cannot be divorced from the divine canvas it comes on.

EXAMPLE 40. 1 Peter 2:5. Peter, addressing the men, says that they constitute a spiritual "holy priesthood" (2:5, 9), to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. Under the Old Covenant only men could be priests, yet not all men could be priests. But here the implication is that all "brothers" become priests. It was Moses' wish that all God's people would be prophets (Num 11:29) and this was granted at Pentecost where the Holy Spirit gave the gift to all men and women without discrimination. So likewise here, all Christians, male and female, can offer spiritual sacrifices to God. The exercise of the prophetic and the priestly offices are subject to the laws governing their public appearances as laid down in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:33-38.

EXAMPLE 41. Peter, throughout 1 and 2 Peter, prefers to use the term "beloved" (Ἀγαπητοί) to refer to the "brothers." Only at 1 Peter 3:8 and 2 Peter 1:10 does he use the term "brothers" directly. At 1 Peter 2:11 "beloved" is restricted to the males who come under secular rulers. Servants and wives come under their own masters and husbands, and these are dealt with separately from the men by Peter.

Peter follows the natural law of creation that the younger men should subject themselves to the older men (1 Pet 5:5). There is a submissiveness that is not a headship submissiveness and it is given voluntarily, and there is a submissiveness that is inherent in headship and is given as a duty. Here, it is the former. Indeed, we see it in the Lord Jesus who washed the disciples' feet. And Peter urges the Elders to show this same submissiveness toward the younger men, even though he has just urged the younger men to be submissive to their church Elders. There is an appropriate mutual submissiveness between same genders that would be inappropriate across the genders.

EXAMPLE 42. In 1 John, the Apostle switches from “beloved” (Jude and Peter’s favourite term) to “brothers.” Indeed, there is a Greek variant at 2:7 showing how interchangeable these two terms were. John also moves easily from the plural to the singular “brother” when he wishes to illustrate some point, just as James (1:9; 4:11) did (cf. 1 Jn 2:9-11; 3:10-17; 4:20-21; 5:16). The pattern is clear. The NT writers write to the men in the congregation. They in turn will convey the truth to their families, hence the injunction that women should ask their questions at home. The underlying assumption is that Apostolic letters were discussed by the men alone. Men wrote to men in the first instance. The solidarity of the family meant that the men were the acknowledged teachers and leaders in the home and the church.

John addresses males of all ages: little children, little youths, young men, brothers and fathers. These would have formed the body of any Christian synagogue or church with the womenfolk in a supporting, attentive role.

EXAMPLE 43. In 3 John the term “brothers” has its normal meaning of male fellow-Christians who travelled the world with the Gospel. Gaius is commended for entertaining them on their travels.

EXAMPLE 44. Revelation 6:11. Here “bondservants” and “brothers” should be taken in their normal meaning of males, just as in 6:15 all the groups listed there consist of males only, even though it is possible that women and children may have been among them. The 144,000 are “sons of Israel” (7:4). If there are women and children they will be in addition to this number. The same will apply in 12:10. The patriarchal background sees society, the nation, and the church in terms of its male members. There is no unambiguous instance in the Bible where “brothers” is used in an inclusive sense. And even if there was a possible case, this would have to be an exception to the rule, rather than proof of the assertion.

SUMMARY OF *ESV*’s DEFECTS

1. *ESV* has moved from a literal translation to a cultural transformation (EXAMPLE NO. 8).
2. *ESV* adds “sisters” to God’s Word, which is not there (EXAMPLE NO. 11).
3. *ESV* has missed the significance of the male term “brothers” as the addressees (i.e. the genders are merged.)
4. *ESV* has missed the significance of the male term “sons” as the addressees (i.e. the genders are merged.)
5. *ESV* removes man’s privileged position between God and woman to be the receiver of His Word (The Church epistles are primarily addressed to the males.)
6. Altering the text has created a contradiction in Scripture (EXAMPLE NO. 20)
7. You cannot call a sister a “son of God,” nor can you call a brother a “daughter of God.”
8. *ESV* does not alter the singular “brother” to “sister” (EXAMPLE NO. 22), but they are embedded in addresses to “brothers.” If the plural includes “sisters” then the singular must also be unisex.
9. According to *ESV* ἀδελφοί is a special “collective noun.” It means siblings without regard to gender. Is δούλος also a special “collective noun” found only in the NT? (EXAMPLE NO. 24)

10. According to *ESV* συγγενῆς in Romans 6:3 is a special, non-gender-specific noun, that includes “brothers and sisters” when used in the NT. (EXAMPLE NO. 25)
11. Disorder at the Lord Supper. The sisters are innocent in this instance. (EXAMPLE NO. 28)
12. 1 Corinthians 14:33-38. The *ESV*’s overwriting of the Spirit’s word, “brothers,” with “brothers and sisters,” will perpetuate and even multiply the dishonour to the Lord Jesus Christ for all time to come in the lives of those who think they are reading the Spirit’s Word.
13. 1 Thess 4:1-6. Two facts make it certain that “brothers” cannot include sisters here. (1) The male body is being spoken about, and (2) the singular “brother” can only be a male. (EXAMPLE NO. 32)
14. The *ESV* has not created a policy of de-genderising the singular “brother” to mean “brother or sister,” as this would expose the artificiality of their policy of de-genderising the plural form. (EXAMPLE NO. 33)
15. If *ESV* were consistent then the Septuagint writers, as well as the NT writers, were using “brothers” with the meaning of “brothers and sisters.” This is unlikely because as a translation of the Hebrew, the Hebrew term “brothers” does not include females. (EXAMPLE NO. 34)
16. A literal translation should be sensitive to pick up the patriarchal background and faithfully convey it into English even though Western culture has moved away from it and accommodated itself to the feminist view of human society. (EXAMPLE NO. 34)
17. The Levites took tithes only from their “brothers.” Women did not have to pay tithes. Therefore to substitute “brothers and sisters” for “brothers” in this context shows ignorance of Hebrew culture. (EXAMPLE NO. 35)
18. By addressing only the male members of the churches directly, the Holy Spirit thereby maintains a constant and consistent viewpoint in the revelation He has given from the beginning of the world. *ESV* breaks this continuity. (EXAMPLE NO. 38)
19. Capturing the cultural and theological world in which the Apostles lived and moved should be as much part of a translation as translating the actual words they used as defined by a dictionary. Greater sensitivity should be shown toward this important aspect of translation than in trying to adapt biblical concepts to fit into non-biblical cultures, which is illustrated in the translation “brothers and sisters” for “brothers.” (EXAMPLE NO. 39)

In this survey we have covered the most significant instances where “brothers” has been given the inclusive meaning of “brothers and sisters.” There was not a single example where such an inclusive meaning was required by the context. Instead, it was noted that the Holy Spirit had taught the NT writers to deal with the sexes on a separate basis and to recognise that Christian men were to be heads of their wives, who were seen to be in a creational, subordinate relationship to them and to the Lord Jesus. This understanding of the hierarchical structure of the family and church explains why only the male members are addressed in the first place in all the church letters. This is no accident. The Holy Spirit respects and safeguards the privileged position God has conferred on every male He has created by addressing His Word to them. By altering God’s Word to remove this privileged status, the *ESV* has unwittingly played into the hands of those who

would destroy the authority God has given to man whom He regarded as His finest piece of work—His glory.

The Church is two-tiered: consisting of a male tier and a female tier. The female tier has been created for the male tier, not vice versa. The relationship between these two tiers is a preordained, subordinate one and was created by God as an in-built feature of their existence for all time on earth. The man is to govern the woman under Christ's headship of man. There are not two classes of human beings: male and female, but one class, sharing one flesh and blood and sharing the same moral likeness to God. **He created sexual quality, not sexual equality; "male and female created He them."** Only by keeping the tiers distinct and each fulfilling their distinctive functions can good order be maintained in Christ's Kingdom, the Church, and the family.

What God created distinct, man has merged as indistinct. What God has separated, man has merged. What God has merged, man has separated. This ceaseless battle to be wiser than God and change His institutions and laws to conform to human wisdom is something the Church has had to watch out for throughout the ages. The *ESV's* ubiquitous footnote, merging the two genders where the Holy Spirit has kept them distinct, is an instance of this ongoing struggle for novelty and accommodation to the spirit of the age. This subtle, but dangerous, change alters the theological background against which God, in His wisdom, conveyed His will to the Church. As such, this translation is not to be trusted.

POSTSCRIPT

At the conclusion of my work on Divorce & Remarriage I wrote the following concluding remark, which points out the danger of using modern English translations such as the *English Standard Version*. It is worth repeating it here.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In any congregation there will be Christians whose sin is not visible. They may be committing adultery in their mind. But there are others whose sin is visible in the form of their second spouse. Many of these will have obtained their divorce through ignorance, or before they became Christians. Wise counselling will be needed to restore such persons to live a life pleasing to God. The Holy Spirit stipulates, through Paul, that the Elders in Christ's Church must be the husbands of one wife (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6; cf. 1 Tim 3:12 for Deacons).¹¹ And what goes for Elders must also go for all male members, as the norm.

The knowledge that Jesus has abolished divorce for all His followers is considered by many Christians to be a 'harsh doctrine.' But calling it 'harsh'

¹¹ That is, if a man is remarried and his former wife is still alive he is ineligible to be an Elder. Or if he is no longer living with his wife, for whatever reason, he, too, would be ineligible to be a model to the congregation. A man who has more than one wife, due to a polygamous past, is likewise, ineligible to be an Elder. The principle behind Paul's teaching is to have a 'normal' husband and wife model up front, in a leadership position, because they will set the standard to be followed by all the members. The assumption behind Paul's ruling is that most men will be married. However, single, mature men, would not be ruled out as model Elders, any more than married men without children would be. The statement, "having children in submission," would apply where the married Elder had children.

or 'soft' makes no difference to the sinfulness of divorce. Flee the divorce courts as you would flee the brothel.

During the course of His short ministry Jesus offended many interest groups, and religious parties, and He said some harsh words of rebuke to other groups (Jn 6:61). He stood absolutely alone on occasions. Even His own disciples were offended by some of the things He preached (Lk 11:45). On some occasions His own disciples gave up following Him and returned to their earlier belief-system. The abolition of divorce was one such 'hard doctrine' to accept.

Many attempts have been made to soften His teaching, or to bring Jesus down to the level of a mere man, a new Moses, with a revised, updated version of the old Torah. Many have tried to incorporate, accommodate, or merge the old Torah into His new teaching; to mix the old, stale wine, with the new wine of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. We have seen the emergence of a rabbinic-gospel, whereby the leaven of Hillel has been mixed in with the teaching of Jesus. Jesus was aware of rabbinic teaching which he hated: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," He preached (Mt 16:12; Mk 8:15; Lk 12:1). The new wine of Jesus' teaching requires new wine skins to contain it. The old, rabbinic skins (doctrines) have to be discarded.

In the final analysis, the consensus of scholars counts for nothing, whether they are for or against Christ's teaching on divorce. When we stand before our Lord to give an account for our lives and teaching what counts is what the Spirit has revealed. I have shown that what has been revealed in the overwhelming majority of Greek manuscripts, and in the unanimous witness of the early Church fathers, is that Jesus abolished divorce, as He abolished adulterers, prostitutes and homosexuals, from having any part or place in His Kingdom. Jesus does not play around with sin or make it an integral part of His system, as the rabbis did. Divorce, like stealing, is a sin against God, and no sin can enter heaven.

There is not a single doctrine in Jesus' teaching which has come about through pressure of the hard-heartedness of His followers, or through the refusal of His disciples to accept any of His doctrines, forcing Jesus to back down, compromise, or concede to their wishes. Yet this is what happened when God introduced His Torah to Israel. They refused to stone the adulterers and fornicators, and forced Moses to regulate their demand to be able to divorce their hated wives for any cause. The response of hate is divorce; the response of love is forgiveness. It is truly astonishing that God permitted Moses to sanction and regulate divorce in order to let these hard-bitten husbands get their own way.

It would appear that there are many Christian leaders who are attempting to do the same thing with Jesus' teaching. Unfortunately for them, Jesus will not change His doctrines to suit their hard-heartedness. It is a case of either you forsake all and follow Him in every detail of His teaching, or you turn back and create your own denomination, or church, or sect. What you cannot do is pretend that Jesus permitted divorce for fornication, and that you are going to take advantage of some perceived loophole in His teaching to punish your wives or husbands. There is no such loophole. If Jesus permitted divorce for fornication then He destroys His own doctrine that men must forgive men *all* their sins. There is no exception clause for withholding forgiveness for fornication or adultery. Jesus forgave the sin of adultery with the words, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."

That has to be the only response of every Christian. Jesus made no room in that statement for the setting up of divorce courts.

God the Father handed over all mankind to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and it will be before Him that every individual will give an account of his words and deeds. The more a person knows of God's teaching and will for them, the more will be expected from them.

It is a privilege to expound the teaching of Jesus clearly in this work. It has made me realise more than ever that to follow Jesus without a born-again experience is not possible. It requires a new spirit and a new heart, one that can love one's enemy and forgive all men their trespasses in a genuine manner. Where that spirit is present, there is also the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

Divorce is man's attempt to regulate sin, not kill it. Divorce feeds, fertilises and multiplies sin. Jesus starves, weeds out and exterminates sin in the lives of all His born-again followers. The clear message coming from Jesus' teaching and the revelation of the Holy Spirit is to flee divorce as you would flee stealing.

The origin of divorce, or abandonment of a man's wife, came into existence the moment Adam and Eve sinned against God. They lost their way, and they lost touch with their Maker in a way that was never restored until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who promised to take up residence in the soul of every one of His disciples, male and female. With the loss of man's original state of sinlessness came selfishness, and with selfishness came tyranny and bullying, and with bullying came hard-heartedness and hatred. Out of this soup of depravity emerged abandonment of wives and children. To make it appear respectable it was given the name 'divorce.' It was a cover-up term that solidified and entrenched their depraved natures. Divorce locks in sin and depraves the one who has anything to do with it.

One of the privileges granted to Adam was headship over his wife and over all of God's creation. The Earth was given to Adam before Eve existed, and what was given to Adam was not going to be taken back when she came along. It is for this reason that God gave no female possession of any part of the Earth, not even in the Promised Land. The repetition of the story about Zelophehad's daughters ensured that the point was not missed. Eve shared in Adam's dominion over the Earth and all that is in it only when she became his wife, not as of right. As an independent being she had nothing and owned nothing. She inherits the Earth *through* her one-flesh union with Adam.

It was God's intention that Eve, from the moment He brought her to Adam to be his help-meet, should do the will of Adam and not her own will, just as it was God's intention from the moment He created Adam to be his co-worker, that he should do the will of God. God, personally, brought Eve to Adam. It was not an accident. It was planned. It was also God's intention that once the union of Adam and Eve took place that a one-flesh union occurred which was not to be undone during their lifetime. It was a union only to be broken by the death of one of the partners. The abandonment of Eve was not an option. It would be an evil if carried out. For better or for worse, Eve was reunited with Adam, never to be separated again in this life.

With the coming of the Lord Jesus, and the promise of lifting mankind out of their fallen natures to live in the Spirit, came the reversal of the fall into depravity. Now, for the first time since the fall of Adam and Eve, men and women could be restored to their pre-Fall state and status, but only if the Spirit of Christ continued to indwell each of His disciples. With the return to

the Garden of Eden status came the recovery of a divorceless state between Christian men and women. Only in Christ are men and women able to return to Eden. No other religion in the world is capable of doing this. They are all human constructs, unable to change the nature of men and women. They boast much but deliver nothing.

With the recovery of the Edenic nature, nay, the gift of Christ's nature to all His followers, comes the recovery of the love-headship that God created between Adam and Eve in the beginning, and which was to be replicated in their respective genders for all time to come. Only in Christians can the original love-headship be witnessed. No other religion can grant it to their followers. Their grant, or promise, is empty and a deception. All other religions cater and try to contain the depravity of fallen men and women. They have no cure for it. Only in Christ is there a cure, and because there is a cure there can be no divorce. Divorce is not a cure but a concession to hatred. Divorce obtains in every religion of the world because true forgiveness is no longer a natural response of all fallen, human beings. There is even a form of Christianity (note the lowercase spelling) which is no different than these false world religions, because it, too, contains but cannot cure the evil response of which divorce is the inevitable outcome. Divorce and the old nature are two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable. Where divorce is, there is sin, and there is the absence of Christ in both partners if both consent to it. This goes without saying for all world religions and none, but it also goes for pseudo-Christianity and every so-called Christian denomination that has sunk to the level of approving of divorce. The standard of true Christianity is the absence of divorce among its teachings. Where divorce is present, the leaven of evil is present.

In Jesus' day the validity of all divorces was accepted, as it is today, and people assumed that their one-flesh union was completely severed and dissolved. Wives, clutching their husband's "roll of severance," confronted Jesus, no doubt, demanding that He accept their divorced status, and reverse His slur on their second marriages. But the words of Jesus have come down the centuries as solid as they were first uttered that no divorce has come from His Father, or approved of by Him. In effect, all divorces were a violation of the one-flesh union that took place at the moment a marriage was consummated. This is not what His generation wanted to hear, and it may well be that if Jesus' assessment of His own generation was that it an adulterous one, because of the proliferation of divorce and remarriage, this may have been a significant factor when the crowds demanded His death by crucifixion. They had come to hate Him because of His outright opposition to their remarriages.

When any modern preacher, teacher, or leader of God's people dares to castigate anyone's remarriage as an adulterous relationship, he will become the target of abuse and vilification, and in some cases assassination.

We have shown in this work that the attempt to make God the creator of divorce has failed, and it has failed because of Jesus' total disregard for those rabbis who turned Deuteronomy 24:1-4 into an excuse to institute it. These rabbis examined Scripture with the sole object of getting it to endorse and justify divorce, even going as far as to split the figurative term *'erwat davar* ("nakedness of a matter") into two words, and using the definition of these individual words to find as many excuses as possible to divorce their hated wives.

Today, Christ's Church is packed with leaders doing the same thing and even using the rabbis as their guide and justification! Rabbinical exegesis

is making a strong come-back in the Church, and this, along with feminism, has derailed Christ's Church. With the proliferation of English translations, confusion has set in over what Jesus really taught on the issue of divorce and remarriage. It is for this reason that I recommend no English translation as a faithful translation of the Majority Greek New Testament text. The *New King James Version* is a stop-gap translation in that it fails to translate the Majority Text faithfully, because in Matthew 19:9 it replaces Jesus' teaching on divorce with Erasmus's teaching. It makes God the creator of divorce, which sets Him at odds with His teaching in Genesis 2:24 as brought to light by His Son in Matthew 19:3-10 and Mark 10:2-12.

Many forgeries of currency money are in the world, and look so genuine as to deceive the ordinary man in the street, who has no clue what he should be looking for to distinguish between the genuine and the false. But in the spiritual world there are also forgeries, and these, too, appear so genuine that they deceive those who do not know what they should be looking out for in order not to be duped into believing something that is of the devil and not of Christ. One such forgery is the introduction of divorce as a replacement for death as the means for dissolving a lawful marriage. In crafty hands, the fact that God spoke of divorce, which He needed to do in order to castigate it, is turned around to make Him become a supporter for it. Such is the power of crafty guile, and it has duped every Reformation church/denomination without exception.

One would have hoped that the Spirit of Christ living in the Elect people of God from the days of the Reformation to the present day would have known instinctively that not to forgive men their trespasses was an evil thing, but their minds were deceived by the Bibles they were depending on to lead them into all truth. These Bibles translated badly copied Greek manuscripts which had been cobbled together at the whim of the cobbler, chief among them being Erasmus's five editions between 1516 and 1536. These faulty manuscripts helped Erasmus to introduce his view of divorce and remarriage, and so he poisoned the transmission of the pure water of life.

In the process of establishing the pure text of the New Testament, the Church was deceived into accepting the Nestle-Aland text, which is an even more corrupt text than the one Erasmus put together. The foundation of the Nestle-Aland text is the Greek text of Westcott and Hort (1881). This was based on two sloppy copies of the Egyptian text-type, namely, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. They were under the mistaken belief that the older a copy was the more likely it contained a purer text. We now know that there is absolutely no direct relationship at all between the date of a copy and its faithfulness as a copy of the original texts. All modern language versions of the Greek New Testament—English and European—are based on this corrupt Nestle-Aland Egyptian text. I include here the *English Standard Version* which is paraded as the version around which all evangelicals can unite and promote and make the basis of study from house-groups to university courses.

The Elect should shun the *English Standard Version* for the following reasons.

First, it is based on the wrong Greek New Testament, because it is based on the Nestle-Aland text. The only reliable base text is the Majority Greek New Testament of Robinson & Pierpont.

Second, the *ESV* is a feminist version. Throughout the NT the word 'brother' is replaced in the footnotes with 'brother and sister.' This is an attempt to appease feminist theologians, or, more likely, unthinkingly following the lead of other feminist/inclusive translations.

Thirdly, inclusive language is imposed on God's Word, especially in the New Testament. The reader is being manipulated and conditioned to accept the equality of the sexes, which is not taught in Scripture. Quality, not equality, is taught in the Bible.

Fourthly, the doctrine of the headship of Man is lost in the translation, due to points (2) and (3). The hierarchy of God, Christ, Man, and Woman, is hugely distorted, if not displaced, and in its place is the levelling out of the distinctive roles and privileges given by God to men and women separately, such that today the trend is that a woman can rule a man in any capacity including the archbishopric.

The single greatest cause of divorces among Christians is the loss of the doctrine of Headship.¹² The *ESV* has contributed enormously to the loss of man's headship over woman in evangelical circles. You just need to see the sea of uncovered female heads when you walk into any so-called evangelical church today. The uncovered female head is the clearest indicator of how far Christ's sisters have spurned His teaching. If they can spurn *Christ's* teaching, then it is no wonder they spurn their husband's headship authority over them. It is no wonder that we see the wife in the pulpit and the husband in the pew. This has Satan rolling about in Church pews every Sunday. He is bursting his sides with laughter and great glee. He cannot believe his luck. He has won the battle over Christ Jesus *among His own people, and inside the Church itself*, who can only stand silently by with a crestfallen countenance, totally bewildered by the ingratitude and disrespect shown to Him by His children, every time they meet to 'worship' Him. The very act of so-called 'worship' is a time of great embarrassment to Him as Satan points gleefully at the woman in the pulpit and at the uncovered heads of His disobedient sisters. He taunts the Lord Jesus with the prophecy that he will have a woman archbishop of Canterbury one day soon, if the trend keeps going. He is right on course, he yells above the din of female voices to the Lord Jesus, and with those words he pumps the air with his fists, and goes into a dance of sheer delight and jubilation.

Where the Spirit once addressed His messages *directly* to the men—to the *brothers* of the Lord Jesus, this has been foolishly changed and obliterated by the *ESV*. In the 'world'—which is the sphere of Satan's influence—we expect to find an upside-down world, where everything that Jesus taught is reversed, turned on its head, and where the opposite is the norm, we do not expect this chaotic situation to be found in Christ's Church, but it is, and the trend has been growing strongly since the beginning of the twentieth century.

The *English Standard Version* promotes this unbiblical trend by a *deliberate* alteration of "brothers" into "brothers and sisters." On this account it should be rejected as a polluted source, and a polluting influence in the lives of the saints.

¹² For a comprehensive explanation of this neglected doctrine see the author's work, *Good Order in the Church*, which can be downloaded from <http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12>.

For public reading in the Church and at home I would recommend (with severe reservations) the use of the *New King James Version*, but for private and academic study,¹³ the reader should use *Young's Literal Translation* until a more modern, literal translation can replace it.¹⁴ The reason for promoting both of these translations is that they are based on the Majority (Byzantine) Greek text. No future English translation should be accepted unless it is based on the Majority Greek text. Therefore, when a new English version is advertised, the first question every believer should ask himself or herself is: "What Greek text is this English version based on?" If the answer comes back that it is based on a revised Nestle-Aland text, have nothing to do with it. It is a faulty translation because it is based on a faulty Greek text. You cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing.

END

¹³ The *NKJV* rejects Jesus' teaching on divorce in Mt 19:9 by retaining Erasmus's 'exception clause,' and using the legal term 'divorce' in 1 Cor 7:11, 12, 13. It gives the *impression* of translating the Majority Greek text, but this is not fully carried through. The reader should follow the interlinear English translation (published by Thomas Nelson, 1994) which keeps a lot closer to the Majority Greek text. Erasmus's 'exception clause' should be more accurately called his 'deception clause.'

¹⁴ Young's translation follows Erasmus's Greek text, which, while it is, on the whole, based on Byzantine manuscripts, it is not the pure form of the Byzantine Text that Robinson & Pierpont have extracted from von Soden's critical apparatuses. Even Robinson & Pierpont's Greek text must be considered a stop-gap version of the original autograph text, until such time as we can computerise every single manuscript of the Greek New Testament. Until that day arrives, the Elect should use only the Majority Text as presently in print. I have made my own extraction of the Byzantine Text from von Soden's apparatus for the four Gospels, and I differ in only a few places from Robinson & Pierpont's Greek text, so that, unless von Soden has not done his work scrupulously in accord with objective and academic standards, a computerised version is not going to differ very much (if at all) from Robinson & Pierpont's Greek text. We may have reached the end of the quest for an exact copy of the original documents, when we have eliminated the side notes in RP's text.