

# Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

## A LETTER TO GIDEON RODRIGUEZ

September 13, 2011

Dear brother Rodriguez:

We greet you in the name of our Lord as brethren who have memories of pleasant associations with you in years past.

We have been made privy to the letter of withdrawal issued to the Capitol Cities congregation and the Metro Manila School of Preaching by the Galimuyod congregation. We have also read your response thereto, the Galimuyod and Danny Douglas responses to you, and the correspondence between brethren Palomar and Bagsangi. Since our names have come up in some of the documentation and the letters, we believe it is appropriate for us to offer some observations, comments, and responses, at least some of which may be new information to you. To begin with, we beg you to consider:

1. We assure you that it always saddens us when division among brethren occurs, whether because of selfish and inconsequential matters or because of issues that involve the Truth of God's Word.
2. The cause of the withdrawal by the Galimuyod brethren involves the Truth of God's Word rather than selfish and inconsequential matters. These issues have been a source of heart-breaking division among American brethren over several years now.
3. Many of us in the USA have been opposing brother Dave Miller's elder reevaluation/reaffirmation error since he first taught and practiced it in 1990 and also his more recent (2000) MDR "intent" error. Brother Miller also refuses to disavow his belief in Mac Deaver's direct operation-of-the-Holy Spirit and modern-day baptism-in-the-Holy Spirit heresies.
4. Before June 2005, by far most of the brethren considered sound in the faith in the USA opposed brother Miller's errors, including brother Cates and all of the MSOP faculty.
5. When the Apologetics Press (AP) crisis arose because of Bert Thompson's sins and Dave Miller was appointed to succeed him (June 2005), brother Cates and his faculty (and some other well-known brethren) immediately reversed their former position and began defending brother Miller in spite of his errors in order to continue to support AP.
6. Brethren who have remained steadfast in their opposition to Dave Miller's errors have invited him and his supporters (including brother Cates) numerous times (beginning in February 2006) to meet with us and discuss this grievous cause of division among those who worked so closely together for so long. We have offered to host such meetings and have offered to attend such if Forest Hill would host one, but they have refused each invitation—often not even dignifying our invitations with a response. Additionally, innumerable brethren have written brother Miller to ask him to clarify his doctrine (since he has claimed he has been "misrepresented"), begging him to repent, or at least to discuss these matters with concerned brethren. He has simply refused to respond to any who he believes are challenging him (he can somehow find time to respond to those who he knows support him, such as brother Palomar).
7. Since we cannot fellowship brother Miller because of his errors, neither can we fellowship those who are bidding him Godspeed, thereby partaking in his error (2 John 10–11). With profound regret we must say that these include, but are not limited to, the Forest Hill church and MSOP.

We believe it is important for you to know that we have done all that we know to do to resolve this controversy. Neither brother  
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# Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder  
August 3, 1917-October 10, 2001

## Editorial...

### “Persecuted, But Not Forsaken; Cast Down, But Not Destroyed” (2 Cor. 4:9)

The previous verse appears in the midst of Paul’s comments about the privation and suffering he and the other apostles underwent because they faithfully discharged their duties to Christ (2 Cor. 4; Also see 1 Cor. 11:23-31). During His earthly ministry our Lord warned the apostles they would be persecuted as He was, pointing out that persecution for righteousness’ sake was cause for rejoicing rather than an occasion for sorrow (Mat. 5:10-12; John 15:20; Also see Acts 16:23-27). To the Ephesian elders Paul declared that the Holy Spirit forewarned him, “**that in every city bonds and afflictions abide me,**” but such persecutions would not stop him from faithfully discharging his obligations to God (Acts 20:22-24). Paul reminded Timothy that among the things he had personally witnessed in the apostle’s life were the “**persecutions**” and “**afflictions**” he “**endured...**” The great apostle then affirmed, “**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**” (2 Tim. 3:10-12; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10). *To one extent or another, in one form or another, and at one time or another, all faithful children of God will be persecuted because they are godly.* Therefore, we have no biblical reason to be surprised or anxious when we are persecuted for our faithful service to the Lord. To the contrary, as did Paul, we too should accept it; knowing fully the reason for it.

In the same context wherein Paul wrote to Timothy about persecutions, the apostle described the attitudes and actions of those who persecute the saints. Of them the apostle wrote:

**This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith (2 Tim. 3:1-8; Also see Exo. 7:8-13).**

Earlier Paul pointed out that error would enter the church via elders teaching “**perverse things**” to gain a following, and through other brethren “**speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.**” Then, he informed Timothy that false teachers would be sought and welcomed by worldly church members who “**will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables**” (Acts 20:29-32; 2 Tim. 4: 3, 4).

As 2011 draws to a close, *CFTF* recognizes that today’s persecutors of the godly are of the same wicked stripe as their ancient partners in evil. However, we are thankful to God that He has equipped us with all that is necessary to defeat Satan’s servants (2 Pet. 1:2-13). We are also thankful to all those brethren who support our work in *CFTF*. To you we extend seasons greetings and pray that God will richly bless you with a safe and prosperous 2012.

—David P. Brown, Editor

(Continued from page 1)

Miller nor his defenders will talk to us. His defenders apparently hoped that, by their ignoring us long enough, we would grow weary and cease our opposition to and exposure of his errors. However, we cannot afford to do so because of the weighty doctrinal issues at stake. Neither distance nor the passing of time render sin and error less sinful and erroneous, and the Truth remains the Truth. If we don't stand for it, we are condemned by it.

The first major complaint in your response to the withdrawal letter (August 7) is that the Galimuyod brethren did not follow Scriptural procedure. Particularly, your letter charged them with not giving CC and MMSOP any "prior admonition or warning." We now respectfully cite a case in which some brethren were truly given no warning before they were marked. Those "some brethren" are the ones who are addressing you in this letter (i.e., David P. Brown and Dub McClish). Since the events of June 2005, both of us have written and/or published several articles and have openly discussed these matters orally in various lectureships in an effort to expose brother Miller's errors and to arouse brethren to join us in obeying Romans 16:17–18, Ephesians 5:11, 2 John 10–11, and other such passages until he repents. As part of that exposure, we have pointedly called attention to the involvement of various ones, including the Forest Hill elders and preacher and the MSOP faculty as supporters of brother Miller. Not only so, but we have also exposed the increasingly liberal direction of Barry Grider, as indicated by material he has printed in the Forest Hill News. Some of the articles we have written/published have been sent to most of the Forest Hill members in an effort to alert them to what is occurring (we have attached some of these documents, which we trust you will read in interest of pursuing true and factual information).

**Without any "prior admonition or warning,"** the Forest Hill elders notified us by an announcement on the back page of the December 1, 2009, *Forest Hill News* (they didn't even bother to mail it in an envelope) that they had marked us as unworthy of fellowship, accusing us of unspecified lies and of sowing discord (see attachment). In spite of pleas to them from us and from the Spring, Texas, elders for specifics of the charges, they have completely ignored us to this day (as they have for 6 years ignored our pleas for discussion of these matters). Of course, you already know about our being marked if you have been receiving *The Forest Hill News* for the past two years. Now you know the circumstances.

We think you have far less cause to cry "foul" over the withdrawal announcement by the Galimuyod brethren than do we over the marking by the Forest Hill elders. Will you hold the Forest Hill elders to the same standard as you hold the Galimuyod church?

In connection with your complaint about the withdrawal, you state that the Galimuyod brethren should have withdrawn from the other congregations in fellowship with you. Please note that the Forest Hill elders did not mark any of the many other brethren who have been exposing and continue to expose Forest Hill/MSOP's fellowship with and defense of a false teacher and their additional doctrinal compromises. (Actually some of your fellow-MSOP alumni wrote the Forest Hill elders and asked them to include them in the marking.) Since you condemn the Galimuyod brethren for singling out CC/MMSOP in their letter, will you now be consistent and condemn the Forest Hill elders for singling the two of us out and ignoring the many others who are in fellowship with us? The truth of the matter is that, in principle and by implication, the Forest Hill elders did mark all who are opposed to their endorsement of Dave Miller and their other compromises. Likewise, in principle and by implication, the Galimuyod brethren have marked all of those who continue to take your compromising position on these weighty doctrinal issues.

If it is true that you were planning a trip to visit personally with the Galimuyod members about the Dave Miller doctrines (and we have no reason not to believe it to be so), two things become evident:

(1) You were not so ignorant about these matters, as you claimed. How could you have thought yourself in a position to contradict charges against Dave Miller and related matters unless you had familiarized yourself with them? This planned trip is simply not consistent with your claim of ignorance. (2) Your behavior in this regard smacks of a paternalism on the part of CC/MMSOP that seeks to control the thinking of brethren in other congregations, rather than letting them evaluate evidence and reach their own conclusions. (3) The leadership of the Galimuyod church was justified in the withdrawal action as a matter of self-defense, if nothing else.

We hardly see how your complaint of having no warning of the withdrawal is justified. Both brother Bagsangi and brother Danny Douglas make it clear in their letters to you that since 2007 you have had the material that indicts brother Miller. Just here we hope you will answer some pertinent true/false questions:

True or False: I have discussed with brother Curtis Cates and/or other MSOP faculty in some detail the matters pertaining to Dave Miller since June 2005.

True or False: I have regularly received *The Forest Hill News* at least since December 1, 2009.

True or False: I have received at least some copies of *Contending for the Faith* since September 2005.

You stated that of 14 men of the CC church, only 11 had even heard of Dave Miller. This claim is not so much an indictment the Galimuyod brethren as it is of you and your apparent determination to shield the CC members and MMSOP students from knowledge of some very dangerous doctrines. Furthermore, you had a reminder of these matters as recently as January when brother Delbert Goins visited with you and expressed his concern about the doctrinal and fellowship controversy revolving around brother Miller. According to him, you told him at the time that you "had heard something about this problem." When you received this material in 2007, you had several options. We will appreciate it if you will tell us which option(s) you chose. Did you:

1. Because of involvement in other matters, neglect to read it after you received it, and then forget about it?

2. Consciously decide not even to read it because of the Forest Hill/MSOP involvement in the issues it raised ("the less I know about this, the better"), thus making you derelict in your responsibility to be well informed, both as a Gospel preacher and as one who is training others to preach?

3. Read it, but were unable to comprehend the gravity of brother Miller's errors (we believe you are far too intelligent not to grasp the gravity of those errors if you read the material)?

4. Read it, become concerned about it and its implications, but decide to withhold it from your brethren at CC and from your students, lest they be disturbed by it and raise uncomfortable questions relating to Forest Hill/MSOP?

5. Read it and grasp the seriousness of the errors, but upon contacting the MSOP faculty about the "Miller mess" find it "convenient to accept their claim, in spite of the objective evidence in your possession, that the charges are false and that only a handful of trouble-makers continue to press them?

6. Recognize that if you chose to pursue your concerns about the Miller errors, you would be forced to oppose Forest Hill/MSOP's support of a false teacher, thereby endangering their financial support of your work?

Gideon, we know this is a hard matter for you emotionally because of your intimate ties with Forest Hill and MSOP. However, we assure you that it was no pleasant or convenient matter for us to oppose those with whom we had so long and closely worked. We remind you that we were closely related with the brethren at Forest Hill/MSOP before you were. We were both speakers on the MSOP Lectures and invited various faculty members to speak on lectureships we directed many years in succession. We were both made honorary alumni of the school a few years ago. One of us even accepted the invitation to deliver the commencement address for the graduates in 1998. Do not think these are not hard matters for us (and for many others), as well. However, Truth is Truth and error is error, and our first loyalty must ever be to the Truth rather than to men or to schools operated by men. If God and the kingdom are not first, we are only playing at religion (Mat. 6:33). We must not only obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29), we must also be loyal to God rather than to men (or schools or congregations) when they are in conflict with God's Word.

We also know that this is a hard matter for you to be objective about because of the financial support that would be affected by your standing with the Truth in these matters. We assure you that it would have been more "convenient" in some ways for us to remain silent, but conscience would not allow it. You need to know that several of us here have suffered financially because we would not bow the knee on this affair. We have good, solid, veteran, capable Gospel preachers who cannot find congregations that can/will support them because of their unwillingness to compromise on this issue. They have had to take secular jobs to support their families, which leaves them little time or energy for the work they did so capably in the kingdom for so many years.

It was inevitable that these matters would make their way to other parts of the world. Your idea that you should not be concerned in your nation with errors in our nation is beneath your intelligence; surely, you did not think this quibble through. What is 1,000 miles (your figure) in today's world of instant communication? Is that which is a doctrinal error in the USA not a doctrinal error in another nation? Did not Paul teach "the same thing everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17)? Did he not oppose the Judaizing teachers everywhere, though they originated "1,000 miles away" in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-2)? Do you not receive financial support from brethren who are "1,000 miles [and more] away" from you? These matters of fellowship should be of great concern to you regardless of where they originated because we are all bound to the Lord through faithfulness to His Word. Besides, that which constitutes error in the USA is just as erroneous in the Philippines, and vice versa.

Gideon, we pray that you will seriously reconsider your reaction to the evidence relating to the errors of brother Miller and his steadfast refusal to admit his errors. The principal issue in the disruption of fellowship signaled by the withdrawal statement is actually not the withdrawal itself. The principal issue relates to whether or not Dave Miller is an impenitent false teacher (which the evidence clearly reveals him to be). That being so, the issue then becomes one of fellowship. The Galimuyod brethren are on the right side of that issue, and those who continue to defend, endorse, and promote brother Miller (including Forest Hill/MSOP) are continuing in sin by so doing (Rom. 16:17-18; Eph. 5:11).

Furthermore, those who fellowship brother Miller's defenders, endorsers, and promoters are as culpable as his defenders, endorsers, and promoters (2 John 10-11).

Some have asked the Galimuyod brethren why they didn't give you and your CC brethren and MMSOP faculty a chance to present their "side." The truth is, as already explained, you had since 2007 possessed ample documentation of the other "side." Now we ask you frankly if, when you talked to brethren in Memphis about these matters (as we are convinced you have done), why did you not contact us to hear our "side"? We assume that, before talking with those in Memphis, you valued us as capable, mature, respectable, knowledgeable preachers of the Word in whom you had confidence (at least in the past we believe you so considered us). Were we just "throw-aways" upon the word of your Memphis mentors? Did it not occur to you that it might be wise and worthwhile to contact us about these matters (of course, we were not financially supporting you)? Actually, the only "side" that matters is the Truth's. The evidence—still in your possession, if you have not destroyed it—shouts that we are on the side of Truth and that you are at present opposed to the Truth in this whole affair. We have not opposed Dave Miller's errors since 1990 because we decided we didn't like his looks or the way he dressed, but because he was in error. Nor did we whimsically begin opposing those who support him (including FH/MSOP) because we decided we didn't like those brethren anymore, but because they did a 180 degree turn in their attitude toward Miller and his errors. We then had no choice but to oppose them, whatever the cost. We beseech you to stand for the Truth (as you had always previously done) at whatever cost of human loyalties, financial support, or other sacrifices that may result therefrom. At the Judgment, you will be glad a thousand times over that you have done so.

Your concerned brethren,

/s/David P. Brown

/s/Dub McClish

# 2012 SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST *CFTF* LECTURESHIP

## *The New Testament Church and Counterfeit Churches*

Wednesday, February 22—Sunday, February 26 • David P. Brown, Lectureship Director

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

6:30 PM *CONGREGATIONAL SINGING*

7:00 PM **David P. Brown:** *What is the New Testament Church?*

8:00 PM **John West:** *What is the Independent Christian Church?*

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

9:00 AM **Michael Hatcher:** *What is the Salvation Army?*

10:00 AM **John Rose:** *What is the Lutheran Church?*

11:00 AM **Johnny Oxendine:** *What is the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)?*

#### LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM **John West:** *What are the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches?*

2:30 PM **Daniel Denham:** *What is Dispensationalism?*

3:30 PM *Open Forum*

#### DINNER BREAK

6:30 PM *CONGREGATIONAL SINGING*

7:00 PM **Dub McClish:** *What is the Restoration Principle and is it Scriptural?*

8:00 PM **Roelf Ruffner:** *One Can Know One Is a Member of the Lord's Church? (Identifying Marks of the Church)*

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

9:00 AM **Danny Douglas:** *What is the Baptist Church?*

10:00 AM **John Rose:** *What is the Unitarian/Universalist Church?*

11:00 AM **Wayne Blake:** *What is the Organization and Work of the New Testament Church?*

#### LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM **Gene Hill:** *What is the Methodist Church?*

2:30 PM **Jess Whitlock:** *What Makes JW's, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Seventh Day Adventists Different from Other Denominations?*

3:30 PM *Open Forum*

#### DINNER BREAK

6:30 PM *CONGREGATIONAL SINGING*

7:00 PM **Bruce Stulting:** *Are Faithful Children of God Found in the Denominations?*

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

9:00 AM **Jess Whitlock:** *What is Christian Science?*

10:00 AM **Geoff Litke:** *Are Pious Un-Immersed Persons Christians?*

10:00 AM **Sonya West:** *Give Your Daughters To Husbands (Choosing a Husband)—LADIES ONLY*

11:00 AM **Daniel Denham:** *What is the Emerging Church?*

#### LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM **Danny Douglas:** *What is the Community Church?*

1:30 PM **Sonya West:** *Thy Desire Shall be to Thy Husband (Having a Successful Marriage)—LADIES ONLY*

2:30 PM **Gene Hill:** *What is the Organization and Work of the New Testament Church?*

3:30 PM **Bruce Stulting:** *Does the New Testament Authorize the Church Revealed on its Pages to Fellowship Denominational Churches?*

4:30 PM **Roelf Ruffner:** *Is the New Testament Church a Denomination?*

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

9:30 AM **Terry Hightower:** *The Apostasy of the First Century Church*

10:30 AM **Johnny Oxendine:** *What is the Worship of the New Testament Church?*

#### NOON MEAL PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION

1:30 PM **Terry Hightower:** *The Emergence of Catholicism from the Apostate Church*

2:30 PM **Michael Hatcher:** *What is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?*

3:30 PM **Dub McClish:** *Has the New Testament Church Been Restored? —LECTURESHIP ENDS*

*Lunch Provided by the Spring Church • Book of Lectureship Available • RV Hook-Ups • Video & Audio Recording • Approved Displays*

Elders: **Kenneth D. Cohn, Buddy Roth, and Jack Stephens**

Spring Church Secretary: **Sonya West**

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SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST ~ PO BOX 39 (Mailing address) ~ 1327 SPRING CYPRESS ROAD, SPRING, TX 77383

# “WHO HATH BELIEVED OUR REPORT?”

Brock Hartwigsen

When I was in high school, an elephant at a neighborhood carnival was spooked by some firecrackers thrown by some troublemakers. As the authorities chased it through town, it ran by the local high school football stadium, where a game was in progress. Needless to say, a lot of students joined in the chase. The authorities eventually caught the elephant. Elephants, however, are fast and this chase took place about nine in the evening. The elephant actually lost the authorities and the crowds a few times as it ran through backyards and down side streets. The next few days the local paper was full with stories about what happened on that strange night.

One story took place during one of the times the authorities lost track of the elephant and it wandered into a backyard. It was quite upset as it crashed through a fence, trampled a flower garden and then tore down a clothes line with its trunk. A preschooler who lived there, and who had already been put to bed for the night, heard the noise, looked out her window and saw the elephant. She went and told her mother that there was an elephant in their backyard making a big mess. Her mother, who had not heard anything, simply told the little girl “That’s nice, honey.” She told her to go back to her room and look at the elephant for a little while, but then she had to go back to bed. So, the little girl did. The next morning there was one shocked mother when she looked out into her backyard and heard the morning news about the rogue elephant which had run loose the night before.

Have you ever reported what you witnessed or that you did something and no one would believe you? In essence, they just told you, “That’s nice, honey. Now you just go back to bed.”

In the 24th chapter of Luke, we read the account of the women visiting Jesus’ tomb early Sunday morning. They found the stone rolled away, the tomb empty and two men in shining garments who told them that Jesus had risen from the grave. They quickly went and told the apostles. Then in verse 11, we read that **“their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.”** “Idle tales” is translated from the Greek word *lerous* which means nonsense or foolishness. This is the only place in the Bible where it is used. It was commonly used by medical writers to describe the wild talk of people who were delirious or hysterical. Imagine how these women must have felt when they honestly reported what they saw and heard and were considered as nothing but a bunch of hysterical women.

How could the apostles not have believed their report? Matthew Henry in his commentary asked this same question.

One would be amazed at the stupidity of these disciples, who had themselves so often professed that they believed Christ to be the Son of God and the true Messiah, had been so often told that he must die, and raise again, and then enter His glory, had seem Him more than once raise the dead, that they should be so backward (as to not) to believe His raising Himself.

We should not be surprised when we try to teach the gospel of the empty tomb and people think we are crazy. After all, Christ’s very own apostles thought those women were! In 1 Corinthians 1:23 we find this statement **“but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.”** In Romans 10:16 after Paul pointed out how not everyone will believe the preaching of the gospel, he wrote, **“For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?”**

There will be many who will think us delirious, think our message foolishness and will not believe our report. But, we must still press on proclaiming the good news of the empty tomb.

It would be bad enough if those who believed not our report were simply limited to those outside the Lord’s church. But, sadly, they are not. There are brethren who will not believe our report when we warn them about **“false prophets, which come to”** them **“in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”** (Mat. 7:15). They will not believe us when we warn them about these **“grievous wolves”** who have entered **“in among them not sparing the flock”** (Acts 20:29). They will say, “That’s OK, honey. Now, you just go back to bed.” Others will verbally take us to the woodshed for spreading “idle tales,” for being delirious or hysterical, for being judgmental and for not having a loving spirit.

There will be many who will think us delirious, think our message is foolishness and who will not believe our report. But, we must still press on warning **“every night and day with tears”** (Acts 20:32).

Whether the world chooses to believe or not, whether our brethren choose to believe or not, we must press on with the truth.

— 189 Brookside Dr.  
Stanton, KY 40380



*Honesty and Truth have nothing  
to fear from open investigation.*

# DEPARTURES FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner

## Outrages and Oddities

Recently the ABC network outraged some viewers by its choice of contestants for its program, “Dancing With The Stars.” Although in the past this show’s trumpeting of lasciviousness (dancing) makes it unwatchable by the Christian, this time they have gone even farther. They chose “Chaz” Bono as a contestant. Chaz (formerly Chasity) has attempted to change her gender from female to male by surgery and chemicals (yet her lack of a Y or male chromosome does not lie!). She has also legally changed her name. She is the daughter of the late Sonny Bono and Cher. For many years she identified herself as a lesbian. Now she has mutilated herself to pass as a man. Apparently the homosexual agenda is being followed by the producers of this show. Not only do they want homosexuals accepted by society but all other sexual deviants as well. If one objects they are quickly shouted down as a “bigot” and a “religious nut.” This is one more reason NOT to watch this show or to support its commercial sponsors (<http://tv.msn.com/tv/article.aspx?news=666994&gt1=28103>).

## Anything Goes

The media knows no bounds of decency anymore. They keep “pushing the envelope” when it comes to sexuality. Recently, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC/BBC America) did this in its popular science fiction television series “Torchwood”. This show not only has a homosexual character and a bisexual character (called “omni-sexual”), it now has introduced a pedophile character. This sexual pervert escaped arrest on a technicality, according to the show’s byline. When God and decency are thrown out the window, anything goes (<http://www.christianpost.com/news/torchwood-pedophilia-and-a-dying-culture-54500/>)!

## ACU’s Continuing Apostasy

Abilene Christian University recently added a new promotional film clip entitled “Outlive Your Life” to its website. It begins with President Schubert walking into his office and grabbing a book from the shelf (right next to a volume entitled “Servant/Leaders”). It is entitled “Outlive Your Life” by apostate and ACU alumnus Max Lucado. Schubert speaks glowingly of Max’s book and how it reflects the philosophy of ACU. He speaks proudly of Max as an ACU Alumnus as he introduces the accounts of students at ACU who exhibit this philosophy.

This is yet another example of ACU’s headlong jump into the old Social Gospel heresy in which good works replace obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Shoeing the

un-shod, for example, even takes precedence over teaching the lost the Biblical doctrine of authorized worship (cf. John 4:24; Col. 3:16,17). And, all this is “legitimized” by the use of a marked false teacher who has done great damage to the cause of Christ and helped shipwreck the faith of many, while making a tidy profit (cf. Rom. 16:17,18) [[www.acu.edu](http://www.acu.edu)].

## Pat Robertson’s Antics

Ole Bre’r Rabbit Pat Robertson is at it again! This false teacher/businessman/politician was asked during his television program, the 700 Club, if it was all right to divorce one’s spouse if that person had Alzheimer’s disease. Robertson answered in the affirmative. When his co-host wondered aloud about the “in sickness and health, till death do us part” section of the marriage vow, Robertson exclaimed, “If you respect that vow, you say ‘til death do us part.’ This is a kind of death.” Though he has taken up the mantle of preacher and teacher of the Bible, he is neither. His antics through the years have proven time and time again that he is a false teacher “**whose God is their belly, who glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things**” (Phi. 3:19). Yes, that spouse’s mind may be shattered by disease, but what separates this spouse from a monkey or a cockroach is that person’s soul. A person is a human being at conception, during life in the flesh on earth and when one departs the body to return to God in eternity—we are made in the image of God. As such Christ’s marriage law still applies—the marriage vow stands until death (Rom. 7:1-3). “Fornication” on the part of a spouse is the only scriptural grounds whereby the innocent spouse has authority from God to divorce the spouse that is guilty of the sin of fornication (Mat. 19:9). “**Have you not read...?**” (Mat. 19:4) [[## Pink Soldiers](http://www.usato-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

*Obama to the Troops: Don’t Quit Your Gay Job!*

President Obama may not have created a lot of jobs for America, but he is creating plenty of them for his homosexual base. Recently, the radical Left celebrated one of President Obama’s signature legislative accomplishments: the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” a 1993 law that codified the longstanding prohibition of homosexual conduct in the military. With the completion of the training and “certification” process, the day has come when service members actively engaged in homosexual conduct are now free to proclaim that preference.

Family Research Council will continue to monitor the

consequences of this reversal of 236 years of American military policy, limit the damage, and demand that the Defense Department do the same. As the homosexual groups rejoiced over their victory, homosexuals and their fellow travelers have fawned over their victory, declaring that it did not cause “the sky to fall.” That is only because there will be no press releases from the new victims of sexual harassment or assault, the soldiers exposed to HIV-tainted blood, the thousands of servicemembers who choose not to re-enlist rather than forfeit their freedom of speech and religion, and the untold number of citizens who choose never to join the military. It is clear this President is more interested in appeasing perverted sexual revolutionaries than in fighting America’s enemies.

## “Conservatives” Continue to Compromise

Recently the *Christian Chronicle* had a full page ad about Sunset’s “Year of Jubilee” Workshop, slated for January 2012. Two of their keynote speakers (besides Truitt Adair, Sunset director) will be Phil Sanders and Jim McGuiggan. Here is one more example of the fellowship compromises of MSOP, the Southside Church of Christ, Lubbock, TX, et al., all of them having used Sanders recently. By the way, the “Worship Leader” at this Sunset “Jubilee” will be Keith Lancaster, founder of *Acappella*, and associated with the Madison, TN, church after it went hopelessly liberal a few years ago.

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# A REVIEW OF THE NIV

GARY W. SUMMERS

The top-selling Bible across the country is the *New International Version (NIV)*. According to the *Bookstore Journal* (September, 1994), the *King James* is second, followed by the *New King James*, with *The Living Bible* in fourth place, the *New American Standard* in sixth, and the *New Revised Standard Version* in tenth. One recent full-page aggressive advertisement in a magazine pictures Jesus teaching several people by a lakeside with one of the people in silhouette. An arrow points to this person with the words: “You are here.” The caption reads: “Reading the *NIV* is the next best thing to being there.” The text underneath declared the *NIV* to be: “unparalleled in its accuracy.”

Solomon observed that: “**the race is not too the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill**” (Ecc. 11:9). It could similarly (and successfully) be added: “nor favor to a translation of accuracy.” The *NIV* is more popular than precise. Two of the others on the list (produced in the latter half of the twentieth century) and better: the *New King James* and the *New American Standard*. Yet they are outsold. The reasons for that phenomenal success will be dealt with later; first various preliminaries must be dealt with.

## TEXTS

“*The New International Version* is a completely new translation of the Holy Bible made by over a hundred scholars working directly from the best Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts” begins the Preface to the *NIV*, written by “The Committee on Bible Translation.” The reader may wonder how they define the word “best” in view of what they think constitutes the most reliable manuscripts prior to Mark 16:9-20.

For the Old Testament the translators used “the standard Hebrew text, the Masoretic Text as published in the latest editions of *Biblia Hebraica*.” However, they also consulted the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritan Pentateuch, “ancient scribal traditions relating to textual changes,” variant Hebrew readings found in the margin of the Masoretic text, and important early versions. Jack Lewis points out that the *NIV*’s choice of the phrase, “all the wild animals” (found in Gen. 1:25 and 8:1), comes from one of those “early versions,” the Syriac. No other translation injects the word “wild.”

The *NIV* admits to using an eclectic text for the New Testament, which means that they did not rely on one major manuscript family, such as the Textus Receptus. Theoretically, they compiled a text based upon the best manuscript evidence, which in itself is not objectionable. But the translators’ reluctance to accept Mark 16:9-20 (they imply strongly that the passage does not belong in the Bible) demonstrates that their judgment in weighing texts is flawed.

However, their inconclusion and exclusion of certain portions of Scripture do not differ substantially from the *New American Standard*. Both of them, for example, omit “in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew” from Luke 23:38 and “according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ” from Acts 2:30 without even a footnote. And while both versions omit the following portions of Matthew 27:35—“**that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots**”—the *NIV* footnotes it while the *NAS* ignores it completely.

Many have unfairly criticized the *NIV* for omitting portions of the text with which we are all familiar. Some have

implied that they did so on the basis of whim or capriciously; such is not the case. While they may be blamed for other facets of their work, they do not appear to show any bias in the use of texts—except for Mark 16:9-20. And while it is perfectly proper to disagree with their final decisions and the worthiness of a text; nevertheless, the ones they omitted are legitimately disputed.

### PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSLATION

Those undertaking the task of translation deserve a large helping of tolerance and understanding. Anyone who has ever studied a foreign language is familiar with problems of translation. Idiomatic phrases and certain grammatical constructions pose problems. Although some words carry with them a primary meaning, others are so versatile that the context must determine the definition. The first three definitions for *ago* in the Latin are “drive, do, discuss.” Besides beginning with the letter b, what exactly do these definitions have in common? Both the noun and the verb forms of “drive” in the English have multiple definitions, many of which seem unrelated. All who seek to change the Bible from one language to another face these problems; so a little latitude must be granted.

Generally speaking, two translation philosophies over the centuries have been used: literal and paraphrase. A literal translation, such as the *American Standard Version* of 1901, strove to be as accurate as possible. It ended up being so literal that it made for choppy reading. Paraphrases, such as *The Living Bible* or *Good News For Modern Man*, are too loose, but they read very smoothly. A third method, Dynamic Equivalence, falls somewhere in between the other two; it has been called a “scientific paraphrase.”

According to the Preface of the *NIV*, the goals of the translators included providing “an accurate translation and one that would have clarity and literary quality...” How successful were they? To make use of a popular song title: “Two Out of Three Ain’t Bad.” The *NIV*’s clarity and literary quality have no doubt made it the popular success that it is, but its accuracy must be challenged. The translators must be commended for being “united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God’s Word in written form,” but unfortunately their approach to translating allows biases to enter in.

Jack Lewis identifies their operating philosophy as “Dynamic Equivalence.” Their own description of it is set forth in the Preface: “The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the Biblical writers.” A close consideration of that sentence prompts the question: “How can the *NIV* translators be sure they know the thought of the Biblical writers?” Would it not be easy for their theology to skew their view of what the Biblical writers thought? It not only could, it does, as will be demonstrated later on.

Paraphrases may be highly readable, but they are more like commentaries in that they contain what the paraphrasers

think the passage means. The *NIV* adds (as does the *NKJV*) the words “with passion” to 1 Corinthians 7:9 from what most interpreters believe “to burn” means and fail to distinguish such as an addition. The *NKJV* puts “with passion” in italics, for the possibility exists that it means to burn in Gehenna because of falling into fornication. The *KJV* and *ASV* quite properly left it open. The *NIV* translators’ personal understanding of the text may be correct or incorrect. Those using the Dynamic Equivalence approach must likewise assume that they know precisely what the message is before they can translate it, which opens the door to subjectivity. If the translators are primarily Calvinists, for example, they might select “**sinful nature**” for the Greek word *sarx*, meaning “flesh.” Or they might have David transfer the sinful action of his mother to himself in Psalm 51:5.

### WHEEL OF GRAMMAR

In their one explanation of Dynamic Equivalence, the translators make the following comment in their Preface: “Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, faithful communication of the meaning of the writers of the Bible demands frequent modifications in sentence structure and constant regard for the contextual meaning of words.”

In the abstract these words sound lofty and reasonable; in reality one wonders if all the changes they made were indeed justifiable. Although the above explanation makes sense, anyone comparing their translation to the Greek or other accurate, literal translations must wonder if there was not a huge wheel being spun with the parts of speech on it instead of dollar amounts like the television program, Wheel of Fortune.

Suppose in the Greek a word is a verb. Spin the wheel and make it an adjective. What about this noun, which is the subject of the sentence? Give the wheel a spin; hey, it’s a verb now. What will we do with this adjective? Spin the wheel and—all right, a special prize—an early lunch break. Not only is this fun, but with a few endorsements from denominational heavyweights, this thing will be a best seller.

Of course, this is a bit of an exaggeration. But consider a few examples. Part of Luke 24:49 reads (correctly) in the Interlinear: “**I send the promise of My Father upon you.**” The *KJV*, *NAS*, and the *NKJV* all keep promise as a noun, the direct object of the sentence. The *NIV* translators must have spun the wheel at this juncture and decide that “promise” should be made into a verb. They complicate a simple sentence by rendering it: “I am going to send you what my Father has promised.” Although this involves no great theological significance, grammatically speaking you has been made an indirect object, and the direct object (consisting of one word) has been replaced by a noun clause which changes a former noun into a verb. (Don’t trust these fellows to figure your income tax!)

Consider 2 Corinthians 5:11. Literally, the first part of the verse reads: “**Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we**

**persuade men,”** which is exactly how the *KJV* and the *NKJV* render it. The *NAS* is only slightly different with its “Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.” None of these translations found it necessary to make any structural change in the sentence. And the *NIV*? “Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.” This time the wheel came up with “noun-into-verb.” “Terror” or “fear” is a noun, but the *NIV* makes it part of an infinitive phrase! and although the focus of attention here is to notice changes in parts of speech, one cannot but help wonder where did “we try to persuade” come from? Paul did not say we try to persuade men, thus weakening the force of the verse, he said we persuade men!

Most Bible students are familiar with Matthew 5:28. The *KJV* records: **“whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her..”** Literally, the verse is **“everyone that looks on a woman to lust after her..”** The *NKJV* and the *NAS* say “to lust for her,” but substantially they are the same. To lust remains an infinitive phrase. The *NIV* renders the verse: “anyone who looks at a woman lustfully.” An aorist infinitive has been changed into an adverb.

This kind of handling is the way “Dynamic Equivalence” works. It can become as loose as the translators see fit. Upon a whim they can change nouns into verbs, verbs into nouns, infinitives into adverbs, etc. Nor are these isolated examples. One can read literal translations side-by-side with the *NIV* and see that the *NIV*’s translators can scarcely string a dozen verses together without rearranging the grammar and sentence structure. To look at the *NIV* renderings of Ephesians 5:19 (i.e. “make music in your hear”), Ephesians 4:13 (i.e. “until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature”; cf. 1 Cor. 13:10), and Acts 2:31 (i.e. “that he was not abandoned to the grave”) is to see just how seriously translation principles can affect meaning. Study closely the *NIV*’s change of “takes” and “sees her nakedness” to “marries” and “they have sexual relations” in Leviticus 20:17. “Takes” does not necessarily involve marriage, and isn’t it possible to “see” a person’s nakedness without having “sexual relations” with that person? Should anyone think this is an unimportant point, he should perhaps be asked by the single Christian (or non-Christian): “Just how far can I go sexually before I get married?” For my part, I plan to stay with the more Form or Content Oriented translations like the *ASV*, *KJV*, and *NKJV*!

Again, numerous reviewers have noticed the *NIV*’s almost freehand altering of sentence structure. That is not to say that occasionally any translation might not change a verb into a noun—if it is a difficult passage to comprehend; the complaint against the *NIV* is that they do so needlessly. Many of the verses they tamper with are plain passages of Scripture which translate easily into English. The *NIV* committee altered them because they wanted to, not because they needed to.

## MEANINGFUL ALTERATIONS

In the example cited above it might be argued that even through the grammatical changes are unneeded and unjustifiable, they do not really harm anything. The problem is that when a loose approach becomes the overriding philosophy, alterations in meaning will eventually follow. In James D. Price’s *Complete Equivalence in Bible Translation*, this point is demonstrated.

The *NIV* changes the Hebrew grammatical structure of preposition and noun (“for good”) to an adjective modifying the previous noun “hand”:

**The hand of our God is upon all those seeking Him for good** (word-for-word translation of Hebrew word order).

**The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him** (*NIV*).

The word “good” is changed to “gracious” and transposed from its adverbial function (explaining the purpose of God’s hand upon the people) to an adjectival function (defining the quality of God’s hand). This produces a simpler, more natural expression, but obscures the purpose involved. Obviously God’s hand is good and gracious, but it is not always upon a person **“for good”** (34-35).

Price points out that the *NIV*’s use of looking to God in the above verse does not “capture the full force of meaning contained in the vocabulary of the original language,” as seeking does. In other words, Dynamic Equivalence does not always convey an equivalent meaning.

## DYNAMIC ABSENCE

In fact, sometimes words are left out altogether. Price includes a section on what are called “particles,” which consist of a single word or a brief expression, used for emphasis. One example cited is Nehemiah 1:5, in which Nehemiah petitions God with the words: **“I pray.”** The *NIV* leaves out this particle entirely. It is not replaced with something else; the words have just disappeared. Evidently the translators did not think they were necessary, despite the fact that such interjections as “behold” dramatically call attention to a spectacular scene or an even of profound importance.

Price does not discuss the New Testament, but the reader does not have to travel very far into the book of Matthew before he realizes something is missing. Count the number of times the word *behold* or its equivalent appears in the first two chapters of Matthew in the *King James Version*. Although the Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to use the particle six times (1:20, 1:23, 2:1, 2:9, 2:13, and 2:19), the *NIV* translators removed it. God put it in; the *NIV* “translators” took it out! Nor is this a fluke. Consider the extent of this situation. The word *idou* is used 213 times in the New Testament. On 107 of those times (50%), the reader will find no equivalent of the word in the *NIV*. It is not that it is an obscure word or part of another word. They simply deleted it from the pages of the New Testament. Why?

How do other translations treat the word? In the *King James Version* *idou* is translated “lo” 29 times, “see” 3 times, and **“behold”** 181 times. Notice it is not omitted even once. The *NASB* omits the word five times, but textual variation is the reason four of those times. No explanation is given for

its omission by them in Mark 5:22, but they translate it the other 208 times. They chose “**behold**” all but eighteen times. The *NKJV* uses a variety of words to translate *idou*, such as “**suddenly**,” “**indeed**,” “**look**,” and “**see**” in addition to “**to**” (twice) and “**behold**,” which appears with the greatest frequency. They occasionally use a phrase such as “at once,” “think of it,” “here am I,” or “at that very moment” but they do so sparingly (fewer than ten times); they never fail to translate the Greek word.

But the *NIV* omits the word 50% of the time. They never use “lo,” and if you desire to see “behold,” you must wait until arriving at Revelation 1:18. They included it three more times in that book (16:15, 22:97, and 22:12). Using “look” or “see” as a more modern equivalent is acceptable, but then why use “behold” at all? If the thinking is that such a word is too obsolete for today’s reading public, why insert it even four times (out of 213)?

Following are some of the passages that the *NIV* translators decided that no word (to call attention to what follows) was needed. The *NIV* rendering will be given; the place in which the words “lo” or “behold” belong will be inserted in brackets to show where it has been omitted.

“**[Behold,] the virgin will be with child**” (Mat. 1:23). “**After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and [lo] the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them**” (Mat. 2:9). “**after Herod died, [behold] an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt**” (Mat. 2:19). “**[And, behold] Two men, Moses and Elijah**” (Luke 9:30). “**Go! [Behold] I am sending you out like lambs among wolves**” (Luke 10:3). “**And [behold] I am going to send you what my Father has promised**” (Luke 24:49). Others include John 4:35, Acts 2:7, and 2 Cor. 5:17, all of which are familiar verses to many students of the world.

Dynamic Equivalence allows the translators a little freedom that those compiling a literal translation do not have. The question is: “How responsibly is that freedom used?” When words are omitted or the meaning of the verses is altered, the answer must be: “Not very.”

### “HOW LOOSE THOU ART”

Surely most people would not think that liberty of expression would include some of the following, but the *NIV* translators thought so. In Matthew 18:22 they put “seventy-seven times” for “seventy times seven.” The *KJV*, *NKJV*, *NAS*, the *Interlinear*, and the *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* all have “seventy times seven”; why change what is so familiar to readers when it is not a textual variation and everyone else has been perfectly consistent in this matter? True, they mention the usual rendering in a footnote, but that scarcely justifies the decision.

In Mark 14:6, when Mary anointed Jesus, He proclaimed that she had done a “good work,” which the *KJV*, *NKJV*, and *Interlinear* record; the *NAS* is virtually the same with “**good deed**.” The *NIV* dynamically unnecessarily substituted “beau-

tiful thing.” Jesus asks in Mark 14:48: “**Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as though I were a robber?**” For some reason the *NIV* (in place of robber) put: “Am I leading a rebellion?”

In Luke 12:25 the *NIV* translators have Jesus asking: “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” Although they do add a footnote saying “or single cubit to his height,” there is no explanation for the change. Is adding an hour to one’s life supposed to be more relevant than adding eighteen inches to one’s height? The *NIV* strangely changed “strange flesh” (a literal rendering) in Jude 7 to “perversion”; the other translations do not.

Most translations have the church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:8) receiving an “**open door**” because they have demonstrated a little strength. The *NIV* alters this idea to: “I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” The traditional translation seeks to build on the strength they have; the latter rewards them in spite of themselves and seems inconsistent with the point of the passage.

Another questionable change is the use of the word “**warn**” in Revelation 22:18 in place of “**testify**,” the literal meaning of the word *summartureo* wherever it is found in the New Testament. Once again, the *NIV* stands alone; no other translation will join it in this variation.

One cannot help wonder if some of the changes in the *NIV* were for change sake rather than a grammatical compulsion or reasons of clarity. Consider, for example, Exodus 20:7. Following are the renderings of the four translations made use of in this study.

*KJV*: “**Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.**”

*NKJV*: “**You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**”

*NAS*: “**You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**”

*NIV*: “**You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**”

Is “misuse” the “dynamic” equivalent of not taking the name of the Lord in vain, let alone the equivalent? What reason warranted this change? For centuries youngsters have been taught not to take the name of the Lord in vain; with the popularity of this translation, they will be memorizing not to misuse it instead.

What happened to “certainly” in Exodus 3:12? For most people studying this passage “certainly” conveys a sense of emphatic comfort. Moses has just asked God: “**Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel?**” “**Certainly I will be with thee,**” answers God in the *King James Version*. But alas! certainly is one of those “pesky particles” which the *NIV* takes delight in omitting.

Why is Manoah’s lament “**We shall surely die**” in Judg-

es 13:22, changed to the melodramatic: “We are doomed to die!”? The *NIV* left Genesis 2:17 intact: “You shall surely die.” If God was not made to say: “You will be doomed to die,” why put such words in Manoah’s mouth?

Another familiar passage is Deuteronomy 6:7 in which Israel is exhorted to teach diligently God’s precepts to their children. The *NIV* for some reason thought “impress on” was a better equivalent than the rendering the *KJV*, *NKJV*, and *NAS* decided upon. “Teach” is more accurate.

Psalm 119:160 has been oft quoted from translators newer than the *King James Version* because it states: “**The sum of Thy word is truth**” (*NAS*) or “**the entirety of your word is truth**” (*NKJV*). It sets forth an important principle about how to read and study God’s Word. One passage should not be taken out of context because another passage may reveal a different aspect on the subject (e.g., faith and works). The *KJV* has: “**Thy word is true from the beginning**,” but newer translations have all been in accord with the thought expressed above. The *NIV* just about returns to the *KJV* on this verse with a weak: “All your words are true.”

### DYNAMIC VULGARITY

Most translations have refrained from using common or vulgar equivalents; the *NIV* at times seems to express the “Roseanne” mentality. Genesis 31:35 in most versions renders Rachel’s words as “**the manner**” or “**the custom of women is upon me**” as her excuse for not arising. These are literal renderings and not too difficult to understand. But the *NIV* translators evidently felt that people would not grasp the situation, so they used: “I’m having my period.” They did get the thought this time, but is it not the purpose of commentaries to do this work?

In Genesis 38:26 Judah never “**knew**” Tamar again; in the *NIV* he never “slept” with her again. That is more modern, isn’t it? In Genesis 4:1 the *NIV* used a better choice of words: “Adam lay with his wife Eve.” The *NIV* renders this verb more respectfully in each of the other passages in which it is found; it is especially refreshing to notice that the translators refrained from saying that Joseph did not “sleep” with Mary until after Jesus was born.

The *NIV* has Samson saying: “**With a donkey’s jawbone I have made donkeys of them**” instead of “**heaps upon heaps**.” A little coarse humor there? Not that it would be out of character for Samson, but is this justified? [The *NASB* points out that heaps and donkeys come from the same Hebrew root word.] Despite these few instances of poor taste, at least they did not follow the vulgar path of Kenneth Taylor in 1 Samuel 20:30; they left it: “**You son of a perverse and rebellious woman!**”

### DOCTRINAL BIAS

Proving that someone’s theology has affected their translation is difficult at best. More passages arouse suspicion than can be dealt with here, but three areas of doctrine will be considered: *the role of women*, *Calvinism*, and *salvation*.

*The role of women.* In the latter half of the twentieth century the role of women has expanded tremendously in most denominations. While some continue to hold out, most have surrendered to the pressures of groups like the National Organization of Women. If Romans 16 is not a concession to the NOW-type feminists, one is at a loss to understand the motivation behind it.

Most reliable translations use the word “servant” in Romans 16:1 for a simple reason—it’s accurate; the *NIV* follows suit. But they cannot resist putting in a footnote (as does the *NASB*), adding “or deaconess.” For them to suggest that *diakonon* can equally be translated into “deaconess” is a theological decision, not one of vocabulary. It presumes that there is such an office rather than leaving it in the realm of interpretation where it belongs.

Although the *NASB* and the *NIV* are alike on Romans 16:1, the *NIV* goes even further in verse 12 to make sure the reader knows what gender some of the workers are: “**Great Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.**” The Greek text contains neither “those women” nor “another woman.” If the translators felt compelled to inform the reader of the gender of these workers, they could have cited in a footnote rather than include it as part of the text. Their decision here reflects a bias in favor of an expanded role of women.

*Calvinism.* Part of this doctrine teaches that men are born sinners. They believe all mankind is depraved because of the results of the fall of Adam and Eve. All human beings have thereafter been tainted by sin and can of their own accord do nothing good or righteous. Many brethren have written on numerous occasions concerning the *NIV*’s bias in this direction. In the Old Testament, Psalm 51:5 has been more than mishandled; the *NIV* brutally assaulted the passage, as the following comparison shows.

*KJV:* “**Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**”

*NKJV:* “**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**”

*NAS:* “**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.**”

*NIV:* “**Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.**”

Notice the shift of focus away from the sinfulness of the mother to the sinfulness of the child. The child became wicked even in the womb. Such a philosophy harmonizes well with Calvinism. They cling to this doctrine despite the fact that no one can inherit anyone else’s sins (Eze. 18:20) and regardless of the fact that Jesus illustrated what the kingdom of heaven is like by using the purity and innocence of a child (Mat. 18:4). What was He saying: “Become like this little child who has been sinful from birth, even from conception”? As brother Taylor points out: when David praised God for being “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psa. 139:14), was he

thanking God for creating him a depraved sinner? Even those enamored with the *NIV* will agree that this is an unfortunate rendering.

### “SINFUL NATURE”

Equally horrendous is the arbitrary translation of *sarx* in the New Testament as “sinful nature.” Of the 151 times *sarx* is used in the New Testament, the *King James Version* translates it as “flesh” 148 times and “carnal” or “carnally” the other three times (Rom. 8:6-7 and Heb. 9:10). According to Vine, Kittel, and others, *sarx* does have different shades of meaning, depending on the context. “Sinful nature,” however, does not appear among the definitions, although some may seem close to it. But even if some lexicographer did define the word as “sinful nature,” would that prove that it is so? No! No more than the *NIV*’s using such a definition proves them correct.

How do we know that “sinful nature” is an incorrect translation? One reason is that the other major translations never chose to use that phrase. The *KJV*, *NKJV*, *ASV*, *NAS*, and the *RSV* all use “**flesh**.” Some of these are as literal as they can be; only “dynamic equivalence” could produce such a misconception, which underscores what has been pointed out throughout this chapter: the translating committee has complete liberty to use what they “think, feel, or imagine” are equivalents to the words in the Greek text.

The *NIV* enjoys using about any word but “flesh” to define *sarx*. In fact, they must have considered it the most versatile word in the New Testament. They translate it “flesh” 33 times, “body” 25, “sinful nature” 25 times, “one” five times, “man” four times, “mankind” (Luke 3:6), “people” (John 17:2; Acts 2:17), “human standards” (John 8:15), “physical” (Rom. 2:28), “in this matter” (Rom. 4:1), “natural selves” (Rom. 6:19), “natural descent” (John 1:13), “external” (Heb. 9:10), “worldly point of view” (2 Cor. 5:16), “worldly manner” (2 Cor. 1:7), “life” (1 Cor. 7:28), “natural” (Rom. 9:8), “race” (Rom. 9:3), “life on earth” (Heb. 5:7), “nature” (Rom. 8:5; Gal. 6:8), “sinful mind” (Rom. 8:7), “sinful man” (Rom. 8:3,6), “outwardly” (Heb. 9:13), “personally” (Col. 2:1), “unspiritual mind” (Col. 2:18), “ordinary way” (Gal. 4:23,29), “another” (1 Cor. 15:29), “human ancestry” (Rom. 9:5), “in this matter” (Rom 4:1), “standards of the world” (2 Cor. 10:2), “good impression outwardly” (Gal. 6:12), “birth” (Eph. 2:11), “evil human desires” (1 Pet. 4:2), “illness” (Gal. 4:13-14), and about a dozen other ways.

When “sinful nature” is used, the translators do add a footnote which provides the alternative “flesh,” but such is not exceedingly helpful. *First* of all, when a text is read publicly as a Scripture reading or as part of the text of a sermon, nobody bothers to say “or flesh.” *Secondly*, when young people memorize a passage of Scripture (and Rom. 8:1 is a good one), they will not likely add “or flesh” when quoting the verse. Even if they did, however, it would still not be helpful because they are not equivalents, dynamic or otherwise!

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF A “SINFUL NATURE”

Why protest this unfortunate rendering of “sinful nature”? It has long been held a matter of logic that any teaching which implies a false doctrine is itself false. What ideas does “a sinful nature” suggest? If man has a “sinful nature,” where did he get it? The first choice is that God created us that way. If so, then He can hardly expect us to do anything other than sin. If we all possess an uncontrollable urge to sin, and God put it there, how can He accuse us of choosing wrongly? Does anyone condemn a crippled man for not walking or a blind man for not seeing? Likewise, if God put within us an unailing desire to sin, how then can we be justly blamed and condemned?

The Bible teaches that when God finished the Creation (including man), it was very good (Gen. 1:31). Such could not be said if man were created with a “sinful nature.” In such a case, sin would have been waiting for a chance to express itself. Rather, we were created with free will, which allows sin to be an option, but not a necessity.

That we have free will is the reason we are encouraged to make the right decision. God calls for us to obey (Mat. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17). We still have the choice to obey or disobey—even as God’s people. Joshua commanded the people to choose whom they would serve (Jos. 24:14-15). If we fail to please God, it will be our fault. Freedom of choice is that which allows God to hold us accountable. Animals will not be judged; they cannot help being what they are; human beings can.

The second way that man might have obtained a sinful nature is through the “fall.” Somehow, when man sinned, he became depraved and incapable of doing good. The nature of man changed at that moment, Calvinists say. But there are a few problems with this theory. The first is that hereditary total depravity is unnecessary to explain why people sin today. Ask a Calvinist for the reason, and he will answer: “Depravity.” Then ask: “Is that why Adam sinned?” “Oh, no. Adam was made in the image of God. Mankind only became depraved after the ‘fall.’” If Adam did not need depravity in order to sin, why do we? Free will explains both situations; depravity explains neither.

Also, the “fall” rationale carries with it the same basic problems the first theory has. How is mankind benefited if Adam was not created depraved, but we are? We still would not be able to help it; our sinfulness would not be our fault. God could still not hold us accountable. Besides, God told even Cain (after the “fall”) that he had a choice: he could do well or give in to sin (free will).

Somebody could perform a real service by polling the *NIV* translators. It would be interesting to find out how many of them believe in the tenets of Calvinism and how many of them think that man is born in a depraved condition. Where else would they get the idea of “sinful nature”? Their repeated use of this phrase disqualifies the *NIV* as a reliable, accurate,

or unbiased translation.

*Salvation.* Needless to say, the prevailing philosophy towards salvation amongst those in the denominational world is that people are saved by grace through faith, period. Most deny that baptism is an integral element of the salvation process and are happy to dispense with it altogether unless it be in some incidental sense. Although they cannot, of course, remove the numerous verses that show that baptism is essential to salvation, they can do the next best thing: co-opt a popular verse in their favor.

They have done exactly that with their “dynamic” reconstruction of Romans 10:9-10. Instead of:

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (KJV),**

the *NIV* has:

**That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**

How about teaching these memory verses to young children? Who can read these verses without concluding that faith and saying: “Jesus is Lord,” is enough to save someone? Instead of confession bringing a person unto salvation, confession “saves” him.

### MARK 16:9-20

The most flagrant bias against baptism, however, is in connection with Mark 16:9-20. No doubt the translators would affirm that their theology had no direct bearing on their treatment of this text, but since brethren have been debating denominational preachers for over a century on the subject of baptism, it is no secret that they would prefer this passage were absent from the pages of divine inspiration. Most editions of the *King James Version* include it without comment. Other translations have added qualifying notes. Compare the statements of other translations about this text with the one made by the *NIV*.

RSV: “Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8.”

NEB: “At this point some of the most ancient witnesses bring this book to a close.”

NAS: “Some of the oldest mss. omit v. 9 through 20.”

NKJV: “Vv. 9-20 are bracketed in *NU* as not in the original text. They are lacking in *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*, although nearly all other mss. of Mark contain them.”

ASV: “The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some authorities, omit from ver. 9 to the end.”

*NIV* (1978): “The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9-20.”

*NIV* (1984): “The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.”

The first four above assessments of these disputed Scriptures are correct; the last three are erroneous. The *ASV* of 1901 should have added the word “complete” to modify “Greek manuscripts.” The *NIV*’s statements, however, are false and deliberately worded to deceive readers into thinking Mark never wrote these words. In fact, there is no way to read that statement and conclude that this ending belongs in the New Testament. People who use the *NIV* are drawing exactly that conclusion—whenever someone mentions Mark 16:16.

The *NIV* translators have done at least as much damage as the *RSV* did when they first put the passage in as a footnote. The *NIV* avoids that, but the effect is the same. By adding the word “reliable,” they have rendered a verdict upon the quality of two manuscripts, which judgment everyone does not share.

### FROST ON HER BIKINI

In Peoria, Illinois, the Uniroyal Tire Company found a rather unusual way of catching the public’s attention. On the curb in front of the store stands a fiberglass figure of a shapely woman 17 and 1/2 feet tall, standing on a metal frame. Her hair is black, her face resembles that of the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and her body clad only in a red bikini. It is not one of the major tourist attractions, but anyone driving down Washington Street cannot help but notice her.

In the winter an interesting anomaly occurs. When weather conditions are just right, motorists will notice a humorous incongruity—frost on the stately lady’s bikini. Of course, a real woman would not be standing on the street corner dressed that way in freezing temperatures. This mixture of the two most opposite seasons is ridiculous. *Frost on her bikini!*

Equally absurd (though not funny at all) is the devotion of some of our church members to the *NIV*! Not only do preachers often use it, but many recommend it to members. It has been estimated that the *NIV* is used by 90% of our young people, which is tragic. No wonder that at some of our youth meetings speakers have begun to allude to our “sinful nature.” What can elders be thinking of?

Churches of Christ have long put a premium upon the Word of God—its authority and accuracy. Yet many are apparently willing to sacrifice all of that on the altar of “Readability.” Such actions might be excusable if the *NIV* were the only modern translation and sufficient warnings and safeguards were issued concerning its use. Neither, however, is the case. The *New King James Version* is easy to read and immensely more accurate than the *NIV*. Why do not more elders and Bible school teachers insist on its use?

For the church of our Lord that has for two hundred years displayed such a commitment to the truth, urged a respect for the authoritative Word of God, and fought battles over the accuracy of proper translation, to embrace a version of the Scriptures that is scarcely better than a paraphrase, replete with doctrinal bias, and arbitrary in its renderings is as ludi-

crous as the image of the woman with frost on her bikini.

### WAS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST INVOLVED IN THIS TRANSLATION?

One more matter should be dealt with from the Preface of the *NIV*. They proudly proclaim the following.

The fact that participants from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand worked together gave the project its international scope. That they were from many denominations—including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, an other churches—helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias.

It has already been demonstrated that they failed with regard to keeping out bias. But the reader may well wonder what is meant by including “Church of Christ” among the denominations, since we are not now nor have we ever been one.

Jack Lewis sets forth his knowledge of the matter in his book *Questions You’ve Asked About Bible Translations*. Of the New Testament brother Lewis makes known that he not only played no role in its translation, he did not even see it until it was published and available to the general public. He further suggests that since the Cincinnati Bible Society people refer to their congregations as “churches of Christ,” possible the Preface of the *NIV* was referring to them. Finally, he explains the rather insignificant role he played in the Old

Testament translation as follows:

Each of twenty teams had a translator, a co-translator, two consultants, and one English Stylist. Dr. Clyde T. Francisco and Dr. Marvin Tate of Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, were the translators on Team Four. The other consultant and stylist I have not yet met. A translation consultant is about as essential as a second-string quarterback behind Joe Montana. With the passage of time, Dr. Tate sent me the first chapters of a trial translation of Exodus. I compared them with the Hebrew text and with the wording of the *RSV*. I marked up the copy, fussed about the freedom with which he had changed the traditional wording, mailed it back, and heard no more about it. Eventually, some other sections came and a few chapters from some of the other books, such as Joshua, were sent out from translation headquarters for general criticism. I wrote the editor, Dr. Edwin J. Palmer, and told him I thought the translations were too free and that change was being made for the sake of change where none was actually needed.

What more needs to be added to that final observation except—AMEN!

—5410 Lake Howell Road  
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“Failure to do **what** God said is sin. Also, when we do what He said, but not in **the way** He said to do it, we sin. And, to do what God said, in the way He said to do it, but not for **the reason or reasons** He said to do it, we also sin. We must know what complete obedience to God is before we can know we have fully obeyed Him” (Ecc. 12: 13, 14; John 12:48).

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