Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

<u>Bible References:</u>

1 Kings 15:14
2 Chronicles 15:17

<u>Original text:</u>

1 Kgs 15:14 – וְהַבָּמֹות לֹא־סָ֑רוּ רַ֣ק לְבַב־אָסָ֗א הָיָ֥ה שָׁלֵ֛ם עִם־יְהוָ֖ה כָּל־יָמָֽיו׃

2 Chr 15:17 – וְהַ֨בָּמֹ֔ות לֹא־סָ֖רוּ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵ֑ל רַ֣ק לְבַב־אָסָ֗א הָיָ֥ה שָׁלֵ֛ם כָּל־יָמָֽיו׃

<u>NIV rendering:</u>

1 Kgs 15:14 – Although <u>he did not remove the high places</u>, Asa's heart was fully committed to the L<small>ORD</small> all his life.

2 Chr 15:17 – Although <u>he did not remove the high places</u> from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed to the L<small>ORD</small> all his life.

<u>Suggestion:</u>

1 Kgs 15:14 – Although <u>the high places were not removed</u>, Asa's heart was fully committed to the L<small>ORD</small> all his life.

2 Chr 15:17 – Although <u>the high places were not removed</u> from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed to the L<small>ORD</small> all his life.

<u>Rationale:</u>

Throughout the books of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles, there are a number of formulaic statements, often giving an evaluation of a specific king or recounting his death or his ascension to the throne. We believe these statements are formulaic on purpose. They are intended to sound like a refrain. Careful study of these statements shows that there is some variation within them. That leads us to the conclusion that in these books, it is important to use an identical translation for verses that are identical and to reflect variation where it exists. (We would not apply this rule to the entire OT text. This is a reflection of the intentional structure of these books.)

Within these books, the expression הַבָּמֹות לֹא־סָרוּ occurs eight times. The NIV translates six of them as an English passive, "the high places were not removed" (1 Kgs 22:44 [E 43]; 2 Kgs 12:4 [E 3]; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 2 Chr 20:33). This seems like a good choice to us. In two verses (1 Kgs 15:14 and 2 Chr 15:17), both dealing with Asa, the NIV chooses to translate: "he did not remove the high places."

It is hard for us to see how "he did not remove" can be defended grammatically as a translation for סָרוּ, since it is a Qal perfect with a 3rd masculine plural subject. The root סור is intransitive in Qal, with the meaning "turn aside," "turn away from," or "depart." The transitive meaning "he removed" is how the

root is translated in the Hiphil stem. In the expression הַבָּמוֹת לֹא־סָרוּ, the noun הַבָּמוֹת is naturally understood as the subject. For this idiom, BDB suggests the translation: "the high places were removed," while HALOT suggests "they disappeared" and DCH suggests "they ceased to exist."

Perhaps the NIV choice was made because of the contrast in the next clause, "Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life." However, the choice of an active voice seems to impute more blame to Asa than the Hebrew actually does. We know almost nothing about the constraints that Asa was operating under, and we think it would be wise to retain the more impersonal construction given in the other passages.

We note, further, that סוּר is used with a transitive sense in connection with הַבָּמוֹת seven times in Kings and Chronicles (2 Kgs 18:4, 22; 23:19; 2 Chr 14:2 [E 3], 14:4 [E 5]; 17:6; 32:12) and once in Isaiah (36:7). But in all of these passages, the Hiphil stem is used. Six of them use the verb form הֵסִיר and two use the form וַיָּסַר. The NIV (correctly in our view) translates each of them with a singular active subject: "he removed the high places." Here is one formula: הֵסִיר אֶת־הַבָּמוֹת. Another formula is: הַבָּמוֹת לֹא־סָרוּ. We think the NIV would do well to be consistent in how it translates these formulaic instructions in these two books.

Finally, 1 Kings 15:14 is the first occurrence of the formulaic statement הַבָּמוֹת לֹא־סָרוּ. We believe that fact should not be lost on the English reader.

Bible References:

Isaiah 19:16
Jeremiah 50:37; 51:30
Nahum 3:13

Original text:

Isa 19:16 – בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה מִצְרַיִם כַּנָּשִׁים

Jer 50:37 – חֶרֶב אֶל־סוּסָיו וְאֶל־רִכְבּוֹ וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכָהּ וְהָיוּ לְנָשִׁים

Jer 51:30 – נָשְׁתָה גְבוּרָתָם הָיוּ לְנָשִׁים

Nah 3:13 – הִנֵּה עַמֵּךְ נָשִׁים בְּקִרְבֵּךְ

NIV rendering

Isa 19:16 – In that day the Egyptians will become <u>weaklings</u>.

Jer 50:37 – A sword against her [Babylon's] horses and chariots and all the foreigners in her ranks! They will become <u>weaklings</u>.

Jer 51:30 – Their [Babylon's warriors'] strength is exhausted; they have become <u>weaklings</u>.

Nah 3:13 – Look at your troops—they are all <u>weaklings</u>.

Suggestion:

Isa 19:16 – In that day the Egyptians will become <u>like women</u>.

Jer 50:37 – A sword against her [Babylon's] horses and chariots and all the foreigners in her ranks! They will become <u>like women</u>.

Jer 51:30 – Their [Babylon's warriors'] strength is exhausted; they have become <u>like women</u>.

Nah 3:13 – Look at your troops—they are all <u>like women</u>.

Rationale:

The NIV's departure from the source text, and the change from NIV84, is substantial to say the least. "Women" and "weaklings" are hardly synonyms: many women are not weaklings, and a great many weaklings are not women. Furthermore, neither BDB, DCH, Gesenius, or HALOT lists "weakling" as a gloss for אִשָּׁה. We grant that the issue is not as simple as that; but when the NIV adopts a rendering that

is unparalleled even in such contemporary, target-oriented versions as CEB, NET, NLT, or NRSV, we are compelled to ask whether the change is really justifiable.

We would hope that the reason for the NIV's change was not fear that some readers are put off by the plain sense of the source text, since we today consider it offensive to use "women" as a term of opprobrium. The background for the prophets' use of נָשִׁים in these source texts was not misogyny; it was simple biology, and the reality that in ancient battles the physical strength of the soldiers could easily be decisive.[1] Add to this the fact that soldiering was men's work, and an ancient reader would have had no trouble understanding "Your troops will become like women" as meaning that their fighting capacity would be profoundly diminished.

We are convinced—as, apparently, are the vast majority of translations—that contemporary readers also have no trouble understanding the passages this way, despite the changed nature of modern warfare; in fact, we wonder if the contrary opinion isn't a bit condescending. Most important, we would not agree that contemporary readers of an ancient text need "protecting" from a source culture in which authors taunted enemy troops in ways that some would consider "sexist" today. Our hope is that NIV would once again give its readers access to the natural, straightforward sense of these texts.

(Although "like" appears only in the source text of Isa 19:16, "like" is added to the suggested translations also of the other verses above to prevent possible misunderstanding, in a day and age when gender is considered malleable.)

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[1] Women have on average 33% less lower-body strength and 40% less upper-body strength than men. I. Janssen et al., "Skeletal Muscle Mass Distribution in 468 Men and Women Aged 18-88 Yr," *JAP* 89.1 (2000): 81-88.

Bible References:

Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16

Original text:

Jer 23:6 – בְּיָמָיו֙ תִּוָּשַׁ֣ע יְהוּדָ֔ה וְיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל יִשְׁכֹּ֣ן לָבֶ֑טַח וְזֶה־שְּׁמ֥וֹ אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרְא֖וֹ יְהוָ֥ה ׀ צִדְקֵֽנוּ׃

Jer 33:16 – בַּיָּמִ֤ים הָהֵם֙ תִּוָּשַׁ֣ע יְהוּדָ֔ה וִירוּשָׁלִַ֖ם תִּשְׁכּ֣וֹן לָבֶ֑טַח וְזֶ֥ה אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרָא־לָ֖הּ יְהוָ֥ה ׀ צִדְקֵֽנוּ׃

NIV rendering

Jer 23:6 – In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.
This is the name by which he will be called: The
Lᴏʀᴅ Our <u>Righteous Savior</u>.

Jer 33:16 – In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.
This is the name by which it will be called: The
Lᴏʀᴅ Our <u>Righteous Savior</u>.

Suggestion:

Jer 23:6 – In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.
This is the name by which he will be called: The
Lᴏʀᴅ Our <u>Righteousness</u>.

Jer 33:16 – In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.
This is the name by which it will be called:
The Lᴏʀᴅ Our <u>Righteousness</u>.

Rationale:

We can imagine two arguments for the change from NIV84: 1) HALOT (4.) argues strenuously for the translation "salvation, well-being" for צֶדֶק, and although some of its examples are doubtful, צֶדֶק does have a broader semantic range than "righteousness" in English. 2) What is meant by calling the Lᴏʀᴅ "our righteousness" may be less clear to an English-speaking reader than calling him "our righteous Savior," especially since Judah is said to be "saved" (תִּוָּשַׁע) in the context.

To respond to the first argument above: if using a noun from English "to save" is necessary to convey the force of Hebrew צֶדֶק, why are these the only two of the 119 occurrences of צֶדֶק in the OT where NIV chooses to do this? We would argue that the reason for the name יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ here has at least as much to

do with the obvious pun on צִדְקִיָּ֫הוּ, the name of Judah's weak and ineffectual last king, as it has to do with the mention in the context of Judah's being "saved" (תִּוָּשַׁע) and dwelling "securely" (לָבֶ֫טַח).

In addition, generations of preachers have found in the translation "The Lᴏʀᴅ Our Righteousness" an opportunity to proclaim the good news of righteousness imputed to us through the Branch whom the Lᴏʀᴅ raised up for David (2 Cor 5:21 etc.). "The Lᴏʀᴅ Our Righteousness" conveys the thought of the Hebrew that the "righteousness" referred to is in some sense "ours." The point is diluted, to say the least, by the rendering "The Lᴏʀᴅ, Our Righteous Savior." From this a reader is likely to infer that 1) only a "righteousness" that is an attribute of the Lᴏʀᴅ's is being referred to in the passage, and 2) the source text contains some form of a lemma usually translated with "save": ישׁע, or perhaps נצל. Neither inference would be accurate.

As for whether it is natural, idiomatic English to predicate an abstract noun ("righteousness") of a proper noun ("The Lᴏʀᴅ"), we note that NIV did not see a need to change "The Lᴏʀᴅ … has become my salvation" to "The Lᴏʀᴅ … has become my Savior" (Ps 118:14; Isa 12:2), or "God is my salvation" to "God is my Savior" (Isa 12:2).

It may be true that an English-speaking reader needs to linger over and ponder "the Lᴏʀᴅ Our Righteousness" a bit longer than "the Lᴏʀᴅ Our Righteous Savior." We are hard put to see this as a bad thing. The fact that this is a name bestowed by the Lᴏʀᴅ on the Branch whom he will raise up for David (23:5-6) and on Judah (33:16) suggests that the phase is meant to be lingered over and pondered. We believe that the rendering "The Lᴏʀᴅ [is] Our Righteousness" (ESV, HCSB, KJV, NAB ["The Lᴏʀᴅ Our Justice], NASB, NIV84, NLT, NRSV) provided a good opportunity for readers to do this, and we would like to see it restored.

Bible References:

Ezekiel 1:12
Ezekiel 1:20

Original text:

Ezek 1:12 – וְאִישׁ אֶל־עֵ֤בֶר פָּנָיו֙ יֵלֵ֔כוּ אֶ֣ל אֲשֶׁ֩ר יִֽהְיֶה־שָּׁ֨מָּה הָר֤וּחַ לָלֶ֙כֶת֙ יֵלֵ֔כוּ לֹ֥א יִסַּ֖בּוּ בְּלֶכְתָּֽן׃

Ezek 1:20 – עַ֣ל אֲשֶׁר֩ יִֽהְיֶה־שָּׁ֨ם הָר֤וּחַ לָלֶ֙כֶת֙ יֵלֵ֔כוּ שָׁ֥מָּה הָר֖וּחַ לָלֶ֑כֶת וְהָאוֹפַנִּ֗ים יִנָּשְׂאוּ֙ לְעֻמָּתָ֔ם כִּ֛י ר֥וּחַ הַחַיָּ֖ה בָּאוֹפַנִּֽים׃

NIV rendering:

Ezek 1:12 – Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the <u>spirit</u> would go, they would go, without turning as they went.
Ezek 1:20 – Wherever the <u>spirit</u> would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

Suggestion:

Ezek 1:12 – Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the <u>Spirit</u>[*] would go, they would go, without turning as they went.
　　　[*] Or *their spirit*
Ezek 1:20 – Wherever the <u>Spirit</u>[*] would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.
　　　[*] Or *their spirit*

Rationale:

We wonder what the average NIV reader will make of "the spirit" in Ezekiel 1:12. The translation "the spirit" may give the impression to many that the Holy Spirit is meant, but careful readers will realize that the NIV capitalizes "the Spirit" in such cases (see 2:2; 3:12; etc.). Since "the spirit" is *not* capitalized, it must *not* be referring to the Holy Spirit. However, the definite article implies that it is a spirit that is well known, and there has been no reference to any such spirit so far in the book.

In short, there are two main interpretive options for הָר֤וּחַ in Ezekiel 1:12. This could be a reference to the Holy Spirit, in which case the translation should be "the Spirit." Otherwise, it could be a reference to the spirit of the living creatures that was in the wheels (see 1:20). In that case, the best way to make the meaning clear to readers would be to say "their spirit," as GW does.

We think that there are good reasons to prefer "the Spirit" for הָר֤וּחַ in 1:12 and 1:20. When Ezekiel describes his call in chapters 2 and 3, it is clear that the Holy Spirit comes into him (2:2) and picks him up (3:12, 14). Yet, Ezekiel himself has own personal "spirit" (3:14).

It would be natural to think that the same situation prevails with the living creatures. The Holy Spirit leads the living creatures, so wherever the Holy Spirit (הָרוּחַ) goes, that is where the living creatures would go (1:12; 1:20). Yet, the "spirit of the living creatures" (רוּחַ הַחַיָּה) is something different. It belongs to the living creatures and is "in the wheels" (1:20, 21).

The fact that הָרוּחַ comes out of the blue in 1:12 without any modification implies that it is an entity that is known. This fits with the Holy Spirit better than the spirit of the living creatures, since the reader does not yet know that there is such a "spirit" in the living creatures. The appearance and function of הָרוּחַ in 1:12, 20 is much like the רוּחַ in 2:2 and 3:12 in connection with the person Ezekiel, where the NIV properly translates "the Spirit."

We realize that the translation of רוּחַ in Ezekiel is a very difficult matter, especially in chapters like 1-3 and 37. It would be hard to insist on one right way. Still, when conservative Christians see the Holy Spirit in chapters 2, 3, 8, 11, 36, 37, 39, and 43, as the NIV does, we see no reason why הָרוּחַ in 1:12, 20 couldn't be a reference as well.

Given the difficulty of the decision, we think it would be wise to retain the other option in a footnote. However, to make matters clear for the reader, we think the two options should be "the Spirit" and "their spirit."

Bible Reference:

Ezekiel 3:14

Original text:

וְרוּחַ נְשָׂאַתְנִי וַתִּקָּחֵנִי וָאֵלֵךְ מַר בַּחֲמַת רוּחִי וְיַד־יְהוָה עָלַי חָזָקָה׃

NIV rendering:

The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and <u>in the anger of my spirit</u>, with the strong hand of the LORD on me.

Suggestion:

The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went <u>with my spirit bitter and angry</u>, with the strong hand of the LORD on me.

Rationale:

People who are at home with the idioms of biblical Hebrew may feel comfortable with "the anger of my spirit," but this expression seems like a Hebraism and not idiomatic English.

There are various ways it could be rendered differently. It would be simple and smooth to say: "I went in bitterness <u>and anger</u>, with the strong hand of the LORD on me."

However, we suspect that the NIV perhaps wanted to keep "my spirit' for רוּחִי, to maintain the contrast with "Spirit" (רוּחַ) in the first part of the verse—a noble goal. That desire has influenced our suggestion.

Another option to represent רוּחִי with less rewording would be: "I went in bitterness and <u>an angry spirit</u>, with the strong hand of the LORD on me."

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Bible References:

Leviticus 7:24; 17:15; 22:8
Ezekiel 4:14; 44:31

Original text:

Lev 7:24 – וְחֵ֤לֶב נְבֵלָה֙ וְחֵ֣לֶב טְרֵפָ֔ה יֵעָשֶׂ֖ה לְכָל־מְלָאכָ֑ה וְאָכֹ֖ל לֹ֥א תֹאכְלֻֽהוּ׃
Lev 17:15 – וְכָל־נֶ֜פֶשׁ אֲשֶׁ֧ר תֹּאכַ֣ל נְבֵלָ֣ה וּטְרֵפָ֗ה בָּאֶזְרָ֖ח וּבַגֵּ֑ר וְכִבֶּ֤ס בְּגָדָיו֙ וְרָחַ֣ץ בַּמַּ֔יִם
Lev 22:8 – נְבֵלָ֧ה וּטְרֵפָ֛ה לֹ֥א יֹאכַ֖ל לְטָמְאָה־בָ֑הּ
Ezek 4:14 – וּנְבֵלָ֧ה וּטְרֵפָ֛ה לֹֽא־אָכַ֥לְתִּי מִנְּעוּרַ֖י וְעַד־עַ֑תָּה
Ezek 44:31 – כָּל־נְבֵלָה֙ וּטְרֵפָ֔ה מִן־הָע֖וֹף וּמִן־הַבְּהֵמָ֑ה לֹ֥א יֹאכְל֖וּ הַכֹּהֲנִֽים׃

NIV rendering:

Lev 7:24 – The fat of an animal <u>found dead or torn </u>by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but you must not eat it.
Lev 17:15 – Anyone, whether native-born or foreigner, who eats anything <u>found dead or torn</u> by wild animals must wash their clothes and bathe with water,
Lev 22:8 – He must not eat anything <u>found dead or torn</u> by wild animals, and so become unclean through it.
Ezek 4:14 – From my youth until now I have never eaten anything <u>found dead or torn</u> by wild animals.
Ezek 44:31 – The priests must not eat anything, whether bird or animal, <u>found dead or torn</u> by wild animals.

Suggestion:

Lev 7:24 – The fat of an animal <u>that died naturally or was killed </u>by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but you must not eat it.
Lev 17:15 – Anyone, whether native-born or foreigner, who eats anything <u>that died naturally or was killed</u> by wild animals must wash their clothes and bathe with water,
Lev 22:8 – He must not eat anything <u>that died naturally or was killed</u> by wild animals, and so become unclean through it.
Ezek 4:14 – From my youth until now I have never eaten anything <u>that died naturally or was killed</u> by wild animals.
Ezek 44:31 – The priests must not eat anything, whether bird or animal, <u>that died naturally or was killed</u> by wild animals.

Rationale:

The words נְבֵלָה and טְרֵפָה appear side by side five times in the OT. In our opinion, the NIV does not hit the nail on the head with its rendering: "found dead or torn by wild animals." The contrast in the NIV is imperfect, because creatures "torn by wild animals" would also be "found dead." Also, the word "torn" is not ideal in this setting.

It is generally recognized that when paired together, נְבֵלָה and טְרֵפָה present two different types of dead animals. The נְבֵלָה is an animal that died of natural causes. The טְרֵפָה is an animal that was mauled to death by something else. It is not hard to bring this distinction across in English, either in the way we propose or in some similar way.

__Bible Reference:__

Ezekiel 13:14

__Original text:__

וְהָרַסְתִּי אֶת־הַקִּיר אֲשֶׁר־טַחְתֶּם תָּפֵל וְהִגַּעְתִּיהוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וְנִגְלָה יְסֹדוֹ וְנָפְלָה וּכְלִיתֶם בְּתוֹכָהּ

__NIV rendering:__

I will tear down the wall you have covered with whitewash and will level it to the ground so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it[*] falls, you will be destroyed in it.
      [*] Or *the city*

__Suggestion:__

I will tear down the wall you have covered with whitewash and will level it to the ground so that its foundation will be laid bare. When <u>the city</u> falls, you will be destroyed in it.

__Rationale:__

The way the last phrase is rendered in the NIV, readers will assume that the "wall" will fall and people will be destroyed "in it" (that is, the wall). This could raise questions about how people would be destroyed "in a wall." Zimmerli makes a good point when he says: "בתוכה is difficult to understand in connection with a picture of a wall collapsing (we would expect תחתיו or תחתיה)."

Also, the Hebrew shifts genders with this last phrase. The word for "wall" in the context is masculine (קיר, see וְהִגַּעְתִּיהוּ and יְסֹדוֹ). But the last phrase is feminine: "*she* will fall and you will be destroyed in *her*."

Put these two things together, and the NIV shows itself to be on the right path with its footnote. We recommend that the footnote be put into the text.

Keil supports this understanding: "The suffix in בְּתוֹכָהּ refers (*ad sensum*) to Jerusalem, not to קיר (the wall), which is masculine, and has no תָּוֶךְ (midst). The words pass from the figure to the reality here; for the plastered wall is a symbol of Jerusalem." Also concurring are Greenberg, Block, Allen, and Hummel.

Bible Reference:

Ezekiel 17:21

Original text:

וְאֵת כָּל־מִבְרָחוֹ בְּכָל־אֲגַפָּיו בַּחֶרֶב יִפֹּלוּ וְהַנִּשְׁאָרִים לְכָל־רוּחַ יִפָּרֵשׂוּ

NIV rendering:

All his choice troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds.

Suggestion:

All his best troops* will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds.
  * Or *his fleeing troops*

Rationale:

It seems to us that the textual witnesses and the commentaries are quite evenly divided between מִבְחָרָיו ("his *choice* troops") and מִבְרָחוֹ ("his *fleeing* troops"). We notice that the NIV84 had the latter and the NIV11 switched to the former. With such a close call, we suggest that a footnote be used to present the other option. If a more detailed footnote is desired, you could use this: "Some Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum; other Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate *his fleeing troops*."

As a second, less-important matter, we think the expression "choice troops" could be improved. As an adjective, "choice" goes well with "food" and other similar nouns, but NIV never uses it elsewhere with "troops." In addition, the combination "choice troops" isn't the easiest to say.

NIV has "best troops" in three other places (2 Sam 10:9, 1 Chron 19:10; Dan 11:15), all with forms from the Hebrew root בָּחַר. Other possibilities would be "select troops" (as in Judges 20:16, 1 Sam 26:2) or "elite troops."

Bible Reference:

Ezekiel 27:3

Original text:

וְאָמַרְתָּ לְצֹור הַיֹּשֶׁבֶתי עַל־מְבֹואֹת יָם רֹכֶלֶת הָעַמִּים אֶל־אִיִּים רַבִּים כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִֹה

NIV rendering:

Say to Tyre, situated at the gateway to the sea, <u>merchant of</u> peoples on many coasts, "This is what the Sovereign LᴏRD says:

Suggestion:

Say to Tyre, situated at the gateway to the sea, <u>who trades with</u> peoples on many coasts, "This is what the Sovereign LᴏRD says:

Rationale:

The expression "merchant of peoples" seems unnatural in English, and it is open to possible misunderstanding. It could give the impression that the Tyrians were slave traders who were buying and selling "peoples." The Tyrians, of course, did do some slave trading, but that is not what is intended with the word הָעַמִּים here.

The active participle of רָכַל occurs seven more times in Ezekiel 27, and the NIV translates "do business with" (27:13) or "trade with" (27:15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24). We recommend bringing one of those translations into verse 3.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible Reference:

Ezekiel 34:31

Original text:

וְאַתֵּן צֹאנִי צֹאן מַרְעִיתִי אָדָם אַתֶּם אֲנִי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה׃

LXX: πρόβατά μου καὶ πρόβατα ποιμνίου μού ἐστε, καὶ ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν, λέγει κύριος κύριος.

NIV rendering:

You <u>are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture</u>, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign L<small>ORD</small>.

Suggestion:

You <u>my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are human</u>, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign L<small>ORD</small>.

Rationale:

We are surprised that NIV11 has chosen not to represent אָדָם אַתֶּם and has not indicated the omission with some sort of footnote. If the NIV11 translation is retained, we think that a footnote should be added similar to the NRSV: "Gk OL: Heb *pasture, you are people*." With the omission, NIV11 in essence is following the LXX, without any indication that it is doing so.

Otherwise, we see nothing wrong with NIV84: "You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people." This rendering is faithful to the Masoretic accents, and it follows the translation tradition of both the Vulgate (Vos autem, greges mei, greges pascuæ meæ, homines estis) and the KJV (And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men,). Perhaps it would be a slight improvement to use the word "human" rather than "people," to accentuate the contrast that is intended between the two parties in the covenant (human vs. divine).

If the thought seems odd or pointless, the explanation of Hengstenberg as quoted by Keil still is eminently reasonable: "The words 'call attention to the depth and greatness of the divine condescension, and meet the objection of men of weak faith, that man, who is taken from the earth הָאֲדָמָה, and returns to it again, is incapable of so intimate a connection with God'" (p. 92).

Finally, if you want to try a new way to include אָדָם אַתֶּם, we wonder if something like this wouldn't work: "You who are human are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign L<small>ORD</small>."

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible Reference:

Ezekiel 38:12

Original text:

לִשְׁלֹל שָׁלָל וְלָבֹז בַּז לְהָשִׁיב יָדְךָ עַל־חֳרָבוֹת נוֹשָׁבֹת וְאֶל־עַם מְאֻסָּף מִגּוֹיִם עֹשֶׂה מִקְנֶה וְקִנְיָן יֹשְׁבֵי עַל־טַבּוּר הָאָרֶץ:

NIV rendering:

I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the <u>center of the land</u>.*
　　* The Hebrew for this <u>phrase means *the navel of the earth*</u>

Suggestion:

I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the <u>center</u>* of the world.
　　* The Hebrew for this <u>word means *navel*</u>

Rationale:

A decision always needs to be made with הָאָרֶץ between "the earth/world" and "the land."

This verse is talking about the "land of unwalled villages" (v. 11 – אֶרֶץ פְּרָזוֹת) and the "resettled ruins" (v. 12 – חֳרָבוֹת נוֹשָׁבֹת), which Gog will invade. In other words, it is talking about the entire land of Israel with its residents.

It seems odd to say that the inhabitants of this land of Israel are living in the center of the "land." Rather, the point seems to be that this restored land is surrounded by enemy nations, because it is at the center of the "world."

To translate "the center of the world" is in harmony with Ezekiel 5:5, which says: "This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her."

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible References:

Ezekiel 40:45, 46
Ezekiel 44:14, 15, 16

Original text:

Ezek 40:45 – זֶה הַלִּשְׁכָּה אֲשֶׁר פָּנֶיהָ דֶּרֶךְ הַדָּרוֹם לַכֹּהֲנִים שֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַבָּיִת:

Ezek 40:46 – וְהַלִּשְׁכָּה אֲשֶׁר פָּנֶיהָ דֶּרֶךְ הַצָּפוֹן לַכֹּהֲנִים שֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ

Ezek 44:14 – וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם שֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַבַּיִת לְכֹל עֲבֹדָתוֹ וּלְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֵעָשֶׂה בּוֹ

Ezek 44:15 – וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם בְּנֵי צָדוֹק אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִקְדָּשִׁי בִּתְעוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעָלַי

הֵמָּה יִקְרְבוּ אֵלַי לְשָׁרְתֵנִי וְעָמְדוּ לְפָנַי לְהַקְרִיב לִי חֵלֶב וָדָם נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה:

Ezek 44:16 – הֵמָּה יָבֹאוּ אֶל־מִקְדָּשִׁי וְהֵמָּה יִקְרְבוּ אֶל־שֻׁלְחָנִי לְשָׁרְתֵנִי וְשָׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמַרְתִּי:

NIV rendering:

Ezek 40:45 – The room facing south is for the priests who <u>guard</u> the temple,
Ezek 40:46 – and the room facing north is for the priests who <u>guard</u> the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who are the only Levites who may draw near to the LORD to minister before him.
Ezek 44:14 – And I will appoint them to <u>guard</u> the temple for all the work that is to be done in it.
Ezek 44:15 – But the Levitical priests, who are descendants of Zadok and who <u>guarded</u> my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD.
Ezek 44:16 – They alone are to enter my sanctuary; they alone are to come near my table to minister before me and <u>serve me as guards</u>.

Suggestion:

Ezek 40:45 – The room facing south is for the priests who <u>are responsible for the care of</u> the temple,
Ezek 40:46 – and the room facing north is for the priests who <u>are responsible for the care of</u> the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who are the only Levites who may draw near to the LORD to minister before him.
Ezek 44:14 – And I will appoint them to <u>be responsible for the care of</u> the temple for all the work that is to be done in it.
Ezek 44:15 – But the Levitical priests, who are descendants of Zadok and who <u>were responsible for the care of</u> my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD.
Ezek 44:16 – They alone are to enter my sanctuary; they alone are to come near my table to minister before me and <u>perform my service</u>.

Rationale:

We are surprised that the NIV of Ezekiel does not have the same translation for idioms with מִשְׁמֶרֶת as it has in the Pentateuch.

The expression שֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת, which occurs three times in these Ezekiel passages, occurs four other times in the OT, all in Numbers talking about Levites at the tabernacle (3:28, 32; 31:30, 47). In all four of the Numbers passages, the NIV translates "who are responsible for the care of." We wonder why the NIV does not use the same translation here in Ezekiel.

The expression וְשָׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמַרְתִּי occurs in one other passage—Lev 22:9, where it is translated "they are to perform my service."

The current translation of the NIV in these Ezekiel passages seems too specific and too narrow in scope, as if the job of the Levites was only or primarily the armed prevention of intruders. We are aware that some commentators understand the expressions that way (see Block). But this interpretation is by no means certain (see Zimmerli), and we see no reason to limit the scope of the Levites' work here. The noun מִשְׁמֶרֶת can be used in a general way for all the service performed at the sanctuary.

Bible Reference:

Psalm 2:2

Original text:

יִתְיַצְּב֨וּ ׀ מַלְכֵי־אֶ֗רֶץ וְרוֹזְנִ֥ים נֽוֹסְדוּ־יָ֑חַד עַל־יְ֝הוָ֗ה וְעַל־מְשִׁיחֽוֹ׃

NIV rendering:

The kings of the earth rise up
      and the rulers band together
      against the LORD and against his <u>anointed</u>, saying,

Suggestion:

The kings of the earth rise up
      and the rulers band together
      against the LORD and against his <u>anointed one</u>, saying,

Rationale:

When the noun מָשִׁיחַ is used with a pronominal suffix in the OT, we notice that the NIV sometimes translates "his/your/my <u>anointed</u>" and sometimes "his/your/my <u>anointed one</u>." In the historical books, "anointed" is preferred. In Psalms, "anointed one" is preferred. Here is what we see:

	"his/your/my anointed"		"his/your/my anointed one"	
Historical books	5 times		2 times	
		1 Sam 2:10		1 Sam 2:35
		1 Sam 12:3, 5		2 Chr 6:42
		1 Sam 16:6		
		2 Sam 22:51		
Psalms	3 times		6 times	
		Ps 2:2		Ps 28:8
		Ps 18:50		Ps 84:9
		Ps 20:6		Ps 89:38, 51
				Ps 132:10, 17
Prophecy	1 time		1 time	
		Is 45:1		Hab 3:13

We also notice that in Daniel 9:25-26—recognized to be prophecy about the coming Messiah, the NIV translates מָשִׁיחַ as "the Anointed One." And, in the Acts 4:28 quotation of Psalm 2:2, the NIV has "his anointed one."

Given the fact that the NIV seems comfortable with either rendering ("anointed" or "anointed one"), that "anointed one" is preferred generally in the Psalms, that "Anointed One" is used in Daniel's messianic prophecy, and that "anointed one" is used in Acts 4:28, we are surprised and disappointed that the NIV11 has "his anointed" in Psalm 2:2. We see no reason for NIV11 to drop the word "one" in this passage.

Psalm 2:2, actually, is one of the NIV11 changes that has been most severely criticized in WELS. It is common in our church body for pastors to refer to the coming Messiah as "the Anointed One." It is common in our church body for Psalm 2 to be understood as a direct prophecy about Christ. The fact that the NIV11 has moved from "Anointed One" (NIV84) to "his anointed" has given some in our church the impression that the NIV is stepping away from looking upon the psalm as a prophecy about Christ.

Even if translators view the prophecy as a typical prophecy—referring to David first and Christ later—as many expositors do, we see no reason why Psalm 2:2 needs to be translated differently from Acts 2:48. Shouldn't a translation try to make the resonance between prophecy and fulfillment as strong as possible? The rendering "his anointed" could be understood as a plural, when the Hebrew is singular. This could blur the reader's association with the coming Messiah.

We are not suggesting that the NIV capitalize the words in Psalm 2:2. We realize that the NIV11 has decided against capitalization in passages like this in the Psalms, allowing for a typical understanding of the messianic prophecies. However, we see no reason why Psalm 2:2 should be translated differently from Acts 4:28, and we strongly recommend that the CBT reinsert the word "one."

__Bible Reference:__

Psalm 8:4-6 (H 5-7)

__Original text:__

מֶה־אֱנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֶנּוּ

__NIV rendering:__

[4] what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
 human beings that you care for them?*
  * Or *what is a human being that you are mindful of him, / a son of man that you care for him?*
[5] You have made them* a little lower than the angels
 and crowned them* with glory and honor.
  * Or *him*
[6] You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
 you put everything under their* feet;
  * Or *made him ruler…; / … his*

__Suggestion:__

[4] what is a human being that you are mindful of him,
 a son of man* that you care for him?
  * The Hebrew phrase *ben adam* means *human being*. The phrase *son of man* is retained here
  because of its use in the New Testament as a title of Jesus, reflected in Heb 2:5-9.
[5] You have made <u>him</u> a little lower than the angels
 and crowned <u>him</u> with glory and honor.
[6] You made <u>him ruler</u> over the works of your hands;
 you put everything under <u>his</u> feet;

__Rationale:__

We notice that there are two places in the OT where the NIV11 retains the translation "son of man" for
בֶּן־אָדָם and includes a footnote to mention the possible connection to "Son of Man" in the New
Testament. Here are the two passages:

- Ezekiel 2:1 – He said to me, "Son of man,* stand up on your feet and I will speak to you."
  * The Hebrew phrase *ben adam* means *human being*. The phrase *son of man* is retained
  as a form of address here and throughout Ezekiel because of its possible association with
  "Son of Man" in the New Testament.

- Daniel 7:13 – In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,*
  coming with the clouds of heaven.

       * The Aramaic phrase *bar enash* means *human being*. The phrase *son of man* is retained here because of its use in the New Testament as a title of Jesus, probably based largely on this verse.

Given the NIV11's treatment in these two passages, we wonder why the NIV11 does not do the same in Psalm 8, all the more because Hebrews 2:5-9 quotes Psalm 8 and makes the connection. Granted, Hebrews 2 does not explicitly call Jesus "the Son of Man." But certainly Hebrews 2 makes a connection between Psalm 8's language about the son of man and Jesus. Picking up on the wording of Psalm 8, Hebrews 2:9 says: "We see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death."

Of course, we realize that many interpreters view Psalm 8 as referring to the human race in its privileged creation position—with Christ being the ultimate example of human rulership. But there are also many interpreters who consider Psalm 8 to be prophetic—fully meaningful only in connection with Christ himself. One linguistic argument in favor of this messianic understanding is that the phrase בֶּן־אָדָם does not elsewhere seem to have a collective sense (= "human beings"), but rather it refers to a single, representative human. For messianic interpreters, the NIV11's current rendering of Psalm 8 is disappointing, because it seems to forestall any direct connection to Jesus.

Perhaps in such a rich passage with prophetic implications it is best to keep the English words as close as possible to the Hebrew (i.e. "son of man"). This would keep the English text open to the fulfillment provided later by God.

In addition, the current NIV11 rendering of Psalm 8:4 is out of sync with the quotation in Hebrews 2:6, where there NIV11 has: "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, <u>a son of man</u> that you care for him?" Since the NIV11 puts "son of man" into the quotation in Hebrews 2, we think that it would make sense to coordinate the OT passage with the NT quotation, and to put "son of man" into Psalm 8 as well.

Perhaps Hebrews 2:6 was not made consistent with Psalm 8:4, because the NT is quoting the LXX and not the MT. The average Bible reader, however, neither knows nor cares that Hebrews 2 is quoting the LXX. The average reader would benefit by being able to see a clear connection between the two passages, especially since this is not a passage where the MT and LXX diverge significantly.

Our suggestion is that the NIV put the alternate translation of its footnotes into the text, and then to include a footnote similar to Ezekiel 2:1 and Daniel 7:13. This would make Psalm 8 consistent with Ezekiel 2:1 and Daniel 7:13, and also consistent with its New Testament quotation.

It can be mentioned that this was a passage as much as any other that set some people in WELS against the NIV11 when it came out. It appeared to some in WELS that the NIV was doing away with the messianic intent of Psalm 8, and was separating Psalm 8 from the quotation in Hebrews 2.

__Bible Reference:__

Proverbs 1:10

__Original text:__

בְּנִי אִם־יְפַתּוּךָ חַטָּאִים אַל־תֹּבֵא:

__NIV rendering:__

My son, if <u>sinful men</u> entice you, do not give in to them.

__Suggestion:__

My son, if <u>sinners</u> entice you, do not give in to them.

__Rationale:__

Given the fact that the NIV strives for more gender neutral language, it seems odd that in this passage what was more gender neutral in the previous edition ("sinners") was made more exclusive. The Hebrew word is masculine in gender, yet this fact does not appear to be a guiding principle for so many other cases. Within the larger context of Proverbs, the reader is warned against temptations that come from both genders.

We suspect that the NIV made the referent masculine because the following words in Prov 1:11-19 deal with a gang of robbers, and brigands in the ANE would presumably be male. However, it could be argued that Prov 1:10 is something of a summary statement, with Prov 1:11-19 focusing more specifically on brigands. As an introduction and summary statement, Prov 1:10 would be better rendered in a gender inclusive way.

We assume that many pastors and teachers use this passage (as we do) in teaching an overarching principle about the Christian response to temptation in general. Since it is possible to view it as a summary statement without doing violence to its meaning, it would be helpful for its use in Christian instruction to avoid a translation that limits it to men.

We sense that the NIV generally likes to leave the gender of groups unspecified, if there is any chance that there was participation by both genders and if there is no benefit in specifying one gender. In Prov 1:10, we, along with the majority of English translations, fail to see a necessity for the masculine reference. Translations that have "sinners" and not something like "sinful men" include: KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NASB, CSB, NLT, NET, NJPS, GW, CEV, REB, and NABRE.

Bible Reference:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Original text:

בְּטַח אֶל־יְהוָה בְּכָל־לִבֶּךָ וְאֶל־בִּינָתְךָ אַל־תִּשָּׁעֵן׃
בְּכָל־דְּרָכֶיךָ דָעֵהוּ וְהוּא יְיַשֵּׁר אֹרְחֹתֶיךָ׃

NIV rendering

[5] Trust in the Lᴏʀᴅ with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
[6] in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

Suggestion:

[5] Trust in the Lᴏʀᴅ with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
[6] give thought to him in all you do,
and he will make your paths straight.

Rationale:

This is the only time when NIV translates a form of ידע as "submit," and the rendering here has no parallel in any published translation that we are aware of. A literal translation ("*know* him in all your ways"), although not indefensible, is arguably not idiomatic English. "Acknowledgements" tend to be verbal and are often superficial or even grudging. The translators may have sought to improve on "acknowledge" (NIV84 et al.) for these reasons.

"Acknowledge" was far better than "submit," however. Cognitive linguists have classified "submit" within the frame "giving-in," the core of which is a situation in which "a Capitulator who has been opposing a Force, which is typically exerted by a Compeller, ceases opposing that Force. As a result, the Force runs its course and an Issue is resolved against the interests of the Capitulator." Participants in the same frame include "acquiesce," "cave in," "cave," "fold," "give in," "give way," "relent," and "yield."[1] We are hard put to see "Cease opposing the Lᴏʀᴅ!" as the point of Prov 3:6a.

We believe that 5-6 are appropriately read as one proverb, not two, and the cola at the beginnings of the two verses are parallel. In other words, 6a connotes a "knowing" of the Lᴏʀᴅ that corresponds in some way to "trusting in" the Lᴏʀᴅ (cf. John 17:30). As has been aptly put, "Knowledge of God is an attitude, awareness of what he wants as well as a desire to do it. To 'know God in all your ways' means giving constant attention to the divine will and presence (Hame'iri)."[2] This is the rationale for the suggested translation above.

We propose "in all you do" simply because it naturally expresses the ascent in thought from activity purely in the mind (verse 5) to overt behavior (verse 6), and because after "give thought to him" it reads smoothly. We can certainly also see maintaining the parallelism "ways/paths" as desirable, in which case the best solution might be a return to the rendering in NIV84. Or it could be rendered: "Give thought to him in all your ways."

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[1] https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Giving_in.
[2] Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9,* The Anchor Bible (NY: Doubleday, 2000), 149.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible Reference:

Matthew 5:24

Original text (including v. 23):

²³ ἐὰν οὖν προσφέρῃς τὸ δῶρόν σου ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον κἀκεῖ μνησθῇς ὅτι ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἔχει τι κατὰ σοῦ, ²⁴ ἄφες ἐκεῖ τὸ δῶρόν σου ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ὕπαγε πρῶτον διαλλάγηθι τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου, καὶ τότε ἐλθὼν πρόσφερε τὸ δῶρόν σου.

NIV rendering:

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to <u>them</u>; then come and offer your gift.

Suggestion:

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to <u>your brother or sister</u>; then come and offer your gift.

Rationale:

We recommend not substituting the pronoun "them" for the noun "brother [or sister]" in this verse. First, Christ did not revert to a pronoun in this statement about interaction between fellow believers. He wishes to remind us about the closeness Christians have with each other. Second, the plural-sounding pronoun "them" could suggest a reconciliation with more than one person. In this context, however, Christ is speaking about a one-on-one interaction.

__Bible Reference:__

Matthew 18:15-17

__Original text:__

¹⁵ Ἐὰν δὲ ἁμαρτήσῃ [εἰς σὲ] ὁ ἀδελφός σου, ὕπαγε ἔλεγξον αὐτὸν μεταξὺ σοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ μόνου. ἐάν σου ἀκούσῃ, ἐκέρδησας τὸν ἀδελφόν σου· ¹⁶ ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀκούσῃ, παράλαβε μετὰ σοῦ ἔτι ἕνα ἢ δύο, ἵνα **ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων ἢ τριῶν σταθῇ πᾶν ῥῆμα·** ¹⁷ ἐὰν δὲ παρακούσῃ αὐτῶν, εἰπὲ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· ἐὰν δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρακούσῃ, ἔστω σοι ὥσπερ ὁ ἐθνικὸς καὶ ὁ τελώνης.

__NIV rendering:__

¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out <u>their</u> fault, just between the two of you. If <u>they listen</u> to you, you have won <u>them</u> over. ¹⁶ But if <u>they</u> will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If <u>they</u> still <u>refuse</u> to listen, tell it to the church; and if <u>they refuse</u> to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

__Suggestion:__

¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out <u>the</u> fault, just between the two of you. If <u>the person listens</u> to you, you have won <u>your brother or sister</u> over. ¹⁶ But if <u>the person</u> will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If <u>the person</u> still <u>refuses</u> to listen, tell it to the church; and if <u>the person refuses</u> to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

__Rationale:__

Christ did not use a pronoun at the end of verse 15, but he used the expression that shows the closeness Christians have with each other (τὸν ἀδελφόν σου). In this paragraph dealing with personal admonition, we think that it would be good for readers to see this family language reflected in the text today ("your brother or sister").

This passage also has been criticized by pastors in our church body for the way that the pronouns "they" and "them" occur. We understand that the pronouns "they" and "them" can be used in a singular sense, and that the NIV11 has gone in that direction. However, the pronouns "they" and "them" still convey a plural nuance for most readers most of the time. Consequently, the repetition of these pronouns in this section could be confusing, since the section is talking about admonition directed to an individual Christian. Our discomfort is all the more intense, because this passage is a key passage in our catechism for what the Bible teaches about church discipline for an individual believer.

We know that the NIV11 occasionally still allows for the use of the "generic he." It could be argued that this is a section where "brother" and the "generic he" would still be the best solution.

However, if the NIV is intent on retaining gender neutral language in this passage, it seems to us that it could be done with wording that is less awkward and subject to confusion. Our suggestion is one attempt

at such a rewording, making use of "the person" to refer to one individual without indicating gender. We notice that the NIV11 in several other places uses "the person" as a gender neutral substitute for "man" in NIV84 (see 1 Cor 2:14-15; Gal 3:12). So, its insertion here would not be a novelty in NIV11.

Other gender inclusive translations that have a rendering similar to what we are proposing are the following:

NLT – [15] "If *another believer* sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If *the other person* listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. [16] But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. [17] If *the person* still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if *he or she* won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

NRSV – [15] "If *another member of the church* sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If *the member* listens to you, you have regained that one. [16] But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. [17] If *the member* refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if *the offender* refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible Reference:

John 1:11

Original text:

εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον

NIV rendering:

He came to that which was his own, <u>but his own</u> did not receive him.

Suggestion:

He came to that which was his own, <u>but his own people</u> did not receive him.

Rationale:

In the Greek, there is a difference between τὰ ἴδια and οἱ ἴδιοι. Many translations (but not all) do distinguish between the neuter and the masculine, saying something like, "He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him" (NRSV). We think that NIrV did a nice job with this: "But his own people did not receive him." We suggest that the same rendering be included here.

Bible Reference:

Acts 13:38-39

Original text:

[38] γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε <u>ἐν</u> νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιωθῆναι [39] ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται.

NIV rendering:

[38] Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. [39] Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain <u>under</u> the law of Moses.

Suggestion:

[38] Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. [39] Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain <u>through</u> the law of Moses.

Rationale:

NIV's "under the law of Moses" is ambiguous. Those readers who take it as indicating means ("under" being understood as equivalent to "under the terms of") will get the right idea. Unfortunately, others might take the phrase in the NIV as indicating a time or situation (compare "England prospered under Queen Victoria"). With such a reading the passage would say that people could not obtain justification when they were "under the law of Moses"—i.e., when and where the law of Moses was still in force, people could not obtain justification.

Luke uses the same preposition to contrast what happens ἐν τούτῳ (τούτῳ = Christ) and what happens <u>ἐν</u> νόμῳ Μωϋσέως. Why not do the same in English? "Through him…through the law of Moses" conveys the intended thought without ambiguity and preserves the parallel language that helps the reader see the contrast.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible Reference:

Acts 13:48

Original text:

ἀκούοντα δὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἔχαιρον καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

NIV rendering:

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who <u>were</u> appointed for eternal life believed.

Suggestion:

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who <u>had been</u> appointed for eternal life believed.

Rationale:

NIV's "were appointed" is not as precise as we might desire in a doctrinally significant passage. Granted, English does not always use the past perfect tense in every situation which can be expressed with that tense; often we use a simple past tense and let context make the time relationships clear. But there is something to be said for the precision afforded by the past perfect in this passage, especially since Christian readers sometimes struggle with the Bible's teaching that before the creation of the world, God chose/predestined those whom he would bring to eternal life through faith in Christ (Eph 1:4; Ro 8:30).

In his commentary on Acts in the ICC series, C. K. Barrett recognizes the ingressive force of the aorist verb in this verse and comments on the periphrastic verb that precedes it: "ἐπίστευσαν, they became believers….Some had been appointed (periphrastic pluperfect) thus to believe and thereby to receive eternal life….The present verse is as unqualified a statement of absolute predestination…as is found anywhere in the NT" (vol. 1, 658). While we would not endorse Barrett's subsequent comments turning Luke's statement into a basis for teaching also a predestination to damnation, we think that Luke's assertion of predestination to salvation should be communicated in English as clearly as it is communicated in the Greek. The NRSV is good: "and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers." The NKJV also gets the periphrastic verb right: "And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."

NIV's imprecise "were appointed," coupled with a rendering of ἐπίστευσαν that does not make the ingressive usage explicit, could open the door to a misunderstanding such as this: *Luke here is talking about those Gentiles who made their decision for Christ and **at that point** were appointed to eternal life and then believed all the rest of their lives.*

<u>Bible Reference:</u>

Acts 15:1

<u>Original text:</u>

Καί τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐδίδασκον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι Ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι.

<u>NIV rendering:</u>

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the <u>believers</u>: "Unless you are <u>circumcised, according</u> to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."

<u>Suggestion:</u>

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the <u>brothers</u>: "Unless you are <u>circumcised according</u> to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."

<u>Rationale:</u>

1) It is hard to see why NIV renders τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς with "the believers" rather than "the brothers." The congregation in Antioch included female believers, and it doesn't make sense to tell a mixed group of males and females, "Unless <u>you</u> are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved" unless the law of Moses calls for female circumcision.

There should be no fear that "the brothers" would create confusion. The use of familial terminology among Christians who are not biologically related is well established. We note that NIV uses "Brothers" in a non-biological sense a little later in this same chapter when males are addressed (Ac 15:7, 13).

2) The comma following "circumcised" could create uncertainty. Does "according to the custom taught by Moses" connect with the preceding words so as to indicate that circumcision is to be done in accordance with the law of Moses? Or do the words look ahead to the main clause and indicate that "the custom taught by Moses" is the authority according to which certain people were asserting "you cannot be saved"? We understand the former to be the correct interpretation, so we recommend removing the comma to make the sentence more clear.

Bible Reference:

Acts 15:10

Original text:

νῦν οὖν τί πειράζετε τὸν θεόν, ἐπιθεῖναι ζυγὸν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τῶν μαθητῶν ὃν οὔτε οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν οὔτε ἡμεῖς ἰσχύσαμεν βαστάσαι;

NIV rendering:

Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?

Suggestion:

Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?

Rationale:

On a *practical* level, the controversy in Acts 15 focused on Gentile believers. The Jewish believers continued to circumcise their boy babies and follow the law of Moses, and no one was arguing that the Jewish believers should abandon that practice. But the instigators of the controversy were insisting that the Gentile believers should be required to follow the Jewish way of life. Peter rejected that proposed change in practice.

But Peter did not differ from the instigators only on a practical level. There was a difference also between the theological rationale the instigators presented for the change in practice they were demanding and the theological rationale with which Peter defended his position. The instigators considered the circumcision of males and the keeping of the law by males and females necessary for salvation regardless of a person's ethnic background. Peter's theological rationale for his position likewise treated Jews and Gentiles alike but made the point that for both groups, cleansing comes by faith (verse 9), and therefore both groups are saved by grace, not by law-keeping (verse 11). God is treating both groups the same way.

Peter thus implies that the law of Moses is not required now by God for either group (cf. Acts 10:28), and so from his point of view the theology of the instigators would impose the yoke of the law on the disciples in general, Jews as well as Gentiles. If he had wanted to say, "God still requires us Jewish believers to keep the law, but it would be testing God to impose that yoke on *Gentiles*," he could have said so. The tenor of his argument is that God now treats both groups alike, and so Peter speaks out against putting the yoke of the law on *the disciples,* Jews and Gentiles alike.

Luke knew and admired Paul. No doubt he knew about the rule Paul taught in all his churches (1 Cor 7:17): Christians were to remain in the ethnic and social identity they had when they were called to salvation. Jews were to live their lives as Jews and Gentiles were to live their lives as Gentiles, all of them with the understanding that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision was anything important—both states are spoken of in contrast to the commands of God (1 Cor 7:19). Paul could hardly make it clearer that

circumcision was no longer commanded by God for Jewish Christians. They were free to live as Jews, eat kosher, rest on the Sabbath, circumcise their sons, etc.; that old way of life was dear to them and advantageous for outreach to non-Christian Jews, and when Christian Jews stayed in that way of life it was a useful way of demonstrating that the gospel saves us in whatever condition we are in when it brings us to faith—no change on our part is needed to make the gospel effective. Jews don't need to become Gentiles in order to be saved any more than Gentiles need to become Jews in order to be saved. Luke must have observed this in Paul's dealings with his churches.

Nevertheless, some, like Jacob Jervell, ascribe to Luke a theology at variance with Paul's. In Jervell's view, Luke held that the law of Moses was still in force for Jewish Christians. Not surprisingly, Jervell struggles with Acts 15:10 in his commentary—he is careless with the actual wording and the connection of the thoughts within verse 10, and instead imposes a meaning that fits his reconstruction of Luke's theology. But at least in his formal *translation* of the text he translates ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τῶν μαθητῶν literally, "auf den Nacken der Juenger"—Juenger ("disciples"), not Heiden ("Gentiles"). We deeply regret that the NIV here foregoes the literal translation that is consistent with Peter's theology and substitutes a free rendering that seems to support Jervell's view instead.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible Reference:

Acts 15:14

Original text:

Συμεὼν ἐξηγήσατο καθὼς πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.

NIV rendering:

Simon has described to us how God first intervened to <u>choose</u> a people for his name from the Gentiles.

Suggestion:

Simon has described to us how God first intervened to <u>take</u> a people for his name from the Gentiles.

Rationale:

A large majority of the English translations accessible at Bible Gateway translate λαβεῖν in this verse with a form of *take*. A few have a form of *choose*. (A few have still other translations, e.g., forms of *accept* or *acquire*). While many readers will not bat an eye over the NIV's translation of this verse, for some it may raise questions: "Didn't God choose people before the world began? Why were these Gentiles in Acts 15:14 chosen later on? If there is a distinction such that God chose some people from eternity and others in time, is there any difference in the way he treats the two groups, and if so, where do I fit in?" All those questions could be avoided with the more common translation, "take."

It is noteworthy that this is the only place where NIV uses "choose" to represent a form of λαμβάνω. Hebrews 5:1 (BDAG's only NT passage under "choose") is "selected" in NIV. If NIV is going to use "choose" only once out of 258 occurrences in the whole NT for λαμβάνω, this seems like an odd place to do it.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible Reference:

Titus 2:3

Original text:

πρεσβύτιδας ὡσαύτως ἐν καταστήματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς, μὴ διαβόλους μὴ οἴνῳ πολλῷ δεδουλωμένας, καλοδιδασκάλους,

NIV rendering:

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or <u>addicted</u> to much wine, but to teach what is good.

Suggestion:

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers, <u>not to be slaves</u> to much wine, but to teach what is good.

Rationale:

Nowadays the word "addicted" is typically used for a physical, emotional, or chemical dependency of some sort. Yet is that really the sinful behavior that the writer to Titus has in mind here? What about the first century woman who was aware she had a tendency to abuse alcohol yet no longer did so? Was she unworthy of respect as a teacher of younger women even when she controlled her addiction in a God-pleasing manner?

To avoid confusion over this matter yet also to retain the vivid "enslavement" metaphor of the original, we prefer the same rendering of δεδουλωμένας here as has been employed for the participial forms of δουλόω at 2 Peter 2:19 and Romans 6:22.

The repetition of "not to be" would bring out the repetition of μὴ in the original.

Translation Suggestion for the NIV
From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2018

Bible References:

1 Peter 4:7; 5:8

Original text:

1 Pet 4:7 – Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν. σωφρονήσατε οὖν καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχὰς

1 Pet 5:8 – νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε. ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν τινα καταπιεῖν·

NIV rendering:

1 Pet 4:7 – The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and <u>of sober mind</u> so that you may pray.

1 Pet 5:8 – Be <u>alert and of sober mind</u>. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Suggestion:

1 Pet 4:7 – The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and <u>sober-minded</u> so that you may pray.

1 Pet 5:8 – Be <u>sober-minded and alert</u>. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Rationale:

The Greek verb νήφω appears six times in the New Testament. NIV translates three times with "sober," twice with "of sober mind," and once with "keep your head." The preposition in the expression "of sober mind" sounds somewhat antiquated to us. Our suggestion sounds more like contemporary English and still retains the word "sober."

For some reason, the NIV in 1 Peter 5:8 switches around the opening imperatives when translating from the Greek original. So we suggest a switch to the same word order in Greek. At the very least, this can aid readers in making connections with words in the original.

Bible Reference:

1 John 2:16

Original text:

ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν.

NIV rendering:

For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

Suggestion:

For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride in one's possessions—comes not from the Father but from the world.

Rationale:

It is no secret βίος can mean "life" (Luke 8:14; 1 Timothy 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:4). The more common sense of βίος seen in Scripture, however, is that of "what one lives on," that is, one's "property"—or, as BDAG puts it, one's "means of subsistence." See Luke 8:43fn; 15:12, 30; 21:4; and Mark 12:44.

We suggest the latter interpretation of βίος for 1 John 2:16 because (a) it reflects how this noun is frequently understood in Scripture; (b) it fits the context of this chapter, as John warns against love for the world and the things that are ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ; and (c) it anticipates how the apostle will use βίος midway through the next chapter of this epistle, when he calls for love in action:

> 1 John 3:17 -- If anyone has material possessions (τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου) and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

At its entry under ἀλαζονεία, BDAG's proposal for ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου in 1 John 2:16 is "pride in one's possessions." We are suggesting that for the NIV's rendering as well.

__Bible Reference:__

1 John 5:1

__Original text:__

Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

__NIV rendering:__

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the <u>father</u> loves his child as well.

__Suggestion:__

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the <u>Father</u> loves his child as well.

__Rationale:__

Might the NIV have altered the most apparent sense of John's wordplay here?

A clumsy but more formal rendering of 1 John 5:1 could go like this: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten from God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται), and everyone who loves the <u>Begetter</u> (καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα) loves also the one who has been begotten from Him (ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ)."

To put that another way, the Begetter first identified as God the Father with the phrase ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ is also the Begetter identified by the active participle, τὸν γεννήσαντα, and by the passive participle, τὸν γεγεννημένον.

To understand these forms of γεννάω in the way NIV has taken them in the latter part of this verse strikes us as out of character for the writings of the apostle John. After all, the remarkable concept of spiritual rebirth is a key feature of the Gospel according to St. John. Compare John 1:12-13 and 3:3-8. The same is true also here in 1 John, where the divine Begetter is explicitly identified as God the Father in each of the eight other occasions when a form of γεννάω occurs. Compare 2:29; 3:9 (twice); 4:7; 5:1a; 5:4; and 5:18 (twice).

Notice too that it is not only the instances of the verb γεννάω that lead us to this interpretation. The last two words of this verse, ἐξ αὐτοῦ, do so as well. Each time a form of γεννάω in 1 John is modified by a phrase with the preposition ἐκ or ἐξ, the object of the preposition ἐκ or ἐξ is God—as in, God the Father.

We see no reason why the form of γεννάω as it is used a second and third time in 1 John 5:1 would not also refer directly or indirectly to the heavenly Father.

Other interpreters who appear to see this latter half of the verse in a similar fashion include:

Robert Yarbrough, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1-3 John*, p. 270 –
"Everyone who loves the one who grants spiritual rebirth loves also the person to whom he grants it."

ESV – "and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him."

CSB – "and everyone who loves the Father also loves the one born of him."

NASB – "and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him."

NIrV – "And whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him."