

New International Version 2011

REMEMBER:

Formal Equivalence: a word for word style of translation whereby the translators seek to remain as close to the original in thought and structure to the original.

Functional Equivalence: also known as 'dynamic equivalence,' a thought for thought style of translation whereby the translators seek to capture the thought of the original in the most meaningful way in the translated language.

Compare with the NIV 1984 translation:

*4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?
5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.
6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet.*

New International Version Overview

The NIV is well known to the WELS since it has been generally used since the 1980's. The New International Version (NIV) are trademarks owned by Biblica, Inc. Zondervan Publishing is the largest printer of the NIV Bible.

The NIV translation was begun in 1965 with the New Testament finished in 1973 and the entire Bible in 1978. This work was revised in 1984 to the edition we have been familiar with since then in the WELS.

An additional version known as Today's New International Version (TNIV) was released in 2005. An emphasis on gender-inclusive language characterized this edition.

The NIV 2011 is a major revision with roots in the 1984 version and also the TNIV of 2005.

The NIV uses a "Functional Equivalence" approach seeking to capture the thought of the original text to contemporary English usage.

Some Unique Features

- The greatest change in the 2011 update of the NIV has been a greater use of gender-inclusive language.
- The translators have moved away from some terms that non-churched people may be unfamiliar with. The best example of this is that the word "saint" does not occur a single time in the NIV.

Passages to Consider: Messianic Issues

#1 Psalm 8

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

Concern: Does this psalm refer to Christ or to someone else? In the Hebrew each of the words above are masculine, singulars. The NIV-2011 obscures the Christology of this text.

Passages to Consider: Gender Issues

#2 1 Timothy 2:12

"I do not permit a woman to teach or to **assume** authority over a man; she must be quiet."

Concern: No other modern translation has chosen to translate this verse in this way. Given the debate over roles of men and women in church governance does this translation bring more or less clarity to the issue? The NIV-84 simply translates this as "have authority" which is how all other major recent translations choose to render this verse. The NIV-2011 translators comment on their translation of this passage: "*Assume authority*" is a particularly nice English rendering because it leaves the question open, as it must be unless we discover new, more conclusive evidence. The exercise of authority that Paul was forbidding was one that women inappropriately assumed, but whether that referred to all forms of authority over men in church or only certain forms in certain contexts is up to the individual interpreter to decide. <http://www.niv-cbt.org/niv-2011-overview/translators-notes/>

#3 Acts 6:3

"**Brothers and sisters**, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them."

Concern: This is a place where the NIV translators have specifically added the word 'sisters' which is not in the original Greek. This is a change from the NIV-84 which simply reads "brothers." The problem here is that this is a technical passage making a theological claim speaking to the exercise of church authority. To include "and sisters" here is claims that men and women chose Stephen and the others when it is neither warranted from the text and contradicts the clear teachings of the New Testament.

#4 1 Corinthians 14:34, 39

34 Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says...
39 Therefore, my **brothers and sisters**, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

Concern: This is another place where the NIV translators have added the word "sisters" which is not in the original. In light of verse 34 however which calls for women to remain silent in the churches why should they be eager to prophesy?

Please see Professor Paul Wendland's essay for further discussion of this verse:

"Translation of αυθεντειν in 1 Timothy 2:12"

[http://www.wels.net/sites/wels/files/Evaluating%20he%20NIV11.pdf](http://www.wels.net/sites/wels/files/Evaluating%20the%20NIV11.pdf)

Additional passages with such gender issues are Acts 1:16,21,23, 26.

For additional discussion regarding gender-neutral language and the NIV please see Pastor Robert Koester's paper:

A Brief Survey of the NIV 2011 and the Use of Gender-Neutral Language

[http://www.wels.net/sites/wels/files/NIV%202011%20-%20Gender%20Neutral%20Language_Bivens.p](http://www.wels.net/sites/wels/files/NIV%202011%20-%20Gender%20Neutral%20Language_Bivens.pdf)
[df](http://www.wels.net/sites/wels/files/NIV%202011%20-%20Gender%20Neutral%20Language_Bivens.pdf)

Passages to Consider: Old & New Test.

#5 Habakkuk 2:4

"See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous person will live by his **faithfulness**-- "

Concern: Why did the translators change "faith" to "faithfulness"? Does this clarify the text or does it make faithfulness a possible ongoing work of the believer?

NIV--1984

"See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous will live by his **faith**--

Additionally what makes this such an uneven translation is that when it is quoted by Paul in Romans 1:17 the word "faith" is used: For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed-- a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by **faith**."

Passages to Consider: Troubling Footnotes

#6 Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The **virgin** will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Concern: Here the translation of "virgin" is absolutely fine; the trouble comes with the added footnote, "young woman" becomes an acceptable alternate for "virgin." This footnote is new to NIV-2011. For whose benefit did the translators add this footnote?

#7 Psalm 45:6

Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Concern: These verses are used in Hebrews 1:8-9 referring them to Jesus the Christ, yet the NIV footnote in Psalm 45:6 states, "Here the king is addressed as God's representative." The footnote is not helpful and contradicts the usage of these verses in Hebrews 1. Again, for whose benefit?

The translation of Isaiah 7:14 has been a controversial and divisive issue for modern translations. This issue came to prominence in the 1950's with the release of the RSV Revised Standard Version which translated the Hebrew 'almah' as 'young woman' rather than 'virgin.'

For an excellent discussion on these textual issues please read Professor David Kuske's paper **Textual Criticism Brief: Mark 16:9-20** found on the seminary website

<http://www.wlsessays.net/files/KuskeMark.pdf>

The NIV-2011 has not been well received by all Evangelical and Lutheran communities. Those who have spoken against the NIV-2011 are the following:

Southern Baptist Convention

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW)

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) who specifically recommended their members NOT to use the NIV-2011.

The LCMS as detailed in the CTCR Report:

CTCR Staff Opinion on Inclusive Language in the New International Version (2011)

Passages to Consider: Textual Issues

#8 Mark 16:9-20

#9 John 7:53-8:12

Concern: The NIV-2011 maintains the NIV-1984 notation, but it now italicizes these texts possibly casting more doubt in the minds of the readers whether these texts are Scripture or not.

Passages to Consider: Nomenclature

Concern: The NIV-2011 has removed the word "saint" entirely from the translation. Why? Perhaps because it is a technical "church" word that fewer non-churched people understand today.

Perhaps less understandable is the deliberate replacement of the Greek "Christ" with the Hebrew "Messiah".

Word	NIV-1984	NIV-2011
saints	69 OT&NT	0
Messiah	2 NT	68 NT
Christ	530 NT	469 NT

Key Questions Going Forward

1. The NIV-2011 has not been universally well received. Most troubling are the recommendations of the ELS with whom we have full fellowship and who have specifically recommended against using the NIV-2011. If the WELS adopts the NIV and it becomes the basis for NPH publications will this stop the ELS from using WELS resources? Furthermore how will the use of the NIV become a practical barrier with the ELS and the WELS?
2. Are the general changes and trends in the NIV-2011 (gender inclusive language, questionable footnotes moving away from Christ, and removal of "churchly" language) ones we welcome? If not then what of future updates to the NIV? If the WELS selects the NIV2011 as our translation of choice this means that will have committed to the NIV for some time to come. Knowing our penchant for establishing traditions how easy will it be for us in the future to move away from the NIV?
3. Much has been made of the "readability" of the NIV. Is this really true? The Report of the 102 would say yes, but has the LCMS encountered problems with the supposedly less readable ESV? If so I haven't heard them. Does readability trump some/all of our concerns?