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How Altered Bible Terminology Endangers our Churches



J. Paul Reno

**ALTERED BIBLE
TERMINOLOGY ENDANGERS
OUR CHURCHES**

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Altered Bible Terminology Endangers Our Churches ...

Acts 2:41-47 *“Then they that gladly received His Word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (KJV)*

This march of triumph continued through trial and persecution until **Acts 9:31a**, *“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria ...”* Beginning with the church at Jerusalem they radiated, starting new churches throughout all of what is now modern Israel. What were these churches? How were they to function? What truths were dear and essential to

their existence? What dangers would they face? More importantly, how can we have such churches today?

The Bible has detailed answers to all of these questions and more. As a Pastor, I must know these answers and steadfastly resist every attempt to change the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

With the proliferation of new versioned Bibles in the English language, what effect will the word changes have upon our churches? How will this generation view the Church, according to the Bibles they use? What changes are likely to occur in a church where these new versions become the accepted norm? What influences will radio and television preachers, in their use of other versions, have on the members in our pews? What church truths may be weakened or lost? These are questions worth asking and answers which must be confronted.

Since the NIV is the most commonly used new version we have used it as an example in this study, and then occasionally have used others for comparison.

In **Acts 2:47** we have the first use of the word “church” in Acts. In the NIV, the word “church” is replaced by “their number”. Good News for Modern Man (TEV) has used “their group”. This commonly used passage for church membership requirements is thus rendered useless. New converts are added to the saved but not necessarily to the church. This is not a healthy change.

In **Acts 9:31a** we have the first use of the word “churches” in Acts. In the NIV and TEV, it is in the singular, “church”. This would contradict the idea of local churches scattered throughout an area the size of New Jersey. One could tramp from group to group and still be in “the Church” while being accountable and faithful to no particular assembly. This is an attack on the nature of the Church.

Two other passages in Acts show the hand of interpretation rather than translation: **Acts 7:38** “church in the wilderness” becomes “the assembly” and **Acts 19:37** “robbers of churches” becomes “temples”.

Precious doctrines are compromised. The de-emphasis on the blood of Jesus, removal of **I John 5:7** telling of the Trinity, and the destruction of proof texts on the deity of Jesus are well

documented. These attacks strike at the soul of the Church.

In 1997 at Kingston, TN, we looked at the destructive affect the NIV has had on evangelism: Of the **104** times the word "Gospel" is used in our New Testament, the NIV made changes in the text by additions, deletions, adjustments and alterations at least **77** times. There are **85** texts in **I John** supporting the **12** marks of eternal life. In the NIV, the changes show:

0	-	clearer or stronger
14	-	similar
46	-	weaker
25	-	terrible changes

Thus, the NIV renders these tests or evidences invalid as a way of comforting the saints and convicting the lost. Instead of helping our evangelism it has devastated it.

At our 1999 meeting at Heritage Baptist University we looked at the doctrine of the Scriptures in the book of Acts.

Of the **93** passages, only **38** were the same or similar to the KJV and **55** were changed. The

inspiration, preservation, sufficiency and power of the Scriptures were all dreadfully treated.

Thus the foundation and message of the Church are compromised by the new terminology. In the future, we shall press further to see what changes for the Church come from these versions.

Authority/Rule of Leaders ...

What authority is bestowed upon God-given leaders? Seven times in the epistles we are told of their "rule". Each time the NIV and TEV remove the word "rule".

I Tim. 3:4 "... *ruleth well his own house*" KJV
"... *manage his family well.*" NIV

I Tim. 3:5 "*rule*" KJV; "*manage*" NIV

I Tim. 3:12 "*ruling*" KJV; "*managing*" NIV

I Tim. 5:17 "... *elders that rule well...*" KJV
"... *elders who direct the affairs
of the church well...*" NIV
"... *do good work as leaders...*" GNB

- Heb. 13:7** *“Remember them which have the rule....”* KJV
“Remember your leaders....” NIV
- Heb. 13:17** *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves....”* KJV
“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority....” NIV
- Heb. 3:24** *“Salute all them that have the rule over you....”* KJV
“Greet all your leaders....” NIV

There is a distinct down-playing of the authority and rule of God’s ministers. Instead, they are only to manage, direct and lead. This greatly alters the structure of the Church and the ability to deal with self-willed members. Many of the attacks on a pastor for exercising rule and authority evidence the practice of the new terminology in the new versions. This is an attack on the organization of the Church.

Church Discipline ...

Of 10 passages dealing with discipline in the New Testament many changes stand out:

	DAMAGED	WEAKENED
NIV	7	2
TEV	7	1
NKJV	3	1

Only the passage in **I Tim. 5:19, 20** is left without clear alterations. (This has to do with disciplining elders.) All of the others are changed, sufficiently so as to make discipline more difficult, confusing or debatable. Some examples are:

Rom. 16:17, 18 Those who cause division are not to be marked but merely avoided.

I Cor. 5:5 The discipline that was for "*the destruction of the flesh*" (KJV) is now changed so that the "*sinful nature may be destroyed*". (NIV)

Do they really believe that discipline will bring total sanctification?

I Cor. 11:16 Leaves the door open for contention to be tolerated in the church.

I Thess. 5:14a The warning of the unruly disappeared and was replaced by warning the idle.

II Thess. 3:6, 7 Twice the disorderly are not mentioned but instead the idle are to be dealt with.

Titus 3:10, 11 Instead of dealing with the heretic we are to warn and avoid the divisive.

What has the new terminology done to church discipline? We cannot mark the divisive; deal with the contentious, unruly or disorderly; nor reject the heretic! The pastor cannot rule over the rebellious, but must somehow manage affairs without authority, leading those who might want to follow.

This will handicap any church in dealing with problems and marching forward in victory. Times of anarchy are more likely to occur. Unfortunately, we are seeing this already and experience the overflow from such in our homes also.

Baptism ...

Believers' baptism is affected, not so much by new terms as by the removal of Scripture. The great text for restricting baptism to believers is **Acts 8:37**. It is Philip's answer to the Ethiopian eunuch's question, "*See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*" (**Acts 8:36b**). The great response was, "*If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*" (**Acts 8:37**).

This great qualification and response is missing in the NIV and TEV. Gone is the necessity of a full-hearted faith. Gone is the need for a verbal testimony of belief in Jesus as God. Remaining is baptism on request without requirements. The issue of being saved before baptism is removed.

The door is open to salvation by baptism or afterward. This is a radical departure from Church practice. The new versions are paving the way for new church policy for a new style of church.

Communion ...

This ordinance of the Church is also under attack by the revisers. Those most familiar words from **I Cor. 11:24**, "*Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you.*" are changed to "*This is my body, which is for you*". Notice the absence of "*take*", "*eat*", "*broken*". The verbal commands requiring action are gone. The precious reminder, "*broken*", told us of Christ's great sufferings for us. This disappears also.

Later in the chapter there are warnings telling of the need for self-examination before eating and the danger of being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. These are weakened, modified and toned down.

In yet another passage, **I Cor. 10:16**, we detect more damage done: "*The cup of blessing which we*

bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (KJV)

Notice the changes to this familiar text. *"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" (NIV)*

Consider another: *"The cup of blessing for which we give thanks to God; do we not share in the blood of Christ when we drink from this cup? And the bread we break: do we not share in the body of Christ when we eat this bread?" (TEV).*

If this sounds like Roman Catholic transubstantiation, and it is, then consider what the "New American Catholic Edition of the Bible" (1961) translated these phrases as: *"Sharing of the blood of Christ? ... Partaking of the body of the Lord?"* One could become very suspicious of the source of wording for the versions produced by the International Bible Society and the American Bible

Society. Ecumenicism and returning to Rome is eased by the wording of these Bibles.

The popish mass will no longer seem strange. The possibility of joint evangelistic efforts becomes easier. Many Christian saints of the past were martyred rather than compromise on this very issue. Was Christ sufficient or does He need our sharing participation in His sacrifice? Did He die once for all or is there an ongoing sacrifice? This is vital. Either Jesus paid it all or we need to share in the payment. I say, "No! A THOUSAND TIMES NO! Jesus paid it all. The great transaction is done. It is finished. Hallelujah! Can we agree that the new versions promote this ancient heresy?"

The scriptural basis for calling this ordinance "Communion" is this verse. The very naming of the service disappears in these word changes.

Confession of Sin ...

Our Authorized Version of the Bible draws a line of distinction between confessing our sins to God (**I John 1:9**), and confessing "*faults one to*

another” (**James 5:16a**). The wording in the new versions (NIV, NKJV, TEV, RSV, NEB, NBB, NASV, ASV, NRSV, etc.) blurs this distinction. It would have you confess your “*sins*” (“*trespasses*” in NKJV) to mortal man. This opens the door to Roman Catholic auricular confession with all of its popish heresies.

Conclusion...

The word changes in the new versions redefine the Church. They present an institution quite different from that described in our beloved King James Version and Greek Received Text. Our forefathers would not have recognized this Church as Biblical and neither should we. By changing their Bibles a word at a time they have brought that living organism which Christ builds under attack. They attack the local indigenous church and believers being added to her. The nature, soul, message and foundation are attacked. Her authority, rule and discipline are attacked. Her ordinances are attacked. They support a general universal (catholic) Church whose message is softened while ordinances become sacraments. Separation is out

and ecumenicism in. Heresy is tolerated but exposure of heresy is rejected. The wording of these new versions and exposure to them will have a leavening effect among our church members and must be warned against.

These are dangerous days and apostasy must be fought. Let us strive for victory personally, for our families, for our home churches and for churches throughout the world. This is a battle worth fighting and one we **MUST** win!



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