

The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version speaks directly to today's social concerns, especially the move toward universal inclusivity. The project was undertaken by our team of biblical scholars, theologians and educators, who carefully studied the Bible's original language texts and also compared their work with many modern Bible versions.

Issues of race, gender, and ethnicity figure prominently in the news today and are forcing serious debate over the equality of many of our accepted social standards, from national policies to our daily interactions with one another. These topics are profoundly reflected in the religious community in highly charged issues such as the ordination of women and the problem of anti-Semitism. Naturally, the Bible has been a prime source of debate concerning these and other inclusivity questions. Bible translators have recognized the limits of the language used in many older versions and in recent years have produced new versions that begin to use language that emphasizes a universal community rather than a particular gender or group.

The New Testament and Psalms moves far beyond these first attempts in its level of inclusiveness. While previous versions focused on limited gender issues such as the elimination of some unnecessary male pronouns, The New Testament and Psalms delves deeper into the Bible text to revise language on a broader level that addresses a wider range of agendas.

References to Judaism in the New Testament have often been translated in ways that allow anti-Semitic interpretation. The New Testament and Psalms corrects imprecise allusions that promote such readings by replacing a passage that reads ". . . for you suffered . . . as they did from those who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets." This ambitious work even addresses the volatile issue of how to refer to God in universal terms without removing the important parental concept of caretaker: where God is referred to as "The Father," The New Testament and Psalms uses a new term "Father-Mother" to include both genders, as in "As you Father-Mother, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us..."

Oxford's Bible Editor, Donald Kraus, explained the principles behind this new version: "The first principle is to use the version of current English that is the most expressive of inclusiveness." Kraus noted that this applies to racial and religious inclusiveness and to sensitivity in language about disabled people, as well as to gender issues.

"The second principle," Kraus continued, "is that the same word in the original language can be rendered by different words in English in order to make the inclusive meaning clear." For instance, the Greek word *pater* is translated into "father" in literal contexts: "Abraham was the father of Issac" (Matthew 1.2). But when it is used in a metaphorical sense of God, it can be rendered "Father-Mother."

Oxford's Bible sales director Hargis Thomas believes the work will be a best seller: "There's a huge audience out there for this. These issues are no longer considered academic or extremely radical by many Christians. People recognize the need and are ready to address it — I think this version is arriving at exactly the right time."

The editors of the book are Victor Roland Gold, Professor of Old Testament at Pacific Lutheran Seminary; Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr., a Bishop in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Sharon H. Ringe, Professor of New Testament at Wesley Theological Seminary; Susan Brooks Thistlewaite, Professor of Theology and Culture at Chicago Theological Seminary; Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Bangor Theological Seminary; and Dr. Barbara Withers, a prominent religious educator and editorial consultant.

By: Helen McInnis, Oxford Vice President and Editorial Director for Academic and Trade Books.