

Inclusive Language Usage in Feminist Bible Translation

by

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Abstract

This thesis is based on a textual analysis of three translations of a book in the New Testament, Ephesians, to look for differences in the translators' treatment of gender. The three versions used are the older 1984 New International Version (NIV) and a retranslation of the NIV that uses inclusive language; the *Today's New International Version* (TNIV), and a modern French Version, *Segond 21*. Going through each version side by side and looking word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence has resulted in research that captures most major differences between versions such as word choice and sentence restructuring. However, even the most progressive version of the three, the TNIV, has room for improvement. After careful consideration, it is possible that a new translation could be made in both languages that would be faithful to the message of the original scripture. This potential version would use more inclusive language and feminist translation techniques than any of the three versions studied in this research but it still could serve Christian audiences. This project contributes to translation history and cross-language knowledge of the Bible. It questions why French culture, whether in Québec or France, does not seem to require a more gender inclusive version of the Bible, especially since French is a gendered language.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. What is Bible Translation?	4
2.1 God’s Perfect Word.....	5
2.2 A Historical or Fictional Account.....	10
2.3 A Compromise.....	15
3. Feminist Language and Theories.....	20
3.1 Feminist Literary and Translation Theory.....	21
3.2 Feminist Work on Language.....	23
3.3 Bible Translation.....	26
4. A History of Feminist Bible Translation.....	28
4.1 Julia Smith.....	29
4.2 Elizabeth Cady Stanton.....	30
4.3 Joann Haugerud.....	33
4.4 Mary Phil Korsak.....	36
4.5 Mainstream Bible translation.....	39
5. Corpus.....	42
5.1 The Book of Ephesians.....	42
5.2 New International Version.....	44
5.3 Today’s New International Version.....	46
5.4 Segond 21.....	47
6. Research Analysis.....	49
6.1 Methodology.....	49
6.2 General Findings.....	52
6.3 Saints.....	54

6.4 “Men” and “People”	56
6.5 They/Their/Them and He/His/Him.....	64
6.6 “He” and “You”	65
6.7 Brothers and Sisters.....	67
6.8 Conclusions.....	70
7. Conclusion.....	72
Table of Research.....	76
References.....	83

List of Abbreviations

CBT: Committee on Bible Translation

FLQ: Front de liberation du Québec/Quebec Liberation Front

NIV: New International Version

NT: New Testament

OQFL: Office Québécoise de la langue française/Quebec Board of the French Language

OT: Old Testament

TNIV: Today's New International Version

1. Introduction

I have always been interested in the Bible due to the fact that it is the most translated book in the world. It is also the source of great controversy due to its religious nature. It is possible to find many feminist critiques of the Bible (most of them negative) as well as Christian critiques about feminism but in general there is a lack of literature for those who think it is possible to believe in the equality of men and women while still believing in a Christian God.

This missing voice set me on a path to discover where and how the existing translations of the Bible perpetuate patriarchal institutions within society, and where it is the fault of the translators who have inserted their patriarchal ways into the translation during their interpretation, analysis and re-writing. This question is far too large to be investigated in a Master's Thesis, so I have relied on the religious scholarship and language expertise of others to bring me as close to the truth as possible and refined the scope of my research to one book of the New Testament of the Bible: Ephesians.

The first step was to look for a book that is long enough to provide data but not so long that it could not be analysed over the course of a Masters Degree. With six chapters, Ephesians fit the bill. I decided to examine the book of Ephesians in two English versions, the older 1984 New International Version (NIV) and a retranslation of the NIV that uses inclusive language the *Today's New International Version* (TNIV), as well as a modern French Version, *Segond 21*, I hoped would show parallels to the newer English version. Ephesians is also an epistle, or a letter, written to the Church in Ephesus and so my hope was that it would address

individuals and groups of people. Due to my previous readings of the Bible, I knew that in English versions this kind of language may provide examples where the English language originally addressed groups of people as ‘men,’ and in the new English translation there should be changes made to bring the language up to date. The French version was entirely a mystery to me and my hope was that a modern French translation might also contain verses that have been updated with inclusive language.

I have operated under the perspective of someone who believes the message of the Bible can be one in favour of equality and this is reflected in the nature of the changes I suggest may be possible through a feminist retranslation of the text. Gender-conscious re-translation of the Bible has already occurred as a result of the “male-biased language, male imagery, and metaphors” used in previous translations (von Flotow, *Translation and Gender* 52). This project contributes to translation history and cross-language knowledge of the Bible. It questions why a gendered language like French would not push for a version of the Bible with gender inclusive language. Does it point to different attitudes in regards to religion or gender equivalency? This comparative analysis of contemporary Bibles regards the different ways their translators approach the problem of gender in order to reveal attitudes of the cultures using them.

Most importantly, this thesis examines whether it is possible to create a French or English Bible translation to be used by Christians and to be well received by a religious audience while still using as many inclusive language and feminist translation techniques as possible. Furthermore, this text will examine whether the

three Bible versions being compared have room for more inclusivity or if another entire translation of the Bible is necessary in either language to avoid patriarchal language and methods imposed on current translations.

2. What is Bible Translation?

In order to decide how a text should be translated it is important that the translator first understand what the original text is. Is it a poem? A song? A story? A biography? A letter? A sacred text? This understanding allows the translator to make an informed decision on how their translation will proceed. Equally as important as understanding the nature of the original, is knowledge of the audience targeted by the translated text. What is it the audience wants or needs when they are reading this translation?

These same questions must be taken into consideration before we proceed with my cross-analysis of selected Bible translations. What is the Bible? The original texts that make up this holy book are separated from us by thousands of lifetimes. When dealing with this text, the translator cannot simply reach out to the original author to ask what he or she meant about a specific sentence or cultural practice. There are unique difficulties that we come across when trying to decipher the layers of culture and language involved in these ancient writers' works. Attempting to understand the viewpoints, cultural influences, language structures, myths, legends, songs and poems that influence the authors' writing is a difficult task in its own right. Then, after gaining insight into all of these things, to translate the text into modern language, and into a culture that bears little resemblance to the culture the original text was written in, and attempt to give the target audience an understandable faithful rendition seems nothing short of a miracle. This is perhaps why Christian scholars insist that the original writers of the Biblical texts, as well as the translators charged with the task of bringing them into modern language, were

under divine inspiration. How else, if not for the intervention of the Holy Spirit, could the word of God be written and translated perfectly? Non-Christians have no reason to believe that the Bible was written and translated under divine inspiration; to them the Bible is seen as a historical account (perhaps an exaggerated one at times) or even at its worst as a book of pure fiction. From this stand point there is nothing holding us back from translating the Bible like any other literary text, fiction or non-fiction.

How should the Bible be translated if we view it from these two standpoints? One, that the Bible is God's perfect word, the other that it is just another text? In order to properly analyze the findings of my research it is imperative to take a side, or find something in the middle, a compromise of sorts.

2.1 God's Perfect Word

In some Christian circles, theologians would agree that because of the nature of the Bible and the fact that they believe understanding it has eternal consequences, the translation of the Bible has been scorned and sometimes become grounds for persecution. Those believing that the original texts that make up the Bible were written under divine inspiration have been against its translation for many reasons ranging from maintaining the ability to control the beliefs of others, to an understanding of the difficulty of the task of translating the Bible and wanting to ensure its faithfulness to the original text. The belief that the original texts are God's perfect word to humans on Earth has governed the actions of those who believe and

led to these beliefs that the Bible a) should not be read by common people and b) should not be translated.

There has always been a strong sense in certain Christian churches that the Bible is not for the common people to read and fully understand. This is due to the fact that without being aware of the context and culture in which the original texts were written it is almost impossible to expect to understand the nuances and finer details of the message. Both Catholic and Protestant Churches use Priests and Pastors or Ministers to help their church congregations fully understand the message of the Bible. These people have usually devoted their lives to the understanding of the Bible and to helping others understand it and follow its ways.

In the Middle Ages, most people were incapable of reading the Bible themselves and were vulnerable to heresy. The Church aimed to protect the souls of the common people from spending an eternity in hell, which they believed would happen if someone taught heresy to others around them (Sippo, et al). Some priests became worried that if their congregations read the Bible for themselves they would interpret scripture differently, and this had already led to over 300 Protestant denominations carrying distinct beliefs about the interpretation of scripture, all of them claiming divine inspiration (Sippo, et al). This led to priests discouraging their congregations from reading the Bible themselves in an effort to save them from their own possibly incorrect interpretations. For centuries the Catholic Church maintained this general attitude of condemnation. Although it was never formally forbidden to read the Bible, it was not until the mid-twentieth Century that Pope

Pius XII openly encouraged Catholics to read and study Scripture for themselves (Kutys).

While the Catholic Church has permitted a handful of approved Bible translations and continues to revise its stance on which versions live up to the standards of the Church and may be used in Catholic Mass, many more Protestant versions are available. The Protestant Reformation was based on theological schisms from the Catholic Church. With the invention of the printing press the dissemination of religious texts became possible alongside this movement. Thus it is only natural that a movement in favour of putting the Bible in the hands of the people in a language they could more easily read has produced more Bible translations (approved and unapproved by Protestant Churches) than the Catholic Church.

There are numerous views on if and how the Bible should be translated if we are to regard it as God's perfect word to us on Earth. For many years Eugene Nida was treated as the most respected authority on Bible translation in the world (Bellos 174). Nida uses two basic orientations in his translation techniques that he identifies as "formal equivalence," which is focused on the message itself, and "dynamic equivalence," also called "functional equivalence," which is focused on giving the receptor the same message that existed between the original receptors and the message ("Principles of Correspondence" 144). Although Nida did not translate the Bible himself, he worked as a linguistic consultant to the United Bible Societies helping to control the quality of many Bible translations that arose after the Second World War (Bellos 174). He was in favour of using dynamic equivalence

to translate the Bible so that it could make immediate sense to the target audience and be used by missionaries to bring the message/meaning of the Bible to people who had never heard it before (Bellos 175). His approach has been criticised by those who do not see the value in translating the message in a way that may lose critical details.

This brings up the argument that the Bible should not be translated. If the original texts are seen as the true holy word of God and the language used in these texts cannot be isolated from the social context in which it was written, and because the ancient Middle East is foreign to us, the Hebrew Bible cannot be fully represented in a translation that makes ordinary sense today (Neufeld 3). The Context Group of the Society of Biblical Literature would argue that the Bible was not written for us:

The Bible is not a Western Book. To be sure, it has generated ideas and attitudes that can be found everywhere in Western cultural and religious history. But the plain fact is that it was written by, for, and about people in the ancient Mediterranean world whose culture, worldview, social patterns, and daily expectations differed sharply from those of the modern West. The simple reality is that in spite of our fondest personal hopes, and even our religious aspirations, the Bible was not written for us. (Rohrbaugh, *New Testament Cross-cultural* ix)

This group and groups like it do not go so far as to suggest that the Bible should never be translated but argue instead for retranslation projects to help restore the foreignness of the scriptures. This would lead to a retranslation that is theoretically

only understandable to Biblical scholars and theologians who are well versed in the original cultures and languages in which these Biblical texts were written. Obviously these sorts of translations could not be readily picked up and read by just any common Christian and would need further interpretation by a priest, pastor, or minister before a congregation of ordinary people could understand the message behind the words.

I would argue that regarding the Bible in this way leads to the assumption that any translation of the original text would mar the original intended meaning from God and distort the message. When any translation occurs, interpretation must occur alongside it. The same text could be given to 20 translators, who could come up with 20 perfectly accurate but slightly different translations depending on their understanding of individual words and phrases being used. Even with the very best of intentions, the translated text could no longer be viewed as God's word, but instead as our best interpretation of it. Furthermore, as translators start to develop methodological approaches to deal with the difficulties of translating the ancient text into a modern one we run the risk of creating "a monster":

While much sophisticated work has been done on the development of the theories of translation and practices in anthropology/ethnography, translating ancient Mediterranean texts is fraught with potential pitfalls. Translators and interpreters speak of "boundary crossing" and of creating "a monster," that is, the violence often done to ancient texts when they are made to cross the border from the ancient to the modern world in the translation process. (Rorbaugh, *Social Sciences*

and New Testament 2)

Specifically, when a methodological approach such as feminist criticism is used and the translator is trying to treat the Bible like the perfect word of God, very few instances for improvement arise. It becomes difficult to imagine where the feminist agenda could find room to improve or liberate the text based on the fact that the translator is so bound to the original.

This leads us back to the second position: viewing the Bible as a historical account or fictional book. Where the first standpoint may lead to the conclusion that the Bible should not be translated, or at the very least must be translated by biblical scholars who would place emphasis on the foreignness of the text and original perfect message from God, this second standpoint allows for many more and varied translations to take place.

2.2 A Historical or Fictional Account

If the translator is not as concerned with the religious uses of the text, then the Bible may be translated in a different manner. There is far less pressure involved in this kind of translation as the translator involved is not subject to the expectation that the new text will be used to influence and govern the religious beliefs of others. Bible translations have been created for satirical purposes, for the purpose of critical investigation of the biblical texts and their contexts, and also to draw awareness to the feminist cause. Translating as a form of mockery or humour, as a product of historical analysis, or from a feminist perspective results in a significantly different text for a distinct audience. At one point in time translations like these may

have resulted in severe persecution or even prosecution. In today's day and age, at best they are applauded by their intended audience or at worst are frowned upon by Christian groups, disregarded as trash, or banned.

Many Bible translations have been created for satirical purposes, such as the *Klingon Bible* for Star Trek fans and the *lolcat Bible*, which is a Bible translation based on LoLcats, which are an internet phenomenon consisting of image macros of comical cat photos with superimposed text written across them in a broken form of English known as lolspeak. At the peak of this humoristic trend in 2007, the lolcat Bible Translation Project started. Here is an excerpt of the Gospel of John, chapter one, verses 1-3 from both the *Klingon Bible* and the *lolcat Bible* with the *New International Version* for reference.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
(NIV 2011, John 1:1-3)

Daq the tagh ghaHta' the mu', je the mu' ghaHta' tlhej joH'a', je the mu' ghaHta' joH'a'. The rap ghaHta' Daq the tagh tlhej joH'a'. Hoch Dochmey were chenmoHta' vegh ghaH. Hutlh ghaH ghaHta' ghobe' vay' chenmoHta' vetlh ghajtaH taH chenmoHta'. (Klingon Bible, John 1:1-3)

In teh beginz is teh meow, and teh meow sez "Oh hai Ceiling Cat" and teh meow iz teh Ceiling Cat. Teh meow an teh Ceiling Cat iz teh bests

frenz in teh begins. Him maeks alls teh cookies; no cookies iz maed wifout him. (Lolcats Bible, John 1:1-3)

Translations such as these satirical ones have fun at the expense of the otherwise seriousness of the Bible. Religious satire is certainly nothing new; politics, sex, and religion have often been the subject of satire (Clarke 116). Molière's play *Tartuffe*, Monty Python's movie *The Meaning of Life*, and even the popular TV show character Ned Flanders from *The Simpsons* are all great examples of religious satire. These examples of satirical Bible translation are of particular interest to me since in order to understand the humour, the reader must first have some previous knowledge of the Bible stories to understand the text and as well, have a real understanding of the "language" the text has been translated into. The *lolcat Bible* in particular finds humour in its interpretation of characters such as "God/Ceiling Cat," "Satan/Basement Cat," "Angel/BirdCat," and "the Holy Spirit/HovrCat." The very people whose religion is being poked fun at stand the best chance at understanding the true humour of the satire.

Moving from satirical Bible translation to secular Bible translation, The Society of Biblical Literature, has created a Greek New Testament translation that is "concerned with biblical scholarship" but not doctrine (Society of Biblical Literature). This society is a secular group that has made their Greek version available for free download, offering to help with the advancement of academic study of biblical texts and their contexts (Society of Biblical Literature). Although these secular Bible translations are by no means popular, a second translation exists as a Public Domain project called the *Wiki Bible Project* due to the fact that it is not

yet a complete translation. The “translation guidelines” of this work state that it “should stay faithful to the original source text” and “be as literal as possible while still translating the correct meaning into good English” (Wikisource: WikiProject Wiki Bible). This translation differs from religious translations in several ways. First of all, it is one of very few translations that has not been influenced by one particular denomination and it attempts to avoid sectarian disputes by adding footnotes with variant translations (Wikisource: WikiProject Wiki Bible). This translation also includes all Protestant and Catholic texts normally included in each denomination’s Bible such as the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and New Testament. A translator’s ideology can certainly shape his or her method of translating and seeing as modern Bible translations for mass audiences are rarely undertaken alone, the beliefs and goals of the group in charge of overseeing the translation do matter in the resulting end product.

If the translation is not being used to influence a believer’s religious views there is also no harm in radical feminist translations. Some radical feminist translations have even been written by feminist Christians not only to challenge traditional patriarchal views but to bring to light as well the belief they hold that to view women as lesser is “an insult to God” (Canty). *The Word For Us* by Joann Haugerud is a feminist take on the Gospels of John and Mark and the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. Her translation states that one of its goals is to “examine and reinterpret scripture and theology from the feminist perspective” (Haugerud iv). *The Word For Us* uses inclusive language, avoids the use of masculine language in reference to God, and even adds in reference to female ancestors such as Sarah, the

wife of Abraham, when she deems it necessary. This version is certainly written from a feminist perspective, but it remains faithful to the intended message of the Bible with only a handful of deviations from the original text for the purpose of including the female reader. Jack Canty, another modern-day feminist Bible translator, has produced a radical translation that reverses all gender-roles played in the Bible; women play male roles and men play female roles (Canty). Here is an excerpt from the Gospel of John for comparison with the other versions quoted in this section:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word existed from the beginning with God. All things were made through the Word, and nothing that was made was made without the Word. (Haugerud, John 1:1-3)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through her. Without **her** was not anything made that has been made. (Canty, John 1:1-3 bold is my emphasis)

Translators such as Luise von Flotow, Sherri Simon, Lori Chamberlain and Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood have played a large role in the development of feminist translation theories and methods. Feminist translation strategies include, but are not limited to: translating unknown significant female authors, the documentation of the work of unknown female translators, using footnotes or commentary to make explicit the importance of the feminine, making the

feminine visible in the translation, performing a collaborative translation as a way of negotiating meaning, and finally, providing contextualization of specific feminist related issues. Feminist Bible translation is no different in the sense that feminist translators of the Bible have used some of these techniques in their translations. I examine some of these influential translations in the next section on the history of feminist Bible translation.

While useful in their own right to draw attention to the problem of sexism often encountered in English Bible translations, its obvious that the use of some of these radical feminist translations is limited in regards to whether or not a religious person would choose to consult their version.

2.3 A Compromise

There must be a way to respect the fact that the Bible is being used as a base for the religious beliefs of millions of people around the world, while still creating a translation in the native tongue of those believers that delivers the intended message of the Bible as best as it can. Many Protestant Christians, such as myself, are interested in a translation like this. Many translations exist that aim to bring the word of God to the masses, to be read and interpreted by anyone willing to read them, with the understanding that the goal of the translation is not a perfect understanding of the original time and place where the Bible was written, but instead a rendition of the “truth” more easily understood by a modern audience who has become estranged from the ancient culture.

The Message is a modern version of the Bible that aims to fit that particular need:

Language changes. New words are formed. Old words take on new meaning. There is a need in every generation to keep the language of the gospel message current, fresh, and understandable—the way it was for its very first readers. That is what *The Message* seeks to accomplish for contemporary readers. It is a version for our time—designed to be read by contemporary people in the same way as the original koin Greek and Hebrew manuscripts were savored by people thousands of years ago.

([Biblegateway](#), *The Message* Version Information)

Eugene H. Peterson wrote *The Message* and published it in sections between 1993 and 2002 when the final full-length version of the Bible was finished. Peterson's vision was to make a Bible version that didn't seem distant and irrelevant while still being faithful to the original message from the Greek and Hebrew texts he translated from (Biblegateway, *The Message* Version Information). This translation can be found in most major Christian bookstores and even those who don't condone it certainly know of it. According to Sarah Zylstra with Christianity Today, the most popular Bible translations in America are, in this order: the *King James Version*, *New International Version*, *English Standard Version*, *New Living Testament*, and *The Message* in fifth place (Zylstra). Considering the kinds of mixed reviews this version gets from the general public and religious theologians it amazes me that while *The Message* is number five in popularity, the *Today's New International Version* was so

harshly ridiculed for its inclusive language usage changes that its publisher, Zondervan, eventually discontinued its production. I think this just goes to show how touchy a subject inclusive language usage really is in Bible translations, considering the fact that *The Message* is about as far as you can push dynamic equivalence, sometimes considered to be a paraphrase of the Bible, and it has still been so well received.

Returning momentarily to the works and ideas of Eugene Nida, it is clear that the translations of the Bible with which Nida was involved appreciated the Christian religion and were in favour of bringing the Bible to other cultures for the purpose of converting new believers to Christianity. These translations were also far less concerned with representing the accurate culture of the original works in the Bible, and far more concerned with helping the receiving culture accept and integrate something completely new (the message of the Bible) by using terms that were already familiar to their people (Bellos 182). For instance,

Analogy-based substitutions are frequent in non-European Bible translations. “White as snow” in the Bible text may become “white as a cockatoo’s feathers” in languages spoken in areas where snow has never been seen, or “white as a cotton boll” in some languages of South America... Nida’s job was to help produce texts that were functionally equivalent to the Bible considered not as sacred script, but as the repository of a sacred story. (Bellos 180-181)

Even going so far as to change phrases and words like “redemption” or “God redeemed us” with phrases or expressions that can convey the message of being

saved in a language that otherwise would have no context for the original written message (Nida, *God's Word in Man's Language* 13).

Translations such as *The Message* or like the ones Nida was involved with prove that people can, and do, accept the Bible as a sacred text to be used as a tool of their faith, while understanding that a paraphrase or re-working of the original text into modern language can be valuable. This kind of translation results in a work that is faithful to the original message of the Bible and presents it in an understandable way to its audience. It would then be natural to assume that a new translation could be made that is faithful to the original message but is focused on not alienating women by using language as a tool for equality.

It would be possible to create a modern Bible translation that does not change the meaning of the original biblical texts, but does manage to avoid patriarchal language and methods imposed on current French and English versions that were not intended in the original scripture. Many techniques are available to us in both languages that could result in the creation of a more inclusive text, without taking it as far as a radical feminist translation that may run the risk of losing or changing the meaning of the scripture.

This is where I am sure many feminists, such as Mary Daly would stop me and ask what the purpose of creating a feminist Bible translation is, when the "history of antifeminism in the Judeo-Christian heritage" seems to be so inherent in its ideology (Daly 3). I would argue that our interpretations of the Bible are incredibly personal and I have been fortunate enough to be brought up in a religious circle that values women and their equality, however I understand that this is not

the case for many. Perhaps a feminist translation would give others the opportunity to decide for themselves, in their own critical study, the nature of the text.

3. Feminist Language and Theories

I tend to look at feminism as multiple movements of an ideology that fight towards establishing political, economic, personal and social equality for women. To understand the nature of feminism the difference between biological sex and sexuality must be explained. Ruth Robbins proposes that sexuality is a learned behaviour, whereas a person's sex is regarded as a biological given (Wolfreys 54). This is to say that a person's reproductive organs define their biological sex and that sexuality and gender are products of society, culture, and other outside influences on a person's life. Historically, feminism has fought against masculine/feminine gender roles and stereotypes that relegate women to a lesser position and dictate what men and women should and should not do within our society. More recently, feminism has begun to examine lesbian, gay, transgendered, bi-, and asexual issues in our culture and advocate for the rights of these people who have often been cast aside, hidden, or persecuted by others. The feminist ideology has brought about the creation of Women's Studies and Gender Studies, feminist literature, feminist translation, and so many other accomplishments and mechanisms for change in our world and for the fight for equality. My greatest interest in feminism, within the context of this thesis, lie in the work feminists have done on the English and French languages, feminist literary and translation theories, and feminist religious theories. This section aims to provide a greater context to my work. In order to create a better understanding of the finer details, it is sometimes necessary to step back and see where they fit in the greater scheme of things.

3.1 Feminist Literary and Translation Theory

I think that feminist literature is a product of the empowerment of women but also acts as a tool for the further empowerment of women. As time goes by more and more women become writers and are acknowledged as readers. Although the situation for women globally has shown improvement in the past century, I believe there is still much more improvement to come. As more countries empower women and acknowledge their voices and opinions as important, feminist literature will continue to grow, not only as literature written in English but hopefully we will see translated works come from across the globe. Feminist literary theory suggests that women can be both the reader and writer of literature, unlike traditional literary canon would otherwise have us believe. Women portrayed in texts need not represent a stereotyped cultural construction of femininity. Traditionally, women were represented in literature as caricatures, as an angel or a whore, cute and helpless or a dangerous seductress (Bertens 75). Poststructuralist feminism also considers the traditional binary oppositions represented by the masculine and feminine, for example: activity/passivity, sun/moon, culture/nature, head/heart. (Bertans 129). But texts produced by women in this realm of feminist literature give women a broader role to play, not confined by patriarchal rules and motivations.

From as early as the 15th century, with Christine de Pisan writing the *Tale of Joan of Arc*, published in 1429, women have been presented with an alternative role in stories. Not as part of an oversimplified binary structure but with a strong purpose, character, and motivations. Authors like Simone de Beauvoir with her works like *The Second Sex* (1949), Virginia Woolf, writer of *A Room of One's Own*

(1929), or even Eve Ensler who wrote the play *The Vagina Monologues* (1996) have paved the way for women of this century to demand more of literature and in turn demand more of culture to be treated equally.

Obviously, Simone de Beauvoir as mentioned above is a French author with great influence in French feminist literary theory but many other works have also been done here in Canada by Québec authors on the feminist front. Take for instance Nicole Brossard, a French Canadian novelist, poet and essayist who has won many awards like Le Prix Athanase-David, a lifetime achievement award for her literary works (Electronic Poetry Centre). She is well known for her contributions to feminist French Canadian literature, as is Susanne Lamy, Denise Boucher, Daphne Marlatt and many others.

With the advent of feminist literary theory and an increase in feminist literature came feminist translation theory. Lori Chamberlain's essay on *Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation* is hailed as being one of the first to summarize the main traditional and modern views on the sexualisation of translation. The main focus of many traditional theories surrounding translation is the qualitative difference between the 'original' act of writing, and the 'unfaithful,' 'artificial,' copy that is the translation. The classic way of viewing translation in gendered terms is then expressed as the original, masculine, text and the derivative, feminine, translation. The feminist counterpart to this antiquated stance on translation is that in order to break free of this sexist view of the relationship between gender and translation, the translator needs to become her own author. Instead of being relegated to the diminutive role of the 'copier' of the original, the translator's status

must be elevated to a position in which she can be seen as an author in her own right.

Some feminist translators choose to translate unknown significant female authors, or document the work of unknown female translators to reshape the translation studies canon. They also use footnotes or commentary to show the importance of the feminine or female sex and use defamiliarizing effects in their translation. Finally, they may also choose to provide additional annotations and glossaries that show the contextualization of specific feminist related issues. Some well-known feminist translation theorists who have influenced my own work are Sherry Simon, Barbara Godard, Suzanne de Lotbiniere-Harwood, and Luise von Flotow.

3.2 Feminist Work on Language

Men have traditionally controlled language due to the fact that the majority of modern civilizations follow a patriarchal model. Men's inventions, beliefs, and ideas have been celebrated and our language models have reflected that fact in more than one way. Take for instance the French language that is gendered and dictates that every noun and pronoun must be masculine or feminine. Many issues can arise from this fact from a feminist stand point but one of the most troubling is the fact that French does not see the genders in reference to language as male and female, but as unmarked or as marked feminine: this suggests that French uses the masculine in reference to men and in reference to men and women, and only uses the feminine in reference to people or individuals who have been explicitly revealed as female. The

English language also makes no effort to hide its patriarchal tendencies and makes use of masculine neutral language such as the terms “mankind” and “man,” and also the use of the third person masculine singular pronouns “he/his/him” to refer to both men and women in the generic sense. These are dangerous tactics that create a culture that thinks of the male-as-default and a language that shows the domination of the male sex and inferiority of female persons by downplaying their existence. Because of these anti-woman issues embedded in the very language we speak, feminists began their work on language to help bring women back into the spotlight and change the way people speak about women and what they say in reference to them.

Janice Moulton is one such feminist in favour of change. She believes that the gender neutral usage of the words ““he” and “man” are “an effect of, and an unpleasant reminder of, the lower status of women” (“Myth of Neutral Man 101). Furthermore, she is in favour of changing our language so that we are not constantly reminded of the male priority and goes on to state:

Although some of the suggested changes will be awkward at first, they will be signs of a spirit of sympathy and cooperation with the criticism and therefore efforts of women to attain equal human status. (Moulton, “Myth of Neutral Man” 102)

I would add that certain changes, such as the use of they/their/them to replace the “masculine generic” he/his/him, are not awkward and are actually already commonly used in spoken English, and are slowly becoming more widely accepted

by hard core grammarians and style guides as a legitimate way to deal with the issue of language inclusivity and the death of the “masculine generic.”

Not every language on this planet has a grammar that is so laser focused on the gender of the individual speaking or being spoken about. Both English and French languages require speakers to understand the sex of the person they are speaking to or about so that they can refer to that person by a suitable pronoun. Or as Robert Baker puts it:

I think that it should be clear that since in our language proper nouns and pronouns reflect sex rather than age, race, parentage, social status, or religion, we believe one of the most important things one can know about a person is that person's sex... Moreover, we would not reflect this important difference pronominally did we not also believe that statements frequently mean one thing when applied to males and something else when applied to females. (166)

I believe this fact about the English language also applies to the French language, particularly when you consider the fact that in everyday writing the masculine is still given priority. For example, when writing to a single student French would call that student “un étudiant” if the student were masculine or “une étudiante” would be acceptable in reference to a female student with the added “e” and the different article to show the female sex of the student. However, unless the writer knew that a group of students were all exclusively female, the writer would choose the masculine plural form of the word students “les étudiants” over the feminine plural form “les étudiantes.” Some would probably argue that this kind of gendered

language usage has no bearing in the discussion of feminism and is only a product of the grammar of the language but as we all know, languages change over time and it is possible that if French language speakers were persistent and creative enough that over time the French language could change and adapt to be more inclusive towards women.

3.3 Bible Translation

Of course, once we step into the realm of Bible translation, language usually becomes more modest and traditional or conservative. If the Bible in question is to be used by Christians, chances are the Bible will only be well received if it doesn't deviate too far away from the norm and so feminist translations of the Bible have largely been unsuccessful at achieving success with those audiences.

The success of Protestantism in English speaking cultures is a significant part of the reason why English feminists have done so much more work on the Bible than French Feminists have. The particular difficulties associated with the French language and gender in its grammar is certainly also another likely influence. In France, Catholicism is still the widespread norm but even in Québec where one might expect more feminist work on the Bible to occur it does not seem to be present. It could be because of the influence of the Office québécois de la langue française, or "OQFL," which according to the Charter of French Language was created to monitor the linguistic situation in Quebec (section 159) and ensure that French remains the official language (section 161). This charter and office were created as a result of the Lesage Liberal government in response to actions taken by

the Quebec Liberation Front, or “FLQ” who were fighting for the independence of Quebec from Canada and the creation of a French speaking Marxist-Leninist Quebec state. The lack of interest in feminist work on the Bible could be due to the Révolution Tranquille in Québec, which fought against the power exercised by the Catholic Church in order to diminish how they were influencing every aspect of culture; they achieved this through secularization (Pigeon). Thus, the next section on the history of feminist Bible translation is focused on translations into English because no such feminist translations could be found in French.

4. A History of Feminist Bible Translation

At the heart of the North American woman's suffrage movement, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, feminist translators played a role in the development of female-friendly literature and were producing texts targeted specifically towards an increasingly educated demographic of women. A highly controversial aspect of this development of literature was the feminist translation of the Protestant Bible. Early on, women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton began supporting the idea that through the reformation of language used in our English translations of the Bible one would be able to clearly see the divine equality between men and women. Stanton edited a condensed "Women's Bible," which directly targeted supporters of the woman's suffrage movement and included Bible passages aimed towards women, as well as passages deemed to be applicable to the lives of women. It was based on Julia Smith's translation of the Bible, which is the first known version of the English Bible to be translated in its entirety by a woman. These kinds of feminist Bible translations laid the foundation for future women to undertake Bible translations and changed the face of religious translation theory. In particular, Joann Haugerud began incorporating gender inclusive language in her retranslations of scripture in the 1970s. Haugerud concentrated on the gendered language of the Bible and the ways in which previous traditional translations of the Bible into English were products of a patriarchal society, leading to the gendering of God as male and an inherent association of power with masculinity. Even more recently, third-wave feminist Mary Korsak retranslated the book of Genesis from a feminist perspective.

Often marginalized, and sometimes openly persecuted or denounced by the church, the translations of these women have been greatly underpublicized in mainstream culture and Christianity. It is evident, however, that the efforts of these women have not gone entirely unnoticed. In fact, because of their work, and the actions of feminists like them, there now exist widely published versions of the Protestant Bible that use more gender inclusive language than ever before. This denotes a shift in cultural expectations of the individuals and churches using gender inclusive Bible translations. It may also point to the potential inadequacy of traditional male biased English language and reflect changes occurring in the English language outside of religious circles.

This section will expose the women behind the creation and translations of these texts and how their work influenced feminist translation theory, as well as feminism itself.

4.1 Julia Smith

As the first known woman to have ever singlehandedly translated the entirety of the Bible, Julia Evelina Smith paved the way for other women like her to take on texts as large and controversial as she did. Growing up in a Christian household, of the Sandemanian denomination, her family believed the Bible could be read and understood by anyone (von Flotow, *Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 9). Von Flotow describes Smith as a highly educated woman who perfected her knowledge of Greek and learnt Hebrew in order to translate the Bible from the original languages it was written in (*Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 10). This goal of hers, to translate literally,

stemmed from a fiasco in 1843 involving the preacher William Miller who led his followers to believe the second coming of Christ was upon them (von Flotow, *Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 9). When the world did not, in fact, end as Miller predicted it would, Julia Smith believed that he had perhaps been misled by a previous translation of the Bible and took it upon herself to translate it anew.

Although the reason she initially took upon herself the translation of the Bible was not fuelled by feminist ideology, through the act of translation Julia Smith became more empowered. Furthermore, it is safe to say that her translation had a profound effect on the feminist movement of her time. Smith's translation of the Bible was used in Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible* later on, shortly after it was published. Smith did, in fact, have some feminist aspects to her translation but most importantly she was the first woman to have ever translated the Bible in its entirety. The fact that she was able to surmount this enormous feat set a precedence for other women, like Mary Korsak, in the realm of feminist translation. Julia Smith provided no comment on the more radical aspects of her translation in the forward or commentary of her Bible. Perhaps the most controversial choice she made in her translation is her justification for changing the name "Eve" to "Life." We will take a closer look at this particular word choice shortly, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton was drawn to make use of this translation in *The Woman's Bible* that also included the name "Life."

4.2 Elizabeth Cady Stanton

The woman who put together *The Woman's Bible*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was an influential promoter of the woman's suffrage movement. With her colleague Susan B. Anthony, Stanton had founded the Woman Suffrage Association, and until the poor reception of *The Woman's Bible* in 1896, she was president of the organization. She edited this book consisting of excerpts from the Bible that she thought concerned women. These Bible passages were accompanied by comments from supporters of the women's suffrage movement and Stanton herself (xxvi Stanton). At the time this book was published, in 1895, it was regarded as scandalous. The first volume of this book had "immediately become a bestseller and had gone through several printings in six months" (Murphy 21). The text did, however, result in extreme reactions from the church, which denounced it and deemed it to be the "work of Satan" (Murphy 22). Feminist leaders were concerned that this project would potentially alienate the women they were trying to appeal to.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Women's Bible* relied heavily on the King James Bible, and also made use of Julia Smith's translation due to its literal translation style. Stanton preferred Smith's translation of the name of Adam's wife. In the commentary on Genesis in this text, one of Stanton's partners, Lillie Devereux Blake states:

"Adam called his wife's name Life for she was the mother of all living."

(v.20, literal translation)

It is a pity that all versions of the Bible do not give this word instead of the Hebrew Eve. She was Life, the eternal mother, the first

representative of the more valuable and important half of the human race. (Stanton 27)

Stanton, and her other supporters, felt that this translation of the Hebrew name 'Hawwa' was a more suitable English translation and it gives more emphasis to the importance of women. According to Luise von Flotow, one possible reason Stanton took a more extreme stance on the name 'Life' than Julia Smith did in her original translation is because of the exposure Stanton had to the woman's rights movement:

Julia Smith saw the connection between "Hawwa" and "Life", but looked no further at the time of translation. Had she done the work in the 1870s after her exposure to the suffrage movement, she may well have taken the more radical stance that Stanton... adopted. (*Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 18)

This suggests that the ideological context of the time in which Smith wrote her text was not as conducive to the same freethinking feminist context Stanton was involved in during the writing of *The Woman's Bible*.

Elizabeth Stanton felt that for centuries patriarchal translations of the Bible had misinterpreted passages of scripture and had been used to misrepresent women, as seen in this quote:

The canon and civil law; church and state; priests and legislators; all political parties and religious denominations have alike taught that woman was made after man, of man, and for man, an inferior being, subject to man... (Stanton 7)

Her main purpose in the creation of this text was to prove that men and women were naturally equal and to empower women to disarm men by using scripture against them.

After being buried for years by the patriarchal literary canon, in 1974 The Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion based in Seattle republished Elizabeth Stanton's *The Woman's Bible*.

The Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion... is reprinting *The Woman's Bible* that it may have a wide circulation, not only for its historic importance but also for its contribution to present day developments. We invite you to join us in person or in spirit as we endeavor to promote the equality of women in all areas of religious life.

(Stanton viii)

This act of republication allowed for this work by female translators and writers to enter back into translation and the literary canon. The women in charge of its republication recognized the importance of this work and the influence it could have on other women translators and writers.

4.3 Joann Haugerud

Decades after Julia Smith and Elizabeth Stanton played their part in influencing the world of feminist translation, Joann Haugerud created *The Word For Us*, a translation of the Gospels of John and Mark and the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. The forward of *The Word For Us* does not make mention of either Stanton or Smith, but in the editor's preface of the 1974 edition of *The Woman's Bible* Joann

Haugerud, as a member of The Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion, adds her voice to the preface. Thus, whether or not she was directly or indirectly influenced by them, it is evident that Haugerud was indeed aware of Stanton and Smith at the time of her retranslation of scripture.

The most striking feminist translation choice Haugerud made in her translation of scripture is the decision to incorporate inclusive language. Inclusive language refers to the contemporary English usage of gender-neutral language instead of the traditional masculine-neutral pronouns and male biased language of the past. For example, inclusive language usage would prefer the use of the word “humankind” over “mankind.” Also, instead of using the noun “man” to refer to both men and women, inclusive language would stress the importance of saying “men and women” so as not to alienate the female audience implied in a sentence or text in general.

Haugerud states that “the correct contemporary English translation” of personal pronouns are used in her translation (Haugerud i). This is important to note, as she does not believe that she “differ[s] radically from other translators in method, but [her] resulting word choices are different” (Haugerud i). This means that although the words used suggest the inclusion of women in the retranslated English text, it is not meant to change the meaning of the original but rather to reflect the inclusivity of the original. As Luise von Flotow points out, it is true that:

Over the course of one thousand years of rewriting and translation by the Church, these texts have been subject to “patriarchal” translation.

Feminist translators do not seek to change original historical fact, they

want to overcome some of the patriarchal excesses imposed on the Bible through translation. (*Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 56)

Such use of inclusive language has received massive pushback from most Christian denominations. It is not only in the description of men and women that inclusive language is used in Haugerud's Bible translation, but also in her description of God. "... I am concerned that the language describing God has been heavily masculine in the past, with the result that people can scarcely avoid thinking of God as a male person" (Haugerud i). Joann Haugerud's argument, which is supported by many other feminists and Christians, is that God is not an inherently masculine being. Instead, the boundaries of gender do not apply to God, which makes referring to God as 'Father' or using masculine pronouns like 'Him' and 'His' is incorrect. Furthermore, it is not solely Haugerud who sees the problem with this male-biased language. Luise von Flotow states, "the male-biased vocabulary used for God is seen to have an important influence on patriarchal social structures that assign authority to human males" (*Translation and Gender* 56). Due to the vast cultural influence of the Bible and the fact that entire civilizations have been founded on Christianity, it is obvious that assigning the power of creation to a God with solely masculine features could influence societal values and uphold patriarchal practices.

To back up her stance in favour of inclusive language Haugerud claims:

Every translation is based on both literal meanings of the original language and implications seen in the new language by the translator. My disagreement with previous translators is that they have clung to the literal where it contains exclusively masculine language, while

freely interpreting other words according to their various insights.

(Haugerud i)

The language used in the Bible is constantly being revised to ensure its understandability in contemporary English. However, in the case of gender it seems to be that most Bible versions disagree with the movement away from traditional 'masculine-neutral' pronouns towards inclusive language. Translators like Joann Haugerud are blazing the trail towards a future of inclusivity.

4.4 Mary Phil Korsak

This next feminist translator, Mary Phil Korsak, was able to profit from the years of blood sweat and tears poured into woman's suffrage before her time. Living in the third wave of the feminist movement, and having translated the Old Testament Book of Genesis in the 1980s, Korsak's work builds upon some carefully chosen aspects of Julia Smith's translation and adds entirely unique aspects to the text herself. Korsak translated the book of Genesis from the original Hebrew into English in a word for word translation as literally as she possibly could (von Flotow, *Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 15).

At the Start: Genesis Made New is a literal, "word for word," Translation.

To ensure exactness, a great deal of spadework has been done at the semantic level to determine which English word can systematically correspond to a given Hebrew word. (Korsak 225)

In this quote from Korsak we can see the importance she placed on the literal translation of the Bible, just as Julia Smith did before her. There are, however, many

notable differences between these two literal translations. One of these is in the translation of the creation story of Adam and Eve. According to Korsak, there are etymological reasons to believe that the ancient Hebrew text is ambiguous in assigning gender to the first person God creates (Korsak 231). In fact, Korsak alleges that it is not until a rib is taken out of the first human being and two individuals are formed that gender is assigned to either one. Korsak believes that this shows the two gendered individuals, male and female, could not have existed without each other; this implies equality. Mary Korsak lived in a drastically more progressive time than Julia Smith did. Feminist translation scholar Luise von Flotow asserts that some of the differences seen between these two literal Bible translations come from the context in which each translation was written (*Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 18). This diversity allows for differences in the translator's positionality to arise and these differences in turn are capable of influencing the translator's choices.

Julia Smith saw the connection between "Hawwa" and "Life", but looked no further at the time of translation. Had she done the work in the 1870s after her exposure to the suffrage movement, she may well have taken the more radical stance that Stanton... adopted. (von Flotow, *Women, Bibles, Ideologies* 18)

Obviously, the ideological context of the time in which Korsak published her translation, in 1992, is extremely different from the ideological context of the time in which Julia Smith published hers. Thus, it can be argued that Korsak was able to make this translation choice and imply equality between Adam and Eve due, in part, to the ideological context in which she translated.

A second example of a distinctly feminist choice Mary Korsak made in her translation is in her choice of the word “side” for “rib.” In Genesis 2:22-23, traditionally God takes a rib from Adam and uses it to create Eve. In Korsak’s version, God builds Eve from a “human side”. She explains her word choice as follows:

The noun *sela* is commonly translated as “side.” It means “side” as in “hillside” or as in the “side of the tabernacle”... It may seem daring, but it is logical, to replace the traditional “rib” by the word “side” here”.

(Korsak 226)

First, Korsak begins her explanation of the Hebrew word ‘sela’ traditionally translated as the rib of Adam. Sound logic is used here to rationalize her word choice. Then, in the following paragraph her feminist roots start to show through as she more bravely describes:

...a substantial number of rabbinical commentaries infer that the woman was built from a human “side.” The same teaching then concludes that woman begins where man ends, she is his limit, and vice versa. Theirs is a “side by side” relationship. (Korsak 226)

It is evident, through the examination of quotes like this, that the feminist retranslation of scripture is capable of creating a target text closer in meaning to the original source text. At the same time, “by revising the language, these versions change the tone and meaning of the stories considerably” (von Flotow, *Translation and Gender* 53).

4.5 Mainstream Feminist Bible Translation

So far, this section has highlighted the many and meaningful contributions of feminist Bible translators who have been, for the most part, received with hostility by the public. Often marginalized, and sometimes openly persecuted or denounced by the church, the translations of these women have been highly underpublicized in mainstream culture and Christianity. It is evident, however, that their efforts have not gone entirely unnoticed. In fact, because of their work and the actions of feminists like them there now exist widely published versions of Protestant Bible translations that use more gender inclusive language than ever before.

As early as 1983 gender neutral translations began appearing on the Evangelical market. The first of these being *An Inclusive Language Lectionary* that was meant for liturgical use to aid pastors in crafting their services to sound more inclusive towards women. Swiftly followed by the *New Jerusalem Bible*, in 1985, and at least 17 other widely published inclusive versions of the Gospels, New Testament, and the entire Bible.

Date Published	Title
1983	An Inclusive Language Lectionary
1985	New Jerusalem Bible
1986	New American Bible
1987	New Century Version
1989	Good News Bible, 2 nd ed.
1990	The Message
1992	The Five Gospels
1993	The Inclusive New Testament
1994	Contemporary English Version
1995	God's Word
1995	New International Reader's Version
1995	New International Version, Inclusive language Edition
1995	New Testament and Psalms, an Inclusive Version

1996	New Living Translation
2001	Today's New International Version
2004	Good As New: A Radical Retelling of the Scriptures

(Chart information from Bible-researcher.com, Michael D. Marlowe)

One controversial translation mentioned above is the *Today's New International Version*, which uses 'people' instead of 'men' and 'brothers and sisters' where it once read 'brothers.' This proves that the decades of work put into feminist Bible translation, and all other work done in favour of equality is, in fact, having a profound effect on society. This TNIV version of the Bible was eventually discontinued, but the longer-standing *New International Version* of the Bible incorporated many changes in its 2011 publication that originally came with the TNIV. According to John Kohlenberger:

Some interpreted this to mean the TNIV was a failed experiment and the old NIV would just be freshened a bit. What was actually stated was that the CBT would reconsider every change that the TNIV introduced to the NIV, in light of external feedback, so that the 2011 revision of the NIV would actually be a revised TNIV. (Kohlenberger)

Instead of being a 'failure' as some had interpreted this to mean, the opposite is true. Certain instances of inclusive language in the *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) such as the use of 'humankind' have been rejected in the revision of the new 2011 *New International Version* (NIV). This is because editors still believe 'mankind' is used more frequently in English than 'humankind' (Kohlenberger). However, many more gender inclusive word choices were incorporated, such as the avoidance

of the use of 'he' or 'him' and in their place is the use of 'one', 'that person', and 'them.' Gone are the days of 'brethren' and 'brothers', which have been replaced with the far more inclusive alternative: 'brothers and sisters'. This speaks volumes to the efforts of feminist Bible translators and feminists everywhere who have greatly impacted the interpretation of scripture and fought for their place among men in religion and scripture.

5. Corpus

I analyzed three versions of the Bible for differences that occur between them. In particular, I looked for differences between them occurring as a result of how gender is translated. The three versions I settled on are two English versions of the Protestant Bible, *Today's New International Version* and the *New International version*, and one French translation, *Segond 21*. The TNIV is well known for its inclusive language usage. This made it valuable to compare against the more traditional NIV and *Segond 21*. If French translators had created a Bible that uses inclusive language, or some sort of equivalent, it would have been a natural choice to include such a translation in my research. Unfortunately, for many reasons that have been examined in my section on Feminist Language, that kind of Bible translation has not occurred in French, so I limited myself to using a modern French version that I hoped would include more instances of progressive French language than an older more traditional French Bible translation. I chose one book of the Bible in the New Testament where I hoped to find many instances of difference between these three versions. The New Testament book of Ephesians was a clear choice for many reasons.

5.1 The Book of Ephesians

As I could not go through the entire Bible for translation differences between the three versions I chose to examine, I decided to start my research with the New Testament book of Ephesians because its content was more likely to illustrate the gender inclusive language I was searching for. With six chapters it proved to be long

enough to find translation differences in over 40 verses, while still being short enough to be studied over the course of my Masters.

It is widely believed that the book of Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul, or perhaps by an “admirer or student of Paul” (Harrington 126). It may have been written in A.D 60 around the time Paul was in prison at Rome (TNIV 1982). Ephesians is part of the “Deutero-paulines” or secondary Pauline letters, this is because of their vocabulary and style differences as well as the theological emphases and historical situations that they presuppose, which are not evident in the other primary Pauline letters (Harrington 120). This book was originally a letter or “epistle” written to the church in Ephesus to inform their believers on the glory and headship of Christ, and steps towards the fulfillment of God’s purpose. However, due to the “general quality” and “lack of reference to individuals or circumstances in the church, and the absence of a specific addressee” some interpreters believe that Ephesians:

is not really a letter at all but instead a theological treatise intended to serve as an encyclical or cover letter for an early collection of Paul’s letters, a sort of summary of his thought. (Johnson 576)

In spite of this viewpoint, most theologians believe there is enough evidence to suggest that Ephesians is addressed to a real Christian Community in Asia Minor. It is even possible that this was probably “a circular letter, intended for other churches in addition to the one in Ephesus” that was written by Paul while he was in Prison (TNIV 1982).

This letter starts with statements about God's blessings and Paul's greetings to "God's holy people in Ephesus" (TNIV, Ephesians 1:1). Following these greetings, Paul outlines God's great goals for the church and the steps towards their fulfillment. This is followed by information on practical ways to fulfill God's purpose for the church in unity, maturity and in personal relationships between husbands and wives, children and parents, and slaves and masters. Lastly, Ephesians concludes with Paul's final greetings and Benediction.

5.2 New International Version

The complete *New International Version* of the Bible has been around since 1978. It has gone through many language revisions and retranslations "in order to reflect the latest developments in our understanding of the biblical world and its languages and to keep pace with changes in English usage" (v NIV). This version of the Bible was a completely new translation based off of the best available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek scriptures. Howard Long, the man with the original vision behind the NIV version, wanted a new Bible translation that would convey the Word of God in contemporary English, and so in 1955 he started pushing the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals for the NIV to be born (Biblica.com). In 1965, a translation team of two lead translators, two translation consultants, and one English style consultant began their work, which was later reviewed by five Bible scholars who compared it to the original biblical text (Biblica.com). Samples of this Bible were tested with groups of pastors and students,

and a general committee of scholars reviewed each book of the Bible (Biblica.com). Evidently, this text was thoroughly processed to guarantee its accuracy and faithfulness to the intended meaning the text would have held for its original audience. The translators who endeavoured to translate the Bible anew for the NIV version decided to create a committee of individuals, called the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), who could review the text and update it periodically in order to ensure that the Bible translation could “always reflect the very best of biblical scholarship and contemporary English” (Biblica.com).

It was initially revised in 1984 with some minor English language updates, and then in 2005 a major revision of the NIV occurred that resulted in a separately published Bible called *Today's New International Version* (TNIV). More recently, in 2011, *Today's New International Version* was discontinued and many of its changes were incorporated into the newest edition of the 2011 *New International Version*. This newest version of the NIV makes use of most of the gender inclusive language that the 1984 edition did and so it is sometimes regarded as a revised TNIV instead of a new NIV.

For my research I used the 1984 *New International Version* and compared it to the original 2005 *Today's New International Version*. It is fascinating that the same Committee on Bible Translation can look at the same text, and with the aid of further research into the original Hebrew and Ancient Greek scripture, as well as the passing of time, the committee has deemed it necessary to create a new translation with so many differences. This goes to show that in just over 20 years, society and

language, as well as our understanding of scripture, have changed enough to warrant a different Bible version.

5.3 Today's New International Version

The goal of maintaining a Bible translation that makes use of contemporary English means constant revision and retranslation when necessary. The original 1978 New International Version was published in a time when it was understood that 'a man' would naturally be referring to a person, whether male or female but English speakers today tend to hear a distinctly male connotation in this word (NIV 2011, vii). Possibly due to the question of how well received these changes would be by the general public, the Committee on Bible Translation chose to release a separately published Bible with inclusive language in 2005 and called it the *Today's New International Version*. They would have been correct in the assumption that certain groups of people would not take well to the changes made in this version to address gender inclusive language issues.

The most controversial change to this version was the elimination of most instances of the generic use of masculine nouns and pronouns (TNIV xiii). The word to the reader states:

the so-called singular they/their/them, which has been gaining acceptance among careful writers and which actually has a venerable place in English idiom, has been employed to fill the vocabulary gap in generic nouns and pronouns referring to human beings. Where an individual emphasis is deemed to be present "anyone" or "everyone"

or some other equivalent is generally used as the antecedent of such pronouns. (TNIV xiii)

For instance, where there once was a tendency to resort to the generic use of “he/him/his” to refer to men and women equally in the third person, *Today’s New International Version* in some instances will replace the third person singular with a plural “they/them/their” to more equally represent both men and women. A good example of this is in the book of Mark in chapter 9 verse 42 where the NIV version states: “And if **anyone** causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for **him** to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around **his** neck” (NIV 1984 my emphasis). Whereas the TNIV version has been changed to: “If **anyone** causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for **them** if a large millstone were hung around **their** neck and **they** were thrown into the sea” (TNIV 2005 my emphasis). Aside from the other obvious changes going on in this retranslation the replacement of ‘him’ and ‘his’ when referring to ‘anyone’ shows the sort of gender inclusive language revisions that are important to my research.

5.4 *Segond 21*

Segond 21 is a retranslation of the original *Louis Segond* Bible from 1910. The original French version can be compared to the English King James Bible, which is still regarded as a ‘correct’ version of the Bible for the time in which it was written, is also largely thought of as ‘out-dated’ in today’s modern English language. *Segond 21* was given this title for its new translation because it speaks to the youth of the

21st century. The idea behind this new version was to remain as close as possible to the original biblical text while being understandable to the adolescent reader (Bible Gateway, Second 21 'About'). This version uses more current vocabulary and although it stays as close to the original Hebrew and Greek as possible it aims to be more natural, comprehensible and readable to the new generation (Bible Gateway Second 21 'About'). The original *Louis Segond* Bible as well as the newer *Segond 21* are both generally thought of as Protestant translations. This is suitable for my research because both the NIV and TNIV Bibles are Protestant versions also.

I decided to use this French version in my research because it is widely accepted in the Protestant French community and uses modern language that has recently undergone revision just like the *New International Version*. While I was unable to find a French translation of the Bible that aims to use gender inclusive language, I was able to find feminist readings of the French Bible. It would appear that attempting to tackle the problem of gendered language in French poses much larger problems than it did in English due to the fact that French is naturally a gendered language. Also, possibly due to the fact that the majority of France is Catholic it has less interest in feminizing the language used in the Bible or making it more gender inclusive. However, it is still possible to compare French and English Bible versions for differences in translation that have possibly occurred due to the gender of each language and methods of translation.

6. Research Analysis

6.1 Methodology

Although the content and themes of certain books of the Bible, Ephesians included, have come under fire from feminist perspectives it is important to remember my research does not analyse the heart of the message of these books, but rather the linguistic delivery of the message. Word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence looking at gender differences in language between versions. Many of the verses in Ephesians itself have been criticised by feminists who believe its message is one that encourages subordination to men; however, entire Christian denominations like the United Church agree that with the correct interpretation of scripture, the Bible shows men and women to be equal beings with different roles and that both must be highly valued.

After carefully deciding on the texts to be used in my research, I began to consider what the best method would be for analysing the three versions of Ephesians. In the end I decided the most thorough way to cross-examine the texts would be to use online resources. Luckily, all three of the Bible versions I chose to analyse are online, which made it an easier task to bring up all three versions side by side. I used the websites Biblegateway.com and Biblestudytools.com because they allowed me to read two versions side by side. This meant I could go line by line through the entire book to search for differences between versions. I looked at the *New International Version* side by side against the modern *Today's New International Version* and *Second 21*. The NIV Bible I used for my research was finished in 1984 and even in the short number of years between it and the publication of the TNIV in

2005, many revisions to address the new understanding of certain phrases in the Bible, as well as changes in the English language were evident. *Segond 21* is a modern French Bible translation that I hoped would reach an equivalent audience of sorts as the TNIV would for its English readers. Of course after comparing the two modern translations against the NIV they still had to be compared to each other.

It was not possible, or necessary, to use the original scriptures of the Bible in their ancient languages. First, because I am not an expert in Ancient Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic and second, because all three versions have been translated directly from the same sources the differences between them should arise from differences in translation techniques and obvious language differences.

I believe I have managed to capture most major differences between versions, including but not limited to: word choice, sentence restructuring, and additions. Of course, there are minor changes that were not included in my research such as changes from a period to a comma and capitalization. There are many instances in which the French version structures its sentences with slight variations due to differences in grammatical structures, which I deemed unnecessary to include in my work. Obviously, when working with two different languages many differences crop up to provide the reader with a fluid reading experience. It would be absurd to think that comparing any translations written in different languages would not have such differences in grammatical structures.

Although I do touch on this general subject in this section, I do not include every instance of gender in reference to French nouns or pronouns. The default gender in French is masculine but due to the fact that French is a gendered language

many more instances of gendered nouns and pronouns occur. For instance, in Ephesians 1:3 the French version uses the word “*predestinés*,” which is the masculine plural form (or unknown gender plural) of the word “predestined” in English. Instances like this would provide grounds for me to include almost every single verse in the entire book of Ephesians in my research, which is slightly impractical in part due to the fact that this issue is not necessarily a specific translation issue, but rather an issue of the French language in general.

After recording all of my findings, I then worked to categorize my findings based on what kinds of differences were found between translations. For the purpose of the table included in this thesis I have provided my findings in chronological order in which they were found in Ephesians. For my own purposes, I grouped translation differences together based on keywords that had been changed. Being focused specifically on gender differences in the translations, keywords were most important to me. Although I recorded findings that included differences in sentence structures and grammatical equivalences, the general comparison between English and French was not all that useful due to the fact that these differences derive from straight forward linguistic differences.

What I deemed to be the most relevant findings were those focused on differences in the translation of the words: “man/people/homme,” “they/their/them” and “he/his/him,” “brothers/brothers and sisters/frères et soeurs,” “he/you/vous,” “saints/people” and a more broad category of interesting findings worth mentioning though possibly not directly linked to my analysis. At

least 18 verses in Ephesians contained translation differences centered on these kinds of terms.

After discovering what kinds of differences arose between the three translations I thought it was necessary to discover what purpose these differences served and for what reasons these changes were put into place. Through further research on feminist work in language and reading many sources on Bible translation and feminist translation methods, as well as reading the notes from the translators themselves in charge of these three translations, the purpose behind my findings became clearer.

By analysing my findings, I have drawn conclusions about whether or not these translations can take it farther with their use of inclusive language and feminist translation methods; whether there are grounds for a new translation to be made in either language that could be more inclusive towards women without radicalizing the Bible so much that a believer could not, or would not, feel comfortable using it. Lastly, I suggest methods I believe could make a translation in either language more inclusive that I did not come across in my own research findings of these versions.

6.2 General Findings

As I went through each of the three Bible versions for my research I found differences among them that were not necessarily related to my immediate interest in differences in gender and inclusive language usage. These findings are, however, related to the process of retranslation and worthy of discussion.

One such of these differences is the translation of the words “strangers,” “aliens” or “étrangers” in Ephesians 2:19. In the 1984 NIV the word “alien” was used to describe people who were foreign to the land. This word has been changed in the TNIV translation to reflect changes in popular culture:

Who would have guessed in the 1970s that, within a few decades, an “alien” would mean, thanks to the influence of ET and other movies and TV shows, an “extraterrestrial being”? In the updated NIV, “alien” has been replaced with “foreigner” or similar words in order to communicate the intention of God’s Word accurately to contemporary English readers. (NIV Translators’ Notes)

This kind of change illustrates how language changes over time and how even from decade to decade a word can take on new meaning that makes its usage in the wrong context confusing to the reader. Interestingly, the *Segond 21* translation of Ephesians 2:19 uses the words “étrangers” and “résidents temporaires” where the TNIV uses the words “foreigners” and “strangers.” “Étrangers” is most often translated in English as “foreigners” but “résidents temporaires” suggests a “temporary resident” or someone who lives in the country without truly or legally belonging to that country. These kinds of small translation differences pop up from time to time in my findings and show how translators can pick up on different nuances of a word in the ancient text that others may not readily focus on.

Two other common differences I found in my research are minor word changes and sentence restructuring. For instance, Ephesians 3:8 uses the phrase

“unsearchable riches” in the NIV version, “boundless riches” in the TNIV version and “les richesses infinies” in *Segond 21*. The French and modern English versions read similarly, describing the riches as boundless or infinite where the older NIV version is perhaps in need of clarity. This is a common kind of change that has occurred to attempt to bring clarity to certain passages. Other minor changes such as the “basic formatting of the text” have been “the work of the Committee” in charge of the retranslation of the TNIV (TNIV xiii). These kinds of changes can be seen in Ephesians 5:13-14 where the sentences have been numbered differently which leads to the verses reading differently when quoted individually. Differences in sentence structures between the English and French versions are also due to obvious language and grammar differences.

6.3 Saints

One reoccurring difference I found between the *New International Version 1984* and the *Today's New International Version* was the use of the words “Saints” which was retranslated as the word “People.” This change can be seen four times in the book of Ephesians: in chapter 1, verse 15; chapter 1, verse 18; chapter 3, verse 18; and chapter 6, verse 18. In the 1984 edition of the NIV “Saints” was a word used in reference to all believers. In the TNIV version the word “Saints” was changed to another term like “God’s people” to avoid confusion:

Most people today think of a particularly good person when they hear the word “saint,” whereas in the Bible it translates terminology that regularly refers to all believers. Sometimes the context suggests

an emphasis on God's having declared them holy or the process of their becoming more and more holy, so a variety of similar expressions were used depending on the context. (CBT 2010)

This change also made it into the newer 2011 version of the *NIV*. Interestingly, *Segond 21* makes use of the French word “saints” in the same place as the 1984 *NIV* and also in at least four other unique verses where neither English version does. For instance, in Ephesians 5:3, where the *NIV* and *TNIV* use the phrase “God’s holy people” and “the Lord’s people,” *Segond 21* does in fact use the word “saints.”

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for **God's holy people**. (NIV 1984 my emphasis)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for **the Lord's people**. (TNIV my emphasis)

Que l'immoralité sexuelle, l'impureté sous toutes ses formes ou la soif de posséder ne soient même pas mentionnées parmi vous, comme il convient à **des saints**. (Segond 21 my emphasis)

Within the context of French Christianity the term “saints” also refers to anyone who professes belief in Christ. This term has not gone out of fashion in French Bible translations, perhaps due to the fact that the majority of Christians in France are

Catholic, not Protestant. And so where modern English is moving away from the term “saints” to refer to all believers in its translations, French is not.

I feel that this difference is not necessarily relevant to the issue of gender in translation but is still a very important difference between the three versions I compared, due to the frequency with which this difference arose.

6.4 “Men” and “People”

In the book of Ephesians, I made note of seven instances where the word “man” or “men” had been changed to “people,” “person,” “human” or “humanity.” This problem is not confined to the world of Bible re-translation since it has been a topic of discussion and controversy for decades. As feminists began to work on language and try to bring to an end the ways women are disadvantaged by the English language, early on it became clear that using the pronouns “he” and “man” to refer to both men and women more readily conjure the idea of a male and demean the importance of women by distracting from their existence (Saul). By allowing the English language to default to maleness when referring to humanity we run into a false and problematic gender neutrality in which the third person masculine singular pronouns “he/him/his” have both gender-specific and gender-neutral meanings. These pronouns function normally when used in gender-specific contexts and some would argue that they could also function in certain gender-neutral contexts (if sexism can be overlooked). For instance, in the following gender-specific sentence: “Mr. Brown left **his** hat at home,” no issues arise. This next example illustrates a traditional usage of “man” and “his” that purports to be gender-neutral:

“**Man** is inherently good, **his** nature is unquestionable.” This sentence is understandable, and although it is offensive in its disregard for women, traditionally the sentence is not problematic. One last situation in which the gender-neutrality of these male-based pronouns is ultimately put to the test is in its usage to refer to a group of people who are exclusively female. In this specific instance it becomes quite clear that this method of using third person masculine singular pronouns, as well as using the terms “man” and “men” to refer to both men and women, falls short. The following sentences show the failure of this system to adequately portray gender-inclusivity: “Man has two sexes; some men are female” (Saul); “Man breastfeeds his young” (Saul). Luckily, English has many ways to deal with these problematic phrases by substituting other words in place of these pronouns, and the use of the third person gender neutral pronouns “they/them/their” are slowly but steadily on the rise in popular and professional language. According to *The Canadian Style Guide*, due to the fact that English lacks a “singular pronoun that signifies the non-specific “he or she,” customarily the masculine pronoun has been used” and thankfully there are new guidelines to help avoid its usage such as: the elimination of the pronoun completely, repeating the original noun, using a neutral word such as “one” or “individual”, and using the plural form (The Canadian Style 255-256).

The *Today's New International Version* repeatedly makes use of the word “people” or “person” in place of “men” or “man,” as in the following example in Ephesians 5:5:

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—
such a **person** is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of
Christ and of God. (TNIV my emphasis)

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—
such a **man** is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of
Christ and of God. (NIV 1984 my emphasis)

In instances such as this specific example the change from “man” to “people” appears to be a straightforward one. Where the original text of the Bible used language that included all people, or where the original text suggests it could be directed towards an audience of men and women by not directly excluding them in its original language usage, the new translation in the *Today's New International Version* does away with the old traditional sexist way of referring to both men and women as “man” and replaces it with the word “person.” The translators’ notes state:

While the Greek word *anēr* (“man” or “person”) was frequently translated with masculine forms in English, it is clear in several contexts that the word refers to men and women equally (an option endorsed by major dictionaries of the Greek NT). The parallelism between James 1:7 and 8 suggests that *anthrōpos* and *anēr* are synonyms; hence, “That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.” (Translators’ Notes NIV 2011, 6)

In other words, the Committee for Bible Translation has decided that the Greek word “anēr” should now refer to both men and women and this decision is reflected in their TNIV translation, as well as the later 2011 NIV translation. This is the case for the other instances I collected in my research, aside from the inherent controversy in moving away from the words “man” or “men” and towards gender-inclusive options like “people,” the retranslation is straightforward.

Unfortunately, this technique has resulted in controversy in other areas of the Bible such as the book of Genesis. Genesis 1:27 has traditionally stated: “So God created **man** in his own image, in the image of God he created **him**; male and female he created them” (NIV 1984 my emphasis). This verse has created tension among translators and religious scholars due to the argument that in the original text the human being created in God’s image is plural, not singular. Mary Phil Korsak makes the argument in her translation of Genesis that the original Hebrew language in Genesis names “adam” after the “adamah” which translates to English as “ground.” Korsak has chosen to call the first human in the Garden of Eden ‘groundling’ because it renders a more meaningful link between the words ‘adam’ and ‘adamah’ (Korsak 228). Furthermore, Korsak claims this “groundling” is not a man:

In traditional versions, two Hebrew words, “adam” and “ish”, are translated by one English word, “man.” This leads to confusion. In the new version, “man” is reserved for “ish.” ... The groundling, adam, appears as a plural being, made in the image of a plural God; the Hebrew name for God, Elohim, has a plural ending. The “them” that

refers to “adam” reflects the “we”; that refers to “Elohim.” (Korsak 228, 229)

In the *Today's New International Version* this verse does not use the more radical term “groundling” that Korsak uses, but it has been changed to: “So God created **human beings** in his own image, in the image of God he created **them**; male and female he created them.” This shows that where the original *New International Version* used “man” and “him,” the new translation has been modified. Perhaps not as radically modified as Korsak’s translation, but just the same this verse, which has in the past been used to relegate women to a lesser position than men, has been retranslated to show that “male and female alike they bear the image of God, and together they share in the divine benediction that follows” (TNIV 8).

Two other examples I came across in my research that demonstrate this retranslation tactic also use the word “human” or “humanity.” Ephesians 2:11 uses the phrase “hands of men” in the *New International Version* whereas the *Today's New International Version* uses “human hands.” Secondly, Ephesians 2:15 uses the phrase “one new man” in the NIV and the TNIV reads “one new humanity.” These kinds of changes may seem trivial, however when looked at as a whole they help demonstrate how deep this problem of gender inclusivity lies in the heart of the English language.

In the *Second 21* version the word “homme” is used in reference to men and women. In the French language the word “homme” can be translated into English as the word “man” where the word man can refer to the whole of humanity, men and women, or also one male individual. In English we usually refer to French as a

“gendered” language because every noun is assigned either a masculine or feminine gender. However, the French language closely resembles English pre-feminism where male-based language was considered gender-neutral and only when making reference to a group of people who are exclusively female does French distinguish a gender difference. Thus, when making reference to a group of people who are exclusively male the phrase “les hommes” is correct. Also, “les hommes” would be used to refer to a group of men and women or a group of unknown gender. However, when the group of people are exclusively female the French language shifts from the “unmarked gender-neutral” “homme” and shifts to a “marked feminine” word such as “les femmes” when no men are present. Of course, the same arguments can be made in French that have been made in English that perhaps the use of masculine-neutral words marginalises women and suggests that the default setting of humanity is male; however, the French language makes this far more difficult to “correct.”

In the instances where the NIV has used the word “man” or “men” the *Segond 21* has used “l’homme” or “les/des hommes.” Ephesians 6:7 demonstrates this as follows:

Servez-les avec bonne volonté, comme si vous serviez le Seigneur et non **des hommes**, (Segond 21, my emphasis)

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not **men**, (NIV 1984, my emphasis)

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not **people**,
(TNIV, my emphasis)

The only version making an effort to include both genders is the TNIV. Both other translations stick with the traditional “men” or “des hommes” that we would unfortunately generally expect. Luckily, this kind of change demonstrated in the TNIV translation represents a wider cultural change going on in association with the English language. French presents a larger problem with its gendered language.

Take for example the word “a person” in English, which appears to be gender-neutral, and can reference human beings of either sex: the equivalent word in French is “une personne” which is assigned a feminine gender. Again, the English word “an individual” has no marked gender, whereas the French equivalent “un individu” is assigned a masculine gender. Trying to separate gender from the French language may be nearly impossible due to its nature. However, other strides have been made to gender inclusivity in the French language such as the feminisation of professional titles.

6.5 They/Their/Them and He/His/Him

This next finding is very closely related to the issue of “man” and “people,” although I feel it deserves its own category due to the fact that where the previous man/people finding deals with a translation tactic that has been widely accepted for a number of years, this next tactic is only just gaining wide acceptance among scholars and experts. For years, as the usage of the word “man” to refer to humanity

or people as a whole has been fading out of spoken language, the third person plural pronouns “they” and “them” and the possessive adjective “their” have been used to replace the 3rd person generic usage of the masculine singular pronouns “he” and “him” and the possessive adjective “his.” The newest edition of the *New International Version*, which has carried over many of the inclusive language revisions first instituted in the *Today’s New International Version*, backs up this claim stating:

The gender-neutral pronoun “they”(“them”/“their”) is by far the most common way that English-language speakers and writers today refer back to singular antecedents such as “whoever,” “anyone,” “somebody,” “a person,” “no one,” and the like. Even in Evangelical sermons and books, where the generic “he,” “him” and “his” are preserved more frequently than in other forms of communication, instances of what grammarians are increasingly calling the “singular they” (“them” or “their”) appear three times more frequently than generic masculine forms.” (Translators’ notes NIV 2011)

The two verses I found in Ephesians that make use of this intralingual retranslation technique are Ephesians 4:28, and Ephesians 5:29. Ephesians 4:28 reads:

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with **his** own hands, that **he** may have something to share with those in need. (NIV 1984 my emphasis)

Those who have been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with **their** own hands, that **they** may have something to share with those in need. (TNIV my emphasis)

This verse, in its original language, is not specifically speaking to a man or group of men. Logically, it would appear that this verse is directed towards new Christians, who could be men or women. “He” has been replaced with “those,” which does retain the intended plural of the first translation while providing a more gender-neutral antecedent to the “their” and “they” that follow.

This kind of retranslation is necessary to account for changes in spoken English that have now made their way over to the written language. It is important to incorporate these kinds of changes to give women a chance to see themselves in the text of the Bible and realize the message is directed at them also and not men exclusively. As Janice Moulton says:

If we change our language, we will increase awareness of past unfair treatment of women and save women from being constantly reminded of the male priority and domination that the neutral uses of “he” and “man” indicate. (“Myth of Neutral Man” 102)

The substitution of they/their/them for he/his/him is one step in the right direction for this cause. Whether people are immediately more aware of women due to language choices like this or not, surely these kinds of change in language should have a lasting effect on the English language and even the culture of English speakers.

6.6 “He” and “You”

In keeping with this theme of changes in the English language that serve the purpose of moving away from the male-based gender-neutral to a true gender neutral, let us look at the usage of second person forms instead of third person forms to deal with generics.

Two instances of this kind of change can be found in my research. Ephesians 4:25 and 6:8 both replace “he” with “you.” In both cases the decision for change is well backed by the fact that “you” is used once already in the sentence referring to more than one person:

Therefore each of **you** must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to **his** neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (NIV Ephesians 4:25, my emphasis)

Therefore each of **you** must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to **your** neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (TNIV Ephesians 4:25, my emphasis)

Normally, the worry would be that with a change from “he” to “you” a sentence or phrase could become more personal than originally intended by shifting the focus from a hypothetical person to a focus directly on the reader. However, in this case it is already obvious with the phrase “each of you” that a retranslation will have no ill effect on the reader. This passage is being addressed to the members of the Church in Ephesus and it is reasonable to assume that the members of this church are male and female. This kind of “you” usage is also sometimes referred to as the “plural

you” and is commonly used in languages other than English such as French or German. Unsurprisingly, *Segond 21* uses this kind of “plural you” in its translation:

C'est pourquoi, **vous** débarrassant du mensonge, dites chacun la vérité
à **votre** prochain, car nous sommes membres les uns des autres.
(Segond 21 Éphésiens 4:25, my emphasis)

Using the plural “vous” is quite common usage when speaking or giving instruction to an audience.

Unfortunately, the second verse in my research, Ephesians 6:8, does not deal with this problem in the same way. The English has been retranslated to use “you” instead of “he” but the French version has not:

because **you** know that the Lord will reward **everyone** for
whatever good **he** does, whether **he** is slave or free. (NIV
Ephesians 6:8 my emphasis)

because **you** know that the Lord will reward **each one of you** for
whatever good **you** do, whether **you** are slave or free. (TNIV
Ephesians 6:8, my emphasis)

sachant que **chacun**, **esclave** ou **homme libre**, recevra du
Seigneur le bien qu'il aura **lui-même** fait. (Segond 21 Éphésiens
6:8, my emphasis)

It is also important to note that while the new TNIV translation manages to do away with any hint of gender difference in both verses, the French version is saturated

with gender. Even in the verse 4:25 not all gender issues have been dealt with such as the use of the word “chacun” which is used specifically in reference to males and also for groups of unknown gender, where “chacun^e” is used in reference to females, and although arguably not as popular as using the “unmarked masculine” in reference to a group of people with unknown gender, “chacun(e)” is also a definite possibility that has been overlooked in this translation. Every possible noun and pronoun takes a masculine form in the French translation. Although this is commonplace in French writing and translation at the moment, French feminists have long been pushing for more inclusive ways to denote that speech and writings are directed towards groups of both men and women instead of assuming that women should see themselves as included in speech that on the surface seems to apply only to a masculine audience.

6.7 Brothers and Sisters

Although this phrase only appears once in the book of Ephesians, it appears numerous times in the rest of the New Testament; take for example: Romans 14:10, James 2:14, 1 Corinthians 15:6, and Hebrews 3:12. Every time it appears in the *New International Version* it is dealt with in the same way in its retranslation, “brothers” becomes “brothers and sisters,” unless the verse is speaking directly about an individual’s brother or brothers. The Committee on Bible Translation explains why as follows:

“Brothers and sisters” was frequently used to translate adelphoi in the New Testament, especially in the vocative, when it was clear that both

genders were in view. This decision reflects the consensus view among scholars (and with basis in the dictionaries) that plural adelphoi refers to both men and women equally. Footnotes now often appear, explaining that “the Greek word for ‘brothers and sisters’ (adelphoi) refers to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family.” (Translators’ notes NIV 2011)

According to the Committee on Bible Translation, “brothers” has been changed to “brothers and sisters” in instances in which realistically both men and women are being spoken to, advised, or referred to. This is similar to the They/Their/Them and He/His/Him finding in how it was determined whether or not to proceed with gender-inclusive wording or keep the original.

Ephesians 6:23 is the verse found in my research that makes use of this phrase. Here is how this verse reads in all three Bible versions I compared:

Peace to the **brothers**, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV 1984 my emphasis)

Peace to the **brothers and sisters**, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (TNIV my emphasis)

Que la paix et l'amour avec la foi soient donnés aux **frères et sœurs** de la part de Dieu le Père et du Seigneur Jésus-Christ! (Segond 21 my emphasis)

Interestingly, this is one of the few findings I made that shows a more inclusive translation in the French version of the Bible. Alongside the other inclusive language changes made in the *Today's New International Version*, it was not unexpected that a change like this would be made. Where this finding surprised me was in the *Segond 21* translation, which up to this point had not shown other instances of gender inclusivity. It made me wonder if this was a common translation in other older French translations, and in other Catholic French translations, seeing as *Segond 21* is generally regarded as a Protestant Bible due to the fact that it does not contain the Catholic Old Testament texts like Baruch, Tobit, Judith, or Sirach and the Old Testament books are in a different order than they are in the Catholic Bible. Here are two other French versions from older more traditional translations that I compared my findings to:

Que Dieu le Père et le Seigneur Jésus-Christ accordent à tous les **frères** la paix et l'amour, avec la foi. (La Bible Du Semeur, my emphasis)

Que Dieu le Père et le Seigneur Jésus Christ accordent paix aux **frères**, ainsi que charité et foi. (La Bible de Jérusalem, my emphasis)

Que la paix et la charité avec la foi soient données aux **frères** de la part de Dieu le Père et du Seigneur Jésus Christ! (Louis Segond, my emphasis)

In all three of these older French versions no effort has been made to use inclusive language towards women. This is similar to my findings in the older English NIV version and not shocking. However, it is interesting to finally find an instance of inclusivity in the *Segond 21*, which otherwise has displayed no other real efforts on this front. *Segond 21* seems to be leading the way with this choice to translate the Greek word “adelphoi” as “brothers and sisters.” Hopefully when newer updated versions of familiar French Bibles come out they will take note and also consider making this sort of change in their work.

6.8 Conclusions

As I had hoped, the TNIV made use of different types of inclusive language and put many new techniques into action in its aim to do away with old sexist language typically associated with the Bible. I did not know what kind of techniques I would come across in the French version for how the translators chose to deal with gender issues in translation; however I ended up being disappointed with the general lack of effort to include women in the translation of the *Segond 21*. Although it claims to appeal to an audience of young believers and Christians of the 21st century, the only real inclusive effort I noted in my research is in its translation of the Greek word “adelphoi” as

“frères et sœurs” or “brothers and sisters” and did not choose to exclude women in that way.

Due to the fact that mainstream Bible translation tends to be so incredibly conservative, and based on my previous knowledge of these languages and texts, these findings are not surprising. However, after examining all three versions it is clear to me that further changes could be made in the retranslation of the Bible to make it more inclusive to women without alienating the audience of Christians with radical translation techniques. The issue of the “gender of God” which examines the use of male biased language in reference to God such as “Father” and masculine pronoun usage in reference to God like “He/Him/His” can be seen as problematic because many theologians agree that God is neither male nor female but spirit and thus is not confined by a biological gender. This issue and many others like it have yet to be tackled in any well received or widely read version of the Bible in either French or English, which leads me to believe that more work can be done in this field to create another version of the Bible in both languages that demonstrates more inclusivity towards women.

7. Conclusion

Feminist translators have already done much work to create gender inclusive Bible translations and to stand up for women in society by questioning previous patriarchal translations that have negatively affected the cultures they have been used in. Women like Julia Smith, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Joann Haugerud, and Mary Phil Korsak have all contributed in one way or another to the creation of feminist Bible translations with varying degrees of radicalism. Although their translations have not been a mainstream success and a typical Christian audience would not know the names of these women, their efforts have been part of a larger movement to see more inclusivity in modern Bible translation.

Feminist work on language has begun to change the way people speak about women and gender neutral words and phrases have started to take the place of antiquated sexist language. Their changes have, in recent years, been incorporated with better reception into modern English Bible translations. With the amount of work that has already been done and hopefully will continue with the next generation of French authors and translators it is optimistic that the French language may incorporate further feminist changes in the future. Although due to the gendered nature of the language itself progress will be a long and arduous process.

The way Bible translation has progressed in French and English cultures differs, in part, due to the fact that French speaking cultures are predominantly Catholic, where English has a substantial Protestant culture. This difference also accounts for a significant contrast in the role that the text of the Bible plays in either

culture. For instance, Protestant translators have done more radical English translations seeing as the Catholic Church approves so few translations for their audience. It is only fitting that fewer radical translations have taken place in French. Even in Québec most of the population professes to be Catholic but due to cultural revolutions to minimize the effect of the Church on everyday life there does not seem to be a great deal of interest in creating a French feminist Bible translation.

Feminist Bible translations have never been very well received by mainstream Christian culture but progress is still being made. Although the *Today's New International Version* has been discontinued, many consider the new 2011 edition of the *New International Version* to be a revised version of the TNIV due to all the changes it incorporated in its translation (Kohlenberger). Some of those inclusive changes have still not been incredibly well received but it doesn't look like the publisher, Zondervan, will be recalling those changes anytime soon since it hasn't happened in the past 4 years. Regardless of how well the public has received these inclusive changes, the NIV is still the second most popular Bible translation in America; obviously this bodes well for the future of gender inclusive language usage in English Bible translation (Zylstra).

Between the three versions I analyzed many differences are apparent in the translators' treatment of the issue of gender. The translation of the terms: "man/people/homme," "they/their/them" and "he/his/him," "brothers/brothers and sisters/frères et soeurs," "he/you/vous," and "saints/people" differed from version to version and it quickly became clear that, as expected, the TNIV was by far the most inclusive version. Aside from its treatment of gender issues in translation,

the only other real differences between the NIV and TNIV were due to minor changes in the English language like the terms “aliens/strangers” and “saints/people” or otherwise a slight rephrasing of sentences or re-numbering of verses. Interestingly, the *Segond 21* was most similar to the NIV in its treatment of the word “saints,” which remains unchanged in the French version, and also in the fact that it shows no real efforts to include women in its language choices aside from the treatment of the Greek word “adelphoi” which has been translated as “frères et sœurs” or “brothers and sisters” just like the TNIV.

Even the most progressive version of the three I analysed, the TNIV, has room for improvement. I believe a new translation could be made in both languages that is faithful to the message of the original scripture and used by Christian audiences but also uses more inclusive language and feminist translation techniques than any of the three versions studied in my research. For example, as mentioned in the Research Analysis section, the issue of the “gender of God,” which examines the use of male biased language in reference to God, is yet to be dealt with in French or English popular Bible translations. Another feminist change that could be made and not affect the message of the original would be to add in the ancestry of women alongside the ancestry of men when genealogy is mentioned in the Bible. For instance, In Matthew 1:1 the genealogy of Jesus “the son of David, the son of Abraham” is quoted, it would be a simple enough addition to mention the mothers alongside the fathers in every instance where the name of the mother is known to historians and theologians. The French version shows the most need for improvement, although progress may be more difficult due to the nature of the

language, and a seeming lack of interest in French culture to produce a gender inclusive language translation of the Bible.

After cross analysing these three versions of the Bible, it is evident that many translation techniques exist for dealing with the issue of translation and gender but due to the sensitive nature of the text of the Bible most of these techniques are not used in mainstream Bible translation yet, although progress is being made. There is still definite room for improvement and more work to be done in this field.

Table of Research

NIV	TNIV	SECOND 21
Ephesians 1	Ephesians 1	Éphésiens 1
1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:	1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:	1 De la part de Paul, apôtre de Jésus-Christ par la volonté de Dieu, aux saints[a]qui sont [à Ephèse] et qui sont fidèles en Jésus-Christ:
5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--	5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--	5 il nous a prédestinés à être ses enfants adoptifs par Jésus-Christ. C'est ce qu'il a voulu, dans sa bienveillance,
10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.	10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment--to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.	10 pour le mettre à exécution lorsque le moment serait vraiment venu, à savoir de tout réunir sous l'autorité du Messie[c], aussi bien ce qui est dans le ciel que ce qui est sur la terre.
13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,	13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,	13 En lui vous aussi, après avoir entendu la parole de la vérité, l'Evangile qui vous sauve, en lui vous avez cru et vous avez été marqués de l'empreinte du Saint-Esprit qui avait été promis.
15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,	15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all his people,	15 C'est pourquoi moi aussi, après avoir entendu parler de votre foi dans le Seigneur Jésus [et de votre amour] pour tous les saints,

18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,	18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his people,	18 Je prie qu'il illumine les yeux de votre cœur pour que vous sachiez quelle est l'espérance qui s'attache à son appel, quelle est la richesse de son glorieux héritage au milieu des saints
Ephesians 2	Ephesians 2	Éphésiens 2
10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.	10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.	10 En réalité, c'est lui qui nous a faits; nous avons été créés en Jésus-Christ pour des œuvres bonnes que Dieu a préparées d'avance afin que nous les pratiquions.
11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)--	11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)--	11 C'est pourquoi, souvenez-vous qu'autrefois vous étiez identifiés comme non juifs dans votre corps, appelés incirconcis par ceux qui se disent circoncis et qui le sont dans leur corps, par la main de l'homme.
15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,	15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,	15 Par sa mort, il a rendu sans effet la loi avec ses commandements et leurs règles, afin de créer en lui-même un seul homme nouveau à partir des deux, établissant ainsi la paix.
16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.	16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.	16 Il a voulu les réconcilier l'un et l'autre avec Dieu en les réunissant dans un seul corps au moyen de la croix, en détruisant par elle la haine.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,	19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,	19 Ainsi donc, vous n'êtes plus des étrangers ni des résidents temporaires; vous êtes au contraire concitoyens des saints, membres de la famille de Dieu.
Ephesians 3	Ephesians 3	Éphésiens 3
5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.	5 which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.	5 Il n'a pas été porté à la connaissance des hommes des générations passées comme il a maintenant été révélé par l'Esprit à ses saints apôtres et prophètes.
8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,	8 Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,	8 Moi qui suis le plus petit de tous les saints, j'ai reçu la grâce d'annoncer parmi les non-Juifs les richesses infinies de Christ
11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.	11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.	11 conformément au plan éternel qu'il a accompli en Jésus-Christ notre Seigneur.
15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.	15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.	15 de qui toute famille dans le ciel et sur la terre tient son nom.
18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Chri	18 may have power, together with all the Lord's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,	18 pour être capables de comprendre avec tous les saints quelle est la largeur, la longueur, la profondeur et la hauteur de l'amour de Christ,
Ephesians 4	Ephesians 4	Éphésiens 4

8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."	8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."	8 C'est pourquoi il est dit: Il est monté sur les hauteurs, il a emmené des prisonniers et il a fait des dons aux hommes.
14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.	14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.	14 Ainsi, nous ne serons plus de petits enfants, ballottés et emportés par tout vent de doctrine, par la ruse des hommes et leur habileté dans les manœuvres d'égarement.
19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.	19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.	19 Ils ont perdu tout sens moral et se sont livrés à la débauche pour commettre avec avidité toutes sortes d'impuretés.
20 You, however, did not come to know Christ that way.	20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned	20 Mais vous, ce n'est pas ainsi que vous avez appris à connaître Christ,
21 Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.	21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.	21 si du moins c'est lui que vous avez écouté et si c'est en lui que vous avez été enseignés conformément à la vérité qui est en Jésus.
25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.	25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.	25 C'est pourquoi, vous débarrassant du mensonge, dites chacun la vérité à votre prochain[b], car nous sommes membres les uns des autres.
28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something	28 Those who have been stealing must steal no longer, but must work,	28 Que celui qui volait cesse de voler; qu'il se donne plutôt la peine de

useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.	doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.	travailler honnêtement de ses [propres] mains pour avoir de quoi donner à celui qui est dans le besoin.
Ephesians 5	Ephesians 5	Éphésiens 5
3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.	3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for the Lord's people.	3 Que l'immoralité sexuelle, l'impureté sous toutes ses formes ou la soif de posséder ne soient même pas mentionnées parmi vous, comme il convient à des saints.
1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children	1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children	1 Soyez donc les imitateurs de Dieu, puisque vous êtes ses enfants bien-aimés,
3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.	3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for the Lord's people.	3 Que l'immoralité sexuelle, l'impureté sous toutes ses formes ou la soif de posséder ne soient même pas mentionnées parmi vous, comme il convient à des saints.
5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.	5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a person is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.	5 Vous le savez bien en effet, aucun être immoral, impur ou toujours désireux de posséder plus – c'est-à-dire idolâtre – n'a d'héritage dans le royaume de Christ et de Dieu.
13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,	13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible--and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.	13 mais tout ce qui est démasqué par la lumière apparaît clairement, car tout ce qui apparaît ainsi est lumière.
14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is	14 This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise	14 C'est pourquoi il est dit: «Réveille-toi, toi qui dors,

why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."	from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."	relève-toi d'entre les morts, et Christ t'éclairera.»
22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord	22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.	22 Femmes, [soumettez-vous] à votre mari comme au Seigneur
29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--	29 After all, people have never hated their own bodies, but they feed and care for them, just as Christ does the church--	29 En effet, jamais personne n'a détesté son propre corps. Au contraire, il le nourrit et en prend soin, tout comme le Seigneur le fait pour l'Eglise
Ephesians 6	Ephesians 6	Éphésiens 6
6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.	6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.	6 Ne le faites pas seulement sous leurs yeux, comme le feraient des êtres désireux de plaire aux hommes, mais obéissez comme des serviteurs de Christ qui font de tout leur cœur la volonté de Dieu.
7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,	7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people,	7 Servez-les avec bonne volonté, comme si vous serviez le Seigneur et non des hommes,
8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.	8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one of you for whatever good you do, whether you are slave or free.	8 sachant que chacun, esclave ou homme libre, recevra du Seigneur le bien qu'il aura lui-même fait.
18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert	18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind,	18 Faites en tout temps par l'Esprit toutes sortes de prières et de supplications. Veillez à cela avec une

and always keep on praying for all the saints.	be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.	entière persévérance et en priant pour tous les saints.
19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,	19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,	19 Priez pour moi afin que, lorsque j'ouvre la bouche, la parole me soit donnée pour faire connaître avec assurance le mystère de l'Evangile.
23 Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	23 Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	23 Que la paix et l'amour avec la foi soient donnés aux frères et sœurs de la part de Dieu le Père et du Seigneur Jésus-Christ!

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