

## **New Bibles and a New Translation Coming to Christ UMC**

This is a bit of a long story-- but let me walk you through the change that is before us.

Our pew Bibles need “filling in.” Some are missing, and others are pretty worn, so about 9 months ago, Brenda (our church secretary) and I searched the Internet to buy a dozen or two of our pew Bibles. We could not find them. Gone. So the inevitable conclusion even back then was that when it comes time to buy some, we need to replace ALL of them so that they will all match.

Fast forward to our recent past. Significant donations were given in memory of Rose Pinke, so I knew the time was right to buy new pew Bibles. It was only then that I made a discovery that somehow I had missed in the last few years. The 1984 version of the NIV that I and many of you use and have come to love no longer exists. What I only recently discovered is that Zondervan revised the NIV with many changes so that it is very much a “new translation.” What is disappointing to me is that the NIV (2011) now only goes by the name “NIV”- and they no longer are publishing the NIV 1984.

So since we will be buying all new pew Bibles, the question I have to now face is - Which Version? Do we go with the NIV (2011) or with something else?

I realize this is an important decision. Pew Bibles are important to me. And sometimes people find it humorous (or maybe even insulting) that I tell people the page number I'm on.

Let me share my heart with you. I believe the Word of God is living and active, and it is sharper than the sharpest sword. It penetrates our lives (Hebrews). I believe that truth sets people free (Jesus), and I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of salvation for those who believe (Paul in Romans).

Some people are well-versed in their own Bibles, but not everyone is. It is a HUGE book. And I remember when I was first growing in my faith how challenging it was to find anything in the Bible. I was lost. I could find Genesis, Revelation, and maybe Matthew or Luke, but that was about it.

If that was my experience, I know others feel the same way. So I try to make the Bible as accessible to everybody as possible (especially those who don't have a strong Church and Christian background).

As to the NIV (1984), I feel like I'm losing an old friend. I also know what the King James folks felt like 30 years ago. When I first became a Christian and then began growing in the Lord, the King James Version is what I had. I read it. I memorized scripture with it, but I sure had a hard time understanding it since the English language has changed so much in 450 years. So when I went to a new church at age 18 and was introduced to a new Bible called the NIV, I was thrilled. I could understand it! - but I was 18 (and adaptable). Many others in their 50s and 80s who had lived a lifetime with the KJV were not quite so excited about “something different” from what they knew.

30 years later I feel like those KJV folks. I'm not liking this change that is being forced upon me, but change is a part of life, and as the years pass by, this one is coming whether I like it or not. So since Zondervan has chosen to not make the NIV (1984) available to me anymore, then it is time to change.

This was a rather long explanation, but I wanted you to fully understand why this change is coming to our church.

I reported much of this information to the Administrative Board recently and asked them how they wanted to proceed. Did they want to form a committee of people to make this choice, or leave it to me. I was open to either. The board enthusiastically communicated- “You are our Pastor and spiritual leader. We trust you to make a good decision. No committee, let us know what you decide.”

So I am in that process now. I have spent hours and hours already researching and comparing translations. No decision has been reached, but I hope to reach a conclusion in the next few weeks. When I am finished, I plan to make available a 15 – 20 page document illustrating my research and reasoning (for those who want to read it).

For now, here are a few Questions and Answers.

**When we buy new Bibles, what happens to the old Bibles?** We'll distribute them to our classes. It is often VERY helpful in a Sunday School class to have everyone on the same page with the same translation (whatever that translation is). This will actually be a big blessing to our classes.

**What are some of the criteria you are thinking about in the choice?** Good question. Faithfulness to the original text, readability, and hardback large print for pew Bibles.

**Do I HAVE to convert over to the new version?** No, of course not. Feel free to use whatever translation you like, however, the pew Bibles will need to change, and you are welcome to change with us or keep what you have.

**Will the next pastor want to change versions?** I hope not, but I obviously cannot predict the future. I can only tell you what I would and have done. I always try to adapt to what people have in the pew. So as a new pastor coming in to a church, I actually have often had to go out and buy a new Bible to match what the people were already using. I have served churches that have used: Revised Standard Version, the New Revised Standard Version, the New Living Bible, and the New International Version. In fact, it turns out that currently, both Christ and Pineview use the NIV (1984). When Christ changes, it will be up to Pineview to change if they want.

**Will I be able to buy a pew Bible?** Yes! I want you to. But it will be a different color. My plan is that all of the pew Bibles will be one color and personal Bibles will be exactly the same Bible, but a different color to help avoid confusion as to people accidentally taking pew Bibles home.

**The new Bibles will be in memory of Rose Pinke? Can I donate one in memory of a loved one?** Sure. The Rose Pinke memorial is already available and we have the funds we need, but anyone is welcome to make a donation in memory of someone. A special name plate will be added to the inside cover, and we will have a form available in the future. Since no decision on the Bibles has been made, we don't know how much they will cost. I'm expecting them to be in the 12-15 dollar range.

**Time frame?** This is April. I expect the Bibles to possibly be in place this summer.

Feel free to ask any other questions.

April 6, 2014

*Pastor Ronnie*

## Translation Comparison.

Choosing a new translation is an important task.

We understand from the beginning that no translation is perfect. If you want to approach “perfection” you need to become fluent in Hebrew and Greek so that you may read the scripture in the original language.

So when we go from the original to a translation, clearly there may be different ways of translating.

It is important for me to state that almost all translations will do a pretty good job of capturing the ideas present in the original. In this process, I don't want people to think that some of the translations examined here are “bad” translations. In fact, the only translation with which I am familiar that I would truly consider a poor translation is The New World Translation which is used by the Jehovah's Witnesses. While fairly literal, it has a tendency to intentionally twist the translation of certain verses to match their doctrine.

The idea that most translations are fine overall is something that pastor and author Rick Warren wanted to communicate when he wrote The Purpose Driven Life. In that book, he intentionally quotes from about 15 different translations to combat the idea that any one English translation is the only “true” Bible. I appreciate that and agree.

But even still, we might say that some translations may generally do a better job than others.

While many many verses will be translated practically the same (e.g. John 1:1-3), other verses may have significant differences. So it is these differences which may be worthy of study in evaluating translations.

There are a couple of important values and methodologies that translators can use.

### **Literal**

#### **Ease of use/Readability**

#### **Does it capture the idea vs literal meaning.**

It is within these three guidelines that translators do most of their work.

Literal means that the translators attempt to translate exactly what is there.

For example, there is little confusion over John 14:6. Jesus told his followers he was leaving, but they knew the way. One said- Lord, we don't know the way. And verse 6 says literally in the Greek: Jesus says to him, “I am the way, and the truth and the life.”

That is pretty clear. There is very little variation on those words from one Bible to the next.

Ease of Use/Readability. In the example just given, we might note that in English we don't use so many “ands”. Thus while literally “and” is in front of truth and life, it reads better for us to drop out the first “and” and only use one on the last of the list.

This is a very simple example of readability. Have we changed the meaning of the verse by leaving out an “and”? Of course not. We have just made it more readable.

A better example would be Ephesians chapter one. In the original Greek, Paul writes the ENTIRE first chapter as one sentence. Yikes! That would be pretty hard to understand in English. In fact, your grade school teacher would grade your English writing and say you were using run-on sentences! So translators almost always break up this first chapter into multiple sentences to improve readability in English.

**Does it capture the idea vs literal meaning.** Sometimes the literal meaning is actually a bad translation because in every language, people use words as “idioms.” These are common sayings which do NOT mean exactly what they say, but mean something else. For example almost every person born in the South understands what we mean when we say, “I’m fixing to go to the store.” “Fixing” is a Southern idiom that has nothing to do with “repairs.” It means “getting ready” or “almost ready” or even “about”. “I’m about to go to the store.”

Here is another example of Southern idiom. “I was at a restaurant and was being served by a new employee. Bless his heart, he gave me coffee instead of orange juice.”

“Bless his heart” is an idiom of the Southern USA. You can’t **literally** translate it, but one of its root meanings is a recognition of incompetence. Furthermore, it is somewhat a statement of trying to be patient in the presence of incompetence.

Now that is one meaning of “Bless His Heart”, it actually has other uses, but I will let you mull that over.

Greek and Hebrew are no different.

One of my favorite examples is the Greek phrase “me genoito!”

Literally, it is an expression of a wish that you don’t expect to be fulfilled (side note: it is interesting that pagans often prayed to their idols in this manner!). So a Greek child might ask her momma- “May I have a fourth serving of ice cream (the child already knows the answer is doubtful).

Well, in Romans 6:1, Paul says, “Shall we continue sinning so grace may increase? Me genoito.

Some translations are a bit more literal- “May it never be,” But if you read Paul’s argument, it is clear this is too wimpy. I personally think a better translation using modern English ways of speaking would be-- “Are you crazy?!” Notice I’m taking a Greek idiom and replacing it with an English idiom.

So in conclusion, translators try to reach a balance between a literal translation, and one that is a bit more free in order to convey the meaning better. However, they tend to lean a bit more one way or the other.

For example, a more literal translation is the New American Standard Bible. It is a wonderful translation, but it is a bit more challenging to read.

When the pendulum is swung heavier toward less focus on literal and more on understanding, then we call those a “Paraphrase.” Two older paraphrases that you might be familiar with are: The Living Bible and Good News for Modern Man. At the time those were written about 40 years ago, they were

the most easy to understand Bibles- even if they were not quite so literal in their translations.

My own personal opinion is that a paraphrase is wonderful for casual reading. It is VERY easy to get the sense of what you are reading without getting bogged down. However, for preaching and teaching, I lean more toward the translations that are a bit more literal- while still being readable.

That's why I loved the NIV (1984). It is not perfect (every translation could be improved), but it reached a very good balance overall between literal translation and accurately paraphrasing ideas when needed.

But the NIV was a product of its time. We live in a day and age where gender neutral language (when referring to people, not God) is VERY important in many circles. The NIV (2011) tried to make the verses more gender neutral, while correcting some of the previous translations which could have been done better.

The question for many is: how good a job did they do? Especially when compared to others.

In general, opinions are split. Zondervan has created a bit of a controversy.

What follows is my own research dovetailing with the work others have done.

There are several verses that are very important to me- I use them as a kind of test-case when looking at translations. Further, you can do Internet searches of things like: "Why I don't like xxxx translation." Authors usually give several examples. Of course you could also search: "Why I love xxxxx translation."

What follows is a summary of much of that work I did, trying to be as open-minded as I could.

I'll begin with one of my personal "hot button" test cases.

Each chart compares 10 English Translations. They are:

NIV(1984)	New International Version
NIV(2011)	New International Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
HCSB	Holeman Christian Standard Bible
NCV	New Century Version
NET	New English Translation
NLT	New Living Translation
CEB	Common English Bible
CEV	Contemporary English Version

Since we are United Methodists, I should note something. While General Conference has never officially adopted any particular translation "for Methodists", there have been some trends. Quite a large number of United Methodists have used the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) in the past. Today, the Methodist church appears to be investing heavily in the Common English Bible (CEB) with much of the literature using that translation.

**Exodus 21:22 The Hebrew literally says “if her fruit come forth”. It is my opinion that the translation “miscarriage” is an absolutely biased translation since miscarriages ALWAYS result in death- by definition. The Hebrew is referring to a premature birth- which sometimes results in death (maybe even often), and sometimes not. And that is the whole point of the passage! It all depends on what happens to the baby.**

**What grieves my soul is that certain translations of this verse make it appear that God has absolutely no concern whatsoever with the baby. All he really cares about is if the woman gets hurt. In fact, I have seen authors quote this very verse “to prove” that God thinks abortion is a wonderful thing.**

**When researching this verse years ago, I remember reading that some of our earliest ancient commentaries understood this verse as only applying to the woman. This may explain why some of our English translations use the word miscarriage- evidently following the ancient interpretation. But just because the commentary is ancient does not mean it is correct.**

**“Her fruit come forth” when taken at face value would self-evidently mean in our modern language that she gives birth prematurely. When translated literally in the context of all the verses around this verse, it is clear that this is indeed a pro-life verse. If the baby comes out pre-maturely and dies, the penalty is death for the guy that hit her and caused it. Clearly God considers the baby a person.**

**Chart on the next page.**

	Exodus 21:22	
NIV(1984)	22 “If men who are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely[a] but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. Footnotes: Exodus 21:22 Or <i>she has a miscarriage</i>	Good-footnote poor
NIV(2011)	22 “If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely[a] but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. Footnotes: Exodus 21:22 Or <i>she has a miscarriage</i>	Good-footnote poor
NASB	22 “If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that [a]she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband [b]may demand of him, and he shall pay [c]as the judges <i>decide</i> .	Good
ESV	22 “When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman’s husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.	Good
HCSB	22 “When men get in a fight and hit a pregnant woman so that her children are born prematurely[a] but there is no injury, the one who hit her must be fined as the woman’s husband demands from him, and he must pay according to judicial assessment. Footnotes: Exodus 21:22 Either a live birth or a miscarriage	Good
NCV	22 “Suppose two men are fighting and hit a pregnant woman, causing the baby to come out. If there is no further injury, the man who caused the accident must pay money—whatever amount the woman’s husband says and the court allows.	Good
NET	22 “If men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely, but there is no serious injury, he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman’s husband demands of him, and he will pay what the court decides.	Good
NLT	22 “Now suppose two men are fighting, and in the process they accidentally strike a pregnant woman so she gives birth prematurely.[a] If no further injury results, the man who struck the woman must pay the amount of compensation the woman’s husband demands and the judges approve.	Good
CEB	22 When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage but no other injury occurs, then the guilty party will be fined what the woman’s husband demands, as negotiated with the judges.	Poor
CEV	22 Suppose a pregnant woman suffers a miscarriage[a] as the result of an injury caused by someone who is fighting. If she isn’t badly hurt, the one who injured her must pay whatever fine her husband demands and the judges approve.	Poor

## 2 Corinthians 5:17

There are a couple of problems with this important verse. This verse has traditionally had masculine language. But when modern translations try to neuter the language, they often de-personalize the verse and make it ambiguous.

Literally, the verse says (an interlinear version has the Greek and English together):

## 2 Corinthians 5:17

Mounce Reverse-Interlinear New Testament (MOUNCE)

17 Therefore hōste if ei anyone tis is in en Christ Christos, there is a new kainos creation ktisis; what ho is old archaios has passed parerchomai away ; behold idou, what is new kainos has come ginomai!

In Greek, the verse begins with the conditional pronoun- “if anyone.” This clearly refers to a person.

The words “there is” is not in the original language.

Literally, the Greek says- “If anyone is in Christ- a new creation. What is old has passed away, behold, new has come.”

The word “anyone” clearly refers to a person. So the most logical and natural translational is for the “oldness” and the “newness” to refer to that very same person- the nearest antecedent. The idea of a person being made new is a similar concept to Jesus' statement that we must be born a second time in John 3.

But when some translations use “there is a new creation”, it is not clear where the new creation is. Some translations operate from the assumption/idea that the person is a part of the new kingdom of God (which of course is true), but the radical transformation of the person is sometimes missed.

The issue of “de-personalization” is, in my view, a common problem with modern gender neutral translations. How can we replace the “he” without horribly distorting the verse? Some translations appear a bit better at this than others.

Chart on the next page.

	2 Corinthians 5:17	
NIV(1984)	17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!	Not gender neutral but good.
NIV(2011)	17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here! Footnotes: 2 Corinthians 5:17 Or <i>Christ, that person is a new creation.</i>	Depersonalized- Footnote saves it.
NASB	17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, [a] <i>he is a new creature</i> ; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Footnotes: 2 Corinthians 5:17 Or there is <i>a new creation</i>	Not gender neutral but good.
ESV	17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. Footnotes: 2 Corinthians 5:17 Or <i>creature</i>	Not gender neutral but good.
HCSB	17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things[a] have come. Footnotes: 2 Corinthians 5:17 Other mss read <i>look, all new things</i>	Not gender neutral but good.
NCV	17 If anyone belongs to Christ, there is a new creation. The old things have gone; everything is made new!	Fair- "Everything" includes people.
NET	17 So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come!	Not gender neutral but good.
NLT	17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!	Good
CEB	17 So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!	Depersonalized
CEV	17 Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new.	Good

## Romans 4:8

**Gender issues- this verse is masculine when it clearly refers to men and women. But how is the gender issue handled?**

**This verse is a classic case of a common strategy for arriving at gender neutrality. Translators take the masculine and make it plural- as in from Him to Them. This sometimes results in mixing singular and plural which violates accepted English practice – even if many speak that way. I admit, there might be a place for this, but this verse is one example where it just sounds terrible.**

	Romans 4:8	
NIV(1984)	8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”	Masculine, but good
NIV(2011)	8 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”	Huh?
NASB	8 “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”	Masculine, but good
ESV	8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”	Masculine, but good
HCSB	8 How joyful is the man the Lord will never charge with sin![a]	Masculine, but good
NCV	8 Blessed is the person whom the Lord does not consider guilty.”	Good
NET	8 <i>blessed is the one against whom the Lord will never count sin.</i> ”	Good
NLT	8 Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin.”	Good
CEB	8 <i>Happy are those whose sin isn't counted against them by the Lord.</i>	Good
CEV	8 The Lord blesses people whose sins are erased from his book.”	Good

**Revelation 3:20. One of my favorite verses in the Bible.**

**Gender issues with the masculine are present, when it obviously applies to men and women, but notice how personal this verse is. The letter is written from Jesus to a church (the Church of Laodicea) which is obviously a group, but notice how individual and personal this particular verse is! Jesus is not saying he will come and dwell with a whole church but that he will come to any person. To depersonalize this verse is to rob it of its impact.**

**Also, this is a verse where the old NIV-1984 could be improved. The knock is not a knock. It is knocking (persistent continual effect).**

	Revelation 3:20	
NIV(1984)	20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.	Fair
NIV(2011)	20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.	Awkward grammar
NASB	20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.	Fair
ESV	20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.	Not gender neutral but good.
HCSB	20 Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me.	Fair
NCV	20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you, and you will eat with me.	Better
NET	20 Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me.	Not gender neutral but good.
NLT	20 “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.	Good
CEB	20 Look! I’m standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me.	Depersonalized
CEV	20 Listen! I am standing and knocking at your door. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and we will eat together.	Awesome

## John 14:23

**This is an important verse in the New Testament. I have no problem with trying to make it gender neutral, but please do it well. However, taking out the “if” risks totally changing the significance of the cause and effect relationship of the passage.**

**“If” you do part A, then part B will naturally follow. And if you do A and B, then God will do part C.**

	John 14:23	
NIV(1984)	23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.	Not gender neutral but good.
NIV(2011)	23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.	Poor- if is gone
NASB	23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.	Not gender neutral but good.
ESV	23 Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.	Not gender neutral but good.
HCSB	23 Jesus answered, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.	Not gender neutral but good.
NCV	23 Jesus answered, “If people love me, they will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.	Depersonalized
NET	23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him.	Not gender neutral but good.
NLT	23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.	Better
CEB	23 Jesus answered, “Whoever loves me will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.	Depersonalized
CEV	If anyone loves me, they will obey me. Then my Father will love them, and we will come to them and live in them.	Depersonalized

## Romans 16:7

This is a curious verse which appears to be a minor verse in the grand scheme of things. Basically, Paul is saying - "Say Hi to so-and-so." But careful scholarly research of the words and historical usage shows that this verse has different possible meanings.

Issue 1. The name "Junian" in Greek is one where it is impossible to tell if it is masculine (Junias) or feminine (Junia). Just like the English name "Pat". You cannot tell just from the name. As manuscripts aged, scribes and monks through the years added pronunciation marks- and it is those pronunciation marks that cause the name to be masculine or feminine. But these pronunciation marks would not have been on the original document.

Having studied this issue, I think there is merit in the modern scholarship that indicates a feminine name is intended.

Issue 2. What does "among the Apostles" mean? Literally, the Greek says "in the Apostles" and that phrase is commonly translated "among" in many places in the New Testament (see below).

Does it mean that these two people WERE Apostles (and not only Apostles, but among the VERY BEST)? If so, now you can see the significance that maybe Junia was the only known female Apostle. In fact, one of the early church fathers thought just that.

Or does it mean "in the presence of." These two were highly regarded "in the presence of the apostles" - meaning possibly "by the Apostles."

Many today argue for the idea that these two WERE apostles. I think it is possible, but that same phrase is used in the following verses and in each case, it is often translated simply as "among": (Acts 15:12, 1 Cor 2:6, 1 Cor 5:1, Gal 2:2, Col 1:27, 1 Pet 2:12). I read one paper where the author cites all of these verses to prove the two WERE Apostles and that these other verses carry the same idea.

But when I actually looked up every one of those verses, the context says something different to me. In most of these verses, the context almost demands an English translation of "in the presence of- but not one of." For example, 1 Peter 2:12 says, "Live such good lives *among the pagans* that though they accuse you ....." Clearly, this means "in the presence" of pagans AND that Christians are NOT in that number (not pagan). You don't have to be an expert in Greek to see that.

So my reading of the scholarship is that the name possibly should be feminine and she was not an Apostle, but was very highly regarded BY the Apostles. However, this is a case where more information is appropriate for the footnotes.

I think that these two people "*are highly esteemed (or regarded) among the Apostles*" is the best English translation since it is a bit intentionally vague AND it happens to match the way this phrase is translated in many other verses. If you make this verse more specific without footnotes, you might be forcing your opinion of what it means.

**I think it is unfortunate that NIV (2011) is portrayed as selling out to the radical feminists when (I think) they actually did a good job on this verse: a. female name, b. intentionally vague “among”, and c. footnotes.**

	Romans 16:7	
NIV(1984)	7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.	Masculine, no Footnotes
NIV(2011)	7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among[a] the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Footnotes: Romans 16:7 Or <i>are esteemed by</i>	Good
NASB	7 Greet Andronicus and [a]Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Footnotes: Romans 16:7 Or <i>Junia</i> (fem)	Good
ESV	7 Greet Andronicus and Junia,[a] my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles,[b] and they were in Christ before me. Footnotes: Romans 16:7 Or <i>Junias</i> Romans 16:7 Or <i>messengers</i>	Good
HCSB	7 Greet Andronicus and Junia,[a] my fellow countrymen and fellow prisoners. They are noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles,[b][c] and they were also in Christ before me. Footnotes: Romans 16:7 Either a feminine name or “Junias,” a masculine name Romans 16:7 Or <i>are outstanding among</i> Romans 16:7 “The apostles” is not always a technical term referring to the 12; cp. 2Co 8:23; Php 2:25 where this word is translated as “messenger.”	Best because of footnotes.
NCV	7 Greetings to Andronicus and Junia, my relatives, who were in prison with me. They are very important apostles. They were believers in Christ before I was.	Biased Fem since no footnote
NET	7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.	Waters down that these were “esteemed”.
NLT	7 Greet Andronicus and Junia,[a] my fellow Jews,[b] who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did. Footnotes: 16:7a <i>Junia</i> is a feminine name. Some late manuscripts accent the word so it reads <i>Junias</i> , a masculine name; still others read <i>Julia</i> (feminine). 16:7b Or <i>compatriots</i> ; also in 16:21.	Good
CEB	7 Say hello to Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and my fellow prisoners. They are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.	Good- but needs footnotes
CEV	7 Greet my relatives[a] Andronicus and Junias,[b] who were in jail with me. They are highly respected by the apostles and were followers of Christ before I was. Footnotes: 16.7, 11, 21 <i>relatives</i> : Or “Jewish friends.” 16.7 Junias: Or “Junia.” Some manuscripts have “Julia.”	Good

## Selah- Psalms

The NIV-2011 has been criticized for doing away with Selah in the Psalms-- all 71 occurrences.

Now it is indeed true that we don't know exactly what this musical/poetical word means so it cannot be translated.

However, evidence suggests that it may be what we might call ..... (wait for it)..... a "meditative stop."

Did you notice what I just did. Even in English, we use what many people might call a dramatic pause- which is intended for some effect- usually to highlight and emphasize what will be or what was said.

Here is a great example: See Psalm 39:5, 11

New Century Version

4 "LORD, tell me when the end will come  
and how long I will live.

Let me know how long I have.

5 You have given me only a short life;  
my lifetime is like nothing to you.

Everyone's life is only a breath. Selah

11 You correct and punish people for their sins;  
like a moth, you destroy what they love.

Everyone's life is only a breath. Selah

**We arrogant humans have just been reminded that our lives are very short- like a mere breath. That sounds like something to think about for a few moments. This is especially true since the idea is repeated. The repeated idea with the Selah has the effect of highlighting the idea.**

**Selah should be kept with an explanatory footnote.**

	Selah in the Psalms	
NIV(1984)	present	Good
NIV(2011)	Absent	Poor
NASB	present	Good
ESV	present	Good
HCSB	present	Good
NCV	present	Good
NET	Absent	Poor
NLT	Present- but uses "Interlude"	Best
CEB	present	Good
CEV	Absent	Poor

## 1 Timothy 3:2

This is an interesting verse. Literally in the Greek it says, “An episcopos (bishop, overseer) must be the husband of one wife.”

In the original language, the leader is male, but there has also been some difficulty in knowing EXACTLY what is meant by “the husband of one wife.”

Does it mean that the leader should only have been married once, so if such a person is divorced, he is now unqualified?

Or does it mean one wife amidst polygamy? If a man has 4 wives, he is unqualified.

There is no doubt that faithfulness is a quality that is being lifted up, but whether the details are one wife forever, or one wife at a time is a bit uncertain.

Polygamy has been fairly rare in Western culture, but that is only just now starting to change. The modern term being used is “plural marriage.” I predict this will be an issue the church must face more in the years to come.

But other cultures have already had to face it. One of my professors in seminary was a missionary in India. He recalled the dilemma he and leaders had when a Hindu with 4 wives wanted to become a Christian. Do we make him divorce 3 of his wives (and the children that went along)? Or do we understand that these actions were taken before he had come to Christ and now we accept him. They chose the latter, but “it sure felt funny baptizing a man with 4 wives.” While accepted as a Christian with 4 wives, because of this verse in Timothy, this man was not lifted up as a leader.

The struggle for modern translation is how much do we change the original intent of the verse? Modern gender issues press heavily on this verse. Some translations have so neutered this verse as to make it appear that this verse applied to men or women equally. While an argument can be made that “he” can often be a generic reference to “people”, it is a bit of a leap to cause “husband of one wife” to mean something else.

My own opinion is to be careful about changing what was originally intended. Translate what it says and then let people and scholars sort it out for modern day life. There is plenty of room for debate. Modern translations are acceptable as long as the original intent is not changed.

Chart on the next page.

	1 Timothy 3:2	
NIV(1984)	2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,	literal
NIV(2011)	2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,	“faithful”
NASB	2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,	literal
ESV	2 Therefore an overseer[a] must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,[b] sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, Footnotes: 1 Timothy 3:2 Or <i>bishop</i> ; Greek <i>episkopos</i> ; a similar term occurs in verse 1 1 Timothy 3:2 Or <i>a man of one woman</i> ; also verse 12	literal with good notes
HCSB	2 An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,	literal
NCV	2 An overseer must not give people a reason to criticize him, and he must have only one wife. He must be self-controlled, wise, respected by others, ready to welcome guests, and able to teach.	modern literal
NET	2 The overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,	literal
NLT	2 So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife.[a] He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. Footnotes: 3:2 Or <i>must have only one wife, or must be married only once</i> ; Greek reads <i>must be the husband of one wife</i> ; also in 3:12.	modern, with good footnotes
CEB	2 So the church’s supervisor must be without fault. They should be faithful to their spouse, sober, modest, and honest. They should show hospitality and be skilled at teaching.	100% neutered
CEV	2 That’s why officials must have a good reputation and be faithful in marriage.[ a] They must be self-controlled, sensible, well-behaved, friendly to strangers, and able to teach. Footnotes: 3.2 <i>be faithful in marriage</i> : Or “be the husband of only one wife” or “have never been divorced.”	Neutered, but with footnote

There are some verses where the NIV (2011) has actually significantly improved the translation of the NIV (1984).

**Phil 4:13**

**Here's a verse which people often take 100% out of context.**

**“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”**

**This verse has brought help and strength to countless people who interpret it to mean that Jesus can help me do something that is hard and/or I don't want to do. And of course, that is a good thought.**

**Some take it a step further to imply almost a superman idea- that there is absolutely nothing I cannot do, but I think there may be danger when a person goes too far. For example, I am 53 and love to watch golf on TV. Should I quit my job, apply myself 100% to golf so that I may become a Pro and one day win the Masters- since “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me?” Sorry, but I think that is silly (I'm not very good at golf anyway).**

**And still others sinfully use this verse for elitist reasons. I have heard of those who commit adultery because “I can do all things through Christ....” Sorry, but that is totally twisting the words of scripture.**

**The reality is that when you take verse 13 all by itself--- you change the meaning of the verse. The fullness of the verse comes from the preceding verses- especially verse 11. Anyone should be able to discern this from the context.**

**Paul is talking about harsh conditions, having food and starving, having money and being poor. He has learned how to be content. THEN he says I can do all things through Christ. Thus he is saying he knows how to be **CONTENT** in whatever the situation that he finds himself-- obviously, this is not easy, but it is possible because of Jesus!**

**I love how the NIV (2011) makes that more clear. The Common English Bible does a good job also.**

**Chart on two pages.**

	Philippians 4:11-13	
NIV(1984)	11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.	literal

NIV(2011)	11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.	Favorite
NASB	11 Not that I speak [a]from want, for I have learned to be [b]content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things [c]through Him who strengthens me.	literal
ESV	11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.	literal
HCSB	11 I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. 13 I am able to do all things through Him[a] who strengthens me.	literal
NCV	11 I am not telling you this because I need anything. I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens. 12 I know how to live when I am poor, and I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens, when I have enough to eat and when I go hungry, when I have more than I need and when I do not have enough. 13 I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength.	modern literal
NET	11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in any circumstance. 12 I have experienced times of need and times of abundance. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment, whether I go satisfied or hungry, have plenty or nothing. 13 I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me.	literal
NLT	11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ,[a] who gives me strength.	modern literal
CEB	11 I'm not saying this because I need anything, for I have learned how to be content in any circumstance. 12 I know the experience of being in need and of having more than enough; I have learned the secret to being content in any and every circumstance, whether full or hungry or whether having plenty or being poor. 13 I can endure all these things through the power of the one who gives me strength.	Favorite
CEV	11 I am not complaining about having too little. I have learned to be satisfied with[a] whatever I have. 12 I know what it is to be poor or to have plenty, and I have lived under all kinds of conditions. I know what it means to be full or to be hungry, to have too much or too little. 13 Christ gives me the strength to face anything.	modern literal

## Wrapping Up the Translation Study

In order to save paper, these last 5 pages will be the only ones printed unless someone specifically requests a paper copy of all 25 pages. If you want a printed copy of the entire report, please let Brenda know in the church office.

If you can use a computer, help us to save paper by downloading the entire PDF from the church website. Go to: <http://christumcmilton.com/>

By the way, if you want to do some of your own research, a great website is: <http://www.biblegateway.com/> It is free.

## **Conclusion**

This has been an interesting journey for me. I examined many more verses, but the grouping in this study is a sufficient sampling to illustrate some trends. I think I am also at a point in my research where I may draw some conclusions.

- 1. Since the cessation of publishing the NIV (1984) is what has prompted this study for me, I want to say a word about the NIV (2011).** I don't want anyone to think that I believe the NIV (2011) is a "poor" translation. If you have one and like, please enjoy it.
- 2. But having spent quite a bit of time in research, the NIV (2011) would not be my personal first choice for the future.**
- 3. I have been impressed with four translations** (not counting my already stated admiration for the NASB at the start of this project).

Both the **Holeman Christian Standard Bible** and the **English Standard Bible** lean a bit more on the literal side- and I like that. In some ways, they often read close to the old NIV while improving some of the NIV (1984) verses that needed attention.

I like the **New English Translation**. The acronym and name of this Bible is not a co-incidence. The NET Bible was designed to be a digital/Internet friendly Bible. The translation was conceived and moved forward mostly by faculty members of Dallas Theological Seminary. One of their concerns was that in this electronic age, the copyright issues with certain translations may be a hindrance to people being able to readily use the Bible. For example, have you noticed generally how easy and cheap (often free) the King James version is? That is partially because there is no copyright to the text and no one need pay a royalty to a publisher for its use.

While the NET Bible is indeed copyrighted (<http://netbible.com/content/net-bible-copyright>), the copyright page states that anyone may use it with a citation for free for non-commercial purposes. In this day and age, that is refreshing. Smart phone apps are now being offered for the NET Bible for free following these guidelines. I have one on my phone. It is a bit uncommon to be able to have a modern Study Bible with copious notes on your phone or computer for free.

The surprise of this study for me has been the **New Living Translation**. When I began this study, I thought of the NLT as a paraphrase which made a modern (if somewhat loose) translation of the original. The strength of a paraphrase is that it is designed to be such that almost anyone could be able

to read a passage and gain a basic understanding of it. The difficulty with a paraphrase is that you sometimes lose some of the nuance and specificity of the original language. This is, of course, true of any translation, but it is more prevalent in a paraphrase.

However, as this study progressed, I was amazed how often I liked the wording of the NLT.

I liked it so much that I thought it best to then do an Internet search of something like: “problems with the NLT” or “critical review NLT” to see what difficulties others had identified.

From doing this I discovered a couple of things. When originally released (1996), the New Living Translation was more of an adaptation of the old Living Bible (which was clearly a paraphrase). However, since then, it has been revised twice (2004 and 2007). This present research was done with the 2007 revision. I found it humorous to read a pretty scathing review on the Internet of the New Living Translation. Very specific and well reasoned critiques were presented in a very long presentation. I agreed with these critiques for the most part. When I got to the end, the author had an addendum. He stated that most of the problems above have been resolved in later versions of the NLT. I chuckled when I saw that.

While I might not recommend the 1996 version of the NLT for preaching and study, I'm really liking the later revisions. The translators have responded well to constructive criticism.

Because of these revisions, the New Living Translation is no longer quite categorized as a “paraphrase” (like Eugene Peterson's *The Message*). The editors of the NLT call their translation method “thought for thought” rather than word for word. So, while not a “literal” word for word translation, I think it does a good job of capturing the message of scripture in modern language.

I still prefer a more literal word for word translation, but I am impressed with the NLT.

#### **4. I'm a bit torn on gender neutrality.**

One of the root problems is that English is a limited language (in more ways than one). English simply does not have an adequate supply of gender neutral pronouns. Greek does a better job.

So in many verses where the intent is clearly gender neutral, it can be quite a challenge to translate the verse in a faithful manner that does not cause more problems than it solves.

While I'm open to the possibility of gender neutral language in certain spots, I also think there is validity to the argument I read that states in part: Look. The Bible is what it is. We should not change it to meet contemporary needs. Leave it the way it is and explain/discuss ways that our culture may be different (remember how shocked the Disciples were that Jesus would even talk with a Samaritan woman? That is very different from today.). This is all part of the teaching ministry of the Church.

Here are a couple of very simple examples that have been meaningful to me. While there are a lot of masculine images in our faith, there are some feminine ones as well. Even though I'm a guy, I am not one least bit offended at the notion that I (and the rest of the Church) am the bride of Christ. Why change or remove that image from our faith? I'm the “spouse of Christ”? Good grief. Leave it the way it was- the Bride of Christ.

I have spoken to some women who do not feel the same passion that our present culture seems to be

exerting on gender neutral language. For them, masculine language in the Bible is a complete non-issue.

Here is another example. In Galatians, Paul has written an entire letter explaining the doctrine of salvation. So people thought that all Christians should become Jews, and Paul refutes that idea. He not only shows how we are saved by faith (like Abraham) but he also addresses the purpose of the Law given to Moses. In that discussion he says that we (Christians) are “sons.”

Obviously, that is not gender neutral language, and some modern translations change that to “child.”

But I think many people miss the point that Paul is specifically NOT being Chauvinistic here. When it comes to salvation, he has already said (Galatians 3:28) that “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female. We are all one in Christ.” OK. That sounds pretty gender inclusive! He then says that we (same group he was talking about before) are sons. Well, remember, that in Paul's day and time, males predominately got the family inheritance. So it is actually rather remarkable that Paul is saying WE (male and female) are sons- and therefore heirs. Women are part of that number spiritually in a way that society did not allow economically.

When you gender neutralize this idea, you take away the egalitarian force of what Paul is arguing in an admittedly male biased culture. How is telling women that they are sons (metaphorically speaking) any different from telling men that they are Christ's bride? Each metaphor is just that- symbolic language meant to communicate truth.

## **5. Marketing Issues.**

In all this time, I have been focused a bit on theological issues when it comes to Bible translations. But now it is time to move to the practical issues related to production and marketing.

My goal for pew Bibles:

Good translation.

Hardback.

Large print (means 12 point)

At least two colors (one for the pew bibles, and one for people to personally buy if they want one).

This may sound really arrogant, but I am simply trying to be honest. At this moment, I have not found a Bible with all the right qualities together for pew bibles and preaching. That doesn't mean I'm not making a choice, but let me explain the limitations and frustrations I've encountered.

I have already said that while a fine translation, I lean a bit away from the New American Standard Bible because it is a bit more difficult to read.

I like the NET Bible, but I think it is not quite ready for “prime time.” If you go to a Christian bookstore, it will be unusual if you even find a copy. It is not widely marketed nor widely sold at this time. One employee told me- Yeah, I like that translation, but we don't really carry it. At another bookstore, the employee had never even heard of it. And when he looked it up, his catalog did not have it in large print. I recommend everyone get a copy for their smart phone since it is free, but the NET Bible is just not ready for pew use.

Among my favorite translations from my research, that leaves the Holman Christian Standard, the English Standard Version, and the New Living Translation (I'll share a special concern in a moment). I found all three at Christian bookstores and online.

One of the things I discovered in Bible marketing is that the words “large print” mean absolutely nothing. Everyone has a different standard. One bible maker called one of their Bibles “Large Print” when it had 7 point font! Yikes. That is tiny! (I'd hate to see their regular print!). Another calls 10.5 point font “Giant print.” Friends, that's just silly.

So I bought large print, hardback copies of three bibles and shared them in a couple of Bible studies to get feedback on print quality. I also made sure that these were the best options in each translation with multiple trips to the bookstores, and even calls to manufacturers. (Obviously, this information is accurate as of spring 2014. Who knows what the future will bring.)

The **Holman Christian Standard Bible** comes in several colors, but without exception, every person who picked it up said something like, “Eww! Yuk. This is too small.” The “large print” is 10.5 point font. I called Lifeway Bookstore- sorry can't help you, please call the publisher. I called the publisher and the nice lady said they had nothing, but she checked the summer and fall release schedule. Unfortunately, nothing was planned for the foreseeable future. She also said, you know, a lot of people call asking about large print Bibles. Hmmmm. It would appear decision-makers at Holman need to do some serious marketing research.

The **English Standard Version** comes in several colors. When I showed it to church members, it was received as “OK.” Not bad. Not wow. What my family calls “the middle category”. The font was of a pretty decent size (12.5 point), but the font was kind of skinny (not on the bolder side) and there was very little white space (of course this also makes the Bible have fewer pages by compressing the words). For example, there was no white space between paragraphs.

One extra feature I like about this Bible is that there are Scriptural Responsive Readings in the back. Long time Methodists will know that the old little brown Cokebury Hymnal had such responsive readings. Our current Hymnal has readings, but the publishers decided to only use the Psalms. I really love the broader readings from the rest of Scripture.

An extra challenge for us at Christ UMC is that this Bible is larger than most. I discovered that most pew bibles range from about 5 inches to 6 inches wide. This ESV Bible is 6.75” (almost 7 inches). It will just BARELY fit in our current pew racks along with two hymnals. While with a little concentration, I could get it in the rack, someone warned me that if some people have too much trouble, they are just going to leave it on the seat. I think it will fit, but it is a close shave.

When I showed the **New Living Translation**, the almost universal response was, “WOW! I like this one!” The font is about 12 point and dark. Also, there is half a blank line between paragraphs which helps avoid that feeling that everything is “running together.” By FAR, my small test sample said that the New Living Translation Personal Bible Large Print was the best looking Bible of them all. It was VERY readable. The size was very comparable to what we already have. It was a little expensive (about \$21), but Tyndale only makes it in one color in hardback. Tyndale does make a NLT “pew Bible” but the print is terribly small (around 7 point).

Now do you see why I said no one makes exactly what I want?

Every choice has a compromise or challenge.

HCSB- small print.

ESB- might or might not fit our pew rack easily.

NLT- only one color. I still have a concern about the translation.

**Given my research to this point, I almost recommended the NLT for our pews. It is a great translation, but in the end, I just couldn't do it.**

What changed my mind was actual sermon preparation for Sunday. In 1 Peter 1:3 we find these words (ESV) “he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance...”

As a teacher, I notice a cause and effect chain. 1. We are born again 2. to a Living Hope 3. through the Resurrection

The New Living Translation leaves out part 2 of the chain for some reason.

“we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance...”

This is the nature of freer translations. Thought may be sometimes summarized so that the main ideas are communicated (and done well) but then- some specificity might be missing.

This was a good and simple example of why I like a more literal translation.

The next page (last page) has the specific recommendations.

I will be making the following recommendations and observations to the Administrative Board:

1. No one makes what I want at this time.

2. My first preference would be for the English Standard Version and just deal with the tightness issue in our pew racks. (see page 20 of the entire PDF document at <http://christumcmilton.com/> )

I recommend black Bibles. If people want to order a personal copy, they are available in blue.  
Costs: \$12.49 each if ordered in case of 24. Personal blue copies will be more if not at 24 copies.  
Biblesbythecase.com

3. My second preference would be the new NIV (2011).

This is not a “bad” translation- but I also no longer think it is the best. Further, I don't think it is as bad as some have made it out to be. I will admit that I have been disappointed in the corporate marketing issues related to this translation. But on the other had, these people know what a “pew Bible” is supposed to look like. The new NIV (2011) would look and feel exactly like what we have.

I recommend we go to brown. If people want a personal copy, they can use blue.  
Costs: \$11.99 each if case of 16. Personal blue copies will be more in not 16 copies.  
Biblesbythecase.com

An additional issue with this translation is some confusion. Many people (I was one of them) will not understand why their “NIV” is not word for word the same as the new one we would have in the pew.

4. My third preference would be for the New Living Translation Personal edition, Large Print.

It is a good translation, and I would adapt to preaching from it overall, but I will probably find myself as a teacher saying something like-- now in the original, it says xxxxx. My concern would be that over time, someone might think I believe the NLT is a “bad” translation.

This would be one of the more expensive options. We are looking at about \$24 per copy (which includes the shipping). Hardback only comes in one color. So personal copies would need to be a.) the more expensive soft cover copies; or b.) the pew Bibles might need to be marked in some way (which might not remain pretty over time).

5. And then my fourth preference would be for the Common English Bible (CEB). The Methodist church is moving toward this translation already and buying suitable large print pew Bibles should not be a problem (though I have not yet seen a sample of the large print pew Bible yet).

Cost: brown, \$12.59 plus shipping Cokesbury. Personal copies, blue (not quite as dark as the hymnals).

This an acceptable translation, but like the NLT and the NIV (2011), I personally don't think it would be among the best.

6. Unrelated to Pew Bibles, if anyone has a smart phone, I recommend an app that has the NET Bible. I use an iPhone and one app (free) is called Lumina.

*Pastor Ronnie Bearden, May 1, 2014*

*For all 25 pages, go to: <http://christumcmilton.com/> Look at bottom of the first page.*