

NIV Bible Changes Gender-Inclusive Language

The world's best-selling Bible is getting an upgrade. Since its debut in 1978, the New International Version, known as the NIV, has been the Bible of choice for evangelicals, selling more copies than any other version. But a 2002 gender-inclusive edition bombed after being condemned as too liberal.

Translators hope their latest edition, which is available for preview at [niv.org](#), will avoid a similar fate. They've retained some of the language of the 2002 edition. But they also made changes—like going back to using words such as “mankind” and “man” instead of “human beings” and “people” — to appease critics.

Wheaton College Bible scholar Doug Moo, head the translation committee, said the group tried to create an accurate English Bible without angering readers. He thinks even critics will respect their work. Translators talked to them ahead of time and gathered suggestions for changes.

“We really tried to get it right this time,” he said to the *The Nashville Tennessean*. “We tried to be careful about not bowing to any cultural or ecclesiastical agenda.”

Today, the Committee on Bible Translation, which translated the NIV, admits Today's New International Version, the revision released in 2002, was a mistake. They substituted "brothers and sisters" where the New Testament writers used "brothers."

They also broke a promise they'd made to James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, John Piper, pastor of Minneapolis megachurch Bethlehem Baptist, and other conservative pastors, not to produce a gender-inclusive NIV. In response, Dobson said translators had distorted the Word of God.

Jay Phelan, senior professor of theological studies at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, was a fan of the 2002 version. He worries that the translators have buckled under pressure from conservatives.

"The whole idea that we want to make this constituency or that constituency unhappy is wrong," he said. "Your job is to produce the most accurate translation possible."

Moo disagrees. He says the new version of the NIV is accurate. But he also admits that the committee did some research to see what words evangelical Christians, who are most likely to buy the new NIV, prefer. So far most of the critics of the last

version have remained silent about the new one.'