The Neutering of "Man" in the NIVI
Andreas J. Köstenberger

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Discussions of the merits or demerits of the planned (now abandoned) "genderinclusive" NIV in the US in recent weeks have frequently suffered from insufficient data. The following comparative study of the translation of the Greek words *anthrōpos* ("man," "human being") and *anēr* ("man") seeks to provide such data. The results of this study must be made public even subsequent to IBS's decision to forego the development of an "Inclusive Language Edition" of the NIV in the US, since it is still insufficiently known and acknowledged that the UK edition (published by Hodder & Stoughton and still available at this time; from here on NIVI) is fundamentally flawed and inaccurate at several significant points.

The terms *anthrōpos* and *anēr* are, of course, not the only relevant words at issue; changes such as those from "non-inclusive" pronouns or participles to "gender-inclusive" ones also contribute to the changed landscape of "gender-inclusive" translations such as the NIVI. Nevertheless, *anthrōpos* and *anēr* are among the most important gender-related terms in the New Testament. *anthrōpos* occurs a total of five hundred and fifty times, *anēr* two hundred and sixteen times. Surveying the changes of translation from the NIV to the NIVI, one is at once struck by the fact that the translators had to resort to no less than twelve different ways to eliminate the English word "man" and replace it with a more "gender-inclusive" term.

It must be noted at the outset that some of these changes are helpful. Still, one is overwhelmed by the magnitude of change to which the conventional NIV was subjected in order to "gender-inclusivize" it.

The Translation Of *Anthrōpos*

Of the five hundred and fifty instances of *anthrōpos*, a full two hundred and forty-five (or 44%) were changed in order to make them "gender-inclusive." The percentage further escalates dramatically when one realizes that ninety-five references are already translated gender-inclusively in the current NIV and ninety-three references are to individuals who are undeniably male.

The following five types of alterations account for over four fifths of all changes in the NIVI:

- from singular to inclusive plural (e.g. from "man" to "people"; 9%);
- from singular to inclusive singular (e.g. from "man" to "person"; 15%);
- from plural to inclusive plural (e.g. from "men" to "people"; 33%);
• from indirect to direct reference (e.g. from "man's" to "your"; 9%);
• from noun/personal pronoun to adjective/adverb (e.g. from "man's" to "human"; 15%).

Thirty references (or 12% of all changes made) involve a change in grammatical number (from singular to plural or vice versa; see categories 1, 4, 6, and 7 under "Changes" below).

**What Are We To Make Of These Changes?**

To begin with, it must be maintained that anthrōpos, contrary to frequently made assertions, does not necessarily mean "human being." Demonstrably, the term, especially in the singular, frequently, even usually, means "man," not "man or woman" (see e.g. John 1:6; 3:1). The argument that the Greek word anēr means "man" or "male" while the term anthrōpos means "person" or "human being" rather than "man," remarkably persistent in popular circles and perhaps also influencing translation practice at certain points, can therefore not be maintained. Still, anthrōpos, especially in the plural, often (but not always) refers to "people," including both men and women.

When considering the categories of change listed above, it becomes clear that alterations involving a change in grammatical number are inappropriate and should be avoided, since they fail to reflect the number used in the Greek original text. Also, a change from indirect to direct reference is precarious, because it changes the entire thrust of a given reference from a general statement to a direct address of the respective audience (cf. e.g. Mark 7:15-23).

Apart from this, only a case-by-case review of scriptural references can decide whether a given passage is genderspecific or gender-inclusive in the Greek original. In the remainder of the article, we will focus on those changes introduced into the NIVI that most seriously compromise accuracy in translation.

**A. Deletions Or Avoidance Of The Word "Man" In Translation Even Where Reference Is Made To A Male Human Being Or Male Human Beings In The Greek Original**

1. **From "Men" To "Disciples"**

Matt. 8:27 (NIV): "The men were amazed and asked, ‘What kind of man is this?’"

Matt. 8:27 (NIVI): "The disciples were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this?""

The word anthrōpos is here best translated as "men," as in the original NIV. Changing the rendering to "disciples" in order to render the term gender-inclusively as the NIVI has done can at best be characterized as an attempt at paraphrase rather than translation. Note also that the term used here is not the word mathētai (Greek for "disciples"), but the word anthrōpos. The effort to "gender-neutralize" this reference leads to a loss in translation accuracy and compromises the original Greek wording.

2. **From "His" To "The"**
Matt 13:52 (NIV): "Therefore every teacher of the law... is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

Matt 13:52 (NIV): "Therefore every teacher of the law... is like the owner of a house who brings out of the storeroom new treasures as well as old."

The Greek masculine pronoun autou, appropriately translated in the original NIV with "his," is rendered in the NIVI with the article "the" in order to eliminate masculine gender. This introduces an inaccuracy in translation, since the Greek pronoun is clearly masculine and should be rendered accordingly in English translation.

3. From "Fellow" To "Person"

Luke 14:30 (NIV): "'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'"

Luke 14:30 (NIVI): "'This person began to build and was not able to finish.'"

In this brief parable, "fellow" is changed to "person" in order to extract the notion of maleness from the original NIV translation. But the change is very awkward and hardly reflects true parlance. Who would say, "This person began to build and was not able to finish"? Also, notice the progression from the NIV to the NIVI: the Greek term "man" (anthrōpos) is rendered "fellow" in the NIV and "person" in the NIVI.

4. From "Man Of The Pharisees" To "Pharisee"

John 3:1 (NIV): "Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council."

John 3:1 (NIVI): "Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council."

In this passage, the NIVI omits the word "man" in reference to Nicodemus. However, omitting the English equivalent for the Greek word anthrōpos blunts an important connection with the use of the same word, anthrōpos, in the immediately preceding verses, John 2:24-25. Note also that there are many instances in the New Testament where anthrōpos in the singular clearly refers to a man, not a man or a woman (e.g. John 1:6: "There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John"), so that there seems to be no problem with retaining the rendering of the original NIV.

B. Eliminating References To Jesus' Maleness

1. From "Mere Man" To "Mere Human Being"

John 10:33 (NIV): "'We are not stoning you for any of these,’ replied the Jews, 'but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.' "

...
John 10:33 (NIV): "'We are not stoning you for any of these,' replied the Jews, 'but for blasphemy, because you, a mere human being, claim to be God.'"

Similar to the following examples, the change from "a mere man" to "a mere human being" has the effect of downplaying Jesus' maleness during his earthly incarnate state.

2. Jesus' Death: From "One Man" To "One Person"

John 11:50 (NIV): "You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

John 11:50 (NIV): "You do not realize that it is better for you that one person die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

Did Caiaphas say that it was expedient for one man or one person to die for the people? The context seems to suggest that the reference is to one man, Jesus. He was the one of whom the Pharisees said, "This man (anthrōpos) is performing many signs" (v. 47). And he is the one of whom John says that Caiaphas prophesied that "Jesus was going to die for the nation" (v. 51). The reference in John 18:14 is almost identical.

3. Adam's Sin And Jesus' Resurrection: From "Man" To "Human Being"

1 Cor 15:21 (NIV): "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man."

1 Cor 15:21 (NIV): "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a human being."

Twice in this passage, the word "man" is changed to "human being." The verse immediately following makes it clear that the reference is to Adam and Christ: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." Adam was undeniably male; the logic of the argument in this passage requires that Christ also be characterized as male in analogy with Adam. As in previous examples, "gender-inclusive" language here significantly dilutes the biblical message.

4. From "Being Found In Appearance As A Man" To "Being Found In Appearance As A Human Being"

Philippians 2:8 (NIV): "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-even death on a cross!"

Philippians 2:8 (NIV): "And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-even death on a cross!"
The current *NIV Study Bible* comments on this verse, "Not only was Jesus 'like' a human being (v. 7), but he also took on the actual outward characteristics of a man (see Jn 1:14; Ro 8:3; Heb 2:17)." This accurately preserves the notion, in context, that the reference is here to Jesus’ earthly sojourn, particularly his crucifixion. And this crucifixion Jesus suffered, not merely as an undifferentiated human being, but specifically and concretely as a *man*, as the current NIV rightly notes. Changing "man" to "human being" here is another instance where an attempt at gender inclusion introduces an inaccuracy into the translation of the original text.

5. Jesus’ Mediatorial Office: From "The Man Christ Jesus" To "Jesus Christ, Himself Human"

1 Tim 2:5 (NIV): "For there is one God and one mediator between God and *men*, the *man* Christ Jesus."

1 Tim 2:5 (NIVI): "For there is one God and one mediator between God and *human beings*, Christ Jesus, *himself human*."

Apart from the awkwardness of the phrase "Christ Jesus, himself human," in English, this rendering dilutes the maleness of Jesus during his incarnate state similar to the previous reference. The translators are correct in observing that part of Paul’s point here is the *humanness* of Jesus: he was able to mediate between God and man because he himself was a man, that is, a human being. But Paul is also clearly thinking of Jesus' earthly life and sacrifice on the cross which he made as a man, a male. Thus both truths are emphasized here by Paul, that Jesus was a *human being* and that Jesus, in his incarnate state, was a *man*. However, by changing "man" (which, it is important to be reminded, is not necessarily a gender-exclusive term in English) to "human being," the NIVI unduly focuses merely on one aspect of Paul’s statement, Jesus’ *humanity*, while deleting any reference to his earthly identity as a *man*. This is therefore another instance where the NIV blunts or blurs gender distinctions in Scripture.

C. Were Doctrinal Disputes Conducted Between Male Teachers Or Between "Persons"?

1. The False Teachers Opposing Timothy And Jude: From "Men" To "Persons" Or "People"

2 Tim 3:8 (NIV): "Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these *men* oppose the truth-*men* of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected."

2 Tim 3:8 (NIVI): "Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these *people* oppose the truth-*people* of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected."

Jude 4 (NIV): "For certain *men* whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless *men* who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."
Jude 4 (NIV): "For certain persons whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless people, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."

In these two instances, the rendering of the identity of Timothy's and Jude's opponents is changed from the original NIV's "men" to "persons" or "people." Why this change? The only heretics named in 1 and 2 Timothy are male: Hymenaeus (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17), Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20), and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17). Unless the translators of the NIVI had access to further information not already available at the original translation of the NIV (and apart from Rev. 2:20, which refers to a much later time period, there is no such evidence), it is preferable to retain the wording of the original NIV (cf. also Acts 20:30, where the NIVI changes the NIV's rendering, "Even from your own number men (andres) will arise and distort the truth," to: "Even from your own number some will arise and distort the truth").

2. From "Man Of God" To "God's Servant"

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NIV): "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NIVI): "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that God's servant may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The term "man of God" is here changed to "God's servant." But the word used here is anthrōpos, not the Greek word for "servant," diakonos. In context, the reference is probably to Timothy and other men called to a public teaching and preaching ministry. In any case, substituting the word "servant" for "man" is unwarranted by the Greek original text, at best diminishing the NIVI from translation to paraphrase and at worst introducing an inaccuracy in translation. Note also that the rendering of this verse may have a bearing on who, according to Paul, is called to the kind of ministry Timothy performed (that is, pastor-teacher): men, or both men and women (see also the following section).

D. Changes Pertaining To The Gender Of Old Testament Priests And Prophets

1. OT Priests: From "Selected From Among Men" To "Selected From Among Human Beings"

Heb 5:1 (NIV): "Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."

Heb 5:1 (NIVI): "Every high priest is selected from among human beings and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."
Heb 7:8 (NIV): "In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living."

Heb 7:8 (NIVI): "In the one case, the tenth is collected by those who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living."

Were Old Testament priests selected from among men or from among human beings? And was the tithe collected by men who die or by those who die? It is an historical fact that women were ineligible for the Old Testament priesthood. This fact is obscured by the change from "men" to "human beings" or "those" in the NIVI. The present passages constitute therefore further significant instances where the NIVI translators render gender-inclusively what is gender-specific in the Greek original.

2. OT Prophets: From "Men" To "Human"

2 Pet 1:21 (NIV): "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2 Pet 1:21 (NIVI): "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

The NIV's rendering "men spoke from God" is changed here to "prophets, though human." Apart from the fact that this paraphrase is awkward in English, and the fact that the word "though" has no equivalent in the Greek original, the change introduced in the NIVI from "men" to "human" dilutes the historical fact that all of the OT writing prophets were men.

Concluding Observations On The Translation Of Anthrōpos

To summarize the extent of these changes introduced into the NIVI: (1) the word "man" is frequently changed or deleted even where reference is clearly made to a male human being; (2) in several significant instances, the masculinity of Jesus is downplayed; (3) the doctrinal disputes involving Timothy or Jude are cast as having occurred between persons rather than men, which dilutes the unique teaching role assigned to men in the Pastorals and elsewhere in Scripture; and (4) the gender of both Old Testament priests and prophets is "neutered." We will reserve some final comments for the concluding summary after the survey of the translation of anēr.

The Translation Of Anēr

While anthrōpos, especially in the plural, may refer to people including both men and women, it is commonly agreed that anēr is the Greek term referring specifically to a man, a male human being. Thus references to "husband" or to a person undeniably male (even according to the NIVI) alone account for over two thirds of all instances of anēr in the New Testament. The following survey will seek to determine
whether the NIV translators respected this fact or whether they sought to render anēr gender-inclusively as well.

Since almost sixty percent of all uses of anēr, or a total of one hundred and twenty-seven references, occur in Luke’s writings, we may start with the way in which the NIV renders gender-related terms found in Luke and Acts. Is Luke allowed to speak for himself? The following analysis suggests that this is frequently not the case.

A. Issues Pertaining To The Translation Of Gender-Related Terms In Luke-Acts

1. References To "Men AND WOMEN" In Acts

Six times in Acts (5:14; 8:3, 12; 9:21; 17:12; 22:4) Luke refers to "both men and women." This indicates that this biblical author was in fact able to, and did, use the phrase "men and women" if he so desired. The question must therefore be asked whether it is appropriate to supply the phrase "and women" when Luke does not do so himself. This may come dangerously close to usurping Luke's role as the author of inspired holy Scripture.

2. References To "People" In Acts

If Luke wanted to say "people," other words were available to him, such as ochlos (Acts 1:15; 6:7; 8:6; 11:24, 26; 13:45; 14:11, 13, 14, 18, 19; 16:22; 17:8, 13; 19:26, 33, 35; 21:27, 34, 35; 24:12, 18) or laos (Acts 2:47; 3:9, 11, 12, 23; 4:1, 2, 8, 10, 17, 21, 25, 27; 5:12, 13, 50, 25, 26, 34, 37; 6:8, 12; 7:17, 34; 10:2, 41, 42; 12:4, 11; 13:15, 17, 24, 31; 15:14; 18:10; 19:4; 21:28, 30, 36, 39, 40; 23:5; 26:17, 23; 28:17, 26, 27). As the abundance of references makes clear, Luke used these words with great frequency. One therefore has to ask the question whether changing the translation of anthrōpos and even anēr to "people" does not level the distinction between Luke's use of these words and his use of ochlos or laos.

3. Observations Regarding The Waygroups Are Addressed In The Book Of Acts

A significant number of references in Luke's writings pertains to the way groups are addressed (Acts 1:11, 16; 2:14, 22, 29, 37; 3:12; 5:35; 6:3; 7:2; 13:15, 16, 26, 38; 14:15; 15:7, 13; 17:22; 19:25, 35; 21:28; 22:1, 3; 23:6; 27:10, 21, 25, 28:17). In virtually every instance, the NIV "genderneutralizes" the way audiences are addressed, changing the rendering of the original NIV from "men" to "people" or from "brothers" to "brothers and sisters." (Note that, inconsistently, the references to "brothers and fathers" in 7:2 and 22:1 are not changed to "brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers"; apparently, this was considered too cumbersome by the NIV translators.) But these speeches were given at a specific point in time in a particular cultural context (where men were considered to be the heads of households and leaders in the community). By changing the translation of andres consistently in a way that neuters gender, the historical particularity and cultural specificity of Luke's historical reporting is compromised. For Luke's use of language is part of the accuracy and historical veracity of his account.
B. Specific Examples From The Writings Of Luke And James

Since the following evidence speaks for itself, comments can be held to a minimum.

1. Carrying The Paralytic: From "Men" To "People"

Luke 5:18 (NIV): "Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus."

Luke 5:18 (NIVI): "Some people came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus."

"Men" (NIV) is here changed to "people" (NIVI) despite the fact that the word used here is anēr, "man." Moreover, even if the plural form of anēr, andres, could mean people (which it probably does not), it is unclear on what basis the NIVI translators made this change. Did they have access to further information indicating that women were among those carrying the paralytic?

2. A Replacement Apostle For Judas: From "One Of The Men" To "One Of Those"

Acts 1:21 (NIV): "Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us."

Acts 1:21 (NIVI): "Therefore it is necessary to choose one of those who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us."

The NIV indicated that the replacement apostle for Judas was chosen from among the men (NIV) who had been with the apostles; the NIVI changes this to "those," eliminating the gender-specific reference. However, it is clear both from the usage of anēr and historical evidence that the replacement apostle was required to be male, so that the substitution of "those" for "men" waters down both linguistic and historical data.

3. Those Accompanying Paul On Damascus Road: From "Men" To "Those"

Acts 9:7 (NIV): "The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone."

Acts 9:7 (NIVI): "Those traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone."

The NIV identified those traveling with Paul as men; the NIVI changes this to "those," apparently a mixed group of people. But again, the term used is andres, the plural form of anēr, so that "men traveling with Saul" is the proper rendering. Also, similar to Luke 5:18 above, the question arises on what basis the NIVI
translators made this change, since it is doubtful that they had additional evidence regarding the composition of the group traveling with Paul.

4. Paul's Prediction That False Teachers Would Arise Subsequent To His Departure From Ephesus: From "Men" To "Some"

Acts 20:30 (NIV): "Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."

Acts 20:30 (NIVI): "Even from your own number some will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."

According to the NIV, Paul predicted that "men" would arise even from within the Ephesian church after his departure. The NIVI changes this to "some" as part of a consistent effort to neuter the gender of the doctrinal opposition in the early church. This was already found problematic in the case of 2 Timothy 3:8 and Jude 4, where the word used is anthr¯opos. It is even more objectionable in the present instance, where the Greek term used is anēr, "man." One may be forgiven at this point if one wonders which word, if not aner, Paul or Luke should have used to convince the NIVI translators that they were in fact talking about men.

5. From "A Double-Minded Man"To "Double-Minded People"

Jas 1:8 (NIV): "he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does"

Jas 1:8 (NIVI): "They are double-minded and unstable in all they do"

The image is here changed from a double-minded man who is unstable in all he does in the NIV to double-minded people who are unstable in all they do. Which did James have in mind? Arguably, a double-minded man, since he used the word anēr, "man." (Note that this may constitute Semitic style paralleling the Hebrew term 'ish found in passages such as Ps. 1:1.)

6. From "Man Who Looks At His Face In A Mirror"To "People Who Look At Their Faces In A Mirror"

Jas 1:23 (NIV): "Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror."

Jas 1:23 (NIVI): "Those who listen to the word but do not do what it says are like people who look at their faces in a mirror."

Is James' illustration seeking to depict a man looking at his face in the mirror (NIV) or "people" looking at "their faces" in the mirror (NIVI)? It is hard to keep a straight face trying to imagine the latter scenario,
all those people standing in front of a mirror looking at their faces. Again, James uses the Greek word for "man," anēr; he is thinking of a man looking at himself in a mirror.

**Concluding Observations On The Translation Of Anēr In The NIVI**

It has already been noted in the survey of the translation of anthrōpos above that their commitment to gender-inclusive language frequently led the NIVI translators to neuter the word "man" in Scripture. The survey of the NIVI’s translation of anēr has shown that the translators did not only seek to render anthrōpos inclusively whenever possible, they also applied a similar treatment to the Greek word for man in distinction to woman, anēr. This reveals the lengths to which this translation is prepared to change the wording of Scripture in order to realize gender inclusion. However, as a number of specific examples have demonstrated, this led to the improper neutering of biblical references to men. Thus at several significant points, the NIVI translators do not allow Luke to speak for himself, compromising the historical and cultural accuracy of his account. This is especially an issue in Acts where groups are addressed. Luke was capable of saying "men and women" or of using the term "people." But where he chose to use gender-specific Greek terms, his wording should be respected. Moreover, the NIVI's "gender-inclusive" translation tends to dilute style characteristic of biblical writers. Apart from Luke, this is evident especially in the case of James, where every single reference to both anthrōpos and anēr is gender-neutralized, significantly changing the character of the entire book.

**Summary And Conclusion**

The inevitable conclusion from the above stated examples is that the NIVI is a translation that is flawed and inaccurate at many significant points and therefore deserves to be withdrawn. This is the case especially since the present study only covers the New Testament, and here only the translation of the terms anthrōpos and anēr. The results of this present study impressively underscore the importance of following proper guidelines for the translation of gender-related scriptural language in order to avoid the kind of "neutering" of biblical terms referring to man achieved by the NIVI (see the Guidelines for Translation of Gender-Related Language in Scripture elsewhere in this issue).