

What do the majority of translations say?

THE CAUTION

Ian and Averil recognize the importance of using a range of different translations:

'Translation is not straightforward; words have different meanings according to context, and translations are influenced by the background and understanding of the translators and commentators. It is important, therefore, never to rely on just one translation or on one commentator.'¹

However, when reviewing Ian and Averil's use of translations readers will note that in three cases only one translation is appealed to, and in one case no particular translation is appealed to at all.

In one case a translation used is particularly old (Diaglott), in another case it is in a completely irrelevant language (Vulgate), and in yet another a fringe translation of no scholarly reputation is appealed to (JNT).

In most cases a translation with an egalitarian bias or using gender neutral language is used, and in the majority of cases the number of translations agreeing with them is significantly smaller than the number of translations which do not.

CLAIMS AND TRANSLATIONS

- **Claim:** The word for 'deacon' (*diakonos*), in Romans 16:1², should be translated as a title meaning 'deacon'³

Translations cited: JB⁴, NEB⁵, REB⁶, RSV⁷.

Translations agreeing: NRSV⁸, NLT⁹, TNIV¹⁰, CEV¹¹, NAB¹². **Translations disagreeing:** ESV¹³, GNB/TEV¹⁴, HCSB¹⁵, Message¹⁶, NASB95¹⁷, NCV¹⁸, NET¹⁹, ISV²⁰, NIV²¹, NIRV²², TLB²³.

² In 'All One – NT', p. 30 (2007), Ian and Averil identify the word for 'deacon' (DIAKONOS), as occurring in Romans 16:2 ("Deacon" in Romans 16:2 is presented as a title or an office'), and in 'All One', p. 36 (March 2009), the same mistake is made ('Accordingly, in Romans 16:2 diakonos is frequently translated as a title or an office'), but the correct reference is Romans 16:1.

³ 'Accordingly, in Romans 16:2 diakonos is frequently translated as a title or an office.', *ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴ 'a deaconess'.

⁵ 'who holds office in the congregation'.

⁶ 'a minister in the church'.

⁷ 'a deaconess'.

⁸ 'a deacon'.

⁹ 'a deacon'.

¹⁰ 'a deacon'.

¹¹ 'a leader'.

¹² 'a minister'.

¹³ 'a servant'.

¹⁴ 'who serves the church'.

¹⁵ 'a servant'.

¹⁶ 'she's a key representative of the church at Cenchrea'.

¹⁷ 'a servant'.

¹⁸ 'a helper'.

¹⁹ 'a servant'.

Conclusion: This claim is supported only by a minority of translations.

- **Claim:** The words *anēr* and *gunē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 should be translated 'husband' and 'wife' rather than 'man' and 'woman'²⁴

Translations cited: None. **Other translations agreeing:** ESV, GNB/TEV, Message, NAB.

Other translations disagreeing: CEV, HCSB, ISV, NASB95, NCV, NET, NIV, NIRV, NLT, TLB, TNIV. **Conclusion:** This claim is supported only by a minority of translations.

- **Claim:** The word *adelphoi* in 1 Corinthians 14:26 should be translated as a reference to both brothers and sisters²⁵

²⁰ 'a servant'.

²¹ 'a servant'.

²² 'she serves the church'.

²³ 'a dear Christian woman'.

²⁴ 'From the point of view of the part played in ecclesial life, 1 Corinthians 11 does not show any distinction in role. There is no suggestion that because the husband is head of the wife, therefore the wife should not pray or prophesy in the meetings.', 'All One', p. 53 (March 2009).

²⁵ 'There is no distinction made as to whether it is a sister or a brother who brings a hymn, a lesson (didache, "teaching"), a revelation, a tongue, or interpretation. By saying "each one" when addressing the brothers and sisters, Paul indicates clearly that he is referring to both.', p. 45 'All One' (March 2009).

¹ 'All One', p. 4 (March 2009).

Translations cited: NIVI (1996)²⁶. **Other translations agreeing:** CEV²⁷, GNT²⁸, Message²⁹, NCV³⁰, NET³¹, NIRV³², NLT³³, NRSV³⁴. **Other translations disagreeing:** ESV, HCSB, ISV, NAB, NLT. **Conclusion:** This claim is supported by the majority of translations.

- **Claim:** The command to pray with holy and uplifted hands in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 refers to both men and women praying³⁵

Translations cited: Emphatic Diaglott, modern Greek New Testament, JNT, Vulgate. **Other translations agreeing:** CEV³⁶. **Other translations disagreeing:** HCSB, ISV, Message, NASB95, NCV, NET, NIV, NIRV, NLT, TLB, TNIV. **Conclusion:** This claim is supported only by a minority of translations.

²⁶ On p. 42 of 'All One' (March 2009), Ian and Averil incorrectly cite the publication date as 1995, and on p. 45 they incorrectly cite the date as 1998; the correct date of publication is 1996, by Hodder and Stoughton.

²⁷ 'my friends'.

²⁸ 'my brothers and sisters'.

²⁹ 'So here's what I want you to do'.

³⁰ 'brothers and sisters'.

³¹ brothers and sisters'.

³² 'Brothers and sisters'.

³³ my brothers and sisters'.

³⁴ 'my friends'.

³⁵ 'But some translations consider that Paul's instructions also refer to women praying.', 'All One', p. 81 (March, 2009).

³⁶ 'I want everyone everywhere to lift innocent hands toward heaven and pray'.

- **Claim:** The injunction concerning women and authority in 1 Timothy 2:12 should be translated 'I permit no wife to teach or to have authority over her husband'³⁷

Translations cited: NRSV (footnote). **Other translations agreeing:** None. **Other translations disagreeing:** CEV, ESV, GNB/TEV, HCSB, ISV, Message, NAB, NASB95, NCV, NET, NIV, NIRV, NLT, NRSV (text), TLB, TNIV. **Conclusion:** This claim is supported only by a minority of translations.

- **Claim:** The women in 1 Timothy 3:11 should be identified as women deacons,³⁸ rather than the wives of male deacons (note ³⁹ below)

³⁷ 'The switch from "women" in the plural (verse 9) to "woman" (gyne) and "man" (aner) in the singular in verses 11 & 12, and the reference to childbearing in verse 15, likewise suggest a marriage context.', 'All One', p.87 (March, 2009).

³⁸ 'The REB translates "Women in this office", and many modern translations add a footnote which says "or, deaconesses". TNIV (2004) puts the footnote: "Probably women who are deacons, or possibly deacons' wives". Since Phoebe in Romans 16 was described as a deacon, there is precedent for this.', pp. 100-101, 'All One' (March 2009).

³⁹ Translations have been identified as 'Translations agreeing', if they include the ambiguous word 'women' in the text, but suggest 'women deacons' as an alternative rendering in a footnote, whereas translations have been identified as 'Translations disagreeing' if they rendered the text as a reference to the wives of deacons, though they may say in a footnote that 'deaconesses' is a possible rendering

Translations cited: REB. **Other translations agreeing:** Message, NAB⁴⁰, NASB95⁴¹, NCV⁴², NRSV⁴³, TNIV⁴⁴. **Other translations disagreeing:** CEV, ESV⁴⁵, GNB⁴⁶, HCSB, ISV⁴⁷, NET⁴⁸, NIV⁴⁹, NIRV, NLT⁵⁰, TLB. **Conclusion:** This claim is supported only by a minority of translations.

(Jonathan Burke, 2010)

⁴⁰ 'Women', a footnote says 'Women: this seems to refer to women deacons but may possibly mean wives of deacons. The former is preferred because the word is used absolutely'.

⁴¹ 'women', a footnote says 'I.e. either deacons' wives or deaconesses'.

⁴² 'women', a footnote says 'This might mean the wives of the deacons, or it might mean women who serve in the same way as deacons'.

⁴³ 'women', a footnote says 'Or Their wives, or Women deacons'.

⁴⁴ 'women', a footnote says 'Probably women who are deacons, or possibly deacons' wives'.

⁴⁵ 'Their wives', a footnote says 'Or Wives, likewise, must, or Women, likewise, must'.

⁴⁶ The text has 'Their wives', a footnote says 'Their wives; or Women helpers'.

⁴⁷ their wives', a footnote says 'Or Women'.

⁴⁸ 'their wives', a lengthy footnote includes 'It is possible that this refers to women who serve as deacons, "deaconesses."', but also says 'The translation "wives" - referring to the wives of the deacons - is probably to be preferred'.

⁴⁹ 'In the same way, their wives', a footnote says 'Or way, deaconesses'.

⁵⁰ 'Their wives', a footnote says 'Or the women deacons. The Greek word can be translated women or wives'.