

Can the ESV and TNIV Co-Exist in the Same Universe?

Prayer — Last year's ETS: Mark Strauss,

“Why the ESV Should Not Become the English Standard Version”

Invited a response paper — this is a response

Disclaimers

1. NT Chair of the ESV (no longer — please don't read anything into that)
2. CBT — not met yet, no first hand information — Doug Moo
3. VP of Educational Development for BibleGateway — owned by Zondervan

Shameless plug

Flyers — sign up for alpha release

So much more than search — quality content; mWiki (student papers)

“Can the ESV and TNIV Co-Exist in the Same Universe?”

Tempted: “In light of current developments, evidently not” and open floor for ?

Debate is larger than the ESV / TNIV debate

Will use ESV and NIV as labels

Debate of formal vs functional

Pick on Wayne Grudem (ESV) and Mark Strauss (TNIV)

Both have published and spoken frequently on this topic

Friends; seen this paper

ANSWER THE QUESTION WITH “YES, IN FACT, THEY MUST CO-EXIST (NIV2011)”

I do not believe that one size fits all — any more

Children no longer learn to read by reading the Bible

Post-Christian culture — expunges any hint of biblical language / metaphor

When I was a full-time pastor, I preached from the ESV

Consistent Bible usage throughout the church

Retains ambiguity; footnotes — didn't have to correct the translation (dangerous)

Except for VBS

Hundreds of unchurched kids from the neighborhood

No idea of their church background — mom felt about “man” and “he”

Used the TNIV — caused Stan Gundry no end of delight (free case)

After all — goal of translation is communication

If kids wouldn't pick it up, or understand it — what's the point?

End goal is not academic debate or being right — make disciples , glorify

HOW CAN THE ESV AND NIV2011 CO-EXIST? — PLAY FAIR! (SEVEN PRINCIPLES)

1. Enjoy aggressive, rigorous debate, but all debate comes under Eph 4:29

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (TNIV) — “That it may give grace to those who hear” (ESV).

For the most part, Wayne and Mark have done this

“ESV ... has found a niche market among those who believe that archaic and unclear language is the sign of a proper Bible.” (betterbibles.com)

2. Never question motives

George Ladd — don't know what they are; don't matter

Language, often unintentionally, questions motives

Seems that Wayne does this some of the time

P. 22 — Genuinely believe “man” and “he” are generic. — All do this

Do not translate the Song of Solomon “literally” because its anatomically precise language is offensive to many.

Paul's *σκυβαλα* is “excrement, manure, garbage, kitchen scraps” — “crap”

Jude 23: “save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, *hating even the garment stained by the flesh*” — Moo

3. Related: Never question competency (*ad hominem*)

Issue of the terminology we use — often unintentional

Mark says the ESV “misses” the point,” “without due consideration,” “misguided,” “without considering” — not there — page 2, 11 (FS too)

4. Respect translation philosophies — or at least debate at that level

Instead of saying that the NIV “omits” certain words

Argue real issue: “Is meaning conveyed more by words or by sentences?”

Mark says ESV would “get it right” if they, in essence, became functional — p. 1

Colloquial translation, okay

FS (37) allows for varying styles (more formal)

Take the issue of word choice — how much to flatten the English language

(Omit the issue of a children's Bible)

Language is not simple — deep, rich, textured, operates at many levels

We all have different registers — same words have different nuances

ESV preference is to keep its beauty, as long as it is understandable

Reader has to work at understanding a bit — philosophy

Mark on Acts 20:12 (page 4); 1 Cor 9:16 (page 6); Matt 24:32 (page 26)

Pet peeve #1: metaphors (e.g., “walk”, Mark page 9)

Wherever you come out on this — not errors

Translation philosophy decisions, and they should be discussed as such

5. Keep Separate Things Separate — primarily thinking of gender language

One thing to say that “man” no longer means “mankind” — agree or not

Other issues that appear to fall under the same umbrella — but don’t

Most, if not all of us here, agree that viewing God as “Father” is different

Some of “Son” as adoption language — full inheritance and rights

Singular “He” in Messianic passages — Ps 34:32 (Wayne, 27 vs FS)

Perhaps rigid consistency is not the best goal — subtle inconsistency

English and Greek

Wayne, p 24 — Jesus did not say “brother,” he said **αδελφος**

Exegesis and Translation

Mark’s “Mistranslated Genitives” — p. 31

6. Separate Fact from Preference

Or, “Distinguish between my sub-culture and your sub-culture”

Heard it said, over and over again, that “‘Man’ only means “male”!

This simply is not true — not matter how many times it is said

We are researchers — very little effort to find mainline news agencies, publishers, even secular editors who still use “man” or “mankind” generically

Southern part of United States

Prius: Harmony between Man, Nature, and Machine (Toyota sell to women)

You may not like it, your particular subculture may not like it

But that is not the same thing as stating my subculture determines the use of language for all subcultures [FS, 98]

Kiersten

8, minimal outside influence

Bible verse xeroxed, with “he” crossed out and “she” written in — Not understand it, or not like it?

7. Not simplify the debate

Easy to be outside the translation process and see what you think is an inconsistency, and then pronounce it as a mistake — not that simple

The ESV probably had about 50 “rules” that were always in play

Blogged on **γραμμα** in Rom 2:27, 29 — ESV has “written code ... letter”

1. Concordance — use the same English word to translate the same Greek word, to help the English reader follow the author’s train of thought, esp. if it is in the same paragraph, as long as doing so does not misrepresent the contextual meaning of the Greek word.

2. Euphony. The single word “letter” provides a nice poetic balance to the single word “Spirit” in 2 Cor 3:6 (uses **γραμμα**)

3. Less interpretive. “Written code” is more interpretive; “letter” is less.

4. Create misunderstanding. Okay to make the reader think and study — Asked if translating, “You who have the *letter* and circumcision but break the law,” would create misunderstanding for people unfamiliar with Paul’s theology — might think of an actual letter?

I found this to be a consistent problem in Mark's paper — page 4

Raises the question of how much this debate can go forward outside the halls of the academy

Not convinced that non-academic celebrities should be making pronouncements on translation theory

CAN THE ESV AND THE NIV2011 CO-EXIST IN THE SAME UNIVERSE?

For the sake of the spread of the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world, and because there are so many subcultures populated with people headed to hell, the answer must be, "Yes."

How? We must play fair — Life is too short, and hell is too hot, to not communicate the gospel to our subculture