One of the most difficult issues that the New Revised Standard Version translation committee had to address involved the use of inclusive language. Part of the problem was that this issue was not a generally recognized issue (by the wider reading public) when the translators began their work, but was very much an issue when they were already finished with a large chunk of it. The translators were mainly senior scholars who had acquired their linguistic skills before virtually anyone in the academy knew (or at least said) that there even was a problem with inclusivity, and so they themselves were learning how to communicate in the new idiom. And it took a while before they figured out how exactly to handle it.

I myself was first introduced to the problem when I entered graduate school, and like a lot of people from my generation (especially, but not only, us males) at first I thought it was a fairly ridiculous much ado about nothing and that writing inclusively simply threatened to destroy the beauty of the English language. But at Princeton Seminary, when I arrived, it was already a hot issue. There I learned that there were people who did not think that the term “men” referred to “men and women” but to “adult males,” that “man” did not refer to the human race but to only half of it, that the pronoun “he” did not refer to someone without male genitalia.

It took me a long time to accept this view or get used to it. For about thirty years now I’ve been completely and passionately on the side of speaking and writing inclusively. But at the time it was hard to get used to, and I put up some serious resistance. I suppose growing up in a town in the Midwest didn’t help me much there....

But now I firmly believe that it is of utmost importance to speak and write inclusively. This is not simply because of some liberal political correctness. It is because ...

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