# P.S. to the NEWS
**by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY**



Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415



RELEASE: FEBRUARY 13, 1981


## SEXISM IN THE SCRIPTURES

Is God our Father, or must our image of God now be changed from He to It? Must we now be required to pray to "Our Parent who are in Heaven" instead of "Our Father"?

The sex-neuterizing of laws, government regulations, and textbooks has been under way for several years. Now that the new frontier of the campaign to drop "sexist" words down the Orwellian Memory Hole has reached the churches, it is no longer merely a semantic, cultural, social, or legal concern. It has crossed the line into theology.

It is clear from a study of the objectives and tactics of those demanding the elimination of "sexism" from the Scriptures that they want to eliminate the patriarchial image of God in the Old and New Testament, to rename Jesus as the "Child of God" instead of the Son of God, and to change the Holy Spirit from a person to an "It."

As one recent letter to U.S. News & World Report expressed it (in commenting on the news story "Furor Over De-Sexing the Bible"), "Do they really think that Jesus meant for us to be baptized in the name of the Parent, the Sibling and the Holy It?" Such a fundamental theological change is unwanted and probably unacceptable to most churchgoers.

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible, published in 1952 and the most widely used Bible in modern English, is now being revised again by a committee of 25 scholars and translators. The newly-revised RSV will, according to present plans, make hundreds of language changes in conformity to the new policy of stripping "sexism" out of the Scriptures. In Psalms alone, more than 200 male pronouns will be dropped.

The man in charge of the RSV revision is the Rev. Bruce M. Metzger, a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is under persistent pressure from an 8-man 5-woman task force which is demanding drastic revisions such as those mentioned above.

Meanwhile, the education committee of the National Council of Churches approved a recommendation to work on a different Bible translation that would more fully meet feminist demands. The first step toward what is being dubbed the "Unisex Bible" will be the translation of a new "de-sexed," "inclusive language" lectionary (which contains the


(more)

Bible readings spoken from the pulpit in many denominations).

"Inclusive language" is the new jargon to denote the "including" of women in the translation. The jargon proceeds from the false assumption that women are not included in any Scriptural passages which use "man" or "mankind" in the generic sense. As Time magazine described it, the translators are now asked to give equal billing for the now-"invisible" half of the human race (i.e., women).

In November 1980, the U.S. Catholic Bishops, by a surprising two-thirds vote after little discussion, approved a recommendation from its Liturgy Committee to make five changes in the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass. The changes eliminated the allegedly offensive words of "man," "men," and "mankind," and replaced them with sex-neutral equivalents such as "human family." The resolution is now awaiting approval (or disapproval) from the Vatican.

The argument for such changes which the Bishops found persuasive went like this: "The changes are minor ... what do they matter ... if words are interfering with women's prayer life, let's give them what they want ... let's defuse the feminist issue by giving them these minor changes."

However, the reaction of those pushing for the changes was typically, "This is a good beginning." It is clear that they look upon the Bishops' vote in November as the first step of a carefully-mapped journey which must lead to the total "unmanning of the Bible," and the total sex-neuterization of the Mass, the liturgy, and all prayers.

The Catholic Biblical Association is now re-translating the Catholic lectionary (the big book on the pulpit or podium which contains all Bible readings used at Mass) in order to eliminate "sexist" language. No one seems to know what guidelines are being used or how radical the changes will be.

The parallel campaigns in all denominations for language changes come from a tiny minority. It can hardly be denied, as the Rev. Metzger commented, that most people find the proposed changes irrelevant in regard to persons and irreverent in regard to God.

The question is, will the sexual-textual revolution in the Scriptures in all denominations be won by the organized single-goal minority, or will the silent majority assert itself to preserve "the faith of our fathers, living still"?

(end)