

# Some things should be left alone

## The new Oxford University Press version of the Bible is a gross distortion of a Holy text

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."



**ERIN HILL**  
COLUMNIST

terrible. For example, if you were to follow the Oxford University press' version of the Lord's prayer, you would say "Our Father-Mother who is in Heaven."

We could go on and on here, or you could do it yourself in the privacy of your home. Every time you read about God's only begotten Son, substitute the words "only child."

This would be almost laughable if it weren't so real.

Who are they fooling? To tamper with the Bible is to ask for trouble.

It's the real thing. God's word, written down by man. It is Scripture, not a paper that needs a little editing to make it more sensitive and culturally appropriate.

It is literature. No one thinks to rewrite Shakespeare to make his texts more inclusive. But we're more than happy to change the words of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

It is also history. It documents the social mores, attitudes and issues of particular groups.

It does not document our society — that is true. But that doesn't mean that we should change it around so that it does.

The Bible is what it is. Love it or leave it; don't rewrite it.

If anything, we should be trying to get it closer to the original Hebrew and Greek texts, not further from it.

Several things about this new version are alarming.

First, the idea of revising history to make it more palatable troubles any thoughtful person.

The original text is a lesson in itself; you can learn attitudes of society at that time, but if you change it there is no context. Every time you change it, it loses something.

Second, is the belief that if we change the text then the behaviors will follow suit.

It is foolishness to think that by changing words, we are changing lives. Words are important, yes, but words by themselves are rarely so compelling that an entire society rides itself of all of its sexist, racist habits and joins in a rousing chorus of "We Are The World."

To paraphrase the words of Berkeley professor and biblical scholar, Robert Alter, author of *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, this version of the Bible is an agenda masquerading as a translation.

And I don't think Oxford University knows who it is messing with.

*Erin Hill is graduate pursuing a teaching certificate*

--Second Letter of Paul to Timothy.

"It is often called 'The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' But Jesus didn't write a word of it. Who, then, wrote the 27 books that make up the traditional New Testament canon?" asked a Dec. 1990 U.S. News & World Report article.

Who, indeed? The birth of the New Testament was not a tidy one. Around A.D. 140, in response to Gnostic heresies and other threats to doctrine, the church moved towards an official Christian canon and began organizing the texts and letters that had been passing around the early church.

Since that time, people have changed it to suit their own personal gospels and creeds, but perhaps none so dramatically as the folks in England who have put together a version of the New Testament to top all others currently available on the market.

It's a doozie, that's for sure. And they are hard at work on a revised version of the Old Testament.

This isn't the first time someone has wanted to change it, but this seems to be one of the most comprehensive make-overs the Bible has ever received. And it comes from a prestigious institution usually thought of as a place where thoughtful and intellectual decisions are made.

This makes it quite alarming. Oxford University is no crackpot underground organization or loose band of radical believers.

It's Oxford. It's definitive. It's made a big mistake.

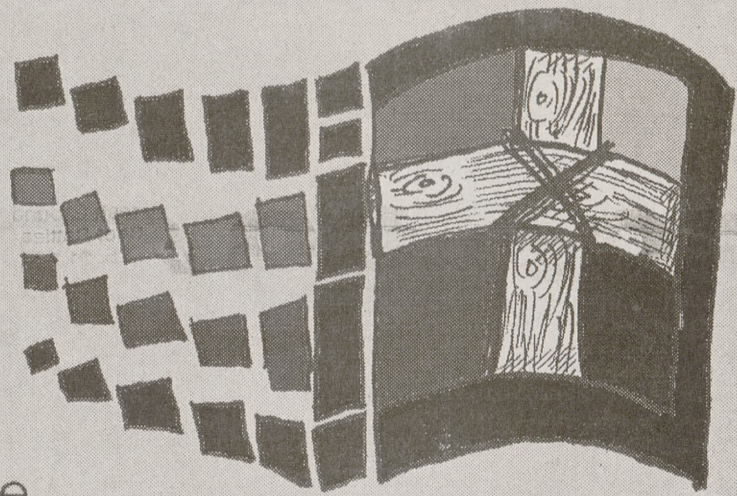
Susan Thistlewaite, co-editor of the Oxford University Press version in question, defends the recent facelift given to the Holy Book. She argues that Jesus' message of tolerance and love is "warrant for treating everyone equally," including equal treatment in the Bible.

This poor Bible has actually gone through more than just a facelift — it's more like total reconstruction, if you will.

All words which might be considered sexist, racist or anti-semitic have been changed. All words which might have excluded have been changed so that everyone is included. Sounds great, but tastes

The  
New, Revised Version,  
of the Amended Version, of the Revamped Version, of  
the Overhauled Version, of  
the Abridged Version, of the Truncated Version  
OF...

# Bibles<sup>®</sup>95



100% PC compatible  
(politically correct.)



## MAIL CALL

### Different approach just same old bull

Matt Segrest's guest column Tuesday on women in the Citadel took me laughing down memory lane.

His reasoning that "women are just different" is exactly the same argument that keeps women from driving cars in some Islamic countries.

If you exchange the word "women" with the word "blacks" it's the same argument that forced black people into "separate but equal" schools and to the back of the bus.

It's even the same argument that kept women out of the A&M Corps of Cadets.

Now the men of the Citadel are using it to justify their disdain for women in their own corps.

When I was in the A&M Corps just 10 years ago, no women were allowed in the Ag-

gie Band or the Fish Drill Team. The Corps staff had never included a woman either.

Then surprise — a lawsuit started by a female cadet changed all that. Cadets were pissed, and even A&M's president at the time refused to shake her hand at her graduation. Now, the idea of women cadets is no big deal.

The differences between the sexes are far fewer than most societies like to purport. Arguments like these are used to promote specific agendas and lifestyles of specific groups.

Sometimes the groups are small, like the A&M Corps or the Citadel, and want to maintain a social cohesion that a single gender organization often provides.

The Israeli army, the most efficient army in the world, doesn't think females are too "different" to be soldiers. Their primary agenda is effective organization.

"The women are different" and "single-sex organizations are better" arguments are just rational-

izations to maintain an agenda — in this case an outdated tradition — without appearing sexist.

The real reason women aren't wanted at the Citadel is because of the "we are better than you" syndrome — something with which Aggies are quite familiar.

We have a saying at Texas A&M that all the little dimples on the underside of the Aggie Ring represent all the a-holes at t.u. The story is that by the time the dimples wear down, the Aggie is old enough to realize t-sips aren't a-holes anymore.

This principle of eventual realization of error applies to many situations, including the Aggie Corps and the Citadel.

*Frank Stanford graduate student*

### "Liberals belong at t.u." hypocritical

I have a story about hypocrisy at Texas A&M University.

Eva Darski writes a Mail Call letter and says, "I didn't come to Texas A&M for cowboy hats and country music but rather for honor, and an environment where my beliefs weren't ridiculed."

Then she tells everyone with liberal views to go away. Darski wants only *her* ideas not to be ridiculed. That's the end of a sto-

ry, and the beginning of a double standard.

*Steve Balfour Class of '90*

### LDS misrepresented by Baxter column

This letter is in response to H.L. Baxter's column in the Opinion section of The Battalion on Sept. 12.

First, I would like to point out that there is no such religion as "Mormonism," nor is there a Mormon Church. The correct name of the church Baxter is referring to is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, appropriately shortened as LDS.

Secondly, Baxter's friend Lisa could not have "discontinued practicing Mormonism" only after "intense arguments with family and friends." To be an active member of LDS means to diligently follow Christ.

The day "Lisa" started practicing her bisexuality is the day she stopped being an active LDS member.

Finally, I sympathize with the biases and prejudices people face in our society. I do not have the authority to judge a person, nor does anyone have the authority to judge me.

It makes me sad to think of the

pain Lisa must be going through, but I hope that she and Baxter realize that their lifestyles are strongly opposed by the Church and its doctrine.

While Baxter is complaining about conservatism and traditions, he himself is succumbing to a prejudice that has developed a traditional negative view of LDS.

Enlightening our environment at Texas A&M University with liberalism may seem exciting to Baxter, but I believe he and Lisa need to enlighten their minds about the values and positive traditions that Texas A&M, conservatism and Jesus Christ endorse.

*Christie Chapa Class of '99*

### NORML no Civil Rights movement

This is in response to the "Situation NORML" article that appeared in the AggieLife section of the Sept. 13 Battalion.

We are so proud to see that people today, of Generation X, the generation that cares about nothing, are finally excited about something: Specifically, the legalization of hemp/marijuana.

By their comparison of themselves to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, we see a new guideline in the quest for equality and bettering the world — today

the Civil Rights movement has become the quest for marijuana. I think Martin Luther King Jr. would be proud. I know we are.

*Shannon Smith Class of '95  
Tiffany Carroll-Curtis Class of '97*

### Gun law provides food for thought

In response to Lydia Percival's column of Sept. 11: Imagine you are a police officer, and you stop a vehicle for running a red light.

You want to issue the driver a citation, finish your shift and go home. But, under the new law, you don't know if you have stopped a rational, unarmed motorist or an armed lunatic.

You frisk the driver for weapons for your own safety. She is unarmed, but irate over this treatment for a simple traffic ticket — especially if you are a male officer. Next time, do you risk your life, or do you put up with one irate driver after another?

It's food for thought. But with freedom comes responsibility and consequences. Be prepared for all of the consequences of an armed society.

*Eric R. Ivie Class of '96*