

February 15, 1994
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Miss G. A. Riplinger
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Dear Miss Riplinger:

I have before me a copy of your recent publication *New Age Bible Versions* in which you attempt to expose a hidden New Age agenda in the modern translations of the Bible, and to defend the sole reliability and authenticity of the King James Version. I share your concern over the way in which the New Age philosophy has found inroads into our present day society and presumably into the highest levels of our government. I also admire your commitment to the defense of the integrity and authenticity of the Word of God. However, I have great concern over your method of such defense.

As former executive editor of the New King James Version Old Testament, I have first-hand knowledge of the facts concerning the NKJV, the people who worked on it, the reasons why certain changes were made in the wording of the Old King James Version, and the reasons why it was decided to produce the new version in the first place. This information is not secret, as you have stated, but has been made public in many promotional brochures produced by the publishers and in a book written by Dr. Arthur Farstad, executive editor of the New King James Version New Testament, *The New King James Version in the Great Tradition* (Thomas Nelson, 1988), a complimentary copy of which is enclosed. Presumably, your research failed to discover these sources.

I have read carefully what you have published about the NKJV, and am greatly concerned because everything you wrote about the NKJV is either false or inaccurate. Consequently, you have rendered a gross disservice to the NKJV, its editors and translators, to its publisher, and to your unsuspecting readers. If what you have written about the other new versions is equally invalid, then your disservice is even greater.

Please grant me the courtesy to read the rest of this letter. It is written in Christian love, and with respect for your honorable intentions. What follows is a presentation of the facts concerning your allegations against the NKJV.

The Greek and Hebrew Texts Used by the NKJV

On the cover of your book and in numerous places within, you group the NKJV along with the other new versions as following the Westcott-Hort Greek Text in the New Testament and a non-traditional Hebrew text in the Old. These allegations are false. The NKJV followed the Greek *Textus Receptus* throughout the New Testament and the Hebrew *Textus Receptus* throughout the Old.

The Greek Text of the NKJV New Testament

On page 475 you stated:

In 1881 this 1% minority text type supplanted the Majority Text with it's [sic] almost two millennia standing. A 'New' Greek Text, using the Vatican manuscript (B), was introduced by Westcott and Hort and has been used as the Greek Text for all subsequent versions.

On page 105 you asserted:

B.F. Westcott, editor of the 'New' Greek text underlying the NIV, NASB, and all new versions, agrees with Blavatsky that visions of 'the Virgin' are merely 'God' changing "form."

On page 494 you wrote:

"The age of Westcott and Hort is definitely over," the Introduction says. Scholars are aware of this shift, yet the pews are still piled high with NIV's, NASB's, NKJV's, Living Bibles, New Jerusalem Bibles, NRSV's, etc.

These statements are false with respect to the NKJV. The NKJV followed the *Textus Receptus* Greek text throughout the New Testament. This information is readily available to the general public, being published in several places including the preface of most editions. Enclosure 2 is a copy of the preface of the slim-line edition I carry in my pocket. The textual information could not be clearer. It says:

Recent studies have caused significant changes in this view, and a growing number of scholars now regard the Received Text as far more reliable than previously thought. In light of these developments, and with the knowledge that most textual variations have no practical effect on translation, the New King James New Testament has been based on this

Received Text, thus perpetuating the tradition begun by William Tyndale in 1525 and continued by the 1611 translators in rendering the Authorized Version.

Perhaps your research sources have misinformed you, or perhaps you made use of some who are ignorant or who have deliberately distorted the facts. Regardless of the source, you could easily have checked these details before publishing false information. The translators and editors of the NKJV were commissioned by publicly available guidelines to “correct all departures [of the KJV] from the *Textus Receptus*.” Thus, anywhere the NKJV appears to differ from the Greek text used by the KJV translators, it is because it has corrected the KJV departures from the *Textus Receptus*. Consequently, the NKJV adheres more closely to the *Textus Receptus* than does its predecessor the KJV. Discussion of such departures is given later. Please continue to read.

The Hebrew Text of the NKJV Old Testament

On page 594 you state that

The NKJV and all new versions have abandoned the traditional Old Testament Hebrew, *Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text*, and followed Rudolph Kittel’s 1937 corruption of *Biblia Hebraica* Leningrad Ms B 19a.

This statement is false in several respects. First of all, the NKJV followed the *Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text* not Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica* (1937). The preface to the NKJV Open Bible Edition states

For the New King James Version the text used was the 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, based on the ben Asher text, while frequent comparisons were made with the Bomberg edition of 1524-25.

What you evidently do not know is that the Bomberg edition of 1524-25 is the *Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text*. Furthermore, the differences between the Bomberg Ben Chayyim edition and *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1967/77) are microscopic. In the eight places where the difference had an effect on translation, the NKJV followed *Ben Chayyim*, not *Stuttgart*. Here are the eight differences:

	Stuttgart	Bomberg (KJV, NKJV)
Prov 8:16	righteousness	earth
Isa 10:16	the Lord, the LORD of hosts	the Lord, the Lord of hosts
Isa 27:2	a pleasant vineyard	a vineyard of red wine
Isa 38:14	the Lord	the LORD
Jer 34:1	Nebuchadrezzar	Nebuchadnezzar
Ezek 30:18	be held back	be darkened
Zeph 3:15	fear disaster	see disaster
Mal 1:12	Lord	LORD

Rudolph Kittel did not corrupt the *Biblia Hebraica* Leningrad Ms B 19a, as your statement asserts. The Leningrad manuscript (Ms) B 19a is a complete manuscript of the ben Asher Masoretic Text dated about A.D. 1008. It is regarded as perhaps the most faithful copy of the Masoretic Text, the *Textus Receptus* of the Hebrew Bible. Kittel's 1937 edition of *Biblia Hebraica* was a faithful printed reproduction of the Leningrad B 19a manuscript. Far from corrupting B 19a, as you wrote, he made its text available. The more recent *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1966/77) is an improved edition of B 19a, making it more faithful to B 19a in all of its microscopic minutia.

But regardless of these details, as former executive editor of the NKJV Old Testament, I can confidently assure you that the NKJV followed, as carefully as possible, the Bobmerg 1524-25 Ben Chayyim edition that the KJV 1611 translators used--I personally made sure. So, sad to say, again using uninformed sources, and without checking, you have misinformed your unsuspecting readers and done a gross disservice to the NKJV.

Secrecy

On page 434 you accuse the NKJV publishers of secrecy:

The secrecy which hovered over the membership list of the recent NASB and NKJV committees, when they were under deliberation, does not spring from the life of Christ and the apostles; this canker was spawned by its 'Carrier' and the Committee of the 'Apostles'. The 'secret societies' (or as Hort's son called 'the Apostles'—'the Secret Club') became the secret Revision Committee.

By this accusation of covert secrecy you lead your unsuspecting readers to believe that there was some subversive New Age plot to undermine the authority of the Scripture. I do not know about the NASB committees, but the statement is false regarding the NKJV. As chairman of the Executive Review Committee of the NKJV Old Testament, I can assure you that there was no secrecy about the identity of the translator-revisors nor of the members of the various committees. The membership list was available to anyone who inquired, and has been published in promotional brochures and in Dr. Farstad's book, *The New King James Version in the Great Tradition*.

In your research, did you ever request a list of translators and committee members? Evidently not. On the other hand, how did you find out about Dr. Lewis Foster, and the seven Calvinists you mention (p. 233)? If you did obtain a list of the translators and committee members, why do you accuse the publishers of secrecy? Your inconsistency suggests that you were less than careful in your research or that you were willing to publish unconfirmed allegation from unreliable sources. Please continue to read.

Hebrew Adonai and JHVH

On page 376 you wrote

The KJV is also the only bible that distinguishes between the Hebrew *Adonai* and *JHVH*, using 'Lord' for the former and 'LORD' for the latter.

This statement is false. I checked the following new versions: NKJV, NASB, NIV, RSV, NAB, and TEV; all without exception make the same distinction as does the KJV.

I do not know the source of your information (you frequently omitted documentation of your sources), so I must assume that you are the authority for such an error. But a simple comparative study would have caught this mistake. Such careless research makes me wonder about the reliability of statements you have published which I have not checked. Again you have done a gross disservice to the NKJV, your unsuspecting readers, and in this case to all the new versions.

Dr. Lewis Foster

In several places throughout your book you identify Dr. Lewis Foster as "a member of both the NIV and NKJV Committees" (pp. 34, 245, 370, 394, 490, 548), implying that this puts the NIV and the NKJV in the same category, using the same Greek text and following the same translational philosophy. It is true that Dr. Foster did

the initial translational revision of the Gospel of Luke in the NKJV, but he was not a member of any committee that determined translational philosophy, the Greek text to follow, nor that passed on the final form of the work.

The translational philosophy was determined by the consensus of several meetings with a large number of conservative pastors from all over the world and from a broad spectrum of denominations. These meetings resulted in a set of sixteen guidelines, the third of which was “Correct all departures from the *Textus Receptus*.” So regardless of what Dr. Foster’s personal views of textual criticism and the merits of the Westcott-Hort text may be, he followed the *Textus Receptus* in his work on the NKJV and adhered to the established translational philosophy. Furthermore, his work was thoroughly reviewed by the Executive Review Committee which made sure that his work, and that of all other translators, conformed to the established guidelines.

So your criticism of Dr. Foster’s personal views of textual criticism does not apply to the NKJV as your book implies. There was no hidden New Age agenda in the NKJV guidelines unless there was one in the KJV guidelines. The guidelines of the two projects are in harmonious conformity.

Let me illustrate the invalidity of your reasoning by false analogy and guilt by association. Here is the form of your reasoning:

Major Premise: Westcott and Hort developed a Greek text of the New Testament, and they allegedly were involved in “New Age” activity.

Minor Premise: Dr. Lewis prefers the Westcott-Hort Greek text, and worked on the NKJV.

Conclusion: The NKJV has a hidden New Age agenda.

Now let me apply that same form of reasoning to your book:

Major Premise: Harvard and Cornell Universities are centers of theological liberalism, anti-Biblical philosophy, and New Age activity.

Minor Premise: Miss Ripplinger did graduate work at Harvard and Cornell Universities, and wrote a book entitled *New Age Bible Versions* which attacks all the modern versions of the Bible.

Conclusion: Miss Ripplinger’s book is part of the New Age movement and part of a subtle anti-Biblical agenda.

Now if you object to the second argument as being untrue and invalid (and rightly so), then you must agree that the first is equally invalid--the conclusions are not logically derivable from the premises. But this is the kind of invalid reasoning you have presented to your unsuspecting readers. You have led them to false conclusions from nonrelevant premises. In so doing, you have done a gross disservice to the NKJV and to your readers. Please continue reading.

Seven Calvinists

On page 233 you wrote:

Palmer's Calvinism did not rest with his influence in the NIV. The *New King James* Committee boasts seven members who subscribe to Palmer's elite 'Elect' and damned 'depraved' classes.

By this you lead your unsuspecting readers to believe that the NKJV committee was dominated by Calvinists (New Age cohorts of Palmer, no less) who had a New Age agenda to foist their theological views into the NKJV. However, you did not document the statement, nor identify the men, nor relate their contribution to the work.

Now this kind of reporting is little different from that of the New Age media. It does not give the whole picture, but chooses only what fits your own agenda. Few, if any, theologians would agree that conservative Calvinists could possibly be sympathetic to the New Age, much less be an active part of it. Nevertheless, there were 31 scholars who worked on the translational revision of the NKJV Old Testament, and 21 on the New Testament. These men were selected from a variety of Protestant, conservative denominations covering the whole theological spectrum, from Calvinists to Arminians. How could seven Calvinists foist their views on forty-five non-Calvinists?

The work of these fifty-two scholars was thoroughly reviewed by an Executive Review Committee, one for the Old Testament, and another for the New Testament. These committees made sure that the work of the translators was in conformity with the established guidelines. Each of these two committees consisted of seven men from different denominational positions. As chairman of the Old Testament Executive Review Committee, I can assure you that no theological view dominated the decisions made, Calvinistic or otherwise. Please keep reading.

The NKJV Logo and 666

On page 101 you wrote:

The number 666 in the form of a mobius symbol appears on the cover of the *New King James Version* (NKJV), just as it does on the cover of *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, the [sic] most popular New Age Book.

It is quite clear that you have never seen the cover of *The Aquarian Conspiracy* because you never cite that book directly in your end notes, but indirectly through Constance Cumby's *The Hidden dangers of the Rainbow* (Huntington House, 1983). I tried and could not find a copy of Ferguson's book in any of the hundreds of libraries connected to our university's inter-library loan network. I suspect that is why you have not seen it either.

The figure Cumby placed on the cover of her book is evidently what she referred to on page 262 where she said "Even the logo on *The Aquarian Conspiracy* by Marilyn Ferguson distinctly resembles 666." I have reproduced the cover of Cumby's book in Enclosure 1, and admit that one could imagine three 6's after it had been suggested, but such a resemblance is not self evident.

However, the logo on the cover of the NKJV is not a mobius symbol with rounded lobes like that of *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, but it is a triquetra, a name derived from a Latin word meaning "three cornered." The NKJV logo has three pointed corners which could never be mistaken for 6's. No one writes the numeral six with a pointed bottom! Thomas Nelson Publishers conducted extensive research to find a distinctively Christian symbol for the logo. The explanation of its choice is given clearly on the copyright page of the slim-line edition I carry in my pocket (see Enclosure 2). It states:

Cover Design: The triquetra (from a Latin word meaning "three cornered") is an ancient symbol of the Trinity. It comprises three interwoven arcs, distinct yet equal and inseparable, symbolizing that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct yet equal Persons and indivisibly One God.

If you had taken time to investigate, you would have known the difference. Instead, you took someone else's word without checking, or worse yet, you deliberately misinformed your unsuspecting readers that the symbols were the same and their meaning the same.

Let me illustrate the subtle but invalid reasoning involved in this type of false analogy and guilt by association. Here is the form of your reasoning:

Major Premise: The New Age book, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, has mobius symbol on its cover.

Minor Premise: The NKJV has a logo on its cover similar to [you said the same as] a mobius symbol.

Conclusion: The NKJV has a hidden New Age agenda.

Now let me apply that same form of reasoning to your book:

Major Premise: In the Bible, a red dragon is the symbol of Satan (Rev 12:3-4, 9), and Satan is an enemy of God's Word.

Minor Premise: Ripplinger's book has a red dragon logo on its cover that is similar to the red dragon in Rev 12:3-4, 9; and the book attacks all modern versions of the Bible.

Conclusion: Ripplinger's book has a hidden satanic agenda for attacking God's Word.

Of course you will object that such reasoning is unfounded and unfair, because your book is clearly an attack on Satan and the new age. One must judge a book (and its author) by its content, not by its cover. In like fashion, the New King James Version has no hidden New Age agenda; its content is the same as the Old King James Version but expressed in current standard English. Its logo symbolizes its dedication to the Triune God. Nor has its publisher, editors, or translators a New Age agenda. There is not a single New Age corpuscle in any of their veins. We are just as committed to defending the Word of God from Satanic attack as you are. Unfortunately, your attacks were made on translations that many godly Christians and scholars regard as God's Word just as confidently as you regard the translation of 1611 (as revised in 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769) as God's Word, and for just as convincing reasons as you think you have. Dare say that Satan is delighted to see such divisive problems in the Church. Please keep reading.

The NKJV and the Deity of Christ

On page 102 you wrote:

The Keys of Enoch “instructs the reader to use the numerical sequence 6-6-6 as frequently as possible.”⁷

1. [T]o be an “outward and visible sign of an inner and spiritual reality.” [The NKJV denies the deity of Christ a half dozen times.]⁸

Here you assert that the NKJV denies the deity of Christ six times as a sign of its hidden New Age agenda. The location of the end number (8) suggests to your unsuspecting readers that your note, which few readers bother to check, provides documentation for the six places where such denial occurs. Instead, the note refers to Alice Bailey’s *The Destiny of the Nations* (p. 19 [sic 119]). This suggests to your readers that Bailey documents the six places of denial. However, the note number should have been placed after the right quotation mark, not after the right-bracket, because Bailey said nothing about the NKJV; nor could she have said anything about it, because the book has a copyright date of 1949 (not 1982), over thirty years before the NKJV was published. Furthermore, Bailey said nothing about the number 666, but spoke of symbols in general, as the enclosed copy of her page 119 demonstrates. So you have made an unsubstantiated and undocumented accusation.

Now the truth is that the NKJV never denies the deity of Christ. A denial is a clear statement such as “Jesus Christ is not God,” not an implication suggested by the absence of a key word in a verse. None of the modern versions make direct denials of Christ’s deity, it is only that some of their adversaries read denial into verses that are not necessarily so.

But, to put the record straight, the NKJV, being based on exactly the same Greek text as the KJV, never leaves out any key words relating to the deity of Christ, but instead says exactly the same thing about Christ’s deity as the KJV. You could have verified that by a simple comparison.

Philippians 2:5-7

On page 306 regarding Philippians 2:5-7, you stated that “all other versions deny Christ’s deity in this verse. The NKJV, here as well as other places, denies Christ’s deity also.” Then you cite the NIV’s “did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped after.” Now this text does not deny the deity of Christ. A denial is a statement such as

“Jesus Christ is not God.” There is absolutely no difference between “equality with God” and “equal with God”; and there is no significant difference between “grasping after” and “robbery.” Either refers to “grasping after or robbing” something you do not have; but Christ had equality with God so unquestionably that He did not need to consider it something He had to grasp after or rob.

Your own comment about this shows the complete absurdity of the accusation:

The spiritual nature of this battle became all too apparent when I was showing this verse to a ‘Christian’ linguistics major. She could not see that the KJV and the new versions expressed diametrically opposite views here. (p. 306)

Of course she could not see the difference. As a skilled linguist she knew that there is no difference. She was too polite to tell you that the only way a statement like that can be understood as its opposite meaning is by devious mental twisting. The clear, normal understanding of the NIV verse, in light of the whole context, is a declaration, not a denial, of Christ’s deity. Now if you persist in twisting the words of the NIV text to be a denial, then, by consistency, you must apply the same twist to the KJV text, which would produce the same denial.

But to set the record straight, the NKJV does not follow the NIV wording in Phil 2:6, but says “did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.” This has been true since the first complete edition was issued in 1982, almost twelve years ago! Surely you can do better research than that, unless you took the word of some careless source without checking. Furthermore, the NKJV is so thoroughly committed to the deity of Christ that one of the guidelines was that all nouns and pronouns that refer to deity should be capitalized. Thus, by means of capitalized nouns and pronouns, the NKJV positively declares the deity of Christ hundreds of times more than does the Old KJV. Please keep reading.

Lucifer and the Morning Star

On page 42, regarding the word “Lucifer” in Isaiah 14:12, you stated:

An examination of the original Hebrew will dispel any illusion that “morning star” is an acceptable substitute for the word “Lucifer.” The Hebrew is *"helel, ben shachar,"* which is accurately translated, “Lucifer, son of the morning.”

This statement is inaccurate. The word “Lucifer” is a proper name as the capitalization indicates. It is a Latin word that the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate applied to Satan. It also is the Latin name of the planet Venus, otherwise known as the morning star--check your English dictionary and your Latin dictionary. This is confirmed by Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. The Hebrew word הֵיְלֵל (*helel*) also is a proper name, the Hebrew name for Venus, the morning star--see copy of the page from the Hebrew lexicon enclosed. Nearly always the KJV translators (and all other English translators) transliterated proper names, that is, they spelled with English characters the sound of the Hebrew name. For example, the transliteration of the Hebrew name הֵיְלֵל would be *Helel*. So, if the KJV translators had been consistent with their usual practice, they would have rendered the text as *Helel, son of the morning*.

However, the KJV translators were well versed in the Latin Vulgate, and most of the proper names in the Bible, being already familiar from their use of the Latin text, were brought over into English from their Latin spelling rather than from a fresh transliteration of the Hebrew. Now it so happened that Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate, did not regard הֵיְלֵל as a proper name, but as the word for the morning star, so he translated it with the Latin word *lucifer* (morning star) rather than transliterate it as *Helel*, a proper name. In the course of time, as interpreters regarded the passage to refer to Satan, they took the word *lucifer* as another name for Satan. By the time of the reformation, the name Lucifer was well engrained in tradition. So when the English translators before 1611 came to this passage, they decided, for theological reasons, to bring the Latin name *Lucifer* into the English Bible rather than transliterate the Hebrew name. The 1611 translators perpetuated this theological decision, as the marginal note in the Oxford and Cambridge editions indicate--*or day star*. Check it out. So, if the KJV translators regarded *day star* (or morning star) as an appropriate alternate rendering, we ought not be critical of translators who agree with them.

However, to put the record straight, the NKJV kept the Latin tradition here along with the KJV, even though we recognized that the decision was made for theological, not linguistic reasons. So the new versions should not be labeled as new age for this verse. If anything, they are trying to offset a theological decision of Roman Catholic origin. Please keep reading.

Readability

In chapter 11 you discuss the readability of the new versions, including the NKJV. Your self-conducted test is supposed to prove that Elizabethan English is easier to read and understand than the new versions. Few unbiased readers will be convinced. You

failed to inform your unsuspecting readers that other tests have been performed making use of validated tests that show the opposite results. Dr. Farstad's book records the results of several tests of that kind which compare the NKJV with the KJV and other modern versions (see his pages 2-4). The KJV came out more difficult than the others as common sense would expect. Please keep reading.

Helper and Religious

I will not quibble with you over your allegations about the words "Helper" (John 14:16, etc), and "religious" (Acts 17:22). The decisions were made purely for linguistic reasons to make the terms consistent with their context. There was no "New Age" reasons such as you have erroneously invented by false analogy.

Majority Text and the KJV

On page 471 you discuss the Greek manuscripts upon which the KJV is based. You lead your unsuspecting readers to believe that the Greek text from which the KJV was translated comes from the vast majority of manuscripts and that this "Majority Text" is the same as the "Traditional Text" (*Textus Receptus*), and then you state:

The overwhelming majority of these manuscripts, lectionaries, and writers agree generally with each other as to the readings of the New Testament. Manuscripts from the second century (P66) down through the Middle Ages (A.D. 1500) attest to the readings of this 'Majority Text,' as Kurt Aland terms it. Dean Burgon, who found this 'Majority Text' in most of the early writers collated, calls it 'The Traditional Text'. It is also called the Syrian Text, the Byzantine Text and the K (Kappa) or Common Text.

This text type is available today in English in the *Authorized Version*, or as it is called in the United States, the *King James Version*. It's [sic] 809,000,000 copies since 1611, in 300 languages, demonstrates the continuum of this 'Majority Text'. (Unfortunately, as we shall see, the new versions are not based on this 'Majority Text', but on the dissenting handful of manuscripts which disagree with the Majority.)

It is not clear how the English *Authorized Version* has appeared in 300 languages since 1611, but that is not my point here. You went on to mislead your unsuspecting readers by citing Pickering, Colwell, and Hodges as though they agree that the Majority Text and the *Textus Receptus* are the same. But note what Zane Hodges said in the Introduction to *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (Thomas Nelson, 1982):

The 1825 edition of the Textus Receptus was employed as a working base against which the manuscript data were compared. Wherever our text differs from the Oxford Textus Receptus, the variation is noted in the first apparatus. Only in a few instances of typographical errors and in certain kinds of spelling variations is this not the case. (p. xiii)

It often happens that in the first apparatus the siglum TR [Textus Receptus] is given after a reading of the Oxford Textus Receptus with no manuscript data cited. This should not be construed to mean that the Textus Receptus has absolutely no manuscript evidence supporting it, though this occasionally can be true. Rather, it means that none of the regularly cited witnesses support the variant, including none of the subgroups of the Majority Text. A variant reading found in the second apparatus also may occasionally appear without any manuscript citation. This means that none of the materials regularly referred to in the apparatus support the reading of the United Bible Societies and Nestle-Aland Texts. If, however, these editions are supported by significant uncial or papyrus evidence not regularly mentioned, this evidence is usually given. (p. xxi)

These statements demonstrate that Hodges and the other Majority Text (MT) advocates recognize that the two texts are not the same, but that the *Textus Receptus* (TR) from which the KJV was translated, often differs from the MT, and has readings that are supported only by a minority, sometimes by a mere handful, sometimes by no Greek manuscripts at all.

In fact, there are almost a thousand places where the TR differs from the MT. True, many differences are trivial and insignificant, but many are not. The same is true in the Old Testament. Hundreds of times the King James translators did not follow the *Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text*, or any other Hebrew authority, but rather they followed the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate, some other ancient non-Hebrew authority, or at times no authority whatsoever. Here are some examples. You can check them for yourself.

In Acts 19:20, the MT, TR, NIV, etc., in fact all Greek manuscripts,¹ read “the word of the Lord”; whereas the KJV reads “the word of God,” words that come from a few Roman Catholic Latin manuscripts. Do you suppose this is a New Age corrupting the Word of God?

¹ Correction (2/6/96): “God” is supported by three late manuscripts: MS E (dated 8th century), MS 88 (dated 12th century), and MS 436 (dated 11th century). It is also supported by a few Old Latin manuscripts, the Latin Vulgate, and the Syriac version.

In 2 Tim 1:18, the MT, TR, and in fact all Greek manuscripts read “he ministered”; whereas the KJV reads “he ministered unto me,” where the KJV added words to Scripture that have no manuscript authority² without putting them in italics. Do you suppose this is a New Age altering of the Word of God?

In 2 Tim 2:19, the TR (KJV) reads “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity”; whereas the Majority Text (MT with the NIV, etc.) reads “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.” Here the TR changed “the Lord” to “Christ.” Do you suppose this is a New Age denial of the deity of Christ?

In Heb 10:23, the MT, TR, and in fact all Greek manuscripts read “profession of *our* hope”; whereas the KJV reads “profession of *our* faith,” where the KJV changed the word “hope” to “faith” without any known authority. Do you suppose this is a New Age corrupting the Word of God?

In Rev 1:8, the MT (with NIV etc.) reads “the Lord God”; whereas the TR (KJV) omits the word “God.” Do you suppose this is a New Age denial of the deity of Christ?

In Rev 14:1, the MT (with NIV etc.) reads “having His name and His Father’s name”; whereas the TR (KJV) omits “His name and.” Do you suppose this is a New Age denial of the deity of Christ?

In Rev 19:1, the MT reads “The Lord our God,” a reference to the deity of Christ; whereas the TR (KJV and NIV) omits “the Lord.”³ Do you suppose this is a New Age denial of the deity of Christ?

In Rev 22:19, the MT, NIV, etc., in fact all Greek manuscripts, read “the tree of life”; whereas the TR (KJV) reads “the book of life,” words that come from a few Roman Catholic Latin manuscripts. Do you suppose this is part of a Romanist conspiracy?

² Correction (2/1/96): “to me” is supported by three late Greek manuscripts: MS 104 (dated 1087), MS 365 (dated 13th century), and MS 629 (dated 14th century). It is also supported by a few Old Latin manuscripts, by the Latin Vulgate Clementine Edition of 1582, and by the Syriac version. However “to me” is not contained in *The Greek Text Underlying the English Authorized Version of 1611* published by the Trinitarian Bible Society.

³ Correction (2/1/96): Oops! This example is in error. The majority of the Greek manuscripts omit “the Lord”; whereas the KJV and the TR add “the Lord.”

In Gen 36:24, all Hebrew manuscripts and other ancient authorities read “found water”; whereas the KJV reads “found mules” following a medieval Jewish commentator. Do you suppose this is a New Age attack on the Word of God for which water is a symbol, replacing it with mules?

In 1 Sam 2:25, all Hebrew manuscripts read “God”; whereas the KJV reads “judge,” without capitalization. Do you suppose this is a New Age denial that God will judge sinners?

In Isa 14:12, all Hebrew manuscripts have the name “Helel”; whereas the KJV (and NKJV) has the name “Lucifer” following the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate. Do you suppose this is a Roman Catholic New Age attempt to extol Satan?

In Isa 19:10, all Hebrew manuscripts read “soul”; whereas the KJV reads “fish,” following the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate. Do you suppose this is a New Age attack on the spiritual nature of man, attempting to lower him to a mere animal?

In Hosea 13:9, all Hebrew manuscripts read “he destroyed you”; whereas the KJV reads “thou hast destroyed thyself,” with no apparent support from any ancient authority. Do you suppose this is a New Age corrupting of the Word of God?

In Mal 2:12, all Hebrew manuscripts read “aware and awake”; whereas the KJV reads “the master and the scholar,” following the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate. Do you suppose this is a New Age attack on spiritual alertness, replacing it with godless scholarship?

To keep the record straight, in all passages, the NKJV adhered to the reading of the TR, even when it was not supported by the majority of manuscripts, in order to maintain the textual tradition of the KJV. However, where the KJV did not follow the TR, the NKJV corrected all departures from the TR in both the Old Testament and the New. An exception was “Lucifer” in Isaiah 14:12, and a few other places where the KJV was justified in departing from the Hebrew.

Now if it is proper to criticize and condemn the new versions as corrupt and “new age” because some of their readings are supported by only a minority of manuscripts, is it not also proper to condemn the KJV when its readings come from a minority, a handful, or from no Greek manuscripts? Should you not cry “New Age!” or “Romanist

Conspiracy!” or “Bible Corruption!” concerning the KJV tradition based on such weak support? But if you do not like that idea, how can you justify the KJV when it violates the very standard you set up as the test of fidelity for other versions, namely the majority of manuscripts? And if you are willing to accept readings supported by only a minority of manuscripts, because those readings are in the KJV, how do you escape your own condemnation? Is it then not true that your real criterion for validity is English tradition and not manuscript evidence? But is this any different than the Roman Catholic dogma of the Council of Trent that decreed that the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible is the final authority of Scripture, over and above the Greek and Hebrew texts? If that is the case, have you not made the Word of God of none effect through your tradition (Mark 7:13)? The only alternative to that is the recently invented, un-Biblical, unhistoric doctrine that the KJV translators (and subsequent KJV revisors) were divinely inspired. Please keep reading.

Members of a Ghostly Guild

Throughout your book you have alleged that Westcott and Hort were members of a Ghostly Guild that involved them is spiritist activity of a New Age nature. These allegations are the basis of many of the false analogies that you use to connect godly scholars with the New Age movement. Enclosed is an article by Dr. Robert Sumner that shows the false nature of this allegation against Westcott and Hort.

I do not defend Westcott and Hort in some of their views, but it is wrong to attack men who are not alive to defend themselves. I just finished reading Westcott’s commentary on Hebrews 1:1-3. He makes such strong, clear statements about the Word of God, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the incarnation, and redemption that it is hard to doubt his orthodoxy on these doctrines.

We may disagree with Westcott and Hort on some of their doctrinal views, but their doctrinal views had little to do with the development of their method of textual criticism, a scientific method for deciding which readings of the Greek New Testament are most likely original. It is wrong to make a connection between their doctrinal views and their scientific methodology. Present day scholars, who accept their method of textual criticism, accept it on the basis of its scientific merit, not because they agree with their theology. So it is wrong to draw any theological connections between such scholars and Westcott and Hort--there is none. Many outstanding conservative pastors and scholars prefer the Westcott-Hort method of textual criticism but do not accept their doctrinal views. No New Age connections can be attributed to them.

Let me illustrate the invalid line of reason by applying it to you and your book. Here is your argument:

Major Premise: Westcott and Hort have alleged doctrinal error and New Age views.

Minor Premise: Westcott and Hort developed a scientific method for deciding which readings in the Greek New Testament are more likely to be original, and a Greek New Testament based on that method.

Conclusion: The Westcott-Hort method and Greek Text are theologically corrupt and instruments of the New Age; and anyone who uses them is likewise corrupt and New Age.

Now let me apply the same form of reasoning to you:

Major Premise: John von Neumann, a brilliant mathematician, developed the design of the first electronic computer.

Minor Premise: von Neumann was an ungodly, blasphemous, immoral man.

Conclusion: computers are instruments of ungodliness, blasphemy, and immorality; and anyone who uses them are likewise. Miss Ripplinger used a computer to write her book, therefore . . .

Obviously you will object to this second argument (and rightly so), because there is no moral connection between the designer of the computer and the people who use them. Likewise, there is no theological or New Age connection between the designers of the Westcott-Hort method and the scholars that use it. Both arguments use false analogy and guilt by association.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my dear lady, you have published much false and incorrect information about the NKJV which has done gross disservice to the version, its publishers, editors, and translators. In addition, you have made unfounded allegations of doctrinal subversion and covert New Age intrigue against many godly scholars and accurate translations of the Bible. The damage you have done cannot be undone, but I beg you to cease any further attacks.

On the other hand, continue to fight genuine New Age activity. Train your guns on the real enemy, not on your Christian brothers.

Submitted in Christian love and respect.

Yours in Christ's Service

James D. Price, Ph.D.