



University of Utah

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL

**GENDERED LANGUAGE IN JOSEPH SMITH'S REVISION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT**

Samuel A. Mann (Dr. W. Paul Reeve)

Department of World Languages and Cultures

ABSTRACT

In 1830, directly after founding the Church of Christ, Joseph Smith began an effort to amend what he considered to be errors in the King James Version of the Bible. By the conclusion of this process, Smith had edited over 3,000 verses. Through comparing Smith's revision to the original language of the King James Version, scholars have gained remarkable insights into Smith's theological framework. Although some scholars have noted instances in which Smith altered gendered language (language implying gender [e.g., him, her, mankind, mother]), none have treated these gendered alterations as a pattern with the potential to provide an increased understanding of Smith's concept of religious gender roles. As the first study of its kind, my research begins to fill this gap in existing literature by identifying and analyzing each gendered alteration in Smith's revision of the New Testament. Although the results of my research have demonstrated that much of Smith's revision maintains the masculine language of the King James Version, a significant number of his alterations de-emphasize its masculine nature and invite a more inclusive interpretation of the New Testament. Overall, Smith's revision of gendered language affirms that his concept of gender roles was in line with 19th century American ideals. However, my research also revealed that Smith was more than willing to defy traditional interpretations of the Bible when he believed gender was not being properly portrayed in the New Testament.

This work was supported by funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program at the University of Utah awarded to Samuel A. Mann.