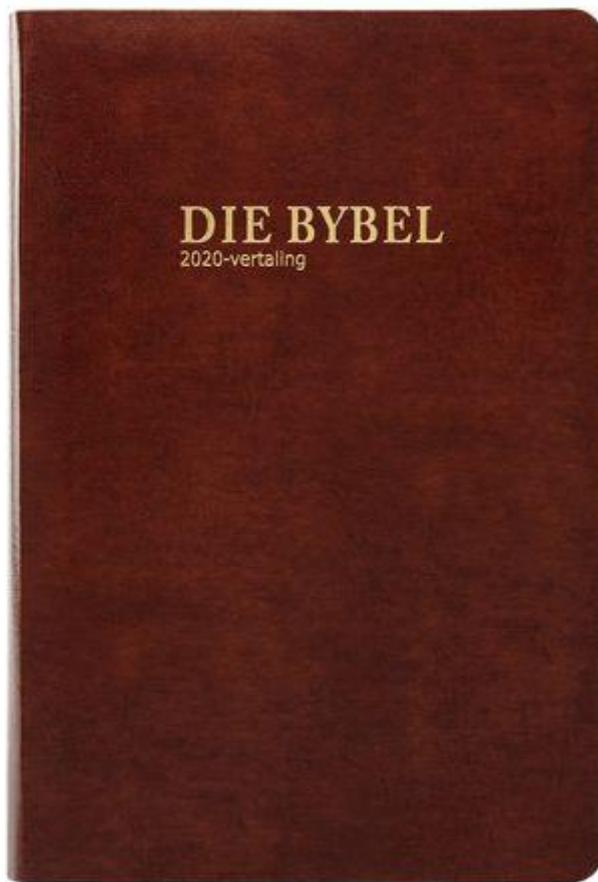


Report of Deputies Bible Translation

April 2024



Mandating Synod: Belhar 2021

Receiving Synod: Mamelodi 2024

Membership of deputyship:

The members of this deputyship were Annemarie Bijker, Gerhard Bijker, Rev. JA Breytenbach, Rev. P Kgatle, and Rev. J van der Linden (convener). Synod 2021 also appointed Greet de Vries, but she asked to be excused from this work.

The deputyship functioned well. Rev. Kgatle was only involved in the mandates regarding the Sotho-speaking churches as we deemed this the best use of his time.

Summary of activities

As deputyship Bible Translation we met on five occasions: 21 Jun 2022, 8 Nov 2022 (specifically about the mandate regarding the Sotho speaking churches), 20 Jan 2023, 30 March 2023 (with the Mission Team), and 29 Jan 2024

On 21 March 2024 we had a public information session about the *Bybelvertaling 2020*.

Mandate given by Synod 2021

10.1.1 - To not express preference for a specific edition of the underlying text.

10.1.2. To thank the Bible Society for this wonderful contribution to Afrikaans Bible translation.

10.1.3. To propose the ESV for official use in our churches and the NIV (1984-edition) as allowable particularly for our Mission churches as acceptable English Bible translations.

10.1.4. To evaluate the BDV 2020 for official use in our churches.

10.1.5. To evaluate other aspects of the BDV 2020 such as footnotes, glossaries, and introductions.

10.1.6. To also involve the Afrikaans-speaking ministers in our church federation, especially in their sermon preparation, as well as church members.

10.1.7. To educate the churches on the BDV 2020, with a focus on the underlying Text Editions and all versions of the BDV 2020 in congruence with our confessions.

10.1.8. To correspond with the deputies of the RCSA (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika) and the APK (Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerke) and possibly other likeminded churches to work together on a BDV edition without the introductory material that was added to each Bible book.

10.1.9. To work with missionaries and/or pastors to discover the use of non-Afrikaans or English translations to see if deputies may be of further help.

10.1.10. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held end 2022 or beginning 2023.

10.1.11 To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

Execution of the mandate given by Synod 2021

We will discuss our progress according to the mandate given to us as deputyship:

10.1.1 - To not express preference for a specific edition of the underlying text.

In the discussions that we hear in the churches (we are, of course, also limited in this regard), we find a clear preference for the Majority Text (and thus the *Bybel 1933/1953 Vertaling*, hereinafter referred to as *OAV 1953*). Some do not only state this as a preference but have a very strong conviction that this is the only possible text edition for us to consider. Mostly though this preference for the Majority Text is based on the fact that the *OAV 1953* is the trusted Bible translation that has been used for many years, and that a new translation is compared to the old translation. The Majority Text/Textus Receptus is in most cases longer than the Critical Text (on which the *Bybelvertaling 2020*, hereafter *Bybel 2020*, is based), and so it feels to the church members as if “they are taking away parts of God’s Word”. We have often heard this phrase through the years.

Rev. Pieter Boon on own initiative had a presentation in some of the churches to discuss the process of textual criticism, and also mentioned that the issue of the underlying Greek text edition was a difficult one. This was also published in Kompas March 2021. As deputyship we are very thankful for this. We still experienced quite a bit of the same problems as mentioned above after this, and so we decided to address this issue and have a more general discussion about the *Bybel 2020*. This public meeting happened on 21 March 2024. On this evening Rev. J van der Linden spoke specifically about the difficult questions asked to the Majority Text proponents by the Critical Text proponents. He also tried to place the decision of synod (not to choose between one of the two text editions) in the context of the broader reformed world, and the decisions we see there. On this same evening Br. Gerhard Bijker spoke on translation methods and the challenges of translating the Word of God by comparing some of the Afrikaans translations (also with English translations). Rev. Pieter Boon spoke on his experience in comparing the *OAV 1953* and *Bybel 2020*, and gave a balanced view on positives and negatives of each translation.

10.1.2. To thank the Bible Society for this wonderful contribution to Afrikaans Bible translation.

This has been done. We have also encouraged the Bible Society to publish a *Bybel 2020-vertaling* without the introductions to the Bible books (see 10.1.8).

10.1.3. To propose the ESV for official use in our churches and the NIV (1984-edition) as allowable particularly for our Mission churches as acceptable English Bible translations.

We had a meeting with the mission team on 30 March 2023 where we discussed this with the missionaries.

The missionaries are encouraging the members to use the ESV or NIV (1984), but many people still use the Good News Translation as the ESV and NIV are more difficult to understand. We encouraged the missionaries to help the church members to understand the importance of reliability in Bible translations. We also suggested that they encourage the church members to add the ESV and NIV (1984) as Bible translations to what they are currently using, so that they can at least also see the differences in translation. In this way they can also be better protected against making wrong conclusions from a specific translation of a passage. As example we used the translation of “happy” that the Good News Translation uses in Matt 5:3-12. This can very easily be understood in a worldly way. When one compares it to the ESV and NIV, you see the translation of “blessed”. This comparison gives (should give) a different colour to the “happiness” than the world has.

10.1.4. To evaluate the BDV 2020 for official use in our churches.

In our evaluation of the Bybel 2020 we considered the following aspects (for a discussion of the footnotes, the glossary and the Introduction to the Bible books, please see the next mandate):

The type of Bible translation

One of the things that we as deputyship have been wrestling with, is to get a good grasp of what type of Bible translation the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* is. In its own words it describes itself as a direct (“direkte”) translation. We get the idea that people generally think that this means that it is a word-for-word or literal (concordant) translation. However, the term “direct” here actually refers to “direct speech.” In other words, the translators considered, for example, how would Ruth express herself in Afrikaans today if we tried to quote her directly.

We also need to understand that underlying every Bible translation type, is a language model. This was not specifically discussed or decided on with regard to the *Bybel 2020-vertaling*. The person who was the frontrunner on what type of Bible translation the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* would be, Prof. Christo van der Merwe himself said,

“Ek moet dit egter duidelik stel dat nog die kerke nog die vertaalspanne op ’n bepaalde taalmodel eksplisiet besluit het. Die taalmodel het amper soos ’n goeie stuk gereedskap dit in die loop van die proses self bewys. Veral omdat dit in baie opsigte bloot ’n verfyning is van tradisionele wysheid en intuisies oor hoe betekenis in taal werk, naamlik dat taal volledig ingebed is in die kultuur van ’n taalgemeenskap, woorde meer as een betekenis kan hê, en dat die spesifieke betekenis van ’n woord net in die konteks waarin dit gebruik word vasgestel kan word.”¹

We should not compare the *OAV 1953* and the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* as two completely similar translations. We would classify the old Afrikaans translation of 1953 (*OAV 1953*) as a “source text translation” (brontekstvertaling) and the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* as an “orientating on the source text translation.” The *OAV 1953* would translate as it says in the source text, while the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* would translate by trying to keep close to the source text, but in idiomatic Afrikaans.²

¹ Christo van der Merwe, 9 Sept 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nVy7_cgzQc

² These are the direct words of Prof. Christo van der Merwe in this regard: “Om ’n verstaanbare vertaling, wat baie naby aan die brontekst bly, in idiomatiese Afrikaans aan te bied.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nVy7_cgzQc

In each translation choices have to be made with regard to the literalness of each part being translated. The *OAV 1953* is not *completely* literal and also made interpretation choices.

In Job 34:10 the *OAV 1953* has “*manne van verstand*,” and the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* has “*verstandige manne*.” The original Hebrew talks about “men of heart” (“*manne van hart*”). So both translations made an interpretation, but also did not go as far as the *Bybelvertaling 1983* which has “*julle wat alles verstaan*.” A translation often needs to make some kind of interpretation to make sense, but should also try to limit its interpretation. “*Manne van verstand*” is a bit more of a neutral translation as it can mean a few things, while *Bybelvertaling 1983* made a choice in this regard, and thus limited the reader’s understanding of the possibilities of the source text.

Another example of the issue of literal translation can be found in Isaiah 6:6:

1933/1953: “*Maar een van die serafs het na my toe gevlieg met ’n gloeiende kool **in sy hand**, wat hy met ’n tang van die altaar af geneem het*” (emphasis added).

2020: “*Een van die serafs het na my toe gevlieg met ’n gloeiende kool **by hom** wat hy met ’n tang van die altaar af geneem het*” (emphasis added).

Literally the Hebrew text refers to “in his hand,” but this is also an idiomatic way of saying “with him.” So the *OAV 1953* is more literal here. But the *OAV 1953* translates the same phrase “take with you” in 1 Kings 14:3. So the *OAV 1953* is not always literal, as no translation is. There is always a gradation of literalness to Bible translations, even in a translation itself.

A formal equivalent translation (i.e., literal translation) also does not necessarily mean that justice has been done to what the author intended to say. In the abovementioned example of Isaiah 6:6, when we translate literally as in “in his hand,” we may wonder whether the author also wanted to communicate that angels have hands? And did he want to communicate that the angel took the coal with the tongs from the altar, and then placed it in his hands? Or even, does he want to communicate that angels have fireproof hands? Or only that he took the coals with him?

We as churches value Bible translations that are more on the literal spectrum of Bible translations. But the question always remains: how much literalness is useful, and when does literalness lead to misunderstanding or confusion.

A very important aspect in this discussion about the difference concerning the types of translation of the *OAV 1953* and the *Bybel 2020* is the concordant translation of specific words. By this we mean the way in which one Hebrew word is consistently or inconsistently translated through the whole Bible translation. It is of course not possible to have complete concordant translations, as some words do have more than one meaning and often *many* meanings. That means that a second meaning of a source word will use a different Afrikaans word than the first meaning of that same source word. The *OAV 1953* is more consistent in its translation of specific words. That has the advantage that certain themes can easily be identified right through Scripture. The *Bybel 2020-vertaling* often focuses more on how to understand a certain word in Afrikaans today, which sometimes means that the meaning of the passage is clearer.

Let us look at an example. The *OAV 1953* reads in Ps 69:2: “*Verlos my, o God, want die waters het tot by **die siel** gekom*” (emphasis added). The Hebrew word “*nefesh*” (soul) can have many meanings,

and the *OAV 1953* has translated it with a different range of meanings in its translation. Here in Psalm 69:2 it keeps to the more common translation it often uses, namely “*siel*.” But it is difficult to see how water can reach the height of the soul. The image is more understandable if we translate it with “*keel*” as the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* does. And then we have to realize that “throat” is a well-known meaning of this word, so it is also a “literal translation” of the word.

If we now look at Isaiah 58:11, the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* translates: “*Die HERE sal jou voortdurend lei; in dor plekke sal Hy jou keel verkwik*” (emphasis added). The source text’s word for “*keel*” here is “*nefesh*,” for which the *OAV 1953* has “*siel*.” Of course both translations are possible, but in this context we do feel that keeping to the common meaning of “soul” brings out the broader and deeper meaning of the word and passage better.

Interestingly, the *Bybelvertaling 1983* translated in Isaiah 58:11: “*sal Hy in jou behoeftes voorsien*.” This is a very strong focus on the meaning and message of the phrase “*in dor plekke sal Hy jou siel verkwik*.” The ESV (the Bible translation used by our sister churches in Canada and Australia) has something similar to the *Bybelvertaling 1983*, even though it is in general seen as a more literal translation: “*and satisfy your desire in scorched places*.”

In this regard one can also think of the Greek word “*parakaleo*” that is consistently translated as “*vermaan*” in the *OAV 1953*, although it has a wide range of meanings. Often the meaning of “*vermaan*” does not fit well in the context, and the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* keeps this in mind as it translates the word differently in different contexts.

And so, we often see that the *OAV 1953* keeps close to the common meaning in the source text and translates more concordant, while the *Bybel 2020-vertaling* orientates on the source text, but in idiomatic Afrikaans and giving more weight to the context when choosing a translation.

In our evaluation of this aspect of the *Bybel 2020-vertaling*, we see that it intends to be less “literal” than the *OAV 1953*. We feel that this is sometimes valuable, and sometimes less so. As far as we can see, the *Bybel 2020* is true to its intention of orientating on the source text.

For us as churches this is an important decision we need to make: whether this translation is literal enough for us to use from our pulpits. We can make a decision that the Bybel 2020 is a reliable translation, but it could still be that it is difficult to use as a pulpit Bible as it is not literal enough. All preachers know the frustration of having to correct or explain the "interpretation" a translation has made while preaching. So this is a question the churches will need to answer, especially the ministers as they try using this translation as the pulpit Bible from which they explain the Scripture text and preach from it.

Examples of good and less good translations

We received feedback on the translation of the *Bybel 2020* from Rev. Van Alten and Rev. Boon, and then we also did spot checks on the translation ourselves. It is not our goal to give a list of good and less good translations in the report. We added some examples as an appendix to the report.

In Bible translation the translators often need to make choices. Although we do see some translations that differ from the *OAV 1953*, we do not often see that the differences of the *Bybel 2020* differ from other reliable Bible translations, like the ESV or the NIV.

One concern that we do have is that the *Bybel 2020* sometimes does not keep in mind how Scripture itself uses a passage when making choices in how to translate a Scripture text. An example of this we see in Gen. 22:19 (see the Appendix with the notes on some of the Scripture passages).

Although the abovementioned issue in particular is not ideal in a Bible translation, we also never had the feeling that the different choices had to do with a critical view of Scripture or a deliberate misdirection by the translators. These aspects were openly discussed at the meetings of the Bible Society, and had to do with differences in the interpretation of prophecy, specifically the fulfilment of prophecy. We will tend to translate a prophecy from the intent of the Author (we would often say the Primary Author), whereas others would tend to focus on the translation as the human author understood the words (what the human author understood or did not understand is of course often not clear to us).

We see the good intentions of the Bible society and the translators in their agreement to publish a so-called "Hoofletter"-translation.

Keeping original words

In the *Bybel 2020* we sometimes see that the translation uses the titles of the people or the indications of measurements in their original forms. The translators did this on purpose, to ensure that the reader at all times realizes he/she is working with a text of a few thousand years ago. A reader of a text always has the great danger that you read your own context or understanding into the text, and this is to help the reader guard against this, and then to provide footnotes that gives an explanation of these terms³.

We are not sure if this aspect of the translation is succeeding in its aim, but we do see the importance of this principle.

General evaluation of the Bybel 2020

We see some important new studies in the understanding of certain Greek and Hebrew words that are now part of the *Bybel 2020*. For instance, in Ezra 4:9 the OAV 1953 talks about "partygenote", while it has since been established that the list mentioned in this verse is functions and officials.

We see that *Bybel 2020* is often clearer in some of its translation, and that old Afrikaans words and phrases (like goedertierenheid, vrees van die HERE etc.) were often replaced by more understandable new translations. Sometimes we feel that *Bybel 2020* is a little naive in that it does not take into account enough how the "normal reader" can understand a word, even if the Greek or Hebrew does allow for a specific translation (e.g. using "gelukkig" instead of "geseënd" in passages like Matt 5:3-12). As with all translations, we as deputyship feel that this translation has its strong points, but also its weaker points.

In our reading of the *Bybel 2020* and our work through the years with the Bible Society and the translators, we have not experienced a deliberate deception or a push for a certain theological agenda. We feel that this is a translation that tries to be honest in what it does - we only need to

³ See Gert J. C. Jordaan, *Die 2020-direkte vertaling in Afrikaans: Waarom en hoe?*, In die Skriflig, Junie 2021.

look at the footnotes, and see how the translators make us aware of differences and options. Bible Society was also always open in discussing certain aspects of the translation.

In general, we think that it is important to move forward surely but carefully with the process of accepting or declining this new Bible translation. It is fully understandable that people get used to the wording and manners of a specific Bible translation. This has a beauty to it (the Word of God as it has settled in our hearts and minds!). We should be careful to force the matter, whichever way, and give people time to consider and obtain a broad confrontation with the new Bible translation. The need to not hasten decisions but take time to evaluate is something that we have seen in many Reformed church federations worldwide as they consider new Bible translations. This is especially true as this Bible translation is based on a different Greek text edition. And the *Bybel 2020* is of course also not the same kind of translation as the OAV 1953, and therefore we need to understand that people will compare Bible translations and have difficulty to understand certain differences. In all of these things, it is important that we give people time to learn and understand how to view this new Bible translation.

Our recommendation is to not yet make a final decision on the *Bybel 2020*, but to tentatively make it available for use in the worship service. In this way we can have the full experience of this Bible translation, while not making a decision hastily. We feel this is also necessary, as we are not sure if this kind of translation ("less literal") will work as a pulpit Bible.

Our recommendation is also, in line with other Reformed church federations, to not be prescriptive to churches in Bible translations that have been approved by the synod. This means, that if the *Bybel 2020* would later be fully accepted by the churches, then the churches will have a choice to which Bible translation they want to use, the OAV 1953 or the *Bible 2020*.

10.1.5. To evaluate other aspects of the BDV 2020 such as footnotes, glossaries, and introductions.

In the above section we gave a general evaluation of aspects of the *Bybel 2020*. We were also specifically asked by synod to evaluate the footnotes, glossaries and Introductions to the Bible books.

Footnotes

There is something of a randomness to the footnotes, what is explained by notes and what not. Still, we feel that the footnotes are a very big bonus in a translation, especially when it mentions different textual options and words or phrases that can be translated in different ways. In Bible translation the translators always needs to make choices, and here the reader is told about these choices. This has high preference above a translation with no footnotes.

As with all explanations, there are times that we would have phrased the footnotes differently, but from our spot checking of footnotes, we could not see big problems.

Glossaries

In the glossary we generally see useful content for the Bible reader. We often see careful phrasing, for instance with regards to prophets in the New Testament. It is also beautiful to see that the glossaries sometimes draw the line to Christ as the ultimate reality of that truth.

The glossary descriptions are short, and then one will always have the danger that one "misses" something in the description. We should be careful not to overask the glossaries.

Sometimes the glossaries leave the reader with questions, which could have been anticipated by *Bybel 2020*. For instance, when it says that "die Ou Testament gebruik nie siel in die betekenis van 'n lewenskern wat na die dood voortbestaan nie". It is indeed true that this is not the focus of this specific Hebrew word ("nefesh"), but it does not mention other words or ideas used by the Old Testament. This leaves many questions about the OT view of life after death, and opens up many misunderstandings, which could have been handled better, especially when *Bybel 2020* considers its readers (non-academic readers). The description of "doderyk" also leaves the reader with more questions than answers.

Another instance in which we see the danger of the description not being clear enough is in the description of "Wysheid". The description says that the books of Ecclesiastes and Job are written against the idea that "as jy dus goed doen sal God jou seën, en as jy kwaad doen sal Hy jou straf". According to the glossary description the books of Ecclesiastes and Job therefore wants to say that it is not always true that when you do good you will be blessed, and when you do bad you will be punished. Does this then mean that when we do good, we can be under the curse of God, and when we do wrong, under his blessing? The problem in this description is with the understanding of the words blessing and punishment. Unfortunately this emphasises the wrong understanding we hear around us all the time, that blessing equals material prosperity and that punishment equals (instant) trials and difficulties.

Under the glossary term "Huishoudelike voorskrifte" the difference between the culture of the day and the Christian view is described, and it is said that because of our position in Christ (with a reference to Gal 3:28) the hierarchy of the various positions has changed. We do not see that this view had any influence on the translation of the Scripture passages like Eph. 5:22-6: 9, 1 Tim. 2:8-15 etc.

In general we feel that the glossaries are useful for the reader, but as shown above, there are also some instances where it is problematic.

Introductions to the Bible books

We think it is especially important to bring to the attention of the churches the problem with the introductions to the Bible books. In these introductions we find many of the assumptions of modern Old and New Testament science and hermeneutics. In some introductions we find views that oppose our Reformed view of Scripture, while in others the reader is being involved in debates that create uncertainty, and then not guided by some clear facts in these debates. Here are three examples to give you an idea of what we mean:

a) The introduction to Exodus: “In the past it was generally accepted that Moses was the author of Exodus. However, it is clear that the book originated over a longer period of time. The final work on the book was probably done by priests during the Babylonian exile (586–539 BC). The first readers of the complete book were presumably priestly groups in the Babylonian exile. After the exile, Exodus played a very important role in the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the establishment of the cult” (translated).

b) The introduction to the book of Job: “The beginning and end of the book of Job places the story of Job east of Israel during the time of the patriarchs. When comparing the language use and themes of other books in the Old Testament it seems to date from a much later time, presumably the fifth century BC. Parts of Job (Job 32:1–37:24, Job 28:1–18) are considered to be later additions...” (translated).

c) The introduction to John’s Gospel: “According to church tradition, the apostle John wrote this Gospel. However, it cannot be determined with certainty who was responsible for the Gospel according to John. There are many obvious reasons why we can assume that the disciple John wrote the Gospel. Nevertheless, theological writers like to discuss the authorship of the Gospel” (translated).

These are a few examples where we see how the reader is being confused and even misled before starting with the reading of a Bible book. The things we mention here is a strong underlining of the importance of our mandate 10.1.8.

The reality however is that the Bibles that our church members are reading, do have these *Introductions*. We can make work of it to warn them about this, but what about in a year’s time, or in five years’ time? It will be important to find a way to keep our church members vigilant about this, as the reading of these Introductions will automatically become part of the reading of the Bible for our church members in the future.

We all know the danger of reading the same thing over and over till it becomes acceptable and even authoritative, especially for those who are not educated in these issues.

This aspect of the *Bybel 2020* is a real concern to us as deputies.

10.1.6. To also involve the Afrikaans-speaking ministers in our church federation, especially in their sermon preparation, as well as church members.

We have involved the ministers in our evaluation and asked reaction from them on their use of the *Bybel 2020*. From sermons that we have heard we could see that all Afrikaans-speaking ministers were confronting themselves with this Bible translation, and we believe this can be very useful in our question (in 10.1.4) whether the *Bybel 2020* is literal enough to use as a pulpit Bible translation in our churches.

At first, we only thought of gathering some comments from the ministers, but through a request we also realized that it will be useful to standardize the feedback we receive. The feedback could be

given through Google Forms or on a spreadsheet. We are thankful for the feedback we received from Rev. Van Alten and Rev. Boon.

We also received a letter from the FRC Maranata about the involvement of church members in the evaluation of the *Bybel 2020*. For us as deputyship this is a big challenge as most of the informal questions we received from the church members were about differences in the Greek text. We have addressed this issue of the differences in the Greek text at the recent information evening of deputies, but we are not sure how broadly this is understood in the churches.

It is also difficult for us to see how church members must evaluate a translation without knowledge of the source languages. There is of course always the possibility to compare the translations with one another, but how then to decide which translation is better?

We have discussed this issue of the involvement of church members in the evaluation of the *Bybel 2020* at a few of our meetings, but it is difficult for us to find a good path in this.

We do see that many church members and Bible studies are reading the *Bybel 2020* with the *OAV 1953*, and we see this as useful in a general evaluation if the *Bybel 2020* reads well or not. The feedback that we have received is that in general the translation reads very well.

10.1.7. To educate the churches on the BDV 2020, with a focus on the underlying Text Editions and all versions of the BDV 2020 in congruence with our confessions.

See 10.1.1

10.1.8. To correspond with the deputies of the RCSA (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika) and the APK (Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerke) and possibly other likeminded churches to work together on a BDV edition without the introductory material that was added to each Bible book.

After we initially did not get response from the RCSA and the APK, we contacted them again.

The RCSA sent a letter to the Bybelgenootskap SA to request that the *Introductions* to the Bible books be changed or that Bybelgenootskap SA will consider a *Bybel 2020* edition without the *Introductions* to the Bible books. They received a letter from the Bybelgenootskap SA that they are not considering this at the moment, but will in the future consider this.

In an email received from Rev. LP van Jaarsveld they mentioned that they are continuing this discussion with the Bybelgenootskap SA, and that they as GKSA deputies will also keep in mind our concerns in this regard. We see cooperation with the GKSA in this regard as a good possibility.

10.1.9. To work with missionaries and/or pastors to discover the use of non-Afrikaans or English translations to see if deputies may be of further help.

We had a first discussion with our deputy (Rev. Kgatle), and we then later had a broader discussion about this with the Mission Team. The missionaries do not see a specific need where deputies can be of help.

The mother tongue of the church members of the “Sotho-speaking churches” differs a lot. Some people do read the bible in an African language, but most people (and almost all the younger people) read the Bible in an English Bible version.

Recommendations to the next synod

1.1. To evaluate the Bybelvertaling 2020 for official use in our churches.

Grounds

As we mentioned, one should not make a decision on a new Bible translation hastily, and so it is good to continue this mandate.

1.2. To critically and provisionally use the Bybelvertaling 2020 on the pulpit, and to ask feedback from the Afrikaans-speaking ministers in our church, especially also whether this translation is literal enough as a pulpit Bible.

Grounds:

1. As deputies are convinced that *Bybelvertaling 2020* does not consciously try to mislead the reader, it will be good to take a further step in our evaluation of this translation. The best way to evaluate this translation is to use it very actively, and for the main purpose that we are evaluating the translation, namely as a Bible translation we want to use in our worship services. Taking this step does not eliminate mandate 1.1. We are still in the process of evaluating *Bybelvertaling 2020*. This should also be communicated to the church members so that they understand the process. Deputies do however feel that it is important to work intensively with this Bible translation, and there is no better way than to use it for the purpose that we will be evaluating it, namely to use in our worship services.
2. A translation can be a faithful translation according to its own purpose, and still not be ideal as a pulpit Bible translation. It is especially the ministers who will know if a Bible translation is suitable (“literal enough”) as a pulpit Bible translation.

1.3. To educate the churches on the positive and negative aspects of the Bybelvertaling 2020, as well as the OAV 1953.

Grounds:

As we keep evaluating the *Bybelvertaling 2020*, it is important to keep the churches updated on our findings. But it is also important that our churches have a realistic view of the *OAV 1953*, and also see the positives and negatives of that translation.

1.4. To correspond with the deputies of the RCSA (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika) and the APK (Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerke) and possibly other likeminded churches to work together on a Bybelvertaling 2020 edition without the introductory material that was added to each Bible book.

Grounds:

We still hope it is possible to come to a *Bybel 2020* edition without the *Introductions* in the near future, and therefore we should keep the discussion about this going.

1.5. To educate the Sotho-speaking churches on Bible translations and what are good choices of Bible translations for them to use.

Grounds:

We have proposed certain Bible translations for the Sotho-speaking churches to use, but it is important that they understand why these choices have been made and why it is important.

1.6. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held end 2025 or beginning 2026.

1.7. To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

New deputies for next Synod

Unfortunately Rev. J van der Linden is not available for a deputyship due to work load and health. Gerhard Bijker and Rev. JA Breytenbach are available to continue as deputies Bible translation.

May the Lord bless our discussions and work at Synod 2024.

With brotherly greetings,

Annemarie Bijker

Gerhard Bijker

Rev. JA Breytenbach

Rev. P Kgatle

Rev. J van der Linden (convener)

Appendix: A Summary of some of the translation choices made by Bybelvertaling 2020

Skrifgedeelte	Kort beskrywing	Tipe	2020-vertaling	Notas
Gen 1	Die vs 'n dag	Grammatika	Neutraal	Taalkundig beide moontlik Teologies is "die tweede dag" waarskynlik sagter op die oor vir jong-aarde standpunt?
Gen 3:15	Vermorsel+byt vs. aanval x 2	Woord-keuse	Positief	Selfde Hebreeuse woord 2020 word meer konkordant vertaal, soortgelyk aan baie ander vertalings.
Gen 22:19	Wens / Sal geseen word	Grammatika	Negatief	Grammatikaal moontlik om dit so te vertaal: Belofte vs. Wens Het 'n voetnota - sou verkies het as dit ander opsie die primere keuse was NT aanhalings in Hand 3+Gal 3 wys dat die alternatief in die voetnota die beter keuse was
2 Sam 18:33	Ontroerd vs bewe	Woord-keuse	Positief	2020 is beter, nader aan Hebreeus
Ps 16:7	Niere vs Hart	Woord-keuse	Neutraal	Voetnota: Hebreeuse opvatting: Niere = Emosies Kon dalk eerder die oorspronklike (Niere) in die vers gelos het, soortgelyk aan die Mate, gewigte, geldeenhede, range
Mat 10:18	Goewerneurs / Prokurators	Mate, gewigte, geldeenhede, range	Positief	
Mat 5:26	Oortjie / Kwadrant	Mate, gewigte, geldeenhede, range	Positief	Voetnota met hedendaagse interpretasie
Open 7:9	Klere vs. Stolas	Mate, gewigte, geldeenhede,	Positief	Voetnota - lang gewade

		range		
Psalm 23	Stok + Staf	Vertaal-tegniek	Positief	1983: Interpreteer / uitleg; dinamies ekwivalent Die 2020 is meestal baie nader aan die 1933 vertaling
Psalm 38:11	slaan vinnig / klop wild	Poesie	Positief	Poesie is ekstra moeilik; rym,klank nabootsing,ens.; In die geval kry die 2020 dit reg om iets mooi in die onderliggende Hebreeus weer te gee
Mat 16	Salig vs Gelukkig vs Geseend	Woord-keuse	Negatief	Salig = verouderde woord; Gelukkig is bietjie plat; Geseend is dalk die beter keuse uit die konteks/teologiese standpunt
Mark 6:41	die dissipels vs Sy dissipels	Grondteks	Neutraal	Grondteks verskil; minor
Joh 16:7	Parakleet vs Trooster	Mate, gewigte, geldeenhede, range	Positief	Voetnota: beskryf dit, ryker betekenis kom uit.
2 Petrus 1:21	Gedrywe vs. Meegevoer	Woord-keuse	Neutraal	
2 Petrus 1:16	krag+koms; kragtige koms.	Grammatika	Positief	2 selfstandige naamwoorde; vs. selfstadige + byvoeglike naamwoord; Griekse stylfiguur;
Open 8:7	Derde v/d aarde vs. bome	Grondteks	Neutraal	textus receptus; grondteks issue
Open 8:13	Arend vs Engel	Grondteks	Neutraal	Op grond van sterk manuskripgetuienis en die inhoud van Openbaring word die lesing "engel" hier gevolg.
Ps 121:1	kyk op vs slaan oe op	Woordkeuse	Positief	Nie streng konkordant vertaal nie
Jes 6:6	in sy hand vs by hom	Grammatika	Positief	Hebreeuse segswyse
Ps 120:2	lieg / bedrieg	Poesie	Positief	
Luk 6:5	Hy is heer vd Sabbat	Grammatika	Positief	Ongewone woordorde in die Grieks - klemtoon verbeter in die 2020 vs 1933
Joh 3:3	Wedergeboorte	Woordspeling	Neutraal	In die bronteks word 'n dubbelsinnige woord gebruik wat sowel 'van bo' as 'weer' kan beteken, en in Joh 3:4 verstaan Nikodemus dit as 'weer', maw 'n tweede aardse geboorte.

Ex 20:5	wat kinders laat boet	Woordkeuse	Negatief	Die woord boet kan verseker ook meer neutraal verstaan word as besoek (OAV) Die 2020 vertaling bring vrae oor die boodskap van Esegel 18 (dat die HERE elkeen vergeld na sy eie dade).
Ex 20:5	besitlike God	Woordkeuse	Positief	Die OAV het "jaloerse God". Dit is definitief vir misverstand vatbaar aangesien "jaloers" 'n negatiewe konnotasie het vir mense vandag.
Rom 6	doulos - dienskneg / slaaf	Woordkeuse	Positief	In die 1953-vertaling word deurgaans met 'dienskneg' of 'diensknegte' vertaal die 2020-vertaling vertaal meer letterlik met 'slaaf' of 'slawe'. Dit is, na my mening, 'n beter vertaling
Hooglied 1:1	Hooglied	Woordspeling	Positief	2020-vertaling volg die Hebreeus letterlik: ""die lied van alle liedere""
Heb 11:1	Vaste vertrouwe	Woordkeuse	Positief	2020-vertaling vertaal meer letterlik (en na my mening nader aan die werklike bedoeling) met sekerheid
1 Joh 5:18	Bewaar homself	Woordkeuse	Positief	vers 18: hy wat uit God gebore is, bewaar homself, maar daar is vanuit die oorspronklike taal meer rede om te vertaal: Hy wat uit God gebore is, bewaar / beskerm hom (so het die 2020-vertaling dit). Die Een wat uit God gebore is, dui dan op Jesus Christus. Hy is die Een wat ons beskerm. Christus bewaar die christen die Een wat by uitstek uit God gebore is, God se eie Seun, bewaar elkeen wat nã Hom uit God gebore word!
Fil 3:2	Waak teen	Woordkeuse	Positief	Die OAV se "Let op" is nie sterk genoeg afwysend en waarskuwend nie.
Efe 2:10	daarvolgens te leef	Woordkeuse	Negatief	Die OAV hou mooi die beeld waaroor dit gaan: ons wandel in die werke wat Christus voorberei het. Dit is iets anders as om slegs daarvolgens te leef.
Gen 1:2	Die aarde was woës	Grammatika	Positief	Die OAV het "En die aarde was woës". Die "en" vooraan kan verkeerd verstaan word (in lyn met die "gap-theory: Eers het vers 1 plaasgevind, en daarna wys vers 2 op 'n nuwe aksie van God). Die hebreuse grammatiese struktuur aan die begin van vers 2 wys hier egter op 'n verduidelikende sin. Dit is daarom beter om dit onvertaald te laat soos die 2020-vertaling (so ook ESV), of om dit te vertaal as "Now the earth was formless" soos die NIV, HCSB en NET.

Deut 6:1	vaste voorskrifte en beslissings	Woordkeuse	Neutraal	Die OAV het "insettinge en verordeninge". Dit is nie meer woorde wat vandag behulpsaam is nie. Die vraag is of "beslissings" beter en duideliker is. Dit gaan hier oor reëls wat die Here vir ons gegee het. Die onderskeid tussen hierdie woorde vir wette is moeilik om te omskryf met een woord.
Joh 13:19	glo dat Ek is	Woordkeuse	Positief	Die OAV het hier "glo dat dit Ek is". Die fokus in hierdie gedeelte is dat die dissipels sal glo in die wese van wie Christus is. Die kom goed uit in die 2020-vertaling. Die "Ek is" (soos dit ook dikwels voorkom in die boek Johannes, bv. Ek is die deur) herinner aan die "Ek is" van God se selfopenbaring in Ex. 3.
1 Joh 3:9	kan nie meer aanhou sonde doen nie	Grammatika	Positief	Die fokus is hier op voortdurende handeling: kan nie aanhou sondig nie. Die OAV met sy "en hy kan nie sondig nie" is hier vir misverstand vatbaar.
1 Sam 12:7	al die weldade van die HERE	Woordkeuse	Negatief	Die letterlike vertaling is "regverdige dade" (so byvoorbeeld OAV). Uiteraard is regverdige dade ook weldade, maar die betekenis dat God deur sy regverdigheid sy volk help en red, gaan hier in die vertaling verlore.

