

2. Committee Reports

2.1. Committee on Bible Translation

Report to General Synod Neerlandia 2001 from the Committee on Bible Translation

Dear brothers,

Greetings in the Lord.

We submit to you our report in fulfilment of the mandate given to us by General Synod Fergus 1998. The mandate was much lighter than those given to the Committee on Bible Translations by general synods in 1992 and 1995; hence, this report is brief.

Mandate

Our committee had received as mandate from General Synod Fergus 1998 the following charge:

1. to receive comments from churches and / or members about passages in the NIV in need of improvements;
2. to scrutinize these comments, and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Center;
3. to bring to a resolution those matters that have already been submitted to the NIV Translation Center;
4. to monitor developments in the NIV as the text is revised;
5. to serve the next General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

Comments from churches and / or members

We have receive no comments from churches and / or members about the text of the NIV.

Resolving Matters Submitted by the Previous Committee

On February 9, 1998, the Bible Translation Committee serving General Synod Fergus 1998 had brought their labours to a conclusion by submitting to the NIV Translation Center a selection of passages in the NIV texts which were judged to be in some manner deficient, along with the reasons for that opinion. General Synod Fergus 1998 charged the present Bible Translation Committee to bring this matter to a resolution. We understood this charge to mean: inquire from the NIV Translation Center whether these particular recommendations will be adopted or not.

On April 28, 1998, Dr. John H. Stek acknowledged receipt of the above-mentioned correspondence, with appreciation for the 'careful study and discussion' that it represents. He requested, however, that before putting our proposed changes before the NIV's Committee on Bible Translation (not our committee, but the one which continues to update and make minor revisions to the NIV text), he might receive further elucidation on four of the nine proposals. He responded to the proposed changes and questioned some of the underlying assumptions.

On March 10, 1999, our Committee replied to Dr. Stek's comments (see

Appendix). Essentially, we acquiesced to Dr. Stek's defence of the NIV text on one point, but maintained and fine-tuned our position on the other three.

Our Committee does not expect to receive any further communication from the NIV Translation Center since, as Dr. Stek observed concerning the above-mentioned submission of February 9, 1998, it would be considered by the NIV Committee on Bible Translation "over the next 2-3 years".

Given the fact that we have had the opportunity to offer additional elucidation on the submission of February 9, 1998, and furthermore, given the fact that our recommendation will eventually be dealt with, this part of our mandate would appear to be concluded. We would consider the matters submitted by the previous committee to be resolved.

Monitoring the NIV Text

In a letter dated March 18, 1999, we inquired of Mr. S. Johnson, Director of Communication for the International Bible Society

1. whether the inclusive-language NIV was still being published by Hodder and Stoughton Publishing House, and
2. whether a non-inclusive-language NIV text with Canadian (or British) spelling had been published.

We did not receive a response to this correspondence.

The mandate to monitor the NIV text, we found difficult to fulfil. We understand why Synod felt it necessary to include this element: It seems that the committee serving Synod Abbotsford 1995 did not monitor developments in the NIV bureaucracy, with the result that shortly after Synod Abbotsford 1995, an inclusive-language edition appeared without warning. We are convinced that the Committee on Bible Translations serving Synod Abbotsford could not have notified Synod of the imminent publication of an inclusive-language edition since that particular development was not accessible to that committee. If there were to be other developments, we feel that we would be similarly unable to monitor them. We do not see a need for this mandate to be renewed.

The matter about which we inquired (but have not received reply) is not of an urgent nature and need not be pursued.

Conclusion

We are pleased to observe that none of the churches have submitted to our committee any points of concern or criticism regarding the NIV text. None had submitted such to the former committee either. This testifies to the fact that the decision of General Synod Abbotsford 1995, to recommend the NIV for use among the churches, has been a blessing to the churches. The transition from use of the RSV to the NIV has been remarkably harmonious.

Your committee has been pleased to serve the churches; however, since there appears to be no need to bring the conclusions of the Report to General Synod Fergus 1998 to further resolution, and further, since none of the churches have submitted concerns regarding specific texts of the NIV during the past six years, and finally, since the mandate to monitor developments in the NIV text seems almost impossible to fulfil, we recommend General Synod Neerlandia 2001 not reappoint a Committee on Bible Translation.

Respectfully submitted by your committee,

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