

Overture from Auckland Presbytery

Assess NIV2011 for use as pulpit Bible

Dear brothers,

Auckland Presbytery respectfully overtures Synod 2014.

That Synod, despite the decision of Synod 2011 with regard to NIV2011, appoint a study committee to assess the suitability of the 2011 revision of the New International Version (NIV2011) for use as a pulpit Bible.

Grounds:

1. Synod 2011's decision was based predominantly on one source – the Committee for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood's review of NIV2011 – and not on our own work.
2. There are now many more studies available on NIV2011 which would enable a study committee to make a more thorough and balanced assessment.
3. There was still a possibility at Synod 2011 that, if enough pressure were brought to bear, that Zondervan might reconsider (as they did with TNIV) and that NIV1984 might continue to be available or, failing that, that it might be possible to secure printing rights for NIV1984. We believe that this was a factor in the way Synod 2011 voted on this issue. However, these possibilities have now disappeared.
4. We currently effectively have two approved translations –NASB and NIV1984 – one of which is a word for word translation and one of which is a dynamic (thought for thought) translation. NASB and ESV (assuming Synod approves this) are both predominantly word for word translations and, If we eventually cease to use the NIV altogether, we will have no dynamic translation for use in our churches.
5. The language of NIV2011 (and NIV1984 before it) is close to spoken, natural English and is therefore very accessible to younger members of our churches and to folk from outside our churches who have not been exposed to the Bible before. We believe this is an important consideration.
6. There have been many improvements in the NIV2011 (as was also acknowledged in the CBMW report). For example, the language used in passages dealing with homosexual behaviour has been made much clearer in denouncing this practice in NIV2011.
7. The NIV2011 is substantially the same as NIV1984 – someone reading NIV2011 will be able to follow along with NIV1984 very comfortably. Many of our young people are already using an electronic version of NIV2011 on phones / tablets etc because NIV1984 is no longer available.
8. It is no small matter to change the translation used in the majority of RCNZ churches. The text of NIV1984 is very familiar to us, is used in much of our Sunday School material, is now used in the RCNZ liturgical forms and confessions and has been memorised for decades by many of our members. As such it is a large part of our heritage.

9. It appears that the use of gender inclusive language in the vast majority of cases accurately reflects the intent of the underlying language. A study committee would need to carefully consider this issue to determine whether our concern in this area has been overstated.

Yours in Christ,

Pieter van der Wel
Stated Clerk

8th July 2014