

**This is a translation of the booklet entitled ‘Wil ons ‘n Ou Testament sonder Christus hê?’**

# **Do we want an Old Testament without Christ?**

## **A submission relating to the new (2016) Afrikaans translation of the Bible**

- This submission was first made available as a draft to the Bible Society and translators of the new (2016) Bible translation. After the feedback period had expired and feedback had been considered, this submission was published in book form.
- We declare that nothing in this submission was aimed at any person, any group of persons, or any institution.
- Text references in this paper were taken from the New King James Version of the Bible and the 1953 translation of the Afrikaans Bible, unless otherwise stated.
- Please feel free to reproduce this document.
- Both English and Afrikaans versions of this document are also available on the **website** [www.2016vertaling.co.za](http://www.2016vertaling.co.za)
- The documents can be obtained **by e-mail** from: [daniehaasbroek@gmail.com](mailto:daniehaasbroek@gmail.com)
- For **enquiries**: contact details appear on page 37.

# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introductory comments.....   | 1  |
| 1. Proposals:.....   | 2  |
| 2. A problem developing rapidly.....   | 3  |
| 3. Examples of passages where Christ was translated out.....   | 4  |
| 4. Where did the problem arise?.....   | 4  |
| 5. Assignment to the Bible translators.....  | 6  |
| 6. The current point of view of the Bible translators.....   | 6  |
| 7. Arguments of ways in which Christ is being translated out of the Old Testament.....   | 8  |
| 8. The resolution of the synod of 1987.....  | 15 |
| 9. Now: a nonconfessional translation?.....  | 18 |
| 10. Possible interpretations to be attached to the use of small print in the<br>Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament..... | 20 |
| 11. Other conclusions regarding the use of small print.....  | 22 |
| 12. The correct approach for the translating process.....  | 24 |
| 13. What is a Christophany?.....   | 28 |
| 14. The Messenger of God in the Old Testament.....   | 30 |
| 15. What about the so-called ‘oldest manuscripts’?.....  | 34 |
| 16. A matter of faith.....   | 34 |
| 17. Bible translations with the correct aim.....   | 34 |
| 18. Recommendations – and the correct way ahead for Bible translations.....  | 35 |
| 19. Requests to the Executive Head of the Bible Society of South Africa.....   | 36 |
| 20. Let us remain faithful to the truth.....   | 36 |
| ANNEXURE 1.....  | 38 |
| ANNEXURE 2.....  | 44 |
| ANNEXURE 3.....  | 47 |
| Resources.....   | 52 |
| Time allotted to the Bible translators and the Bible Society.....  | 55 |

*Note: To those readers with limited time at their disposal, we recommend reading sections 6 and 7 for an overview of current conditions.*

## Introductory comments

The matter discussed in this submission is of the utmost importance. Christ gave His disciples, and us, the Great Commission to proclaim the gospel (Mat 28:18-20) and to keep it.

Translation of the Bible plays an important role. A true and correct translation of the Bible is non-negotiable for a Christian believer. Bible translations affect theology.

Currently there are two trends in Bible translations, namely:

At first, the translations where the Names of Christ are retained in the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. In this regard most of the English Bible translations can be cited as examples (e.g. the New King James Version and the Amplified Bible). This is the mode recommended in this submission.

Secondly, translations with the tendency to omit the Names of Christ from the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. In this instance the Nuwe Afrikaanse Bybelvertaling (Afrikaans translation of the Bible) (1983 version) is an example. In this version the Names of Christ in the Old Testament (for example *god, Lord, King, Messiah* and *Son of God*) do not appear in the Messianic prophecies (except for Isaiah 9:6) or in the Messianic psalms.

We regard this latter theology as incorrect. This kind of theology is gaining momentum, as the Names of Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament had been translated out of other Afrikaans Bible translations not issued by the Bible Society of South Africa. These Names of Christ are also explained away in Afrikaans Expository Bibles published lately.

Now the question arises: What is to happen with the new Afrikaans Bible translation due to be published in eight years' time?

We have reason to be concerned about the **type of theology** nowadays practised in many circles, especially with regard to the subject of Christ's position in the Old Testament.

Under these circumstances testifying about Christ's position of honour in the Old Testament is of vital importance. This submission details these facts for the translators, and at the same time it is presented as a testimony to all Christians.

This submission is based solely on Scripture.

The desire of our hearts is that the honour of the Lord will be restored in His Word once again!

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28 July 2008

# SUBMISSION

## To: The Bible Society and all contributors to the translation of the new Bible in Afrikaans (expected to be published in 2016)

Since it has become known that the Bible will once more be translated in Afrikaans, the following question arose: are the Names of Christ to be omitted from the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament as happened in the 1983 version?

One of us (Danie Haasbroek) had telephonic conversations with pastor Manie van den Heever, at that stage in charge of the section dealing with translation and the interpretation of texts in the Bible Society in Cape Town, as well as with prof Bernard Combrink, the chairman of the church advisory committee on the Bible in Afrikaans. They informed us that the following had already been decided: in the proposed Afrikaans Bible being translated at present, small print will be used in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

This implies that for example the words *He* and *Him* in Isaiah 53, as well as the Names of Christ in the Old Testament (e. g. *God, Lord, King, Priest, Prophet, Son of God, and Anointed One* will appear in small print.

Furthermore it was mentioned that should the public wish to propose changes, these should be submitted in writing.

Therefore, in response to this, we would like to propose the following:

### 1. Proposals:

- 1.1 With regard to the new Bible translation in Afrikaans, we request that Christ be honoured to the full extent in that all His Names in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament as well as the relevant pronouns be written in capitals.
- 1.2 Furthermore we request that capitals be used in even more Messianic passages than in the 1933/53 Afrikaans translation of the Bible. Consider the following words referring to Christ and printed in some Bible versions in capitals:
  - \* the words *Seed, He* and *Him* in Genesis 3:15 (compare among others the New King James Version and the Amplified Bible),
  - \* the words *David, Shepherd, Servant* and *King* in for example Ezekiel 34:23; 37:22-25 and Hosea 3:5 (compare the Amplified Bible), and
  - \* the term *Teacher of Righteousness* in Joel 2:23 (compare the NIV and Young's Literal Translation as well as The Scriptures – this is a Bible translation of the Messianic Jews). (Compare as well the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, 2004 edition, pages 75-76, 101, 157, 159, 218 item 4, 243.)

### **Motivation:**

- Theologically it is right that Christ occupies the place of honour in the Old Testament, even as He does in the New Testament. He has always been a Divine Person. In all eternity He existed and functioned actively as God, Lord, King, Priest, Prophet, Anointed One (Messiah) and Son of God.
- For many years the one major criticism against the New Afrikaans Bible translation (1983 version) was the use of small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament and the theology lurking behind that. Furthermore, this criticism is reflected in the preferences of some Afrikaans Churches for the 1953 version. The new translation which is in progress at present will inevitably encounter justified resistance should you proceed with translating Christ out of His own Word.

## 2. A problem developing rapidly

Many modern publications contain descriptions denying Christ's place of honour in the Old Testament. This causes reason for concern about what is to happen.

Note the following examples:

- 2.1 In the New Afrikaans Bible (1983 version) the above Names of Christ were removed from all the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament except in Isaiah 9:6. The effect developing from this is that even in Isaiah 53 small print was used for "he" and "him". This could suggest that Christ no longer died for our sins as a Divine Person. On the other hand it could suggest that it was not *He* who would die for our sins, but someone else. Some modern theologians say that Isaiah 53 could refer to the nation of Israel in exile, or Moses, or even Cyrus!  
These theologians argue that Isaiah had not known Christ at the time and therefore could not have had Him in mind when writing the prophecy. According to them Isaiah probably had a human king, his contemporary, or a well-known person like Moses in mind when he penned the prophecy.
- 2.2 In Expository Bibles in Afrikaans, based on the 1983 translation, Christ is largely explained away from the Old Testament.
- 2.3 In a similar way the Names of Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are translated out of non-official Afrikaans Bible translations published recently. Examples are: *Die Boodschap*, and *Die Bybel: Nuwe Lewende Vertaling*.  
Compare for example how these versions replace the Names of Christ (namely: *God, Lord, Son of God, King, Priest, Prophet* and *Anointed One/Messiah*) by using small print in Psalm 2:1-12; Psalm 45:6-7 and Psalm 110:1, 4.  
Now compare these with the 1953 translation.
- 2.4 The Names of Christ were also removed from Psalm 2, 45 and 110 in the new versification of the Psalms by T T Cloete. (The book: *Is Jesus in Psalms?* treats this in full.)
- 2.5 Can we expect new versification of the Psalms in African languages also to eliminate the Names of Christ?
- 2.6 Now the question arises, to what extent has the process of translating the Names of Christ in the Old Testament out of the new Bible translations advanced in the translating of Bibles in African languages in South Africa.
- 2.7 How can we ever calculate the extent of the confusing influence exuding from Afrikaans theology to this country and many other countries and nations? (Keep in mind, many foreign students are enrolled in South African universities in theological courses.) In the long run the effect of this, with regard to matters of eternity, may amount to many people not only being misled but as a result can be lost forever.

### 3. Examples of passages where Christ was translated out

To illustrate how Christ was translated out of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament in the 1983 version, some examples follow: (discrepancies in verses indicated)

|                      | 1953 Translation   | 1983 Translation  |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Deuteronomy 18:15-19 | a (great) Prophet  | a (great) prophet   |
| Psalms 2:2, 6-7, 12  | Anointed One, King, Son  | anointed, king, son   |
| Psalms 45:1, 6-7     | King, God  | king, exalted being   |
| Psalms 110:1         | my Lord  | my king   |
| Isaiah 53:11         | my Servant, the Righteous One                                      | my servant, the righteous one   |
| Jeremiah 23:5        | Branch, King   | branch, king  |
| Jeremiah 23:6        | THE LORD OUR<br>RIGHTEOUSNESS (this<br>is a proper name of Christ) | The Lord rules righteously<br>over us (this does not<br>indicate a unique proper name of<br>Christ) |
| Daniel 7:13          | Son of Man   | someone like a human being  |
| Daniel 9:25-26       | Anointed One (=Messiah), Prince                                    | an elected ruler  |
| Zechariah 9:9        | King   | king  |

*Note:* In the 1983 version the Names of Christ in the Old Testament were retained in only two Messianic prophecies and written in capitals (thus translated as directly Messianic) namely Isaiah 9:6 and Malachi 3:1. In the 1953 version 23 Scriptures in the Old Testament are indicated by the use of capitals as being directly Messianic.

### 4. Where did the problem arise?

The question begs asking: What is behind the attack to uproot Christ from the Old Testament? The following two examples cite institutions which could have had an influence on Afrikaans theology:

At first, mention can be made of liberal theological trends from various overseas universities taking root locally.

Secondly, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church should be considered. A publication under the title: *Working together for the Word*, (Sub-titled:) *Celebrating 40 years of fruitful co-operation*, appeared in 2005. This was published by the United Bible Societies (or UBS). It contains the following information:

The UBS was established in 1946. At first there was no co-operation between the UBS and the Roman Catholic Church. However, in 1965 at the Second Vatican Council the Roman Catholic Church issued the document *Dei Verbum*. According to that document the Catholic Church would in future collaborate with the UBS and the UBS agreed to it.

Since then the Catholic Church had representation on national councils of Bible Societies around the world and they are also involved in collective Bible translation projects and Bible distribution. It is apparent that they particularly emphasize the inter-confessional approach. (The term 'inter-confessional' means that the translation should accommodate the creeds of both Catholic and Protestant churches.)

In 1968 an important document was issued jointly by the UBS and the Catholic Church. The title of this document is: *Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible*. This provided a model for inter-confessional translating.

Inter alia, the apocrypha would henceforth be included in Bibles where required. Immediately afterwards prof Carlo Maria Martini became involved in Bible translation. (Later he became a cardinal.) Many more Roman Catholic theologians would follow.

In 1969 the *World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate* (WCFBA) was instituted. This again gave rise to the *Catholic Biblical Federation* which is currently still involved with world-wide Bible translation projects. The Vatican considered the work of the WCFBA to be an important part of the task assigned to the *Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity*.

With reference to the above, we would like to comment as follows:

- The Roman Catholic Church emphasizes good works as means of obtaining eternal life. Salvation can be obtained by man himself earning his salvation. A translation in collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church is in danger of importing that theology into the Afrikaans Protestant Bible. The use of small print for “he” and “him” in Isaiah 53 in the 1983 version indicates that ordinary people can accomplish salvation for themselves and for others.
- Why are the Names of Christ, namely *God, Lord, King, Priest, Prophet* and *Messiah (Anointed One)* removed from the Messianic prophecies? Is that perhaps done to dethrone Him? In favour of whom?
- Because of the many non-Protestant creeds and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, do you not think it best not to unite with them in translating a Bible?
- If we should indeed unite with the Roman Catholic Church in faith, what would be the content of that faith?
- Might it not be the purpose of the Catholic Church to absorb the Protestant churches in a peaceful ‘ecumenical’ way, with a view to world-wide church unity?
- Are joint Bible translations – such as the new (2016) translation – not an attempt to accommodate all faiths, and in this way promote the inter-faith movement and the New Age?
- Is the purpose of this to take the world into the New World Order – as proclaimed by Pope John Paul II on world-wide TV on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 for this to be implemented? It boils down to the fact that the world could be led into a one-world church under the Vatican. It is credible that the pursuit of a one-world government and a one-world economy forms part of this concept. Is the pursuit of globalisation, so often mentioned today, not part of this endeavour?

*In summary:* Before 1965 the Roman Catholic Church had not been involved with Bible translation. Since then an influence invaded Afrikaans translating of the Bible, bringing with it a swing away from Christ (by name in the Old Testament).

The influence of the above institutions also penetrated South African theological faculties, with devastating results. Now various theologians explain Christ away from the Old Testament.

Without doubt the Bible Society and the UBS have a very important function. A return to true theological practice in all our theological faculties is also extremely important. Because this is so essential, mistakes and problems must be exposed and put right.

In the light of this requirement, the following questions emerge:

- Is the present teaching at Afrikaans theological faculties according to truth of the Bible and the Articles of Faith?
- To what extent will Protestant Afrikaans churches still be able to counsel regarding appointments of theological professors to South African universities in years to come? What kind of influence will this have on Bible translations in the course of time?

## **5. Assignment to the Bible translators**

The question is: Can we expect the translation of the new (2016) Afrikaans Bible to proceed correctly at present? Indications argue the contrary. For a more complete review of the subject we have to take cognisance of the following:

The assignment from the Bible Society to more than 100 collaborators on the Afrikaans Bible Translation project (the ABV project for the 2016 Bible) reads as follows:

*Produce an easily comprehensible source-text orientated Afrikaans translation, suitable for reading and use in worship services, as well as for catechesis, Bible study and personal use.* The assignment is furthermore defined to be a translation *faithfully representing the meaning of the source text, while retaining as far as possible the images, metaphors, style and structure of the source text.* The translation is to be of high literary quality and expository notes must be used for information not apparent in the translation itself. For those churches which want to use the deuterocanonical books (some of the apocryphal books) these will be translated as well. Work on the translation would commence in 2006 and is expected to last for about 10 years at an estimated cost of R650,000 per annum. The translation will serve the Afrikaans-speaking community for the next 30 to 40 years. (End of quote.) (Compare: *Die Hervormer*, May 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 edition.)

This indicates that the translation will be source-text orientated, thus not translated according to the dynamic equivalent method (as was used for the 1983 version).

However, there are schools of thought which can influence the translation process adversely. We feel it our duty to alert you of those.

## **6. The current point of view of the Bible translators**

The approach of the translators of the new (2016) Bible translation is stated in an information paper dispatched by the Bible Society in June 2008 to the central church offices of all churches collaborating with this translation. Some of these collaborating churches already dispatched these papers to their ministers.

Because this information paper is so very important, it will be quoted in full (translated for our English readers) – with the approval of the Bible Society and the chairman of the Bible translators. The bold lettering is retained in the same way it appears in the original document:

**AFRIKAANS BIBLE TRANSLATION PROJECT**

**INFORMATION PAPER: THE DESIGNATION OF PASSAGES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETED CHRISTOLOGICALLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

From time to time as the translation proceeds the Steering Committee of the Afrikaans Bible Translation Project provides information regarded as important to collaborating churches. One of the problems with which the compilers of the workbook had struggled, was how to write passages of text in the Old Testament which are interpreted in the New Testament as being references to Christ, while still remaining true to the source text, maintaining the integrity of the text.

The request addressed to the Bible Society by the Church Advisory Committee (The Bible in Afrikaans) on behalf of the churches and denominations using Afrikaans as language medium, is summarised in the translation assignment as follows:

Produce an easily comprehensible source-text orientated Afrikaans translation of the Bible, suitable for reading and use in worship services, as well as for catechesis, Bible study and personal use.

The purpose is to keep the proposed translation **as close as possible to the source text** and to produce it in good, flowing, clear Afrikaans. The implications of the translation assignment are clear: **It being faithful to the source text is of the utmost importance.** This implies inter alia that dogmatic reflection on the text, from whatever conviction, will **not** be included in the translation. The Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts of the Old and New Testaments have to speak for themselves in the translation and not the interpretation of those texts by dogmatists nor as they were set down in ecclesiastical doctrines and Articles of Faith.

The compilers of the workbook and the members of the Steering Committee are aware that particular texts in the Old Testament are reinterpreted in the New Testament, and in such a way as to provide new meaning to the texts. It is clear that the authors of the New Testament found a deeper and more hidden meaning in some words and even in some narratives in the Old Testament and that these are interpreted as applicable to the life and work of Jesus Christ. The question is how to write those words and passages in the Old Testament while remaining true to the source document.

The particular nature of translating occupying the teams of translators at present is clear: The texts are to be translated as the first readers and hearers would have understood them. The meaning intended for the first hearers and readers must be maintained. This means inter alia that the hidden references to Christ, which the New Testament authors found in the Old Testament, should not be set down in a translation by for example the use of capitals. Those collaborating on the translation are of the opinion that the interpretation and application of particular passages of texts in the Old Testament by the New Testament authors should be respected; therefore **foot-notes** will be employed in the translation of the Old Testament to indicate where a particular word or sentence or longer passage is interpreted in the New Testament as a reference to Jesus Christ. This procedure was approved at a meeting of the Church Advisory Committee, represented by all the collaborating churches and denominations. The use of foot-notes seems to be the most responsible way to handle the above matter.

\*\*\*\*\*

***We respond as follows:***

The above information paper does not contain any indication reflecting the conviction ...  
– that Christ Himself functioned in the Old Testament, and  
– that the Old Testament contains a direct message regarding Christ.

Furthermore, the translators seem strongly convinced that the Bible translation is not to convey any dogma (doctrines and message). To be consistent, the same should apply to the translation of the New Testament. This would mean that nowhere in the new Bible translation it could then be said that Christ Himself is *God, Lord, King, Priest, Prophet*, and the *Son of God* – neither that He is the *Anointed One* (the Christ, the Messiah), nor that He is the only Saviour.

The information paper further declares that the use of capitals would wrongfully relay a particular dogma (a particular message) and that the use of small print would not relay any dogma.

We regard both instances as depicting a dogma, with small print providing the dogma opposed to that which capitals provide.

The Hebrew text does not use small print or capitals. Thus it is a mistake to allege that the use of small print agrees with the source text.

What would be the correct approach? We have to listen to Christ Himself Who gave us the Old and the New Testaments. In John 5:39 He declares: “*You search the Scriptures (the Old Testament) ... these are they which testify of Me.*” (Retained in the 1983 translation). This pronouncement of Christ clarifies what the content and message of the source text truly is. This pronouncement is denied outrightly by the use of small print. Remaining faithful to the source text therefore means using capitals

The whole Bible, including the Old Testament, presents a particular message. This particular message, namely the gospel of Jesus Christ (contained in both Testaments) must be evident from the complete translation.

The direction on which the Bible translators and the Bible Society embarked is nothing new. This school of thought has invaded especially Afrikaans theology for more than 40 years.

Everybody should know: The gospel truth about Christ in the Old Testament is so much more wonderful than any deviation therefrom. It is a heavenly joy to know Christ in the right way – and to get to know Him in the right way from a Bible translated in the right way.

For further review of the above information paper read the following item.

**7. Arguments of ways in which Christ is being translated out of the Old Testament**

Those supporting the use of small print explain the Names of Christ away in the Old Testament, replacing Him with ordinary people. Furthermore, those who prefer small print allege that, according to the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, Christ was not the One Who would suffer for our sins, but rather the nation of Israel in exile, or Moses, or even Cyrus (a heathen Persian king). They allege that those prophecies were only applied to Christ in the New Testament.

It is significant to realise how supporters of such an interpretation reason and what arguments they use. This they do without apparently taking into account that Christ Himself quoted from Old Testament prophecies regarding Himself.

The following arguments are advanced as reasons for translating Christ out of the Old Testament. (These arguments appear for example in the resources supporting the use of small print – presented at the end of 7):

- 7.1 *Argument:* We have to consider the *historical context* of people in the Old Testament, in particular that they had not known Christ as yet and therefore could not speak about Him.

*Our response:*

The true historical context of the people in the Old Testament was the reality that Christ was actively engaged in revealing God and taking messages from God to people all the time (Gen 3:8, 15; Ex 14:19). In performing this task Christ became known to many nations.

In Christ was life and that life was the light to the Old Testament people (Jn 1:4). Thus He was well known to people in Old Testament times.

- 7.2 *Argument:* The prophets had not known Christ and thus did not realise they were writing about Him. The prophets knew contemporary persons (e.g. earthly kings) and had those in mind as they penned these prophecies.

*Our response:*

The Old Testament prophets knew Christ full well. For example, He appeared to the prophets in visions when He presented them with the prophecies. In the New King James Version Numbers 12:6 declares: (God speaking) *If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.* (Compare Is 6:1; Ezek 1:1; Hos 12:10.)

This verse leads to two conclusions: At first it is clear that the prophets knew Christ, the Spokesman for and Revealer of God, very well. Secondly, we can conclude that hundreds, even thousands of Christophanies (appearances of Christ) occurred during Old Testament times. When Christ delivered messages from God to Moses, Christ appeared so clearly to Moses that Moses could see the appearance of the Lord (*the form of the LORD* – New King James Version) (Num 12:7-8).

Thus the prophecies were delivered so distinctly that we can take for granted the prophets understood the message intelligibly in every instance. Only very rarely the prophets did not understand the fulfillment (for example the time of the fulfillment, compare Daniel 12:8-9).

- 7.3 *Argument:* We find in the Bible the merger of folk-tales orally delivered from one generation to the next. In this way the particular traditions developed and were written down at various stages. The dates of the written documents can be much later than the actual events. The Old Testament comprises various genres of literature, even myths (tales about gods), legends, stories and fables.

*Our response:*

This reasoning maintains that the Bible originated with human beings and was not given by God. In contrast the Bible itself teaches us that God by His Holy Spirit *carried* the prophets *along* or *moved* them (2 Pet 1:20-21). God Himself, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, wrote the law with His *finger* (Ex 24:12; 31:18; 32:15-16; 34:1-2, 27-28; Deut 9:10). Christ, as the Spokesman of God, spoke to Moses from the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle (Ex 25:22; Lev 1:1; Num 7:8-9). Christ also appeared in visions to Moses and spoke to him *face to face* (Ex 33:11; Deut 34:10 – in the 1953 translation) and *mouth to mouth* (Num 12:8, – in the 1953 translation). Moses had to write the words of the law, or the covenant (Ex 34:27; Deut 31:9, 24) as well as the history of the Israelites (Ex 17:14; Num 33:2). Christ Himself said that Moses wrote about Him (Jn 5:46; compare Deut 18:15-19). The name *Moses* became an expression indicating the first five Books of the Bible (Lk 24:27, 44).

The revelation of Scripture does not deal with the thoughts of man, but with that which God revealed.

- 7.4 *Argument:* All the Messianic prophecies had numerous fulfillments (or *prefigurations*) before Christ was born on earth. In the Old Testament the emphasis should therefore be on the prefigurations.

*Our response:*

Christ Himself acknowledged that prefigurations occurred in the Old Testament (Jonah 1 :17; Mat 12:39-40; compare Rom 5:14; Col 2:16-17; Heb 10:1). We have to take care that over-emphasis of prefigurations does not supplant Christ in the Old Testament. Consider for example that Isaiah 53 could never have depicted anyone but Christ. Should that reference denote an ordinary person, nobody could ever be saved. No ordinary person can ever make another righteous.

- 7.5 *Argument:* People in the Old Testament received salvation from sin by the suffering and death of the-nation-of-Israel-in-exile. (This is the explanation of Isaiah 53 propagated in inter alia the *Bybellennium Eenvolumekommentaar*.)

*Our response :*

It is known that Jews regarded Isaiah 53 traditionally as a description of the suffering of the Israelites (Jews) during the exile. They made a mistake - and because of this wrong belief no Israelite/Jew was saved, and many were lost.

Do we have to make the same mistake? Rather let us contend ourselves with Isaiah 53 not being a description of history, but a Messianic prophecy. Even people from the Old Testament period had to get to know the Messiah in this chapter, namely that He is a Divine Person. This they could perceive in three facts, namely: He is the perfect *Righteous One*, Who *never sinned Himself*, and was able to *make others righteous* (Is 53:9, 11). This whole chapter distinctly deals with an individual who would suffer and die also for the Old Testament people (compare: “and carried *our* sorrows...” etc, Is 53:4-6).

Verses from Isaiah 53 are quoted 18 times in the New Testament and each time they point incontrovertibly only to Christ.

- 7.6 *Argument:* The question needs to be asked, how did the original readers understand the prophecies and what did these mean to them in their peculiar situation.

*Our response:*

To ask how the first readers would have understood the prophecies, is the wrong method of approach. The question should be: “What did God reveal?”

Scripture is after all God’s Word. That Word was to be proclaimed to the people of the Old Testament and that was the Word they had to believe – even as we have to. Inverting the order leads to misunderstanding of God’s true revelation.

The majority of the first readers understood the revelation incorrectly. Note the following:

As a nation the Israelites were very sinful. The whole nation (except for Moses and Joshua) danced around the golden calf and worshipped it (Ex 32:1-6). Merely 7000 in more than a million Israelites did not worship Baal (1 Ki 19:18). The utter sinfulness of the people of the old Covenant is an uninterrupted theme throughout the Old Testament. Christ Himself called the religious leaders of the Jews hypocrites (Mk 7:6). The church leaders of the time misunderstood the Old Testament. For that reason they rejected Christ and crucified Him. The present theology based on small print says in fact that we should own the religious convictions of the majority of Israelites and Jews (thus, the unbelievers).

But: Scripture wants to bring home that which God said – and not how the unbelievers, the majority at the time regarded the revelation.

If we are to adapt our theology at present to the religious convictions of the majority group of that time, our theology will be as erroneous as theirs was.

- 7.7 *Argument:* The people in the Old Testament did not have a New Testament perspective.

*Our response:*

The Old Testament did indeed have a perspective on the New Testament. The purpose of the Holy Spirit was precisely to provide especially through the Messianic prophecies, a perspective on the New Testament to the people of the Old Testament.

Christ Himself interpreted the Old Testament as directly Messianic (compare Lk 4:18, 21; 24:25-27, 44-46).

According to 1 Peter 1:10-11 the *Spirit of Christ* Who was in the prophets, proclaimed beforehand that the Christ had to suffer (compare Is 53:1-10) and that He would be glorified thereafter (compare Is 53:10-12).

Furthermore, the Old Testament people had to know Christ. They had to know in Whom to believe to be saved from their sins (compare Jn 14:6). Often He appeared to people in visions and manifestations and in these they came to know Him. Thus they already experienced His glory. In addition they could learn about His Godhead from the Messianic prophecies. Thus they certainly had perspective on Christ.

- 7.8 *Argument:* In the New Testament the Old Testament does not obtain *another* meaning but an *altered* meaning.

*Our response:*

God's revelation remains the same forever. Thus the content of the Old Testament definitely did not change in the New Testament. The Old and New Testaments contain the same revelation and the same gospel (Heb 4:2, 6). Both were delivered by the same Author. Any translation implying that God altered His revelation, implies that God contradicted Himself in the Old and New Testaments. The correct approach is to admit that the Names of Christ (namely: *God, Lord, Son of God, King, Priest, Prophet* and *Messiah*) were fully revealed in the Old Testament. No alteration occurred thereto – also not to the revelation that salvation could only be obtained through the Messiah (compare Isaiah 53).

The problem with supporters of the small print is that they see the Old Testament separate from the New Testament.

- 7.9 *Argument:* Only in the New Testament clarity is reached that all the expected images – however contradictory they might appear – were united in Jesus Christ. (Some passages mention a conquering Davidic King, others a suffering Servant, some prophets believed Him to be an Elijah-like prophet, etc.).

*Our response:*

Christ was revealed to the Old Testament people by various Names and in various descriptions. He was e g described as *King, Priest* and *Prophet*. This variety of expected images did not confuse believers. Those rather convinced them that He had a variety of offices and functions. In these various expected images His greatness was depicted and that He was all His people (children) would ever need. The *I am* pronouncements in the gospel of John wonderfully link up with these.

- 7.10 *Argument:* It is anachronistic to read from the (later) knowledge of the New Testament back into the Old Testament those things which had not yet been said.

*Our response:*

The whole of Scripture was inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16). God had a particular purpose in giving the Scriptural revelations, namely to reveal Himself as well as the only possible reconciliation with Him, namely by His Son. The matter about the approach to understanding (therefore translating) the Bible, is the question about the purpose of God. From the beginning God's purpose has always been the same, because He is eternal and unchanging. Thus no alteration to revealed truth ever occurred, only clarification of that which was given originally, for example in Genesis 1 :1 and 3:15.

The themes about the reality of God's existence, the battle between light and darkness, and salvation from sin through Christ alone, run throughout the Bible up to the very last page.

Important is the fact: What has been revealed, was revealed in all truth right from the beginning. From the beginning God pertinently stated His purpose.

Now, this results in two determinations: At first, we are not allowed to translate the Bible as if God had not pertinently stated His purposes; secondly, the revelation was revelation of all the truths about salvation, for example the virgin birth of Christ, His suffering, crucifixion, physical resurrection, ascension, second coming, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, justification by faith alone, et cetera. The statement: 'to read back into the Old Testament those things which had not yet been said' is therefore untrue, as the revelation of salvation was given irrevocably – compare for example how distinctly the suffering of Christ is described in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

- 7.11 *Argument:* The fact that verses from the Messianic prophecies were quoted from the Old Testament in the New Testament is merely a later interpretation the authors of the New Testament attached thereto. These facts about salvation were not taught in the Old Testament itself.

(This argument is evident in the heading of the information paper in point 6.)

*Our response:*

The above argument denies the supernatural content of the prophecies – seemingly saying that the gospel is not evident in the Old Testament. However the reality is as follows: According to Hebrews 4:2, 6 the gospel was proclaimed to Old Testament people in the same way as to people in the New Testament..

As the Word of God (Jn 1 :1) Christ Himself revealed the Old Testament, as He did the New Testament. Thus He knew exactly what He had said in the Old Testament. In the New Testament He expounded it exactly.

Keep in mind: The test for a true prophet was whether his prophecy would be fulfilled exactly (Deut 18:21-22). If that which he saw prophetically came true, he was proved to be correct.

Why can the prophecy proclaimed by a prophet not be “read together” with the events which occurred later (the fulfillment of the prophecy)?

- 7.12 *Argument:* Christ used the Old Testament to apply certain passages to Himself.

*Our response:*

This argument boils down to alleging that Christ misused the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament is saying something different to that which Christ attributed thereto. However, the truth is that Christ was the content and the message of prophecy from the beginning. We have to acknowledge Christ's pronouncements. He Himself said that Moses (Lk 24:44) and David (Mat 22:43-45; Mk 12:35-37) testified of Him.

Keep in mind that people in the Old Testament had to admit Christ was the content and message of the Messianic prophecies in order to be saved. Only those who believed in Him were saved and are now in heaven (compare Jn 14:6).

Christ was exactly right. The Holy Spirit (as the *Spirit of Christ*, 1 Pet 1:11) has always testified of Him – therefore Christ did not just “use” certain verses from the Old Testament. Should someone imply that Christ interpreted the content of the Old Testament incorrectly and therefore lied, it boils down to nothing less than blasphemy.

Now we come to the next conclusion:

- Why is it not possible to follow the translation of for example Psalm 110, as used by Christ Himself in the New Testament? (Compare Ps 110:1 with Mt 22:41-45.) Are translators better equipped than Christ to translate the meaning of the Old Testament?

- The (non-Messianic) Jews do not want to read and see Christ in the Old Testament. Why would translators insist on Christian believers reading the Bible as if they were (non-Messianic) Jews?
- 7.13 *Argument:* Foot-notes at the bottom of pages in the translation can indicate that relevant verses are quoted in the New Testament and applied to Christ.  
*Our response:*  
 This argument alleges that the Old Testament prophets were not led by the Holy Spirit to testify to the Messiah and to prophesy about Him. This contradicts the pointed pronouncement of Jesus Christ that David was guided by the Holy Spirit to write the prophecy of Psalm 110 (compare Mt 22:43-45).  
 Foot-notes at the end will not as a matter of course declare the Old Testament itself to be truly the Word of God – Christ can only later be “read into” it.  
 Whoever supports foot-notes in the New Testament – but uses small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament – thereby implies, to our way of thinking, that the Messianic prophecies did not contain prophetic content and thus were not truly prophecies.
- 7.14 *Argument:* By the use of small print in the Old Testament, the newness of the revelation in the New Testament is emphasized.  
*Our response:*  
 The way in which God revealed Himself in the Old Testament remains ever valid and new. People will always be able to get to know God aright therein. The revelation of who God is, as delivered in the Old (and New) Testaments, can never become obsolete.  
 The whole of Scripture is a proclamation about God – therefore also about Christ’s Divinity and salvation from sin in Him alone. To emphasize this message only in the New Testament would mean that the Old Testament says something different to what it actually proclaims – and in this way Christ is being obscured.  
 The Old Testament prophets proclaimed a timeless message regarding God and His plan of salvation. From the beginning this message has been directed to all peoples of all times. The Old and New Testaments remain ever new, fresh, alive and sparkling. This is because God remains true to His promises, even those in the Old Testament. Therefore the Old Testament still has full authority. Remember ‘no longer new’ implies ‘no longer with authority’.
- 7.15 *Argument:* The New Testament interprets the Old Testament allegorically.  
*Our response:*  
 This argument does not take into account the wonderful reality that the Old and New Testaments are revelation from God. Scripture was given by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3:16) and because of that is infallible.  
 Furthermore, this approach, just like the previous ones, boils down to the Old Testament being understood apart from the New Testament. According to that, the Old Testament has an own meaning and message – and the authors of the New Testament used the Old Testament allegorically as it suited them.  
 This casts doubt on the functioning of Christ in the Old Testament and the Old Testament prophecies which He fulfilled in the New Testament. In addition it opens the way for reading anything into the Old Testament. With the result that the messages of the two Testaments do not necessarily coincide and both can be regarded as without authority.
- 7.16 *Argument:* Ask unceasingly “What is written in the Hebrew text (the source text)?” We have to stay with the text as linguistic premise.  
 (This argument is prominently evident in the information paper, point 6.)

*Our response:*

The written text is the rendering (the putting on record) of the revelation imparted. The text was disclosed purely with the purpose of revealing Christ. From this we conclude: We do the text no violence by translating it (for example by using capitals) so that the modern reader can clearly see how Christ comes to the fore in the text. On the contrary, we only render that which the Holy Spirit proclaims by means of the text.

7.17 *Argument:* The original languages do not use small print or capitals.

*Our response:*

This argument cannot be used to justify the use of small print. Using small print in the Afrikaans translation is the result of wrong theology. It can therefore not be attributed to the style of the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek).

The language (translation) must be geared to convey the message of the Bible to readers in a clear and intelligible way.

7.18 *Argument:* We have to distinguish between the *translation* and the *exposition* of the Old Testament. The translation has to render only the language, but the exposition should render the theological content.

(This argument occurs in points 8.4 and 8.7.)

*Our response:*

Translation and exposition should not conflict. Both the translation and the exposition should present the correct rendering of God's revelation. The translation should reflect the revelation correctly, otherwise the translation is lying, guiding readers of the Bible away from the correct exposition.

The revelation of the Names of Christ in the Old Testament is a particular culmination in the Bible. To deny these Names in the translation is a gross offence and cannot be redeemed by exposition.

The 1983 translation is an example of a translation which did not follow Christ's exposition of His own Word, and therefore had the translation say something different to what the exposition would be. In this way the 1983 version replaced for example the Names of Christ, namely *Anointed One (Messiah), King, Son, God and Lord* with the words *anointed, king, son and exalted being* – in Psalm 2, 45 and 110. Such a translation is Biblical-scientific incorrect.

Thus it is evident that the translation should not be done in a way which would contradict the correct exposition. In this way the translation leads to a wrong exposition.

This can also be stated as: Is a wrong translation the product of wrong exposition because of a wrong theology?

7.19 *Argument:* The translation should be inter-confessional. (This argument also appears in the note under 9.10.)

*Our response:*

An inter-confessional translation contradicts itself. For example, a Roman Catholic Bible translator and a Calvinistic Bible translator cannot have the same concept of Mary.

In fact, something like an "inter-confessional translation" does not exist. A translation is in essence either confessional (that is according to ecclesiastical confessions of faith) or a-Christian. The term *a-Christian* explains how for example the majority of Jews (the non-Messianic Jews) or Muslims would understand the Hebrew words.

7.20 *Argument:* The Old Testament does not declare a particular Messiah who would come to the earth. In Old Testament times various messiahs were expected.

*Our response:*

The Old Testament proclaims only one particular Messiah to come. (This argument is taken up in ANNEXURE 3, point 6.)

*Conclusion:* Clearly one important point of departure is lacking in the above *Arguments* – the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is nowhere taken into account. This is apparent as the message regarding Christ in the Old Testament is obscured. Furthermore, the testimony of the New Testament is not sufficiently admitted in this regard.

### **Resources:**

- The point of view expressed in the above *Arguments* (thus supporting the use of small print) is mentioned and endorsed in for example the following:
  - Deist FE en Vorster WS: *Woorde wat ver kom*.
  - Response from the Synod of Transvaal North on the gravamen, mentioned in point 8.
  - Resolution of the Western Cape Synod regarding the gravamen by Rev Smuts (compare ANNEXURE 1).
  - *In die Skriflig*. Research article by JL Helberg.
  - Prof APB Breytenbach's standpoint (compare ANNEXURE 3).
  - Expository Bibles e g *Die Bybel in Praktyk*, *Die Bybellenium Eenvolumekommentaar*, *Die Bybel A-Z*, *Leefstyl-Bybel vir Vroue* en *24/7 Bybel vir die Lewe*. (To check this, please note the expositions of for example Psalm 2, 45 and 110, and of Isaiah 53.)
- The point of view expressed in the above *responses* (thus supporting the use of capitals) is endorsed in for example the following publications:
  - Borland, James A: *Christ in the Old Testament*.
  - *Die Bybel met Verklarende Aantekeninge. Deel 1. Job tot Maleagi*. (This is based on the 1953 Translation and was published in 1958.)
  - Grosheide, dr FW: *De Psalmen. Deel 1 en 2*.
  - Haasbroek, Danie: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*.
  - Lockyer, Herbert: *All the Messianic prophecies of the Bible*.
  - Ridderbos, dr J: *De Profeet Jesaja. Deel 1 en 2*.
  - Young, Edward J: *The Book of Isaiah. Vol 1 – 3*.
  - Young, Edward J: *The Prophecy of Daniel*.

**Note:** Prof PW Hoek associates himself absolutely with the *responses* in point 7 but not with the *Arguments* as these were not addressed to him personally, as well as the *resources* at the end of 7, as he had not read all of these exhaustively. In his lifetime he has read hundreds of theological books. The study of Scripture was one of the themes of his life.

(For further details about the arguments according to which Christ was translated out of the Old Testament, and the refutation thereof, read *Is Jesus in Psalms?* especially chapter 3.)

### **8. The resolution of the synod of 1987**

The Synod of Northern Transvaal of the Dutch Reformed Church, in its session of 1987 was presented with a gravamen by rev Danie Haasbroek (one of the co-compilers of this submission). In the gravamen the synod was requested to see to it that Christ was once more reinstated in His place of honour in the Old Testament in Bible translations.

In the gravamen reference was made to Genesis 3:15; Job 16:19 – 17:3; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13. The request was made that capitals were to be used here, and that the Names of Christ (for example *god* and *Lord*) appear once more as in the 1953 version.

The synod decided against this. (See *Agenda* pages 456-458, and *Handelinge* pages 618-619.)

*The following is an extract (translated) from the synodal motivation for its decision:*

- 8.1 *Statement by the synod:* The opinions in the point for discussion are underwritten by hardly any Old Testament scholar in South Africa.

*Our response:*

If hardly any Old Testament scholar in South Africa sees Christ directly in the Messianic prophecies (for example in the verses mentioned in the point for discussion, or gravamen) it is a sad reflection on how low Afrikaans theology has been sinking for a number of years.

- 8.2 *Statement by the synod:* Hardly any commentary of note supports the exegesis of the point under discussion.

*Our response:*

Should the synod imagine that no commentary of note retains the esteem of Christ's Divinity in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, the attendants at the synod show a severe lack of knowledge. In most of the English Bible translations the Divine Names of Christ are retained in the Messianic prophecies.

Our question is: Would Totius and the other translators of the Old Testament in the 1933/53 translation, as well as the thousands of theologians of the English Bible translations over the centuries, have used only bad commentaries?

- 8.3 *Statement by the synod:* The New Afrikaans Bible Translation (1983 version) is in line with most modern translations using the dynamic-equivalent method, with some of the very best source texts, applying some of the best linguistic norms and translating into the modern, comprehensible idiom. (Take into account, the NAB does not replace the Old Afrikaans Bible Translation (OAB) – which is a literal translation – but the intention is to use the NAB alongside the OAB.)

*Our response:*

The Names of Christ are found in any case in all Old Testament manuscripts. Translating these as they occur in the Messianic prophecies of for example the 1983 version, is wrong. It is a fact that some modern translations in the dynamic-equivalent method retain the Names of Christ in Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament (compare for example the Living Bible).

In addition we would like to remind you that “easy read” is not the highest norm for a Bible translation. We want all the spiritual riches of the Scriptures in the translation.

- 8.4 *Statement by the synod:* The proposed changes in the point of discussion are not determined by linguistic reason. Should it be allowed for translations to be founded on any reasons other than linguistic, the door will be opened to all kinds of confusion: Scriptural convictions, dogmatic emphases, ideological views and even political preferences. A translation cannot grapple with various problematic matters or try to resolve these as if it was a commentary; these matters should be left to the expositor. A translation is a linguistic undertaking and should be handled according to the rules of the linguist and linguistics.

*Our response:*

To retain the Names of Christ in the Messianic prophecies is indeed determined by linguistic reason. Two examples follow:

- \* In Psalm 45:6-7 two Divine Persons are celebrated. In the 1953 translation and the NKJV these verses read as follows:  
*Your throne, o God (Christ), is for ever and ever ... Therefore god (Christ), Your God (the Father) has anointed You (Christ) with the oil of gladness more than Your companions*  
 However the 1983 translation reads as follows (in translation):  
*Your throne, exalted being, ... because, exalted being, with great joy your God anointed you ...*  
 Clearly, in the 1953 version both Persons (both the Father and the Son) are presented as *God*. In the 1983 version one Person is presented as *God* and the other as *exalted being*.  
 What does the original Hebrew text say? There both Persons are presented as *Elohim* (God). Surely it is linguistically correct to present both Persons as *God* in a Bible translation. (In Genesis 1:1 the word *Elohim* is also translated with the word *God*.)  
 The synod goes as far as saying that (with regard to Psalm 45:6-7):  
 “The Hebrew word ‘elohim’ (:6) does not designate god, even more so not Christ.” The synod conveys this as reason for translating Christ out of Psalm 45:6-7! This we regard as blasphemy.  
 The following comment can rightly be addressed to the synod: It seems as if you want to translate the Divinity of the First Person out as well, and you are consistent in the direction you are moving!  
 (The word *elohim* can also indicate idols or persons of high standing like kings. The meaning of the word therefore has to be derived from the context.)  
 These two verses are quoted in Hebrews 1:8-9 and there both Persons are presented as *God*.

*In summary:* Psalm 45 teaches us these rich truths: The Father anointed the Son (with the Holy Spirit) as King at His right hand. Christ had already reigned from all eternity over the universe as God and King - in the same way He reigns now and forever. This is an eternal truth. This reality is more important than the existence of the universe. In that the creation finds its true meaning, power and responsibility.  
 In this Psalm the people from the Old Testament, as well as the whole of mankind, are called to serve Christ, to be His bride and to be prepared to appear before Him one day.

- \* Another example is the following:  
 The translators use small print in the Old Testament but capitals in the quoted verses in the New Testament (compare for example Isaiah 61:1-2 with Luke 4:18-19, in the 1983 translation). This is surely not the correct application of linguistic rules! Stated differently: this would indicate that the Old Testament is quoted incorrectly in the New Testament!  
 Thus we conclude: The reason why the Names of Christ are removed from the Old Testament is not because of linguistic rules, but rather because of bad theology.

8.5 *Statement by the synod:* In Psalm 110:1 the second ‘...Lord’ of the OAB (Old Afrikaans Bible) cannot be retained.

*Our response:*

Psalm 110:1 reads: *The LORD said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand ...* (1953 translation). This means that God the Father said to Christ: ‘Sit at My right hand’. (In this verse the term for *my Lord* is the Hebrew *Adoni*.)

In the Old Testament this verse is of core significance. This verse indicates Christ’s place of honour in the Old Testament times and even now.

The synod argued this truth away. The synod followed the 1983 translation which reads (in translation): *The Lord said to my king: “Sit at my right hand...”* The Divinity of Christ was excluded here as well and Christ was deprived of His place of honour in the Old Testament.

Neither did the synod take into account that Christ Himself declared that these words of Psalm 110:1 referred to Him, and were quoted by three of the gospel writers (Mat 22:43-45; Mk 12:35-37; Lk 20:41-44; also compare Acts 2:34-36). Passages from Psalm 110 are quoted thirteen times in the New Testament and each time the passage quoted undoubtedly refers to Christ only.

Surely we should copy Christ in the way He quoted Psalm 110:1!

*The fact is:* Christ, as the Spokesman for God, gave the complete revelation of the Old and New Testaments. He knows exactly what He Himself said in the Old Testament. And what He had said in the Old Testament He expounded precisely in the New Testament.

To translate the Bible in conflict with that which Christ said, is sin.

- 8.6 *Statement by the synod:* The point for discussion amounts to devaluating the Old Testament, depriving it of its own independent authority and message.

*Our response:*

This is an outrageous and senseless statement by the synod. The synod is of the opinion that in retaining Christ's place of honour in the Old Testament amounts to 'devaluating the Old Testament, depriving it of its own independent authority and message'. The opposite of this statement is in fact true, namely: the presence of Christ in the Old Testament (together with the Father and the Holy Spirit) is the content, the truth, the praise and the glory of the Old Testament, even as in the New Testament.

The synod was wrong in concluding that the Old Testament has an 'own independent authority and message' without the presence of Christ.

- 8.7 *Statement by the synod:* The translators remained true to the text as linguistic concept from which the Church itself should abstract and formulate the dogmatic concepts.

*Our response:*

Linguistics should not take preference at the expense of dogmatic truths. Both should serve together to reveal and pass on the unadulterated revelational truths. As employed in the 1983 translation the emphasis placed so-called on linguistics leads to unquestionable confusion in abstracting dogmatic truths. Who is for example the *offspring* recorded in Genesis 3:15? Who is the *exalted being* of Psalm 45:6-7? Who is the *someone like a human being* of Daniel 7:13? Who are the persons referred to in the other Messianic prophecies?

Are theologians and the Bible reading public not being left in the dark? Does this not create confusion? Is the honour of Christ not affected?

**Note:** Rev Mike Smuts sr, submitted an unassailable (to our way of thinking) gravamen in this connection to the Western Cape synod session held in October 1987 in Cape Town. The gravamen dealt with the use of small print in Isaiah 53 and the other Messianic prophecies of the 1983 translation. (Compare ANNEXURE 1.)

## 9. Now: a non-confessional translation?

What can be considered as an important method of approach for the proposed new (2016) translation? Prof APB Breytenbach is an Old Testament scholar and professor emeritus of the theological faculty of the University of Pretoria. At present he is vice-chairman of the Steering Committee: The Bible in Afrikaans which co-ordinates the translating. In the edition of 1 September 2004 of *Die Hervormer* (the official mouthpiece of the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika*) prof Breytenbach says in an interview with the editor:

“On the one hand there are those to whom Biblical-Reformed means that the Reformed Articles of Faith are the spectacles through which the Bible should be read, because (as it is called) the timeless truths of God are summarised in the Articles of Faith.

On the other hand there is the point of view that, while it is acknowledged that the essence of the Biblical message (namely that we are saved by grace alone) is the sum total of the Articles of Faith, we should not read the Bible through the spectacles of Articles of Faith. The latter remains the deposit of believers' struggle with faith at a particular time and under particular circumstances. The present questions regarding life and faith cannot be answered by polemic writings of ages past. My own point of view agrees with the latter." (Thus prof Breytenbach.)

*Note:* For us the Articles of Faith are a confession, but note what prof Breytenbach says here, namely:

- he does not support the reading of the Bible through the spectacles of Articles of Faith, and
- the Articles of Faith are not able to answer our present questions regarding life and faith.

(For further review of prof Breytenbach's point of view please see **ANNEXURE 2** point 4 and **ANNEXURE 3**.)

*The following comments do not deal with prof Breytenbach's point of view, but with the non-confessional approach in general.*

### ***How should we evaluate the non-confessional approach?***

- 9.1 The term 'non-confessional' means: Not from (or according to) the Articles of Faith (or confessions). The intention can be to translate the Bible without taking into account doctrines in the ecclesiastical Articles of Faith. The Bible translation will then be merely a translated version of the languages in which the Bible was written originally. The Bible reader will have to draw his own conclusions.
- 9.2 The non-confessional approach boils down to the following:  
During the process of translation the translators should not import theology into the Bible, otherwise it will become a confessional translation. Translators only have to present linguistic details. Afterwards it becomes the task of the Bible reader to interpret the theology from the translation. This means in fact that the theology of traditional Protestant churches is ignored.
- 9.3 The term 'non-confessional' means taking the following as points of departure:
  - the Old Testament had no particular message,
  - the Old Testament did not point to a particular way of salvation,
  - the Old Testament does not have a particular idea of God, and possibly proclaims a God who does not have a Son.(In the 1983 version the Name *Son* of God was translated out of the Old Testament in three passages, namely Psalm 2:7, 12 and Proverbs 30:4, but retained in Isaiah 9:6. Compare John 3:36: *He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*)
- 9.4 A non-confessional approach implies that this did not have to be a particular Divine Person...
  - who acted in Old Testament times as Messenger (or Angel, or Word) of God to convey messages from God to people (compare Ex 3:1-6; 14:19; Jn 1:14),
  - who was expected as Messiah (compare Ps 2:2; Dan 9:25-26 in the 1953 translation),
  - who would be born as a person (compare Is 9:6; Mal 3:1-4),
  - who would die for our sins (compare Isaiah 53),
  - who would come on the clouds of heaven for the last judgement (compare Dan 7:13 in the 1953 translation).
- 9.5 In the case of a non-confessional translation the use of small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament will be evident. In this way the words *He* and *Him* in Isaiah 53 will be in small print and the Names of Christ will be translated out of the Old Testament by writing them in small print.

Look at the possible effects of this: According to the 1953 translation *the Son of Man* (a Divine Person) will come on the clouds of heaven for the last judgement (Dan 7:13). In the 1983 version however, it will be *someone like a human being*. Now, what else can we expect?

- 9.6 Will the translators produce a Bible introducing to the world Christ as the only Saviour, or perhaps not?
- 9.7 It is wonderful to know what the confession directly present in the Old Testament really is. Note the following example:  
We know from Isaiah 53 itself that this chapter refers to a Divine Person, because:  
– He is perfectly *the Righteous One* (Is 53:11 ; Acts 7:52),  
– He never sinned (Is 53:9),  
– He has the ability to make others righteous (Is 53:11 ) and this means: to save people on the way to eternal damnation, granting them eternal life.  
From the four prophecies about the *Servant of the LORD* in the book Isaiah (Is 42:1-7; 49:1-13; 50:4-10 en 52:13 – 53:12) it is clear that these passages deal with a Divine Person. This is the confession of the Old Testament!  
(About this compare the book *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 238-240.)
- 9.8 In the case of a non-confessional translation the conclusions of thousands of believers over centuries who studied the Scriptures about that which God is teaching us in His Word, will be shoved aside. The Bible reader will then have to try afresh to derive a religion from the Bible – a process by which they will be misled because of the use of small print.
- 9.9 The inevitable result of such a translation will be that many Bible readers will draw the wrong conclusions. Many might even place their hope in another messiah to die for their sins and come on the clouds of heaven. This paves the way for interfaith, that is anyone can be the Saviour. By not believing correctly, many people can be lost.
- 9.10 We cannot imagine that more than 100 Bible translators will shove aside the confession of our Protestant churches, to bring into existence a Bible translation where Christ does not appear in the Old Testament, and where He is being marginalized, or where a substitute is translated into the place of Christ. Such will create an open door for interfaith and the New Age to move and flourish. (Compare for example the book: *New Age Bible Versions*, by prof GA Riplinger.)
- Keep in mind the following as well: A translation is always a rendering of a confession. A non-confessional translation can be a confession of a wrong road pursued.

**Note:** In a letter dated 27 November 2006, which Danie Haasbroek addressed to the head office of the Bible Society in Cape Town, he enquired about the proposed 2016 translation. Pastor Manie van den Heever, then the Principal in charge of Translation and the Care of Texts of the Bible Society replied inter alia the following (letter dated 6 December 2006):

“Those collaborating on the Afrikaans translation represent a wide spectrum of denominations using Afrikaans as preaching and pastoral medium. Thus it is an interconfessional translation.”

(*Our note:* In this we do not allege that Pastor Manie van den Heever is a supporter of the interconfessional translation.)

## **10. Possible interpretations to be attached to the use of small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament**

We regard it to be theologically wrong to use small print. Keep in mind the next number of arguments:

By using small print it can be an indication:

- 10.1 that the Divine Names of Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are so insignificant that the Names might as well be left out,

- 10.2 that Christ was not a Divine Person in Old Testament times,
- 10.3 that Christ was not active in Old Testament times and thus not active in communicating revelations from God to man (which is contradicted in Jn 1:1-5),
- 10.4 that Christ is not the message of the Old Testament (and the New Testament), alternatively: that the Old Testament does not proclaim Christ,
- 10.5 that Christ was not yet the Saviour and Messiah in Old Testament times (which is contradicted in Is 43:11 ; 53:4-6; Jn 14:6; 17:2; Acts 4:12; 10:43),
- 10.6 that Christ as a Divine Person was not to die for the sins of the Old Testament people, and for our sins (which is contradicted in e g Is 53:9, 11 -12; Rom 5:18 – compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 136-139),
- 10.7 that the grace of God is rejected and salvation from sin is obtained by human merit (which is contradicted in e g Isaiah 53 and Gal 2:16),
- 10.8 that God and thus the meaning of Christ's death on the cross are limited by time – and do not apply to the Old Testament people (which is contradicted in Is 43:11 ; 53:4-6; Jn 14:6; 17:2; Rom 5:18),
- 10.9 that the gospel had not as yet been known in Old Testament times (which is contradicted in Heb 4:2, 6),
- 10.10 that the historical context of that time determined that people in Old Testament times had not yet known Christ and that prophets could not write or speak about Him (which is contradicted in e g Exodus 14:19 where Christ was designated as the Angel of God, or Messenger of God who led the nation through the wilderness for 40 years and in which time they could get to know Him very well – compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 178-181, and 203 point 1),
- 10.11 that Christ did not appear to the prophets in visions while presenting them with the prophecies (which is contradicted in Num 12:6-8; Ezek 1:1; Hos 12:10 ),
- 10.12 that there were no Christophanies (appearances of Christ) in the Old Testament times – and therefore that Christ never appeared to communicate messages from God to people (which is contradicted in e g Gen 18:1-3, 10, 22-23 and Ex 14:19),
- 10.13 that Christ had not revealed God Himself to people in the Old Testament,
- 10.14 that the Bible should be translated according to the ignorance and unbelief found with the majority of Old Testament people (however compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, page 204, point 3),
- 10.15 that the Old Testament should be expounded according to the Jewish expository methods of the time, that is as interpreted by the Pharisees and Scribes,
- 10.16 that the New Testament interprets the Old Testament incorrectly,
- 10.17 that the testimony of the New Testament does not have to be taken into account ,
- 10.18 that the Old Testament should be viewed as separate from the New Testament,
- 10.19 that the testimony of the Holy Spirit is irrelevant,
- 10.20 that the Bible does not have adequate authority to interpret itself, because in using small print in the Old Testament and capitals in the New Testament the prophecy and fulfillment do not correlate as they should,
- 10.21 that there need be no specific fulfillment for specific promises, and that the birth of Christ on earth was not a particular fulfillment of specific promises in the Old Testament,
- 10.22 that occurrence of prefigurations in the Old Testament is regarded as more important than the presence and actions of Christ Himself in the Old Testament, and of the fulfillment by Himself,
- 10.23 that the gospel can only be read retrospectively from the New Testament to the Old Testament (this disagrees with e g Isaiah 53 and Heb 4:2, 6),
- 10.24 that linguistic rules can be violated by using small print in the Old Testament but capitals in the same verses in the New Testament,
- 10.25 that faith in God's revelation can be replaced by unbelief which can be evidenced in the form of destructive human reasoning,

- 10.26 that many Bible readers do not see Christ in Old Testament prophecies and that the true meaning of the Messianic prophecies disappear from their lives, and
- 10.27 that the *authority of Scripture* is undermined (as is clear from all the above points 10.1 to 10.26).

*In summary:*

Again we cannot imagine that the Bible translators of the new (2016) Bible...

- would neglect to introduce modern Bible readers to Christ as the only Saviour,
- would impress another Jesus than the Biblical Jesus on Bible readers (compare 2 Cor 11 :4; Gal 1:6-9),
- would be too ‘mature’ and emancipated not to need Christ any longer, and
- would like to accommodate all faiths – that is: by undermining the Divinity of Christ in the use of small print.

## **11. Other conclusions regarding the use of small print**

- 11 .1 By obscuring Christ in the Old Testament, God the Father and the Holy Spirit are being obscured as well. Christ is the only way to God (Jn 14:6). To the same extent the Way is being obscured or glorified, the Father and the Holy Spirit are being obscured or glorified.
- 11 .2 The doctrine of the Divine Trinity can be in danger. If the Divinity of Christ in the Old Testament is in danger, then it means that the existence of the Triune god of the Old Testament could in due course be called into question. (Compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, page 202.)  
Consider the following: Christ, as the Angel of the Lord (Ex 3:2), has this particular Name, that is: *I Am that I Am* (Ex 3:14-15). This confirms He is eternally who He is, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This remains a firm reality – even in spite of the attack by means of erroneous Bible translations.
- 11 .3 The Holy Spirit has always testified to Christ and of salvation from sin by Him alone. Therefore the expectation of the Messiah was extremely potent in Old Testament times. To translate a Bible as if the expectation of the Messiah was not potent or that the full focus was not on Christ, means that a mere man expresses a motion of no confidence in the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times.
- 11.4 An apt term expressing the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, is the term: *promise-fulfillment*. This expression conveys that the promises in the Old Testament were rich in content and proclaimed the truth about Christ.  
Opposed to this, the use of small print transmits the concept that the promises were of lesser importance and without real content. In that case these prophecies in the Old Testament do not hold sufficient authority.
- 11.5 The use of small print contradicts Christ’s perspective of the Old Testament. How did He see it? He regarded it as the product of Divine revelation and not of human spirituality and piety (Jn 3:34; 5:19, 30; 7:16). According to Him the Old Testament contains a particular message with regard to a particular Messiah, who is a Divine Person (Jn 4:25-26; 5:23, 39; as well as Lk 20:41-44, compare Ps 110:1 – 1953 translation).
- 11 .6 By using small print the continuity of God’s covenant with His believers in the Old and New Testaments is not acknowledged. This covenant still stands firm on the Mediatorial work and merit of Christ.

- 11 .7 The use of small print creates the impression that people in the Old Testament never needed Christ. Furthermore it implies that they learnt from the Old Testament to ask for salvation from earthly kings, priests and prophets – instead of Christ. (This clashes straight off with the Scriptures – compare Is 43:11; Jn 14:6.)
- 11.8 The use of small print presents a misconception of the way people in the Old Testament were saved and of the historical context of how they lived. The truth is that Christ *actively functioned* as the Messenger and Message of God. This was the true historical context of how people lived in Old Testament times!
- 11.9 An insulting judgement is expressed on the intelligence of the Israelites if we accuse them of not having known Christ, even though He crossed the wilderness with them for 40 years in a vision in the column of cloud and fire and even spoke with the whole nation (compare Ex 14:19-24; 20:18-20; Judg 2:1-4).
- 11 .10 Believers among the original readers most probably concluded that in the Messianic prophecies the Messiah was referred to as *God* (Ps 45:6-7; Is 9:6). The use of small print leads the present readers away from the conclusion of believing original readers, indicating through the use of small print for the modern reader that those passages did not refer to God (Christ).
- 11 .11 The assignment of the Bible Society to the translating commission was that the proposed new translation had to be a ‘source-text orientated’ translation. However, the intention of a source-text translation is misleading if small print is to be used. In the source text of the Old Testament no small print or capitals are used. By using small print in the Messianic prophecies the message and meaning of the source text are precisely contradicted.
- 11 .12 The influence of the Roman Catholic Church theology is obvious in the use of small print. In their theology and religious practices the emphasis is placed on salvation from sin by the merit of man. The use of small print in for example Isaiah 53 indicates that Christ’s merit at the cross is no longer given us by grace, but that man can earn his own salvation.
- 11 .13 The core of Reformed theology can be summarised in four “sola’s”, namely: *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), *solus Christus* (Christ alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone) and *sola fide* (faith alone). Small print theology says the opposite, namely: not Scripture but human thought, not Christ but human stature, not grace but own merit, and not faith but self-eminence.
- 11 .14 Some conviction of faith is developed in that we can look to another besides Christ for salvation. Consider the following: During the Reformation the battle was about the way man can obtain salvation. At the time the heresy was: by faith plus works. Then the true doctrine was proclaimed: salvation is obtained by faith in Christ alone.  
Nowadays a theology is growing in the Western world, teaching that salvation can be obtained by Christ plus people (that is valid for those who teach that for example Isaiah 53 indicates more than one Christ). However the true doctrine remains that salvation is obtained by faith in Christ alone.  
As happens in a heresy where a plus is added to Christ, the plus gets the emphasis, not Christ. This is the case in this instance. The small print ‘he’ and ‘him’ in e.g Isaiah 53 places the emphasis on the *plus people* and not on Christ. If Christ was indicated, those would have been capitals, because He is God.
- 11 .15 The denial of Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament runs wider than merely the removal of His Names. It leavens other aspects as well. Another example is the translation of Ezekiel 47:1. The altar is unmistakably mentioned in this verse – and this emphasizes its function in this prophecy. From the 1953 translation, and other translations, we can conclusively infer that the altar (pointing to Christ’s death on the cross) was the source of the holy water flowing from under the threshold of the temple. According to the 1983 translation the holy water flowed *past* the altar.  
This we have to know: nowhere in Scripture do we find streams of blessing flowing past the cross of Christ. These flow *from* Christ’s death on the cross.

- 11 .16 It is evident that the New Age movement wants to remove Christ as Messiah and Saviour from the Bible. This would open the way for the ‘inter-faith’ where anyone else can be the Messiah.
- 11 .17 The use of small print delivers a message which leads Bible readers away from Christ, en route to eternal damnation. (Keep in mind Hebrews 10:29-31.) The use of small print does not grow faith, but unbelief. This grieves the Holy Spirit.
- 11.18 If translators are no longer driven by faith in Christ to produce a translation, they will not lead Bible readers to faith in Christ.
- 11 .19 Because of the denial of the Names of Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament often other misconceptions occur, for example the literal and physical resurrection in the New Testament can be called in question. Because of the very meaning of the Names of Christ in the Old Testament (that is: *God, Lord, Messiah, Son of God, King, Priest and Prophet*) He was able to conquer death. The resurrection is significant proof that Christ is the Son of God (Rom 1:4).
- 11 .20 By using small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament *a god other than* the true Biblical God can be proclaimed.  
The true god has always revealed Himself in His Son only, and in the Old Testament He could also only be known through His Son.  
Christ, as the *Angel or Messenger*, made His Father known by His repeated appearances on earth (compare the term *Angel of His Presence* – Is 63:9 in the 1953 translation; as well as Mat 11 :27; Jn 1 :18; 14:9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).
- 11 .21 We conclude:
- How is it possible for the church to keep silence when the ‘small print theology’ is gaining ground?
  - Do you realize the predicament of preachers who have to preach from a Bible where to a large extent Christ was removed from being Saviour, Lord, King and Messiah?
  - It seems there is no justification for using small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

## 12. The correct approach for the translating process

The following important reasons point to the fact that each Messianic prophecy should be translated in such a way that it clearly indicates the true reference to Christ:

- 12.1 There is but **one** true gospel. There is only **one** way to salvation. There is only **one** right way to believe. The whole of the Bible contains but **one** message of salvation. According to Hebrews 4:2 the gospel was proclaimed to people in the Old Testament in the same way as it is being proclaimed to us. This is true, as Christ is the Messenger and the Word of God who Himself revealed both the Old and New Testaments.
- 12.2 In all eternity God anointed Christ with the Holy Spirit. That is why He is called the *Anointed One* (Ps 2:2; 45:6-7; Dan 9:25-26 – 1953 translation; Acts 4:25-27; Heb 1 :8-9). This anointing marks and equips Him to be our *King, Priest and Prophet* as well as our Saviour.  
Note: *Messiah* (translated from the Hebrew) = *Christ* (translated from the greek) = *Anointed One*. Thus these three words have the same meaning.
- 12.3 From all eternity Christ functioned in all His offices in full. In this way He as King together with the Father and the Holy Spirit planned the creation. As High Priest He prayed from eternity for the creation which was to come. Indeed, even at that stage He prayed for each one of us. Of this we can be assured because as High Priest it has always been His task to pray.

- 12.4 In Old Testament times Christ already maintained and cared for the whole of the spiritual and physical creation (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3). Over that realm He reigned as King. Christ is the *King of all ages* (1 Tim 1:17).
- 12.5 Even in Old Testament times all the angels prostrated themselves in worship and rejoicing before god the Father and Christ. They obediently executed all the instructions of Christ (Ps 103:20; Heb 1:14).
- 12.6 God is not subject to time, as time is part of creation.
- 12.7 No person existed before Christ. He has always existed and He has been active all the time. The following is evidence of this: It is wrong to say the Old Testament has a *pre-Christ perspective*. We can merely talk about: *the time before Christ's incarnation*.
- 12.8 Jesus Christ was the source from which the people in the Old Testament were fed (Jn 1:4-5; 1 Cor 10:1-4; Heb 11 :24-26).
- 12.9 The main purpose of Christ's appearance on earth in Old Testament times was to glorify His Father (compare Jn 14:6-13; 17:4) and to make known the Kingdom of God (compare Jn 5:24).
- 12.10 In Old Testament times Christ often appeared to people in visions and manifestations – and in these they got to know Him well. To the prophets He also appeared in visions (Num 12:6-8; Ezek 1:1; Hos 12:10).  
We also know He often appeared to king David and communicated messages from God to him. This is how the Psalms were given supernaturally.
- 12.11 Old Testament people were well acquainted with Christ (compare gen 3:8; Ex 14:19, 24). People in many lands all over the earth talked daily about the Messenger (or Angel) of the god of Israel, and the messages He communicated. (The word *Angel* means *Messenger*.)
- 12.12 Christ is the Messenger of God and He is the Message of the Old (and New) Testament as well. He was the sole Message of salvation, even for people in the Old Testament.
- 12.13 Old Testament people were aware that the Messiah was to come, that He was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), that He would reign forever from the throne of David (Is 9:6-7) and that He would bear the sins of people (Isaiah 53).
- 12.14 The question is: 'How were Old Testament people saved?' The answer is: They were saved by faith in who Christ is as indicated by His Names in the Old Testament. They were saved by the faith that the Messiah (the Christ) was God. We are saved by the very same faith. This has always been the saving faith.  
Stated another way: The people in the Old Testament had to believe in the sacrifice the Messiah would bring and that the meaning of the sacrifice already applied in Old Testament times (compare the words: 'He has borne *our* griefs...' etc – Is 53:4-6). The Holy Spirit convinced Old Testament believers of this truth. Nobody can be saved apart from Christ. Therefore the Names of Christ in which the people from Old Testament times had to believe to be saved, should be clearly indicated in the translation!
- 12.15 Isaiah 53 deals with *the Righteous One* (verse 11 ) who was to take our sins on Himself and be led like a lamb to the place of slaughtering (the cross) (compare Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 1 Pet 3:18 – 1953 translation). Psalm 22 provides another clear description of Christ's death on the cross. Both Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 conclude with a description indicating Christ's resurrection (compare Ps 22:25-31; Is 53:10-12).  
In Psalm 16:8-11 Christ's resurrection is prophesied. In the New King James Version verse 10 reads as follows: *...Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption*. In the old Dutch Bible this verse reads as follows: *Gij zult niet toelaten dat uw Heilige de verderving zie*. (Compare Acts 13:35.)
- 12.16 In the New Testament Christ Himself proclaimed that Isaiah 53 referred to Him alone (Lk 22:37 and Is 53:12; compare Mat 8:17; Acts 8:32-35).  
Only if the translators are prepared to follow the pronouncements of Christ like a child, the translation will be correct.

- 12.17 Only a Divine Person can conquer the devil and sin. On the cross Christ gained this victory. Consider the following: While Christ was on the cross, God the Father placed the sins of believers of the Old and New Testaments on Him. Then the Father left Him (Mk 15:34) and the devil with all the powers of hell attacked Him. We can say, Christ was in hell at this time. While He hung on the cross He was physically exhausted, partly because of blood loss and thirst. People heckled Him.  
Now for the important point: Only a Divine Person could be victorious, crushing the devil's head under such circumstances (Gen 3:15). Where this scene is depicted in e.g. Isaiah 53 capitals should essentially be used (for the words: *the Righteous One, He and Him*). If the person who would have died for our sins and conquered the devil were not Divine, nobody would have been saved and the devil would not have been conquered.
- 12.18 The meaning of this victory of Christ was already fully valid in the garden of Eden. The meaning of His death on the cross is not limited by time.  
These truths reveal that for example in the sentence: *I will put enmity between your seed and her Seed* (Gen 3:15) the word 'Seed' should be written with a capital letter (as was done in the New King James Version, the Amplified Bible, and The Scriptures).
- 12.19 The true *historical context* in which the Old Testament people lived is evident. We can summarize as follows:
- They got to know the true god through the frequent appearances of Christ on earth.
  - All people everywhere were sinners (Is 53:5-6, 8).
  - They needed a Divine Person to die for their sins (Is 53:9, 11).
  - They knew a Divine Person was to be born as man. Isaiah 9:6 says: *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His Name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace* (NKJV).
  - They knew He would be born on earth as the Messiah (Ps 2:2; Is 9:6; Mal 3:1-3).
  - They knew He would die for their sins as the *Servant of the LORD* (Isaiah 53).
  - They were saved through grace alone, as were and are the New Testament believers (Is 53:9-12; 55:1, 3).
  - They were made righteous by faith and not by their own merit (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6-8).
  - God the Father and the Son worked in the hearts of people through the Holy Spirit (Ps 51:12).
  - Even in Old Testament times Christ was the only Saviour (Is 43:11; Jn 14:6; 17:2).
  - The meaning of Christ's death on the cross already applied in Old Testament times, because god is not limited by time.
- Thus: the same gospel is found in both the Old and the New Testaments (Heb 4:2, 6).  
This is the true historical context in which the Old Testament people lived!
- 12.20 The prophecies were, in fact the whole of Scripture was conferred with enormous power. Christ, the Word spoke so powerfully that He brought creation into being in a single moment (Psalm 33:6, 9 – 1953 translation and The Scriptures; Jn 1:1-3). In the same power Christ delivered the Scriptural revelation. For that reason we should not devalue the Old and New Testamental revelation.
- 12.21 Because Christ gave us both Testaments, both have the same message and the message of the two Testaments agrees.
- 12.22 The perspective that Christ (and the authors of the New Testament) had on the Old Testament did not become a later perspective, but in fact during the time of the Old Testament this was the right and only perspective. In other words, Christ said exactly what God had been saying all the time.  
It is important to note that the Old Testament itself testified about Christ and His role in it. The New Testament confirms the truth about Christ's role in the Old Testament.

Therefore we have to copy Christ and the authors of the New Testament exactly. This is the only way to expound the Old Testament correctly.

Keep in mind the apostles, the authors of most of the Books in the New Testament, were instructed by Christ Himself during His life on earth. For more than three years He instructed them in understanding and interpreting the Old Testament. He appeared to Paul as well (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8.)

The correct principle: Scripture interprets Scripture.

- 12.23 Our guideline should indeed be those words of Christ: *You search the Scriptures* (the Old Testament) ‘... *and these are they which testify of Me* (Jn 5:39 – NKJV, compare the 1983 translation). To the men on the road to Emmaus Christ said: ‘... *that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms* (that is in all of the Old Testament) *concerning Me*’ (Lk 24:44 NKJV ).  
This we should imitate obediently – and remember Christ said we have to believe like a little child otherwise we will not enter the Kingdom of heaven (Mat 18:3).
- 12.24 The Holy Spirit and the Scriptures testify to Christ (Lk 24:27, 44). It is logical therefore to have many direct Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.
- 12.25 **All** the Bible Books in the Old Testament tell about Christ (compare Lk 24:25, 27, 44) and **all** the Old Testament prophets wrote about Christ (compare Acts 3:18; 10:43; and compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 74-177).
- 12.26 **All** the prophets testify that everyone who believes in Him (also in the times of the Old Testament) will receive forgiveness of sins in His Name (Acts 10:43; compare Heb 4:2).
- 12.27 The prophets spoke *from* God (2 Pet 1:21 – according to the original text). The prophets were *driven* or *carried along* by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21).  
The Scriptures were *inspired* by God (2 Tim 3:16) which literally means *God-breathed*. This word in Greek is *Theopneustos*.
- 12.28 The Messianic expectation was joyous (Zech 9:9; Jn 8:56).
- 12.29 The Messianic prophecies were final and irrevocable. God remains true to His word (promises). Thus the Scriptures are new every morning.
- 12.30 The wonderful truth about the Messianic prophecies is that they were given unconditionally. There was no demand on anyone to do anything for these to be fulfilled. This shows the character of pure grace.
- 12.31 The Messianic prophecies were announcements of God’s eternal Counsel which had ever been a fact. For that reason Isaiah 9:6 and Isaiah 53 were written in the prophetic past tense. (The term *prophetic past tense* means that something is as certain to happen as if it had happened already.)  
The Old Testament is so extraordinary as to proclaim the moments of salvation to have been already true and sure – and this is exactly the point for contemporary Bible translations to clearly show this!
- 12.32 The validity of the prophecies does not depend on man’s judgement or his experience. Even so we cannot regard the Second Coming of lesser importance merely because mankind has not experienced it as yet.  
This clearly shows the principle that translation should occur from the perspective of that which God proclaimed and not from the perspective of man’s interpretation. The Bible does not deal with the extent of man’s understanding of the revelation, but of the content of the revelation itself, namely that which God said. This should be imparted to the modern Bible reader.
- 12.33 According to Luke 11:52 Jesus referred to the *key of knowledge* (Jesus said the Pharisees *threw it away* – and 1983 translation *took it away*.) This expression means: Christ is the key which unlocks the Old (and New) Testaments. He is the key to understanding of the whole of Scripture.

From the beginning of time people obtained the true knowledge of God solely through Jesus Christ, as revealed in His Word. With this knowledge the Kingdom of God is unlocked. This is the only true theology. The only pure and true exegesis is when Jesus Christ is the CONTENT.

12.34 What are we to do? Jesus said: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind* (Mat 22:37).

The Bible translation should be a rendering of that, in that we love and honour God.

12.35 The conclusion is:

- The true interpretation of the Bible which had been tested for many centuries, should be clearly conveyed to the Bible reader.
- No-one who is a child of God, would like to see Christ supplanted in or reasoned out of His Word.

**Note:** For further arguments about Christ's place of honour in the Old Testament, please read the *Summary* on pages 246-248 in the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, and chapter 7 of the book: *Is Jesus in Psalms?*

### 13. What is a Christophany?

13.1 *Christophany* is a concept often repeated in this submission (compare points 7.2, 10.12 and 14.16).

Theophanies and Christophanies in the Old Testament have been the subject of theological research for hundreds, even thousands, of years. The word *Christophany* is being used worldwide. The word *Christophany* is a combination of two Greek words, namely *Christos* (meaning *Christ*) and a derivative of the verb *phainō* (meaning *to appear*). The meaning of the word *Christophany* is thus *appearance of Christ*.

The appearances of Christ were at the same time appearances of God (or Theophanies). In essence the Old Testament deals with Christophanies. Christ appeared to people in various ways, namely as God in glory or at times He appeared as a man (or rather: a Man). He appeared in the light of day or at night. In a dream He appeared to Solomon (1 Ki 3:5; compare Num 12:6). To the prophets He appeared when communicating prophecies to them (Num 12:6-8; Ezek 1:1; Hos 12:10). We can regard all of these to be described as Christophanies. Christ could appear *when* and *as* He wanted to, because He is God.

13.2 In the times of the Old Testament Christ appeared in manifestations and visions. The difference between these can be described as follows: A manifestation was an appearance of Christ which was discernable with the human eye, but a vision could only be discerned by spiritual eyes. Furthermore, a manifestation was a tangible reality (compare gen 32:24-30) while a vision was intangible.

The difference in meaning between *manifestation* and *vision* can also be described in another way. It is evident that the word *manifestation* indicates an extremely powerful revelation of God. Even so, in this regard every vision of Christ can be described as a manifestation. Consider for example, the powerful descent of Christ on Mount Sinai (as the *Angel of the Covenant*, Mal 3:1) to present the law.

In giving prophecies Christ sometimes appeared in the form of a man (example Amos 9:1).

13.3 It might prove fruitful to briefly consider the view of James Borland at this stage. (We differ only from his first statement, but the remainder is informative.)

- 13.3.1 Borland writes in his book: *Christ in the Old Testament* (op.cit. pages 16-17): The Christophanies comprise only appearances of Christ as a man. All the other appearances were Theophanies.  
Our response is: In all of time God made Himself known only through His Son. It seems that *Christophany* is a more comprehensive concept than Borland's understanding. As example: Christ, as the Angel of God, stayed with the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years as a vision in the column of cloud and the column of fire (Ex 14:19; 23:20, 23). This was Christ appearing though not in the form of a man.
- 13.3.2 Borland alleges (op. cit. pages 25-26): It is obvious that Christophanies occurred only to individuals. Christ never appeared to groups of people in the form of a man.  
Our note: Keep in mind we do not know in what form the Angel, thus Christ, appeared to the whole nation at Bochim and spoke to them (Judg 2:1-5). We can take it that He was covered by a cloud, as He was covered in a cloud in other instances when He appeared to the nation (Ex 14:19, 24; 19:16-18).
- 13.3.3 Borland alleges (op. cit. pages 68-71): Christ's manifestations occurred in the form of a man. An example is: Abraham's three visitors are described as *men* (Gen 18:2, 16, 22). In the Hebrew text the word *'ish* is used, conveying the concept of male.  
The Hebrew word *'ādām*, expressing the concept of human nature, is not used in this instance. The word *'ish* occurs in other passages where Christ appeared in manifestation in the form of a man, namely in Genesis 32:24; Joshua 5:13 and Judges 13:6.
- 13.3.4 Borland alleges (op. cit. page 67): Passages in Scripture with a positive indication of a human form occur only in a few instances. Perhaps only the following are examples of this: God appearing to Abraham at Mamre (Gen 18:1-33), His wrestling with Jacob (Gen 32:24-32), His confrontation with Bileam (Num 22:22-35), His commission to Joshua (Jos 5:13 – 6:5) and His appearances to Gideon (Judg 6:11 -23) and to Manoah and his wife (Judg 13:3-23).
- 13.3.5 Borland alleges (op. cit. pages 72-73): "The human-form theophany seems to have been God's characteristic manner of revealing Himself in the early days of man's sojourn on the earth."  
Passages of Scripture mentioning the appearance of God without a mention of His particular form of appearance, even though implying it, are for example: Genesis 2:15-16, 22; 3:8, 21; 12:1-3, 7; 16:7-13; 17:1-22; 26:2, 24; 35:1, 9-13 and 1 Samuel 3:10. (Compare op. cit. pages 72-84.)
- 13.3.6 Borland alleges (op. cit. page 86): God is able to show Himself in a physical form to people for a particular purpose. To see such a manifestation of God does not produce death and is not contrary to God's invisibility.  
Passages of Scripture describing the invisibility of God are: Exodus 33:20, 23; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16 and 1 John 4:12. This is a description of how God exists in reality: He is Spirit (Jn 4:24).
- 13.3.7 Borland alleges (op. cit. page 86): "What they beheld was naturally some *physical* manifestation of the invisible God and not the very essence of His being, which no mortal could ever behold."  
Passages of Scripture indicating that people actually saw God, are: Genesis 16:13; 32:30; Exodus 24:10-11 and Judges 6:22; 13:22.
- 13.3.8 Borland alleges (op. cit. page 25): The long-term purpose of the Christophanies was inter alia:  
– that Christ anticipated His future incarnation and prophesied the coming reality of that, and  
– that Christ combined His work in the Old and New Testament by appearing in human form in both.  
Our response: We agree. Christ appeared in the Old Testament in visions and manifestations but in the New Testament He clothed Himself in our flesh.

- 13.4 One night at Jabbok Jacob wrestled with a *Man* (Gen 32:24). That this *Man* was a Divine Person is evident from verse 30 where Jacob said: ‘... *for I have seen God face to face...*’ The word *Man* is written with a capital letter in the 1953 translation, as well as in other translations e.g. the New King James Version, the Amplified Bible and The Scriptures. In these last three translations the word *Man* is also written with a capital letter in for example Joshua 5:13 and Judges 13:6-11.
- 13.5 Concerning Christ’s appearance in the form of a man the following needs to be kept in mind: The visions and/or manifestations of Christ *appeared* or *came* again and again and thereafter *disappeared* or *ascended* (Gen 17:1, 22; 35:9, 13; Judg 6:11, 21; 13:3, 20). Also compare Borland op. cit. page 81.  
Visions are also mentioned in Gen 15:1; Num 12:6; Ezek 1:1.
- 13.6 Throughout Old Testament times Christ was seated (and He reigned) at the right hand of God in the highest heavens (Psalm 110:1). Thence Christ appeared to people in manifestations and visions. When He appeared like that, He still existed outside the manifestation or vision. (Compare for further reading: Borland, op. cit. page 85.)
- 13.7 We regard it important to mention the following: Even when the Holy Spirit came down on the 70 elders, a Christophany occurred (Num 11:17, 25). We know this to be Christ who descended in a vision in a cloud as this agrees with the scene where Christ (as the *Angel of the Covenant*, Mal 3:1) gave the law/covenant (Ex 19:16-18). It is undoubtedly Christ who gave the Holy Spirit in Numbers 11. This is confirmed by the fact that in the New Testament He was the One who poured out the Holy Spirit (Mat 3:11; Acts 2:33).  
What a wonderful climax is found in Numbers 11 where Christ descended in majesty and approximately three million people (compare Num 1:1-3, 45-47) bowed down before Him to worship! (Compare Ex 33:9-11.)
- 13.8 When keeping the Christophanies in mind we understand Hebrews 1:1-2 much better. This verse reads as follows: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son ...*  
This means Christ appeared in times past in visions to the prophets and conveyed God’s messages to them. Through the Holy Spirit He gave them revelations. The prophets then transmitted these prophecies to the nation. However in the New Testament Christ Himself spoke directly to individuals and crowds. His general attitude could also teach them much about God.
- 13.9 Christ’s active role in the Old Testament we perceive above all in the many Christophanies mentioned or implied in the Old Testament. These events and messages are written down – in the Old Testament! (We can accept that many more Christophanies occurred in Old Testament times than were penned in the Old Testament – compare Jn 21:25.)

The wonderful subject of the Christophanies should be prominent in our theology!  
(The next point 14 covers more about Christophanies.)

- Note:* In regard to the subject of Christophanies, please consult the following books:  
– Bavinck, dr H: *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, Band 1.* (pp 299-301)  
– Borland, James A: *Christ in the Old Testament*, (Sub-title:) *Old Testament appearances of Christ in human form.* (184 pages)  
– Haasbroek, Danie: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament.* (pages 15-22, 183-186)

## 14. The Messenger of God in the Old Testament

Christ does not only appear in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. He acted dynamically in the whole of the Old Testament. There is so much to learn about the true role of Christ in the Old Testament.

If we attend to this positively and transmit it in the Bible translations, the negative (small print theology) will disappear by itself.

For example, consider how Christ performed His task as Messenger (Angel) of God:

14.1 The Angel of the Lord is a Divine Person. This is clear from the following:

- He is often indicated as *Lord* and *God* in the same passages of Scripture (Gen 22:11 -16; Ex 3:1-6).
- He demanded to be honoured and worshipped.

Genesis 22 relates about Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac. The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven. The Angel of the Lord equated Himself with God and said that Abraham *feared* Him (that is an attitude of worship) and was prepared to bring his son Isaac as a *sacrifice* to Him (an act of worship).

Twice in the Old Testament Christ ordered people to remove their sandals, as the ground on which they stood was holy. In this He ordered them to adopt an attitude of worship because they were standing before Him. Christ is the *Angel of the Lord* who commanded Moses (Ex 3:2,5) and He is the *Captain of the host of the LORD* who ordered Joshua (compare Jos 5:13-15). In the New King James Version He is called *the Commander of the army of the LORD*. (Also compare Rev 19:11 -16.)

14.2 Christ has many functions, also in the Old Testament. One function which constantly appears prominently is His task as the Messenger of God. The way He performed this task remains thrilling.

An example of someone who was gripped by this was the Apostle John. At about the age of 90 he penned the gospel of John in the town of Ephesus. The Holy Spirit guided him all his life to ponder profoundly over the Old Testament in order to realise the true content thereof. As he commenced writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he set out rejoicing over the function of Christ in the Old Testament (Jn 1:1-5).

He said: *In the beginning was the Word* (Spokesman, Messenger, Angel) *and the Word was with God and the Word was God*. Then he continued describing how Christ in His function as the Spokesman for (Mouthpiece of) God acted so dynamically that He brought the whole of creation into being by a single command. Furthermore he noted that the life in Christ was the light of people in the Old and New Testaments.

14.3 In 1 John 1 :1-2 Christ is called the *Word*, the *Life* and the *Eternal Life*, who was with the Father in Old Testament times (compare the 1983 translation). In these Names of Christ we learn that He was the Messenger and Saviour for Old Testament people – and is the same for us.

It is significant that John's First Letter (like the gospel of John) commences with a description of the role of Christ in the Old Testament.

14.4 It is confirmed in the New Testament that Christ was the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. He is the Word (the Messenger) who became flesh (Jn 1:14; 1 Jn 1:1-2).

14.5 Christ is the eternally existing One, thus He was the Word long before becoming a human being. During Old Testament times He acted dynamically in conveying the words (or messages) of God the Father to people.

Christ's Old Testament Name *Angel* (or Messenger) and His New Testament Name *Word* have the same meaning.

14.6 That Christ acted as the Messenger and Word of God is confirmed by the fact that He is the great Prophet (Deut 18:15-19; Jn 6:14). This has been His office from all eternity.

- 14.7 The Name *Messenger* conveys the meaning that God the Father, even in Old Testament times, spoke only through His Son – the same as in the New Testament times (Jn 3:34; 30; 7:16; 8:28-29). Even if the Father gave messages to angels, He spoke through His Son (compare Rev 1:1).
- 14.8 Throughout the ages true Christians agreed that the appearances of the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament were appearances of Christ. In Old Testament times already Christ had the task of communicating messages from God the Father to people. In order to do this Christ often appeared to people in visions and manifestations. In this way He also made God the Father known to people. Christ Himself appeared to Moses in the midst of the burning thorn bush (compare His Name ‘*I Am*’ in both Testaments – Ex 3:2, 14; Jn 8:58). He Himself guided the Israelites through the wilderness for 40 years in columns of cloud and fire (Ex 14:19; 23:20, 23).  
Therefore the Israelites were extremely well acquainted with the Messiah (the Christ). Nevertheless the majority of the Israelites and Jews rejected Him – recall for example the event around the golden calf (Ex 32:1-6) and compare Acts 7:51-54.
- 14.9 The translators of the 1933/53 version were spot-on: He was a Divine Person, namely the *Angel* (with a capital letter) who appeared to Moses in the burning bush at Mount Sinai (Acts 7:29-35) and who gave Moses the law on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38).
- 14.10 The Angel of the Lord was the form in which Christ often appeared in the Old Testament. The Name *Angel of the Lord* and the variant terms, namely *Angel*, *Angel of God*, *Angel of His face* and *Angel of the Covenant* are found about 60 times in the Old Testament. These variant terms all pointed to the same Person, Christ. The capital A clearly indicates that He is a Divine Person. He is not a created angel.
- 14.11 The Hebrew term *Malak Jahweh* is translated as *Angel of the Lord* (1953 translation *Angel of the LORD*). It literally means *Messenger of the god of the Covenant*.
- 14.12 Regarding His Name as *Angel of His face* (Is 63:9) Edward J Young says the following: *He is actually the Lord (Yahweh) Himself. The Angel of His face is the Angel who is His face or in whom His face is made clear. In Him the Lord is Himself present.* (Compare: *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol III, pages 481-482.)  
The term *Angel of His face* literally means exactly that. Christ saw the face of God the Father at all times. Christ is the Messenger who brought messages from the intimate, holy presence of the Father in heaven to people on earth. In this way He also came to show the Father’s face to people (compare Jn 12:45; 14:9) and people could experience His Father’s presence, holiness and love.  
Thus even in Old Testament times Christ presented the *Face of God*. Even then He was the Image of God (Col 1:15).  
In ordinary life a son resembles his father because he was born of the father. In the same way we can say that Christ resembles His Father because He emanated from the Father in all eternity – therefore Christ is called the *Son of God* (Ps 2:7, 12; Prov 30:4; Is 9:6; Jn 3:16). In all eternity He received His life from His Father (Jn 5:26; 6:57). This confirms Christ to be the image and face of God (2 Cor 4:4, 6; Heb 1 :3). The Name of God the Father is in the Angel (Ex 23:20-21).
- 14.13 The Names of Christ are used alternatively. An example of this is the use of *LORD God* in Genesis 3:8 and in Genesis 18 *LORD* (1953 translation). In both instances He acted as the Messenger of God the Father. Christ Himself also simultaneously acted as God of the covenant. *LORD* (Hebrews: *Jahweh*) means *God of the covenant*.
- 14.14 *From the beginning* Christ was the Word of God (Jn 1 :1). This clearly shows that Christ was the One to appear in the garden of Eden to communicate God’s message to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:8). Right there a Christophany occurred. (Compare: Borland, op.cit. pages 24, 74-75.)

- 14.15 In Genesis 18 the appearance of Christ and two angels to Abraham is reported. This is when Christ told Abraham and Sarah that after nine months (or a year) they would have a son. In this wonderful event we see Christ and the angels resembling ordinary men. Christ truly entered our human existence: He and the angels even ate food while Abraham stood reverently by. Afterwards for about a day Abraham walked with Christ and the angels (compare gen 18:16).  
We can assume Christ and Abraham had a conversation all the way. We do not know the topics of conversation but still wonder: did Christ not inform Abraham about His intended birth on earth, crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension? Perhaps in the light of this possibility we can understand John 8:56 better, when Christ said: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad* (NKJV). We know Abraham knew Christ very well because Christ often appeared to him (Gen 15:1; 17:1; compare gen 22:10-17). Abraham learned much from Him.
- 14.16 Christ appeared to people hundreds of times. This means that hundreds of Christophanies occurred in Old Testament times. He appeared in visions and manifestations. The following references indicate some of these appearances:  
– Christ appeared as God in glory (Ex 19:16-19), and often as a Man (Gen 18:1-2; 32:24-30; Judg 6:11 , 14; 13:6, 11 ).  
– He spoke with Moses and Joshua on the mountain for 40 days (Ex 24:10-12, 16-18; 34:28-35).  
– At times the whole nation could see His appearance (Ex 14:19-24; 19:16-19) and at times He spoke to the whole nation (Ex 20:18-20; Judg 2:1-4).  
– He appeared to the prophets when conveying God’s messages (prophecies) to them (compare point 7.2).  
– He even appeared to some people who were not prophets (compare Judges 6 and 13).  
– He appeared to people during the day or at night, or in dreams.  
– His Names (that is *God, Lord and Angel of the Lord*) are used alternatively to describe these appearances (Gen 22:9-16; Ex 3:1-6).
- 14.17 Christ became well known throughout many countries in the performance of His tasks. Regarding the Old Testament context we can say with confidence He was known world-wide. In this way the wonder of Christ’s action as the Angel of the Lord leading the nation for 40 years through the wilderness in a column of cloud and a column of fire, became known in many lands (Num 14:13-14). Nations cringed in fear when they learnt about Him (Ex 15:13-18; Jos 2:8-11). His messages became well known – and many in heathen nations came to believe (Mal 1:11 , 14).  
It was essential for Him to be known throughout the world, because people had to have known Him or known of Him in order to believe in Him and be saved.
- 14.18 In the last Book of the Old Testament an exceptional Name Of Christ comes to the fore. In Malachi 3:1 He is called the *Messenger of the covenant*. This confirms that Christ was the One who established the covenant with Abraham and the Israelites (Genesis 15 and 17) and the One who gave the whole of the law. The law was also called the *covenant* (Deut 4:12-13). The Name *Messenger of the covenant* thus means that Christ is the Messenger of God who gave us the Old Testament (and the whole of the revelation of Scripture).
- 14.19 Now follows a correct definition of what the Old Testament is in reality: *The Old Testament is the collection of messages Christ communicated from God the Father in Old Testament times.*
- 14.20 Every word of this revelation was spoken with the same power He used to create the universe from nothing in one single moment (compare Ps 33:6, 9 – 1953 translation; Jn 1:3).
- 14.21 The Holy Spirit clearly reveals in Scripture that the presence and actions of Christ were of crucial importance to the Old and New Testaments. We should note this very closely and rejoice more excessively.

We regard any assailing of this revelation as false teaching.

### Notes:

- \* The following are some of the works confirming that Christ was indeed the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament:  
*Bible Commentary: The Minor Prophets*, by dr Theo Laetsch (compare pages 409-410 – also in the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 213-214 and read pages 2-7, 178-181);  
*Handboek Bybelse geskiedenis: Die Ou Testament*, by prof JH Kroeze (compare page 88); and  
*The Amplified Bible* – compare the subscript to Genesis 16.
- \* Examples follow where appearances of Christ were translated with small print in the 1983 translation but capitals were used in the 1953 translation: *angel* (Ex 23:20, 23; Num 20:16; Isaiah 63:9), *angel of God* (Judg 13:6), *angel of the Lord* (Zech 3:1, 3, 5-6) and *man* (Gen 32:24). Also compare *son, name* (Prov 30:4).  
In the 1983 translation we do have some instances where references to Christ's appearing are indicated with capitals. Compare for example: *Angel* (Gen 48:16; Hosea 12:4), *Angel of God* (Gen 21:17; 31:11 ; Ex 14:19; Judg 6:20; 13:9), *Angel of the Lord* (Gen 16:7-11 ; Ex 3:2; Judg 6:11, 21; 13:17-21; Ps 34:7; 35:5-6) and *Lord* (Gen 18:22). Also compare *Wisdom* (Prov 8:1, 12).

### 15. What about the so-called 'oldest manuscripts'?

The possible variations in the texts of the old Bible manuscripts make no difference when evaluating the place of honour of Christ in the Old Testament. The reason is that His Names appear in any case in all of the Old Testament manuscripts. They only have to be read in the correct way – and believed as well, otherwise the Names can be translated out.

### 16. A matter of faith

Retaining the Names of Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament is a matter of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please god (Heb 11:6). This means that without faith a person is outside the will of God; and if people refuse to obey Him they do not please Him (compare Heb 3:12, 18, 19; 4:2).

Hebrews 11:6 adds: "... for He who comes to God, must believe that He *is*..." The word *is* means that He *is who He is* (compare Ex 3:14; and Jn 8:58 in the 1953 and 1983 translations). Even in the Old Testament we learn who God truly is. It is a matter of faith. Faith means to acknowledge and confess that God is who He is.

A further meaning applies in that the Names of God in the Bible should be acknowledged and retained in Bible translations – also in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. To translate His Names out of the Bible is in direct opposition to the faith God demands from His true worshippers.

### 17. Bible translations with the correct aims

At first, the Old Afrikaans translation of the Bible (1933/1953 translation) can be consulted.

The majority of well-known English Bible translations retain the Divine Names of Christ in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Examples are: New King James Version, New American Standard Bible, The Amplified Bible and The Scriptures (this is a translation by the Messianic Jews).

Remember that thousands of theologians over a period of hundreds of years took understanding and translation of the Bible seriously.

*Wrong tendencies in English Bible translations:*

A number of English translations veer off-course in some instances. Examples are the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New International Version (NIV). In these Versions the following Names of Christ were translated out – as is apparent in the use of small print instead of capitals:

The term *My righteous Servant* which is conveyed as *my righteous servant* (Is 53:11); and the term *Son of Man* which is rendered as *son of man* (Dan 7:13).

Some other Bible translations are entirely off-course everywhere in the Old Testament regarding the translation of the Messianic prophecies. An example of this is the New Afrikaans Bible Translation (1983 edition).

**18. Recommendations – and the correct way ahead for Bible translation**

18.1 In a storybook we find stories people imagined and related. Should the prophecies and by name the Messianic prophecies resort under this category, the use of small print would suffice. Over against that the Scriptures are the faithful Scriptural rendering of Divine revelation. The word *revelation* indicates that the contents are supernatural, received from God, and that people would not have known this by themselves. Furthermore, this revelation in both the Old and New Testaments, was given by the Spokesman of God, namely Christ Himself. He gave the revelation by means of His Spirit (the *Spirit of Christ* -- 1 Pet 1:11). For this undisputed reason capitals should undoubtedly be used in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

18.2 Readers of the Bible understand that where capitals are used the passage refers to a Divine Person – for example for the words *King, Priest, Prophet* and the pronouns *He, Him* and *His*. The use of capitals is a correct guide for Bible readers. They then understand that a Divine Person was to be born as man, the Messiah, Who would reveal God and die for our sins. The Bible should be translated in such a way that the message of the Bible is understood straight-forwardly and correctly – and, to our way of thinking, this is achieved only when capitals are used in the Messianic prophecies. In doing this Scripture is handled correctly and with respect, and no violence or unscientific way is applied to the Bible. On the other hand, the use of small print violates the message of Scripture and the readers of the Bible are assuredly led astray, away from Christ.

18.3 Christ deserves the place of honour in the Old Testament even more than is expressed in the 1953 Afrikaans Bible translation. One reaches this conclusion when comparing the various Bible translations – as was done in the book *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*. Please pay serious attention to the above proposal (point 1.2)!

18.4 What should be the proper way ahead?  
The translators have the ideal opportunity to present Christ even more than is the case in the 1953 translation.  
Let us take the Book of Psalms as an illustration. In the 1953 translation only three Psalms were translated as directly Messianic, namely Psalm 2, 45 and 110 (in the 1983 translation no psalm was translated as directly Messianic).

In the New King James Version seven psalms are translated as directly Messianic. This is apparent from the following table:

|                      |                             |                                  |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Psalms 2:2, 6-7, 12  | <i>Anointed, King, Son</i>  | cf. Acts 4:25-27; 13:33; Heb 1:5 |
| Psalms 16:8-11       | <i>Holy One</i>             | cf. Acts 2:27, 31; 13:35         |
| Psalms 22:1-31       | <i>Me, My</i> (in capitals) | cf. Mat 27:35, 39, 46            |
| Psalms 45:1, 6-7, 11 | <i>King, God</i>            | cf. Heb 1:8-9                    |

|                  |                 |                                       |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Psalm 72:1       | <i>Son</i>      |                                       |
| Psalm 110:1      | <i>Lord</i>     | cf. Mat 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42, 44 |
| Psalm 132:10, 17 | <i>Anointed</i> |                                       |

Please note, these Names of Christ comprised the contents of the prophecies from the beginning – and this is not merely apparent from quotations of these verses in the New Testament.

- 18.5 The Names of Christ should be written in capitals not only in the Messianic prophecies but also in the Christophanies throughout the Old Testament. (Compare the notes under point 14.21.)
- 18.6 It may be well for the Bible translators to consider translating the word *Angel* (where the word applies to Christ) with the word *Messenger* (note the capital letter). This will aid the Bible reader towards a better understanding of the true events in the Old Testament. In Malachi 3:1 the term *Angel of the covenant* is translated in the New King James Version and the Amplified Bible, with the term *Messenger of the covenant*. In The Scriptures the word *Angel* is never used, only the word *Messenger*.
- 18.7 The proper way of writing the Covenantal Name of God in the Old Testament (*Jehovah* or *Jahweh*) is in four capitals (*LORD*) – as was done in the 1953 translation (*HERE*) and in many English translations.
- 18.8 Where the New Testament describes fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies capitals should be used. In this way the word *Prophet* should be written with a capital letter in e g John 6:14; 7:40 (compare Deut 18:15-19). This was properly written with a capital letter in for example the 1983 translation and the New King James Version. Furthermore, the following should also be written in capitals: the word *Father* in Isaiah 63:16 (this was sadly written in small print in the 1983 translation) and the word *Rock* in 1 Corinthians 10:4 (as was done in the New King James Version).

## 19. Requests to the Executive Head of the Bible Society of South Africa

Attached please find a copy of the requests addressed to the Executive Head of the Bible Society of South Africa – see ANNEXURE 2. It is important that all Christians take note of this, therefore these are attached hereto. ANNEXURE 3 links up with ANNEXURE 2, point 4.

## 20. Let us remain faithful to the truth

Let us and the translators continue valiantly as Christians to honour, protect and proclaim the position of Christ in the Old Testament (and the whole of the Bible). We must never express a low opinion of the honour of Christ, but rather remember that the victory will be His in the end – just as recorded centuries ago in Psalm 2: *...the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed (Christ) ... But: He who sits in the heavens shall laugh, the LORD shall hold them in derision.*

Christ ordered us to keep His Word and not to deny His Name (compare Rev 3:8). In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul says: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for ... correction* (to oppose erroneous belief). Let us correct the erroneous beliefs regarding Christ by allowing Scripture to speak for itself! Remember, there is but **one** true gospel..

We trust you will appreciate the serious and good intentions we express in this submission – and will use this in the same spirit as that in which it was written. This was written with the intention of only serving the Kingdom of God to the best of our ability. This submission calls on everyone to highly regard Scripture for what it truly is – and to observe it in the way God commanded Joshua (Jos 1:8).

This was not directed against any person. It was written exclusively to serve the truth of the Word of God, and to convey the confession of our faith in the Triune god and in Jesus of Nazareth as man's only Redeemer.

We kindly request all readers of this submission to pray for this cause.

Sincerely,

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## **ANNEXURE 1**

### **Introductory notes:**

- 1. Refer to the above section, the note under point 8.7.**
- 2. The next gravamen (or petition of protest) was compiled by Rev Mike Smuts Sr. This gravamen was submitted to the Western Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church which had a session from 13 to 23 October 1987 In Cape Town. (Compare: *Agenda* pages 878 – 882, and *Handelinge* page 139.)**

### **REV MIKE SMUTS OPPOSING THE NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION**

GRAVAMEN SUBMITTED TO THE SYNOD OF THE NED. Geref. KERK IN S.A. (DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN S.A.) AT THE SESSION IN CAPE TOWN IN OCTOBER 1987

**CAUSE:** THE NEW AFRIKAANS BIBLE TRANSLATION WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ISAIAH CHAPTER 53

Submitted by Rev M J Smuts

Reverend Chairman and Brethren

In this matter I followed the Biblical way by producing this matter on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1985 to the Church council and the congregation of which I am a member.

However, the Church council was not clear about proceeding and asked me to submit a Gravamen at the very next Synod.

As I realised your agenda would be comprehensive, I beg your indulgence for this cause, which I believe to be of the utmost urgency.

If I had not been convinced that there is a possibility of the honour of Christ being affected by the translation in the NAB of Isaiah 53, I would not have concerned you in this matter. Therefore I trust this Gravamen will be received by the Synod.

1. General comment:

In comparing the 1933 Afrikaans Bible translation with the New Afrikaans Bible translation (NAB) you will notice that the powerful and clear emphasis on the Messianic prophecies is lost in the NAB. Should the Synod agree that my statement is correct, the question arises whether the honour of Christ was affected in any way by this. (Compare Is 52:12 to Is 53:1-12, as well as Is 42:1-7, Is 49:5-7, Is 50:4-10 etc.)

2. Isaiah 52:12 to Isaiah 53:1-12

To take up as little time as possible, I shall limit myself to the above passages of Scripture.

- 2.1 According to the 1933 translation Isaiah 53 refers to Jesus Christ alone. In the above translation the personal pronouns in verse 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 are written invariably with a capital “H”, that is it points to Christ. The same holds true for Isaiah 52:13-15. In contrast to this all the personal pronouns, except for the personal pronoun being the first letter in a sentence, are written with a small letter ‘h’ in the NAB. The translators argue that this could point to other persons as well as it being a reference to the Messiah. They say that ‘My servant’ (small print ‘s’) in Isaiah 52:13 could also indicate somebody other than Christ. The 1933 translation however, reads ‘my Servant’, note the capital ‘S’.
- 2.2 In the *Verklarende Afrikaanse Bybel* (Expository Afrikaans Bible) a footnote appears with Isaiah 53 which, translated, reads: This remarkable ‘Gospel of the Old Testament’, quoted about fifteen times in the New Testament, culminates and in a sense is the depth of the Old Testament’s Messianic proclamation. Nowhere else in the Old Testament the character of the atoning death of the Messiah is pictured so clearly.  
Comment: Only one atoning death was died for sinners and Christ Jesus did it. Surely no room should be left for somebody else – a king or a prophet – relating to the atoning death.
- 2.3 The 1933 translation renders Isaiah 53:11 as follows: ‘By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many for He shall bear their iniquities’. Please note the capital ‘S’ and the capital ‘H’.
- The NAB reads without any capitals. Thus this could have been anyone other than Christ.
- Opposed to this the whole of the Word of God declares that no person is righteous. For example Romans 3:10, ‘There is none righteous, no not one’ . (Compare Ps 14:3; Ps 53:1-3; Eccl 7:20; Rom 3:23 etc.)
- No-one other than Christ can make sinners righteous. No person, except for the Son of Man can bear the punishment for sinners, because every man is a sinner worthy of punishment. This honour is due to Christ alone. After all, this is the confession of our church.
- 2.4 The 1933 translation renders Isaiah 53:5 as follows: ‘But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.’ Please note always the capital “H”. This points to Christ.
- Opposed to this we find the small print ‘h’ every time in verse 5 in the NAB. This could indicate someone else.
- Once again – nobody other than Christ was ‘pierced through/wounded’ for our sins or ‘crushed/bruised’ for our iniquities or bore our ‘chastisement’ or could bring ‘healing’ to our sinful condition. Even for the people of the covenant in the Old Testament nobody else could do all the above.
- Here Calvary is depicted so very clearly. The well-known Delitzsch put it incisively: “It looks as if it had been written beneath the cross upon Golgotha, and was illuminated by the heavenly brightness...” p. 303, of his commentary on Isaiah 52 and Isaiah 53.
- 2.5 In the 1933 translation Isaiah 53:6b reads as follows: ‘And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all’. Note, once more the capital ‘H’. The NAB differs from this and uses a small letter “h”.

Please note, in verse 6a the prophet declares that we all went astray like sheep – all – therefore not a single person did not go astray, therefore no other person could possibly have taken our iniquities on himself, not for the people of that time or since. This applies to Christ and to Him alone.

- 2.6 In the 1933 translation verse 7 reads as follows: ‘...He opened not His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter... So He opened not His mouth.’ Always capital “H”. Only Christ is the Lamb of God. Once again the NAB made provision for someone else by using small letter “h”s.
- 2.7 In the NAB we read verse 9 with only small print ‘h’. This verse contrasts the ‘wicked’ and ‘sinners’ with someone who committed no crime and was never false. This can only be said of Christ.
- 2.8 The last verse in Isaiah 53 sounds it wonderfully and as clear as a bell. ‘... And He shall divide the spoil with the strong because He poured out His soul unto death and He was numbered with the transgressors and He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.’ The NAB rendered this in lovely Afrikaans but sadly kept to the small print ‘h’, to provide for someone else alongside Christ.

In this verse we deal with someone who was regarded as a criminal, i.e. this person was no criminal but was deemed to be one. This is a clear reference to Christ who also prayed for His transgressors. Once again it is mentioned that this person took the sin of many on Himself. Only Christ could do that.

3. It is striking to see the translators of the NAB use capitals ‘H’ instead of small letters ‘h’ whenever Isaiah 53 is quoted in the New Testament. In this way it is acknowledged that this refers to Christ alone, for example Matthew 8:17 ‘... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses”.’

Christ Himself declared: ‘For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: “And He was numbered with the transgressors”. For the things concerning Me have an end.’ (Lk 22:37). Can it possibly be clearer?

4. When Philip joined the high official from Ethiopia, the latter was reading from Isaiah 53:7. The official asked Philip ‘I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or some other man?’ (Acts 8:34). The following verse reads: ‘Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him’.

#### 5. IN SUMMARY: Brethren

Can it be said of anyone other than Christ that :

- 5.1 he as righteous can make others righteous? If not, then Isaiah 53 :11 was not translated correctly. (NAB)
- 5.2 he was regarded as a criminal, because he took the sins of many on himself and prayed for his transgressors? If not, then Isaiah 53:12 was not correctly translated in the NAB.
- 5.3 the Lord took the sins of all of us on himself, or even only the sins of the nation of the covenant? If not, then Isaiah 53:6 in the NAB was not translated correctly.

- 5.4 he was pierced through for us, even crushed because of our sins, and the punishment which brought us peace he took on himself? If not, then Isaiah 53:5 in the NAB was not translated correctly.
- 5.5 he took our diseases on himself and carried our sorrows? If not, then Isaiah 53:4 in the NAB was not translated correctly.
- 6. Are we allowed to allege that Christ, our only Mediator, as the only Lamb of God, as the only Righteous One before god, should share this honour with anyone else?
- 7. Kind request to the Synod:
  - 7.1 Please consider referring this serious matter to one of the temporary commissions to enable the Synod to make an informed decision.
  - 7.2 Should such a commission regard my protest as founded and the synod agrees, please have this matter adjusted along the right channels, for example in the next edition of the NAB.
  - 7.3 Should the synod concede that this whole matter, namely the clear emphasis of the Messianic content in the Old Testament, should be rectified, please request the responsible people to review the complete Christology, or Messianic content of the Old Testament, to ensure that Christ receives all the honour.
- 8. Conclusion

Thank you to the members of the Synod for having heard my petition so patiently.

With the greatest regard

MIKE SMUTS  
 Minister Emeritus  
 Member of the Welgelegen congregation.

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**THE SYNOD'S RESOLUTION:**

This gravamen (Afrikaans 'beswaarskrif') was referred to the Commission for Doctrine and Practical Application of the Western Cape and/or General Synod.

A commission of SCDPA (the Synodal Commission for Doctrine and Practical Application) of the Western Cape Synod then compiled a report of 16 pages. This was known as the comprehensive report. From this report SCDPA then compiled a condensed version to serve as recommendation before the 1991 synod.

In this report the above gravamen of Rev Smuts was rejected. This recommendation was accepted and confirmed by the Western Cape synod of 1991. (Compare Synod 1991 *Agenda* pages 64-66, and *Handelinge* pages H47-H48, H170, 23, 25.)

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## Arguments of the Synodal Commission for Doctrine and Practical Application (SCDPA):

In order to refute the above gravamen, SCDPA (according to its condensed report in the Agenda) produced inter alia the following as arguments:

1. *SCDPA alleged:* It is important to note that the title ‘Messiah’, derived from the Hebrew word meaning ‘to smear with the hand’, ‘to anoint with oil’, was never connected with the person of the future Saviour and Redeemer in the Old Testament. This particular application we find in later Judaism and in the New Testament (Jn 1:40-41; 4:25).

*Our response:*  
A firm revelation of God which was recorded in the Old Testament as well: from all eternity Christ was anointed by God the Father with the Holy Spirit for three offices, namely *King*, *Priest* and *Prophet* and to be our *Redeemer* (Ps 2:2; 45:6-7; Dan 9:25-26; Hab 3:13 – 1953 translation; Acts 4:25-27; Heb 1:8-9).

Remember also: The Old Testament believers were saved because Christ filled these positions even in the times of the Old Testament. Furthermore, people in Old Testament times had to know this and believe in order to be saved.  
(Compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 37-43 and 193-200.)
2. *SCDPA alleged:* In the Old Testament we do not find a rounded and complete picture of the Person and work of the coming Messiah. His image is mostly veiled behind symbol and prophecy. Only in the light of the New Testament is it possible to discover a testimony to Christ in the Old Testament.

*Our response:*  
At first: SCDPA never took into account that Christ Himself was active throughout the Old Testament. He functioned fully and the Old Testament testified to that all the time.  
Secondly: SCDPA did not keep in mind the true nature of prophecy. God is all-powerful and was thus able to say whatever He wanted to reveal about His Son. In other words, Christ as the Spokesman of God, was able to say whatever He revealed about Himself.  
Thirdly: The argument that we only discover in the New Testament testimony to Christ in the Old Testament, has a response in this submission under 7.7 to 7.15.
3. SCDPA wanted to advocate the ‘pyramid model’. They allege that a great number of Old Testament passages have an indirect Messianic reference. Then they add: ... and only in a remote way they refer to Christ.  
(Our note: In terms of this representation Christ is mentioned as the ‘top of the pyramid’.)

*Our response:*  
Christ is not only the top of this pyramid, He is the foundation and the builder thereof. He is the *Creator* of the Old Testament. He is also from beginning to end the *Lord*, the *Messenger*, and the *Message* thereof.  
It would be best not to think of the Old Testament in terms of a pyramid (Compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 44-51.)
4. *SCDPA alleged:* The use of the small letter does not mean that the Messiah was translated out of these passages (‘servant of the Lord’) in the Book of Isaiah. He is present there but in an Old Testament manner, in the sense that the messianic function at the time of Isaiah was intertwined with Israel and all its functionaries in their calling to be ‘servants’ of the Lord. In Christ all these threads of the functioning models are pulled together.

*Our response:*  
The Old Testament (even as the New Testament) was inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3:16) and this is a fact SCDPA did not mention in their report.

The Holy Spirit has always testified to Christ and is called the *Spirit of Christ* (1 Pet 1:11; compare 2 Sam 23:2) who witnessed through the prophets. Thus it is logical to expect many direct Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

In the *Servant of the LORD* prophecies (Is 42:1-7; 49:1-13; 50:4-10 and 52:13 – 53:12) there are many indications that these passages deal with a supernatural Person – and they cannot refer to the nation of Israel, Moses, or Cyrus, or whoever. There are emphatic indications that these passages of Scripture deal with a Divine Person, because He is called the *righteous Servant* who never sinned and was able to make others righteous (Isaiah 53:9,11).

Therefore, the word *Servant* should be written with a capital letter in these passages.

(Compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 136-142 and 236-241.)

## ANNEXURE 2

### REQUESTS ADDRESSED TO THE EXECUTIVE HEAD OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Pretoria

12 May 2008

Dear Rev Kritzinger

The Bible Society granted the public opportunity to submit written proposals regarding the new Bible translation which is being undertaken at present. With reference to that we prepared a draft submission, which we amended after receiving a letter from prof Combrink dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

After all the translators and the persons of the Bible Society involved in the 2016 Bible translation have had this submission in their possession for 6 weeks, and handled our input and comments, we intend printing the submission. Prof Combrink, in his capacity as Principal of Translating and Care of the Texts at the Bible Society will receive 120 copies requesting him to hand each translator a copy. Copies will also be forwarded to all the regional offices of the Bible Society. Please compare the attached list, titled *Receivers of Parcels*.

The following are specific questions and we would like pertinent answers to these. Therefore we kindly request you, as Executive Head of the Bible Society, to provide answers to these questions as soon as possible:

1. *Die Hervormer*, official mouthpiece of the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika*, reported in the issue of 1 May 2006 that the Bible would once more be translated into Afrikaans and the final product is expected to be ready by 2016. This was a final decision by the National Council of the Bible Society of South Africa (the BSSA) at a meeting held in February 2005. 120 collaborators had already been designated by various churches for this task.

From this decision it is evident that the Roman Catholic Church, apart from other churches, will be involved.

Can it possibly be true that the Catholic Church is involved with our Bible translation? Even though the Roman Catholic translators are limited to translating the apogrypha, they will have input in wider areas and this we deem ill-advised.

*Note:*

In your position you are most likely aware of the attitude of Pope Benedict XVI towards Protestantism, as was reported in the London Telegraph of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and quoted in The Philadelphia Trumpet of October 2007. This quoted section appeared under the heading: *Protestants not even a "church"*:

In July, London's *Telegraph* reported, "Christian denominations outside Roman Catholicism are either defective or are not full churches of Jesus Christ, the Vatican has reaffirmed. A 16-page document released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which Pope Benedict XVI once headed, described Orthodox churches as true churches, but said they are suffering from a 'wound' since they do not recognize the primacy (state of being first!) of the pope.

“The paper, approved by Pope Benedict, went on to say the ‘wound is still more profound’ in Protestant denominations. ‘Despite the fact that this teaching has created no little distress... it is nevertheless difficult to see how the title of “church” could possibly be attributed to them,’ it said...

“While there was nothing doctrinally new in the document, it nevertheless prompted swift criticism from Protestants, Lutherans and other Christian denominations.”

*(The editor of The Philadelphia Trumpet, of October 2007, commented as follows:)*

But the criticism was anemic compared to the pope’s scathing condemnation of their religions. The reason Protestants revolted in the first place was the corruption inside the Roman Catholic Church.

The pope can’t see how the Protestants could even have the title of “church” attributed to them! Quite an outrage coming from a church with such a bloody history.

This document criticized Orthodox churches almost as severely. Other religions have a history of being afraid to criticize a powerful Catholic Church. That situation is only going to get worse as the Catholic Church rapidly grows in power and influence.

*(End of quote from The Philadelphia Trumpet.)*

2. (Regarding the 2016 Afrikaans Bible translation:) We are aware that the Church Advisory Committee: The Bible in Afrikaans co-ordinates this project, comprising about 40 members representing a wide spectrum of Afrikaans churches. From this the Steering Committee: The Bible in Afrikaans was appointed consisting of 13 members who are to attend to the practical translating process. Prof Bernard Combrink is the chairman of both these committees and prof APB (Andries) Breytenbach the vice-chairman.

It is important for all Christians in our country and the neighbouring states to know which persons are involved or will be involved with the translating process. Has this information been published? How can the public obtain this information?

3. Pastor Manie van den Heever and prof Combrink confirmed that a decision had been reached to use small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament in the proposed new Afrikaans Bible translation. This means that the Names of Christ will once more disappear from this edition (as happened in the 1983 translation).

Has this decision to translate Christ out of His own Word been clearly declared to all Afrikaans churches?

4. Prof Andries Breytenbach is the vice-chairman of the Church Advisory Committee: The Bible in Afrikaans. We can assume that he will take a major lead in translating the Old Testament. (The chairman, prof Bernard Combrink, is a New Testament scholar.) We conclude that prof Breytenbach’s point of view is that the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament do not directly refer to Christ. His view on this is contained in the 1 September 2004 edition of *Die Hervormer*, included herewith as **ANNEXURE 3**.

How many persons with similar convictions are participating in the Bible translation? (We know the Bible Society invited a wide spectrum of Afrikaans churches to nominate translators from their own ranks.)

5. We know the Bible to be the Word of God, teaching :
  - that Christ is the only Saviour,
  - that the Old and New Testaments form a unit,
  - that an ‘independent Old Testament apart from the New Testament’ does not exist, and

- that the literal and physical virgin birth, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension and second coming of Jesus Christ are the literal and complete fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

Why would the translators allow these truths to be questioned by using small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament?

6. It is important to know which resources are being used as texts. Would it not serve a purpose to mention in the introduction to the proposed 2016 Bible which Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were used as source texts for this translation? Should this information not be published even at this stage?
7. The Bible Society assigned the translators of the proposed Afrikaans Bible translation to produce a source-text orientated translation. Will the translation serve its purpose by using small print in the Messianic prophecies? We believe by the use of small print the message and meaning of the source text will bring confusion and cause doubt. What do you think?
8. The matter raised in this letter affects the core of the gospel and our life of faith.

Therefore we ask the following questions:

- Are you convinced that members of congregations prefer small print when reference is made to Christ in the Old Testament?
- Are you convinced that congregants would like a new Bible which translates Christ out of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament?
- Have all the members of the relevant church denominations been informed and consulted regarding the above matters?

Exactly how fundamental these questions are is confirmed in John 5:39, where Christ Himself said: *'You search the Scriptures (the Old Testament) ... and these are they which testify of Me.'* – NKJV and the 1953 translation.

9. We are convinced the majority of Afrikaans-speaking Protestant Christians prefer capitals in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Is that not an important reason why the 1953 translation is still in great demand?
10. You are aware of the fact that in Hebrew, because of its way of writing, no capitals or small print is used. The words indicating the Names of Christ in the Hebrew text appear in the source texts. The critical fact is to make this comprehensible to the contemporary Afrikaans public. Surely it is of foundational importance that Christ is correctly identified in the Bible. In our society writing the name of a person in capitals is a sign of respect. Should the Names of Christ not be treated with even more respect?

We would like responses to these questions as soon as possible. Should you disagree with the contents of this submission, please transmit the specific contrary opinions to us. Be assured, we intend with this document, only to seek the very best for the Kingdom of God. We would like this translation to do justice to the true message of the Scriptures.

Thanking you sincerely

Prof PW Hoek  
Ds Danie Haasbroek

## ANNEXURE 3

(Excerpt from *Die Hervormer*, edition 1 September 2004)

### IN CONVERSATION WITH PROF ANDRIES BREYTENBACH

(The editor of *Die Hervormer* posed the following questions to him in an interview:)

**In the *Hervormde Kerk* you opened up perspectives for a different understanding of the Old Testament when you indicated that the so-called Messianic texts in the Old Testament do not refer to Christ. How would you briefly explain the intent of this argument?**

The whole matter of the *Messianic texts* in the Old Testament is vested entirely in references to Old Testament passages found in the New Testament. New Testament authors used Old Testament passages as determined by the fact that in the Jewish academic field of that time it was generally acceptable to *interpret* or *expound* the Holy Scriptures by quoting words in sound out of the context in which they originally appeared, by applying events and attitudes referred to in the Scriptures, typologically and allegorically to their own times, and so forth. This way of interpretation or exposition of the Scriptures always meant that the one doing that had the words mean something different to what they meant in the original context. This also entailed a selection of the quoted text. For example, only half of Hosea 11:1 is quoted in Matthew 2:15, applying this to Joseph and Mary and their stay in Egypt. In Hosea 11 :1 ( *When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son*) it indicates undoubtedly the nation Israel. The same can be said of Paul's allegorical interpretation of the story of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4:21-31. It is evident that Paul meant something completely different in his argument to the actual events in Genesis.

Theologians tried to solve this dilemma by suspecting a deeper meaning was hidden in the Old Testament passage, than was obviously apparent. As a matter of fact, this was said in so many words in Ephesians 5:31 and 32. The whole matter of a so-called *deeper meaning* produces serious questions:

Why would only some verses, even sections of verses have a deeper meaning (suggesting also a richer, fuller and more complete meaning) while the rest of the Old Testament did not? Why would God conceal the richer meaning for centuries and only reveal it after the advent of Christ? Furthermore, why would we read the Old Testament if the fuller and richer meaning is concealed while we can find the same meaning properly revealed in the New Testament, and indeed in such a way that even a child can understand it?

Clearly the argument of a *deeper meaning* makes the Old Testament powerless and redundant. Therefore I believe we should just accept that the New Testament authors were children of their times, who in proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, made use of Jewish expository methods and that they did this because the only Holy (and therefore authoratative) Scriptures for the first Christians were the Old Testament writings.

In faith we can accept the matter they put forward (for example the virgin birth in Matthew 1 :18-25) without having to parrot the communication strategy they used (for example their use of Isaiah 7:14 as *proof*). Along with this we should consider that God gave in Jesus of Nazareth much more than was expected from the messiahs of the Old Testament. We cannot thank God enough for not providing a king like David to the world, but the king of the world, and that He gave us not a *son of David*, but His own Son.

**The connection between the Old and the New Testaments is being advanced time and again in contemporary critical-theological issues. How do you see this connection?**

There is some continuity between the Old and the New Testaments, but there is also discontinuity in particular: According to the Old Testament God is primarily concerned with Israel, His chosen nation; in terms of the Sinai covenant He demands obedience to the law and prescriptions regarding the sacrifice of animals; man can experience His presence in the Temple in Jerusalem; et cetera.

According to the New Testament everyone who believes in His Son becomes part of this chosen nation; He expects no more animal sacrifices; He is present in any place where people pray to Him in the name of Jesus, etc. This indicates very little connection between the Old and New Testaments.

Earlier there was an attempt to proclaim a connection between the Old and the New Testaments from a system of promise fulfillment: According to this system, whatever we read in the Old Testament would be predictions or promises of God's complete revelation in the New Testament. The most important argument against this is the same as that of the previous question: If the Old Testament contains promises which were fulfilled in the New Testament we do not need the Old Testament.

To me the connection between the two Testaments is on a different level. On the level of confession: We believe and confess that the Old Testament and the New Testament testify to one living God in His relationship with people. The unevenness between the two Testaments entails that we do not have a closed system in which to proclaim God and His work among people. And this is very good, because I would have been very worried if God could fit into one of our systems. (Thus far the quotation from *Die Hervormer* of 1 September 2004.)

**Reaction thereto:** In the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2004 edition of *Die Hervormer*, the following was a response to prof Breytenbach:

Dear Editor

In his conversation with the editor of *Die Hervormer* (1 September) prof APB Breytenbach put forth his view that the Messianic texts in the Old Testament do not refer to Christ. I reckon he blunders as follows:

1. Apparently the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is not valid as a point of departure for expounding Scripture and the rhyming the psalms, as he does not refer to the Holy Spirit and His work anywhere in his conversation.
2. The Old Testament people did not need the teaching of the Old Testament concerning Christ – namely that He is proclaimed in the Messianic psalms (e g Psalm 2, 45 and 110) as Anointed (or Messiah), Son (of God), God, King and Lord. Apparently they could be saved without faith in these truths. (These Names of Christ were also removed from the new versification of the Psalms.)

3. Furthermore he implies that the New Testament incorrectly interprets the Old Testament. By doing this he states that we do not have to accept the authority of the New Testament. Opposed to this I would like to state the following: For the Old Testament people the true Biblical faith was also vested in Christ, the Messiah. The Old Testament people received the gospel in the same way we do (Heb 4:2). Nobody could come to the Father even in Old Testament times other than through Christ (compare Jn 14:6). Old Testament people had to get to know the Names and functions of Christ from the Old Testament in order to believe in it!

*Prof PW Hoek*

### **Further reasoning regarding the above interview with prof Breytenbach**

(the numerics run on:)

4. Prof Breytenbach alleges: “The whole matter of the *Messianic texts* in the Old Testament is vested entirely in references to Old Testament passages found in the New Testament.” Against this we pose the question: How were the Old Testament people saved if they knew nothing about Christ? In that case they could not believe in Him as Saviour. They would have had to be saved by other means. However, Jesus emphatically said: *No one* (not even the Old Testament people) *comes to the Father except through Me* (Jn 14:6). (Compare the submission points 7.11 and 7.12.)
5. Prof Breytenbach alleges: “Therefore I believe we should just accept that the New Testament authors were children of their times, who in proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, made use of Jewish expository methods...”  
The following comments provide to our way of thinking the right perspective:
  - The Jewish expository methods were used by the then Pharisees and scribes, and not by the authors of the New Testament.
  - Is it not the confession of the church of all ages that the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures, and thus guided the authors of the Old and the New Testaments? (Compare for example 2 Tim 3:16.)
6. The impression is gained that prof Breytenbach is convinced that the Old Testament does not proclaim a particular Messiah who would come. He merely mentions ‘messiahs expected in the Old Testament’.  
Against this the truth of Scripture stands fast, namely: the Old Testament proclaims only one particular Messiah who was to come. This is conveyed by e g the following:
  - 6.1 He would be a Divine Person to be born as a human being on earth (Is 9:6; compare Mat 1:23).
  - 6.2 He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). In Matthew 2:3-6 mention is made that the high priests and scribes were convinced that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.
  - 6.3 In order to be saved the Old Testament people had to believe in this Divine Person, the Messiah, and in the sacrifice He would bring by offering Himself up to death (Isaiah 53).
  - 6.4 By His appearances, for example as the Angel (Messenger) of the Lord, the Old Testament people had the opportunity to get to know Him and to believe in Him (and His messages).  
Already at that stage the Messiah was the Light and the Life of the Old Testament people (compare Jn 1 :4; and 1 Jn 1 :2-3 in the 1983 translation). In Old Testament times He was known throughout the world.

6.5.1 It was precisely the *Angel of the Covenant* (the Messenger from God who gave the law/covenant) who was to be born as man, and thus as the promised Messiah (Mal 3:1).

John the Baptist was to be the messenger to announce His public ministry (Mal 3:1; Mat 11:10). From this it is abundantly clear that the Angel of the Lord is the Messiah who would come to earth (to *His temple*, His church, His children – Mal 3:1) as Divine Person – according to the Old Testament!

According to the Old Testament the *Anointed One, King and Son* (Ps 2:2, 6-7, 12) and *Lord* (Ps 110:1; Mal 3:1) was to be born as man. This very same Divine Person sat at the right hand of God the Father as *Lord* and would come to the earth – to be born as a human being on earth (Ps 110:1; Mal 3:1).

According to Daniel 9:25-26 the *Anointed One* (Messiah) would come. The time of His coming was described in this passage in symbolic terms.

(Compare the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, pages 37-43, 193-200.

6.6 Christ Himself announced in the Old Testament that a particular Messiah would come. This is evident from the following: Christ, as the Spokesman of God, gave the Old (and New) Testament. He knows exactly what He revealed in the Old Testament. Those were the facts He expounded clearly in the New Testament (compare Lk 24:44; Jn 4:25-26; also compare 1 Jn 2:22).

6.7 Paul used the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 17:2-3; 26:22, 23; 28:23; compare Jn 6:14; 7:40-41; Acts 18:28).

This has always been the meaning and message of the Old Testament. The New Testament confirms this truth. This truth cannot be destroyed by anything, not even by the flawed understanding of men. Both Testaments have the same Author, both proclaim the same gospel, and both proclaim the same Messiah (Christ). Therefore the New Testament provides the only true exposition of the Old Testament. That which is expounded by the New Testament has always been the exact meaning of the Old Testament.

7. Prof Breytenbach's view is also obvious in his comment: "He (God) gave us not a *son of David*, but His own Son."

Our response: The Bible tells us that God gave us both: the *son of David* (relating to His fleshly descent and birth, Mat 1 :1; 22:41-45; Acts 2:30; Rom 1 :3) and *His own Son* (who has always been God). In Christ's incarnation both natures were united in Him!

8. Prof Breytenbach alleges: "Earlier there was an attempt to proclaim a connection between the Old and the New Testaments from a system of promise fulfillment..... To me the connection between the two Testaments is on a different level. On the level of confession."

Opposed to this we respond: In the same interview prof Breytenbach alleged: "... we ought not to read the Bible through the spectacles of the Articles of Faith." (Compare the submission, introduction to point 9.) Does he contradict himself? Does prof Breytenbach accept the system of promise fulfillment regarding the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament? He further alleges: "According to this system, whatever we read in the Old Testament would be predictions or promises of God's complete revelation in the New Testament. The most important argument against this is the same as that of the previous question: If the Old Testament contains promises which were fulfilled in the New Testament we do not need the Old Testament." Does he reject all the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus Christ? Does he think the Messianic passages in the Old Testament have *another* meaning than that attributed to them by the New Testament?

\* Scripture teaches the following:

The New Testament interprets the Old Testament from start to finish as *directly Messianic!*

An example of this is the fact that passages from Isaiah 53 are quoted eighteen times in the New Testament and in each and every instance incontrovertibly refers to Christ alone. (Compare ANNEXURE 1 , as well as the book: *The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament*, chapter 9.) Probably the only two exceptions to the rule are the ones he mentions, namely Matthew 2:15 and Galatians 4:21-31. Why does he use these two exceptions to prove his concept of the interpretation of the Old Testament? Why leave out the more than 200 directly Messianic references in the New Testament to Christ in the Old Testament?

- Does prof Breytenbach imply that the 18 references of Isaiah 53 in the New Testament was an abuse of the Old Testament?
- Does he imply that Christ misinterpreted the Old Testament – only to justify Himself? Does the same hold good for the authors of the New Testament who quoted Isaiah 53?
- Where, according to him, does Christ function in the Old Testament?
- Does he set no value on all the prophecies already fulfilled during the past 2000 years, or the end time prophecies still to be fulfilled?

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- Ridderbos, dr J *De Profeet Jesaja*. Deel 1 en 2. Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift. JH Kok NV Kampen. Deel 1: 1971; Deel 2: 1972.
- Riplinger, prof GA *New Age Bible Versions*. AV Publications Corporation, Ararat, VA, USA. 1993; eleventh edition: 2000. (Danie Haasbroek cannot present a view on this publication as he has not read it.)
- Smuts, rev MJ *Kan Jesaja 53 op iemand anders slaan as net op Jesus Christus alleen?* Study document as compiled by rev MJ Smuts, Helderberg. March 1992.
- Wegener, Günther S *In die begin was die Woord*. Afrikaans edition by Human en Rousseau (Edms) Bpk. 1961, 1991.
- Young, Edward J *The Book of Isaiah*. Vol 1 – 3. William B Eerdmans Publishing Company. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1965, 1969, 1972.
- Young, Edward J *The Prophecy of Daniel*. William B Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1949. Seventh edition: 1970.

### **Bible translations:**

- Bijbel (the old Dutch Bible, printed in 1919)
- Die Bybel (in Afrikaans): 1933/53 edition
- Die Bybel – Nuwe Vertaling: 1983 edition
- King James Version
- New American Standard Bible
- New International Version
- New King James Version
- Revised Standard Version
- The Amplified Bible
- The Living Bible
- The Scriptures

### **Non-official Bible translations:**

*Die Boodskap*. Editors: Jan van der Watt & Stephan Joubert. Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging. 2002.

*Die Bybel: Nuwe Lewende Vertaling*. Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging. 2006.

### **Expository Bibles:**

*Die Bybel A-Z*. Editor: Jan van der Watt. Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging. 2003.

*Die Bybel in Praktyk*. Editors: Wil Vosloo & Fika J van Rensburg. Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging. 1993, 1996, 2001, 2007.

*Die Bybellenium Eenvolumekommentaar*. Editors: Wil Vosloo & Fika J Van Rensburg. Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging. 1999.

*Die Bybel met Verklarende Aantekeninge, Deel II*. (Job tot Maleagi.) Edited by Prof Dr B Gemser, Prof Dr AS Geysers, etc. Verenigde Protestantse Uitgewers (Edms) Bpk, Kaapstad. 1958.

*Leefstyl-Bybel vir Vroue*. Final editor: Prof Christina Landman. Lux Verbi. BM. 2003.

*24/7 Bybel vir die Lewe*. Final editors: Nico Simpson & Ewald van Rensburg. Lux Verbi. BM, Wellington. 2006.

### **Song books:**

*Liedboek van die Kerk*. NG Kerk Uitgewers, Kaapstad. 2001.

### **Compiled collections:**

- *In die Skriflig*. Magazine of the Reformed Theological Association. Editor in chief: Prof JM Vorster. Annual /Vol 40; No 4; Des/Dec 2006.  
Research article by JL Helberg (i.e. prof Jaap Helberg, professor emeritus of Old Testament at the NWU). Subject: *Die messiaanse aard van psalms: Hoe dit 'n Nuwe Testamentiese lees, vertaling en omdigting van die psalms raak*.
- *Woorde wat ver kom, Deel I*. (Subtitle:) *Die literatuur van die Ou Testament*. Editors: FE Deist & WS Vorster. (Collaborators: HL Bosman, JJ Burden, JH le Roux, JA Loader.) Tafelberg Uitgewers, Kaapstad. 1986.
- *Working together for the Word*. (Subtitle:) *Celebrating 40 years of fruitful co-operation*. United Bible Societies. Zurich House, East Park, Crawley RH10 6AS, United Kingdom. 2005. Website: [www.biblesociety.ie](http://www.biblesociety.ie)

### **Gravamen:**

- \* (Gravamen submitted by rev Danie Haasbroek opposing the New Afrikaans Bible translation. See the above:)

*Agenda vir die Tiende gewone Vergadering van die Sinode van Noord-Transvaal van die Ned. Geref. Kerk. Sinodale Sentrum Pretoria, 8 tot 18 September 1987.*

*Handelinge van die Tiende gewone Vergadering van die Sinode van Noord-Transvaal van die Ned. Geref. Kerk, te Sinodale Sentrum Pretoria, 8 tot 18 September 1987.*

- \* (Gravamen submitted by rev Mike Smuts, Sr, opposing the New Bible translation, see above:)

*Skema van werksaamhede – voorgelê aan die Veertigste Vergadering van die Hoogerwaardige Sinode van die Nederduitse gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, op Dinsdag 13 Oktober 1987 op 9.30 vm en volgende dae, in die Ned. Geref. Kerksentrum, Kaapstad.*

*Handelinge van die Veertigste Vergadering van die Sinode van die Nederduitse gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika gehou in Kaapstad van 13 tot 24 Oktober 1987.*

- \* The comprehensive report of the SCDPA (compiled as commissioned by the Western Cape Synod of 1987 with regard to the use of capitals or small print in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament).
- \* *Skema van werksaamhede. Voorgelê aan die een-en-veertigste Vergadering van die Hoogerwaardse Sinode van die Nederduitse gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, op Dinsdag, 15 Oktober 1991 om 09.30 vm en volgende dae, in die Hugonote-Gedenksaal, Kaapstad. Handeling van die een-en-veertigste vergadering van die Sinode van die Nederduitse gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika gehou in Kaapstad van 15 tot 23 Oktober 1991.*

#### **Church magazines:**

*Die Hervormer.* Editions of 1.09.2004; 15.10.2004; 15.02.2006 and 1.05.2006.

*Die Kerkpad* (a semi-church monthly magazine within the GKSA). Editions of July 2003, January 2004 and May 2005.

*Kerkbode.* Edition of 27.10.2006.

#### **Other magazines:**

*The Philadelphia Trumpet.* Redakteur: Gerald Flurry. Edition: October 2007. Website: [www.thetrumpet.co.za](http://www.thetrumpet.co.za)

### **Time allotted to the Bible translators and the Bible Society**

1. Much care was taken to ensure that the Bible Society and the translators of the new (2016) Afrikaans Bible translation were informed of this before publication of this submission. This was submitted to them (in manuscript format as well as on CD) during two periods namely for five weeks (11 February – 17 March) and again for six weeks (12 May – 23 June 2008). In both instances these were sent to prof B Combrink, as chairman of the Steering Committee: the Bible in Afrikaans. For the second period a copy of the manuscript was also sent to rev Kritzinger, the Executive Head of the Bible Society. It was specifically requested that the submission was to be made available to all involved in the Bible translation project.

The purpose of this was the following:

- A period of time was allowed for all who were supposed to receive the submission to react in writing and specifically should he/she feel he/she was offended or any publication by her/him or the publishers or co-authors thereof.
- All the translators and those involved were given the opportunity to comment before publication of the submission. We undertook to consider inputs and comments after this period and then to publish the submission.

We received feedback on behalf of the institutions they represent from the two persons mentioned.

2. For use by the Steering Committee and the Bible Society copies of each of the following were sent to them on 11<sup>th</sup> February:
  - The relevant sections from the *Agendas* and *Handelinge* of the Western Cape synods of 1987 and 1991 (compare ANNEXURE 1 ) and of the Northern Transvaal synod of 1987 (compare submission point 8).
  - The comprehensive report by SCDPA of the Western Cape synod, compiled before the synod of 1991.

- The document of study by Rev Mike Smuts Sr, entitled: *Kan Jesaja 53 op iemand anders slaan as net op Jesus Christus alleen?* This can be regarded as a supplement to the gravamen by rev Smuts in ANNEXURE 1.
  - A copy of the interview by the editor of *Die Hervormer* with prof APB Breytenbach as contained in the 1 September 2004 issue of *Die Hervormer*, official mouthpiece of the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk* (compare introduction to point 9; ANNEXURE 2 point 4; and ANNEXURE 3).  
(We refer to the above in our submission.)
3. A copy of each of the items under point 2 together with the printed version of the submission are sent to the central church offices of each of the churches collaborating in the new (2016) translation.

**Please note the following:**

- Should any person or institution require any of the items mentioned under 2, please contact Danie Haasbroek.
- The Steering Committee intends making the translation in Phase 3 (of the translating process) at a later stage available to readers nominated by the collaborating churches, as well as to other readers, with the view to comment.