

# *biblia zuluensis*

iviyo lezikhuthali emzamweni  
wokuhunyushwa nokubhalwa kabusha kwebhaybheli ngesiZulu  
Team von Freiwilligen im Projekt  
zur Übersetzung und Neuschreibung der Bibel in isiZulu  
team of volunteers venturing  
to translate and rewrite the bible in isiZulu



## READING WITH EARS IN ZULULAND TODAY

Translating the Bible from classical Hebrew and Greek  
in isiZulu of the present day  
applying the *functional equivalent method*

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This is a summary of the discussion based on the guest-lecture at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Zululand on the 2nd of August, 2000.

### 1. WHY ?

Before any translation-project is undertaken, it is essential that the need for such a project be thoroughly investigated.

The following issues of the Bible in isiZulu have been reviewed by us:

- ° IBHAYIBHELI ELINGCWELE, The Bible in Zulu, R 0 53, 1959
- ° IBHAYIBHELI ELINGCWELE, The Bible in Zulu, sixth impression 1982
- ° Ithestamente eliSha namaHubo, Indaba emnandi kaJesu Kristu iNkosi yethu, Isihumusho sika-1986, ukuhlelwa kokuqala 1986, ukushicilelwa kwesithathu, 1992

We have come to the conclusion that **a new translation** rather than yet another revision should be made:

Linguistic inaccuracies and semantic discrepancies on the one as well as orthographic and idiomatic shortcomings on the other hand necessitate concentrated reading in the language(s) of origin and writing readably in the receiver language in keeping with methods applied by Bible Societies today in similar situations.

## 2. WHAT ?

**iBhayibheli ngesiZulu**, the title of the book to be published on concluding the translation-project, points out clearly that the goal we are aiming at is idiomatic and orthographic access to the message conveyed by the writings contained in the “Biblia Hebraica” and the “Novum Testamentum Graecae”.

## 3. HOW ?

° “Functional equivalent method” (fem) \ “Word for word method”  
(= “fana ka lo” = “church-Zulu”)

Not the **form**, but the **content** is our concern. (Example: A python swallowing an impala - entirely, yet in suitable form!)

Zulu idiom expresses semitic scenes, simultaneously conveying **the message behind the words** intelligibly: Linguistic (not cultural) translation!

Principles and guidelines ensure systematic progress.

° “**Bhanjekhu =Bhala njengoba ukhuluma**” (= “Write as you speak”)

Functional simplification of orthography:

“iBhaybheli”	instead of	“ibhayibheli”
“eMesophothamya”	instead of	“eMesophothamiya”
“umsayphresi”	instead of	“umusayiphulesi”

A team of volunteers and support by churches and institutions of learning are **the** decisive factor for successful progress.

## 4. WHO ?

° The Translators

Experience has shown that the ideal number of translators on such a project is between 3 and 5, selected on being capable in the “biblical languages” and exegesis; competent and at home in the receptor language, isiZulu.

° The Reviewers

- are persons who have the capability to translate or the ability as writers or competence as mother-tongue speakers, readers and users of the receptor language.
- are between 8 and 10 in number.
- do not constitute a “committee of censors”! Their function is supplementary und advisory. (From time to time they may be called together to discuss a specific agenda covering points on which the translators need guidance, but they should not meet as a committee to scrutinize what the translators have done).
- One of the reviewers accepts the assignment of being the **stylist**. It is his or her role to take the draft which the translators submit to the reviewers and to make recommendations for idiomatic and stylistic improvements.

° The Readers

- are part of the project from the very beginning!

The booklet-series “**zumnandi ngokuphindwa**” (= “tell me the old old story over and over again!”) encourages interested readers to make comments and to suggest improvements. It works !

#### °The Institutions

The Churches (locally, regionally and beyond), the Church Councils (interdenominational and ecumenical), the Institutions of learning (at primary, secondary and tertiary level) and Bible Societies are encouraged to show interest and give support to the Team of Volunteers.

Annual meetings and workshops provide for persona encounter with representatives and decision-making bodies of various churches in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Gauteng in order to ensure their being informed and hopefully interested in the progress of our venture.

#### 5 WHEN ?

We are under no time-pressure whatsoever, however, we work hard to see the results soon. Should we not live long enough, somebody else will ultimately do and bring the harvest home!

#### 6 THANKS

I thank the University of Zululand for have enabled this exchange of views and experiences on our project.

The first copy of the Book of Isaiah and the Pentateuch is being handed over to the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in gratitude.

KWADLANGEZWA, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2000      Dr. Ben Khumalo-Seegelken

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