

Translation as empowerment – new Bible (re)translations

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The spreading of the Bible is the greatest translation success story in the world. In the last century, a process of translation renewal has begun, in which many traditional translations have been renewed or revised, mainly in order to adjust to the language gap brought about by modernity. At the same time, a shift within the practice of theology had seen the target audience become more and more the focus of renewed editions of the Bible. Since the turn of the millennium, many different retranslations have appeared. Each initiative, including some by various churches, presents its own version according to different dogmatic convictions, academic norms and social standards.

In the so called first world, such retranslations fall in line with gender equality, political correctness, and cultural sensitivity, among other agendas. Examples include the *Bible in Just Language* (2006) – an academic theological translation project in the German speaking countries of Austria, Switzerland and Germany; *The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* (2007) – an English language catholic publication initiated by Priests for Equality; and *Lutherbibel* (2017) – a revised edition of Luther's 1545 bible translation into German, issued by the German Lutheran Church. In all cases, the biblical source text is enriched according to new political and social standards. A process of *eisegetic translation*, i.e. integrating the own interpretation and norms *into* the text and its author's intentions, seems to replace exegesis – the traditional determination of the meaning of a text adhering to the ancient context and words of its author.

At the same time, grassroots initiatives in the so-called third world bring about similar undertakings, carried out by members of the congregation supported by theological and translational guidance. Such initiatives aim to undermine the former hegemony, which traditionally utilised translations into indigenous languages predominantly as a tool of colonial empowerment. By questioning the old epistemological hierarchy, some indigenised translations of the Bible have come to prescribe biblical dialogue. These translations comment on the cultural mechanisms of ownership and resistance as vacillating media of oppression and liberation, and make the nature of the colonial encounter between the source text, its translations and its target audience visible (Naudé 2009). In this sense, indigenisation opposes foreignisation and transforms exegesis into eisegesis.

The proposed panel invites investigations into the validity and relevance of lived biblical translations, whether academically oriented adaptations to certain political-social norms, or the integrative search for identity anchored in the cultural context of faith.

Contributions may include, but are not limited to

- Possibilities and limits of eisegesis through translation
- Eisegetic translations as tools of decolonisation
- Current (re)translations of the Bible, with a special focus on their dealing with theological issues
- Translation as an agent orientated process: visibility of agents and their goals in biblical translation
- Bible translation projects addressing issues of established hegemony

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