**Towards a Code of Ethics in Bible Translation**

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Secondly, due to the emerging interdisciplinary professionalism in Bible translation, a specific discipline called the “science of Bible translation” is developing (etic aspect of a code of ethics)*.* Thus the increasingly

**Eberhard Werner**

*Dr. Eberhard Werner was born in 1966 and lives in Germany. His main interest is in communication science, translation theory and their influence on Bible translation. Since 1996 he has worked for SIL International in the Near East. He is coordinating SIL language projects of this region as technical advisor since 2012. His previous article in the* Journal of Translation *was called* **"***Toward an Ethical Code in Bible Translation Consulting” (2012).*

**Abstract**

An ethical framework, in other words a Code of Ethics, in Bible translation is still missing. It could set an ethical structure for those involved in Bible translation projects or the science of Bible

As Bible translation slowly develops into a discipline of its own, ethical standards need to be defined. In following the functional and skopos-oriented translation theories, an obligatory work plan gives support to expressing and regulating the expectations, capabilities and the contextual environments of a Bible translation project. Such agreements should also describe a code of ethics to which all agree. The interdisciplinar and professional nature of Bible translation leads increasingly to a collection of expertise that also requires an ethical framework to guarantee mutual understanding. Balancing out divine intervention against human responsibility is foundational to a code of ethics in Bible translation with Scripture-internal ethical aspects (emic), outward-oriented ethical aspects (etic) and mediating ethical aspects. A general code of ethics in Bible translation states the general but minimal agreements of those involved in Bible translation, and an individual code of ethics in Bible translation builds on the former and states the ethical agreement in Bible translation projects as part of a work plan.

**1. Introduction ,**

Bible translation revolves around a divine sacred text. So how is ethics of interest when dealing with the Word of God, which offers a divine code of ethics in itself? How far is humanity responsible for keeping up with this code and how much ethical substance has to be added by humans for practical reasons?

Ethics here is understood as the system of morals and values that drive a community. Thus, a code of ethics is an agreement of by a group of people to keep to the ethical arrangements that were made. We are dealing here less with formal ethics than with material ethics and do not touch on meta-ethics (Bockmühl 1995:16). Also, our perspective is more from the perspective of theological ethics (Kammer 1988:30**-**32), as we look at the consequences and the outcome of actions and less from deontological aspects (asking for dealing with questions of right or wrong, as in Adeney [1995:145–147]).

Three developments and distinctive ethical features of the science of Bible translation lead to the conclusion that such a code of ethics needs to be developed: is needed.

Firstly, the product, the function, and the process of Bible translation (three basics) involve a conglomerate the collaboration of specialists. These specialists do not automatically follow the same ethical standards, but base their ethical standards on those what they think the Scripture reveals (emic aspect of a code of ethics). Having said this, the goal is not to make all participants of Bible translation the same, but to set an ethical framework in which everyone finds himself ethically represented. The emic ethical code is based on a Christ-centric perspective of Scripture. Even those who do not adhere to the Christian code must in one or the other way or another complement the overall code of ethics in Bible translation if they are engaged in the science of Bible translation or a Bible translation project.

global ethical debate within sciences about values and morals will also relate to this new discipline. A science of Bible translation has to define a code of ethics which will allow for professionalism in translation (see, for example, e.g. Chesterman’s [2001:149] Hieronymic oath and “striving for excellence”; see below), as well as creative and appeal ing ways to contribute to the ecumenical and interfaith debate of the global Church. At the same time it needs to maintain its specific Christian profile. This etic aspect is based on the Christ-petal and “glocal” (think global, act local) orientation of Scripture.

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Thirdly, the sciences of translation, anthropology, theology and missiology are basic to Bible translation and have developed their own ethical standards. To al low for a wide variety of ethical interpretations and at the same time to pin down a code of ethics that is obligatory to those involved in the science of Bible translation is a mediating, flexible and dynamic process (mediating aspect of a code of ethics). A code of ethics in Bible translation is dependent on zeitgeist and ongoing language and culture shift. It is best regarded as made up of two components: First, general and basic ethical statements effective for the science of Bible translation and all Bible translation projects (a general code of ethics in Bible translation), and second, individually dynamic and zeitgeist-adaptable statements focusing on a specific Bible translation project (an individual code of ethics in Bible translation).

**2. Preliminary Considerations**

The ethical centre of Bible translation is, by definition, the expressed will of the Judeo-Christian self­revealing God. He himself revealed ethical norms and guidelines in the Mosaic Law (613 laws; and many other implicit principles) and the teachings of the incarnated Jesus of Nazareth, mainly expressed explicitly in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) and implicitly through his life (as recorded in the gospels), and the teachings of the apostles derived therefrom (derived from the book of Acts and the New Testament letters). Those emic and Christ-centered divine ethical standards form just one side of a code, which has to be enriched by the anthropocentric ethical requirements of those involved in Bible translation. The close divine-human interaction in Bible translation is well documented (Kraft 1979:202–203). The science of Bible translation as a human interaction to research, produce and distribute the Holy Scripture especially asks for mutual understanding and thus its own ethical standards and values. Ecclesiastical or spiritual missional organizations involved in Bible translation are in need of an ethical framework to cover their human demands of mutual respect, appreciation and encouragement. The latter ethical agreements are etic and Christ-petal, that is directed outwardly and beyond the Church (see below).

Basic to Christian ethics is the concept of either an inclusive or exclusive salvation history, built on creation­oriented and environmental ethics. In Scripture all divine ethical considerations are framed under soteriological and eschatological premises. Creation-oriented ethics are is fundamental to understand salvation history as *the* key to its divine global implementation (e.g. Stückelberger 2011:3–6).

A code of ethics for Bible translation will strive for a general framework of ethical standards by statements on the macro level. This macro level framework reflects the glocal impact of Bible translation movements and describes the minimal agreement of those involved in the science of Bible translation and individual Bible translation projects (a general code of ethics in Bible translation). On the micro level, an individual Bible translation project works under the general framework of the macro level code of ethics and specific ethical agreements of the involved partners, fixed in the work plan (individual code of ethics in Bible translation—ethical agreements in Bible translation projects).

Until now a framework of such a general code of ethics in Bible translation and its derived individual code of ethics in Bible translation projects is tacitly expected but not explicitly outspoken enunciated or written down. In Bible translation projects, as well as in the cooperative work of the science of Bible translation, this leads to mismatches in expectations. One reason for the lack of an ethical framework in Bible translation can be found in the confidence that the Holy Spirit will provide for the ethical needs of those participating in Bible translation. By way of an unspoken agreement all the participants assume that the impact of the Holy Spirit is revealed through conformity, unity and clarification on unsolved questions. Insuperable difficulties are either solved by compulsion or lead to divisions and the departure of those who do not agree. In consequence a general code of ethics led by influential people is too commonly found (financial power; Colonist colonialist approach; academic Teutonic superiority). This does is not mean to say that the Holy

Spirit does not play an essential part in Bible translation, but it is obvious that God Himself asked his disciples or followers to act and reach out to the ethnicities of the world under his surveillance. All through the centuries the Church struggled to balance the divine versus the human responsibility and the consequent activity. Recently during the ongoing “movement or century of Bible translation” (initiated by William Carey in 1805 AD), the pendulum has swung towards human activity and input. The *incarnational principle of Bible translation* (see Werner 2011), illustrated by the incarnation (becoming flesh), the condescension (transforming from higher divinity into lower humanity) and the kenosis (pouring out into another form) of the Judeo-Christian God in Jesus of Nazareth, functions as a model to translate the divine revelation into the linguistic idioms of people of different ethnicities worldwide. The human responsibility lies in the research of the worldwide languages to offer them the divine revelation by translation.

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Emic ethical aspects go along with hermeneutical considerations. Ethical standards as morals and values are often not explicitly stated in the Scriptures but are derived from the parables, narrations or anecdotes

**2.1. Inspiration and Incarnation**

The translation of the Hebrew Bible (Hebrew and Aramaic) and the New Testament (Koiné Greek) into the languages of those people groups that have no access to it them is just one approach. These new translations  
do not build on existing mother tongue translations. Another task of Bible translation is the ongoing revision of existing translations due to culture and language shift. Revisions carry with them the opportunity to overcome translational mistakes (misunderstandings, overemphasis, etc.), wrong interpretation of textual criticism, and other related issues. The general question of an ethical code under such circumstances has to deal essentially with the perception of inspiration in sacred texts. We enter an interfaith sphere with this topic. It is a community that sacralizes a revelation holds Scripture to be sacred by arguing its divine inspiration, also but secondary text-inherent internal indicators are also leading to such an assumption. Inspiration from the Bible translators’ perspective is not inherent to the product that the translation team bring forth (who would say he translated and produced a divinely inspired book?), but it is the divine power which reveals spiritual truths to the believer through the revelation. Inspiration is effected in the faithful by opening the audience’s “spiritual eyes” to a message. A Holy Book Scripture in this sense is sacralized through divine power in the recipients (e.g. Holy Spirit opens the spiritual eyes) and not by the written word itself. The other way round it would be heretical to translate a directly-given divine revelation with regard to Scripture-inherent warnings (e.g. Revelation 22:18-19; Qur’an 2:211). These Such warnings are also found in other holy books such as the Qur’an (2:211) or the Vedas; giving attributing a divine origin to a revelation through inspiration is a basic to religious concepts. Now “Impact-inspiration” of the Christian Holy Scripture relates also to translations, and this is unique to divine revelational sources. The incarnational Bible translation principle demonstrates the ongoing transformation of the One God. He revealed himself on the basis of incarnation as a man to humans. He entered the Jewish environment and gave the example to translate his teachings and life into all the mother-tongue idioms of the world. Thus the Holy Spirit’s boundless impact overcomes all the linguistically and culturally ethnical limitations (overcoming Babel; see Genesis 11: 1–8).

The impact of the Holy Spirit in the faithful can move a religious community (Church) to sacralize Bible translations may also revere certain translations of the Scriptures as sacred, as happened with in the case of the Latin Vulgate, the King James Version, the Luther Bible, or and many others. To a local body of believers, such translations become essentially “the Holy Book,” replacing former ground- or source texts (e.g. Nestle Aland27) and other Bible translations (e.g. King James Version replacing Geneva Bible). Thus “impact-inspiration” passes on its divine effect on to a Bible translation. Direct or verbal inspiration (e.g. of the lost originals) does not explain how inspiration is passed on in translation. It is assumed that the translated wording contains spiritual impact and as such churches use these translations as their liturgical texts like inspired sacred texts. “Impact-inspiration” gives a better glimpse of divine transformation from the originals to Bible translations, although inspiration can never be understood fully. This principle is also transferable to other religious texts and their sacralization processes held to be sacred. Having said that, it is necessary to emphasize that those texts contain are embraced as having divine authority to by those that believe or trust in it.

**2.2. Emic aspects of a code of ethics**

presented by Jesus of Nazareth in the gospels. A “hermeneutics of principles” has its forerunner in the Jesus’ interpretation of the Mosaic Law by the Incarnated. This scripture immanent scriptural *modus operandi* stimulates gives the Church a course to follow its course. It functions as a model to the interpretation of the sayings and life of the Revealed one Christ. Creation and either inclusive or exclusive salvation history point to a Creator and Ruler of the world and everything that is in it. The monotheistic alignment is expressed in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. the name JHWH in Exodus 3:14; the *Shema Israel* in Deuteronomy 6:4) and continues in the New Testament (e.g. John 10:30 and 14:10–13; 1 Timothy 4:10). The ethical inferences that are drawn out from his teachings are on the one hand static or fixed in relation to sociological topics of interpersonal relations (e.g. forgiveness, charity and brotherly love, sin, trespassing, monotheism based on the “I am” Exodus 3:14 and the following tri-unite revelation). On the other hand a linguistic and cultural interpretation of the recipients draws conclusions out of the Scripture, which deal with a dynamic and flexible interpretation of ethical standards. Thus, emic ethical standards are built on the interpretation of principles that are taken out of the Scripture by an ethnocentric interpretation (formal ethics). In consequence—against a situational ethic based on a theology of experience (Bockmühl’s [1995:31] “new moral”)—a Scripture-based code of ethics contains fixed basic ethical doctrines, as well as contextualized dynamic ethical principles. The principles that can be drawn out of from Biblical parables, narrations or anecdotes are not random but follow the framework of Scripture. To give just one example: in the parable of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32), a Christ-centred interpretation asks for the context in which the parable is told. The soteriological concepts of repentance, conversion and change towards the Kingdom of God (symbolized by the term “heaven” in verses 7, 18, 21) are introduced in this parable as ethical principles to follow. But the narrative setting (father, sons, and servants) is contextualized according to the Jewish environment of Jesus’ times. In this sense it is arbitrary. To reduce misunderstandings and to be open to new and creative ways of translation, a code of ethics in Bible translation has to divide the basic and unchangeable principles and those that are open for contextualized adaptation.

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The *emic* aspects of a code of ethics brings into effect an impact on those who do not adhere subscribe to the inner divine authority derived from of sacred text. In the case of Bible translation it is the Christian ethical standards and norms which that derive from Scripture and perform the ethical framework in which projects and the science of Bible translation operate. Parties involved in projects or the science of Bible translation have must somehow to complement the emic aspects of ethics derived from the sacred text. This minimal ethical consensus to start cooperation in Bible translation does not speak into address Biblicism, which expects that the Word of God is self-explaining or that a specific interpretation is necessary to get down to the “real” divine revelation. What it says is that Scripture inherits a divine history of salvation which is of interest to all humankind. In this sense a text is raised to the genre attributed with the status of Holy text Scripture, by becoming a liturgically authoritative revelation as a result of human sacralization (see “impact­inspiration” below). Dealing with such genre requires some basic agreements on religious ethics.

**2.3. Etic aspects of a code of ethics**

The outwardly-oriented ethical aspects of Bible translation are following a Christ-petal (outwardly-going) course. Its orientation includes a “glocal” working perspective and an interdisciplinary approach. From the missiological point of view, Bible translation is global, although its actual activity is in local Bible translation projects. Global, because comparative studies in linguistics, anthropology and missiology form the strategies for the realization of individual projects; local, because the individual projects focus is on translation, language development, and Scripture use (Scripture in context) in a geographical and ethnically-confined region. This “glocal” orientation works towards the local and the global Church. Bible translation takes an interdisciplinary approach by combining the efforts of theology, missiology, translation studies, anthropology, linguistics, and social sciences to fulfill its task. Because the science of Bible translation attracts and influences many academic disciplines, its ethical foundation is interdisciplinary by definition, for instance:

~Translation studies developed out of theological approaches to translate and contextualize the Biblical canon1 and related theological works (e.g. commentaries, clerical writings) into the mother tongue idioms. The history of Bible translation is full of translation theory approaches which that lead into the discipline of translation studies. Until today, to the present, both studies disciplines mutually influence and enrich each other.

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Anthropology, from its beginning, dealt with religious and linguistic issues, which that were also reflected in Bible translation. The movement of Bible translation triggered ethnographic studies globally, due to its attitude of linguistic and cultural transmission of the divine revelation.

Linguistics is based on fieldwork findings in which anthropology and Bible translation, because of the global activity of language investigation and preservation by Bible translators, have made a huge contribution.2

There is also an ecumenical and interfaith approach dimension to Bible translation. The linguistic audience of Bible translation represents a larger ethnicity audience in which religious or political boundaries are not applicable. It is essential for translation teams to overcome such boundaries to reach a broad spectrum of linguistic groups in a culture. Other religions are often interested in the Christian message as much as to the extent that they are included and have a say in the linguistic translation task. For mutual understanding, secondary religious barriers need to be considered and overcome.

It is within the discipline of religious studies that the translations or transfers of the Qur’an, the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, or other religious texts are discussed. From a human perspective, directly-revealed divine text is not translatable at all (e.g. Qur’an), but for practical reasons (e.g. concept of mission) and because inclusive religions are oriented towards expansion, those texts are represented in the mother tongue idioms of the ethnicities. The incarnational principle of Bible translation is unique in the sense that a divine revelation is interpreted and vividly represented by its author. In Bible translation the incarnational concept of divine transformation is an essential tool against anti-colonialist imperialist or anti-western resentments. The issues of financial, power and inherent (racial, religious, educational) superiority play an essential role in Bible translation (e.g. colonialist translations). Under these conditions a general code of ethics in Bible translation should be inclusive and inviting. The difficulty here is to keep the balance in serving the national / local church and the surrounding ethnicities. A sacred text that follows the incarnational principle is a revelation to all, although its spiritual impact is only for those that follow its spiritual advice. For linguistical, cultural and language developmental reasons this should not hinder, but motivate, the Bible translators to get the Church, and also those outside of it, on board in a cooperative mode for a Bible translation. Holding to the spiritual sense of the divine revelation is through control by the local church. In cases where there is no local church or controlling body the Bible translation team should provide the audience with the necessary information by referring to the meaning of the ground text. However, new translations especially are always a first attempt and a starter to encourage succeeding successive Bible translations. Professionalism and improvement in this sense develops by experience and by faith.

**2.4. Mediating aspects of a code of ethics**

Bible translation as an *interdisciplinary* science does not exist in an ethical vacuum. It relates to disciplines in which ethical standards are already set up have already been established. Thus translators, linguists, anthropologists, religious bodies and organizations do have morals and values that they are following. Regarding Bible translation as a science, a translation team could keep hold for instance to the Hieronymic oath of translation (Chesterman 2001), *loyalty* as ethics of conflict prevention and trust (Nord 2004:236), and the public ethical statements of the American Anthropology Association (American Anthropological Association 1998) or the Linguistic Society of America (Linguistic Society of America 2009). On the other hand, engaging with sacred text implies conducting creating a discipline-specific general code of ethics in

1 The term canon does not imply a fixed and static text but a selection of different proposals about an obligatory text for the global Church. For a discussion of finality see Metzger (1987), Rüger (1984), and Stemberger (1988).

2 For the close relation of linguistics, anthropology and translation studies in Bible translation see *inter alia* McGee & Warms 2004.

Bible translation that conforms to its interdisciplinary orientation and its etic aspects. From a mediating stance, the science of Bible translation combines the efforts of the ancillary sciences under its roof. The resulting responsibility requires that the general code of ethics in Bible translation directs, harmonizes and balances the close collaboration of these disciplines. The triggering effect of Bible translation in the past on its ancillary sciences reflects its developing interdisciplinary impulses and cooperations (e.g. dynamic equivalence, functionalism, relevance theory, linguistic structuralism).

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Besides the general reciprocal effects that those disciplines have, the individual Bible translation project relates to these disciplines for their professionalism. Out of this, a general code of ethics is interested in covering the macro-level of interdisciplinarity in general statements, as well as the micro-level of an individual project, by an individual code of ethics. The former has to be more general and the latter more dynamic and flexible. Science in general, as a linguistically, culturally and zeitgeist-bound enterprise, asks for adaptable ethics, which means that even a general code of ethics in Bible translation is always reflecting the given and is not set in stone once and for all.

**3. A Guideline towards a code of ethics**

A code of ethics in Bible translation (material ethics) is based on general statements as the general code of ethics in Bible translation (macro-level), and on individual and dynamic declarations that reflect the needs of a particular project as the individual code of ethics in Bible translation (micro-level).

On the macro-level, interfaith, interdisciplinary and cross-ethnical cultural aspects play an important etic, emic and mediating roles:

*Preamble*—The science of Bible translation first serves the global Church, secondly the local churches, and thirdly the non-Christian world (human sciences, social affairs, etc.). Its glocal course is headed towards the inwardly-directed consolidation of the body of Christ (Christ-centric), and the outwardly-oriented invitation to the unseen Kingdom of God (Christ-petal). It is the revealed tradition about the history of salvation to all humankind.

*Sacred text*—Dealing with the subject of sacred text brings the science of Bible translation into the realm of religious studies and the interest of interfaith matters. As such Bible translation is inclusive and ecumenical*.* It commits to the global interfaith discussion by introducing the Christian revelation. Scriptures, including the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament based on the history of salvation. At an ethical minimum, the genre of Holy Text asks to complement this salvation history as a divine revelation.

*Interdisciplinarity*—The interdisciplinary approach combines various auxiliary disciplines under the roof umbrella of the science of Bible translation. Their discipline-specific codes of ethics are inclusively considered and do not contrast in regard to the general code of ethics in Bible translation.

Concerning the individual Bible translation projects, dynamic and flexible individual codes of ethics are suggested (micro-level). The following framework is about concerns norms and values that have to be considered and balanced:

*Social cohesion settings* loyalty of the Bible translation team to the participants includes mutual respect based on human rights, as well as respect towards the ideological and religious worldview of each participant.

*Historical setting* as sacred text loyalty to the subject of Bible translation as a sacred text requires respect for its historical setting. This includes referring to its Jewish background, including the continuation of the Hebrew Bible in prophecy, the political development of the Israeli region and the Near East, as well as the linguistic and cultural setting of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Koiné Greek base text. This can also be done in the paratext (explanatory notes) or through an added interlinearized ground text.

* *Religious setting*—denominational expectations are secondary, for the sake of an inclusive, interfaith and ecumenical approach. The aim is for the good of a broad linguistical and cultural translation that speaks into the hearts of the addressed.

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The ethical aspects implemented in of the translation of sacred text are *emic* (inwardly-oriented), *etic* (outwardly-directed) and *mediating* (balancing). Emic aspects are those represented by a holy text itself:

* *Skopos settings* the skopos of a Bible translation project asks for a work plan that covers the broad social wealth of an audience and expresses the individual code of ethics of this project explicitly. Loyalty toward the ground text, the client (e.g. local or national church), the translation team, and the audience is ethically expressed. To increase quality, recursive procedures of process optimization are incorporated.
* *Intellectual property settings* financial and copyright issues are important to build and to guarantee trust in the partnership (intellectual property agreements). Cooperation on Bible translation deals with involves the intellectual property of partners. The work and effort that is spent on research for the science of Bible translation or into on a specific translation process asks for protection. As a general rule, intellectual property and copyrights belong to the author(s) of the Bible translation. However, a work plan fixes identifies the main rights holder and the spread of grants specific rights to the parties involved. An individual code of ethics works towards such copyright agreements, which need to be discussed and fixed determined in the beginning phase.

A code of ethics for Bible translation that covers all the needs and expectations of those involved in the science of Bible translation and the individual Bible translation project has its challenges. Besides the task of bringing all parties to the table and agreeing on ethical standards and norms, it is a challenge to keep to maintain such agreements during a long-running project. Therefore the general code of ethics in Bible translation reflects firstly the minimum ethical norms and values that can be agreed upon. Since all parties involved have the right to work within an ethical framework in which they feel respected and protected, a project-related individual code of ethics in Bible translation complements the former.

**4. Summary**

The search for a code of ethics in Bible translation applies to sacred texts in general. Religious studies reveal an ethical standard of religions and their holy texts which match correspond to the Christian revelation Scriptures. Some of the findings on a general code of ethics in Bible translation can be found in other religions’ ethical codes too, which claim to be inspired and of divine source. A unique impression aspects of Bible translation is are its foundation on in the incarnation (becoming flesh), the condescension (coming down from the pure heaven, which is pure, to the defiled earth, which is defiled) and the kenosis (transforming into humanity) of the divinity) in of Jesus of Nazareth. The incarnational principle of Bible translation, which transports the divine revelation into the idioms of the ethnicities. This principle is handed on through begins with the Hebrew Bible as the prophetic foundation, and continues through the New Testament, which displays presents the life of Jesus. Sacred text is firstly maintained through a community of the faithful and secondly includes divine revelation. The divine authority of a text is manifested through text-internal warnings against change by either addition or deletion (e.g. Qur’an 2:211; Revelation 22:18– 19). Sacralization is a process by a community of believers that lifts up a text from the profane to the as sacred as a result of based on the claiming that it is divinely inspirationed. Inspiration at the point of translation excludes verbal, dictated or direct inspiration, because divine text delivered directly is by definition untranslatable without losing its sacredness. Impact-inspiration as suggested here describes the process of divine revelation in a believer by opening the “spiritual eyes” to the divine meaning of a text through the Holy Spirit. Even translations derived from of sacred ground texts can thus be embraced as being inspired then, as they become important liturgical texts for a smaller or larger the body of the faithful (*ecclesia*). Ethical expectations are high as sacred texts are considered to present impart binding instructions for daily life. Contributions to a general code of ethics in Bible translation are coming come from the text itself, as it reveals ethical standards and norms; from the parties involved in the science of Bible translation and / or an individual translation project; and from the “glocal” responsibility of the Church, both global and local, to attend to about the task of Bible translation.

1. warnings of against change (see above),

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1. divine revelation (direct divine speech; “I am” and “the Lord said” words; prophetic speech; etc.),
2. the continuous ongoing history of salvation that builds on one and another prophecy, and
3. the importance to a body of believers as liturgical text (e.g. ban on blasphemy, devotion to text).

Emic aspects also include principles that are implied in the text. A hermeneutics of principles can filter out such implications, as it follows the model of the Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth by asking for the *intention* of a revelation, guiding principle or rule of life and its ethical aspect (e.g. the Mosaic Law as a guideline and not as an absolute). His Jesus’ parables and sayings in the New Testament are following these principles also. Often Biblical parables reveal just one main ethical statement (e.g. repentance, conversion, forgiveness) and some others secondarily. Coming to Arriving at a literal renderings without digging into the underlying principle behind will lead to an ethical misinterpretation (e.g. the prodigal son as an example for bad behaviour instead of one of repentance). *Emic aspects* define the Scripture as sacral sacred text, and as such it forms a genre with its own ethical orientation. *Etic aspects* deal with the *glocal* impact, the *ecumenical* effect and the *interfaith* orientation that Bible translation takes. The local and global church is interested in spreading the Word of God to all ethnicities and their mother tongue idioms. This attempt binds denominations and churches together, because their membership is often cross-cultural and multilingual. Bible translation(s) function across churches (inter-ecclesiastical) and as a genre even inter-denominationally by offering points of contact (e.g. “Our Father” in Matthew 6:9–13; the Christmas story in Luke 2:1–21, etc.). *Mediating aspects* of Bible translation are effective on the macro and the micro level of the science of Bible translation, the impact of the Bible translation movement (see century of Bible translation), and the individual Bible translation projects. The attraction of Bible translation on the macro and micro level includes its scientific interdisciplinarity and its social impacts such as atonement, reorientation or forgiveness. Its *interdisciplinary* approach, its social effects on Bible translation teams (i.e., involved parties) and the translation’s cultural and linguistic environment (mother tongue, national language, lingua franca) induce a balancing effort to combine the auxiliary disciplines and the common understanding of the involved parties.

A general code of ethics in Bible translation serves the science of Bible translation and contains general statements on the macro level (glocal orientation) of Bible translation that are inclusive, dynamic, flexible and harmonizing. This general code of ethics represents the minimal agreement of the disciplines and parties involved. On the micro level the individual code of ethics in Bible translation constitutes the ethical agreements in an individual Bible translation project. It is fixed in the work plan and describes the ethical agreements of those taking part, within the wider framework of the general code.

As the title of this article suggests, the long way path to a code of ethics in Bible translation is in its starting phase. It is time to think about ethical standards that overcome Western superiority, colonialist tendencies and anti-Christian prejudices by making explicit what the ethics that Christians hold when they take part in the movement of Bible translation as part of the science of Bible translation.

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