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Toward a Code of Ethics in Bible Translation

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Abstract

As Bible translation slowly develops into a discipline of its own, ethical standards need to be defined. In 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 interdisciplinary 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 (emic), outward-oriented (etic) and mediating ethical aspects. To deal with the ethics of translating a text of divine origin, the author presents a perspective on the notion of divine inspiration that he calls impact-inspiration. 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 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 (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 is needed.

First, the product, the function, and the process of Bible translation (three basics) involve the collaboration of specialists. These specialists do not automatically follow the same ethical standards but base their ethical standards on what they think 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 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.

Secondly, due to the interdisciplinary professionalism in Bible translation, a science of Bible translation is developing (etic aspect of a code of ethics). Thus the increasingly 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, Chesterman's [2001:149] Hieronymic oath and "striving for excellence"), as well as creative and appealing 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 *Christopetal* (that is, outward, borrowing a missiological term from German) and *glocal* (think global, act local) orientation of Scripture.

Thirdly, the sciences of translation, anthropology, theology and missiology are basic to Bible translation and have developed their own ethical standards. To allow for a wide variety of ethical interpretations and at the same time 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 self-revealing 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 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 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 outwardly-directed Christian arguments and therefore beyond the Church (see below).

Basic to Christian ethics is the concept of salvation history, because the understanding of the origins of man determines the source and the objectives of ethics. Salvation thus is either understood inclusively (an ecumenical perspective) or exclusively (an evangelical perspective). From an ethical point of view it makes a difference which approach is taken. If the inclusive approach is taken, environmental issues are more important and the ethical responsibility of humanity for its actions is emphasized. This approach is anthropocentric, whereby ethics is understood as an outflow of human actions. On the other hand an exclusive approach is based on a human interpretation of the Creator's (biblical God's) plans for humanity. Ethics is thus derived from divine revelation as it is understood by the receivers, with the focus on divinity. In creation-orientated ethics, salvation history is the key to understanding the global implementation of God's plan for humans (e.g. Stückelberger 2011:3–6). In Scripture, all divine ethical considerations, from either an inclusive or exclusive point of view, are framed under soteriological and eschatological premises.

A code of ethics for Bible translation will strive for a general framework of ethical standards by statements on the organizational (macro) level. This organizational-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 individual (micro) level, an individual Bible translation project works under the general framework of the organizational-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).[1]

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 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

[1] For more on the macro-micro distinction, see Werner (2011:30, 83, 89-90, 311).

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; colonialist approach; academic superiority). This is not 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. 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* (introduced by Walls and others; see discussion in Werner [2011:86–92, 328–329]), 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.

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 them is 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 translation mistakes (misunderstandings, overemphasis, etc.), wrong interpretation of textual criticism, and other related issues. An ethical code under such circumstances has to deal with the perception of inspiration in sacred texts. We enter an interfaith sphere with this topic. A community holds Scripture to be sacred by arguing its divine inspiration, but text-internal indicators also lead to such an assumption. In Bible translation the translated text as such might not be perceived as a divinely-inspired product but rather as a text that can be used by the Holy Spirit to speak to people's lives. Accordingly, inspiration is not inherent to the translated text, but rather it is divine authority that reveals spiritual truths to an individual through the translation. Inspiration is effected in the faithful by opening the audience's "spiritual eyes" to a message. Holy 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. Otherwise it would be heretical to translate a directly-given divine revelation with regard to Scripture-inherent warnings (e.g. Revelation 22:18-19). Such warnings are also found in other holy books such as the Qur'an (2:211) or the Vedas; attributing a divine origin to a revelation through inspiration is a basic religious concept. "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).

A religious community may also revere certain translations of the Scriptures as sacred, as in the case of the Latin Vulgate, the King James Version, the Luther Bible, and others. To a local body of believers, such translations become essentially the Holy Book, replacing source texts and other Bible translations (e.g. King James Version replacing Geneva Bible). Thus impact-inspiration passes its divine effect on to a Bible translation. It is assumed that the translated wording contains spiritual impact and as such churches use these translations as their inspired sacred texts. Impact-inspiration gives a 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 held to be sacred. Those texts are embraced as having divine authority by those that believe or trust in them.

2.2. Emic aspects of a code of ethics

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 presented by Jesus of Nazareth in the gospels. A "hermeneutics of principles" has its forerunner in Jesus' interpretation of the Mosaic Law. This scriptural *modus operandi* gives the Church a course to follow. It functions as a model to the interpretation of the sayings and life of Christ. Creation and 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 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 from 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 from 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 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.

The *emic* aspects of a code of ethics brings into effect an impact on those who do not subscribe to the divine authority of sacred text. In the case of Bible translation it is the Christian ethical standards and norms 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 must somehow complement the emic aspects of ethics derived from the sacred text. This minimal ethical consensus to start cooperation in Bible translation does not 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 attributed with the status of Holy Scripture, becoming authoritative (see "impact-inspiration" 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 follow an outwardly-directed Christian 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 canon[2] and related theological works (e.g. commentaries, clerical writings) into mother tongue idioms. The history of Bible translation is full of translation theory approaches that lead into the discipline of translation studies. To the present, both disciplines mutually influence and enrich each other.
- Anthropology, from its beginning, dealt with religious and linguistic issues 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.[3]

There is also an ecumenical and interfaith dimension to Bible translation. The linguistic audience of Bible translation represents a larger 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 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. 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 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-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 linguistic, cultural and language developmental reasons this should not hinder, but motivate, the Bible translators to get the Church, and also those outside of it, 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 successive Bible translations. Professionalism and improvement in this sense develop 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 have already been established. Thus translators, linguists, anthropologists, religious bodies and organizations do have morals and values that they follow. Regarding Bible translation as a science, a translation team could 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 creating a discipline-specific general code of ethics in Bible translation that conforms to its interdisciplinary orientation and its etic aspects. From a mediating stance, the science of Bible translation

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

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).

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-cultural aspects play 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-directed invitation offered by Christ to the unseen Kingdom of God. 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 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 divine revelation.
- *Interdisciplinarity*—The interdisciplinary approach combines various auxiliary disciplines under the 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 concerns norms and values that have to be considered and balanced:

- *Social cohesion*—loyalty of the Bible translation team participants includes mutual respect based on human rights, as well as respect towards the ideological and religious worldview of each participant.
- *Historical setting*—loyalty to the Bible as sacred text requires respect for its historical setting. This includes its Jewish background, the continuation of Hebrew Bible prophecy, the political development of Israel 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 linguistic and cultural translation that speaks to the hearts of the addressed.
- *Skopos*—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*—financial and copyright issues are important to build and guarantee trust in the partnership (intellectual property agreements). Cooperation on Bible translation involves the intellectual property of partners. The work and effort that is spent on research for the science of Bible translation or 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 identifies the main rights holder and grants specific rights to the parties involved. An individual code of ethics works towards such copyright agreements, which need to be discussed and 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 bringing all parties to the table and agreeing on ethical standards and norms, it is a challenge to maintain such agreements during a long-running project. Therefore the general code of ethics in Bible translation reflects first 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 correspond to the Christian 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. Unique aspects of Bible translation are its foundation in the incarnation (becoming flesh), the condescension (coming down from heaven, which is pure, to the earth, which is defiled) and the kenosis (transforming into humanity of the divinity) of Jesus of Nazareth. The incarnational principle of Bible translation transports the divine revelation into the idioms of the ethnicities. This principle begins with the Hebrew Bible as the prophetic foundation, and continues through the New Testament, which presents the life of Jesus. Sacred text is maintained through a community of the faithful and 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 recognizes a text as sacred based on the claim that it is divinely inspired. 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 of sacred texts can thus be embraced as being inspired, as they become important liturgical texts for the body of the faithful (*ecclesia*). Ethical expectations are high as sacred texts are considered to impart binding instructions for daily life. Contributions to a general code of ethics in Bible translation 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 responsibility of the Church, both global and local, to attend to the task of Bible translation.

Ethical aspects 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:

a) warnings against change (see above),

b) divine revelation (direct divine speech; prophetic speech; etc.),

c) the ongoing history of salvation that builds on one and another prophecy, and

d) 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). Jesus' parables and sayings in the New Testament follow these principles also. Often Biblical parables reveal just one main ethical statement (e.g. repentance, conversion, forgiveness) and some others secondarily. Arriving at a literal rendering without digging into the underlying principle 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 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, 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 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 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 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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