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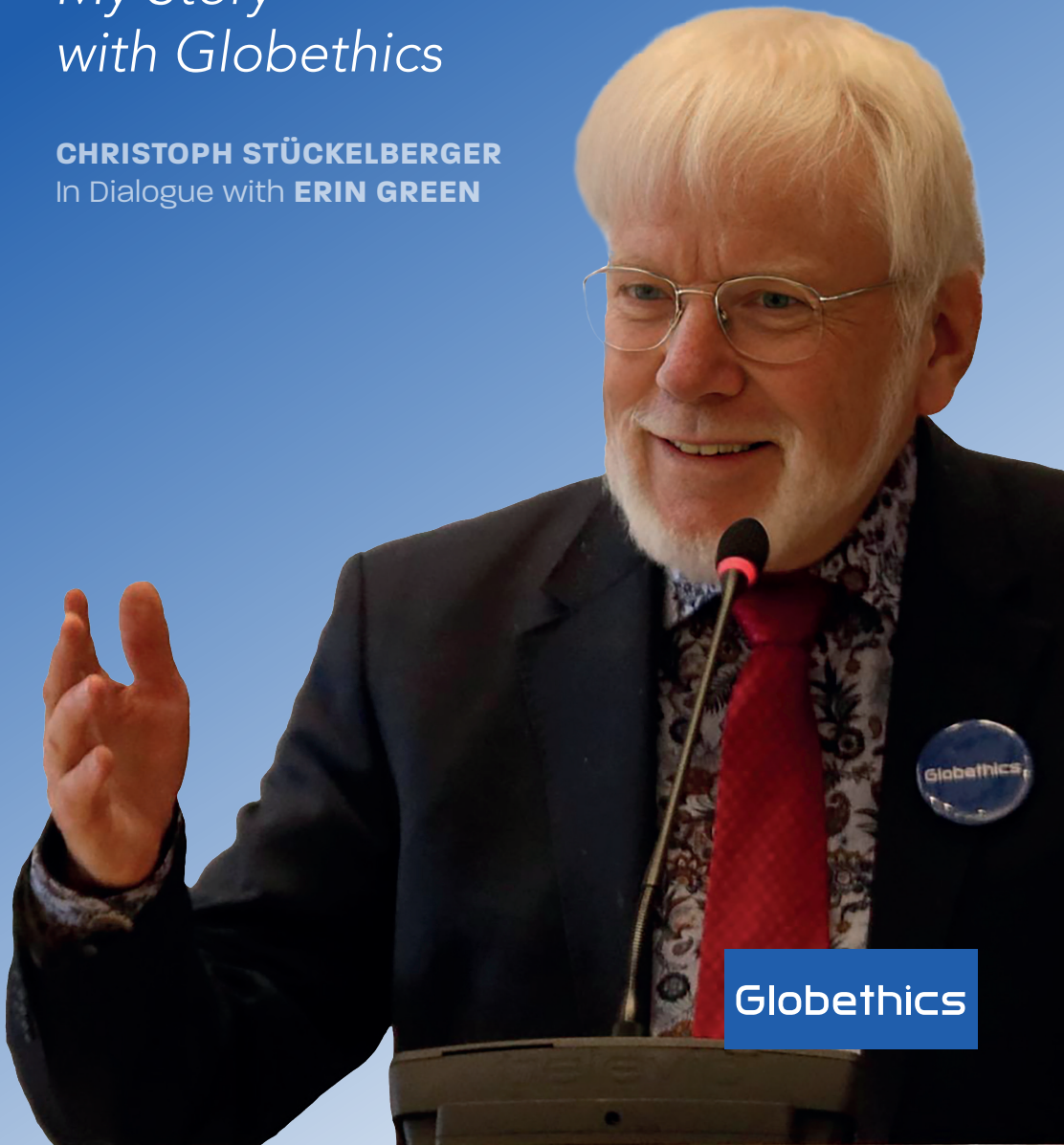
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SHARING VALUES ACROSS BORDERS

*My Story
with Globethics*

CHRISTOPH STÜCKELBERGER

In Dialogue with **ERIN GREEN**



Globethics

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Foreword

In January 2024, Globethics founder and president, Christoph Stückelberger sat down for a series of interviews about the birth, evolution, and future of the foundation. The interviews were guided by Erin Green, PhD, as part of the 20th anniversary celebration of Globethics. Over the course of several days about the Globethics story through the eyes of its founder.

This volume is a record of these conversations, but also much more. It is an account of a foundation that has built a global network on ethical, values-driven behaviour across continents and worldviews, and also transformed ethics education around the world. It is the story of a bold vision for open access, digital resources that was unlike anything of its time. It is also the narrative of one person, the keystone of the foundation, who had a vision for Globethics, realised it, and now leaves it the capable hands of a new generation as its story continues to unfold.

Though these kinds of retrospectives tend to demand a certain chronology, the history of Globethics is so much richer than any tidy trip down memory lane allows. Here, instead, you will find anecdotes mixed in with history, memories from the founder of Globethics, interspersed with the achievements of the organisation along the way. The chapters are organised according to the current eight values of Globethics: Justice, Peace, Dignity, Inclusiveness, Quality, Sustainability, Integrity, and Responsibility. You will find both the story of Globethics as an institution as well as that of its founder, Christoph Stückelberger. These two threads are always intertwined and therefore cannot be separated here. This weaving of the personal and the organisational reflect just one of the things that makes Globethics stand out—that the foundation is always, irrevocably about the people that have brought it to life every step along the way.

Introduction: Why values? Why spirituality?

The interviews with Christoph Stückelberger partially took place in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. These buildings form the historical heart of the global ecumenical movement and were the home of Globethics nearly its entire 20-year history. The surroundings thus provided a fitting testament to the words that follow as we were surrounded by international collaboration, cooperation, and fellowship.

Christoph Stückelberger's office is a compact museum of his life. Each artefact, even the unsuspecting ones, are part of his history and consequently the story of Globethics. One most conspicuous piece is a coffee table with a thick, dark red stone slab for the top. The stone is in fact a fossil, a petrified slice of a tree (see foto no. 54 in the middle of this book), older than you and your ancestors, older than humanity itself, and as old as the dinosaurs that once roamed Earth. Polished, cold, and immovable, Stückelberger started the interviews with an invitation to meditate upon the stone.

Meditation on a petrified tree

As I embark on this short meditation, I can't help but feel it transports me to a grander perspective. It's impossible to grasp the magnitude of 250 million years of time, the humility of one human in the place of evolution's tale, yet here I am, able to physically touch this ten-centimetre-thick slice of a petrified tree.

Back in 2016, my family presented me with this remarkable gift for my retirement as Executive Director of Globethics. We commemorated the occasion with a significant celebration here in Geneva. But a few months before that, my family and I had the opportunity to visit our oldest son in Arizona, United States. He took us to visit a national park that was essentially a desert, with these enormous, petrified trees strewn across the landscape, their once-organic matter hardened into stone.

Little did I know that in a shop within that vast national park, my family had a heartwarming surprise for me—this very slice of tree that sits between us now as a small table. Even now, some years later, this fossilised tree continues to amaze and even surprise me, with its intricate details and commanding presence.

Meditating upon it, as we are doing now, is humbling, reminding me of our insignificance in the grand scheme of things. Humanity is just a dot in the history of this beautiful Earth and endless universe. Who are we with our mere 70 years or so of existence? The very question makes me humble, responsible, and thankful.

The beginnings of Globethics: Why values?

I embarked on the Globethics journey for a reason. For me, it has always felt something like holding a torch, shedding light on both daily experiences and ethical reflections. This is in keeping with the words of Swiss theologian Karl Barth, who said one should preach holding the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. My stories, the stories of the world, and the story of Globethics enjoy such an interplay. This inspired me in developing the vision for Globethics, where values are brought to the fore, to interact with and inform our daily lives and the kind of ethical reflection we bring to our experiences.

Let us look briefly at the values of Globethics themselves. These will form the backbone of our conversations that follow, but some background is informative here. Why did Globethics settle on eight foundational values? One might have argued that three or seven or another number would have sufficed. But these eight reflect the demands placed on the network today and how we respond to them. We have expressed our institutional values over the years, but these eight—Justice, Peace, Dignity, Inclusiveness, Quality, Sustainability, Integrity, and Responsibility—reflect where we are today and our aspirations for the future.

My personal and professional biography has two pillars—development work and ethics. As a professor of ethics, working for many years directly

in development cooperation and with a good number of missionaries in my family. The intersection of these presented me with a crucial question: How could we enhance the orientation toward values within development work?

The spark behind this question comes from the fact that development work has always been associated with values. Projects aimed at peace, gender equality, access to water, and so on, have been integral parts of the development landscape. These are all issues associated with values. For example, the valuing of human dignity, equality, justice, and the like. However, as I became immersed in the field, I was confronted with disheartening realities like corruption, abuse of power, violence, neocolonial lack of respect, and collusion of leaders in business and politics, sexual abuse and much more. These represented the antithesis of the values we sought to promote.

The realisation of this incongruity led me to deep reflection on ways to strengthen the orientation towards values in development work. It was during my tenure as the director of Bread for All, the Swiss protestant development agency, that I started on an initiative to establish ethics centres in Africa and Asia. My life—both as development practitioner and also as professor teaching ethics—had brought me into contact with people from all over the world at that point, through education, work, and other projects. I saw that people from the Global North and the Global South were equally invested in and capable of responding to this need for strengthening values.

This emphasis on ethics always revolved around development, which necessitated placing the Global South at the forefront. Consequently, I founded ethics centres in Cameroon (photos 23), Kenya, and China with a focus on capacity building in ethics for governance issues, including church governance. This ethics centres program, operated from 2002 to 2004 and I remember it as a demanding time. Financial limitations were ever-present, and it was difficult managing these centres with such

limited resources. This pressure provided a spark that would lead to Globethics in the form and character we know today.

The digital world provided an answer to the challenges the ethics centres were facing. This is a theme we will return to repeatedly as I reflect on my story with Globethics.

An eye-opener was the first World Summit for the Information Society WSIS in 2003 in Geneva. The Swiss Government was the host of this global summit of the International Telecommunication Union ITU and Unesco to push information and Communication Technologies ICT's for the development agenda, from education to health, from transport to communication, from security to agriculture. The Swiss Government invited me as Director of 'Bread for all' to be a member of the preparatory advisory group.

This WSIS triggered in me the idea not to remain with a few ethics centres scattered in the vast sea of injustice and anti-values, but to build a global online network on ethics. My motivation in fostering deep discussion about fostering values for development, I realised this did not necessarily need to be in the form of physical centres. The power of the online world was starting to make itself known, and here I saw the potential to do something innovative. Globethics was meant to be a global endeavour from the outset, and despite early growing pains digitality would be the way to bring this to fruition.

The 2004 founding workshop

This early exploration of values provided the necessary groundwork for a founding workshop in Geneva in 2004. The founding workshop of Globethics (formerly Globethics.net) took place from 23 to 28 August 2004 at the Ecumenical Château de Bossey, near Geneva, Switzerland. I invited an international group of handpicked 30 experts from 29 institutions from all continents, selected by country, gender, denomination, age and innovative network capacities. I developed the draft concept of Globethics and already a website, supported by the volunteer Evelyne

Appiah from Ghana. During the founding workshop we participants developed the values, rules and institutional frame in order to be inclusive from day one. The vision was to provide an online platform and global network for all those committed to applied ethics, stemming from this first concern about the incongruency of values in development work. To proceed quickly and not become mired in ideological struggles, I decided to start with the diversity within Christian ecumenical circles, while remaining committed from day one to open it up to people and institutions from other faiths and worldviews.

Since this beginning, the debate always centred around the question of values: Why values? What is an international understanding of values? Are there global common values while respecting the diversity of contextual values? A critical question arose from the multilingual nature of the nascent network. In my own writings on values, I have discovered a range of 5 to 15 core values that are intercultural and interreligious. However, there are nuances according to cultural contexts. For example, the value of sustainability may differ between an Arabic country and Sweden. Similarly, gender equality is interpreted differently from one country or culture to the next. I remember one Swahili-speaking woman from Kenya, Musimbi Kanyoro, a linguistic expert, remarking that ethics did not exist as such in her language. This posed a challenge for translating both the name and essence of Globethics into her context. She proposed that ethics could be understood as "correct behaviour". Soon after, participants from South America advocated for the term *valores* instead of ethics. And again, participants from China explained that the word ethics in Chinese 伦理 (lunli) relates more to virtues and personal morality than ethics in the western meaning. All these differences sparked a collective effort during the workshop to translate the term ethics into 20 languages within the domain of Globethics' network. Our intent was to be inclusive, avoiding any neocolonial imposition of western concepts on the world. This exercise helped us develop a shared

understanding through intercultural listening—a value deeply ingrained in Globethics from the start.

The set of core values within Globethics has evolved over time, but have always remained focussed on overarching themes of responsibility, integrity, the balance between global and local, holistic perspectives of solidarity and inclusiveness. Every cycle of four years, we reflect on additional values and how to express them in new contexts through the work of Globethics. Yet, the fundamental questions that gave rise to our foundation remains the same: Why values? What is a global understanding of values? It is evident that there is still ample room to explore diverse perspectives within Globethics? And most importantly: how to implement values-driven behavior which is not only driven by power games or greed for money.

As we look at the first twenty years of the network's existence, it becomes apparent that the examination of ethics has gone beyond the mere exercise and enactment of values. There is an academic element in the diligent study of ethics itself. Here we can see the evolution of reasoning and methodologies, especially in response to new historical challenges. However, within Globethics, our approach always remains oriented to values and the expression of these in a global and practical context—an attribute that distinguishes Globethics both in its formation and in its future.

Before and for Globethics: My spiritual source from Taizé

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said in his story *Little Prince*, if you want to build a ship, dream of the sea. A perfect way to express that the root of an innovation is a dream, a vision. Globethics did not start in 2003 with my conceptual work. It started with my dream and vision 1970! Let me explain.

At Easter 1970, at the age of 19 in high school, I went to Taizé with a group of other students under guidance of our teacher for religion. Taizé is a tiny village in the Burgundy region of France, two hours' drive from

Geneva. During World War II, the Swiss protestant pastor Roger Schutz built a small ecumenical community of “brothers” as they called themselves, committed to reconciliation between young people from France and Germany after the war. It expanded and attracted over years thousands of young people. From 1962 to 1965, the Catholic Church held its Second Vatican Council. Brother Roger had the vision, to complement this top-down approach of church dignitaries with a bottom-up approach. Young people, he argued, should express their vision of the future of church and society. The Taizé community invited people from many countries to Taizé to develop a vision. The result was the announcement and discussion of the “Good News” of the Youth Council at Easter 1970 in Taizé. I was there with 2500 other young people in a multilingual, international environment. Living in simple tents and with simple food. The original French text follows, with an English translation:

La Bonne Nouvelle	The Good News
• Le Christ ressuscité vient animer une fête au plus intime de l’homme. • Il nous prepare un printemps de l’Église : une Église dépourvue de moyens de puissance, prête à un partage avec tous, lieu de communion visible pour toute l’humanité. • Il va nous donner assez d’imagination et de courage pour ouvrir une voie de réconciliation.	• The Risen Christ comes to bring a feast to the most intimate of human beings. • He prepares for us a springtime of the Church: a Church devoid of the means of power, ready to share with all, a place of visible communion for all humanity. • He will give us enough imagination and courage to open a path of reconciliation.

• Il va nous préparer à donner notre vie pour que l'être humain ne soit plus victime de lui-même. <i>Taizé, Concil des Jeunes, Pâques 1970</i>	• He will prepare us to give our lives so that the human will no longer be the victim of the human. <i>Taizé, Youth Council, Easter 1970</i>
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This short text of four points is a vision, a confession of faith and a personal commitment. I learnt this short text by heart and can still cite it. After 54 years, it is still present at home and in my life. In reflecting on the beginning of Globethics, I realise that it may be this vision, which, decades later, became the DNA of Globethics and its values.

The first point expresses that it is not my or our vision, but the divine vision (of Christ) which is the spiritual energy source of our human visions.

The second point is a vision of the church and thus the society, where not power struggles and wealth dominate, but sharing and community with the whole of humankind.

The third point is an offer and encouragement to develop creative, innovative solutions towards peace and reconciliation and that the Risen Christ will provide the necessary courage needed for this engagement.

The fourth point was the one I struggled with most. I was not ready to sacrifice my life and be killed in conflicts. However, my commitment was and is to give all my energy, time and mental or other means for human dignity, justice and nonviolent solutions.

I recognise, how much current Globethics values are present in this text: justice, peace, dignity, inclusiveness, responsibility. Integrity and quality

only implicit and sustainability in the environmental sense was just slowly coming up in 1970. This text is a personal example, how investing in the ethical vision of young adults will bear fruit—even though sometimes visible only decades later.

Walter and Walter: The two godfathers of Globethics

Globethics would not exist without the two Walters: Walter Fust and Walter Linsi! (see photos 11, 12 and others) My vision needed to merge with institutional and financial power.

Ambassador Walter Fust was director general of the Swiss Development Cooperation of the Swiss Government. As a minister for development, as other countries call the role, he was an innovative, courageous and far-sighted diplomat. I had the honour to work with him as member of the Consultative Commission for International Development and other roles. When I shared my vision for Globethics, he immediately supported the idea and provided seed money from the SDC of CHF 200,000 per year for the first three years, 2005 through 2007. This came with the condition that I add another 50% from another donor as the Swiss regulations require it.

Walter Linsi, entrepreneur and co-founder of the successful international technical company Belimo in the Canton of Zurich, with a deep commitment to ethical, values-driven business, was the one I could convince to add the other 50%, also an amount of CHF 200,000 per year for 2005 through 2007. Without these two godfathers, Globethics could not have started and certainly would not exist today. The unique setting was, that both did not only provide capital, but strategic advice and board commitment. Walter Fust was Globethics president from 2008 to 2016 during my tenure as executive director. Walter Linsi was a key board member from 2017-2020.

Chapter 1

Justice: Championing equity for global justice

Introduction

The concept of justice as embraced by Globethics relates primarily to equitable and fair access to resources, especially educational ones. This is fundamental to cultivating ethical practices across all sectors, from education and politics to business and religion. This understanding of justice is not monolithic, but instead acknowledges plurality in its interpretation across different cultures and contexts.

Globethics' strategy to promote justice involves a twofold approach: enabling greater access to resources and actively combatting inequity. This is most evident in initiatives like building an online library and other platforms to disseminate research, and the online academy, which are all geared towards ensuring fair access to resources for everyone, regardless of their background.

Globethics also emphasises the importance of dialogue in understanding and applying the concept of justice. Justice cannot be discussed abstractly or in isolation, but must be contextualised within cultural, linguistic, and other frameworks.

In Christoph's words

It's hardly possible to have a conversation about ethics, including ethics in higher education, without addressing the concept of justice. While there are, of course, diverse and competing theories of justice, the underlying principle is quite simple: the equitable and fair access to resources is at the heart of justice. What does this mean practically? It includes access to financial resources, jobs, knowledge, and obviously basic human needs like water, food, shelter, security, human relations and identity.

Fair access to knowledge

When we sent out the call to build a global online library on ethics, I received an email from a young man in India, who was somewhat of a visionary. He had already some experience in creating online libraries for villages throughout India. At first, his vision did not match with my perception of an online library, but I was curious and open. When he came with a proposal, urging us to build a global online library, we became convinced. This innovative idea, originating from the Global South, would form the backbone of the Globethics contribution to ethics and academics.

I confess, I was both delighted about this idea and clueless about how to bring this idea to life. However, he reassured me, having already built similar online infrastructure with limited resources. Convinced, we offered him a six-month mandate and invited him to Geneva. He would serve as the technological expert, and I would focus on curating the content for the online library.

Though he was only around 27 years old at the time, he had already earned international recognition and received a prestigious award for online libraries. Strong implementation support came from the tech company Point Software in Zurich that aligned with our values and shared the same passion for accessibility as we did. In 2006 and 2007, they developed with us a then-unique “harvester” of ethics content from all content of open repositories. Our Globethics librarian specialists at that time, Amele Vallotton and Andreas Waldvogel, helped to develop the online library classification system and taxonomy. The board member Jill Cousins was at that time executive director of the Europeana Foundation, the largest EU library consortium. She shaped many of the concepts. An impressive expert group made it possible. The online library began to take shape.

During these formative years, our focus was to provide access to books online. Around 2007, this was still a relatively new concept, leading to

many challenges along the way. For example, when negotiating with publishers, we found they insisted on exorbitant fees, defeating the open and accessible vision we held so firmly. We found a workaround by starting with what was already available online. We also started digitising books from the Global South that were not yet accessible on the internet. Globethics wanted to not only be merely accessible, but also to shine a light on the knowledge hidden away from so many people in so many places.

Our efforts soon bore fruit. This coincided with positive developments both in academics and in digital technologies. More and more doctoral dissertations and master's theses were finding their home in open repositories, making cutting edge research accessible and free to all. Again, drawing on technological support from people who shared our vision, we developed a harvester to help us aggregate scholarly works from various online sources.

At this time, there were approximately 1,000 open repositories worldwide, waiting for harvesting. We invested a substantial sum of over CHF 1.5 million, supported by the Linsi Foundation, to develop the digital tool to collect all this published research from the repositories for a single online library. Our efforts resulted in the world's first harvester designed specifically for open repositories. Thanks to the foresight and trust of donors, we were able to develop cutting-edge digital tools that allowed us to provide an open, democratic, free library to the Globethics network.

Like all technologies, the harvester needs regular updating and maintenance to keep pace with the web ecosystems and ensure that the Globethics library remains up-to-date and functional. The concept at heart of it, however, has never changed—providing free access to knowledge. Recalling how I used to move books across borders illegally to Eastern Europe during the Cold War with my now-wife in the trunk of her car and to libraries in Africa by airplane, we can see how digitalisation and the online library helps build bridges and break down barriers. These

geographical obstacles are hard for many of us to now imagine. But digital technology, of course, is not a panacea. In the place of physical borders, digital ones have emerged that continue to limit, censor, and block access to online resources, including ones like the Globethics library.

Breaking through ideological borders

This leads to a crucial question—do we still need the metaphorical books in the trunk? Does the physical still bypass the digital in some meaningful way? What other kinds of barriers do we now need to navigate around? Boundaries that divide us remains an issue to be confronted, regardless if the boundaries are physical, digital, or ideological.

To illustrate, we cannot afford to dismiss entire countries like China or Kazakhstan based on preconceived notions about openness and freedom. First, we are obliged to recall our shared humanity, striving for fair and equitable interactions with one another. This calls for both vision and innovation. Second, creativity and courage are essential. Working with people from different places and contexts makes it clear that innovation demands inclusivity. Merely having good ideas is not enough, they must be brought to life through dialogue and action, enhanced through connection. As a consequence of my frequent visits to China over the past 20 years, I have cultivated a positive reputation and gained acceptance. Now, I hold a position as a visiting professor in Beijing.

The courage I call to mind here is not a reckless bravery. It requires wisdom and judiciously accepting legal, political, and economic restraints while simultaneously pushing the boundaries of what is possible. It should be radical, but never destructive. When I took on the risk, in 1973, of driving to Romania, behind the Iron Curtain, to deliver theological books, I had to weigh the possibility of being imprisoned against the lack of access to knowledge that many suffer from. I judged it to be a reasonable risk.

In terms of China, a similar wisdom guides my approach. While I do not actively engage in protesting for the rights of Uyghurs, Tibet, or Taiwan

on a daily basis, I am not entirely silent either. I remain rooted in my primary business, which is promoting ethics, specifically business and governance ethics. During my visits to China, this focus allowed me to meet with high-level tech research teams, for example on the topic of AI ethics and business ethics, where I was invited and welcomed. This courage, patient and measured, eventually grants me access to spaces I may not otherwise have joined.

The risks of today are different, we face new ideological and technological challenges. Nevertheless, our mission remains unchanged, and we can persevere in building bridges, whether they be physical or digital. The pandemic, naturally, shows how people and organisations can adapt to new limitations, when our lives were radically online for several years.

Overcoming corruption

Corruption, on the other hand, deviates from justice. It allows individuals to gain resources unfairly, based on privilege or deceit. Whether it's through nepotism, leveraging family connections such as a father being a minister or an aunt holding a dean's position, or through financial or sexual means, corruption distorts the basic principle of justice.

This insight led me to a twofold strategy rooted in justice. First, there is the positive aspect, which aims to enable access or greater access to resources. This, returning to the Globethics story, involves initiatives like creating an online library, building platforms to disseminate research, and developing an online academy. These endeavours, for me, have been a pursuit of justice—ensuring fair access for every person, regardless of their background. Whether someone comes from a poor or affluent family, whether they practice Christianity or Islam or Hindu or Buddhist values, does not matter—as long as they should not face unequal opportunities. Second, there is the negative aspect, where the strategy is to actively combat unfair access. This is where the fight against corruption becomes intertwined with the pursuit of justice.

My commitment to justice in higher education extends beyond the theoretical. It has to include practical actions, advocating for change, and challenging unfair practices. By leveraging elections to create equal opportunities and combat corruption, we find potential to create a more just and inclusive educational landscape.

Ethics needs laws and courts

Over the years, I have become more adamant in asserting that law and ethics are intrinsically intertwined. They are each essential to the other's existence. Ethics, on the one hand, necessitates legal frameworks, complete with appropriate measures and sanctions to address wrongdoings. While education, especially ethics education, plays a significant role in the amelioration of corruption, on its own is insufficient. We must recognise that some people, the truly unscrupulous ones, need consequences in the form of sanctions. Losing their jobs, for example, can serve as a more ethical approach than mere pleas for change. As harsh as it may sound, sanctions can offer a tangible means of holding people accountable, propelling them towards moral rectitude. Prayers without addressing the underlying issues is always insufficient.

These stories are not just convenient thought experiments; they are rooted in real experiences. Let me provide another example: In the Church of South India, there was a bishop who was tempted, and gave in, to bribery and misuse of funds of an Indian microfinance institution, where I was the international president. A deaconess sought my counsel about the matter, seeming rather defeated from the start. She found herself constricted by hierarchical structures, facing enormous barriers of institutional power and authority. She felt powerless to do anything about the wrongdoings she knew had taken place. As a deaconess, she felt she could not challenge the actions of those higher up, particularly the bishop in this instance.

She expressed her frustration to me, admitting that earnest prayer alone could not solve the problem. She was well aware that something needed

to be done. I suggested the idea of bringing forth a case against the bishop, but not alone. She could do this with others who shared in her concerns. It was crucial that she did not undertake this on her own, rather as part of a group. Recognising the risks involved, even with the security a group may provide, I also emphasised the importance of getting a competent lawyer who would guide them throughout. I reassured her that taking such a step was not an act of defiance or lack of loyalty, but one of justice and loyalty to God who is above a bishop.

At first, she was taken aback by my proposal, expressing apprehension. She was a deaconess going up against a bishop. I urged her, however, to consider the larger picture. It was through collective action and strength in numbers that she could protect herself while seeking justice. Together, their voices would be amplified. Together with others they finally brought the bishop to court.

This story serves as a prime example of how people, regardless of their position—whether church leaders, university presidents, and so on—only will truly learn their lesson when faced with legal consequences in a court of law. It is this reason that still today I often actively encourage people to take matters to court.

Encouraging people to use judicial systems and laws, is imperfect advice because these are imperfect systems. Subsequent concerns arise when the very institution of justice is corrupt. In certain countries, I hear despondent stories where the chances of achieving justice through the legal system is bleak. It's a troubling reality that very many people around the world and within the Globethics network face.

Nevertheless, we must persevere, continually working within and around systems for a fairer, more just society. By standing united, in voicing our concerns together, and pursuing legal recourse whenever appropriate, we can create opportunities to bring about the changes we desire. Even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, the resilience to fight for justice remains a powerful force.

So to return to the concept of justice. As a global organisation, justice is one of our values, but perhaps one of the most contested ones due to the way different cultures and languages interpret the very word. Some think of justice in terms of jurisprudence, others think of it in terms of the common good. Some think of it collectively, while others consider justice on individual terms. The character of justice is evasive. If we discuss justice in an isolated way, it may be distorted somehow.

Many people have come to me over the years and have argued that justice means something different in their contexts than what I am talking about or Christian faith means. And this is why Globethics, at its core, is about dialogue. I invite these challengers into dialogue so we can listen to each other and understand why maybe a legislation of an Indigenous tribe may differ from that of a New York state court. In Globethics we are not so much interested in eternal truth rather than the process of dialoguing about what is truth for you and for me, and how we can live together with different understandings. We always seek to increase understanding and respect.

In summary, in Globethics, justice through equity and equality includes:

- Fair access to (knowledge and financial) resources
 - Gender equality e.g. in participation in decision-making
 - Environmental justice of human and non-human beings in creation
 - Participatory justice in proactive contributing to development
 - Procedural justice in transparent, corruption-free judiciary
 - Peaceful justice by non-violent conflict resolutions
- and more.

Chapter 2

Peace: Deepening relationships for peaceful coexistence

Introduction

Peace, as understood within Globethics, is a dynamic concept. It is not merely the absence of conflict, but proactive engagement with listening, learning, and building relationships. This approach, rooted in dialogue, forms the core of Globethics peacebuilding efforts. Sharing values across cultures, languages, religions, and more helps ensure that diverse perspectives are heard, understood, and valued.

The Globethics commitment to inclusiveness contributes to peace as a core value. Ensuring that as many perspectives as possible are considered, especially those traditionally excluded or marginalised in ethics discourse, contributes to lasting, meaningful peace initiatives. Importantly interfaith and interreligious dimensions of Globethics' work help find common ground for working toward specific goals. This bridgebuilding work can transform destructive conflicts into constructive ones and help support people and their communities in maintaining peace.

In Christoph's words

Peace is not about having no conflicts. That is not peace. Peace is when we are willing to listen and to be patient and to listen again, and even a third time. Listening does not mean accepting everything of the other, but trying to understand first. Then we see where we can come to some conclusions or define continued disagreement. This is the kind of platform Globethics provides. I come back to this vision of an independent foundation. We are not in service of one government, or one donor. No one entity can tell us you have to do this or that, and that is a key element for our credibility. We are independent from anybody but committed to everybody. But this independence does not mean that we do

whatever we want to do. We are committed to our values and have a community where we are accountable to each other. I hold a strong conviction that we must learn to coexist amidst conflicts, recognising that they are an inevitable part of life. We have to cultivate capacity to resolve these conflicts in a constructive manner, looking to move forward and avoid destructive behaviour.

Mediation and conflict resolution in praxis

I took up these themes of peace and reconciliation during my PhD work where I explored the role of churches in fostering peace¹. The backdrop of this academic pursuit was the unfolding of a violent struggling taking place in Switzerland. Throughout my undergraduate studies, I found myself engaged in youth work and serving as the director of the Swiss Christian youth movement “Young Church”. From 1980 to 1982, a period the youth referred to as the “Jugendunruhen” or youth revolt. Their intention was on establishing self-governed spaces for youth, quite like what already existed in Copenhagen, Denmark. The youth efforts, however, were met with resistance by the city council, leading to clashes between the police and young protestors in Zurich. In this tumultuous time I was part of a mediation group of church representatives to mediate between the young “anarchists” and the city government. It then compelled me to reconsider my approach to my doctoral studies and investigate how we could strive for peace in times of turmoil.

And so, my focus shifted towards how peace can be achieved, the ethics surrounding it, and the nature of reconciliation. My research turned to bridging divides in conflict-ridden situations, and how we can turn destructive conflicts into constructive ones. In thinking about these formative years, I'm drawn again to the influence of place and context on who we are and how we come together as the Globethics network.

¹ Christoph Stückelberger, Vermittlung und Parteinahme. Der Versöhnungsauftrag der Kirchen in gesellschaftlichen Konflikten, TVZ, Zurich 1988. Available online in GE library.

Strategic decision: Globethics in Geneva, the place for building bridges

It has been helpful for Globethics to have our home in Geneva. If we had been based in the United States or the United Kingdom or elsewhere, we would have encountered more barriers, more resistance to our work. It was a strategic decision to have our headquarters in Geneva.

When I imagined the possibilities for Globethics, I first thought it could be hosted as an institute at my university in Basel. This would have been a relatively straightforward and uncomplicated way to launch the organisation. The university would have provided institutional support, but also institutional restrictions. A similar option was to link it to the ethics center at the university of Zurich. Globethics would have been enmeshed in the values and ambitions of the university, limited in our partnerships and collaborations. We needed to be free to work with whomever we wanted to work and chart our own course, identify our own values. And it took me one and a half years of reflection between 2002 and 2004 to come to this firm conclusion that Globethics had to be a standalone foundation—and it had to be in Geneva.

Today we have more than 200 partnership agreements, working at different levels across different sectors. Abundant evidence that the institutional independence of Globethics has allowed it to flourish.

So why Geneva? To start, Switzerland is a neutral country, which helps prevent us from becoming embroiled in geopolitical conflicts and barred from certain places and countries due to the location of our headquarters. Zurich, of course, would have been a convenient choice as I live there. But from a strategic point of view, Geneva was the right choice for Globethics. With the United Nations and hundreds of other international organisations, including from the ecumenical movement, we had a ready-made home for collaboration, multilateralism, networking and partnership.

Rule- or relation-based values?

Relationship building is integral to peacebuilding. And, one's notion of rules and regulations informs how we relate to others. One of the principles I hold dear in life is to respect rules while also recognising the need to circumvent them when necessary. Breaking rules, also called civil disobedience, can be exceptionally a necessity, if rules themselves are unethical or life-restricting. My most important decision in life to break a rule was quite some time ago. In high school, at the age of 19, I organised a three-week service trip in Sicily, Italy to renovate a children's home. The number of participants was restricted to 30 and the selection closed. In the evening of the closing day I got a call of an unknown student that she was sick but wants to participate at all means. Against the rule of 30 participants, I decided to accept her as number 31. She became my girlfriend and eventually wife and in 2025 we will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary, the Golden one. Breaking this rule changed my life!

Again, we see significant cultural variation about this as well. I, therefore, approach this topic of rule-based versus relation-based with due caution, as I'm far from being reckless. But this is one of the balances we have to maintain if we want to build peace and integrate it across all our organisational activities.

In my lectures in China, I delved into the interplay of rules and relationships, examining the distinction among rules-based, relation-based, law-based, and value-based approaches. Here, I noticed significant cultural variations in this regard. For example, my own Swiss culture being predominantly rule-based in contrast to many cultures throughout Africa and Asia that are more relation-based.

As an example, I recall that during a visit of Globethics to China in 2015, I had the opportunity to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Liaoning State University. I anticipated the usual process of reading the complete text and discussing the terms before signing. However, to my surprise, they approached it differently. The Rector came to me saying,

"We'll sign," without much consideration of the written document itself. What they valued most was the relationship and trust between the parties involved. The relationship counted as seal, not the signed text.

This is a lesson that has stayed with me throughout my life, reappearing again and again as I encounter people and communities from a diversity of backgrounds and contexts. For example, I recall attending a liturgy in the Russian Orthodox Church, and was confronted with their restrictions around the eucharist, or Holy Communion. There is great variety within Christianity around these practices, some more open than others. Some traditions welcome all who are baptised to partake in the sacrament, others welcome those who are in communion with their community. In the Russian Orthodox Church, partaking in eucharist is restricted to Orthodox Christians, so I was not allowed to partake.

In another instance, I found myself in a business situation where I had information that someone involved was engaging in dishonest practices. The question that arose was whether I should completely avoid any contact with them. It reminded me of the story of Zacchaeus, a well-known story from the New Testament about a wealthy, very corrupt tax collector of the Roman Empire. After encountering Jesus, he repents his corrupt practice and commits to making amends for his wrongdoings. Certainly, I'm not suggesting that I play Jesus in this account, but it reminded me of the transformative power that relationships can have. If we cut off contact, remain firm in our "rules" then perhaps there are missed opportunities for conversion through relationship. Here, I felt an inner impulse not to avoid contact with this person, even if their deceitful behaviour was known. It was instead an encouragement to enter further into relationship with this person with the goal to bring him to a virtue-driven instead of vice-driven behaviour. I needed some courage.

The value of time management

Concepts of time is another place where I'm confronted with how different people are, and for the need in a certain flexibility about rules. In so-

called western cultures, there is often a rather strict notion of time, perhaps nowhere more strongly than in my own Swiss context. We schedule meetings for a specific time, date, and length, with a set list of topics. There is not a lot of room for improvisation or flexibility.

I must confess here that I do have my limitations when it comes to time. I do find myself growing impatient, and even frustrated, with delays and things not going according to schedule. I recognise, however, that practices around time differ throughout the world. For example, Chinese punctuality felt rather familiar to me, while throughout Africa there was a more relaxed approach, with much greater attention given to social relationships than schedules. My frustrations were often met with the response: “You Swiss have the watch, but we have the time.”

Respecting differences as basis for inclusivity and peace

How does all of this relate to peace? Well questions about time and class-trips and so on seem trivial given the major issues the world faces today. However, these small examples point to the methods that we can use to resolve and prevent all kinds of conflicts. There are issues that are very difficult to resolve, and in today’s politics we are met with autocracy and other problems. But my message is that we need places where we can consider the different standpoints of others and then come to some form of understanding. This is why I emphasise inclusivity as an element of peace. Inclusivity does not mean that anything goes, and we can justify everything, not at all. There will be clashes emerging from cultures, of course. But we must show respect for the other and not stop debates for fear of these clashes.

Spaces for dialogue and listening are spaces for reconciliation. A lot of the things we talk about as issues of justice are the products of historical wrongs, and often products of colonial wrongs, that have established unjust power imbalances. Just peace demands reconciliation and through listening to the other this can be satisfied.

I think we are in a world, even more than twenty years ago, that it is more demanding, much harder to listen than before. Everyone is a missionary today and wants to bring their truth to the world. Everyone wants to enforce their belief on others and extraordinary expense. There is precious little space where we can say “I totally disagree with you, but first I want to listen to you. Tell me your story and I will tell you mine.” And these critical conversations are simply not taking place, leading to unresolved conflicts heaped one upon the other.

Globethics maintains contacts with academics in Globethics Russia even when universities stop relations. It maintains cooperation with partners in China and USA even with the trade war, it received a delegation from Iran (photo 33) even when others call it the political evil. Globethics aims at remaining the UN of Ethics, better the “UPV”, the United People of Values.

In summary, Globethics has the mission and—in all modesty—real real opportunities to contribute to peace and reconciliation by

- remaining an independent foundation, not bound to a specific nation, institution or ideological bloc, but only committed to its values;
- the possibility, through this independence, to cooperate and build bridges to wherever it is needed to build trust and cooperate;
- encouraging and empowering current and future leaders, especially through higher education and executives, to become and remain bridge-builders in harsh times;
- the inner strength and courage of Globethics leadership to build bridges with political enemies even if it provokes criticism; and more.

I am impressed and deeply thankful, how the board members, teams in the regions and especially the former executive director Obiora Ike, the current executive director Fadi Daou and the president-elect Dietrich

Werner implement this work for peace with great practical experience, analytical knowledge, wisdom and courage.

Chapter 3

Dignity: Honouring regional diversity

Introduction

Human dignity within the Globethics framework is rooted in the recognition of the inherent worth and equal value of every human being. Human dignity transcends cultural, religious, and other boundaries. This value seeks equality, consideration, and mutual respect for all those within the Globethics network, the communities they serve, and beyond.

Taking into account diverse cultural and religious perspectives is one of the ways Globethics shows its strong commitment to honouring humanity through ethics. This includes early formative years with strong connections in the worldwide ecumenical family and its evolution to interfaith and interreligious cooperation. Leadership of Globethics represents some of the rich diversity found within humanity, emphasising the importance of mutual respect and deepening understanding.

Educational initiatives seek to prepare future leaders who can promote and uphold human dignity in their professional and personal lives. Democratising knowledge through online and open access resources and opportunities is another manifestation of the Globethics commitment to human dignity.

In Christoph's words

There have been many influential places that have shaped not only my personal story, but that of Globethics. We have already touched on east Africa, Switzerland, China and more. The word 'global' in Globethics cannot be forgotten. At home, I have a book I cherish called *The World is My Parish*, the biography of Visser't Hooft, the first general secretary of the World Council of Churches. This title holds great meaning to me as a pastor. Even though my work has taken me far beyond the traditional confines of a parish, I have never forgotten my pastoral calling. The notion

that the world is my parish goes beyond the promises of globalisation. It means that what Globethics has to offer can and must be for all those who want to participate in it.

Navigating life—in dignity

For me, my mission and the mission of Globethics was not about evangelism or converting people to a specific faith. Instead, it was always about venturing beyond the boundaries of the church and engaging with the world at large. The true mission is bringing values to the world, rather than confining them within a particular institution. This fuelled my work in academia, development, research and more. It was always one with the intention of reaching out and helping people to “navigate life.”

Navigate life is a phrase that was coined by our current executive director, Fadi Daou. It encapsulates perfectly my original vision for Globethics and how it works today. We, as individuals and as a network, strive to empower one another to navigate the complexities of life and societies based on a foundation of values. It’s fundamentally a simple, but powerful concept.

Global South: Regional diversity in unity

Globethics has always been characterised by its global outlook from the outset, but with an emphasis on the contributions and perspectives of the Global South. While we certainly do not neglect the Global North, we observed that many academic institutions in Europe assumed that they held the sole authority on ethical matters and imposed this on the world. Globethics challenges this notion and advocates for a more inclusive approach, honouring the contributions to ethics emerging from the Global South and their rich value-cultures.

We believe in dialogue that takes place on equal footing, recognising that there was an imbalance, with Europe being too dominant. It was, therefore, imperative to start conversations with our counterparts in other parts of the world, especially the Global South. I had already

established partnerships and personal relationships in many places throughout the world, through university teaching and development work (see photos part “1. Students”, in the middle of the book). It was a modest entry point, but proved to be enough to make the global in Globethics a reality.

Some countries and regions proved more receptive to our efforts than others. Progress was far from uniform. One memory comes to mind—an encounter I had at a worldwide conference of the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Melbourne, Australia in 2009. During this conference, I had the opportunity to connect with a woman from Indonesia named Siti Syamsiatun. She is Muslim, a professor of Islamic gender studies, and shared my passion for ethics on a Globethics panel. Through this serendipitous meeting, we came up with a plan to establish a branch of Globethics in Indonesia. Despite my familiarity with mainly Christian projects in Indonesia, I felt it was important to involve Muslims in a country with eighty percent of the population being Muslim, in shaping the development of the ethics centre there. And so, Globethics Indonesia took root, and she became the first director of Globethics Indonesia and later an international board member.

Such decisions were most often a blend of strategic thinking and seizing opportunity when it appeared. While some projects flourished from the start, others came up against unforeseen challenges along the way.

For instance, our plans for Cameroon in 2002, before Globethics was built, started promisingly but were halted due to a painful incident. A young PhD student involved in our early stages, central to our vision of establishing an ethics center, committed a fraudulent act and absconded to the United States with some funds. This turn of events forced us to discontinue our plans for Cameroon temporarily. It was a reminder that our path in life, whatever it might be, is never linear. We must adapt, learn, and find other ways to realise our goals.

Despite this and other setbacks, my focus remained on establishing a presence for Globethics on all continents, with an emphasis on Africa, Asia, and South America. I also wanted to continue to build bridges and overcome isolation, which led us to prioritise certain regions based on how they could contribute to the overall mission of Globethics.

For example, when considering how to include Buddhist perspectives within the network, we turned our attention to Thai Buddhism, recognising its openness and receptiveness to engagement of ethical questions. So Thailand became a natural centre of gravity for the network.

Such strategising played a significant role in shaping the development and expansion of Globethics. We made these decisions always in a strategic and at the same time pragmatic way, balancing factors like willingness to collaborate, the presence of suitable host institutions, and our preference for “light” institutional structures. This comes from my experience as the president of the Ecumenical Church Loan Fund from 1999 to 2008, where we had in thirty so-called developing countries chapters for microcredits. There, I saw firsthand, the problems when you establish a legal entity in so many countries. They each become too autonomous, easily running into problems with corruption, fraud, legal institutionalising and the like. Situations arose where I found myself powerless to address issues, because everything involved separate legal entities. Even when there was a clear need for intervention, I was unable to hold people accountable. So when I was building up Globethics, we kept the heart of the foundation and its legal entity here in Geneva, while granting autonomy to the regions, based in host institutions, that make up the network. Now, the legal environment in some countries is changed which means, own Globethics legal entities are needed in some countries.

Strengthening dignity through distributive justice

The core of justice is the basic notion of human rights, that all people are equal in principle and have the same rights (distributive justice) This does not mean that we do not have a lot of differences—differences of

gender, age, culture, capacity, and so on. Justice does not mean that we are all the same, but that we have equal value and equal rights. Even the proposal of equal rights can already be controversial, this is why I often mention the notion of dignity.

We have a fundamental dignity as human beings, independent of what we are, perform or not perform, our race or ethnicity,, gender, age, religion, and so on. This is the foundation and precondition for justice. If we would say people like the so-called untouchable lowest cast in India, the Dalits, or a person with a disability or a racialised person, has less human dignity, we cannot have a just society. We have to respect that you and I are both human beings. Full stop.

But how to translate that? Distributive justice, the same for everybody, has to be balanced with commutative justice: those who are disadvantaged and more in need, should get more It's not about everyone getting the same or having the same, but about balance. Unequal treatment may be just in order to give a chance to disadvantaged people. For example, a child may need more care than an adult. This was for me the justification in Globethics to give more attention to countries and people who have less access to ethics resources than those who already have plenty.

Chapter 4

Inclusiveness: For a fair globalisation

Introduction

Globethics seeks to foster environments where diverse perspectives are acknowledged, respected, and integrated into its work. This means going beyond mere representation, and instead creating spaces and opportunities for people from different cultural, religious, linguistic, and professional backgrounds shape the overall identity and mission of the network. Diversity enriches ethical discourse and the sharing of values.

Many of Globethics' activities touch on issues that directly impact people's lives. The network seeks to honour this by emphasising collegiality and connection in the relationships that are formed through it. The integration of professional and personal lives helps ensure that people feel welcome withing Globethics and can share their unique stories and perspectives freely. As Globethics grows, it will be important to preserve the strength of personal relationships while expanding its reach and impact.

Linguistic and cultural sensitivity is important for inclusivity, which has been evident in the network from day one. Now, the emergence of Globethics centres around the world, allowing for contextually credible ethics discourse, is a testament to this foundational commitment to inclusivity.

In Christoph's words

Openness, though a hallmark of globalisation, is not owned by it. Individuals need to have their own convictions, this is what makes us open. This is a lesson I learned at Taizé.

My first encounter with the Taizé community took place when I was just seventeen years old. I found myself standing in its midst. It left me

awestruck, for here was a community that possessed a remarkable balance of strict rules, order and values—all while welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds and religions. There was no demand for a confession before entering Taizé's embrace. Everyone was accepted.

I remember in great detail being part of the inaugural "Council of Youth" in 1974, called by Brother Roger, bringing together more than 40,000 young people around the world to this small French village. They came from every corner of the globe. And yet, within this massive assembly, the community did not impose collective prayer. It remained a choice, a freedom granted to everyone who made the journey there. This revelation had a profound impact on me, demonstrating that openness and acceptance were possible only when anchored within one's own identity, and trusting in that.

Globethics, therefore, seeks to emulate this balancing. We do not advocate for moral relativism, where anything goes and convictions have no weight. Instead, we recognise the importance of individuals having their own convictions, for without them, one becomes adrift in a sea of uncertainty, vulnerable and threatened by perspectives that challenge their very identity.

As we look back on the past twenty years of the network's formation, it becomes apparent that the examination of ethics has gone far beyond the mere exercise of discussing and defining values. There is, naturally, an academic element—a diligent study of ethics itself. This includes the understanding of reasoning and methodology within the study of ethics. Alongside these queries, the emergence of historical challenges, including the emergence of digital technologies, have given rise to new ethical questions. Within Globethics, however, the stance towards these fundamental questions about values remains process- and people-oriented. This distinguishes the network, intertwining it with historical contexts. In this vein, it is noteworthy that during the early 2000s, as Globethics was emerging as a network, the notion of globalisation had gained

tremendous momentum, forming the contextual backdrop of the early years of the network. This was a time only a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, where there were glimmers of hope that the world could truly be one. The prospect of unified world, devoid of borders and divisions, was on nearly everyone's lips, often with great fervour.

Globalisation, de-globalisation, re-globalisation

I was happy and sceptical at the same time. I insisted that the hype for globalisation was not hype that the Globethics network could share, as there have been losers of globalisation in especially in some countries of the Global South; however we could also see many chances, opportunities embedded within globalisation. In these early years, everyone was opening up borders, China was open, and more. The financial crash of 2007 dampened enthusiasm for globalisation, disorienting those who wholesale bought into the globalisation narrative. But the pathways that were opened allowed the expansion of the Globethics network wherever there was an opportunity. We were able to keep pushing doors open, to keep expanding, even in countries where it is difficult at the moment such as Russia, Myanmar, Iran and others.

Global ethic of Hans Küng

It was in this context that the famous Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Küng came up with his global ethic concept. This was a set of five principles that could unite people from different contexts, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds. A global ethic proposes that, despite the diversity of religious beliefs and secular moral frameworks, there are common values that tend toward the universal. These include respect for life, a culture of tolerance, equal rights and partnership between men and women, and economic justice.

Küng grew up only a few kilometers from where I did in Switzerland. I knew him while he was still a professor in Germany and liked his concept of a global ethic. He was represented at the founding workshop of

Globethics in Bossey 2004 by the director of his Global Ethic Foundation in Tübingen.

I remember vividly a debate we had in Davos in the early 2000s, at the World Economic Forum, during the course of a dinner with about 70 people seated around tables. He told the world that there are five values that we have to believe in, which are common throughout humanity. A woman from the Middle East stood up and challenged him on this point, saying “Gender equality is one of your values, Professor Küng; we in the Middle East have a different understanding of gender equality than you.” He rebutted, insisting that the world must see values according to the global ethic. This was an eye-opener for me. And that is why I invited a group of 25 people to Bossey and said, “We’ll develop an understanding of global ethics together. Globethics is not a Stückelberger Ethics, Globethics is the joint search for global and contextual values.” Küng challenged me, “Why do you build the Globethics.net foundation? You should just promote my foundation.”

I became critical of his self-centred, “papal” methodology. It positioned his own framework at the centre, telling the rest of the world what ethics mean. Perhaps I was a bit sharp on that point, but I discussed this with him openly. I read most of his excellent books. In spite of this difference of approach between us, I still deeply respect and appreciate Hans Küng’s pioneering efforts towards a global ethic!

Careful planning of the project also demanded careful consideration of who would compose this first group. At first, I entertained the idea of inviting participants from all religions, and even those without religious affiliations. I soon understood, however, that such an ambitious arrangement may prove overwhelming for the fledgling network. Instead, I drew upon the ecumenical family arising from my deep ecumenical experience. This, ultimately, laid a strong foundation for the way forward.

These were people who were grounded in their own traditions and contexts, and open to others at the same time. In my experience you cannot

have such openness to others if you surrender your own identity. This is why Globethics is first and foremost, even in its very DNA, a network. It has to be global, it has to be values-oriented, and it has to be collaborative. This is Globethics.

From inclusivity to friendships

Coming back to the value of inclusivity, we had been discussing friendship, which is an integral part of the Globethics network. While we emphasise our professional work in our relationships, there is also rich friendship in our interactions. As the former director and now president of Globethics, I appreciate that our organisation fosters these deeper connections. These human relationships, alongside professional mechanisms, provides checks and balances for Globethics. The board, indeed the broader network, can respond with compassion and empathy, when a colleague is ill or struggling, or when we celebrate milestones with our families and children. This bringing together of the professional and personal is what makes my engagement with Globethics, so rewarding. There is no need, and certainly no benefit, in keeping a strict separation of our personal and professional lives when we deal with both on a daily basis.

I must clarify that this mixing, this integration, does not mean with haphazardly mixing everything without discretion. It is about balance, and honouring that much of what Globethics does touches on issues that affects people's lives directly, so this human dimension must be honoured in our work.

We often say that people are the capital of Globethics, an imperfect metaphor no doubt, but a useful one. By extension, it implies that we have to invest and reinvest in our people, which increases engagement and return on that investment. What constantly impresses me is the high level of motivation and dedication shown by those who join our network. They approach their involvement with enthusiasm and a desire to

connect with those who share it. It is about being part of a values-driven community.

Gender balance

Maintaining gender balance across our network is essential, just as ensuring diverse perspectives from varied backgrounds and cultures. I am very happy to see that we have very strong female participation on all levels. The rule of at least one third/two third participation of women and men, men and women is implemented at both the board and staff level. The 200,000 registered participants by country often shows 40% women and 60% men, with the exact ratio changing from one country to the next. Looking at the network now, we see there is an ongoing need to encourage the participation of younger people within Globethics.

Another kind of balance we seek is between the growth of Globethics and maintaining a personal, intimate network, where personal connections are fostered. So we naturally want the network to grow, but not at the expense of the strength of the connections that have served it so well over the past generation. We have to find this equilibrium, where we welcome fresh faces and constantly renew our network, while not expand so rapidly that we dilute the essence of who we are. Today we are still relatively small compared to other international NGOs and foundations. We have about 200,000 registered participants. We do not call them members as there are no legal obligations or fees. But the goal is to substantially increase it to 300,000 or even 500,000. Figures matter in a world of very large online networks.

Coming back to the importance of inclusivity and diversity, we do find room for growth. Globethics started with ecumenical connections and has moved intentionally toward interfaith encounters. There is a need to focus on Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and other faith traditions more prominently. The connections between Christianity and Islam, in particular, are coming to the fore in the network, including through collaborations with Islamic organisations on shared policy issues, like the regulation of

artificial intelligence. Strengthening the interfaith and interreligious textures of Globethics will help us extend our influence and provide richer, contextual thinking where we are already active.

The board of Globethics represents this diversity and inclusion in microcosm. Each member brings their own spiritual elements to our meetings. Whether it be through Hindu chants, Muslim prayer, or Christian reflection, these shared moments of spirituality and connection emphasise the diversity we enjoy in our shared humanity. Honouring the spiritual aspect of our people helps us arrive at even greater mutual respect and understanding.

By fostering inclusive dialogue and promoting shared values, Globethics can contribute to a more equitable and just global society. This is more than ever needed in a newly and dangerously polarised world. It needs more courage in the future than in the past to stand up for one humanity within one ecosystem, beyond ideological, political, economic, ethnic and religious differences.

Pictures

1. Students



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2. Founding and Board



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3. Leadership



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4. International team



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5. National Trainings



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6. International Conferences



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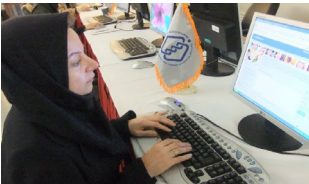


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7. Libraries and Books



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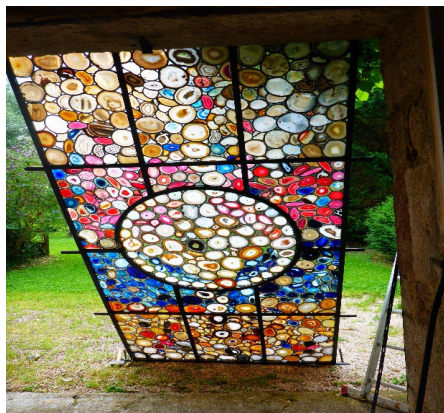


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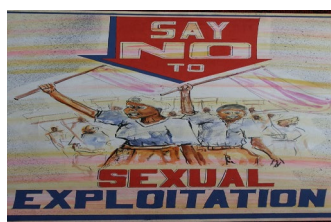
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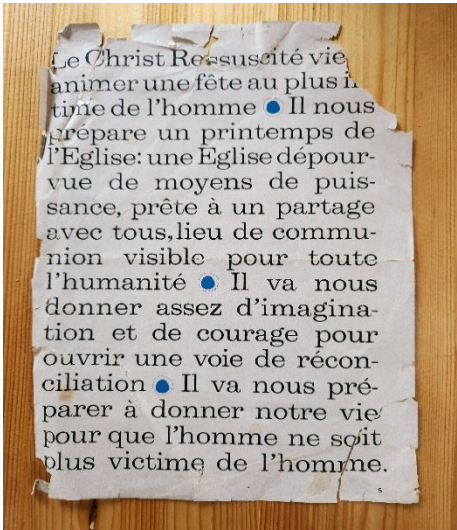


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Chapter 5

Quality: Standards and spiritual depth

The commitment to quality is reflected throughout Globethics approach to education, publishing, and broader ethical discourse. The online library and other digital resources provide relevant, scholarly resources for a network of over 200,000 registered users around the world. This is making an impact today but also for the years and decades to come as younger generations profit from education and training opportunities that help them flourish in leadership and other professional roles.

For Globethics, quality cannot be measured in numbers alone, such as total downloads or participation numbers. Emphasis on storytelling, and other qualitative measures, show the impact of Globethics' work in fostering meaningful change. A broader, holistic view of quality is also taken up within the network. This means that the overall quality of discourse is important, rather than each individual contribution. Dialogue, exchange, and creating spaces where diverse voices can contribute to a collective understanding of ethics is most important.

In Christoph's words

From 2004 to 2014, business ethics was a main focus of Globethics, in addition to the overall topic of responsible leadership. Following this, the next ten years from 2014 through 2024, ethics in higher education became the main focus, and since 2023 with the additional dimension of global multilateral engagement.

From business ethics to ethics in higher education

The target groups for our foundation have always and deliberately been quite broad, because ethics has relevance for business leaders, economic leaders, governments, NGOs, religious leaders and in fact for everyone. But the first focus was on business because businesses are drivers

in development and there are many ethical challenges in this sphere. This is well reflected in the Globethics conferences, even through 2015.

The shift toward education was precipitated indirectly by the events of 2007 and following. There was a boom, an economic boom, followed by a major economic crisis that reverberated around the world. The deep global financial crisis and even entire economies was laid bare. Many people, in the immediate wake of the collapse of banks, said “Oh we have to do something about these crooks who run the world economy.” As a result, topics like business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and so on, became almost mainstream. In this period, there were a number of new actors, companies themselves were organising huge conferences and specialised ethics and compliance units in their multinational companies. So we increasingly felt there was less of a distinctive need for Globethics in the business ethics space.

A second reason for the shift to education, was that education was always somehow instrumental to the development of Globethics. Since the beginning the majority of our active users came from universities and the academic world. Looking at this we said we should serve those who are already making up the network. Among the nearly 200,000 registered participants, there were approximately 50 to 60% students, another 30% professors or teachers, and the minority have been participants from the private sector, governments, and NGOs.

Finally, we were convinced this was the right direction for Globethics when we observed that there were not many actors working in this area. Obiora Ike, internationally well-connected professor of ethics, familiar with university structures on all continents, was the right person as executive director from 2016 to 2023 to lead this focus on ethics in higher education

In the first decade of Globethics, we regularly did training for capacity building, leadership, and these kinds of things. Conferences both in Geneva and elsewhere made up a big part of our work. For example, we

held one in 2015 on transformative leadership and integrating ethical issues into business leadership. Another good example is a research project conducted in 2009 and 2010, which was a global survey on business ethics, already foreshadowing the kind of academic projects that would shape the second decade of Globethics institutional life.

The study under leadership of Professor Deon Rossow from South Africa, who worked at Globethics in Geneva during his 2009-2010 sabbatical, looked at the methods, standards and practices of teaching business ethics around the world. The study was carried out at the continent and country level, and the results were published as a book. A similar, follow-up study was published at the Global Ethics Forum in September 2024. Again, the reader will find this global aspect, comparing different approaches to business ethics and to identify gaps where we can learn from each other and strengthen the business ethics curricula.

This also resulted in concrete moments of exchange. For example, we had a visit of 25 business leaders and entrepreneurs from China to Kenya. Most of them had little exposure or experience working in any African context and they benefitted from increased, mutual understanding. Business relations between China and the African continent have been intense for some time, and from this emerged some criticism of Chinese behaviour in Africa. The study tour helped raise expectations and open eyes to the realities of life in Kenya.

Technical and spiritual quality

This was interesting because some of the Chinese delegates were convinced that they are better, faster, and more competent. Through this exposure, they discovered that they could have a fair dialogue on equal footing. They also discovered the emotional and spiritual side of Kenyans. Most of them happened to be Christian entrepreneurs from China and we took them to worship where there was powerful drums and dancing, and Chinese worshippers had tears in their eyes. The delegates

were really taken aback at the expression of spirituality and emotion, which is such a contrast from their quite culture in China.

We have always had this spiritual element to our work, because it reflects the reality and convictions of the people in our network. For example, the co-founder of Infosys, Shibulal, was leading Indosys as one of the biggest IT companies of India. A giant corporation. He, clearly, brought a business perspective, but I was always impressed how he as a Hindu (and married to a Christian) has always expressed a strong interest in having ethical reflection within his company. He even invited me to give a training for top leaders in the company. Together we tried to find solutions for concrete dilemmas and questions. To give an example, I asked them to name their ethical issues. One that came up was how to deal with pluralism in India. They have so many holidays coming from the religious traditions that make up their population that it was nearly constant celebration. They struggled to find a fair way to honour this while keeping the company running profitably.

With the leaders, through a training workshop, we came up with a solution to respect different traditions and also run a profitable business. In the end, the company allocated a certain number of days that each employee can take for their respective religious and cultural celebrations.

In the shift toward education, we have not completely abandoned these earlier interests. The future of Globethics will remain open to the changes of history and different pressures on the need for ethics. However, these two major chapters in the Globethics story, business and education, will certainly remain relevant for the foreseeable future. We can see this in trends like increasing corporate investment in higher education, for example. There Globethics will already have extensive ground-work in working both in the corporate sphere and education, so when there is a blurring of these sectors, we are already well prepared. We of course continue to work with business schools as well, having just signed an agreement with CEEMAN, a global network of 170 business schools.

I was a speaker at their general assembly in Kazakhstan. But for now, the focus remains on higher education—and there's still so much to do!

Quality in global policy dialogue

The common denominator is always leadership. Globethics has always been concerned with leadership since its beginning. We now want to extend policy dialogue, because regulatory frameworks are key. They set CSR standards, ESG standards, SDGs, AI regulation, education standards and much more. We want to work with the ministries of higher education, ministries of trade and multilateral standard setters such as UN, EU, AU, ASEAN, ISO and others.

Looking to the academic sector and higher education, we have this library which is a huge part of where Globethics puts its energy and so on. Here we see a large, even majority, share of the users are students—whom we see as future leaders. Self-leadership is also an important concept because, ethically speaking, the first step for leadership is that you manage yourself. The first book Globethics published was *Responsible Leadership* (2007), a compilation based on a conference in Thailand. This book covered topics like leadership in families, business, religious institutions, political settings, and more. These chapters, brought together, show that Globethics has been thinking collectively about leadership broadly and deeply for some time. Now it is time to expand this to global policy dialogue.

Quality leadership

Returning again to the balancing of diversity and inclusion, the notion of leadership also yields different results throughout the Globethics network. Some have a more subversive sense of leadership, and leaders accompany people. While others have a hierarchical notion of leadership, following a chain of command. This richness in understanding is also well represented in the book to which I have just referred. Just as there is diversity in cultures, there is diversity in leadership cultures.

For example, in some cultures in Africa, I have observed that it is not possible for a younger person, a junior professor, to take the floor before an older one. In other contexts, this would seem old-fashioned or authoritarian.

We challenge extreme ideas, for example, if religious leaders claim that no one can question them because they are directly enthroned by God and a channel of the divine. I have had very tough discussions with gurus, for example, in India who have claimed that their brain is directly connected to the divine. Believers are very impressed by this. We wanted to cooperate, as always, so I was invited by a guru in India to have in-depth exchanges. On the way back to the airport a woman approached me and said, “I just wanted to share with you that this guru abused me sexually.” People often told me these intensely personal experiences because they felt safe to do so with an outsider. The lesson we learn is that the more a leader claims absolute authority, the more he (sometimes she) has to hide unethical behaviour.

I could add many such encounters to this account, to illustrate the abuse of power that happens all-too-often in religions as in politics, business and educational institutions. It’s not about criticising one religion or another, but about illustrating the pervasiveness of the problem. The problem is one of ethical leadership. In all these years, I have determined that ethical leadership demands transparency and integrity even when (or perhaps especially when) it’s related to religious contexts. This is why the spiritual dimension must be a constant thread in all our work. Religious leaders take other sources of authority into account, above and beyond the legal systems that I have already appealed to.

Chapter 6

Sustainability: Integrating ethics and ecology

Sustainability within Globethics reflects a commitment to fostering long-term ecological balance and social responsibility. This commitment is evident in the organisation's emphasis on environmental ethics and ecological justice, as part of overall interest in development work.

Globethics adopts a holistic and inclusive approach to sustainability, recognising the global interconnectedness of environmental and developmental issues. Additionally, Globethics addresses the link between corruption and environmental degradation, promoting transparency and ethical governance to combat harmful practices. Discourse on sustainability is enriched through interdisciplinary and intercultural collaboration.

In Christoph's words

We turn our attention now to the environment, ecological justice, and environmental ethics. The latter was always a strong suit of mine since my days as a student with my master's thesis on a new lifestyle, published in 1979, and my habilitation (formal qualification to become a professor) on environmental ethics published in 1997. Sustainability is a growing topic within Globethics. Globethics has published many books on environmental ethics and is engaged in climate justice issues at least for ten years. The development of so-called green campuses, for example, is where we are increasingly active in this space. We try to encourage universities to incorporate sustainability into their operations and ethos and sustainability ethics is a course in our Globethics academy.

Environment and development go together

I have seen positive development since the 1970s in this area of discourse. It used to be the case that the Global South was for development and the Global North for the environment, grossly characterised. But

now there is much more the sense that this is a global topic and each continent, each context has a crucial role to play.

I always try to forge links between different topics. I try to be as holistic as possible. This means not to isolate one topic from the other. For example, corruption is a major driver in cutting down forests, illegal resource extraction, and more, all with devastating environmental effects. So corruption and ecological devastation are related. It's evident that overcoming corruption is a major necessity in protecting the environment. When I was teaching in Indonesia, I saw tropical forest burning, which really broke my heart. I was teaching on the Indonesian island of Kalimantan, bigger than France, which is nearly entirely forested. To see that burning really compels you to action.

It's very easy to talk about the Global North and Global South generally, as though they are unified wholes. This kind of distinction is only satisfying to a point, especially recalling my holistic approach and looking at all the possibilities for connection with the Globethics network. We are trying to soften this sharp distinction and cultivate a sense of global community, where each context has a mix of experiences and privileges. This is increasingly represented in our decentralised structure, where we are opening Globethics centres around the world. While the centres are different in their focus, we are building a common global platform. What remains, however, is a certain traceable anger, well-justified, about the effects of colonialism and how there is a rush to move beyond this as though it was a thing of the past. So it remains sensitive and its critical to listen to people about how they wanted to be described and what categories are helpful to them in this self-description and self-identification.

Sustainability needs fair salaries and currency reforms

The world faces serious structural issues, which are seen in microcosm when I tell you about my friend, a senior professor in Kenya. We visited the UN Africa bookshop in Nairobi. He wanted to buy a book, but he

could not afford a USD 50 book with his meagre professor salary. How could he afford solar panels or an electric car? This is a reality that repeats itself the world over. This is one of the many reasons I'm so committed to publishing books. I know so many scholars who could never publish their PhD dissertations because the big publishers ask an amount of money far out of their reach.

When we try to find the roots of this, we find them among others in the financial currency architecture around the world. Why is it that somebody who works day and night, 60 hours a week, doing the same thing as many other people around the world, cannot live comfortably from their efforts? And then we see that currency is one of the issues. This is so much the problem of geopolitics that it's very difficult to influence. What we can influence, concretely, is book prices and publishing. And that, of course, is what we do.

We need to also reach the systemic level. Here we find different kinds of solutions. A colleague of mine, for example, said that we need a new basket of the lead currency. Here we take the chicken egg as the basis, because around the world many keep chickens in the rural area especially in the Global South. Therefore, the value of a chicken egg could be the basis. Of course, the specialists found the idea laughable and unrealistic, but this is an example of someone, in this case an economist, trying in earnest to find solutions for structural inequality. Others argue as well that the world needs a new basket of currencies to be together the lead currency.

The dominance of the American dollar as the de facto lead currency since the financial crisis 2008, as studies prove, is an obstacle to fairness and global sustainability. There are efforts on that front. It's now rather trendy to say that China and the other BRICS countries could create an alternative to the dollar, and start to pay themselves in this alternative currency. We are certainly witnessing geopolitical shifts in this regard,

and Globethics is modestly connecting individuals and raising awareness to help shape a way forward at all levels.

Open access as success story

The open access model has been enormously successful for Globethics. We publish, in many ways, what would be considered academic blockbusters, with downloads and reach that far outpace traditional academic publishing. There is of course a need to go deeper, to look at these numbers to see what kind of impact we are making. We are proud that we have 200,000 participants and 3 million downloads or our own 350 books published until now. But how does this correspond to the structural change that Globethics seeks?

Impact Measurement: Long-term and qualitative, not only quantitative

Standardisation organisations, donors, project managers always ask about the impact of their investments. It is important to show impact, but also argue that impact cannot be reduced to numbers alone. When we say that navigating life is our motto, this is also an insistence that life is more than facts and figures. Even more so when it comes to education; we cannot measure impact in education in numbers only, especially not in a three-year grant cycle. The impact of education is one for a lifetime, one for generations. What I have witnessed is that the impact of education, ethical leadership, advocacy, and so on, may only show up some thirty years down the road. The impact of a book that someone reads today may be visible only a generation from now.

This is why we need to revise our narrow view of measuring impact only in economic terms, or other such numbers. Sales figures simply do not correspond to quality, accessible, just, and ethical education. We do our best at Globethics to have a positive impact on the soul and minds of people in their decisions. This, to many, might sound soft and a bit against the mainstream of today.

This leads us again to a philosophical or even spiritual dimension. Philosophers and spiritual people know intimately that impact is not a straightforward measurement, and this is why our focus is as much on quality as quantity. Central to this is the method of storytelling. We cannot only say how many people have downloaded or read a Globethics book, but we must also tell their story about the impact of reading this book. This is the real measure of impact. We have all had these experiences in life where we remember something simple someone has said that has touched us profoundly. A sentence we might write or say, half-consciously even, and it may change how someone thinks or acts or the things that they take up in life.

Ultimately, I am just happy that there is an impact. Within Globethics there can be no denial of this. A New Testament parable, the one with the seeds, is appropriate here. The farmer sows seeds, and some fall on the stone and die, and some fall on fruitful soil, and others become tress. So we take this to heart. We are the farmers, and the network will reveal to us which seeds will take root.

I think we need a more humane approach. And everybody who raises children knows about it. We never know, we all hope that life is successful and our children will have a decent life and so on. Life can be unspeakably cruel, and so impact cannot be so strictly tied to the things that we can enumerate. Impact in this sense is about navigating and finding ways, and when we encounter an obstacle, we adapt and help others to do the same.

Access to an online library, a course, an event or a publication is relational, it is about building connections between the actor/author and those who take up their work. These relationships are out of the actors/publisher's hands, and who is to say if an idea might percolate for some years or even decades in the mind of a reader. All these connections are unique to the individual and to the lives they lead. This is why it is important to build up dialogue around issues, because everything is

relational. I have a dialogue with the author, I have a dialogue with myself, and I enter into a new universe of sorts. The body of literature around certain topics or issues also includes all the people who are in conversation with each other, and this is the platform that Globethics provides.

The courage comes in investing in something where the outcome is so open, so beyond our influence. We are enormously grateful to the donors who have immediately understood this and ensured that Globethics would not fumble financially in reaching for these highest of goals. This also helps Globethics authors in their own publishing endeavours. We do not ask that people contribute perfect, timeless truth, but rather offer something to the conversation. No text is perfect, but nearly all can contribute something meaningful to this relational vision of publishing that is inextricable from the Globethics identity. Changing viewpoints, personal growth, and development can all be positive, meaning that people can go beyond what they have written some years ago. This is the Globethics approach. It goes beyond the mainstream mechanical peer-review mechanism and publishing and teaching industry.

Chapter 7

Integrity: For credibility and overcoming corruption

Globethics is committed to integrity through honesty, transparency, and the upholding of its other core values. This contributes to trust and accountability throughout the network. This approach helps foster a global community that is supportive and encourages ongoing ethical reflection and improvement.

Globethics strives for integrity at the institutional and personal level, encouraging principled approaches and engaging with new challenges to integrity that arise. This includes new ethical challenges prompted by digital technologies, and different cross-cultural dynamics that emerge as the network expands. In responding to new challenges and keeping cross-cultural dynamics at the forefront, Globethics is building a credible platform for ethical discourse and action.

In Christoph's words

The value of integrity is multifaceted. Interpretations can be as unique as the individual proposing it. In our opening, where we looked at the inevitability of values in the founding of Globethics, we discussed the presence of non-values or anti-values in the world. This led me to consider the risks of establishing a movement defined by values, with ethics proudly embedded in its name. This would surely expose us to constant scrutiny and constant accusations of hypocrisy. It set forth the impossible task of maintaining immaculate integrity.

We have not been exempt from these challenges, not me, nor the network. Our network only thrives through the presence and participation of people who embody integrity. Over the past twenty years, Globethics has benefited immensely from countless people who have strong moral principles and adhere to them steadfastly. Yet, this is only half of the

equation. The other half is that we are all susceptible to failure. There are no guarantees of absolute integrity in all circumstances. However, I find solace in two essential realisations.

Integrity support by communities

The first stems from my own faith and understanding of humanity. Even those who are regarded as saints are, at their core, human beings. None are spared from the capacity to falter, not even the Pope himself. Therefore, we must collectively recognise that we need not strive for unattainable perfection. This realisation serves as a cornerstone within our network. It acknowledges our shared humanity and the integral pursuit of integrity, even in the absence of guarantees.

The second aspect of this realisation lies in the presence of a supportive community that aids us in overcoming our failures. When we err, there is a network ready to provide assistance and guidance. We are never left to face our challenges alone. The essence of our network lies in this understanding, allowing us to embrace the pursuit of integrity without fear.

This is precisely why I have dedicated more than thirty years to addressing the issues of corruption in business and government, and now extending to churches and educational institutions. Questions of integrity are everywhere. There are times when we must confront people in positions of authority, including political leaders, bishops, and professors, who engage in exploitative behaviour.

The Globethics network is not a community of flawless saints. We must recognise our own shortcomings. However, we are fundamentally a network of humans who strive to do our best.

Integrity, because of its different expressions across cultures, can have an almost elusive quality, one that can be difficult to define precisely. It tends to slip through our fingers as we try to grasp it. Over time, I have developed an innate intuition for discerning the integrity of individuals. For instance, I have encountered many people who immediately express

great enthusiasm, claiming to be deeply committed and saying they are genuinely honest. Yet, in these instances, I find myself wondering why they feel the need to defend themselves pre-emptively. It strikes me as peculiar. There must be something amiss if a person feels compelled to justify their integrity before I even utter a word. Sometimes, it showed that they are indeed rogues and try to cover their unethical behavior with verbal ethics commitment.

Of course, how integrity is understood and enacted varies from person to person and place to place. Notions of dignity and respect across various cultures significantly shapes our understanding of integrity. The cultural complexities surrounding integrity challenge us to strike a delicate balance, respecting diversity while upholding universal principles. It is essential to acknowledge and respect the cultural diversity that exists, while keeping this respect balanced with boundaries. We cannot excuse every apparent wrongdoing based on cultural differences alone. Take, for example, instances where cultural norms condone violence.

Integrity needs honesty

Certainly situations arise where we must firmly uphold our own values and not compromise our own sense of integrity. However, most of what we encounter in life is not such extreme scenarios. Most often, we should place our initial focus on seeing understanding.

Take for instance, a higher education landscape tainted by corruption, where staying uncorrupted becomes an arduous task. Instances of bribery, for example, become all too familiar. A cash payment in exchange for an exam result could make a substantial financial difference to someone not making enough money to cover basic necessities. Survival itself seems an insurmountable challenge, so what choices remain? Some venture into second jobs, additional professorships, higher workloads. Others resort to other means. This is not a justification for the corruption, but rather an acknowledgment of the prevailing circumstances—a reflection of reality.

Here, the role of Globethics transcends condemnation. Instead, we advocate for open and honest discussions. We must bring these issues to the fore, otherwise we stand no chance of ethical resolution. Part of maintaining integrity lies in the very willingness to be honest, to admit that we live and work within corrupt systems and structures. It is also a call to acknowledge our own privileges and say "I, too, am part of this corruption. While I may not succumb to it, others are not as fortunate as I am."

Integrity needs courage and has a cost

Understanding and acceptance are not synonymous. In the field of mediation and peacebuilding, we often employ empathy as a fundamental methodology. We seek to put ourselves in the place of another, to cultivate understanding and connection. By doing so, we gain a better understanding of their perspective, helping us exercise judgment, rather than preaching morals from on high. It allows us to say "Now that I understand better, my perspective has shifted." It also allows us to say, "No, I cannot accept this." In essence, it is integrity in practice.

Allow me to provide an example through a story. I once had the privilege of teaching ethics courses at the Université Protestante au Congo (UPC) in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. One particular experience stands out in my memory. The professor of ethics and dean invited me to deliver a week-long series of lectures to about 400 students. At the conclusion of one lecture, he took the floor and made an announcement. "You all know Professor XYZ well. He was highly esteemed and loved by everyone. It is with a heavy heart that I must share the following news." He paused, sombrely, continuing, "I had to make the difficult decision to dismiss him this week. It was revealed that he engaged in sexual abuse with a student, offering academic favoritism in exchange for sexual acts. As much as it pains me, I had no choice but to immediately terminate his professorship."

The room fell silent, the weight of the revelation hanging heavily in the air. The students absorbed the revelation. It was a widely known so-called secret, but one that had gone unchallenged until this point. The dean, my close friend, bore the burden of severing ties with a dear friend and also the weight of delivering news to the students.

This anecdote serves as a reminder that sometimes integrity requires us to confront seemingly unimaginable situations, relying on personal integrity to uphold ethical standards and take decisive action, even if the circumstances are disheartening.

In these accounts, we see the complex nature of integrity. Integrity defies easy, surface-level understandings and pushes us toward a deeper examination of our values, judgments, and the pursuit of ethical conduct in our world.

This brings another incident to mind, one that took place during a Globethics leadership training I conducted, together with the then executive director Obiora Ike, for professors in the oldest and one of the largest Nigerian universities, Nsukka. Over 800 professors attended the compulsory two-day training. The topic was integrity in leadership. The participants counted five of the university's most esteemed professors. During a break, the dean of one faculty approached me, asking for a private moment to share something with me. Naturally, I was curious. She told her story, describing a recent open professorship within the university in her faculty. The job was posted and applications flooded in, as one would expect. As the dean, she carefully assessed the candidates and settled on the most deserving candidate.

When the successful candidate was announced, her childhood friend—and applicant for the professorship—came into her office, visibly angry. "I applied for the position, and I expected you, my close friend, to select me. How could you not choose me?" The dean responded with empathy. "I value our friendship deeply," she said, "but objectively the other candidate had stronger qualifications. I had to prioritise merit over personal

ties.” In this moment, where the dean acted and spoke with integrity, she also suffered the loss of a decades-long friendship. A sacrifice borne out of her values.

In my leadership and ethics training sessions, I was entrusted with many confidential conversations. An assistant professor from the prestigious Delhi University in India once sought advice from me, agonising over a dilemma. This person in his forties was an accomplished academic, with a strong track record. The faculty was aware that he had the qualifications to be promoted from assistant professor to fulltime professor. The candidate was also aware, however, that bribing the supervisor, the dean, was the key to securing the position. Merit alone would not determine the outcome. This predicament forced this person, who had spent their life working toward the very goal that seemed now right in front of him, with a serious question of ethical integrity. What would take precedent—values values or the desire for professional advancement?

I experienced similar leaders with integrity in academic, religious and business fields in India, Indonesia, China, South Korea, Kenya, South Africa, Mexico, Argentina, Romania and many more countries.

This showcases the essence of integrity—making decisions rooted in values rather than personal interests. This remains true of integrity wherever it may be practiced. Though the academic world, civil society, and corporations all vary in their ethical challenges, the need for this understanding of integrity remains consistent. Though the language and dilemmas may be different from one context to the next, the essence remains the same. Whether it be through preaching to old or young, differences between urban and rural communities, and so on, I always strive to establish a relational connection through the wording I chose.

Balancing the need diversity of language alongside authenticity requires a certain flexibility. Take for instance, ethics in the business, where even the mere presence of ethicists can conjure mixed feelings. Here, risk management is very important. Businesses strive to manage and avoid

risks, understanding the consequences for their profits and reputation. In these settings, I turn to the language of risk avoidance and risk mitigation. However, underneath this, the notion of integrity is ever-present. The fundamental question of integrity remains—and a lack of it poses a high risk to any company's success.

Integrity with digital technologies and artificial intelligence

Returning to the broader Globethics story, I'd like to dwell for a moment on the notion of “unprecedented times”, a phrase that we heard all-too-often during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 through 2023. We can draw parallels with events like the global financial crisis of 2007-2008. These shocks show that history is rife with pivot points, events that force a shift from one state to another. These are also opportunities for changes in perspective, changes in the way we work together.

When we consider the pandemic's impact on organisations and networks, there was a great pressure to adapt and even embrace the digital. Globethics, however, has been online since its outset, so weathered this seismic shift more smoothly. Following closely on the heels of the pandemic, came the rise of artificial intelligence, specifically so-called generative AI. This was without a doubt a technological leap that further pushed movement toward digitalisation, altering the ethical landscape and computer intelligence comes to simulate ever more closely human intelligence.

This is the challenge of integrity of our present moment. Everything is facing pressure from digitalisation, specifically competition from AI. For example, we could entrust AI with a lot of our daily tasks, and the work of our network. And what do we lose in doing this? What do we have to gain? What does integrity look like within the Globethics story in these circumstances?

This phenomenon, the advent of AI, should be scrutinised within a wider framework of how new technologies emerge and impact society. The

reaction now is polarised, with the pendulum swinging rather wildly. Some view AI with unbridled enthusiasm, maybe even a religious fervor, imbuing it with salvific power. Conversely, others see AI as the ultimate villain, the demise of humanity and all the good that goes with it.

Polarisation, of course, is nothing new under the sun. This tends to happen around the exaggerated claims surrounding new technologies, whether it be generative AI or the plough three millennia ago. AI will not usher in utopia, neither will it our demise. We will come to understand its limitations and learn to navigate its impact on our lives. It requires a open-yet-discerning approach, and we must balance harnessing its potential for good while guarding and regulating against its misuse.

Ideally, when approached with integrity, technology is a tool for human betterment, but it remains that the human who is the agent responsible for this trajectory. Unfortunately, technologists often become so engrossed in the marvels of technologies that they overlook these fundamental truths. Ethics, then, steps in to illuminate, to restore balance. Within the context of Globethics, we have the opportunity to promote exactly this kind of ethical reflection, irrespective of the emergence of new technologies—AI being just one (major) among many. Through this, through the fostering of discourse, we can alleviate polarisation and lessen extremes. A balanced perspective, rather than perfection, is our goal. By providing such a space for people to engage with each other, their different perspectives and stories, however imperfect, we can then find a balanced way forward, towards “AI with integrity”. I am thankful that the Globethics Board, in its current strategy from 2023 to 2027, names AI as one of four thematic priorities, under the dynamic and committed leadership of the new executive director, Fadi Daou.

Integrity needs trust and control

My experiences as president of the global ecumenical microfinance organisation ECLOF as well as in my role as the founder and president of Transparency Switzerland and other roles, taught me the importance of

maintaining control and integrity within organisations. These lessons influenced my approach in establishing Globethics. I wanted to ensure that we had mechanisms in place to prevent corruption and mismanagement. ECLOF in microfinance lending promoted the slogan and principle: “In God we trust, all others we control.”

Our approach to corruption was shaped by a country-specific strategy. Even today, a generation into the Globethics project, we have not adopted a one-size-fits-all model. We have been fortunate in over the course of our twenty years that we have maintained an unblemished record, free of mismanagement and misuse of funds. While we can take a certain pride in this, we cannot disregard that we work in very difficult contexts and there is certainly opportunity for corruption at all levels of our work.

Being a person of integrity comes with its own set of challenges and risks. Those who try to uphold their values and principles are not exempt from criticism and false accusations. People of integrity are all-too-often targets of gossip, tarnishing their reputation. This unfortunate reality is a consequence of the attacks people who dare to stand firm in their moral convictions face. Some even find themselves in courtrooms facing baseless charges drummed up by those who feel threatened by their integrity.

Integrity needs creativity

Whatever the risks and challenges involved, however, upholding integrity remains necessary. I can share one more example that shows the need for creativity in navigating corrupt environments. Some time ago, again returning to Cameroon, it was common for police checkpoints to stop motorists on the pretext of minor infractions, like an expired permit or some minor problem with the vehicle. In such situations, it was customary for drivers to offer a bribe to avoid any trouble. This is what I call “petty corruption”, a form of small-scale bribery. I feel a sense of compassion in these cases, considering that many police officers earn

meagre salaries—perhaps just \$100 or \$200 per month. Under such financial strain, people often resort to supplementing their income. Understandable as this might be, we consistently advocate for zero tolerance towards corruption.

In my travels, I learned of two interesting methods to help work around such situations. One colleague, affiliated with a church organisations, would confidently say, “Oh, I’m a pastor, and I’m not allowed to bribe or pay.” To reinforce the claim, he carried a small New Testament with him. In an amusing turn of events, he would offer the New Testament to the police officers, who would then allow him to proceed without requesting a bribe. An ingenious way to bypass the status quo.

Another subversive workaround I encountered in Cameroon involved young people. They faced even more frequent stops at police checkpoints when driving. To deal with these situations, they printed money resembling the local currency. When asked to pay a bribe of, say, a hundred francs (FCFA), they would offer up this counterfeit currency. However, on the back of the bill, they had placed a message expressing their refusal to participate in bribery. A rather clever trick—at the limit of legality to copy money—in the face of systemic corruption.

I have spent countless hours and days trying to understand the nature of corruption and how it manifests. The more I researched, the more I realised that nearly every sector is somehow embroiled in it. The pervasiveness of corruption has prompted many organizations and governments to tackle the problem head on. While I was originally most interested in corruption in the context of business, my interests eventually gravitated toward schools. At first, I was looking mostly at corruption in high schools across west Africa, but then later turned my attention to universities and other institutions of higher education. This, in turn, led me to the problem of corruption within religious bodies, particularly churches.

It's now been some time since my book "Corruption-Free Churches Are Possible" came out in 2010—a substantial text spanning 250 pages. More recently, in 2022, I published "Corruption-Free Religions Are Possible" expanding upon this earlier work. This second volume sought to illustrate that corruption permeates all religions, transcending cultures and contexts.

In 2024 I am now revising and enlarging my book of 2010 under the new working title "Churches with Integrity: Overcoming Corruption is Possible". After thirty years of fighting corruption, I will not give up in the long struggle against this global plight, which creates countless millions of victims. You, reader, will not give up! I count on you inside and outside Globethics.

Chapter 8

Responsibility: The call of ethical leadership

Responsibility is a core value that has consistently guided Globethics throughout its history, particularly in its focus on responsible leadership. From the organisation's inception, this emphasis has been obvious, even encapsulated in its original tagline “Responsible Leadership” since 2004 and the title of the first book of Globethics in 2005. The sense of responsibility within Globethics is relational, honouring a sense of duty and accountability toward others—whether it be towards God, family, communities or the common good.

Globethics’ commitment to responsibility extends to education and capacity building, aiming to foster responsible leadership among students and, academics. This focus seeks to shape ethical leaders prepared for the challenges of today and tomorrow. An early emphasis on corporate social responsibility has now expanded to other areas, including civil society, academic and public sectors.

In Christoph’s words

Responsibility has consistently remained a core value throughout the twenty years of Globethics’ existence. In fact, the first tagline of Globethics was “Responsible Leadership.” Why did we do this? Because our network was founded upon this fundamental value—responsibility. In all our work, all our projects, and volumes, and gatherings, there is an overarching sense of responsibility in everything we do. In religious terms, this responsibility may be directed towards God, the giver of life, or towards one’s inner self in the Buddhist tradition, for example. In secular terms, we may experience a sense of responsibility toward each other, to other values, or other communities, but what remains the same is that responsibility is a relational matter that transcends cultural and religious boundaries.

From the beginning, Globethics acknowledged the importance of orienting questions of responsibility to those who have the greatest duty to exercise it—decision makers and leaders. While some may refer to this as a top-down approach, we recognised the potential impact it could have. At the outset, our attention was primarily directed towards business and political leaders. This explains our current strategic focus on higher education and future leaders in ethics and taking on the responsibility of forming them in responsible leadership, ultimately yielding greater influence wherever they may go.

In Globethics we do not want to have a world with one superpower, or two superpowers and all the others serve these powers. There is no one start with the others orbiting around it. We imagine ourselves as a sort of United Nations of ethics, and that means that we cannot accept that one ethics system dominates all the others, or one values systems dominates all the others. We certainly come to moments of impasse. For example, with the name of the organization we stood firm that Globethics is our brand and it's the same word around the world. We balance the global and the contextual, but always return to the notion that we are all human beings and that is our common identity, independent of language and religion and culture and gender and so on.

Global and Contextualised Values

We want to encourage the contextualisation of values. Context is not negative. On the contrary, context is key. We are not just neutral beings floating in space. We are rooted in culture and they have their necessities. I understand this theologically: incarnation means inculturation. God became human in Jesus as a man in a specific place, year, village and jews context. That is an expression of contextualisation. The Christian God is not floating in the air. God is concrete, incarnated in contexts. Christianity, for example, is always a religion of contextualisation while remaining a global religion. Jesus was a male, but the Holy Spirit in Hebrew is female, the trinitarian Christian God is inclusive/beyond gender.

The same contextualisation can be said about ethics. We have global values, but we need to translate them into a specific context. Our key element of our identity as Globethics, is to be global and contextual at the same time. This is why I emphasise so much this diversity of language, cultures, religions, and so on. It's a gift, theologically speaking. Diversity is not negative, diversity is positive. This is why we publish in so many languages. We have more than 10 languages in our library already and this will surely grow. We publish mainly in English, but also substantially in French, Spanish, Chinese, Indonesian, Russian, Farsi, Arabic, and so on.

Challenge to remain multilingual

A global network needs financial means and human resources for its multilingual work. Globethics does not have it sufficiently, why English became the main language. But to keep the identity of Globethics as a network of contextualised values, multilingualism needs continued efforts. The UN has six official languages. Globethics as UN of ethics needs to mirror it. Of course, translation technologies have come along way since the early days of Globethics and help immensely! Websites, online messages, text and so on can be easily machine-translated. However, with all progress they are imperfect. And often dissatisfying if the source material is always in English or some other dominate global language. This is why language specialists remain vital, for they can explain the deeper meanings emerging from cultural contexts. They provide insight into the reasoning, the history, and the nuances that lead to particular choices of words and so on. They can shed light on tensions between dialects, for example the contrasts between so-called British English and American English, that have often fascinating roots.

Global multilateral policy engagement

It includes in the current strategy the increased global engagement, especially in the UN system, where Globethics becomes even more active than before in selected UN organisations. Selected topics are AI Ethics, Climate Ethics, Higher Education Ethics, Sustainability Ethics, Peace

Ethics. Regional and national focal points can have different topics and serve the region as the global network of Globethics. Globethics needs to reevaluate the levels and methods of interventions and looking at strategic partnerships to increase its impact.

Conclusion

The evolution of Globethics over the past two decades reflects a profound commitment to ethics education and responsible leadership on a global scale. Initiated by Christoph Stükelberger, the organization has emerged as a vital platform for ethical discourse and action, underpinned by a steadfast focus on inclusivity and diversity. The journey of Globethics is marked by its strategic emphasis on higher education and the creation of a comprehensive digital library, which has played a crucial role in democratising access to ethical resources worldwide.

At the heart of Globethics are its core values: justice, peace, dignity, inclusiveness, quality, sustainability, integrity, and responsibility. These values are not merely abstract principles but foundational elements that shape the organization's identity and operations.

The emphasis on justice, for instance, underscores the importance of equitable access to resources, a principle that stands in stark contrast to the pervasive issue of corruption. By fostering fair access to financial resources, knowledge, and essential services, Globethics aims to combat the injustices that arise from privilege and deceit.

The commitment to peace within Globethics is not about the absence of conflict but about the willingness to engage in deep, meaningful listening and dialogue. This approach fosters an environment where diverse perspectives can be shared and understood, leading to respect and constructive resolutions rather than destructive confrontations. The organization's independence from any single government or donor ensures its credibility and allows it to remain committed to its values while being accountable to a broad community.

Integrity, another cornerstone of Globethics, presents both challenges and opportunities. While the organization strives to embody strong moral principles, it also acknowledges the human capacity for failure. This recognition fosters a supportive community that aids individuals in

overcoming their shortcomings and upholding ethical standards. The pursuit of integrity within Globethics is a dynamic process, requiring constant vigilance and the ability to adapt to new ethical dilemmas, particularly those posed by technological advancements.

Inclusiveness within Globethics goes beyond mere representation; it is about fostering genuine connections and understanding among diverse groups. The organization has made significant strides in engaging with various religious traditions, recognising that inclusivity is essential for achieving its mission. The emphasis on dialogue and mutual respect helps bridge cultural divides and promotes a more harmonious global community.

As Globethics looks to the future, it is essential to consider the historical megatrends that will shape its trajectory. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, for instance, presents both opportunities and challenges for the organisation. While digital tools can enhance access to knowledge and facilitate global collaboration, they also raise ethical questions that require careful consideration. The emergence of artificial intelligence, in particular, demands a balanced approach that harnesses its potential for good while guarding against its misuse.

Globalisation, another significant megatrend, continues to influence the work of Globethics. The organisation's commitment to a global perspective ensures that it remains relevant in an interconnected world. By fostering inclusive dialogue and promoting shared values, Globethics can contribute to a more equitable and just global society. This is more than ever needed in a newly and dangerously polarised world. It needs more courage in the future than in the past to stand up for one humanity within one ecosystem, beyond ideological, political, economic, ethnic and religious differences.

The future direction of Globethics will also be shaped by its ability to adapt to changing contexts while staying true to its core values and mission. This requires a flexible and innovative approach that responds to

emerging ethical challenges and leverages new opportunities for impact. As the organisation continues to grow, maintaining a balance between expansion and the preservation of its intimate, values-driven community will be crucial.

In conclusion, the journey of Globethics over the past twenty years has been one of remarkable impact, growth and encouragement for many. By staying true to its core values and embracing the opportunities presented by historical megatrends, the organisation is well-positioned to continue its vital work in promoting ethics education and responsible leadership globally. It includes in the current strategy the increased global engagement, especially in the United Nations system, where Globethics becomes even more active than before in selected United Nations organisations. The commitment to justice, peace, dignity, inclusiveness, quality, sustainability, integrity, and responsibility will remain at the heart of Globethics, guiding its efforts to create a more ethical and equitable world for all.

Postscript: An (assistant) artist

I like creating by my hands, not only my brain. It was handicraft, but at one point, friends told me “you are an artist”. It is a big word for my modesty, but if they want to call me an artist, I accept, with an important nuance as I will describe below.

My story as an artist starts from an early age. Even though art was not at the forefront in my childhood, it was somehow present in the family in different ways. Singing and playing music was always important, especially with my mother. I was always interested in doing something with my hands, and growing up in a farming village we were always doing something with our hands. It was only much later, though, that this became more structured. My art encompasses the sculptures I’m now doing, but also all nonverbal expressions. For example, when I write a book, I like to lay it out just myself to see how it looks like. But primarily, I work with sculpture and photography². I like to call myself an assistant artist, because my creations are made of wood and metal and other raw materials that necessitate the involvement of others in their realisation. I also insist on the word assistant because my art is about adoration of the immense beauty of creation. God as creator is the true artist. I am just helping make things visible that we may not see normally, to change perspectives and help people discover new dimensions in creation and thankfully adore this overwhelming beauty and diversity that humans can not do or only in a very limited way.

My connection of art with ethics is to visualise values in a nonverbal way. This provides a wonderful open space because it allows for different options for interpretation. The word is precise, sometimes too precise, and other forms of art allow for spaciousness. There is a large circle near my office, called solidarity. It is a metal form, with people encircling it, giving their hands to each other to build a community (see photos 46-48 in this

² See some examples on my website www.christophstueckelberger.ch/creating

book). The iron ring was the tire of a wheel of an farmers' old hay cart in our holiday home. I start from what is on my heart, from signs of the times, and often the material comes first and inspires me to create.

From April to November 2024, I exhibited 12 sculptures at the famous exhibition in Venice. My topic is "Upside Down and Inside Out". It is an ethical topic because I want to look at objects from the other side and discover new perspectives. For example, the white bark of birch tree has inside a beautiful purple colour which is normally not seen. In mediation we say "sit on the chair of the other" or "walk in the shoe of the other" in order to change perspective. Ultimately, I want my art to increase adoration and joy in people. So many people in this world are depressed or experiencing huge problems, but humans also need joy. We need gratitude. This fuels both art and ethics.

In our holiday home we have a workshop and I place things in there that I have collected in the forests or along the lake. I let them sit. Sometimes an idea will pop into my mind and I'm compelled to bring it to life by carving it. This helps me find balance between the two sides of my brain, the more analytic and the visual-holistic so to say. This brings me back to my holistic view, everything is integral to the human experience. We cannot have ethics without art or art without ethics. They need each other as the beautiful and the good are two sides of the same coin.

Coincidences have brought a lot of goodness into my life. Near our home in Zurich there was a shop with agate stones. Flat, polished, fossilised. I bought one for a gift for someone and I was really fascinated by it. So, I went back, and the shop was about to close for ever and the owner had to sell everything off. I asked the owner if he had more, and he led me to the basement and showed me boxes upon boxes of them. Here I was a bit crazy, and I said, "I'll buy all of them." I had an intuition and that ended up with maybe 60 kilos or more of polish slices of agate, about 1000 pieces with a diameter of 10 centimetres on average. I paid half a fortune in order not to miss the chance.

I brought them all back to my holiday home and added them to the trove of other materials and waited. I thought about it, forgot about it, and thought about it some more. What could I do with these agate stones? Then I remembered that some 20 years ago another artist in Zurich had done a window with similar stones. I found a local artist around Burgundy who made windows, in stained glass and she was willing to show me how to do it, putting the lead around it and soldering. This was possible not only for glass, but with 800 agate stones I built a 5-meter high and 1.5-meter wide window. It is tremendously heavy, needing an iron frame to support it. I in fact asked a blacksmith who makes horseshoes in the village of our holiday home to make a frame for it. He studied the great windows of Notre Dame in Paris and other medieval churches, and figured out how they did it. So the three of us, the glass artist, the blacksmith, and myself, made this window. It took three years from 2015 through 2017.

During a training of entrepreneurs in the new theological seminary in Wuhan, China, I discovered that they did not yet have church windows. I then offered mine.

We built it in sections to allow for transportation to and assembly in China. Then I brought it to a packing company in Geneva to send by air cargo to China where it was received as a gift and opened by the church leader in my presence. This is certainly the kind of project you do once in your life, not twice. Soon after, Wuhan became a world-famous city where the Covid-19 pandemic started. Many patients have been treated in this new church as an intermediary emergency place.

There are so many of these coincidences in life, the kind that led me from a precious stone shop in my neighbourhood in Zurich to a church window in Wuhan. It's impossible for me to just let them go by. I'm now in a period of my life where there is energy enough, freedom and creatively enough, to pursue these coincidences as they are revealed to me. I am

really thankful that I am active as ever. But life is life, and I will not go on until I'm 100 years old like this.

For now I have a list of about 20 book titles that I want to write, and will be satisfied if I manage to finish part of them. I also want to be free for creative work and for things that come up along the way, for grandchildren and conferences, for friends and speeches. I am definitely not one to lounge on the beach. I do like swimming, but I like writing even more. The satisfaction is like nothing else. It is such a simultaneously painful and joyful process, each book like giving birth to a child.

It is akin to working with wood or stone for hours upon hours. You work with it, refine it, and toward the end you see a shape emerging from the raw material. You can form something rather beautiful from mess and chaos and discarded bits and pieces from elsewhere in your life.

In September 2024, I retired as the president of Globethics. I plan to retire from two other foundations once they are in good shape. Everything has its end in order to open new paths. I'm not at all afraid of giving things up when the time comes. I founded and lead seven other foundations and associations, the first as a student in 1977. They all still exist, without me! Wonderful. It fulfils me with humility and deep thanks to the divine.

Appendix

Moments of the eight key virtues

Moments for Justice

- Founding of the Globethics.net digital library (2008). Globethics launched one of the world's largest digital libraries on ethics, offering open access to resources, promoting equitable access to knowledge, and fostering ethical education globally.

<https://repository.globethics.net/>

- Publication of Global Ethics Applied, 4 volumes, 1400pp. Readers 1-4 (2016). This publication work contributed open access on ethics across various sectors, emphasising the importance of justice in global contexts. Discover all Readers books:

<https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/7>

- Consortium on ethics in higher education (2017). This initiative aimed at promoting justice in education by providing institutions worldwide with tools and frameworks to integrate ethics into their curricula.

<https://globethics.net/consortium-ethics-higher-education>

- Conference partnership with UNESCO on ethics, justice, and peace. Globethics collaborated with UNESCO to explore how higher education can promote justice, ensuring diverse interpretations of justice are recognised and respected in global education.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/repositioning-ethics-justice-and-peace-through-higher-education-human-development>

- The conference AI Nexus: Bridging Law, Justice & Ethics on the Global Stage (2024). This conference addressed the intersection of AI, justice, and ethics, with a focus on the equitable and fair use of

AI technologies in education and other sectors, highlighting the need for global access to these technologies.

<https://globethics.net/events/ai-nexus-bridging-law-justice-ethics-global-stage>

For Peace

- Co-published *Our Feet into the Way of Peace* with the World Council of Churches (2022). This publication was an important contribution to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, and emphasised the importance of holistic peace-building by reflection on the experiences of people in conflict-affected countries like Burundi, South Sudan, and Colombia.

<https://globethics.net/publications/our-feet-way-peace>

- International Peace Day statement (2020). On International Peace Day, Globethics joined over 170 organisations in calling for governments to recommit to peace in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The statement emphasised that peace must be a central focus in global responses, advocating for inclusion, dialogue, and multilateralism to address the crisis and prevent further conflicts.

<https://www.obioraike.com/peace-day-2020-globethics-joins-call-to-governments-to-re-commit-to-peace.html>

- Statement “Stop Wars, Save Lives, Build Inclusive Peace” issued (2023). In response to ongoing global conflicts, Globethics issued a statement advocating for an immediate ceasefire and renewed commitment to international law. The statement also called for responsible leadership to create a more peaceful and just global order.

<https://globethics.net/stop-wars-save-lives-build-inclusive-peace>

- Publication of Water Ethics: Principles and guidelines (2019). This essential reading on water ethics argues that ethical considerations are crucial for resolving water-related conflicts and ensuring fair access, thereby contributing to peace by integrating economic, innovation, political, and religious ethics into sustainable water management practices. This work is available in four languages, , including Chinese, and we are working on an Arabic fifth version.

<https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/237>

- Contribution to Geneva Peace Week on AI ethics (2023). Globethics hosted a policy briefing panel on AI ethics in collaboration with the Club of Rome. The resulting policy report was published as Inclusive AI for a Better Future.

<https://globethics.net/publications/inclusive-ai-better-future>

For Dignity

- Youth Leadership Award launched (2024). In celebration of its 20th anniversary, Globethics launched a Youth Leadership Award to recognise and empower young leaders who promote ethical change in their communities, uplifting the dignity of youth people as capable and ethical leaders.

<https://globethics.net/youth-leadership-award>

- Partnership with Jesuit Worldwide Learning (2020). Globethics has partnered with Jesuit Worldwide Learning to provide accredited online courses to marginalised students, enhancing their credentials and future opportunities.

<https://globethics.net/global-impact>

- Doctoral school on the ethics of inclusive peace (2024). The first Globethics doctoral school on ethics in governance and inclusive

peace, emphasising the role of education in promoting human dignity, took place in September 2024 in Indonesia.

<https://globethics.net/courses/doctoral-school>

- Strengthening Christian Perspectives on Human Dignity and Human Rights (2022). Co-published with the World Council of Churches, these are the results of a two-year ecumenical study on the relationship between human dignity and human rights, culminating in a global conference.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/strengthening-christian-perspectives-on-human-dignity-and-human-rights>

- Long term collaboration with the Conference of European Churches (CEC). This resulted in co-publication of works on human rights by the European ecumenical churches. Focus on freedom of worship and dialogue among Reformed and Orthodox theologians on social ethics, and nine multiple authored works have seen the light, in this joint effort, over the last nine years:

<https://globethics.net/publications?copublisher%5B49%5D=49>

<https://ceceurope.org/resources/globethics>

For Inclusiveness

- Contribution on inclusive citizenship at Inter-Parliamentary Union interfaith dialogue (2023). Globethics Executive Director Fadi Daou addresses more than 800 senior delegates from all over the world on the topic of inclusive citizenship as critical for peacebuilding and reconciliation.

<https://liferay.globethics.net/blogs/-/blogs/championing-inclusive-citizenship>

- Publication of Bridging the digital gap: ethics and values for inclusion (2023). This volume brought together the presentations

delivered at the Globethics international conference “Building New Bridges Together: Ethics and Values at the Heart of Quality Education.”

<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/4266292>

Establishment of Globethics regions and regional centres (2004 - present). Using a regional model and establishing centres throughout the world allows for broader participation and contextually relevant publishing and other programmatic work. Globethics currently includes the following regions: Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia Pacific.

<https://globethics.net/regions-and-centres>

- Multilingual publication program (2004 – present). Globethics has published in ten languages to-date (English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesian, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and Italian) and seeks to continue providing high-quality publications and other resources in a variety of languages.

<https://globethics.net/publications>

- Pool of experts. The Globethics Pool of Experts understands itself as a collaborative community of practice for expert exchange, and brings together experts to enhance Globethics public profile, course development, publication, and institutional outreach. As of 2024, the pool of experts has 57 members representing 27 countries.

<https://globethics.net/pool-of-experts>

For Quality

- Policy briefs (2023 – present). Globethics collaborates with global thought leaders on cutting-edge ethical issues. These policy briefs are key tools to present research and recommendations, providing evidence-based policy advice to help readers make informed decisions.

<https://globethics.net/policy-briefs>

- Competence centres. In collaboration with our partner higher education institutions, Globethics produces and disseminates top-level academic research on the priority thematic areas: higher education, sustainability and environmental justice, digital and emerging technology, and inclusive peace and responsible governance.

<https://globethics.net/academic-research>

- Standards of quality in electoral processes in Central Africa. Globethics is monitoring the École de Formation Électorale en Afrique Centrale (EFEAC), and co-publishing the fifth volume with EFEAC, including a recent Dictionary in two volumes on the practice of elections, and on redefining the republic:

<https://globethics.net/publications?copublisher%5B51%5D=51>

- International accreditations. Globethics is accredited by highly-regarded accrediting bodies, including the British Accreditation Council and the European Agency for Higher Education and Accreditation.

<https://globethics.net/our-accreditations>

- Publication of Educating teachers for tomorrow: on ethics and quality in pedagogical formation (2021). This book gathers 22 presentations in ten chapters, selected among the plethora of

papers presented during the interdisciplinary session, held at the Faculty of Education of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in 2016.

<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/4043067>

For Sustainability

- Globethics library. The Globethics.net Library has more than 14,000 documents related to environment or ecology and ethics, it includes more than 4,000 articles, 1,000 master or doctoral dissertations and 800 books. An additional 2,000 documents are focusing on ecotheology. A special collection on Climate Ethics gathers about 11,000 documents pertaining to the ethical and theoretical framework around climate change regulation and ethics.

<https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/28>

- World Class: Sustainability Ethics (2024). This course focused on the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills in the area of sustainable development. The UN SDGs are used as the underlying rationale to analyse the connection between sustainable patterns of production and consumption, care for the environment, wealth distribution, responsible governance and societal participation.

<https://globethics.net/courses/world-class-sustainability-ethics>

- Strategic priority on ethics of sustainability and environmental justice (2023-2027). Globethics has committed to sustainability in its strategic plan through 2027. Priority will be given to developing an ethics of sustainability and environmental justice through collaboration, policy dialogue and educational programmes.

https://globethics.net/sites/default/files/media/document/2024-03/Globethics_Strategy_2023-2027-reduced.pdf

- COP28 and the power of the global conscious community (2023). Globethics contributed to the debate on environmental issues by organizing a session at the Faith Pavilion, featuring a diverse panel of UN representatives, faith leaders, academics, and indigenous advocates to discuss perspectives on listening to the earth.

<https://globethics.net/cop28-and-power-global-conscious-community>

- Indigenous statements on environmental justice (2008-2023). This publication gathers key statements and champions indigenous perspectives on environmental justice, with an emphasis on engagement with global climate forums like the United Nations' Conference of Parties (COP).

<https://globethics.net/publications/indigenous-statements-environmental-justice>

<https://globethics.net/cop28-and-power-global-conscious-community>

For Integrity

- The construction of the sciences of integrity is at the core of plagiarism prevention and the understanding of the changing landscape of how technology of information impacts academic life. Globethics follows closely, in collaboration with Institute for Research and Action on Fraud and Plagiarism in Academia (IRAFPA), - Conference and publication in French and English, including the most recent texts on academic integrity co-published with IRAFPA.

<https://globethics.net/publications/academic-integrity>

- Following the request of Globethics Board, International Global Ethics Forum participants, and Network members we released The Journal of Ethics in Higher Education (JEHE) in 2022, with the

technical support of SOAP2 (Univ. of Fribourg, Switzerland). This is an open-access academic journal on ethics in higher education: a diamond open-access: no fee for the author or reader, focusing thematically on standards, integrity and education. Latest Issue is focusing on norms and regulations, in relation to emerging technologies. JEHE No. 4, has proven to set the bar high, as peer-reviewed academic journal

<https://jehe.globethics.net>

- Church assets management has been an ongoing monitoring work involving Globethics regional centre in Kenya as African Church Assets Programme (ACAP), as well as the theoretical and practical efforts of Globethics Founder, on the theme of Corruption free churches over years, not only in Africa but on a global level. In Kenya, work started in 2005, with an audit commissioned by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) secretariat in Nairobi. The partnership with AACC and the support of Bread for the World has been ongoing over the years, to develop the auditing and monitoring service, focusing on Church leadership integrity to the whole Eastern African region.

<https://globethics.net/acap>

For Responsibility

- Responsible Leadership, as the first book of Globethics Global Series, paved the way to a systematic effort to apply ethics to all academic disciplines, to address in responsible ways ethical issues with global relevance and contextual perspectives. With over 20 volumes, each volume including contributions from at least two continents and with two editors, often one from the global South and one from the global North, this Globethics Series is at the heart of our normative and value-driven enterprise of writing and sharing quality knowledge across the globe.

<https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/5>

<https://globethics.net/publications?series%5B19%5D=19>

- Responsible leadership, understood as environmentally responsible practice, is an important Strategic but also creative moment for Globethics. Book titles such as: *We are all Guests of Earth – A Global Christian Vision for Climate Justice* by Christoph, but also the works of many others, as reported in 2015 by A. Hillert from the WCC, contribute to not only bring a strong voice, but also practical steps toward an economic and political direction, which places responsibility as key norm or value:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/news/christian-authors-address-eco-theology-ethics-and-climate-change>

- Restorative justice in relation to climate justice, business ethics and law, women leadership in the Church or parenting in China, are key directions of research in ethics, useful bringing sometimes conflicting aims of justice and peace together. With over 40 PhD theses in total, and 27 authors from the African continent, countries from the Global South, stand in the forefront of Globethics production of doctoral theses.

<https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/9>

<https://globethics.net/publications?series%5B13%5D=13>

- The Globethics African Law Series (13 vol.) is a longstanding publication project, bringing responsible legal frameworks in the bright light on the African continent, in large part from legal scholars from Francophone African countries.

It is since 2022, part of a larger effort to include responsible legal and governance frameworks from other continents.

- <https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/11>
<https://globethics.net/publications?series%5B15%5D=15>

Biography

Christoph Stückelberger is the founder of Globethics (which was Globethics.net until 2023), its president from 2004 to 2008 and again from 2016 to 2024, its executive director from 2008 to 2016, and honorary president since September 2024.

Christoph Stückelberger is a Swiss protestant theologian and ethicist. His career has been marked by his dedication to ethical leadership, education, and global responsibility. He was born in 1951 in Wingen, Alsace in France and from a young age was deeply influenced by his family's values of solidarity, fairness, and commitment to community. His father was a pastor and his mother a cooking teacher.

He pursued his theological studies at the universities of Bern, Nairobi and Zurich the studies in Nairobi, Kenya in 1974-75 were decisive for his commitment to development. He was particularly inspired by the work of Karl Barth, Hans Küng and especially his ethics professor Arthur Rich as well as African, Asian and Latin American contextual theologians. He was ordained a protestant pastor in 1979, continued on with graduate studies for PhD in peace ethics in 1988 and habilitation in environmental ethics in 1997, culminating in a part-time professorship since then.

His main activities have always been in applied ethics as university assistant, youth leader, editor-in-chief of a large church magazine, director of the Swiss protestant development agency Bread for All (1992-2004), director of the Institute for Theology and Ethics of the Swiss Protestant Churches (2004-2008) and executive director of Globethics (2008-2016).

He holds the title of Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology and Ethics at the University of Basel, Switzerland. His expertise is further recognised through his roles as a Visiting Professor of Ethics at Godfrey Okoye University in Nigeria, the Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute in Russia (former), and Minzu University in Beijing, China, and also as a

Senior Ethics Advisor to the UN (SUN: Scaling Up Nutrition Program), as ethics advisor to banks and investment funds and since 2002 as director of the School for Election Experts EFEAC (master's program) of the 11 countries of the central Africa region with its seat in Kinshasa, DR Congo. He serves as president of the Geneva Agape Foundation and of the OikosInvest Foundation, both in Geneva.

Stückelberger is a prolific author and editor, contributing to the fields of responsible leadership, global trade ethics, environmental ethics, and peace ethics. His publications include over 70 books as author and editor, and hundreds of articles³.

He has been married to Susanne Stückelberger-Aeschbach, a psychotherapist, since 1975, and together they have four adult children and four grandchildren.

³ See the bibliography Christoph Stückelberger, *50 years of Publishing. With 12 Encouragements for Young Authors*, Globethics: Geneva 2022, free download from www.globethics.net/publications

Globethics

Globethics is an international non-governmental organisation working for ethical leadership through the integration of academic and public engagements. Registered in Geneva, Switzerland, as an independent, not-for-profit foundation with an international Board, and affiliated centres across the globe, Globethics seeks to be inclusive of diverse cultural, religious, philosophical, and humanist ethical wisdoms, and to be the bridge between the different world views on ethical issues.

We strive for a world in which people, and especially leaders, are educated in, informed by and act according to ethical values and thus contribute to building sustainable, just and peaceful societies. The founding conviction of Globethics is that having equal access to knowledge resources in the field of applied ethics enables individuals and institutions from developing and transition economies to become more visible and audible in the global discourse.

In order to ensure access to knowledge resources in applied ethics, Globethics has developed four resources:



Globethics Library

The leading global digital library on ethics with over a million documents specially curated



Globethics Publications

A publishing house for authors interested in ethics with over three hundred publications in series



Globethics Academy

Online and offline courses and training for all on ethics both as a subject and within specific sectors



Globethics Network

A global network of experts and institutions including a Pool of experts and a Consortium

Globethics provides an electronic platform for dialogue, reflection and action. Its central instrument is the website:

<https://globethics.net> ■

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The focus and scope of JEHE is to answer to the request made by many faculty members from Globethics Consortium of higher education institutions, Network, Partners, Regional Programmes and participants to Globethics International Conferences to have a new space on Globethics platform for the publication of their research results in a scientific Journal.

<https://jehe.globethics.net>

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SHARING VALUES ACROSS BORDERS

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of Globethics, through a series of interviews founder Christoph Stückelberger takes readers through his own journey with the foundation with stories, reflections, and philosophical insights. From groundbreaking online library to global network of researchers and leaders, Globethics has transformed the sharing of values across borders for a generation. This volume looks to the future of the foundation, recounting the challenges and success that shaped Globethics until today. More than a retrospective, *Sharing Values Across Borders* is a testament to the enduring power of ethics in shaping a just, inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable world.

Christoph Stückelberger is Founder of Globethics with its headquarter in Geneva/Switzerland, 2004-2007 its President, 2008-2016 its Executive Director and 2016-2024 again its President. He is Professor of Global Ethics in Europe, Africa and Asia, author/editor of over 80 books, development practitioner as former Director of "Bread for all", reformed Pastor and Senior Ethics Advisor to the UN.

Erin Green, PhD, is a theologian, communicator, and educator specializing in the ethics of artificial intelligence. She is a co-editor on the 2021 volume *AI Ethics and Higher Education*. She currently lectures at Thomas More University in Belgium alongside running her communications services business, The Joyful Bot.

Globethics