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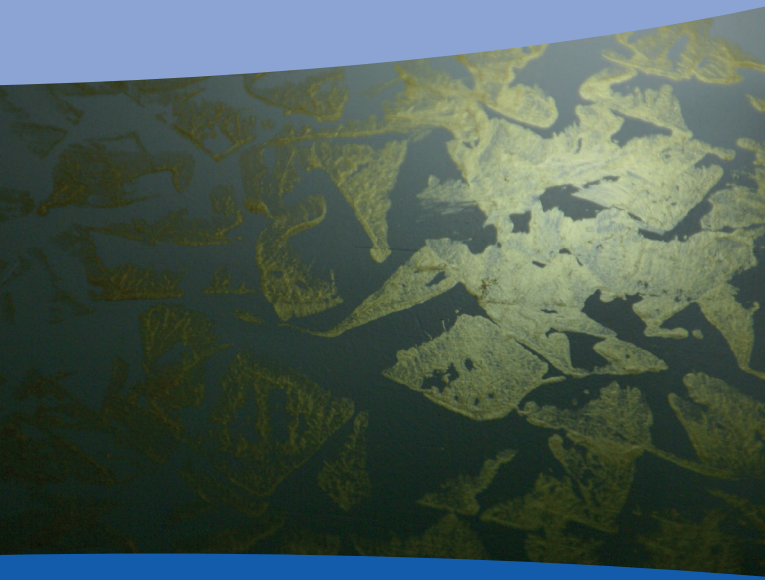
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Ethics Praxis 2

Way-Markers

100 Reflections Exploring Ethics in Everyday Life

Christoph Stückelberger



Globethics.net

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100 Reflections Exploring Ethics in Everyday Life

Globethics.net Praxis 2

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Dedicated with gratitude to
Dag Hammarskjöld. He was UN Secretary-General from 1953-1961, politician, global peacemaker and Christian. His spiritual diary, "Markings", gathers the short texts and aphorisms about ethics and faith that he wrote amidst his senior professional responsibilities. It was published in 1963, two years after his death in a plane crash during a UN mission in Congo.
Even as a young person, these texts and aphorisms inspired and encouraged me during all these decades.

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Preface

Listen carefully to your inner voice while paying attention to others. Continue your nimble dance through life.

Be inspired to discover new perspectives. Despite personal, professional and social squalls and storms, look for the markers at the wayside and use your inner compass to keep to your path. The short texts that follow seek to offer some reflections to help you on the way.

Morality is a heavy burden and ethics are difficult. These short texts are intended to counter this widespread perception by stimulating the desire and curiosity to explore ethics in everyday life, to discover the values that can be found in things great and small, in decision-making situations

and dilemmas, and to find playful and spiritual approaches to reaching solutions.

"My burden is light," said the One who, nevertheless, in his Sermon on the Mount offered the vision of a maximalist ethics that seems scarcely attainable. Happy are those who are able to take up each day a small part of such fullness of life that has been offered to pass it on to others.

These texts were written between May 2011 and July 2013, often in the bus in the morning on the short way to work at Globethics.net in Geneva or in the evening returning home. The length of the texts was set by the ten-minute bus ride and a very small notebook with 17 short lines per page. Ideas for the content came from a Bible verse in the morning, an experience at work, a personal encounter, a newspaper report or the pressures of everyday life.

The order of the texts follows that of their creation. Those looking for guidance in a particular area will also find the texts listed by content. Sense and meaning, good and evil, life and the different phases of life, relationships and love, justice and politics, humanity and the environment are ethical themes that particularly inspire and accompany me.

It has become increasingly clear during my 35 years as a professional ethicist that ethics is about offering an orientation for life. Life is about change. Ethics is therefore about change. *Panta rei* - everything flows and dances. Yet fundamental values such as justice, peace, freedom and integrity of creation remain core benchmarks for me. They represent what is constant within this change.

Being so rooted while being carried along in this movement of life is something that applies to trees and fishes, birds and human beings. In the first place, ethics means trust: trust that we will not lose our bearings in this movement of life; trust that we will continually find the orientation that is needed, even when we cannot discern or grasp it in advance. In short, trust in life and the giver of all life.

Join the dance.

Geneva/Cuiseaux, 1 August 2013
Christoph Stückelberger

1

Sense and the senses

Whether something makes sense
has to do with our senses.

Seeing
Hearing
Touching
Smelling
Tasting

Sense is shaped by the senses.

Things have a sense only
through the senses.

2

The good that is evil

When is good evil?

If what is good
is complacent
behaving self-righteously
seeing the unethical only in others
acting cowardly, not daring to do anything
wanting to do right by all
being conformist, changing nothing
lacking any perspective.

3

The evil that is good

What is evil?
It is destructive – setting
person against person
strong – stronger than what is good
weak – collapsing and imploding
a void – nothingness
in the light of eternity.

For what is evil good?
As a deterrent?
For education?
For community building?
For nothing?

4

The miracle of waves

Science:
Astronomers explore
gravitational waves still unproven
The miracles of Creation
God still has
an infinite
number of surprises in store.

Science also means
being amazed about the miracle of waves
in astonishment and gratitude.

5

Inquisitiveness not acquisitiveness

Inquisitiveness is
creative, innovative.
Inquisitiveness is a virtue.

Acquisitiveness is
deadly, an addiction.
Acquisitiveness is a vice.
Keeping things in moderation
prevents inquisitiveness becoming
acquisitiveness.

6

"I will give you ..."

"Come to Me, all you who labour and are
heavy laden, and I will give you..."
(Mt 11:25-30)
What will he give?
Money? Support? Advice?
A job? Counselling? A relationship?

No. Only this:
"I will give you rest."
Letting go, relaxing
Trusting even without clear prospects
inner serenity
to seek solutions
with renewed vigour.

7

The soul of the conference

"Your Global Ethics Forum
is different
to other conferences.
It has a soul,"
said one participant.

The vision of global ethics
The energy of the participants
Mutual respect
Including the excluded
The soul of the conference.

8

Luxury is a right

An advertisement for cars:
"Luxury is a right."
A right to Luxury?
Lux the light
Luxury - what glitters
Appearance or reality
Pretence or achievement.

Right to property, right to luxury
The social obligations of property
The social obligations of luxury

Luxury entails obligations.

9

Democratic Luxury

Luxury is
exclusive, expensive
with scarcity value
for special occasions.

"Democratic luxury" * is
mass production
with brand impact
for a comfortable life.

The dignity
of the small man and the small woman.

*Philippe Gaydoul, owner of a navy boat, Fogal, JetSet

10

Faszinosum

The Good
    demands respect
Evil
    is fascinating and spellbinding
The Holy
    is attractive, leaving us trembling
    Faszinosum and Tremendum.

How, then,
may we experience the good as the holy
like a shining light
pulling us irresistibly
to itself?

11

Panta rei

Panta rei – everything flows
Life is floating
Life is movement
Life is dance.

Centred
grounded
like a spiral
fleet of foot
towards the light.

The Eschaton is here
God is present
With YOU in the stream of life
on the way.

12

Creation Art

My handiwork
fashioned from the roots of a tree
entangled, scarred
twisted, warped
is HIS work of art

The art of the creator
The art of creation
Creation Art

I only make visible
HIS work
to HIS glory

Creation Art

13

The beauty of age

Furrowed
scarred
drained
barren and drawn
battered by the weather
the trunk of the acacia.

The burden of life
The dignity of age
The beauty of age

Meeting
in humility
and respect.

14

Eruption

Responsibility
means
seismographically
discerning
the portents
and harbingers
of impending eruption.

Responsibility
means
early warning.

15

Disease

Disease is the result of sin,
self-inflicted.
This medieval theology
is heresy
not the way of Jesus.

And yet
many diseases of affluence
seem to result from
human consumerism.
Self-inflicted?

Disease is not sin.
Jesus did not ask
why and how
but
for what and to where?

16

Ideology

Ideology is distorted reality
a black and white view of the world
that ignores complexity.

But the life energy of reality
is stronger over time
bringing down ideologies
like tree roots bringing down walls.

Ethics as a value system should enable us to
apprehend the complexity of reality
and thereby shape it humanely
in simplicity and beauty.

17

Craziness

Morality is normal:
an everyday habit.
Ethics is vision:
revolution, innovation.

This requires
a little craziness
a great deal of independence
and a lot of courage.

Ethics needs craziness.

("Vote for me. I'm completely crazy. In a national crisis don't look to a normal leader," New York Times 15.08.11)

18

Reproving

"The Lord reproves the one he loves."
(Proverbs 3:12)

The patriarchal rod
abused a thousand times
but also
setting limits for the child
protecting them from accidents, out of love.

The ethical reproving
not looking on indifferently
caring about the welfare of others
indicating the right way
pointing to the path that leads to life.

19

Doing nothing

"Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin."
(James 4:17)

Doing nothing is sin.

Instead of not daring to do anything
it's better to have the courage to take a step
despite the risks of making a mistake.

Ethics that accepts mistakes
Fleet of foot
in the light of forgiveness.

20

The cover up

Ethics means light.
Dark forces
seek light,
to hide the darkness.

The unethical
has a friendly face
it is attractive.

The dark forces
seek
to use ethics
as a cover up.

21

Crooked trails

The ethical may still
sprout from the unethical
like good fruit
from a prickly, smelly plant.

Against its will, evil can
open doors, eyes,
hearts, hands
for good.

"God walks straight
even on crooked trails."*

* Helmut Gollwitzer

22

Freeloaders

Taking credit for others' achievements
living at others' expense
benefiting unlawfully
taking without giving
clinging, unable to stand on your own feet.
Because of an inferiority complex
greed
selfishness
uncertainty.

Wretched bondage
Self-esteem gone wrong.

23

Appropriation

Yoking others
to one's own cart
against their will
is a mild form of
exploitation
manipulation
dispossession.

Working with others
in partnership
by mutual agreement
is the ethical expression of
the equality of others
the freedom of others
respect for the dignity of others.

24

The go between

She is
A profit-maximizing banker and
a humanitarian worker
greedy and human
luxurious and modest
contradictory identities
value systems in tension.
She builds bridges
between different worlds
She is a go between.

25

Logic

Logic can be deadly
If it forces life into a single system
until it dies
if it weeds out the contradictions
if it does not withstand opposites
if it is not dialectical.

Logic can promote life
when it imparts
order and direction
within the flow of life.

26

Amulets

Amulets are superstition
if they are worshipped as
a God. *

Amulets are symbols of faith
if they are symbols that
evoke God's healing presence. **

A fine line

* Pantheism: The gemstone is also God

Pan-en-theism **: God also works through the gemstone.

27

The Eye

The blue eye of Turkey
a blessing at the front door
welcoming and protecting guests
against envious glances.

The eye of Turkey
is an encouragement
to free oneself from the fetters of envy
to be free to encounter others.

Virtues need symbols.

28

Flight capital

Refugees seek safety.
Flight capital seeks safe havens
in companies, countries, currencies
in stormy economic crises
constantly on the run
to dollars, euros, Swiss francs, kroner
harried and hunted down by financial
sharks.

Currency areas based on solidarity*
and ultimately a world currency
offer security in solidarity.

* As proposed by the monetary expert Mundell

29

A headlong rush

Dark shapes
seek light
to make their darkness
invisible.

A headlong rush
ethics as whitewash
one person's shrewd cunning
is the start of *metanoia* for another.

Caught between trust and distrust,
discerning the spirits?

30

Criminal Energy I

The headlines said:
"UBS trader with considerable
criminal energy."
Two billion Swiss francs down the drain
A desire to destroy?
Getting a kick through illegal behaviour?
Greed and addiction to getting still more?

Don't put the brakes on the energy
but transform it
into the infinite
energy of love.
Veni Creator Spiritus.
Come, O energy of God.

31

Criminal Energy II

The criminal was not only the
individual banker
but, more importantly, those who
designed the system

Setting up Delta I as high-risk gambling
setting the aim of maximum returns
promising maximum bonuses
putting a young reckless investment
banker onto a roller coaster

and
when he crashes
calling him a criminal
so that the system
can continue with the next victim.

32

Opium and Bread

Religion is opium
Faith is bread
Religion numbs the senses
Faith sharpens the senses
Religion makes you blind
Faith makes you see.

33

Planning

Planned and successfully implemented
planned and badly implemented
planned and not implemented
unplanned and successfully implemented
unplanned and badly implemented
unplanned and not implemented.*

"The human mind may devise many
plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord
that will be established." (Proverbs 19:21)

* The ethics of responsibility and consequence evaluates ethical decisions according to their actual consequences and effects and not according to motivations and planned intentions.

34

What remains?

What remains at the end?
A couple of archive boxes
a few publications
a living memory
acquaintances, near and far
perhaps
children and children's children
and children's children's children.

More important than what remains
is what was and what is;
love that is lived
in the here and now.

35

Deep currents

It's good to define what's good
We need to consider values
Yet it's demanding and takes courage to
reveal the forces that destroy.

Recognising the power of the
destructive currents that run deep
and enabling the surface water of the good
to act in the depths
needs the transformative power
of God's Spirit.

Spiritual Ethics

Take a deep breath
sing the beatitudes
give thanks for God's rich blessings.

Plug into God's spiritual energy
through wrestling with God's Word
in a smile
in an encouraging word
in a sharp analysis
in a simple act of love.

Fired by the spirit, and remaining well grounded
fleet-footed and committed
practise spiritual ethics daily.

37

Bears and berries

When a bear suddenly appears,
we try to escape.
We forget about picking the berry.

Bad news drives out good.
Dangers and evil
lead to action straightaway.
It takes discipline and exercise to
become aware of the good that nourishes.

Don't get fixated on bears
on what's bad
Awaken interest in berries
in what's good
Practise spiritual ethics every day.

38

The New World Map

Country classifications
reflect value systems.

Developed-under-developed is obsolete.
North-South is meaningless.
New fault lines are emerging.

The new bipolarity is
heavy debts – few debts
wasteful – sustainable
corrupt – respecting the rule of law
power-crazy – value-oriented
unethical – ethical.

39

The better solidarity

Mismanagement, wheeling and dealing,
corruption
The implosion of the state in Greece, Spain,
Portugal, Italy?

Should Germany pay the bill?
Yet national bankruptcy and a fresh start
might be better than living off others.

Refusing further injections of cash
to a son who is a drug addict
may be the better solidarity.

40

The spell of numbers

Today is the 11th of the 11th of the 11th.
Spellbound by the mystique of numbers
Order and symmetry
Beauty and mystery.

Say no the superstition of numbers and the
bad luck of Friday the Thirteenth.

Say yes to the living one, who with
his order as our order
orders the path our action should take.

41

Getting to know the son

"As I know you,"
I said to my adult son.
He smiled. Of course. I have known him
since his first breath.

And yet each day
I get to know him anew.

Life's fascinating adventure is
discovering the known unknowns.

Kiss 1: ethics ∞ law

Ethics without law
is toothless

Law without ethics
is lifeless.

Ethics within law
  leads to justice with love
Law within ethics
  leads to commitment.

Law and ethics embrace
Justice and love kiss each other.

Kiss II: Justice ∞ Love

"Justice and peace will kiss each other."
(Psalm 85:10)

A kiss is electrifying energy
a humanising relationship.

Justice without love
    is static and inhumane.
Love without justice
    is a flash in the pan.
Love and justice together
    make the world go round
    and make human beings human.

44

Kiss III: Breaking the rules

Perhaps the most important decision of my life was to break the rules, an exception to the rule.
1970. The deadline for registrations for our youth work camp in Sicily had expired. The limit for the number of participants had been reached. A student who I didn't know phoned me as student and camp organiser, insisting to be allowed to take part.
As an exception to the rule, I allowed her to participate.
She became my wife. She gave us four children.
If justice and love kiss each other ...

45

Goodwill

Not having to pay for a hotel room or a
conference fee because of illness,
despite not having cancelled:
a goodwill gesture
meeting someone halfway
retaining customers
avoiding difficulties
taking account of time and effort
using common sense
showing a bit of empathy
waiving one's rights.

It's goodwill that gives a human face to
daily life and work.
Exploiting it means squandering it.

46

The ethics of diplomacy

Defending one's own interests
Recognising others' interests
Not fighting each other
Taking a step towards each other
Making careful diplomatic concessions,
expecting that the other party
also makes concessions.

Putting yourself in the place of others
offers surprising possibilities
of achieving an ethical compromise.

The ethics of negotiation
The ethics of diplomacy.

47

Too weak

Kitchen quarrels
Who's in charge
male-female roles.

irritated
overwrought
tired
short-tempered and with a migraine

too weak
to apologise.
Being able to make an apology
is an expression of strength.

48

Dazzled

Dazzled
infatuated
beguiled
taken in by appearances
allowing oneself to be
seduced, inveigled
turning off critical thought
forgetting common sense
worshipping
idols instead of God.

Yet
Idols resemble gods
Appearance and reality look alike.

Ethics requires a sharp mind.

Translation ethics

God "is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords", says the King James Version (1 Timothy 6:15).

In today's language we wouldn't speak of God being a Potentate.

The Good News Bible speakers of God as "the blessed and only Ruler".

Language is the foundation for action
Translation ethics is foundational ethics.

50

Mercy and Compassion

Allowing your heart to be touched
immediately and directly
person to person
following the logic of the heart.

Merciful, full of mercy
in Old English *mildheort* or *earmheort,*
being of tender heart
in modern English, compassion,
from *com-pati,* to "suffer together"
Having compassion, taking
a child to the breast

Mercy is the first step to empowerment
But only the first step.

51

Procession and demonstration

Procession
follow the leader
the one on whom
all hopes are focussed.

Demonstration
follow the ideal
demand
values and rights.

Affirm your hopes and convictions
stand up for your values
two affirmations.

52

Secret Societies

Sects, freemasons*, Opus Dei
secret societies
Cliques to maintain power
Trust through secrecy
Lack of transparency as a principle
Prostituting enlightenment
from light to darkness
Ritualistic secularism as a
substitute religion.

Simply: unethical.

* "Freemasons within the whole of the French elite."
Le Point 26.1.2012.

53

Secrets and trust

"He took his secrets with him," she said after her husband's death.

"It's a good thing," she added.
"Some secrets incriminate; others exonerate."

Sharing a secret with someone in confidence can strengthen trust.

Not sharing a secret even with one's closest partner can strengthen trust.

Secrecy can create suspicion
Secrecy can create trust.

Three types of justice

Natural justice

- The laws of nature
- Bio-organisms
- Sustainable equilibrium

Human justice

- equal opportunities, rights, duties
- To each the same
- To each their own

Divine Justice

- A great blessing
- Grace that has not been earned
- Love also for the unjust.

55

unjust

Do not expect
life to be fair
at least not on the scale of human justice
at the very most according to
natural justice and divine justice
be realistic, not fatalistic.

But do expect
that each day you can offer
signs of justice.
A realistic hope.

56

Self-discipline

Discipline

Wanting or needing to act

Imposed discipline

discipline

prescribed by others

obedience or necessity

Self-discipline

voluntary discipline

self-determined

fulfilled freedom

Different ethical energies.

57

Legal Ethics

Religious dress codes and dietary rules
are on the increase.
In all world religions
pilgrimages are flourishing
along with hate preachers and
teachers of the law,
fundamentalists and conservatives.

Where the social-ecological market system
becomes unrestrained capitalism,
where liberalism degenerates into
libertarianism,
where freedom descends into
self-indulgence,
religious rites and regulations re-emerge.

We need ethics that liberate.

Fountain of Youth I

Getting older
More than sixty
and at the same time
discovering new strength and resources
tapping into new springs
prayers and serenity
relationships and grandchildren
eroticism and angels
swirl about, and keep silent.

The Fountain of Youth

Fountain of Youth II

After periods of life
of burdens,
dehydration,
fatigue,
lacking a sense of direction

finding a new source of life
of sprightliness
irrigation
energy
love.

The fountain of youth
from God's groundwater.

Efcharisto

"Thank you", "Efcharisto" *

ευ-χαριστω! thank you
ευ - good
Χαρισ - grace
Χαρισματα - gifts of grace, charisms
ευχαριστια - Eucharist, thanksgiving

Eucharist is thanksgiving
for the abundance of gifts
God offers in Christ

The everyday "thank you!" is a prayer of thanksgiving
"Efcharisto!"

* Efcharisto means "thank you" in modern Greek Visiting Thessalonica, Pentecost 2012

61

The Song of Songs

Dancing wind
tender hands
flashing eyes
feeding lips
curious ears
playing fingers
dancing feet
caring arms
burning fire
relaxing sleep
beauty of love
gift of God
heavenly blessing.

Excreta

Excreta
Saliva, fat, bowel movements, sweat
urine, vomit, tears, exhaled air
allow the organism
to get rid of unnecessary or harmful
substances.
The amazing diversity of
self-purification.

Ethical purification
allows the spirit, soul and body
to excrete attitudes and practices that
are unethical.
Vices are pollutants that cause illness.
Catharsis, ethical purification,
means conserving and restoring
ethical health.

63

Stress reduction

Stress
Pressure
Worry

Find a place of inner strength
Concentrate
Gather your forces
Ground yourself

Practise a spiritual life once again
pray daily

Find peace
Act from a place of inner strength
remain anchored amid the storm.

Transformation

"Planting seeds of transformation"
was the theme of the conference.*

"I'm a changed person after this conference.
Now I feel that I am a member of the global village",
said one of the participants at the end.

How can we shape
transformation, conversion, renewal
so that small plants become
the strong trees and forests of society?

* "Seeds of Transformation" was the theme of the Global Ethics Forum 2012 of Globethics.net in Geneva.

65

The real elite

It's better to be elitist than egalitarian
better to be rich than modest
better to forget about compassion.
Such are his philosophical ethics.*

I contest.
The real elite are those who are
modest
compassionate
humble.

The masses scramble for wealth and fame.
The elite are those who stand out ethically.

* Peter Sloterdijk in his book "Zeilen und Tage", 2012
As reported by the Tages-Anzeiger 25 Aug..2012)

66

Tears

Tears of mourning
Tears of anger
Tears of despair
Tears of compassion
Tears of pity

About people I love and who are suffering,
entrapped and tormented and
about structures in which I am at home,
and which I want to change,
yet cannot change.
My tears.

"And Jesus wept over the city."

67

Breaking promises

Are there ethical reasons
to break promises?

Out of malice: no
Out of revenge: no
Out of necessity to achieve a political
compromise while partially keeping
the promise: yes
Because too much has been promised:
Yes, with an apology and corrective action.
To save life: yes.

Breaking promises
erodes trust.
Breaking promises
Can be ethical only in emergency.

Five different lenses

Optimists are euphoric
they see the opportunities
Pessimists are sceptical
they see what has been destroyed
Fatalists are resigned
they refuse responsibility
Cynics are malicious
they cut themselves off
Those who hope are full of trust
they believe in the transforming power of
God through human hands.

I am a pessimist who is full of hope.

69

Working and praying

I was relieved that the funding
application had finally been approved
after six months work,
preparing many documents.

A staff member responded to the good
news with little emotion: "I knew that it
would be approved." –
"How did you know?" –
"I have been praying for it for six months."

Those with little faith?
Those with great faith?
Twin forms of faith:
Work and prayer.

Silence

The ethical quality of silence
depends on what motivates it.

Silence from cowardice
Silence from humility
Silence from shock
Silence from guilt
Silence in order not
to hurt with words
Silence to listen.

One sort of silence is destructive;
The other sort of silence is golden.

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Getting to the essentials

My doctoral thesis: 660 pages
My habilitation: 380 pages
My books: 200 or so
My articles: 20 or so
My aphorisms: 15 lines

and
before passing
into the light of God
only
one word

Gratitude

Gift token

A gift token of 50 Swiss francs for
one night at a hotel.
The token is valid but only at the
standard price of 259 francs,
less 50 francs = 209 francs.
One night for early bookers: 210
Saving: 1 franc.

The gift token turns out to be
a mere token, not a gift.
Good people need the gift
of being able
to distinguish
a gift from a token.

Gift value

The gift token turns out to be
a mere token
a ploy
a ruse

if it is not
backed by

honesty
truthfulness
and genuine value.

Reject to Protect

Reject, to protect yourself
Keep your distance, to find yourself.
Create protected areas
so that tender plants
may take root and grow
finding stillness to cope with the noise.

This dynamic balance of
times of protecting and of blossoming
is the meaning of human dignity and
humanity.

Christ and Culture

Christmas celebrates the
Incarnation of God
Incarnation in Palestine.

From Christ to Christianity
incarnation becomes inculturation
God's incarnation in many cultures.
First in the Middle East and North Africa
in Southern Europe and South India
today throughout the world in all cultures
and with Bible translations into
2798 languages.

Christ becomes incarnate in culture
Christ transforms culture
This is why Christian ethics is always
contextual ethics,
assimilating and transforming cultures.
The Incarnation of God.

Sustainability

The Swiss Forest Act of 1876:
Those who clear a forest, must plant a forest.

The Swiss Land Act of 2013: *
Those who turn green into grey, must
turn grey into green.

The golden rule of reciprocity
the ecological rule of taking the long-view
the rule of inter-generational justice
together add up to
sustainability.

* Proposal and principle by Benedikt Loderer,
Architect, 2013. It means: if you build on the land,
you must give land that has been built on back to nature.

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Trust

Without cares
taking care

Without concerns
showing concern

Without letting drop
letting go

Enjoying freedom
and remaining committed

Growing with you
beyond myself

Setting sail for unchartered waters,
trusting in each other.

The right to be forgotten

"Love keeps no records of wrongs." *

The right to be forgotten
is a human right
The duty to remember and to forget
is a commandment of love.

The digital age seems
to store everything and
to forget nothing.
But information technology
is short-lived.
It is still possible to forget.
Instead of panicking,
remain calm and stay vigilant.

* 1 Cor 13:5, International English Version

The four F-sins

Sin means
applying other standards
than those of God.
Four widespread F-sins are

Fatalism
    false resignation
    instead of hope
Fundamentalism
    false security
    instead of trust in God
Fascism
    false leaders
    instead of the One God
Fetishism
    false gods
    instead of the Risen One.

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Cloud-values

The Indian paths to liberation are
impressive
from the I to the self
from the ego to the universum
from virtue to love,

and yet mind numbing.
The values evaporate in the clouds.
I remember
Jesus of Nazareth
tangible
on the side of the working fisherfolk
the grounded God
down-to-earth
with the light of heaven.

* Returning from Schillong/Kalkutta
in North-East India

The Cloud of Values

India - a cradle of deep spirituality
Northeast India - indigenous music
Cultural diversity, spirituality
The cradle of great gurus and thinkers.

The modern India at Mumbai Airport
puts spirituality up for sale
Modern bestsellers about the struggle
between good and evil
based on Indian mythology.
Just like American thrillers.

History repeats itself
American markets
are reflected
in Indian ones.

* At Mumbai airport returning from
Schillong/Calcutta in North-East India.

Virtue and Vice

Virtue and vice are like
wheat and tares,
promoting life and obstructing life.

Good is that which does good
Good is what is healthy
Bad is that which harms
Good is that which does not damage
(does no harm).

But often
what some people think are pests
are useful for others
and wheat and tares are
difficult to distinguish.
When does which weed
become part of God's plan?

Offers – Precepts – Prohibitions

I may – the offer of freedom
I should – the precept of love
I should not – the prohibition of destruction

Offer, precept and prohibition
belong together.
Together they form the triangle of
ethics, values and promotion of life.

At the beginning is the offer
God's offer and gift of life
You may.

Hidden faults

Do unknowingly someone wrong
Accept a social norm that is
unfair to others
not knowing the long-term
consequences of one's own actions.

Acting unethically unknowingly
"Forgive my hidden faults."
(Psalm 19:12 NIV)

Saints and Sinners

Asked whether
Globethics.net
can work with companies
whose behaviour is unethical.
I replied:

We are not looking for saints
but rather for sinners
who want to improve.

It is not the healthy who need a doctor
but those who are sick.
It is not saints who need ethics
but those
who want the best and who still do wrong.

Let the person who is perfect
cast the first stone.

Skin and Hair

Every day
Hair falls out
Flakes of skin
are shed.

Every seven years
the body is completely renewed
all cells are replaced
a gentle, never-ending renewal
Signs of life
only scars remain.

Signs of life
are also about changing values
values lead to change and growth
change leads to new values
constancy in renewal.

The Ethics of Life
Scars may still remain.

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Thou shalt not swear

An oath is irrevocable
carved in stone
unchanged for eternity.

But life is about change
adapting,
continual change.

"Thou shall not swear."*
Oaths bind and block
They kill life.

But say yes to a covenant
a contract able to be modified and renewed.
"The new covenant I will not
Write on stone, but on the heart."**

* Lev. 19:12; Num 30:3; Mt. 5:34

** Jer 31.33

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Love

Love is

when you
do not lead others
into temptation.

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Trust and Distrust

Trusting in advance
opens doors to relationships
Distrusting in advance
closes doors to relationships
Distrust without trust
kills life
Trust without distrust
Makes one blind and dependent.

Trusting in advance
supported by critical examination
and experience of working together
leads to
Long-term trust.

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Philanthropy and Fraud

Philanthropy
Helping through love
for human beings
and with a critical mind.
Fraud
Illusory help out of love of oneself
with criminal intent.

Sometimes the two
cannot be immediately distinguished.

Philanthropy must be paired with
transparency
accountability
a willingness to accept criticism
and keeping a balance
between control and confidence.

Superstar or Truly Human

Incontestable
omnipotent
superhuman:
the superstar.

Security and doubts,
Promoting and impeding life,
hope and despair:
being human.

Spirit-led and tested
healing and wrestling
all-transforming love:
Jesus, truly human.

Surveillance

A data scandal
involving the secret services
of the global powers and
global companies
that are tapping and
Googling and Tweeting
Big Brother is watching you
political and commercial exploitation
an Orwellian society
commercial and state surveillance.

Or

Guarding, preserving and protecting
like the mother at the child's bed
"But even the hairs of your head are all
counted. Do not be afraid." (Luke 12:7)
Surveillance that serves life.

Managing desire

Desire is the energy of life
The desire to eat, the desire for sex,
The desire for relations
the desire for knowledge.
Gifts of God.

Suppressing desire
destroys lives.

Uncontrolled desire
leads to greed and addiction.

Managing and making use of desire
in the right way,
in the right place
at the right time
promotes life.

Ethics is the management of desire.

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$0 \neq 0$

"I have nothing left, nothing, zero,"
The woman said in despair.

"But you still have more than me,"
her friend replied thoughtfully.

Zero does not equal zero.

Aggressive Love

Attack and aggression
fighting and wounds
are the result of hatred
but also of love.

Shaking one's beloved awake
provoking them
to feel their heart beat
and to arouse love.

Jacob wrestling with God at the Jabbok
"I will not let you go, unless
you bless me." (Genesis 32:26)
The wounded hip:
love that has been grasped.

Aggressive Love

Harmony

Finding a balance
instead of swinging between extremes
like a pendulum

Harmony
through the dialectic of opposites

Yin and Yang
instead of all or nothing

Globalance
instead of global dominance

Dynamic equilibrium
instead of deadlock

The order of existing creation
with the promise of the future

Ethics of harmony.

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Yes and Yes

Yes or No
express a decision.

But the colours of the decision
are as finely graded as a watercolour.

Yes, but
  the hesitant Yes
Yes, I could
  the Yes that ponders
Yes, if you agree
  the Yes that is ready to compromise
Yes, certainly
  the definitive Yes
Yes, absolutely
  the ultimate Yes
Yes, whispered
  The Yes in the face of the ultimate.

Aesthetics and Ethics

My wood sculpture began
with a chainsaw and chisel
then grinding, grinding, grinding
Grain size 30, 40, 60, 80, 120, 240
weeks and weeks of sanding down.

Sometimes relationships begin
with coarse and harsh words
but which are then refined, honed,
carefully chosen
until they feel as gentle and soft as
respect and love.

Aesthetics and Ethics
are twin sisters.

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Ethics has wings

Oppressive morality?
No thank you!

But rather
a nimble dance
towards liberation.

""Do not be anxious how you
shall answer." (Luke 21:14)

The burden is light.
Ethics has wings

Earth and Heaven

Caught between
earth and heaven
embedded between these poles.

With my feet on the ground
pulled by a thread heavenwards
the wide view
of earth and heaven.

Earthly wings
walking upright
incarnation
human dignity

truly human.

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Way-Markers

100 Reflections Exploring Ethics in Everyday Life

Christoph Stückelberger



Christoph Stückelberger, is Founder and Executive Director of the Geneva-based global ethics foundation Globethics.net and Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Basel, Switzerland, specialising in ethics.

Listen carefully to your inner voice while paying attention to others. Continue your nimble dance through life. Be inspired to discover new perspectives. Despite personal, professional and social squalls and storms, look for the markers at the wayside and use your inner compass to keep to your path. The short texts in this booklet offer reflections for orientation. Ethics from everyday life for everyday life. Join the dance.

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