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## Way-Markers : 100 reflections exploring ethics in everyday life

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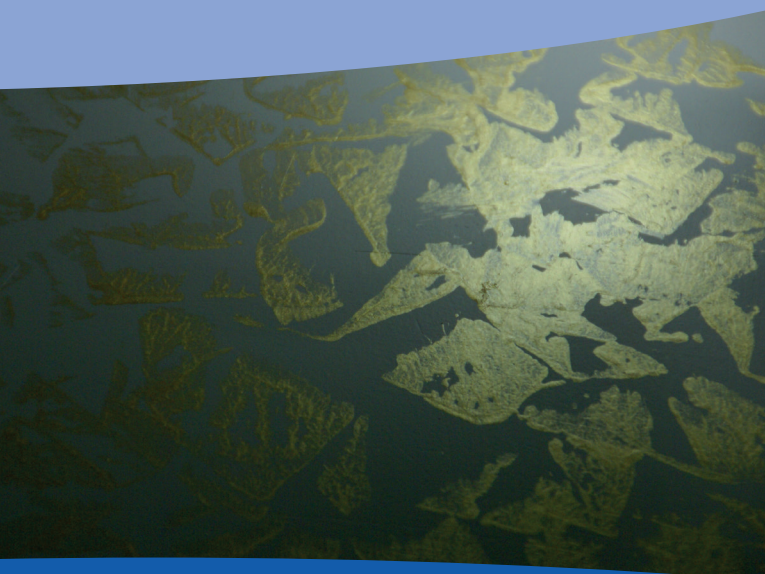
# Way-Markers

100 Reflections Exploring  
Ethics in Everyday Life



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Christoph Stückelberger



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# Way-Markers

100 Reflections Exploring  
Ethics in Everyday Life

Globethics.net Praxis 2

The author, 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.

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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 reprovng  
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 *metanoía* 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.

# 36

## 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 to 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.

# 42

## 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.

# 43

## Kiss 11: 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.

## 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.

# 49

## 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 speaks 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 *earnheort*,  
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.

## 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

# 59

## 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.

# 60

## Efcharísto

"Thank you", "Efcharísto" \*

ευ-χαριστώ! thank you

ευ - good

Χαρις - grace

Χαρίσματα - gifts of grace,  
charisms

ευχαριστία - Eucharist, thanksgiving

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

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

\* 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.

# 62

## 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 élite

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 élite are those who are  
modest  
compassionate  
humble.

The masses scramble for wealth and fame.  
The élite 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.

# 68

## 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.

# 70

## 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.

# 71

## 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

# 72

## 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.

# 73

## 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.

# 75

## 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.

# 76

## 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.

# 77

## 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 uncharted waters,  
trusting in each other.

# 78

## 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

# 79

## 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.

# 80

## 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 Shillong/Kalkutta  
in North-East India

# 81

## 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  
Shillong/Calcutta in North-East India.

# 82

## 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?

# 83

## 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.

# 84

## 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)

# 85

## 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.

# 86

## 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.

# 87

## 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

# 88

## Love

Love is

when you  
do not lead others  
into temptation.

# 89

## 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.

## 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.

# 91

## 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.

# 92

## 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.

# 93

## 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.

$0 \neq 0$

"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.

# 95

## 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

# 96

## 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.

## 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.

# 99

## 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

# 100

## 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

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Christoph Stückelberger, is Founder and Executive Director of the Geneva-based global ethics foundation [Globethics.net](http://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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