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LEADERSHIP WITH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY. THE NOBLE VOCATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ETHICS

Keynote Speech at the Inauguration of the Chancellor Samuel Kobia Centre for Ethics, Integrity and Governance at St. Paul's University, Kenya, 15 March 2019

Christoph Stückelberger, Switzerland

Students, Administrators, Professors, Vice-Chancellor, Chancellor, Excellences, friends, is a great honour for me to hold this keynote speech at the inauguration of the *Chancellor Samuel Kobia Centre for Ethics, Integrity and Governance*. I do it with great humility and thankfulness as an alumnus of the then St. Paul's United Theological College, now St. Paul's University. I had the chance to study on this campus for half a year between 1974 and 1975, 45 years ago! I am also deeply thankful for the long-term friendship with former chancellor, Dr. Samuel Kobia, who studied here just a few years before me, and whom I worked with for over twenty years. During that time, Dr. Samuel Kobia, Prof. Jesse Mugambi and myself, worked together to create the Programme for Ethics in Eastern Africa PEEA in Nairobi in 2002. This was one nucleus which two years later, in 2004, led me to create the global network

www.globethics.net. I will say more about this foundation towards the end of my speech.

Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia in his valedictory speech as chancellor, in 2018, concluded with three topics. He suggested: "In conclusion, I wish to identify and propose three frontiers for universities to explore in academic studies and vocational training; social media; ethics in politics; and ethics in higher education." It is my privilege in this keynote speech, to concentrate on the third of the frontiers: ethics in higher education.

But before dealing with ethics in higher education, I would like to share some experiences and a lesson learnt during my studies at St. Paul's, then called United Theological College, 45 years ago.

3.1 My Studies at SPU 1974-75: Eight Lessons Learnt

It is for me an emotional moment because I realize how much I owe to this institution and how much it influenced my personal development and academic journey. You will also see how it is directly linked to ethics in higher education.

The mid-seventies in the last century was, politically, a very intense period. I must remind you that it was still the period of apartheid and strong anti-apartheid movements that we as students in Europe were involved in began to take hold. The liberation movements in Africa were still active. The Portuguese colony Angola became independent during my time at St. Paul's in January 1975, and Mozambique followed suit in June of the same year. Black theology and South American liberation theology were hotly debated. In 1974, Swiss students launched the campaign, "Nestlé kills babies", and about the company's exploitive tactics that promoted powder milk over breastfeeding, to the detriment of infants in developing countries. As a student I also investigated Nestlé in Nairobi and Limuru.

Lessons Learnt

- A long way: Incarnation of Christ needs enculturation of faith.
- Honest listening opens doors and builds friendship.
- Poverty eradication starts with access to information.
- Contextual ethics places humans at the centre.
- Cry Justice: Ethics starts with tears and smell.
- Integrity leadership means zero fraud and corruption.
- Trauma healing is a condition for liberation and reconciliation.
- Unity (at St. Paul's United Theological College), ecumenism and interfaith, is possible.

For you, students and researchers, let me add a small remark on academic research methodology: make your geographical, political, economic and religious contexts, as well as your personal interests and experiences transparent in the introduction of your research. This personal context is what I briefly tried to explain with these biographical notes. The times, where empires – be it the Roman, Ottoman, British, French, American or Chinese – claimed to speak for the whole world, have passed. Even though I am convinced that global values and globally shared knowledge exists, academic work is international, but also always contextual. Academic honesty rests upon making this context transparent and taking stock of its influence on research results!

3.2 Higher Education: Trends and Ethical Challenges

Let us now look at ethics in higher education and start with trends[6] and challenges before looking at fundamental values and solutions.

[6] The following is partly based on *Research Report: Ethical Impact of Funding in Higher Education*, article in this book, by student Marie Renée Andreescu under supervision of Christoph Stückelberger.

3.2.1 Global Enrolments of Students

Global enrolments of students in tertiary education institutions grew from about 65 million in 1990 to 213 million students in 2015. This is an increase of 300 percent in one generation! China and India dominated the global growth, but many African countries also increased substantially. Demographic growth and economic growth are two main factors, but enrolment growth exceeds demographic growth. UNESCO forecasts for 2015-2030, the SDG period, an increase of 16% in global population growth and 56% in tertiary education enrolment up to a total of 332 million students in 2030, five times higher than 1990. In Kenya, from the year 2000 to 2015, the population increased by 51%, GDP grew by 100% and tertiary student enrolment by 168%. This immense growth can be seen as a positive development towards more skilled people in a society, but the high unemployment rate of graduates shows its negative side as we will soon discuss.

Ethical chance: Increased number of well-educated and equipped graduates for rising needs.

Ethical challenge: The rapid growth can also undermine quality and integrity.

3.2.2 Public versus Private Universities

With market liberalization in the last four decades, the education market was also liberalized, causing a boom of new private universities. Private universities are often smaller than public ones, and ask for much higher student fees, but offer (sometimes, not always) better quality of teaching because of better remuneration of teaching staff. They offer better infrastructure as they are newer. Global private enrolment increased by 5 percent between the year 2000 and 2010, but since then it is slightly decreasing[7]. Some private universities have already closed or

[7] According to unpublished data, shared by the author with Globethics.net: Daniel C. Levy, *Global private higher education: an empirical profile of its size and geographical shape*, 2018.

will disappear for lack of quality. On my recent visit to universities in Moscow, I met the President of the Association of Private Universities of Russia. He told me that 600 private universities have been established in the last two decades (many of them only distant learning), but recently, 500 of them have been closed by government decision. Being the president of a private university himself, he was not unhappy about this development for the sake of guaranteed academic quality and reputation. Whereas in Europe, the "old" continent with many universities as old as 500 years including my university in Basel, public universities still comprise the majority of higher education institutions. In the "young" nation of USA and especially in emerging economies influenced by the American model, private universities are booming.

Ethical chance: Private universities, because of competition, are often more willing to integrate ethics in higher education.

Ethical challenge: In some countries, there is corruption or fraud in accreditation and supervision authorities of higher education. Competition can also lower standards in order to attract more paying students.

3.2.3 Funding of Higher Education

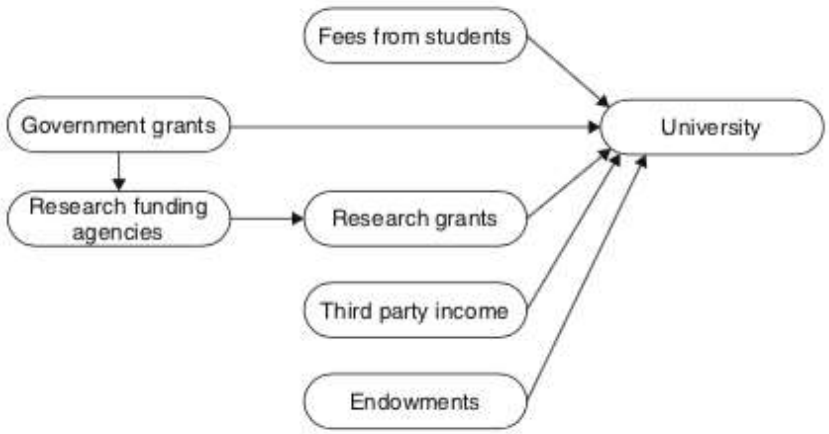


Figure 3.3 The four flows of finance to present universities

Together with market liberalization, the funding models also changed. Private investors discovered the education market. This is positive as public funding is not enough, but it is negative as volatility and,

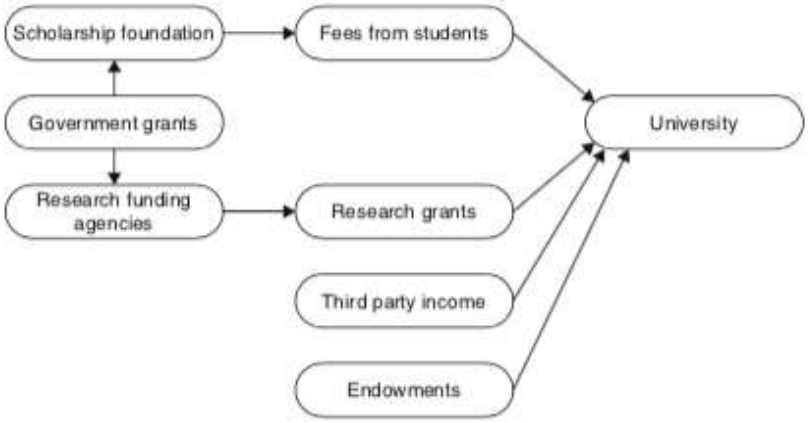


Figure 3.4 Schematic flow of finance to the Third Generation University

in some cases, profit maximization raises serious ethical questions. The following two graphs[8] show the shift from direct to indirect government funding in a competitive environment:

Ethical chance: private funding is needed, but public budget should remain strong for higher education.

Ethical challenge: increased private sector funding, e.g. in research, increases conflicts of interests and endangers independence of research.

3.2.4 Teachers' Salaries and Quality of Teaching and Research

A large part of the ethical challenges in higher education are linked to economic factors, especially low remuneration of teaching staff. This leads to multiple higher education institutions engaging with the same professor, often with no or little time for research and accompaniment of students. The praxis of additional income from bribes from students, "marks for sex" and absenteeism because of private business, is still growing in many countries. By the way: a professor at a university in Greece or Eastern Europe does not earn more than a professor in Kenya nowadays (professor salaries in Greece were cut by 50% due to the current economic crisis).

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[8] Josef C. Brada, Wojciech Bienkowski and Masaaki Kuboniwa, *International Perspectives on Financing Higher Education*, Palgrave Macmillan:, 2015.

Ethical chance: I do not see an ethical chance in low salaries, only challenges.

Ethical challenge: as mentioned above.

3.2.5 Unemployment, Employability and Vocational Training

Unemployment of graduates is a huge problem in many countries. It is up to 50 percent and more in some countries. In Nigeria, where I teach at a private Catholic university, graduates' unemployment in the country is estimated at 70%! This has led to policy change in many countries (from Indonesia, India and China) where budgets for higher education have been reduced in favour of vocational training budgets.

Ethical chance: meet the needs of the job market/the society better with more practitioners and technicians.

Ethical challenge: lower government budgets for higher education

3.3 Higher Education as Noble Vocation

The relation between academic and vocational education leads to a key ethical question: what is the value and the reputation of a profession in society? In ancient Greece, the philosopher was higher than the slave; in the middle age the priest was higher than the trader or teacher; in 2019, the CEO of an IT or Artificial Intelligence company is more reputable than the farmer. And from the perspective of Christian faith? Christian work ethics[9] is revolutionary for education and the job market: what counts not is the reputation of a profession in society, but rather work executed for the glory of God (Soli Deo Gloria) and as service to people in need/to the society. And if work is only done for personal ben-

[9] See Elly K. Kansiime, *Integrating Faith with Work. A Ministry Transformational Model*, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2015, Focus series; Christoph Stückelberger, *Work Ethics. Profession as Vocation*, in Christoph Stückelberger, Global Ethics Applied, Vol 4: Bioethics, Religion, Leadership, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2016, 180-182. Free download www.globethics.net/publications, Readers series.

efit, it often leads to exploitation of others. Therefore, in the light of Christian faith, a righteous farmer has higher reputation and dignity in front of God than a corrupt billionaire or a famous researcher who develops the newest autonomous weapons/drones to kill innocent civilians. An honest cleaner in this university has higher status in front of God than a selfish professor or pastor or priest!

"Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection"[10] is an excellent document of the Vatican, published by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace under its president Cardinal Turkson from Ghana. Not only does a pastor, a deacon, a nun or a bishop have a vocation, but every profession. "When businesses and market economies function properly and focus on serving the common good, they contribute greatly to the material and even the spiritual well-being of society.…The alternative path of faith-based "servant leadership" provides business leaders with a larger perspective and helps them to balance the demands of the business world with those of ethical social principles, illuminated for Christians by the Gospel."[11]

"Vocation of an Academic Leader" could be statement or policy document produced by the new Centre for Ethics, Integrity and Governance at SPU, together with Globethics.net. to work in the sector of higher education, be it as vice-chancellor, teacher, administrator, driver, cook or student, a vocation, a calling to serve God for the common good!

3.4 Integrity Leadership as Stewardship

This leads directly to the keyword "integrity" which is one of the three topics of the new centre. Integrity is one of the most important characteristics of a leader. What does it mean? I call integrity "The Vir-

[10] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Vocation of the Business Leader. A Reflection, Vatican 2014.

[11] Ibid, 2, Executive Summary.

tue of Virtues"[12], because it integrates most of the virtues and values for a life in dignity and a human society.[13]

> *"Integrity is a combination and integration of many virtues: honesty, respect, responsibility, transparency, righteousness, trustworthiness, probity, uprightness, honourableness, morality, high-mindedness, right-mindedness and following God's rules on justice, peace and love. Integrity is to comply with one's own values and convictions. For Christians, this means to act in conformity with God's will. Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching (C.S. Lewis) and doing what is necessary and not only what is profitable. A truthful person acts out of intrinsic motivation and not the contrary. A truthful person respects and implements laws and regulations. He/she has the courage to act correctly without being followed by the crowd, without being applauded by the authorities, or without fear of financial losses. The person with integrity can distinguish conflicts of interest and solve them in a transparent way. The person with integrity can recognize his/her own mistakes and those of others, and to correct them, accepting the own limits and the need for collaboration with others."*

Integrity means also to accept the limits of oneself. If I am not strong enough to resist unethical practices in politics, I may not apply as a candidate for a position. The Bible is very blunt on that: "Do not try to become a Judge, if you cannot extract injustice, for you could be influenced by the personality of a Prince and thus compromise your own integrity" (Sirach 7:6). Straightforwardness (Prov. 1:3) is close to integrity and integrity of faith says no to former (ancient) gods, and has trust

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[12] Christoph Stückelberger, *Integrity*, in Christoph Stückelberger, Walter Fust, Obiora Ike (Editors), *Global Ethics for Leadership. Values and Virtues for Life,* Geneva: Globethics.net, 2016, 311-328.

[13] The following part is taken from ibid, 323-327.

in God (Jos 24:14); integrity and faithfulness are almost synonymous in this text.

"There are other expressions that describe many aspects of integrity: the purity of the heart and the loyalty of the believer, for instance, David, following the threat of Saul (2 Samuel 22:21-26):

> "My God treats me by my justice, he treats me by the purity of my hands, as I have followed the paths of God, I have not been unfaithful to my God. All his laws are in front of me, and I have not disobeyed his commandments. I have been faithful with Him; I have avoided all misbehaviours. Consequently, God has given me back my justice, as he has seen it with his own eyes. To the faithful, you are faithful, to the blameless; you are blameless (intègre)."

Faith in God and in his teachings/ethical principles: "Let our heart be truthful to God, our God, so that you follow his teachings, and keep his commandments, as you are doing it today" (1 Kings 8:61, 1 Kings 9:4). But in the eyes of Jesus, the Pharisee, in his prayer, he follows all the laws of God, but he forgets that love is the most important teaching of Jesus. So, in this sense, integrity is understood as an act of love.

A biblical text on integrity—which we may consider as a "classic", as it is very rich — is the Psalm 15:2-5:

"God, who will be accepted in thy tent?

Who will stay on thy sacred mount?

He who has a truthful behaviour;

practises rightfulness;

has honest thoughts;

controls his tongue;

does not harm others;

nor hurts his fellow men;

he despises the sinner;

but respects those who fear God.

He does not back off after he made a wrong promise

He does not lend money with interest

He does not accept gift to condemn an innocent

He who behaves as such is incorruptible."

This is an excellent description of a truthful person with the eleven following traits: he is rightful, honest and true, he controls his words, he is fair, nonviolent without excess, he does not fear wrongdoers, but follows those who behave truthfully, he keeps his promises, does not let himself being exploited, is free of corruption and is incorruptible ("unshakable" in other translations). The term "incorruptible" at the end of the Psalm is an important qualifier of the believer and of the truthful person: a truthful person recognizes temptation, but he resists.

Staying truthful in a world where evil, cheating, corruption, dishonesty, lies and exploitations are abounding, is a big challenge for a truthful person. This is where he/she needs a lot of bravery and resilience. These are moments during which the truthful person finds him-herself alone, without any support, nor understanding from others, and often being considered as a naive or even weak-minded person. These are moments where he/she undergoes pain and sufferings as violence overshadows non-violence, just as the horse overshadows the donkey, if we refer to Jesus' metaphor on donkeys. It is during those moments where the force of integrity is tested and where faith comes into force, based on the conviction that the dishonest person may have short term gains, but the just will benefit in the long term from benedictions and blessings, as promised in the Bible: "For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it" (Proverbs 2 :21), "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Mt 5 :5), "Blessed are those who are the

pure in heart, for they will see God" (Mt 5 :8). The spiritual inspiration for a truthful person is his faith, his hope and the divine promise.

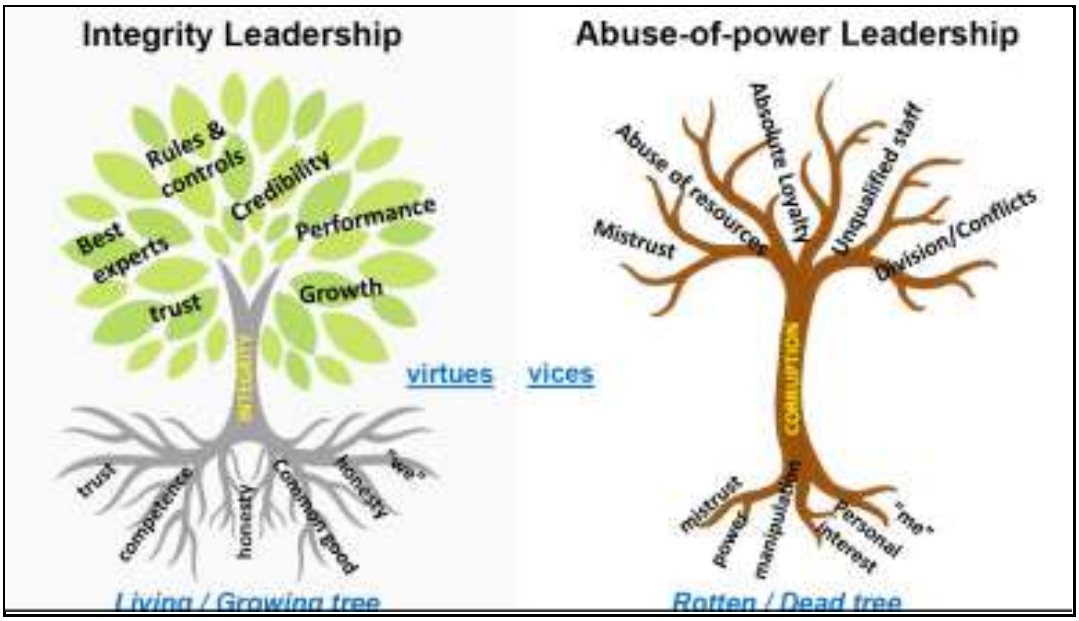
Courage to remain truthful can be (sometimes) costly. Some time ago I met two friends: The first has a high-ranking position as head of a public company in Africa. He resigned voluntarily as he was not given the chance to implement the value-based integrity as discussed above. He had given up his position and the privileges thereof, the money and the politico-economic power in order to keep up with his principles of integrity. He thereby enhanced his reputation as a truthful and trustworthy person, a moral quality of which the people in his country were yearning for. The second is a friend from Asia, who had accepted a promotion for a top academic position in an institution, provided he could replace the corrupted elements within it, and build thereupon a culture of integrity with more transparency. He declared that he would resign without the instrumental support of the auditing authorities. These two examples show that one needs not only the necessary bravery, but also a sufficiently sound safety net to avoid falling into the insecurity gap upon leaving a position out of ethical conviction! Many more examples of personalities known for their integrity could be mentioned. Africans like Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Kofi Annan are only three.

Integrity Leadership as Stewardship: The Christian term for leadership is in fact stewardship. It means leaders do not own decision-making or political power, the assets accumulated, the skills they have or the spiritual power. All power belongs to God, who entrusts power to human beings, to serve society and the whole creation. The calling (vocation) of every leader is to be a good steward[14] of God. God calls us to be the steward, good manager (oikonomos, manager of the household

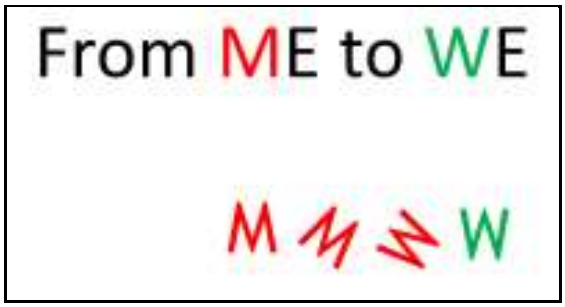
[14] See Christoph Stückelberger, *Stewards and 'Careholders': Christian Leadership Ethics*, in Christoph Stückelberger, Global Ethics Applied, Vol 4: Bioethics, Religion, Leadership, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2016, 135-148. Free download www.globethics.net/publications, Readers series.

oikos, Luke 12:42-48). This is also the deep meaning of servant leadership: not to serve oneself, but to serve God the one who entrusted us his charisma and power (exousia). This trust of God in human beings, this delegation of power is the very root of all human *empowerment.*[15]

Integrity leadership means to put the *"we"*, the common good and service, before the *"me"* ("What is in for me"). These two types of leadership can be shown in the above graph:



The key change of attitude is to simply turn one character, from the "me" to the "we". I call it the One Character Revolution":



[15] See Christoph Stückelberger, *Empowerment as Fundamental Value*, in Christoph Stückelberger, Global Ethics Applied, Vol 1: Global Ethics, Economic Ethics, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2016, 190-106. Free download www.globethics.net/publications, Readers series.

3.5 Governance of Oneself and of an Institution

There is a close link between ethics, integrity and governance as it is these three that are represented in the title of the new centre at SPU. Governance: the governing structures, mechanisms, quality checks and control of power start with the integrity of the persons in leadership. *Governing oneself as a leader is the core of governance of an institution!*

The current Lenten period – 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter – is an excellent example in Christianity, like the Ramadan period in Islam – of strengthening self-governance by cleaning body, mind and soul of greed and unethical "waste" accumulated in order to be free for servant leadership.

Governance would be an individualistic approach if it were to stop there. As we human beings are weak, we all need others — in Christian terms, brothers and sisters who support and correct us if needed, and in structural terms, rules, regulations, standards, laws, checks and balances. Integrity is not only an individual virtue but needs a *Systemic Approach for an Institutional Culture*. Some may blame the ethics of virtues as individualistic. Indeed, virtues are foremost references for attitude and action on a personal level. But integrity is not only reserved to ethical heroes, in other words, women and men with a strong character. Integrity is the attitude of an individual who can bring transformation to a culture, within which the majority of the population can adapt under all circumstances, the foundations of integrity. Integrity is a holistic and systemic approach to solve a problem and reduce its vices.

Christian ethics not only calls individuals to come back to moral behaviour but makes them feel accountable for having failed to provide the necessary support to carry out a virtuous life. In addition, Christian ethics help to build a thorough support structure for the individuals. The individual and interpersonal ethics are about the direct interaction between human beings. The structural ethics is the indirect interaction of ethics through structures and rules within institutions. Here are some

examples: Professional and Institutional Codes of Ethics[16], Committees for Research in Ethics within Higher Education Institutions and Hospitals, sanctions against plagiarism, religious worship activities, religious and moral teaching in schools, education within the family, anti-corruption posters in airports, documentaries on public personalities or unknown individuals whose exemplary behaviours can serve as models for others."[17]

The non-governmental organisation, Integrity Action, which also co-operates with Globethics.net, defines *public integrity* as follows:

> "Public or organisational integrity is the set of characteristics that justify trustworthiness and generate trust among stakeholders. Integrity creates the conditions for organisations to intelligently resist corruption and to be more trusted and efficient. Integrity Action takes integrity to be the alignment of four factors: accountability, competence, ethics and corruption control."[18]

3.6 Ethics in Higher Education at Globethics.net: Four Programmes

Globethics.net Foundation, the global network on ethics which I founded in 2004. Prof. Jesse Mugambi attended the founding week and Dr. Samuel Kobia helped in the 'birth' process, therefore both are co-founders. I can never forget the shocking experience of having the book of John Mbiti, which my fellow students on the campus did not have access to.

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[16] See the collection of over 1000 codes of professional ethics online, free downloadable: https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/29

[17] Christoph Stückelberger, *Integrity*, in Christoph Stückelberger, Walter Fust, Obiora Ike (Editors), *Global Ethics for Leadership. Values and Virtues for Life,* Geneva: Globethics.net, 2016, 325f.

[18] www.integrityaction.org.

Empowerment
Transformation
Holistic
Integrity
Competence
Sustainability

This was one of the triggering experiences leading to the launch in 2008, 4 years later, of the current largest worldwide online library on ethics and theology. Academic content available to everyone, everywhere.

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We have 198,000 registered participants from 200 countries. We have ten regional offices on all continents, operating for many years. One of them is in Nairobi, the Regional Programme for Eastern Africa, hosted at CUEA and working in all 5 countries of the East Africa Economic Community.

The focus of Globethics.net is now on Ethics in Higher Education. We have a global network of universities which build a Consortium for Ethics in Higher Education. Kenya is a core country for Globethics.net and we see many opportunities to cooperate with you at SPU in general, and with the new Centre for Ethics, Integrity and Governance in particular.





3.7 The New Ethics Centre and Future Cooperation

The new *Chancellor Samuel Kobia Centre for Ethics, Integrity and Governance* at St. Paul's University offers manifold opportunities to cooperate with Globethics.net:

- Publications, co-publications
- Trainings for teachers
- Online courses for students and teachers
- Consortium member institutions, e.g. consultancy on directorate of ethics
- Specific conferences of the centre, in cooperation with Globethics.net where appropriate
- International and regional conferences
- Course for management and values-driven business for companies

I thank you for your attention and for all excellent work of SPU.