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365 Way-Markers



Christoph Stückelberger



Christoph Stückelberger

365 Way-Markers

Daily Flash Lights for
Ethics in Everyday Life

Globethics.net Praxis 12

Impressum

The author, Christoph Stückelberger, is Founder and President of the foundation Globethics.net, and was its director until 2016. He is Visiting Professor of Ethics at universities in Switzerland, Nigeria, Russia, China and Great Britain. He is an ordained reformed pastor.

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Introduction

How can I live out my values in everyday life? How can I resolve ethical dilemmas in the decisions I make? How can I bring my actions into line with my faith, even if only in part? How can I express the wisdom of life in a short and succinct form? How can we encourage one another in what we do instead of giving up to resignation?

Such questions are the starting points for these short texts. They are intended as way-markers that offer a sense of direction and encouragement: discerning signs at the wayside of the path of life; swimming in the river of life and setting our course by the trees that we pass on the banks; perceiving the faint outlines of the wayside through the fog; following the footsteps of other human beings and animals in the snow where everything is white; finding

our way by the distant light in the darkness.

I have published many academic publications on ethics including dozens of books and hundreds of articles (see the 60-page bibliography www.christophstueckelberger.ch/publishing/articles). In comparison, these short texts are personal, concentrated and fragmentary. Aphorisms express the insight that life is made up of fragments. They give expression to specific situations and at the same time try to discern what is of lasting importance from among the everyday happenings. These texts came to me after chancing to read a newspaper article, a biblical text or following a personal encounter and then trying to discern the greater whole. I have tried to follow the river of life honestly, openly and without a closed dogmatic system, listening to the gentle

voice of the transcendent which calls me to follow and which invites me to dance.

These short texts combine individual, social, structural and environmental ethics. These dimensions have to be held together as ethics that are understood holistically in daily life. The texts are grouped in seven clusters of themes which are central to my life:

1. Creation, meaning and the senses:

Wonder at and gratitude for creation as a foundation for ethics.

2. Good and evil, virtue and vice:

Gently discovering what promotes and what hinders life, avoiding fundamentalism and yet finding clear answers.

3. Life, energy and being human:

Many everyday decisions depend on how we see and understand our humanity. Anthropology as the basis of ethics.

4. Poverty, wealth and justice:

The injustice of the gap between poverty and wealth continues to impel me to cry for justice.

5. Relationships, love and sexuality:

Intimate human relationships are one of the places where ethics are put to the test. These texts strive for credible, honest, value-oriented, holistic relationships in an age of pluralistic values.

6. Economics, technology, globalisation, media:

Ethics are not only individual but also structural ethics. The short texts on these themes put the spotlight on issues of economic justice, globalisation, protectionism, media in the cyber world, technology and research as core ethical issues in everyday decisions.

7. Politics, globalisation, law, national-

ism: political instability, new polarisation

in the globalised world, state of law and democracy, fighting corruption, , new nationalisms and responsible leadership are key issues.

8. Spirituality, faith and knowledge:

I believe that a faith that promotes life, a rootedness in a spirituality that is lived out and the interconnectedness of faith and knowledge are at the centre of everyday ethics that promote life.

9. Churches and Religions:

Solidarity with churches includes also to suffer from the churches. It is part of my engagement to help transforming churches and other religions from oppressing to serving and life supporting institutions.

The texts are rooted in Christian ethics as my own source of energy. At the same time, they are intended as an invitation to interreligious openness and cooperation

with all people of good will. I have become convinced of the need, particularly through the global ethics network Globethics.net, to live out one's own values, to respect other values and to strengthen common global values.

These 365 aphorisms were written between May 2011 and December 2018. The texts 1-100 have been published as the book "Way-Markers. 100 Reflections Exploring Ethics in Everyday Life" (Globethics.net Publications, Ethics Praxis 2, Geneva 2014), the texts 101-211 as "Way-Markers II. 111 Reflections Exploring Ethics in Everyday Life" (Globethics.net Publications, Ethics Praxis 7, Geneva 2016). The further 153 texts 212-365 are published here for the first time. Together they now offer 365 texts for each day of the year.

The texts can be read day by day from number 1 to number 365. They reflect the

random rhythm in which they were written, in an intentional mixture of the seven different clusters of topics. The texts can also be read at random, or can be read more thematically by using the index.

In all the diversity of the texts, I have been guided by a common thread: The first text is about blessing, the last about gratitude. I experience the whole of life from the first breath and the whole creation as a great gift, the "Original Blessing" (Matthew Fox). I hope that our lives and our societies with all the complex, depressing and worrying realities of everyday life can be embedded in this great blessing - like the mathematical plus before the brackets $+ (...)$ which changes the whole value within the brackets which is our life. Ethics then becomes a "light burden" (Matt 11:30) and life becomes a dance. This blessed life leads then to the last text in

this collection which will hopefully also be
the last word in my life: Gratitude!

Join the dance!

Zurich, Christmas 2018

1

Blessing

The Great Blessing
mine, your, our life
world and cosmos

Receiving blessings and
passing on blessings means
approving
encouraging
strengthening
trusting
protecting
empowering.

Perceiving blessings
and blessing others is
foundation and energy
for ethics in everyday life.

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 any-
thing
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 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.

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 mildheart or earnheart,
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.

54

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.

58

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

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
"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 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.

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.

74

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
with Bible translated into 2798 languages.

Christ becomes incarnate in culture
Christ transforms culture
This is why Christian ethics is always
contextual ethics, assimilating and trans-
forming 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 unchartered 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

Respect and recognition

Basic human needs

Water, food, sleep, shelter, community,
Knowledge, orientation, meaning, identity.

But especially

Respect and recognition

Respect for identity

Recognition of achievement

Taking part in decision making.

Human dignity in everyday life.

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.

90

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.

94

$0 \neq 0$

"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.

97

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.

98

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.

101

Weeping

Weeping
tears of grief
tears of joy
tears of confusion
tears of rage.

Not able to weep means being
frozen in shock
speechless with joy
paralysed with fear
callous and unfeeling.

Weeping is
emotion
energy flow
empowerment.

God's gift.

102

No limits - Within limits

In the morning
on the F bus
to the office in Geneva (Switzerland)
from nearby Ferney-Voltaire (France).
Crossing the border,
No limits.

In the morning
on the bus writing these aphorisms
Ten minutes' travelling
Maximum 17 short lines
A small booklet
Paperback format
Keeping within limits.

103

Healing Forgiving Forgetting

Skin renews itself
Injuries are healed
Scarring remains.

If wounds of the soul
cannot be healed then
come to terms with the scars.

Scars

Acceptance instead of fixation
Let things be
instead of always scratching
Forgive and forget.

Healing - forgiving - forgetting.

Blessed Day I

I wish you
a happy day
a peaceful day
a grounded day
a heavenly day
a successful day
a contemplative day
a serene day
a creative day
a solution-oriented day
a blessed day.

Wishes are blessings.
Share God's blessings.

Everyday ethics.

105

Blessed Day II

I wish you
a day of encounters
a day for reflection
a day for dressing up
a day to go without
a heavenly Earth Day
a day for a soulmate
an easy day
an exhilarating day.

Finding
the right word
at the right place
for the right person
at the right time.

Everyday ethics.

106

Groundwater

Where can we find
the divine water of truth?

Liberals assume

it is everywhere, where it rains.

Orthodox know

it flows from its source along
a buttressed river bed.

Fundamentalists force it

from the bedrock of the soil.

Reformers discover it

fresh from the source.

Mystics dig deep and find it

in groundwater
where the heavenly
water of all religions
mingles together.

107

Homo verus

The true human being

Who is the true human being?

Human beings as they are or meant to be.

The ultimate question of
theologians, philosophers, economists,
Psychologists, writers, artists.

Human beings

Unfathomable?

Capable of doing good?

Crazy?

Unpredictable?

Fickle?

Powerful?

Capable of divinity?

Jesus - the true human being.

108

Sex drive

Without desire (Triebe)
no love (Liebe).

Without love
no life.

The sex drive
is a driving force
of love and of life.

Powerful and uncontrollable
Destructive if uncontrolled
Powerful when tamed.

Constrained and unconstrained,
Restrained and unrestrained
The highest art.

109

Sex

Physical satisfaction
Relaxation
A conquest
Keeping a relationship going
Procreation
Tenderness
A game
Adventure
Desire
Pain
Addiction
Ecstasy.

One or the other?
Sometimes one, sometimes the other.

Sexuality, like religion, is
"awesome and formidable".
Humanum "fascinosum et tremendum".

110

Clearing up - Building up

Clearing up

after the storm

after the financial debacle

when you are ill

when dealing with the past

Is thankless, stressful,

Frustrating, apparently backward looking

Yet essential for building up.

Building up

anew

looking ahead

making the way free

learning from things past

releasing energy.

Clearing up and building up

are twins.

111

Canine Ethics

Caring for one's dog
at least three times a day
eating, running, playing, stroking.

A human being wants to care for others
People, animals, communities.

A human being is not only
the aggressive wolf
(homo hominī lupus)
Not only a greedy egoist
(Homo economicus).

A human being is also
one who cares
(Homo caritativus).

112

Thou shalt not swear I

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

113

Thou shalt not swear II

Do not swear thoughtlessly

Do not swear perfidiously

Do not swear a false oath

Do not misuse the name of God.

Do not swear at all

Only clearly let

Your yes be yes and your no be no

And Amen - "so be it".

Radical and simplified ethics

From the Old to the New

Covenant of God.

114

Two styles of life

The skier

using the ski lift's energy
to get up the mountain
sets off quickly
heavy-footed like a tank
risk taker
in free flow
towards the goal.

The cross-country skier

moving with their own energy
slowly sliding
nimble footed as if sandal-clad
risk free
in a pre-set path
towards the goal.

115

Holy avarice

Saints are selfless,
committed only to the truth
and the commonweal.

Yet the holy woman Guru Amma
hoarded 100 million dollars of
donations held in private accounts.

The holy Guru Bhagwan
had 99 Rolls Royce.

The holy feminist Alice Schwarzer
withheld three million euros
from the tax authorities.

The vatican has a non-transparent
state bank "Spírito Santo".

But Jesus rode on a donkey
and died with empty pockets.

116

Intention and action

The gap between
intention and action
is the fundamental fact of human existence
is the fundamental problem of ethics.

It is people's greatest sin.

The unity of
intention and action
is the fundamental fact of the Divine,
Is perfection.

God says: "My purpose shall stand,
and I will fulfil my intention."*

* Is. 46:10.

117

RUMOURS

Rumours give one a kick
They arouse curiosity.
Rumour mongers
get attention.

But rumours
violate human dignity
destroy relationships
poison the community.

That's why there's the
fundamental ethical precept
"You shall not spread a false report."*

* Ex 23,1 and 20,16.

118

Toilet and chapel

Signs at the airport:

Straight on to the gates

Turn right for the

Toilets, Prayer room, Telephones.

Three basic needs

Physical

Spiritual

Social.

A modern holistic

ethics of care for pilgrims.

119

Taking off and landing

Before taking off

The prayer room

A quick prayer

Gratitude.

After the landing

Safe arrival

No prayer room

Ingratitude.

120

Fasting from words

In an age of
a deluge of words in the media
empty Twitter tweeting
the prattle of overweening televangelists
the empty weasel words of politicians
frantic protests

Simply
Practise fasting from words *
fewer words
chosen words
innovative words
expressing the inexpressible.

Ethics comes from language
Action from the Word.

* In lent 2014, the German centre for Protestant preaching culture recommended pastors dispensing with 49 words such as God, penance, Spirit (and finding new words instead).

121

Phone fasting

A surfeit of
food
noise
information
sex
communication.

Lent - a time for fasting
fasting from food
fasting from noise
fasting from email
fasting from sex
fasting from mobiles.

122

Sorry

Pardon, forgive me, sorry
The small everyday apologies
Stain removers
Problem solvers
Air fresheners
Signs of humility
Decency and courtesy
Balm for relationships.

An everyday small training field
for the great request
for forgiveness
Kyrie eleison -
Lord have mercy upon me.

123

Transformation

Downward spiral

(Vicious circle):

Suffering produces worry:

Worry, fear

Fear, deadlock

Deadlock, violence

Violence, death.

Upward spiral

(virtuous circle):

"Suffering leads to patience;

patience, experience;

experience, hope

hope, love."*

* Cf Rom 5:3-5.

124

Stubbornness

Stubbornness is annoying
a pain in the neck
not letting go
"I will not let you go,
unless you bless me."*
"Day and night
crying out to God."**

Stubbornness means ethically
standing up for your values
not giving up
because
God does not give up.

* Jacob's struggle at Jabbok (gen 32:22-32).

** Cf Lk 18:7.

125

Standing firm

Afflicted

but not fearful

Threatened

but not disheartened

Persecuted

but not forsaken*

Buffeted

but not uprooted **

Doubting

but not despairing

Believing

but not self-righteously

Standing firm in the storm.

* 2 Cor 4:8-9.

** Psalm 62:2.

126

Can hormones be sin?

Aggression and anxiety

Boredom and love

Greed and patience

Vices and virtues

All controlled and influenced
by hormones.

Hormones

Accept them as a gift of the Creator
as the terrain of the Liberator.

Restrain and control them
as far as possible

Through food, medicine and exercise.

Acting ethically means
taking responsibility
for your hormonal balance.

127

Anger

Anger wounds
with sharp words.

Anger destroys
with uncontrolled rage.

Anger is a vice.

Anger protects
through the anger-alarm of lovers.

Anger transforms injustice
with the angry cry of the prophets.

Anger is a virtue.

128

Gift cultures

Switzerland: Always remove the price of the gift.

China: Leave the price on the gift so that it can be seen.

Switzerland: Place the wedding gift silently and quietly on the gift table.

Turkey: Read out each guest's contribution to the wedding in order, starting with the most costly.

What is embarrassing in one culture is an honour in another.

The diversity of gift cultures.

129

Gift Ethics

After receiving a gift

Offer thanks

Don't offer thanks

Honour it

Use it

Consume it

Reject it

Exchange it

Forget it

Give it away

Share it

Let it grow

Dealing ethically with gifts

- but how?

130

Forerunner

Fore-Runner

Pathfinder

Exploration team

Scouts and Guides

Pioneers

Innovators.

All pave the way for

the group

the team

the workforce

the mass.

They need

courage,

a willingness to take risks,

responsibility.

131

Trail markers

Supervisors

Pastors

Teachers

Project managers

Ethicists

Ski-piste markers

They are all Jalonierer *
setting the boundary markers
for the Slalom of life
to avoid crashes
to advance to the goal
and to promote ethical conduct.

And yet, each of us has to
take the journey of life ourselves.

* Those who go out in advance to set the boundary markers (jalons) on the piste.

132

Ecclesia gloriosa

Ecclesia ethica

St Andrews, Scotland: The largest cathedral in Scotland in the 12th century

Cluny, Burgundy: Europe's largest cathedral in the 13th century

Both now ruins.

Churches built on
political and military power
corruption and grandeur
have collapsed.

Churches of ethics and values
continue to live in the hearts
of those with faith
those without faith
and those with a different faith.
Temples of living stones.

133

Mega-churches

Cathedrals as modern
places of pilgrimage for tourists.

Spaces that shape identity
and give direction.

Modern Pentecostal mega-churches
for mass events in the media world.

During the Reformation
the Reformers took over Catholic cathedrals
but built no new ones.

Churches as a
community of living stones
rather than a show of power.
Churches offering a direction for
ethical orientation and public structures
rather than fossilised power.

134

Copying

Copying

Emulating

Imitating

The path from childhood to adulthood

The path from student to master

The path of Christian discipleship

The path of Confucian order

Ridiculed in the west as

uncritical copying of the original,

yet in China the path to success and truth.

Copying

emulating

imitating

is the first step

to adulthood.

135

Controllers

The ticket inspector
gives the ticket holder
a warm glow of correct behaviour.

The auditor
by checking the figures
confirms the money has been used correctly.

Controllers
make correctness visible
and strengthen ethics.

136

Nature and culture

Nature is in continual movement.
Not a straight line. Even the straight
horizon out at sea forms part of a globe
In Nature, everything striving for the light
Nature-time as rhythm is movement.

Culture is planned and straight
Rectangular buildings, boxes, windows
Stable and efficient,
Strong and dominating
Culture-time as Chronos is linear.

Ethics combines
nature and culture
that which grows and that which is made.
Ethics-time as Kairos is
doing the right thing with the right person
in the right place at the right time.

137

Ethics of espionage

Espionage and intelligence agencies
are as old as humankind.

Suspicion and surveillance
cunning and deceit
as methods of warfare.

Do the ethics of espionage
belong to the ethics of war?

At least placing a few limits on evil?
Or should we totally reject espionage
as unethical?

"The International Intelligence Ethics
Association is currently inactive."*
Mission impossible?

* Introduction on the website intelligence-ethics.blogspot.fr.

138

The ideal wife

Which characteristics should we look for when choosing a wife or life partner?

Harmonious beauty?

Brilliant intelligence?

A tireless worker?

Playful creativity?

Warm-hearted love of children?

Honest character?

My grandmother told me,
the first thing to look for is
whether and how she prays with children.

139

Self-giving love

Mutual love means

listening and speaking
giving and receiving
being fair and balanced.

A human relationship.

Self-giving love means

listening without being heard
giving without receiving
self-giving dedication.

A Godly relationship.

140

walking upright

Grounded

rooted in the world
with both feet on earth
fit for everyday use.

Towards heaven

carried upwards
by heavenly threads
held by the Eternal One.

Held

in tension
between earth and heaven
walking upright.

Being human.

141

Judging and saving

Accusing

Condemning

Judging

Legal systems

are needed for ordered
human coexistence.

Understanding

Healing

Salvation

Healing and salvation

remain the ultimate goal
of divine action.

Christ is not Judge of the world
but saviour of the world.*

* I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."
(Jn 12:47)

142

Getting a kick

Scurrying across the pedestrian
crossing at red

Bartering the price down until
the vendor almost screams in pain

Testing the limits

Concealing a misdemeanour.

The small kick of adrenalin
when stung by the devil.

Unethical, yet human.

Ethics means

keeping these kicks in check

so, that no one comes to harm.

143

Joints

Ankles, knees and hips

Back, hands and neck

Joints are hinges

helping movement

holding the parts

of the organism together.

"Therefore lift your drooping hands
and strengthen your weak knees,
and make straight paths for your feet." *

Caring for joints, looking after them
strengthening, protecting, renewing them,
caring for the wholeness of the organism.

Relationship ethics as the ethics of joints.

* Heb 12:12-13.

144

Political ethics

The most important aspect of political ethics:

God is not human.

Therefore
no human being is God.

Therefore
absolutism, dictatorship and theocracy
are blasphemy.
They give one human being absolute power.

Therefore
Separation of powers, limitation of power,
accountability and responsibility
are pillars of good governance
and political ethics.

145

Love triangle

Love yourself
Love your neighbour
Love God.

The love triangle is the
Centre of Christian ethics.

But

How to love the Highest?

"... this is his commandment,
that we should believe in the name of
his Son Jesus Christ
and love one another,
just as he has commanded us."*

Trust this wisdom and guidance
Simple Christian ethics

* 1 John 3:23.

146

Justifications

Good is as good as it is,
when justified as good.
Evil is as evil as it is,
when condemned as evil.

Legitimation and de-legitimation
are the powerful hand tools
and 'weapons' of ethics.

Ethics can be a curse and a blessing.
A great responsibility.

147

Giving

Giving is a pleasure
often more for the one who gives
than for the one who receives.

Giving is a burden
as a social duty
as a cost factor.

Giving creates conflict
if it's expensive, without love
if it expects a gift in return.

Giving in moderation
without expecting a gift in return
accepting gifts
with honesty and respect.

Giving and receiving gifts
is an art and a virtue.

148

Public Religion

Etihad flight

from Zurich to Abu Dhabi

The flight announcement begins with

a prayer from the Quran

Radio channel number 1

continuously reciting

from the Quran in Arabic,

I listen to it for four hours.

Emirates flight

from Dubai to Geneva

The flight path on the screen

displays a compass with the direction of

Mecca and a call to prayer at midday.

Public religion offered to all,

in state airlines.

Religions are a private matter

and a public one. Worldwide.

149

Power and truth

"Politics determines who has the power, not who has the truth." (Paul Krugman *)

"The majority does not determine what truth is." (Huldrych Zwingli, Zurich Reformer)

Political ethics seeks to throw a bridge between power and truth:

- Democracy as the best of the bad forms of government;
- Negotiations based on both tactics and good faith;
- Compromise, except for that which is non-negotiable: human dignity.

Political ethics keeps alive the desire for truth in the midst of power.

* International New York Times, 8 Nov. 2014, 7.

150

First day of the week

What is the first day of the week?

Monday, the first working day
in the secular world, ISO norm 8601.

Sunday, the first day of the week
for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Choose from
Monday, Sunday or Saturday
in the mobile phone calendar.

Technology in the multi-religious world:
Some people find it confusing
Others find it fair.

151

World Calendar

The first day of the year in 2015

Gregorian calendar	1 January 2015
Islamic calendar	15 October 1437
Ethiopian calendar	12 September
2007	
Buddhist calendar	1 January 2559

Calendars, measurement units, celebrations:

Global standards exist simultaneously with cultural and historical diversity.

Double identities

Migrating between worlds and cultures.

Unity in diversity

Diversity in unity

A challenge and an opportunity.

152

Premonition

The swimmer makes waves
They move faster than he does.
They spread out ahead.

Animals feel a natural event
like an earthquake coming on
days earlier.

Premonition
Harbinger
Announcement
More than a forecast.

Train and sharpen
mind, senses and emotions
to receive and perceive
premonition.

The ethics of anticipatory action.

153

My and My

My clock

My house

My property

My - a pronoun for possession.

My wife

My children

My relationship

My - a pronoun for relationship.

Conflicts arise where

We do not distinguish between

'my' and 'my' and

'my' relationship becomes

'my' property.

Possessions and relationships

Are entrusted to me for good stewardship

My - a pronoun for responsibility.

154

Perfect

Perfect day for skiing

Perfect sun

Perfect sky

Perfect powder snow

Perfect mood

Perfect food

Perfect company.

Only one thing

is missing -

the possibility

of things getting better.

155

Imperfect

The weaver
intentionally weaves
an error into the perfect
handwoven carpet.

The stonemason
does the same with an ornament
on the pillar of the perfect cathedral.

Made by hand
Made by people.

Imperfection
as a label and
a guarantee
of humanity.

156

Poverty I

Poverty of the lower middle class
in a developing country

No toilet paper in toilets

because it is stolen immediately.

The photographer with the old camera:

"Give me your good camera."

The mobile phone functioning

only sporadically, when a little money
has been saved up for credit.

Breakfast at a guesthouse

The guest first gives the cook money
to buy food for the next meal.

Daily life at the edge

Bordering on even greater poverty.

157

Poverty II

Kinshasa, capital
of the Democratic Republic of Congo
the worldwide richest country
in natural resources.

Hotel reception: The only magazine available

is a single issue

from 2004 - 11 years old.

The car of the professor stays at home
no money for petrol.

The school fees of the child
are paid by an aunt in Europe.

The mother must pay all the costs
for the children from her small income.

The father uses his salary
for his sister's children.

158

Cars and bananas

Geneva Motor Show

About 500,000 visitors

Mercedes \$60,000

BMW \$90'000.

An hour later

two kilometres away

shopping in a discount supermarket

in Ferney-Voltaire:

4 bananas for 60 cents

1 banana for 15 cents

Probably 2 cents for the farmer

in Africa or Latin America.

Customers driving up in

Mercedes and BMWs

to save a few cents.

My scream sticks in my throat.

159

The car and the saviour

"I love the car and the building blocks
and the frog and the Saviour",
the three-year child tells his mother.
Holistic love. *

* Saviour=Jesus. This is how I was quoted by my mother
in her notebook about my childhood.

160

Jerusalem

Why I was never in
Bethlehem, Golgotha, or Jerusalem?
Because the Risen One said
"Why do you look for the living
among the dead?"

The Risen One
lives in the development of an innovation
to enhance human dignity;
suffers with the girls who have been raped;
is present in the peace of a kiss.

161

Do we need God?

The question on the cover
of a global magazine:
"Do we need God?".

No, we do not need God
Many atheists are good people.

The decisive question is
rather the opposite:
"Does God need us?"

Yes!
God has only our hands, feet, heads, hearts.
God needs all that has been created,
humans, animals, plants
microorganisms and stones
to sustain and to perfect
His wonder-full creation.

162

Friday

Today is a special Friday.

Good Friday: Good News Friday

Kar-Freitag: Suffering Friday

Vendredi Saint: An especially holy day.

The death of Jesus as good news

The beginning of the new, the resurrection

The Holy One close to God.

Good Friday: for most people
just a free day, a day off.

Good Friday: for Christians

a special free day

free of burdens

free of resignation, free from guilt -

a day of freedom.

163

Death as a blessing

Death is cruel

when life is flourishing

Death is painful

when it is sudden and unexpected

Death is a release

from serious illness

Death is a gift

at the end of a fulfilled life

Death is always a blessing

passing into the infinite light.

164

Open or Closed

Open and closed
pluralist and unified
globalized and protectionist
societies, states and
parties within a state
are caught up in conflict and war.

Avoiding a conflagration
means living together
with our contradictions.

World-concordance
Globalance.

165

Envy

Envy embitters

Envy makes you ill

Envy poisons relationships

Envy goads

Envy incites

Envy divides

"Are you envious because I am generous?" *

Envy is a vice

Gratitude is a virtue.

* Parable of the workers in the vineyard, Mt 20:15.

166

Satisfaction

Dissatisfaction

results from outward appearances

Someone else is richer

Someone else is more beautiful

Someone else is more powerful.

Satisfaction

results from inner certainty

I have what I need

I am loved as I am

I am who I am.

Contentment with inner peace.

167

Thunderstorm

A hot summer day
Searing Heat
No breeze
Dusty air

But then in the evening
The sound of rain
Thunder and lightning
Energy unleashed

The redeeming release
The purifying rain
The precious cool air

The rich blessings of a thunderstorm.

168

Conflicts I

Conflicts are unsettling
like sleepless nights in pain
Painful as labour pangs
the birth of new life
Confusing as
getting lost in fog
As terribly beautiful as feeling
your way ahead in a glacier's crevasse
Liberating as a purifying
thunderstorm after a heatwave.

169

Conflicts II

Conflicts are a necessary part of life

to set targets

to deal with opposing points of view

to promote innovation and creativity

to establish responsibilities

to experience closeness

to feel warmth

to spark vitality

to defend dignity and rights.

No life without conflict.

With violent conflicts

life is destroyed.

With fair conflicts

life will flourish.

170

Bionics

Learning engineering
from nature -
Bionics.

Teeth become pliers
A bird becomes an aircraft
Barnacles become Velcro
An octopus becomes a suction cup
Sycamore seeds become propellers
Photosynthesis becomes artificial energy.

Pride in innovation through imitation.
Human knowledge is only
a tiny fraction of the creator's wisdom.
Modesty
Gratitude.

171

The total world

"Secrets are lies
Sharing is caring
Privacy is theft."
Three eternal truths.

The triune creed
of the priestly caste of "The Circle"
of the six united Orders of Google, Face-
book, Twitter, Apple, Microsoft and
YouTube.
Silicon valley as the modern Jerusalem.

Seemingly limitless transparency
serving unlimited power
Sharing for users
Wealth accumulation for the owners
State totalitarianism
replaced by private totalitarianism.
The total world.

172

Human robot

Will machines replace human beings?

The ancient hope of being freed

from heavy and demanding work

The ancient fear of losing

control and losing work.

The response of ethics?

Technology is always ambivalent,

it can destroy and it can heal.

Technology should always remain an object

and never become the subject.

Human beings remain responsible

even for the robot machine.

There is no human robot

even if the robot can do more

than human beings.

God remains Creator and liberator

of human beings and machines.

173

Intercessions

Globethics.net: A community of people who think of each other

... Esubalew	Doro
Fanantenana	Siti
Sanjoy	Juan
Kanthamane	Jing
Parichart	Carlos
Isaac	Obiora
Vasanthi	Nanh
Roug	Olga
Dan	Florencia
Isabella	Ilya
Daveit	Lucy
Michael	Mohamed
Elisabeth	Adeyemi
Wantian	Naomi
Joy	Naupess...

174

Pure freedom

Freedom from
dependence
oppression
limitations
obligations
guilt.

Freedom for
life
love
service.

Freedom
is challenging
overwhelms many
requires strength.

175

Freedom plus

'Freedom from' does not last long:

It overwhelms
leads to isolation
ends in uncertainty
weakens weaknesses.

Freedom plus belonging
is harmonious.

Freedom plus security
is sustainable.

Freedom plus responsibility
is ethical.

176

Ethics of Governance

In a totalitarian surveillance state
those who survive
commit nothing to paper
play with the rules
leave no traces behind.

In a state based on the rule of law
those who survive
put everything in writing
follow rules and regulations
give account of their actions.

Which survivalist
is more ethical?

177

Open Secret

Everybody knows it
No one may speak of it
An open secret.

The illness of the dictator
The corruption of state leadership
The weaknesses of the company head
The child of the priest
The stock market bubble
The rottenness of state doctrine
Open secrets.

Open secrets lead to
loss of credibility
loss of confidence.

178

Biafra

1967-1970: A newspaper clipping with a photo of a hungry child from the Biafra war hung over my bed as a teenager, 16-19 years old. The swollen belly got me involved in the politics of development.

2015: Now I'm in the big city Enugu in Nigeria, the centre of the former Biafra. My friend Obiora Ike was then a hungry child and got food aid, now he's a professor of ethics and my successor as Executive Director of Globethics.net.

Who can dare to say humanitarian and development aid have been pointless?

God's history of healing and salvation, transforming suffering into blessing is unfathomable. I weep tears of gratitude.

179

Horn and brakes

She

does not dare to sound the horn
to knock on the table
and to say, "Enough is enough."

He

cannot put on the brakes,
always on the go,
workaholic,
speeding dangerously.

Together they make
a dangerous vehicle
without horn and brakes.

But after improving and using
the horn and the brakes,
a dream team.

180

How it seems

How it seems in Zürich:

Stockholm is nearby - Europe

Rabat is far away - Africa

Moscow is a long way away - foreign.

And yet - all three places are only
three hours by plane from Zürich.

Near and far are in the head

Language, culture, politics, religion.

Who is my neighbour?

Not a question of geography

but one that is religious and ethical.

181

Ethics Committees

Ethics Committees

International, national, local
governmental, company, academic

Secular confessionals?

Today's morality police?

Fig leaves?

Toothless paper tigers?

Giving people bad consciences?

Shadow government?

Offering Guidance?

A Seal of approval?

Ethics audits?

Reputational guarantors?

182

ways of seeing

Life is full of events -
unexpected, unforeseen, unforeseeable.

Are they
Coincidence?

Fate?

Fortune?

Destiny?

A law of nature?

Guilt?

Punishment?

A game?

Chaos?

Events become part of our experience only
when we give them meaning, significance.

By giving them meaning
we can deal with them,
understand them,
prepare the next step
that follows the event.

183

Sex from No to Yes

No to condoms

No to abortion

No to the marriage of priests

No to homosexuality.

The four-fold religious 'No'
is loud, legalistic and strict.

Yes to sex as God's great gift

Yes to listening and showing empathy with
all those unable to deal with sex

Yes to matching care for the soul
with care for the body

Yes to joy through sex.

The four-fold religious 'Yes'
is God's liberating whisper,
which comes with a wink.

184

Desire

New life in plants
Green shoots carried upwards
Vitality, innovation

New life in human beings
Desire carried upwards
Vitality, innovation.

Being bound to our desires
reveals a lack of restraint.
A horse unbridled
galloping on, without a rider.

Desire
curb, steer, tame
use as a source of energy.

Ethics of desire.

185

Transformation

It was an intimate relationship.
She was a beautiful flower
named
"Forget Me Not".

Then her gentle, inner transformation to
a flower, still beautiful,
named
"Touch Me Not".

He tries to keep pace
in this painful transformation
towards a modified relationship.
From love. In love.

186

Emotions

Emotions

are the foundation of ethics.

Anger about injustice

Compassion for those who suffer

The eroticism of lovers

The fear of danger.

An ethics of emotions

differentiates between

life-giving emotions and

life-destroying emotions.

Anger or hatred

Compassion or paternalism

Eroticism or possessiveness

Apprehension or the fear that paralyses.

187

Double standards

Two standards

What is said and what is thought

What is open and what is secret

What is public and what is private

Unethical double standards.

And yet

double standards are

part of what it means to be human.

When is it ethical

to keep the seamy side hidden?

To tell a lie from necessity?

To keep quiet to be polite?

Double standards and integrity

contradict each other.

Exceptions confirm the rule.

188

Forms of marriage

Monogamy

One marriage - two people

Polygamy

Multiple marriage -
one man, several women

Polyandry

Multiple marriage -
one woman, several men

Telegamy

Remote marriage -
a couple lives in two places

Duogamie

Divorced and remarried

Polygamous monogamy

Monogamy with other relationships

A complex diversity

Difficult ethical discernment.

The ethical goal in all situations is

fulfilled, fair and caring relationships.

189

Political Dilemma

Fight evil with evil?

A zero-sum game

Fight evil with less evil?

The ethical dilemma of the lesser evil.

America wants Assad
eliminated from Syria.

The world wants the Islamic State ISIS
eliminated from the Middle East.

Russia wants to cooperate with Assad
to eliminate ISIS.

"Using Beelzebub to cast out the devil." *

The dilemma of Realpolitik.

* Mt 12:26-28. Beelzebub is a name for the chief devil.

190

Wavering

Faith equal trust means

To doubt, but not to despair

To be anxious, but not to be afraid

To waver, but not to fall.

Even when doubting, remain confident.

Even when afraid, remain hopeful.

Even in a trembling world, remain steady.

191

Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness is unpredictable
One is subjugated to it,
at its mercy.

Arbitrariness is a tool of
dictatorial power.

Transparency
generates predictability.
Predictability
generates trust.
Trust
generates authority.

Trust is a means
of ethical power.

192

Hammock

Deck chair

Hammock

Leaning back

Relaxing

Unwinding

Trusting

that someone else

is working well

while you are taking a nap.

The chair of trust.

193

The earth's rotation

Ingenious, immense creation
The earth's rotation.

It makes possible
warming up and cooling down
day and night
through sun and moon
Life.

Life for all
The sun is always shining somewhere
"The sun shines on all"
The righteousness and wisdom
of the Creator.

194

Whispers from Space

Einstein's gravitational waves
received their first empirical proof on
14 September 2015, 10:51.

A beep from space
from 1.3 billion light years away.
Coming into being as a gigantic bang
from the clash of two black holes.
Now received as whispers from space.

Astronomers
help us to hear
God's creation of creation as whispers.*
Wonders of creation
God of all time.

* Psalm 111:2: "Great are the works of the Lord, studied by
all."

195

Humility

A piece of petrified wood
Hold it in your hands
200 million years old
from the Petrified Forest
in Phoenix, Arizona, USA.

When Arizona was still
in the tropics near Costa Rica
before the continental plates of
North and South America
drifted apart.

Wonders of creation
Marvel in humility.

196

Nothing and everything

The human being
smaller than a needle tip
inconspicuous as a Nano unit
in the universe of billions of light years.

The human being
infinitely precious
every breath a pearl
every hair counted.

Held between
nothing and everything.
Quivering between
impotence and omnipotence.

Finding one's human space
Living in human dignity.

197

Gentle strength

Glass smashes
Ice shatters
Even iron breaks.

Immutable hardness
is not strong enough.

Grass is trampled upon
and grows up again
Bamboo bends
but does not break
Water is soft
and hollows out the stone.

Mutable stubbornness
is gentle strength.

198

Help for Helpers

The therapist

needs the supervisor.

The doctor

needs the doctor.

The pastor

needs the intercession of the faithful

The entrepreneur

needs the coach.

Helpers need to be helped.

Leaders need to be cared for.

199

Bond

Bond, covenant
alliance, commitment,
promise,
binding bond.

Exclusive bond

Extended bond

Broken bond

Ended bond

Eternal bond

Moribund bond

Renewed bond.

Bond is not concrete

Bond is relationship

Bond means life

Life means bond

Life bound together.

200

Criticism

How to offer ethical and fair criticism?

Do not judge
but support.

Do not push someone into a corner
but widen their perspectives

Do not generalise
but be precise.

In criticism
do not hate
but love.

201

Frustration

Disappointment can result in frustration and paralysis.

Disappointment can be the driving force for innovation and changes in strategy.

Frustrated by his people in Galilee, Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem for his mission. *

* Galilee: Mt 11:20 to 24; Lk 10:10 to 16.
Jerusalem: Lk 9:51-56.

202

Miracle

Supernatural healing
Virgin birth
Resurrection from the dead.

Doubters may seek
supernatural miracles;
I don't need them.

The natural life
is miracle enough for me:
Creation and love.

I believe in miracles
because I am one.

203

A Human Being

A human being is like a tree
steady, thanks to deep roots,
anchored in history and tradition.

A human being is like a flower
stretching out to the sun
growing with light and love.

A human being is like a bird
with two wings of knowledge and faith
being carried far into the future.

A human being is like a tiger
fast and agile
combative and determined.

Abundant diversity of gifts
Enormous creative potential.

204

Distance and closeness

You

Geographically

10,000 kilometres away.

Technologically

just a minute away by email and sms

Audio-video-logically

present in real time by mobile and video

Physically

worlds away for touching and smelling

Emotionally

close to the heart.

A spa therapy

of hot and cold springs

of distance and nearness

A multimedia

simple-complex relationship.

205

The question

"How old are you?"

A question that divides generations

"Where are you from?"

A question that divides nations.

Laughing and crying together

brings generations together

Eating and dancing together

brings nations together..

206

Migration in nature

The apple seed lies below the trunk and grows into a new tree.

The nut is dragged by the squirrels into their nearby winter shelter and grows into a new tree.

The airy flower seeds are carried far away by the wind and there become a new flower meadow.

The coconut is carried across oceans to new shores and grows to become a tree.

All seeds survive only if the new bio-environment suits them and they can slowly be assimilated.
Migration in nature.

207

Human Migration

Some people stay in their birthplace all life.

Others move to neighbouring villages or provinces close by.

Some emigrate to other continents, for work, from necessity or for love.

Some flee from war and violence and are stranded wherever they are taken by the tides of time or traffickers.

People survive only if they can feel at home in their new environment and become assimilated there.

Human migration.

208

Depths

1.7 million species
are known to exist on the planet.
10-30 million species in the oceans
are still unknown.

At 10,000 metres in the ocean depths
creatures have been living
for 670 million years.

Dimensions of time
that cannot be fathomed
Inexhaustible diversity.

God's creativity has
surprising depths.

209

The fish

Day after day, Year after year
The fish swims in the pond.
What is its purpose in life?

Anthropocentric

Pleasure and food for human beings.

Biocentric

Eat and be eaten as part of
the biodiversity of the ecosystem.

Theocentric

I am who I am

The silent praise of the Creator.

Only human beings ask the question of the
meaning of life. For creature and Creator
everything has meaning.

210

Heavenly calculator

The age of the heart
is measured in
the number of heartbeats
seconds, minutes, years
pumping capacity.

Earthly calculator.

The true age of the heart
is measured in
the tonnes of worry
the number of traumas
the intensity of love received
the megawatts of energy from joy.

Heavenly calculator.

211

Stingy

Stingy out of greed

avariciousness

Stingy out of poverty

fear for one's own existence

Stinginess out of envy

resentment

Stingy as a principle

an attitude that is learned.

“One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.”*

*Proverbs 11:24 (NIV)

212

Ethics for work

Doing what has to be done

Doing your duty

Being reliable

Achieving goals

Using resources efficiently

Protecting the environment

Treating people fairly

Withstanding stress

Avoiding the unethical

Earning money fairly

Value-oriented work.

213

Ethics for leisure

Making room for what's not necessary

Using time as you want

Being reliable

Living without a goal

Preserving resources

Protecting the environment

Treating people fairly

Reducing stress

Avoiding the unethical

Spending money fairly

Value-oriented leisure.

214

Everyday spirituality

Discerning the spirit, *spírítus*,
in objects and happenings:

Closing your eyes and
becoming aware of your breath
Offering gratitude for life
Seeking a moment of peace
Listening to your inner voice
Enduring solitude
and finding yourself
Recognizing God in the worm
Seeing the whole in small things
Reading a sacred text
as a signpost to the Absolute.

Everyday spirituality as
sustenance for everyday ethics.

215

Slow lane

In the slow lane
with an underpowered car
walking slowly
with panting breath
Stopping to look at each flower
with a curious child
Staying in the remedial class
with a mental disability.

Practising patience
so as to live.

Jesus was there for everyone
and rode to victory not on a fast horse but
on a stubborn donkey.

Dignity in weakness.

216

Restoring dignity

Exploited and repressed
Despised and colonised
wounded
until the pent-up humiliation
erupts like a volcano
in revolution and revenge
and turns into conceit and hubris.

Follow the path of healing
Allow wounds to heal over
Demand reparations
Develop your potential
Live in healthy self-awareness
Generate forces of reconciliation
Restore dignity.*

* "Restore Dignity" is the motto of the University of Nigeria UNN in Enugu, Nigeria.

217

The navel

Navel gazing appears
egocentric

Navel-centred is spiritual:

The umbilical cord is
the lifeline

The navel is the centre of the body
like a hub at the centre of the wheel.

Meditating on the navel

Connecting what's above and below

Reconciling transcendence and imma-
nence

Uniting opposites

Finding peace

Acting from the centre

Encountering the cosmic Christ,
the navel of the world.

218

The heartbeat

My heart beats
without stopping
without me doing anything,
reliable.

Source of Life
Power of action
Miracle of life
Reason for gratitude.

219

The Breath

Breathe in deeply
Breathe out deeply.

Take a deep breath
Let life flow
Slowly breathe out
Let go of life.

Take a deep breath
Feel yourself joined with every living thing
Breathe out slowly
Gain in confidence
that the next breath will follow.

220

Energy flow

When breathing in the word
You in me
When breathing out the word
I in you.

You in me
 I in you
You in me
 I in you
You in me
 I in you.

Connected to
the water spring of life
Sustained by the
energy flow of the Eternal.

Eternal song in dance.

221

Shadows

No life without light
No light without a shadow
No life without a shadow.

All human lives
barring none
are made up of light and shadow

A criminal
has many shadows but also light.

A saint
has much light but also shadows.

Only united in the One
is everything in the light.

222

Startled

Startled
by the noise in the night
Menaced
by the danger of
wild animals and dreams
Worried
about bad news
about loved ones
Confused and angry
about the silence of God.

Unsteadily seeking steady ground
paralyzed and unable to act
until the approach of dawn.

223

Lifted up

Lifted up
into the silence of nature

Taken up
into the community of
animals and plants

Supported by the
thoughts and prayers
of loved ones

Loved
by the giver of all life.

Internal security
as a force for action
From contemplation to action.

224

Dialectical ethics

Thesis - antithesis -
synthesis

Good - evil -
better

Light - shadow -
illumination

Hardness - softness -
gentle strength.

Inequality - egalitarianism -
balance

Globalism - nationalism -
globalance

Profit maximization - charity -
Social entrepreneurship.

225

Tackling the symptoms

Radix: the root

Radical: tackling evil at the root.

But what to do
if the roots are too deep
the sick tree too big
the cancer too widespread?

Chop off individual roots?
Remove sick branches?
Treat individual tumours?

Tackling the symptoms and
partial therapies are
better than doing nothing.

226

Spiritual being

Listening to the depths
Speaking from the depths
In every moment
seeking the centre
acting from the centre.

Wise and considered and yet
committed and passionate
in words and deeds.

Being approachable
so as to approach
the unapproachable.

With reverence and without fear
inviting God to come close.

227

Spirituality of aging

Free from the pressure of work

Free from family responsibilities

Time for the

inner path

Space for the inner voice

of the absolute

of the reconciler

of the light of God.

Spirituality of aging.

228

Trust

Trust is
the foundation of every relationship
the capital for success
the support in a crisis
the core of faith.

.
Trust in oneself
Trust in the neighbour
Trust in the stranger
Trust in God.

YOU, I trust
help me when I mistrust.

YOU, I believe
help me when my faith is too small.

229

Shortest prayers

using a maximum of five words
pray that you may act in the spirit of God.

YOU in me

May your will be done

May your spirit guide me

May your love embrace me

Bless my actions

Forgive me for my mistakes

Thank you for your blessing.

230

Five seconds

Pause for five seconds

before answering

before sending an email

before driving away

before reading the newspaper

before going to the gym

before a meal

before sex

before giving a lecture.

In these five seconds

say a silent prayer:

YOU in me - or

May your will be done - or

Bless my actions - or

Thank you for your blessing.

231

Infobesity

Obesity
Corpulence,
is a civilizational disease.

Infobesity
Information gluttony
is a cyber disease.

After info-diagnosis
The remedy* is:
Info-diet
Info-balance
Info-prayer
Info-addiction treatment
Info- support group
Info-fasting
Info-abstinence.

* Always read the packet leaflet thoroughly.

232

Nomads and settlers

Nomads and settlers
have been in conflict
since the beginnings of humanity
The nomad Abel
and the farmer Cain
(Genesis 4: 2).

Fulani nomads in northern Nigeria
and the settled people in southern Nigeria
Travellers and
city dwellers
Migrants and
local people
in search of food.

“Am I, the sedentary Cain,
The keeper of my migrant brother Abel?”

233

Stateless

Ten million people
who live yet do not exist:

Stateless

Without passport, without rights
without access to education or hospitals,
to bank accounts or insurance
without identity.

until one came, offering
dignity and identity
and told them:

"You are no longer
strangers and stateless people;
but you are citizens
in God's kingdom
and residents
in God's house." (based on Eph. 2:19)

234

Dare to know

Sapere aude

Dare to be wise

(Horace 20 BCE).

Have the courage

to use your own reason

(Kant, 1784, Enlightenment).

Think for yourself

(Mission statement of the Reformed
Churches of Switzerland).

Daring to know

especially as a scientist,

means daring

to open yourself to God's wisdom
in all world religions.

235

Mobile phone

The mobile phone

lost

Blocked from communication

Shut out

from the community

Today the mobile phone

is a

basic need

like food and clothing.

A human right

To the Six Works of Mercy *

is thus added a seventh:

“Give a mobile phone to those in need.”

* Matt 25:34-46.

236

Soul

My identity
My character
My being
My potential
My vocation
My values
My senses

called soul, inseparably connected
with body and mind - the human trinity.

The ethical challenge:
Losing and selling
one's soul, one's self
or gaining and preserving it?*

* "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world,
and yet forfeit their soul/their very self?" Luke 9:25.

237

Occupation and vocation

Occupations
come and go;
vocation
remains.

Occupational skills
need to be adapted
to developments
and needs.

The call - *vocatus* - of God to service
and the values of God's compass
continue
to set the direction.

238

65-year-old

Not dead because of illness,
accident, murder or war.

Still alive at 65.

Simply grateful
Thanks be to God.

Each day
Is a gift.

239

Co-creator

In the beginning, God created the world
Deus Creator Originalis

But since then, is God just watching,
leaving the world to its own devices?
Deus Observator?

No, God continues as creator
and acts in everything
Deus Creator Continuans et Activus.
Until the completion of the creation
in the creatio nova.

And human beings have been invited,
commissioned and empowered to be co-
creators in this captivating developing crea-
tion as guests at the guest house earth and
as fellow citizens in the kingdom of God.

240

The flow of life

Life is like swimming in the river
going with the flow
of the water
carried by the water
using one's movements
for direction and speed
avoiding dangers
shaping one's own path of life.

until one's own river flows together
with all rivers
in the all-reconciling sea.

241

Big Data – Small Data

Big Data

Huge datasets
of global corporations
collected by technology for
marketing and medicine
counter-terrorism and espionage
media and fake news
science and weather forecasts.

Small Data *

Knowledge gained in
small-scale encounters
collected by human beings in
meetings with mothers
pastors, psychologists for
needs-based help
healing and community.

* Martin Lindstrom: *Small Data*, 2016

242

Proof

Logical proof:

A valid series of arguments
that establishes the truth of a statement

Legal proof:

Determination of facts through evidence.

Scientific proof:

not proof, but confirmation or falsification
of hypotheses through
reproducible verification.

Theological proof:

logical, empirical, narrative
cosmological, mythological.

Proof in life:

Recognizing with the eyes of love.

243

Populism

Populus: the people.

Populism: one person
claims to understand and represent
the people.

Those who contradict
do not belong to the people.

The people is made up
of the true believers of a community
as defined by the Führer.

Dictatorship of the people.

244

Facebook and Faithbook 1

Facebook:

Chat room

See and be seen

The forget-me-not
of friends.

Faith Book:

Prayer room

See yourself and others
with the eyes of God

Lifted up in the
global fellowship
of the friends of God.

245

Facebook und Faithbook II

Facebook:

Face-to-face encounters
with friends on the Internet.

Faith Book:

Faith-to-faith encounters
with sisters and brothers in faith
in prayer
in encounter
and with the
divine invisibly present.

246

TWO

Two legs

Two arms

Two eyes

Two vocal cords

Duplication

Risk management in case one does not function - amazing creatures.

But why not

four legs like animals

four arms all around

four eyes - front and back -

four ears - omnipresent -

for increased efficiency

and multi-tasking?

Because we are called to work together

My legs and your arms

Your vocal cords and my ears.

247

Security

Security through

denial mechanisms
distortion of history
trust in leaders
escaping into a dream world
escapism through drugs
seeing things in black and white.

Security through

scientific facts
legal justice
clarity about norms
guided by values
community solidarity
trust in God.

248

A new era

*From faith in science
to faith in myth*

*From faith in reason
to faith in ideology*

*From trust in the people
to obedience to the leader*

*Instead of these pendulum swings of history
it is enlightened faith in God
self-critical self-confidence
leadership aiming at the common good
that is forward-looking.*

249

Captatio Benevolentiae

Seeking favour from your audience
(*captatio benevolentiae*)

is unethical when it's
rhetorical, dishonest
ingratiation.

But it's ethical
when praise comes before criticism
and respect comes before setting demands.

Do not beat someone around the head with
truth, but place it on their shoulders like
a warm, comfortable coat.

(Max Frisch)

250

Humility

"Humility in happiness.
Courage in need."*

Humility and courage are
Twin virtues.

* Protestant church hymnbook of Switzerland,
Hymn 291, verse 4.

251

Reliability

Reliability is
a virtue
in all cultures.

But it means different things:
meeting deadlines
or
going through with blood revenge
or
keeping promises
or
keeping your mouth shut.

What they all have in common:
They can all count on the other person.

252

Prosperity populism

Prosperity gospel

Those who entrust their money
to the rich preacher
will be blessed by God
and become as rich as the preacher.

Prosperity Populism

(Billionaire democracy)

Those who entrust their vote
to the billionaire
will benefit from
their government's welfare programme

Two kinds of looking for salvation

Two kinds of empty promises

Two kinds of exploitation of the poor.

253

Extra-terrestrial

Imagining extra-terrestrial life sparks off

Curiosity: what will they be like?

or

Fear: aliens, strangers, unknown, threatening

or

Joy: immeasurable energy of the divine creator in the universe with billions of unknown celestial beings.

Comfort: God is also the creator of aliens.*

Strangers become friends.

* Bible, Col 1:16: in him [Christ] all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible.

254

Hawks and doves

Hawks

Aggressive

Strength through force

Hardliners in power.

Doves

Peace bringers

Strength through stamina

Like carrier pigeons, ambassadors of peace

Hawks and doves – the perpetual pendulum
of world politics?

Globalance means

promoting what is good in hawks and

doves and overcoming what is bad.

255

Information warfare

The Cold War
is back.

The front line
is information warfare
“Fake News” (Trump)
“Alternative facts” (Trump)
Democratized disinformation
in social media
is no longer the privilege
of spy agencies.

The Ninth Commandment “Thou shalt not
bear false witness” * is more relevant than
ever and the virtues of honesty and truth-
fulness need to be learned again.

* Exodus 20:16. The ethics of honesty (truth)

256

Election

Elected - selected from the masses

Called - for something bigger

Placed at the top -
with a mandate to rule.

Ideologies of election,
of the chosen people,
exist in almost all religions,
cultures and political systems.

Israelites in the Old Testament
Hitler's Germany
Apartheid in South Africa
"America with God on our side".

Too much harm has been done.
We need to remove the term "chosen people"
from religion and politics.
For God's sake.

257

calling

called to a special task
called to respond
in respons-ibility
blessed for service.

Church as the fellowship
of those who are called
(Ek-klesia: called out)
Occupation as vocation.

Divine election means
arrogance and domination.
But calling means responsibility
and service of and for
both individuals and communities.

258

Loss

The lost mobile phone

The stolen jewellery

The broken relationship

Fragile health

The workplace being rationalized away

Slipping into poverty.

Fear of loss

is at the core of

human existence.

The central ethical and spiritual challenge:

Accept loss

transform loss into freedom.

Free from possessions

Free for new relationships

Yes to physical limits

Yes to new tasks.

259

Blinded

Ninety-one percent of Republicans believe US President Trump is credible, despite demonstrable lies and misinformation.*

Ideology is the distorted perception of reality based on preconceived opinions blinded by ideology.

Love is blind, according to the saying, but the love of faith makes you see seeing visible reality without fear recognizing invisible reality with the glasses of faith. "One sees clearly only with the heart." (St Exupéry)

* Emerson College, survey 18.2.2017

260

Everyday heroes

Mandela
Mother Teresa
Martin Luther King
are beacons,
holy heroes.

We need them
for guidance and encouragement.

More important still
are the small ethical
steps in everyday life
taken by you and me.

We are indebted to
the millions of everyday saints
and everyday heroes.

261

It or me

The salt

The lamp

The letter

The temple

Things - it.

"You are the salt" *

"You are the light" **

"You are the living letter" ***

"You are the temple" ****

Persons - you - me.

I am the change

I wish from the world.

* Matt 5:13. ** Matt 5:14.

*** 2 Cor. 3:2. **** 1 Cor. 3:16.

262

Priority

I am
Swiss
A professor
A Christian
A husband
A Protestant
A family man
A citizen of the world
Manager of a foundation
An amateur artist.

Who am I first?
Which identity
has priority
when I take decisions?

"But seek first the kingdom of God." Mt 6:33
The priority is
Christ-centred decision making.

263

Crown and cross

The crown appropriates the cross *
to protect its power
to legitimize its rule
to tame spiritual energy.

The cross is joined with the crown
to protect its existence
to increase its effectiveness
to limit and tame political power.

walking on a tightrope.

* Written on Easter 16.4.2017 after visiting a Serbian Orthodox church service in Belgrade. This church justifies war just as many churches bless weapons.

264

Church and state

How close do church and state need to be to allow the gospel to have a public impact to offer effective support to the state in its tasks so that the gospel can be proclaimed freely and to accomplish political tasks through *diakonía*?

How distant do church and state need to be for a prophetic voice to be raised when needed to act independently without being dependent on the state?

Church and state shall be neither separated nor united: partnership as equals.

265

Blessing weapons

Blessing weapons?

For pacifists: no go

For atheists: religion lacking credibility

For believers: a dilemma

For state churches: inevitable

For free churches: not needed.

How do churches behave in war?

According to Protestant ethics

we should not bless weapons,

but support

decision makers in politics,

military and business

in our intercessions

that they may serve peace

by listening to God's wisdom.

266

unity

Imperialistic unity

imposed by a great power

Ideological unity

ideology suppresses diversity

Dictatorial unity

admits no contradiction

Federal unity

enables diversity in unity

Unity in values

a constant struggle to find a
common value basis

Unity in love

voluntary unity from love.

Which forms of unity are ethical?

267

Balance

Ambitious and modest

Gentle and courageous

Taking responsibility for yourself

Working and praying

Letting things be and taking action.

A dynamic balance

Constantly being re-created.

268

Cross of the entrepreneur

Sluggish income
Rising costs
Cutting staff
to the pain threshold
Looming insolvency.

As president of a board of foundation
I am a social entrepreneur
and in the same boat
as small business owners.

The cross of responsibility
Bankruptcy means death.
"Let this cup pass me by.
May your inspiration bring
liberation through innovation."

269

From Revenge to Justice

Corrupt judges meant
her parents did not
receive justice from the court.

How should this wrong be avenged?
Their daughter studied law
became an incorruptible chief judge
with integrity
helping people
to receive justice.

Transforming
wrongs to right,
transforming revenge to justice.

Transforming love.

270

Transparency and secrecy

Automatic exchange of information
between banks

OECD standard since 2017

Transparency agreed globally

Internet - a gigantic
global transparency machine.

Cyber hacking

Cyber spies

The darknet

a secret global network for
spies and criminals.

Secret worlds

are one of the major sources
of unethical behaviour.

271

Restless

Restless
Agitated
Feeling
that something new
is about to dawn.

Driven
by the vision
of justice
through the force
of God's Spirit.

Between restlessness and impatience
Allow time
for what does not yet have form
to take shape and is ready
to be born.

272

Great

“Let us make
America great again “

Donald Trump, US President,
Entrepreneur, billionaire

“Let us make
the Planet great again “

Emmanuel Macron,
President of France*

* Statement of 2 June 2017 in response to the withdrawal from the climate agreement by US President Trump

273

First

America First (Trump)

France First (Le Pen)

Turkey First (Erdogan)

Russia First (Putin)

China First (Xi)

Me First (Many).

Earth First (God Creator)

Humanity First (God Christ)

Love First (God Spirit).

274

Joy

“Christians should look more as if they have been redeemed” (Friedrich Nietzsche).

Redeemed – released – joyful

“The kingdom of God is
justice and peace
and joy.” (Rom 14:17)

Ethics and joy
are twins.

275

Property

Property promotes
individual responsibility

Property leads to
greed

Property supports
prosperity

Property incites
strife and war.

“Those who believed were of
one heart and soul.
everything they owned
was held in common.”*

Property in common.

* Acts 4:32

276

High speed

Just seconds
after the event
digital tweets and photos
are shooting around the world.

Breaking news
Fake News
Uncontrolled News
True news.

High speed
with an explosive mixture
Speed is overtaking
conscience as ethics.

277

Slowing down

The core tasks of media:

Verification

Checking the truth

Interpretation

Offering meaning

Communication

Sharing.

News

filtering it

processing it

digesting it

slowing it down

Through

investigative journalism

ethical reflection

prayer

conversation.

278

Simple 1

Dewdrops

Stalactites

Eyeballs

Apple seeds.

What they all have in common is

Amazing simplicity

linked to

immeasurable complexity.

This is

perfection.

279

Simple II

The microcosm
with the smallest unit:
the Higgs field.

The macrocosm
with the largest unit:
the universe.

Both the smallest and the largest units
Are said to have
a simple structure.*

Human life stretches out in between.

Modern physics and ancient mysticism
meet in understanding and admiration.

* Physicist Neil Turok, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 5 July
2017.

280

Visitors' car park

"Visitor"

The simple
parking sign
is social ethics.

Being a visitor

Receiving visitors

Room in the house for
guests, expected and unexpected.

Creating community

Is what makes
people human beings.

281

A light burden

Ethics is not a court of law
but the power of healing*
not a moral burden
but a source of energy.**

Energising

Thankful

Humorous

Inspirational

Celebrating life

Sustainable.

*_Jesus: I came not to judge the world, but to save the world (John 12:47).

**_Jesus: My burden is light (Matt 11:30)

282

Security or freedom

“Security is
the most important thing in my life”
says the older woman
from a poor country.

That’s why she voted for
a dictator as president.

Security or freedom?
Without security, no lasting freedom
without freedom, no long-term security.

283

Freedom or security

“Freedom is
the most important thing in my life”
says the student
on his world tour.

That's why he does not want any
state restrictions.

Freedom or security?
Without freedom, no security in dignity
Without security, no freedom in peace.

284

Wind concert

Gusts of wind in the trees

the fine lisp of birches
the massive bass of the firs
the light violins of the pastures
the double bass of knotty oaks
the soft flutes of the young apple tree.

Winds that rise and fall
orchestrated
by an invisible conductor.

An enchanting wind concert.

285

Water Dance

Running water at the spring

splatters and babbles
gurgles and chuckles
burps and runs
grumbles and grunts
rages and moans
tumbles and dances
whispers and sings

like a child at play.

The playful water
joyful and relaxed
calm and moist
praises the Creator.

Water of life – Joie de vivre.

286

Works of Love 1

1. Secure nutrition
2. Guarantee drinking water
3. Strengthen community
4. Enable protection
5. Promote health
6. Treat prisoners decently.

The call of Jesus to practise these six works of love* corresponds to the essence of human rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

Loving care and provision.

* See Matt 25:35-40: Six Works of Mercy.

287

Works of Love II

1. Be vigilant
2. Courageously stand firm
for your beliefs
3. Protest
4. Resist
5. Sacrifice yourself
6. Hope even where there is no hope.

The call of Jesus to
courage and resistance
is prophetic love.
It can hardly expect
the applause of the powerful.

Uncomfortable and costly love.

* Biblical references: (1) 1 Pet. 5: 8; (2) Matt 5:10; (3)
Luke 19:45pp; (4) Eph .6,13; (5) Matt 10.39;
(6) 1 Pet. 3:15.

288

Protection

The seed in the apple

The chicken in the eggshell

The embryo in the amniotic sac

The baby kangaroo in the mother's pouch.

Expectant life

requires gentle protection

secure comfort

caring mindfulness.

Ethics of Protection.

289

Necessary for survival

No life without

air for living beings

water for fish

the amniotic sac for embryos

food for all living things

the love of the giver of all life.

290

The Golden Ratio

1: 1.618 The Golden Ratio
Harmonious proportion

in the shell

in the egg

in the orchid

in the spiral

in the human body

in the Egyptian pyramid

in the Romanesque church

in Buddhist and Hindu temples

and the Islamic mosque

in the universe.

Divine proportion

Beauty of the Creator.

Robert Vincent: *Geométrie du nombre d'or*, 2015;

Klaus Mainzer: *Symmetries of Nature*, 1988.

291

Hotel Ashram

I'm looking for peace, meditation,
prayer to guide me
in my priorities.

Two days off in Bangalore in India
between conferences:

Should I visit a Christian or an interfaith
Ashram?

But instead of two times four hours
driving to the Ashram Oasis in the suburbs
stuck in a traffic jam
in this metropolis of millions
I decided to use
the hotel room and spa as
spaces of silence.

Hotel Ashram

292

Titles

Doctor

Professor

Steward

Manager

Expert

Ambassador

Helper

Bishop

President

Servant

Excellency

Honorary Member.

Job titles, official titles, honorary titles.

In the end, however, everything
comes down to one value:

Responsible service.

293

Stewardship

The moderator introduced me as
"Reverend Professor Doctor Doctor".
I kindly requested her
"Please call me
steward Christoph - and
may I call you steward Ruth?"

More important
than titles is
the calling and vocation
to be good stewards
of God's world
entrusted to us.

Titles are obligations
Reputation is vocation
Call is calling.

294

Religious rituals

Take off your shoes
on entering the sacred space

Bow your head
in the presence of the holy

Kneel down
in humble reverence

Fold your hands
in prayer and thanks

Close your eyes
to glimpse the transcendent

Keep silence
to hear the divine voice

Religious rituals
Respected globally
Spiritual virtue.

295

Artificial intelligence

The new great fear:
Artificial intelligence
becoming uncontrollable
seizing power
over human beings like us.

The new great opportunity:
placing trust in God again
Everything on earth and in heaven
visible and invisible powers
authorities and technologies
is subject to God.*

Influencing and dealing with
the new challenge
calmly and attentively
critically and constructively.

* Col 1:16.

296

Homo Deus

Homo Deus *

Human beings becoming God

Does artificial intelligence
mean transcending
human beings
or is it simply a new form of hubris?

Each new technology
leads to human beings
overestimating themselves.

Trusting in God means
God is God
Human beings remaining human.

* Title of the bestseller by Yuval Noah Harari, English
2017.

297

Deus Homo

"Do it like God
become human."
(Author unknown)

Heaven is empty for a long time.

Human beings becoming God
is idolatry and absolutism.

Human beings becoming
Truly human
is worship
a task that beckons.

Jesus, the true human being
Perfect ethics.

298

Extending life

Today
people live for
90 years.

Once
people lived for
50 years
and an eternity.*

* according to Pastor Theodor Schubert, Basel

299

The Kitchen Apron

The kitchen apron
means serving and
quietly getting on with things.

“Clothe yourselves, all of you,
with humility.”*
All of you, put on your kitchen aprons.

Bosses and workers,
poor and rich,
women and men,
old and young,
forming a fellowship of service.
This is what church should mean.

* 1 Peter 5:5: The Greek word for “clothe” means “to change the apron for work”.

300

Regeneration I

A harsh word

Slight abrasions

Repeated humiliation

Painful wounds

Degrading oppression

Deep stitches

Life-threatening destruction

Cut to the bone

Catastrophic genocides.

Amputating whole limbs.

Life is

overwhelmingly robust

Wounds can be healed

Re-generation, however, can

take generations.

301

Regeneration II

The 1986 chemical disaster
in Schweizerhalle near Basel
The Rhine was dead as far as Mannheim
no fish survived.

A dead river for generations -
that was the prediction.

A few years later
life came back.

God's nature is
overwhelmingly robust
The miracle of
regeneration.

302

Regeneration III

Six million Jews out of 17 million were murdered in the Shoah.

Today, there are again 17 million Jews alive, six million of them in Israel.

The attempt to exterminate a whole people has failed once and for all.

God's human beings are overwhelmingly robust
Miracle of
Regeneration.

303

Chance

By chance

meeting somebody on the street

By chance

winning the lottery number

By chance

missing the plane that crashed.

For some people

chance is the arbitrariness of fate

For believers

chance is the message of God.

Chance is a sign

a gift or a warning.

304

Prosperity Gospel I

“Those who have faith will be rich.
If you give me (the preacher)
your donations,
you will become as rich as me.
If you remain poor
your faith is not
strong enough.”

This Prosperity Gospel
is sacrilege and heresy.
The preacher is elevated as a demigod
God is degraded
to be a business partner.

305

Prosperity Gospel II

“Those who have faith will show gratitude.

Discover the many gifts God gives you:
spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional,
social, material.

You will experience God's rich gifts even in
suffering and doubt.”

This Prosperity Gospel
is liberating and biblical.

The preacher announces the good news
God remains the sovereign
giver of all gifts.

306

Snow Peace

Undisturbed fresh snow
Cold air
Warm sun.

Everyday worries
and global problems
under a
soothing white blanket.

Everyday noise
and screams of conflict
soaked up by
sound-absorbing snow.

Snow peace
Soul peace
Refuelling for action.

307

Paper Ethics

"If it's not on paper,
it doesn't exist," the auditor told me.
A necessary accounting principle.

The "sans papier," without passport
in a foreign country, does not exist.
The piece of land of a church in Africa,
offered by a widow with a handshake
does not exist
without notary certification.

The tension between law and ethics
People are more than paper.

308

Traffic Ethics I

Trucks

SUVs

Small cars

Motorcycles

Cycles

Pedestrians

Animals

The hierarchy of power.

In some countries

the stronger

always have priority in traffic.

Traffic ethics are the

law of the stronger.

309

Traffic Ethics II

Pedestrian zones

Cycle paths

Bus lanes

Speed limits

Road signs

Traffic lights

to regulate priority.

Safety before strength.

In some countries

the weaker enjoy

special protection in traffic.

Traffic ethics are the

protection of the weaker.

310

Dirty hands

Those who get involved
in tricky situations
and corrupt societies
get their hands dirty
because of their courageous action.

Those who do nothing
and wash their hands
as if innocent
get their hands dirty
because of their silence and failure to act.

They both need forgiveness.

311

The first stone

Modern media culture of condemnation
in "social" networks:
put in the stocks and stoned
with words, pictures and emoticons.

But one person tweeted
"Let the one among you
without faults, throw
the first stone."*

Then the tweets of the cyber-bullies
fell silent.
Calm and respect returned.

*John 8: 7

312

Hangíng

The basket handle:

pulled off

The coupling of the railway carriage:

broken off

Those at the margins of society

Hung out.

A chain is as strong as

the weakest link

A train is as strong as

the coupling

A society is as stable as

it integrates the weakest.

313

Contradictions

She is a vegetarian
and every day gives
her dog meat.

Protecting animals
and killing them at the same time.
Contradiction?

Carnivorous animals
need meat.

Animal feed are
the left-overs from the meat
for non-vegetarian humans.

Being a vegetarian reduces
animal suffering.
Compatible?

An ethical dilemma.

314

Efficiency

"How are you able to work so hard and get so much done?" I keep getting asked.

I honestly look for answers:

Good Health

Structured work

Getting energy from work

A generous wife

Adult children

Few personal financial worries

Not looking back, but looking forward

using both halves of the brain

Stimulating encounters

Trust in God.

And, I add self-critically

Such efficiency is a gift but

people around me

pay the price of my impatience.

315

Take Care

Those who do not care
despair

Those who not dare
forswear

Those who do not sow
won't grow

Those who do not trust
will rust

Those who do not love
will lose.

316

On the way down On the way up

Changing jobs twice,
I knowingly
earned less
than in the previous position.
Finance - on the way down,
Influence - on the way up.

"My body is on the way down
but I'm on the way up
toward God," said my father
a few months before his death.

On the way up as being on the way down.
On the way down as being on the way up.

317

PEP ethics

Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs)
are Very Important Persons (VIPs)

PEPs are members of
governments and parliaments
or belong to corporate management.

To have a PEP marker in the databases
means a warning light
for the finance industry;
general suspicion of
corruption and money laundering.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF):
- a secular inquisition authority
or a clearing house for ethics?

318

Hopium

Hopium: hope as opium?

Yes if

Hope is escape from reality

Hope makes blind

Hope is a justification for inaction

Hope for the hereafter is a comforter.

319

Henergie

Henergie: Hope as energy?

Yes if

Hope sets energy free
to confront fatalism

Hope helps to
follow your vision

Hope for the hereafter
gives strength in this world.

320

Those of other faith

In 539 BCE, Persian King Cyrus II promulgated the first human rights charter for promoting religious tolerance.

In 538, the people of Israel returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity.

Cyrus, the non-Jew, serving the salvation history of God.*

God also chooses those of other faith and non-believers for his kingdom.

* Isa 45:22.

321

Young rulers

At the age of 33,
Alexander the Great*
and his army ruled
from Greece to India.

At the age of 33,
Mark Zuckerberg the Great**
and his company Facebook
ruled over a quarter of humanity.***

* 356-323 BC

** born 1985

*** 2 billion monthly users.

322

Escalation

Verbal war - disparaging

War with enemy images - slandering

Information war - twisting things

Trade war - prohibiting

Financial war - selling off

Economic war - barricading

Military war - destroying.

323

De-escalation

Peace language - understanding

Peace dialogue - encountering

Peace information - explaining

Peace trade - exchanging

Peace banking - paying out

Peace Economy - restraining

Peace politics - pacifying.

324

Parallel worlds

Technical-scientific world

globalized

Political-economic world

quadripolar

Socio-cultural world

fragmented

Religious world

patchwork

Ethical world

a complex mixture
of everything.

325

Quadrípolar world

From the bipolar world
of the Cold War 1945-1989
to the multipolar world
of globalization 1990-2007
to the re-regulated world of 2008-2016
to the quadrípolar world of 2017 and after.

The four poles
USA, China, Russia and Europe
struggle for power and control
with proxy wars
trade sanctions
cyber-dominance
technological advances.

But we at Globethics.net
continue our work undeterred
for the one pole of the
Global Value Community.

326

Promises

Keeping promises
is the essence
of ethical integrity.

Therefore better
to promise too little
than too much.

And to say sorry
for promises
unkept.

Only God
keeps all promises.*

* Joshua 21:45.

327

Proof

Our two physicist sons
are used to proving their research
experimentally and theoretically.

As a theologian
I concentrate
empirically and theologically
on the proof
that there is no proof for God
and yet God exists.

Two perceptions
One reality.

328

Privileges

Privileges, entitlements
inherited, administered
acquired, seized
sold, lost
inspiring, stressful.

They are unfair when they
set in stone unequal treatment.

They can serve justice
if they are used for the rights
of the weak.

Dealing ethically with privileges
means dispensing with them
or using them for the weak.

329

Self-interest - common good

Ethics is simple:

The common good comes
before self-interest

Taking account of
your own interests
is not unethical
provided
the common good
is taken into account.

“When the king is concerned with justice,
the nation will be strong, but when he is
only concerned with money, he will ruin
his country.”*

*Proverbs 29:4 (GNT)

330

Asynchronous

Human time: Chronos

Technological time: 3 years

for new computers

Political time: 8 years

for new laws

Ethical time: 25 years

for new values.

Human action is

non-contemporaneous

unharmonized

asynchronous.

Chronos - linear time is

Peccatio originalis - original sin.

331

Synchronous

God's time: Kairos

Doing the right thing
at the right place
in the right moment
with the right people
with the right means
and the right intention.

Divine action is
simultaneous
harmonized
synchronous.

Kairos - fulfilled time is
Gratia divina - God's Grace.

332

Punctuality

Reliable

Keeping a promise

Efficiency

A spirit of partnership

Punctuality as a virtue.

Stress

Life according to norms

Controlled from without

Leaving urgent things to one side

Punctuality as a vice?

333

Delay

unreliable

Breaking a promise

Wasting time

Being dependent

Delay is a vice.

Relaxation

Following the flow of life

Self-determination

Respecting what's urgent

Delay as a virtue?

334

Sense and the senses

Whether something makes sense has to do with our senses.

Seeing

Hearing

Touching

Tasting

Smelling

Sense is shaped by the senses.

Things have a sense through the senses.

335

Ethics of the senses

Seeing

Hearing

Touching

Tasting

Smelling:

Ethical responsibility
using the five senses

Seeing - taking account of reality

Hearing - speaking with care

Touching - stroking with sensitivity

Tasting - distinguishing between the
ephemeral and the life-giving

Smelling - becoming aware of God in the
perfume of God's creation.

Praise God with all senses.

336

Reward - Punishment

Cooling down
in the stone fountain
at the holiday home
after hard work
in the garden
under the scorching sun.
A reward from heaven.

For my wife
ice cold water would be
a punishment from hell.

The same action can be
a reward or a punishment.
Situation ethics.

337

Ora et labora

Ora et labora

Praying and working

Praying as if everything
depends only on God's action.

Working as if everything
depends only on my action.

Doing both
with all my heart
with all my mind
and all my power.

338

Intelligence services

Intelligence services need to be abolished.

They undermine transparency

They destroy trust

Their analysis is often wrong

They work with criminals

They promote wars of disinformation

They take human life

They make use of vice and immorality

while claiming to promote

virtue and morality.

The means contradict the ends.

An unethical double standard.

339

Sovereignty

Switzerland is proud of its national sovereignty going back to 1291.

But Switzerland has to thank

Napoleon in Paris in 1798
for making Switzerland a federal state
replacing a loose confederation;
the Congress of Vienna in 1815
for permanent Swiss neutrality;
the European Union for Swiss prosperity.
through the bilateral treaties since 1972.

The ethical solution has always been:
Autonomy in community
Sovereignty in solidarity.

340

Researchers

It's not only Nobel Prize winners
but millions
of unknown researchers
who contribute the smallest building blocks
to the huge cathedral
of science and technology.

Stubborn and modest as ants and
focussed and contemplative as monks.

They deserve
respect and gratitude.

341

Friend - enemy

The friend of my friend
is my friend.

The enemy of my friend
is ... my enemy?

The enemy of my friend
can be my friend.

This balancing act requires
diplomacy
attentiveness
loving my friends
loving my enemies.

342

Loyalty

The exclusive loyalty*
of subordinates towards their superiors
is dictatorship.

The exclusive loyalty
of superiors
towards their subordinates
is a betrayal of leadership.

Critical loyalty to each other
is both sustainable and ethical.

* "Trump demands loyalty from his staff, but suddenly drops them." Paul Manafort, former campaign leader of US President Trump, 23.8.2018.

343

Transcendence

Human beings are miniscule in universe.

So how do you rise above yourself?

Trans-scendere - overcoming limitations

Transcendence is the core

of all religions.

Self-transcendence of human beings:

using technology to expand the body

using drugs to overcome boundaries

using meditation to heighten awareness.

The Christian faith goes the other way:

Discovering God's transcendence in

immanence:

the divine in the poor

the eternal in creation

and meaning in love.

344

Autocrats

Zhao Gao, chancellor (230-207 BCE) under the Chinese emperor Qin Er Shi called a deer a horse - and beheaded all those who disagreed.

Ignatius of Loyola wrote (1522-24) that if the church declares white to be black, then white is black (Exerzitien, Nr. 365) - and led the Counter-Reformation.

Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, calls (2018) lies facts and the truth Fake News - and removes his critics.

Xi Jinping, President of China, installs (2018) 420 million additional surveillance cameras - and demands strict obedience to the party.

345

Overcome autocracies

Do not put up with the difference
between reality and truth;
Do not let your conscience become dulled
Counter
lies with light,
confusion with clarity,
and hatred with love.

Live in the certainty
that all human
dictatorship
will one day crumble
since God alone
remains almighty.

346

wounded dignity

Restoring
wounded dignity
awakens
unbridled energy.

As individuals
by exacting revenge and
by going through the courts.

Collectively
by waging war to reconquer lost territories
building statues to the heroes of history
gilding the domes of monasteries and
mosques
Nationalist autocrats for national pride.

** written in Moscow, 5.11.2018, national holiday.*

347

value of a life

Spinal Muscular Atrophy:

From 2019, small children can be treated with a single infusion through gene therapy

- at a cost of four million US Dollars.

The Swiss Federal Court ruled in 2011 that the health insurance coverage for cancer treatment is limited to 100,000 francs for each additional year of life.

For a few dozen francs a child in a developing country can be saved from blindness.

How much is a life worth?

348

Migration religions

Abraham,

migrating from the Euphrates to Canaan
is the common ancestor of the Abrahamic
religions Judaism, Christianity, Islam.

Moses

led the migrant people of Israel from Egypt
into the promised land.

Jesus

called on the faithful
to go unto all the world.
World mission as world migration.

Muhammad

the founder of Islam
migrated from Mecca to Medina.

Three migration religions.

349

Rules or love

Living together needs rules

Living together needs love

Do rules need love?

Does love need rules?

Rules give love

structure and reliability

Love gives rules

purpose and depth.

Love and rules

are siblings.

“For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.”*

* 1 John 5:3.

350

Failure

Moses was a stutterer
King David had
the husband of his lover killed.
King Solomon
was a calculating power politician.

Judas betrayed Jesus
for blood money.
The disciples fell asleep in the
Garden of Gethsemane and left
Jesus alone in his fear of death.
Peter denied Jesus three times.
Paul, as Saul, persecuted Christians.

A fellowship of failures.

God calls such failures.
God builds his kingdom
with those who are weak - like you and me.

351

Burden of proof

In states based on the rule of law, prosecutors need to prove the guilt of defendants.

In dictatorships, defendants need to prove their innocence.

Believers know that before God they are guilty of not doing God's will but acquitted through forgiveness.

352

Humanum

The fundamental poles of human existence:

Being born and dying

Facing limits and crossing borders

Fear and hope

Guilt and reconciliation

The individual and the community

Dominating and being dominated

Power and powerlessness

War and peace

Self-limitation and self-transcendence

Distinguishing good and bad

Wanting to and doing nothing

Moderation and excess

Reason and ecstasy

Hatred and love

Exclusion and inclusion.

The humanum

353

Humanum - Religiosum

The humanum
forms the basis
of the religiosum.

Religions
seek answers for the
basic poles of human existence.

That's why there are religions
- with or without God -
as long as there are people.

354

Comparisons

"I have a million,
but he has ten million."

Making comparisons with those who have
more
leads to envy.

"I'm sick,
but she has lost a child."

Making comparisons with those who have
less
leads to gratitude.

"Everything I have and am
is a gift."

Making comparisons with the absolute
leads to wonder.

Giga-catastrophe

Loss of a job

355

Death of a child
The end of life

Noah's Flood
Apocalyptic destruction
The end of the world

Climate catastrophe
Reversal of the earth's magnetic field *
Giga-catastrophe

Uncertain existence yet certain faith:
We can only fall into God's hands.
Thus we undertake what lies in our hands
calmly and with determination.

* In the earth's core 3000 kilometres deep, last time it happened 780,000 years ago.

356

Pessimist - optimist

Pessimists and optimists
orient themselves on
what they see:
the glass half-empty or half-full.

Those with hope
orient themselves
not on what they see,
but on what they believe:
the promise of the Kingdom of God.

I am
a pessimist full of hope.

357

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

358

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

359

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

360

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

361

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

362

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

363

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

364

[Write your own text on ethics
in everyday life]

365

Gratitude

Gratitude is
the foundation of ethics.

Leads to awe
Protects from avarice
Opens the heart to share
Fosters modesty
Reduces anxiety
Discovers uncomplicated solutions
Joie de vivre
Prolongs life
(as researchers have shown).

It is at the centre of the faith
that everything is
a gift - from the Giver of Life.



365 Way-Markers



Christoph Stückelberger

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How can I live out my values and convictions in everyday life? How can I reconcile faith and action? How can we encourage one another in what we do instead of giving up to resignation?

Such questions are at the centre of these 365 short texts, written out of and for everyday life: way-markers offering a sense of direction and encouragement.

These aphorisms and reflections are centred around seven themes: 1. Creation, the senses and environment; 2. Good and evil, virtue and vice; 3. Life, energy and being human; 4. Poverty, wealth and justice; 5. Relationships, love and sexuality; 6. Economics, technology, globalisation, media; 7. Politics, globalisation, law, nationalism; 8. Spirituality, faith, knowledge, 9. Churches and religions.