



Review of Stückelberger, C. *Globalance*, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2020, p.620

Lajos Békefy

First published on Oct. 2022.

Keywords

Global ethics, Christian ethics, balance of conditions, intercultural dialogue, international cooperation

Abstract

This is a book review of Stückelberger, Christoph, *Globalance. Ethics Handbook of a Balanced World Post-Covid*, Focus Series No. 57, 2020, 620pp. New second editions planned 2022. Translation of the Hungarian original: Békefy, Lajos. *Globalance – Etikai kézikönyv a Covid utáni időkre - Könyvszemle - Békefy Lajos, Christoph Stückelberger, Ethics Handbook for a Balanced World post-Covid, Globethics.net ed., Genf, 2020. 620 p. In: Confessio Reformatus, 6pp. From Hungarian: I. Haaz, with editing and proofreading by Patrick Joseph Cannon.*

Corresponding Author: Rev. Dr. Lajos Békefy, paxvobis2016@gmail.com.
To quote this article: Békefy, Lajos. 2022. "Review of Stückelberger, C. *Globalance*, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2020, p.620" *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 1(2022): 271–285. DOI: 10.26034/ft.jehe.2022.3390 © the Author.
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit <https://www.globethics.net/jehe>

1. Introduction

I have not come across any book as profound and forward-looking with faith in the middle of the pandemic as the 600-page *Globalance* by Christoph Stückelberger, a theologian with expertise in social and ethical matters from Zurich, Switzerland. Stückelberger, a professor who founded and operated the global ethical network Globethics.net (<https://www.globethics.net>) for two decades, gives his lectures almost continuously at several universities, even during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this regard, Stückelberger's impressive commitment to ethics aims to prepare society for the future. In addition to teaching in Switzerland, Stückelberger is a welcomed lecturer at university departments in Nigeria, China, Russia, and England. Before a more detailed description, let's familiarize ourselves with *Globalance*'s brief content and critical reviews. Knowing the volume, I warn the reader in advance that the term "globalance" has nothing to do with financial "globalism" nor with the ideology or world power aspirations of some kind of naked great power equilibrium. Rather, the entire volume reflects the open responsibility of Christian faith and morality, its supporting and helping activities, and its contribution to the future. Subsequently, these ideas will be visible from the detailed analysis.

2. Structure and aim of the work

Chapters 1-3 define the problem and analyze the current situation of the world from the point of view of balance in the conditions of the world after the pandemic and the onslaught of the Coronavirus. Chapter 1 provides some first glimpses of the epidemic and raises questions of ethical importance. Chapter 2 defines what globalism is from an ethical point of view. Chapter 3 analyzes ideological polarization and political and technological superpower structures. Chapter 4 examines the possibilities of globalization and philosophical and religious concepts in interpreting history and contemporary authors. Chapter 5 provides the normative center of the volume for value-balance (globe-balance) by examining the relationship between values and virtues. Chapter 6 examines the processes of

transformation towards globalization. Chapter 7 analyzes and validates Globalance's thirty domains of application. Each of the thirty subsections includes three steps: vision and recognition through analysis (“current development”), judging the situation based on ethical orientation (“value poles”), and concretization (“toward globalance”). With that said, Chapter 7 is the most important, it thereupon makes up half of the book. The goal is not an extended monograph on a single topic but to present the relationships and interdependence of all sectors of society and all continents in today's globalized world. After the marathon of Chapter 7 with thirty applied domains, Chapter 8 spiritually reflects on the basics: what really matters in the world? Death, life, and love? Religions, beliefs, worldviews? The Outlook in Chapter 9 draws some conclusions about the tasks of the transformation towards a balanced world order after the coronavirus epidemic. The globally known Reformed theologian started writing the book at the end of 2016. Stückelberger ultimately finished the text on June 15, 2020, during the first two waves of the Covid-19 pandemic while trying to find a balanced human world after the coronavirus, even in the depths of danger, assuming and trusting that there will be a pandemic or a post-Covid-19 world.

I quote some opinions from the responses and reactions to the book by professionals and the press.

“ Without ethics and trust, our societies are in deep trouble. The Coronavirus is a chance to reflect. Stückelberger gives us an overview with a lot of background information. The book helps us to recognize the risks, opportunities, and our responsibility in the world. It encourages more international cooperation. Many thanks! (Doris Leuthard, former Minister of Environment of the government of Switzerland, twice its president, member of the Kofi Annan Foundation). When the global village is facing disintegration and globalisation is heading towards the cliff, how can the human heart and ethics return to the trust of the global family? Stückelberger is a profound observer and theorist of global ethics. He ignites the torch of people's conscience. This book

is very enlightening to provide a reference direction. (Cui Wantian, Entrepreneur in e-health, Professor of Economics, China). An inspiring read, providing thought-provoking opportunities for Africa to re-envision its cumulative position and continental role in the new post-Covid ‘globalanced’ world order. (Divya Singh, Prof. Dr, Academic Director, Stadio Holdings, South Africa). One of the foremost global authorities on ethics, Stückelberger presents extremely interesting and new perspectives. This book is relevant to various stakeholders in the global ecosystem, especially with the Covid challenges. (Pavan Duggal, Dr. International Cyber Law Expert, Supreme Court of India) Very few books provoke one to think and gain critical insight in the way Globalance does. This Globalance does it! (Alex Ageev, Professor of Economic Strategies, Russia).

Detailed presentation. Many exciting and provocative details have to be omitted for reasons of space. Christoph Stückelberger's book, an ethical manual written for the post-Covid world, was published in English on the world market of specialist books with a positive vision of the future of faith. Its key concept is the ethics of creating a worldwide balance and international, national, and individual pursuits. Globalance is the ethics of responsible religious thinking and care. Stückelberger writes about his intention with almost arspoetic brevity: “I recommend this volume to all those who are interested in the SDGs (=Sustainable Development Goals). I close these 600 pages with the same letters SDG as all the books and letters of our reformer Calvin: SDG! The glory belongs to God alone!”. A very clear direction and foundation.

Preface to the future. In the foreword of the book *Globalance: Ethics Handbook for a Balanced World Post-Covid*, which debuted in Zürich on August 20, 2020, environmental scientist E.U. von Weizsäcker, former vice-president of the Club of Rome, writes that our world is unbalanced, that climate change is bringing serious problems and destructive phenomena, that polarization and deadly competition between superpowers is intensifying, and that humanity is also responsible for all of this with the

Covid-19 pandemic. But, above all, this and the growing number of millions of deaths that come with it demand worldwide cooperation and cooperation. How can this fragile, unbalanced world, which threatens its survival, be transformed in such a way that more balanced societies are created? How can the world confront differences and divisions and help modern humanity to think and act in a relational manner that maintains relationships with each other? This very timely *Globalance* is the central question of the book, according to von Weizsäcker. On hundreds of pages, we get arguments, examples, and models on achieving actual and long-lasting balancing, balanced states, or balancing processes instead of superficial or apparent peace. Finally, the volume penetrates deeply into the connections, analyzes many forms of polarities and divisions, and looks for resolving and connecting values. The big message of the thick volume: the success story of humanity is not the history of endless conflicts but effective cooperation.

For four decades, Professor Stückelberger has been dealing with the techniques and methods of balancing the environment and development, peace and justice, power and respect, and global and local values. As the founder of *globethics.net*, which brings together about 170,000 scientists from a wide variety of religions and provides a world forum for their thoughts, he can only imagine the future based on ethical values. As a guest professor and a devout Reformed scholar, he persistently works on the multiple creations of the minimum moral, the smallest moral common. For Stückelberger, the maximum local moral context is the Bible, Reformed, and Protestant values. Those whose awareness and commitment bravely face global, planetary challenges. Instead of dogmatism and fundamentalism that incites or stiffens opposition, its goal is to research, spread, and teach balancing methods and forms of behavior. Also, by publishing his manual, which can be downloaded for free from the Internet, *Globality*, a worldwide balance that includes the diversity of local values, national values, and religious ethics. Unity in diversity globally - and locally. Diversity in the unit is also on a global scale - and locally. His vision of survival and future as a maxim - as a life principle. Let's see some distinct and essential parts of his book!

68, 73, 79, 89, 01, 07, 20. These are not the winning lottery numbers but the seven dates when the balance of the previous world was shaken, a loss of balance, and an imbalance occurred on a global scale. These are the milestones of the global changes of the last five decades. Those who lived through these years as adults have the dates burned into our memory. 1968 – student riots, the cultural revolution of values. 1973 – the first oil price shock and the Club of Rome report on the limits of growth. 1979 - The start of China's open door policy and its rise to superpower. 1989 - the fall of the Berlin Wall, the beginning of the collapse of the bipolar world. 2001 - September 11, terrorist Islamic fundamentalism and the beginning of global defense. 2007 - global financial crisis. 2020 - the beginning of the global pandemic. Each date represents a new stage of uncertainty, a loss of balance, new forms of global disorder, and new challenges.

The most important question is the shaping of *homo humanus* - or the twilight of humanity. The most crucial question after realizing this is: how can we transform such dysfunctions and imbalances into a new, dynamic world order and global balance? How can ethics contribute to this transition and change by deploying the balance of values and virtues, the power and ability to create balance? The global financial crisis of 2008/2009 showed how vulnerable global and interdependent financial markets are. The author also emphasizes in capital letters that the global balancing of opposites is not the ultimate goal in the ethical vision of globalance. The ultimate goal is more than that, much more. The goal is not simply to control processes or countermovements. It is a means to achieve the real goal: helping people become human, shaping *homo humanus*. Or precisely to prevent people from being the price and victim of the processes. Because the future will either belong to man, God's creation, or artificial intelligence, AI, which is man's creation, if this happens, the twilight of *homo sapiens*, *homo humanus*, will begin. Either *Homo Deus* - the era of the man-god, as Harari's books suggest - or *Deus homo*, with the teachings of the God-man, Jesus Christ, and the awareness of his return! If this is not the case, then the actual twilight of the West will come, in fact: the twilight of the entire globe! Let me quote the author verbatim:

“ Extremes dehumanize others or oneself and violate human dignity; unbalanced lifestyle destroys environment and unbalanced values in economy and politics leads to suffering, war and victims. Religions around the globe are part of the problem and the solution. With fundamentalist or authoritarian religious structures, they often hinder human beings from becoming human. But religions in their core show the way to become truly human. Incarnation of the divine means, we see how to become human by looking at the divine. As an anonymous Christian in light of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ said: “Do it like God: Become Human.” The topic of the World Congress of Philosophy in Shanghai in August 2018 was “Learning to Be Human.” That is the ultimate goal of *Globalance*. (Stückelberger, 2020, 28)

The purpose of this book is not to describe what is (using a descriptive, descriptive method - this is what the Danish philosopher Korsgaard did in his article on the digital world dictatorship), nor to predict what the future will be (using a predictive - forecasting method - this is what the Israeli historian, Yuval Harari with *Homo Deus* did), but to give orientation, guidelines, and a compass to what should be (normative - measuring, value-giving method).

For sustainable development that helps people and humanity, for the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals=SDGs), the question is: where is humanity headed? To what extent and by what means do you try to achieve your survival? Does the search for survival lead all of humanity towards a (more) livable future, or does it serve crude, partial interests that endanger humanity? Are we advancing the culture of life or the "culture" of death, even unconsciously, in the absence of moral reflection? This central question constantly pulsates in Stückelberger's book. Indeed, new pandemics, unknown, planned, or spontaneously occurring Covid-19, 20, 21... and who knows how many global genocides caused by the Corona virus await us. Humanity is heading towards total self-extinction, genocide, or waiting in the digital world prison as the Danish Sören

Korsgaard says. In this regard, perhaps the vision of Homo Deus, the anthropological narcotic intoxicating with deification, enslaves the unborn and a part of the living (according to the book by the Israeli Yuval Harari)? These are more or less realistic models of the future or nightmares spread by the media. Thus, what Chr. Stückelberger drawing the attention of readers to in his ethical manual is no accidental wordplay either. After all, it seems that humanity has just arrived at the point where its responsible thinkers connect the two SDGs: the 17 areas of sustainable development goals developed by the UN in 2015 and adopted by the member states, setting the direction until 2030 with the culture-creating Christian principle (strongly emphasized in the Reformation), serving the glory of God (SDG) in all areas of life. These areas include: no poverty, no hunger, no health protection, good education, no gender equality, no clean water, no renewable energy, no jobs and economic growth, no innovations and good infrastructures, no reduction in inequality between people, sustainable urban and community life, responsible consumption, climate protection actions, protection for marine life, protect peace and strive for justice, strive for a partnership to achieve the goals. Many? Yes. But now we've reached the point where all-or-nothing has become a viable alternative.

Three scenarios about the future. Stückelberger's monumental ethical work is based on the faith-based constructive view that there will be a continuation after the pandemic. What kind of sequel will it be? The SDG model tries to contribute to the pursuit of world balance with a three-step method. And in this method, ethical standards are decisive.

The first step is to analyze the situation which is done with factual analysis, using strictly scientific tools. The second step is to assess the revealed situation from the point of view of whether or not it carries ethical motives, and the third is to preserve the human character of people in the consequences of the decision, in the actual action, by validating the ethical aspects. By adopting the three-one method of analysis-decision-consequence consideration, the three scenarios appear in the SDG world model adopting the three-one approach of analysis-decision-consequence review. One of the scenarios will try to return the world to the old way of life, to the "normal" situation before the pandemic. However, it is now clear

that this is not a viable path. The caesura, the dividing line between the heretofore and the now/later, is much greater than the meaning of returning to the "ante," i.e., before. The second is the completely new world order, the renewal scenario. The renewal scenario is also impossible since tomorrow can only be planned somehow based on yesterday and the day before yesterday. The third is accommodation, adapting to new situations, but preserving the fundamental ethical and human values that have been tested and proven for thousands of years as the primary conditions for a sustainable planetary existence. Furthermore, accommodation cannot be achieved by "either-or" thinking but by "and-and" or "both-and." The global balance considered achievable by the SDG model means the ratio of values and human qualities, even if they sometimes conflict. However, they belong together in existence and the actual historical space. Stückelberger calls the innovative middle ground between extremes and fundamentalisms, which are dead ends or derailments on the roads to the future.

Harmonizing the values of world religions and world cultures, Stückelberger also applies the concept created by the outstanding religious sociologists of our time about secularism, the religious world era after secularization. Berger, Monica Toft, and the vastly talented research groups of Harvard, Berkley, and German Münster universities have made it evident that the XXI. century will be “God's century, in which reborn world religions will be a decisive force in world politics, domestic and foreign politics.” It is no coincidence that J. Micklethwait and A. Woolridge's book on the return of God (God is back...) was published in 2009. In their wake, hundreds of studies deal with the reviving and growing influence of world religions, cultures, and philosophies on the thinking of our era and, sometimes against, the tremendous pressure of digitalization and cyberspace. Modern ethical thinking also considers the universal and humanity-protecting findings of world religions, such as M. Gandhi's permanent seven principles of avoidance, which we recall because of their unheard-of relevance. The seven main sins of today's world, and thus the chance of the planetary struggle against them, were described by a brilliant foresight Hindu sage with great feeling: 1. wealth without work; 2. pleasure without conscience; 3. knowledge without a definite goal; 4. business

without morals; 5. science without humanity; 6. religion without sacrifice; 7. politics without principles. The SDG model is a creation-oriented worldview, which considers that contradictions are fundamental in life, yet God said to this world: “This is good.” World religions, especially Judaism and Christianity, have made it evident for thousands of years that the opposites are brought together by the existence of the One, God himself. In this way, God does not allow his handiwork to fall apart in the battle of opposites, not even during such a powerful and rubbed diabolical manipulation. In the background of the world of phenomena stands the uniting being, Who is God? He can be called Creator, Eternal, Ultimate, Absolutes, Transcendent, Supreme.

The name is secondary since He is unnameable, unspeakable with human words, concepts, and names. He does not allow himself to be taken prisoner by human words and reason. Instead, He reveals only as much about himself as he considers helpful, happy, and life-giving for us. In other words, the world's future cannot be imagined without God, without the billions of believers of functioning world religions, and without the coordination of their values and their unification into a unified future-influencing force. No power, philosophy, scientific plan, or concept today surpasses the dimension of faith and can preserve the world's future to such an extent by protecting the human essence. In a multifaceted analysis, Stückelberger reveals the inner characteristics of world religions, which can help to shape, maintain and defend global balance for man! The momentum of development can only be carried forward through dialogue, finding and building relationships, and interaction. In all of this, the preservation of one's character, be it religious, faith, or church specifics, is primarily essential so that the world does not turn into a faceless masquerade ball, from which no one except perhaps the Lord of the worlds and universes can tell, where it is going, drifting, collapsing.

The SDG model supports the possibility of finding a global balance. After Stückelberger outlined 13 characteristics of world processes, he moves on to 5 possible steps for creating planetary balance. In his opinion, the 13 attributes of world processes are 1. opposites are two sides of the same coin; 2. life emanates from the center of existence, from God, who is love itself; 3.

world processes are dialectical, not dualistic; 4. balancers, not imperialistic monopolists; 5. they are dynamic, not stationary or moving; 6. they are developmental, they are not revolutionary destructively constructive; 7. inclusive, open, non-exclusive; 8. they strive for balance in the body-soul-spirit-created world four; 9. value-driven, not value-denying; 10. seek unity in diversity but preserve diversity in agreement; 11. they support religious and non-religious ethical content; 12. self-critical, not authoritarian or oppressively one-sided; 13. they seek to join the parts together and are not driven by fragmentation. They are expanding the experience of the universal phenomenon of opposites and polarization and the five methods of dealing with them. Accordingly, one opposite tries to destroy the other to rule with absolute, exclusive power. While this may lead to a short-term victory, it cannot be sustainable since the oppressed, the denied, and the marginalized cannot be eliminated; sooner or later, they will return. Then he mentions fusion, the attempt to merge opposites, in which the opposites are extinguished. He then classifies innovation here as when opposites create something new together. The best example is the child, the joint fruit of the male-female opposite pair. Then the synthesis takes place in the list when, like innovation, the opposites appear in a new, higher quality, creating a new value. Finally, *globalance*, the method of creating a worldwide balance, appears. In this mode, the opposites remain connected and interact with each other in a dynamic balance. Life progresses, develops, and unfolds step by step, both on the material and spiritual, individual and community levels. Stückelberger, working with a vast amount of facts and a world concept, in his system aiming at world balance, then lists the 13 “isms” and political “empires,” systems considered temporary. These “empires,” which pose a severe challenge from the point of view of the future and necessitate the urgent search for globalism, is suitable for this the coming together of ethical world forces.

Acceptable, ethical compromises! Several chapters of Stückelberger's book deserve a more detailed presentation and discussion. Nearing the end of our review, I will briefly recall a few more essential details. The question is how to forge a coalition between as many cultures as possible that bear moral standards for the sake of the future. He describes three value-carrying

culture types: culture circles of honor, effectiveness, and joy (following Miguel Basanez). Respect for tradition is central to honoring cultures. In most African countries (where Christianity is growing most strongly today), the nations with Islamic, Christian, and Orthodox majorities were classified here. Prosperity is the measure of result-oriented cultures and the emerging and growing Asian economy, the so-called developing countries based on Confucian philosophy and ethics (China, Japan...), Western countries, and the USA. In joyful cultures, the family, the celebration of life even in poor conditions, and friendship are at the center. How to find points of connection between them? According to Stükelberger's balance-seeking future ethics, compromise is a process during which, voluntarily or under pressure, the participants seek common goals and values. To do so, they are ready and able to renounce the enforcement of their interests or move them backward. There are different types of compromise, five of which are listed in the post-Covid ethics manual. 1. Territorially distinguish between social and ethical compromise; 2. It is realized on three levels: within a person, between persons, and between institutions; 3. It can have two characteristics: false and true compromise; 4. In terms of intensity, there is a democratic, legal-based compromise and a peaceful, peace-making, agreed-upon compromise; 5. Regarding its schedule, there is a temporary and final compromise; The ethics of compromise. A compromise can be morally justified if it serves as a means to achieve specific ethical values and goals that can be jointly undertaken, even if it is aimed at a sector of the economy or industrial production. This concept is called possibilism, which strives for the best possible solution that can be mutually agreed upon. At the same time, compromising must be rejected if this is considered a state of value as the ultimate moral goal. Nor should it be driven by cheap survival pragmatism. Acceptable compromises bear the mark of being temporary since if the possibility of a better compromise arises in the future, it will overwrite the previous state. But this is precisely the engine and driving force of constant good compromise. A compromise is good if it helps settle and resolve conflicts between persons, institutions, and nations. During this process, inevitable conflicts should not be covered up or kept silent because this ticks like a time bomb in the background of the compromise reached. A

quick compromise may be necessary to maintain both essential human life and our ecosystem. The parties will make a worse compromise than planned but must accept it to protect life until a better option can be determined. A compromise in line with democratic principles can and must be justified in front of the public. Confidential compromises between states or organizations can only guarantee success for a particular time. Compromise can be rejected if, for example, it would serve the survival of an existing dictatorial regime simply through advantageous international trade agreements.

Stückelberger's worldwide ethical internet network has 200,000 registered followers. They include 50,000 teachers and professors worldwide in more than 200 countries and an online library containing more than 3 million documents (globethics.net). I asked him in writing a year ago in connection with his book, briefly reviewed here. His answer reads:

“ So my message: ethics in education at all levels means that high-level knowledge education and skill development must be balanced with high-level integrity. Power must be balanced with responsibility. Without it, the nations produce even more injustice and frauds...

At the end of his argumentative volume, working with enormous factual material and an army of graphs and figures, he also revealed the heart of the committed “Calvinist” scientist. In his word picture poem about his dreams, he says:

“ *I have a dream*
Superpowers cooperate
Suspicion is converted to trust
Escalation is turned to de-escalation
Domination is replaced by participation
Innovation is balanced with conservation
Competition is combined with cooperation
Extremism is defeated by respect of opposites

*Power and leadership are executed with integrity
The Golden Rule of reciprocity becomes true
Self-confidence is balanced with modesty
Soft water is stronger than hard stones
Freedom and justice kiss each other
Hate is transformed into love
Death is integrated into life
Love never ends
I have a dream*

Hopefully, this dream will start to come true as soon as possible.

3. Bibliography

- Békefi, Lajos. Globalance – Etikai kézikönyv a Covid utáni időkre - Könyvszemle - Békefi Lajos, Christoph Stückelberger, Ethics Handbook for a Balanced World post-Covid, Globethics.net ed., Genf, 2020. 620 p. In: *Confessio Reformatus*, 6pp.
- Chan, D. 2017. “The AI that has nothing to learn from humans.” *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/10/alphago-zero-the-ai-that-taught-itself-go/543450/> (10/20/2017)
- Green, Erin, Divya Singh, Roland Chia, eds. 2022. *AI Ethics and Higher Education Good Practice and Guidance for Educators, Learners, and Institutions*. 2022. Geneva: Globethics.net.
- Ike, Obiora, Justus Mbae, Chidiebere Onyia, Herbert Makinda, eds. 2021. *Mainstreaming Ethics in Higher Education Vol. 2*, Geneva: Globethics.net.
- Koroleva, E. and Kuratova, A. 2020. “Higher Education and Digitalization of the Economy: The Case of Russian Regions”, *International*

Journal of Technology, 11:6, 1181-1190, <https://doi.org/10.14716/ijtech.v11i6.4431>

Meyer-Bisch, Patrice. 2011. *Introduction aux droits culturels, Les valeurs de l'identité*, Fribourg : IIEDH.

Stückelberger, Christoph, Joseph Galgalo and Samuel Kobia, eds. 2021. *Leadership with Integrity: Higher Education from Vocation to Funding*, Geneva: Globethics.net.

Stückelberger, Christoph, *Globalance. Ethics Handbook of a Balanced World Post-Covid*, Focus Series No. 57, 2020, 620pp. New second editions planned 2022.

The Vatican. 2022. The Holy See. <https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html> (02/16/2022).

Weber, Max. 1978 [1921]. *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, translated by Guenther Roth / Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.

4. Short biography

Rev. Dr. Lajos Békefy, PhD, is a reformed pastor-theologian, researcher, publicist, and foreign affairs secretary of the Protestant Workshop, Hungary, which reflects in this Eastern European country on the position and role of Protestants, within Christian democracy in a way that informs current events.

Email: paxvobis2016@gmail.com

