“Hans Küng puts his house in order” – 10 Years of the Global Ethic Foundation

The tenth anniversary of the Global Ethic Foundation was celebrated on 18 March in connection with Prof. Küng’s 77th birthday. This celebration provided an occasion for the President of the Foundation to announce important decisions of the Board of Directors regarding the future of the Foundation, in particular in the event that he himself might become incapacitated through illness or death:

- President of the Foundation will then be the current Vice-President Prof. Dr. Karl-Josef Kuschel, Professor for Inter-religious Dialogue and Theology of the Cultures at the University of Tübingen.

- Dr. Stephan Schlensog, currently serving as the Foundation’s business manager, has now been named Secretary General, an appointment, which reflects his increased responsibility for the conceptual work of the Foundation and for its public representation.

- Furthermore, Prof Küng has announced that, upon his death, ownership of his portion of the house in the Waldhäuser Strasse 23 will devolve upon the Global Ethic Foundation to become the “Hans Küng Research and Encounter Centre”, thus making it possible to continue the work of the Foundation over the long term.

Death of the Founder

In July, we were forced to take leave of Count Karl Konrad von der Groeben, the founder of the Global Ethic Foundation. On 6 July 2005, at the age of 86, he died in Baden-Baden in consequence of a tragic accident. Impressed by his reading of Hans Küng’s book *Global Responsibility*, the retired businessman decided in 1995 to give practical realisation to the global ethic idea by creating a foundation to support it. As a member of the Board of Directors, Count Groeben, well known for his generosity and his high ethical motivation, has supported the work of the Foundation over all these years with keen interest and personal engagement. The Global Ethic Foundation will forever be grateful to him.
The Global Ethic Lecture 2005

As in previous years, the 5th Global Ethic Lecture, held at the University of Tübingen on 20 October, marked one of the highlights of the year. In her lecture, the Iranian Nobel Prize Laureate of 2003, Dr. Shirin Ebadi addressed the topic “The Contribution of Islam to a Global Ethic”. Following the lecture, she engaged in a dialogue with Prof. Küng on the same topic. The dedicated lawyer and human rights activist emphasized the universal validity of human rights, their connection with a global ethic, and their compatibility with the principles of Islam. The text of Shirin Ebadi’s speech can be found on the website of the Global Ethic Foundation (www.weltethos.org), and a video version of the lecture can be purchased as a DVD at the Foundation’s Internet Shop.

Global Ethic International

An exceptional event for the Global Ethic Project this year was the conferral of the 22nd Niwano Peace Prize on Prof. Küng. With this world-renowned prize, the Japanese Niwano Peace Foundation of the Neo-Buddhist Rissho Kosei-kai Movement honours Prof. Küng for his inaugurating the Global Ethic Project. Accompanied by Dr. Schlensog, Prof. Küng accepted the award in a celebration on 11 May, in Tokyo. In this connection, he also spoke at a symposium of the Rissho Kosei-kai in Kyoto and at a conference of the Arigatou Foundation for Ethical Child Education in Tokyo.

A milestone in the spread of the global ethic idea in Asia was set by the conference “Global Ethic in School Education”, which took place from 6 to 8 December in Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia. Both Prof. Küng and Dr. Günther Gebhardt took part in this conference as speakers. At the invitation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Malaysia, 40 experts from the ministries of education, school offices and schools representing some 11 Southeast-Asian countries came together. In the opening day programme for a larger public, Prof. Küng held a major lecture. On the following days, beginning with two introductory lectures by Dr. Gebhardt, the experts divided into groups to work out practical teaching units for the global ethic theme. The huge success of the conference promises further development in the future of the educational work in the various countries of Southeast Asia.

Special encouragement to the Global Ethic Project was given by the new Pope Benedict XVI in the course of his four-hour long conversation with Hans Küng in Castel Gandolfo on 24 September, 2005. In the official press release, which the Pope himself authored, he praised Hans Küng’s “efforts – in dialogue with the religions and with secular thinking – to contribute to a renewed recognition of the essential moral values of mankind.”
In the course of two visits to the USA, Prof. Küng held lectures on the global ethic at three places: Santa Clara / California (in connection with the travelling exhibition “World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic” at the university there), Philadelphia (at Temple University, also in connection with the exhibition), and Phoenix / Arizona. Additional important international engagements brought him to the World Economic Forum in Davos, to the Nobel Peace Prize Institute in Oslo, and to Geneva, Grenoble, Zollikon / Switzerland, Caux / Switzerland, and Salzburg.

Prof. Karl-Josef Kuschel, Vice-President of the Foundation, held guest lectures at the universities of Jena (25 May) and Antwerp (13 October). Among his many engagements in Germany, special mention is made of his lecture to the International Symposium of the Evangelical Alliance on the Dialogue of the Religions, held in Bensheim (24/25 February) and the festive lecture to the German National Convention of Student Fraternities held in the grand auditorium of the University of Tübingen.

Dr. Günther Gebhardt, in addition to his many global ethic lectures in Germany, spoke also in Cluj / Romania, twice in Grenoble (see below) and twice in Vienna, first within the framework of a lecture series organised at the University by the Austrian Global Ethic Initiative and then before the Freemasonic Academy of Austria.

Global Ethic in the French-speaking Regions

Thanks to the engagement of the Global Ethic Foundation of Switzerland, since the beginning of 2005, the travelling exhibition (in various formats) and the accompanying booklet are now available in a French version under the title “Religions du monde – Paix mondiale – Ethique planétaire”. Furthermore, an improved translation of the Global Ethic Declaration has been prepared, which is available as a booklet with the title Déclaration pour une éthique planétaire. The French exhibition was shown for the first time at the University of Geneva. In this connection, Prof. Küng, accompanied by Dr. Gebhardt, held a public dialogue with the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr. Jakob Kellenberger, and on the following day spoke at a colloquium organised by the University. In the course of the year, the exhibition was then shown in Caux by Montreux (organised by the movement “Initiatives for Reform”), where Prof. Küng also held a lecture, and in Neuchâtel / Le Louverain.

In this year, for the first time, a major event for the Global Ethic Project took place in France. The Centre Théologique de Meylan in Grenoble organised a colloquium on the theme “Aux défis d’une éthique planétaire”, which took place from the 5th to the 8th of July. Along with Prof. Küng and Dr. Gebhardt, several French scholars, NGO-representatives and religious representatives spoke at the meeting. As a preparation for the colloquium, Dr. Gebhardt had already held a lecture in Grenoble on 27 May,
Global Ethic and Sport

In the year preceding the World Soccer Championship Competition in Germany, two important encounters took place between the global ethic theme and the question of ethics in sports:

- At the German Protestant Church Congress in Hannover, on 27 May, Prof. Küng held a programmatic lecture on the theme “Worldwide Sports and Global Ethic”, and he participated in the subsequent podium discussion with athletes and sport functionaries.
- On 27 September, at the International Olympic Forum in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt/Main, Prof. Küng took part in a public dialogue with Dr. Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee. Subsequently, Dr. Rogge indicated his readiness to hold the 6th Global Ethic Lecture at the University of Tübingen on 10 May 2006.

Global Ethic and scholarship

In five public lectures in April and May, within the Studium Generale programme of the University of Tübingen, Prof. Küng sought to build bridges between global ethic and the natural sciences. Under the title The Beginning of all things: Natural science and religion, he treated the questions of the origins of the universe, of life and of mankind and the religious relevance of all these questions. In this connection, the origins of an ethic likewise come under discussion. In amplified form, these lectures have appeared now as a book with the same title published by the Piper Verlag in Munich.

On the same theme, science and religion, Prof. Küng held a major lecture for an awards celebration in Heidelberg on 8 June, where the State Research Prize of Baden-Württemberg was conferred. He also lectured at the annual conference of the Academia Europaea in the Albert-Einstein-Research-Park in Potsdam.

In the Tübingen Studium Generale programme, Prof. Kuschel gave a highly successful series of lectures on the theme „World Religions in the Literature of the 20th Century: India and China“.

Dr. Hans-Martin Schönherr-Mann, professor of political philosophy in Munich, has begun working on a book project, Global Ethics in Philosophical Perspective, which he expects to finish next year. The aim is to show what contributions 20th Century Philosophy has made to the idea of a global ethic and thus to close a gap in the discussion of a non-religious foundation for a global ethic.
New publications and translations

- Hans Küng, *Der Anfang aller Dinge* (*The Beginning of all things*) published by Piper in Munich.
- For a five-volume edition of *Die Heiligen Schriften der Welt* (*Hinduismus, Buddhismus, Judaïsmus, Christentum und Islam*) published by the Munich Hugendubel/Diederichs Verlag, Prof. Küng functioned as editor and wrote an introduction to each volume.
- Hans Kung, *Islam* has appeared in Italian by Rizzoli in Milan.
- The *Declaration toward a Global Ethic* is now available in booklet form in Bulgarian, Chinese and Bahasa Malaysia and has been published in a scientific journal in Russian by the University of Perm.
- The booklet to accompany the exhibition “World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic” is now also available in Spanish and Chinese translations.

In addition, in the course of 2005, members of the Foundation’s team have again contributed articles on the global ethic theme to various journals, collections and other publications.

Global ethic in education and the schools

As in previous years, the members of the Foundation’s team, both official and unofficial, have been active in a multitude of educational presentations in collaboration with various secular and religious partners and especially in teacher training sessions. Besides the Tübingen team composed of Dr. Stephan Schlenosg, Dr. Günther Gebhardt, and Dr. Markus Weingardt, the following persons deserve special mention: Dr. Martin Bauschke (Berlin), Religious Education teacher Walter Lange (Castrop-Rauxel), Privatdozent Johannes Rehm (Bamberg), Dr. Christel Hasselmann (Hannover), Dr. Helga Offermanns (Wiesbaden), and Prof. em. Dr. Hermann Häring (formerly Nimwegen, now Tübingen), who is active since 2005 as a scientific advisor to the Foundation. New to the team are the two teachers, Anke Gehrt-Woitzik and Katrin Ziesecke (Leipzig). The dates for lectures and teacher-training conferences by our team members can all be found listed on the website of the Foundation.

To make available to a broader base the fruitful experience gained over the years in adult and school education, Dr Schlenosg has begun to develop a German language
Workbook Global Ethic. In the form of a loose-leaf collection, it will contain extensive teaching materials and draft lessons for dealing with the global ethic theme in school education. Working on this project, under the direction of Dr. Schlensog, is a team of teachers composed of Walter Lange, Anke Gehrt-Woitzik and Katrin Ziesecke.

Global Ethic on the Internet

The Internet presence of the Foundation (www.weltethos.org and the school server www.schule-weltethos.de) are being constantly updated and expanded. As finances permit, the offerings in foreign languages are being increased.

In the future, an important role will be played by the Internet Shop, newly developed by Dr. Schlensog in collaboration with the Medienstudio Lang in Rottenburg. Here interested persons will find comfortable access to a wide offering of didactic materials, media, and above all books in German.

In addition, the conceptual preparations have begun for developing a comprehensive interactive Internet learning programme, A Global Ethic Now, in German and English. Under the direction of Dr. Schlensog and with the cooperation of external experts, it is proposed to develop a multi-facet didactic instrument giving interested persons worldwide access to the themes of world religions and questions of ethical values and standards.

The Exhibition “World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic”

The booklet for the exposition is now available in German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, and Chinese. The travelling exhibition in its diverse versions continues to enjoy great popularity, especially in Germany and Switzerland.

− In Germany, it has been shown in Leipzig, Niederzir/Marzenich, Schleiden, Bochum, Kleve, Pegau, Landshut, Ronnenberg, Weißenfels, Chemnitz, Sindelfingen, Erfurt, Annaberg-Buchholz, Bremen (there with a very extensive accompanying inter-religious programme), Hamburg, Flensburg, Kiel, Lübeck, Castrop-Rauxel and Zeitz.

− In Switzerland, the exhibition has been shown in Appenzell, Sargans, St. Gall, Geneva, Caux, Neuchâtel / Le Louverain, and Davos (till 2006).

− In Malaysia, a Chinese version has been shown in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and in the Federal State of Sarawak. Later it will travel through other parts of the nation.
- In the USA, the English version was shown at the University of Santa Clara / California and at the Temple University in Philadelphia. From there, further showings are expected to be organised.

**Global Ethics Foundations in Various Countries**

The Global Ethics Foundations in Switzerland, Austria, and the Czech Republic, in accordance with their own specific orientations, have likewise carried out various activities in the areas of education, schooling, and academic reflection.

In Switzerland, this year, the Global Ethic Project was launched in the French language areas of Western Switzerland via the exhibition and accompanying materials (see above). For a school competition there in 2006, which is meant to deal with the global ethic theme, a representative jury has been put together under the direction of Prof. Denis Müller (Lausanne). For the co-ordination of these and other educational activities, the executive director of the Global Ethic Foundation Switzerland, lic. phil. Guido Baumann is responsible.

The principal project of the Global Ethic Initiative Austria ([www.weltethos.at](http://www.weltethos.at)) has been to sponsor a highly successful lecture series at the University of Vienna from October 2005 to January 2006, under the title “Global Ethic – Universal Peace – World Religions”, organised by Prof. Dr. Erwin Bader. In addition, the General Secretary of the Austrian Foundation, Mag. Edith Riether has continued her educational work.

In the Czech Republic, Senator Dr. Karel Floss, founder and chairman of the Czech Global Ethic Foundation, continues to promote the global ethic idea especially in political and academic circles and in meetings organised by the Procopius Centre in Sazava, which he heads.

Further information about the Global Ethic Foundation, its on-going activities and current publications, as well as working materials and a comprehensive bibliography can be found on the Internet under [www.weltethos.org](http://www.weltethos.org).

**Our Team**

In 2005 as in the past, all of the diverse activities of the Global Ethic Foundation could only be carried out thanks to the immense engagement of the entire team. Particular thanks go to the secretariat with the Chief Secretary Inge Baumann aided on a part-time basis by her predecessor Eleanore Henn. Foundation Assistant Anette Stuber-Rousselle, M.A., is principally responsible for the preparation of extensive manuscripts and for keeping the bibliography up to date. Dr. Markus Weingardt is responsible for bookkeeping, but also serves as a speaker on occasion. Valuable practical work is done by our student assistants, Carina Geldhauser and Ulf Günnewig.
The Global Ethic Foundation takes this opportunity to thank all of its friends and supporters for their valuable contributions so indispensable for the Foundation. Even the smallest contribution constitutes a major assistance for the work of our Foundation.

Tübingen, January 2006

Dr. Günther Gebhardt