

Toward a Global Ethic of Loyalty/Fidelity/Truthfulness*

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The purpose of this article is to critically evaluate *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, with commentaries by Hans Kung and Karl-Josef Kuschel (New York: Continuum, 1993)¹ along with Hans Kung, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (New York: Continuum, 1993)². In order to make it clear to the readers in what context I am about to engage myself in writing this article, let me first share with you the entire text of the Introduction to the Declaration which was meant to serve as "a brief summary of the Declaration for publicity purposes" (GE, 12):

Introduction

The world is in agony. The agony is so pervasive and urgent that we are compelled to name its manifestations so that the depth of this may be made clear.

Peace eludes us...the planet is being destroyed...neighbours live in fear...women and men are estranged from each other...children die!

This is abhorrent!

We condemn the abuses of ecosystems.

We condemn the poverty that stifles life's potential; the hunger that weakens the human body; the economic disparities that threaten so many families with ruin.

We condemn the social disarray of the nations; the disregard for justice which pushes citizens to the margin; the anarchy

overtaking our communities; and the insane death of children from violence. In particular we condemn aggression and hatred in the name of religion.

But this agony need not be.

It need not be because the basis for an ethic already exists. This ethic offers the possibility of a better individual and global order, and leads individuals away from despair and societies away from chaos.

We are women and men who have embraced the precepts and practices of the world's religions.

We affirm that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic.

We affirm that this truth is already known, but yet to be lived in heart and action.

We affirm that there is an irrevocable, unconditional norm for all races of life, for families and communities, for races, nations and religions. There already exist ancient guidelines for human behaviour which are found in the teachings of the religions of the world and which are the conditions for a sustainable world order.

We declare:

We are interdependent. Each of us depends on the well-being of the whole, and so we have respect for the community of living beings, for people, animals, and plants, and for the preservation of Earth, the air, water and soil.

We take responsibility for all we do. All our decisions, actions, and failures to act have consequences.

We must treat others as we wish others to treat us. We make a commitment to respect life and dignity, individuality and diversity, so that every person is treated humanely, without exception. We must have patience and acceptance. We must be able to forgive, learning from the past but never allowing ourselves to be enslaved by memories of hate. Opening our hearts to one another, we must sink our narrow differences for the cause of world community, practising a culture of solidarity and relatedness.

We consider humankind our family. We must strive to be kind and generous. We must not live for ourselves alone, but should also serve others, never forgetting the children, the aged, the poor, the suffering, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely. No person should ever be considered or treated as a second-class citizen, or be exploited in any way whatsoever. There should be equal partnership between men and women. We must not commit any kind of sexual immorality. We must put behind us all forms of domination or abuse.

We commit ourselves to a culture of non-violence, respect, justice and peace. We shall not oppress, injure, torture, or kill other human beings, forsaking violence as a means of settling differences.

We must strive for a just social and economic order, in which everyone has an equal chance to reach full potential as a human being. We must speak and act truthfully and with compassion, dealing fairly with all, and avoiding prejudice and hatred. We must not steal. We must move beyond the dominance of greed for power, prestige, money,

and consumption to make a just and peaceful world. Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed first. We pledge to increase our awareness by disciplining our minds, by meditation, by prayer, or by positive thinking. Without risk and a readiness to sacrifice there can be no fundamental change in our situation. Therefore we commit ourselves to this global ethic, to understanding one another, and to socially-beneficial, peace-fostering, and nature-friendly ways of life.

We invite all people, whether religious or not, to do the same.
(GE, 13-16)

In reading the above-cited Introduction and the Declaration, I basically perceive that the three "Principles of a Global Ethic" put forward in the Declaration would contribute much to deep thinking about a "global ethic" among religionists of different kinds only if at least two basic issues that seem to remain unclarified in the two volumes were elucidated properly.

One of the issues concerns how one can think of an "Ultimate Reality" (referred to in GE, 19) in trans-personalistic, as well as personalistic, terms in order to conceive religiously of a global ethic. It seems to me that the authors of the Declaration are mainly representing the personalistic notion of the Ultimate, not its trans-personalistic notion. This leads to the lack of clarification about one of the most significant problems in the present-day world-wide interreligious dialogue, especially the one between Buddhism and Christianity: namely, the problem of how the theistic or Christian Ultimate, God, is "ontologically" related to the non-theistic or Buddhist Ultimate, Emptiness (*sunyata*).

By contrast, in this article, as well as elsewhere³, I will be presenting my thesis of "God as the principle of loyalty in the universe" which comprizes the following three ideas: (1) God is supremely loyal to Emptiness or Nothing; (2) Emptiness empties

itself; (3) God is the only one in the universe who can evoke loyalty in us creatures.

The other issue that needs elucidation is concerned with articulating the way in which we can acknowledge and attain “the full realization of the intrinsic dignity [which I might designate Beauty, as does Whitehead] of the human person” (GE, 20), “axiologically”—and this in conjunction with other values peculiar to human nature, such as intended instrumental and pragmatic values, that is, Goodness and Efficacy. We hold that the authentic manifestation of the intrinsic value of human nature, Beauty, cannot be achieved without seeing into the nature of our own being as “empty.” In being ourselves, we are one with the reality of Emptiness. Accordingly, where there is no manifest concern in us for the reality of Emptiness, as is the case with the two books in question, there cannot arise authentically in us the possibility of our insight into our intrinsic dignity, the most fundamental of all values.⁴ A personal God alone cannot help us in this instance.

Let us then discuss in what follows the three principles put forward in the Declaration of the Parliament of the World’s Religions from my aforementioned double perspective, ontological and axiological, in order to move toward what I call a “Global Ethic of Loyalty/Fidelity/Truthfulness.”

I. The First Principle “No new global order without a new ethic” and the Problem of Loyalty

The authors of the Declaration wish to express our common global convictions acceptable to all people, religious and non-religious, as follows:

We all have a responsibility for a better global order.

Our involvement for the sake of human rights, freedom, justice, peace, and the preservation of Earth is absolutely necessary.

Our different religious and cultural traditions must not prevent our common involvement in opposing all forms of inhumanity and working for greater humaneness.

The principles expressed in this global ethic can be affirmed by all persons with ethical convictions, whether religiously grounded or not. (GE, 18–19)

What is the basic rationale for saying this? The Declaration does not explicitly answer this question. It merely presupposes that “As religious and spiritual persons we base our lives on an Ultimate Reality,” and that we “draw spiritual power and hope therefrom, in trust, in prayer or meditation, in word or silence” (GE, 19). But what is religiously necessary today, if I am correct, is to clarify the distinction and relationship between a Personal Deity (such as the Christian God) and a Transpersonal Power (*dunamis*) of Relationality (such as Buddhist Emptiness) precisely within the realm of Ultimate Reality *per se*.

If these are not clarified and yet we are urged to base our lives on an Ultimate as the transcendent criterion of all creation, we are left with an impasse like this: although we evaluate the pluralistic state of religious affairs on an equal basis by virtue of the criterion, and although we want to move toward creating egalitarian ethical principles on a global scale under its compulsion, we still never come to notice freely (without compulsion from without) the authentic “source” of the divine call into existence of ethical imperatives. For in this case the Personal Deity is perceived as willing to call forth from the outside of our creatureliness our creaturely obedience, religious and ethical, without at all showing us how the Deity Himself/Herself is immanently loyal and obedient to the Deity’s innermost “beyond-essence”⁵ which is utterly “*trans*-personal.” Outrageous ideas!^{5a}

Just as is the case with the proponents of religious pluralism, such as John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, who do not

advocate a view of the plurality (or, more correctly, the duality) of the Ultimates intelligibly enough while passionately addressing themselves to the phenomenology of plural existence of religions, the proposers of a global ethic who do not base it on the interrelatedness of the Ultimates are not, I might suspect, religiously well-grounded in their thinking. This is simply because they are still unclear about the "source" of the source (i.e., Deity) of religio-ethical principles. My conviction is that today we need to proceed to the stage of clarifying the "relatedness" of the source of religio-ethical principles or imperatives to its own innermost source from the position of holding fast to the Christian "singularity" of the notion of God.

Otherwise, on the axiological level of the universe, as well as on its ontological level as related to the realm of the Ultimates, as noted above, we will be basically at a loss as to how to conceive of "the intrinsic dignity as such of the human person." I think Hans Kung is rightly attacking the core subject matter of the present-day global ethic when he brilliantly states:

An unconditional claim, a 'categorical' ought, cannot be derived from the finite conditions of human existence, from human urgencies and needs. And even an independent abstract 'human nature' or 'idea of humanity' (as a legitimate authority) can hardly put an unconditional obligation on anyone for anything. Even a 'duty for humankind to survive' can hardly be demonstrated conclusively in a rational way. In the face of the apocalyptic potential of nuclear or genetic technology, Hans Jonas rightly raises a metaphysical question with which ethics has not previously been confronted: whether and why there should be a humankind the genetic heritage of which should be respected; indeed why there should be life at all. (GR, 52)

Yet Kung's is basically the view of life as interpreted in terms of the intended instrumental value of human nature (namely, self-sacrificial love or Goodness), not the view of life as perceived as the intrinsic value of human nature in itself that goes "beyond good and evil" (namely, Beauty). The latter view is manifested when Jesus says: "That you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45).

Thus, it appears very strange that Kung in the following passage is defending the intrinsic value of human nature or of life itself by virtue of an extrinsic principle, the Absolute:

Here I shall just state briefly the answer to be given in principle. Nowadays—after Nietzsche's glorification of 'beyond good and evil'—we can no longer count on a 'categorical imperative' which is quasi-innate in all, and makes the wellbeing of all human beings the criterion for our own action. No, the categorical quality of ethical demand, the unconditional nature of the ought, cannot be grounded by human beings, who are conditioned in many ways, but only by that which is unconditional: by an Absolute which can provide an overarching meaning and which embraces and permeates individual, human nature and indeed the whole of human society. That can only be grounded by the ultimate, supreme reality, which while it cannot be proved rationally, can be accepted in a rational trust—regardless of how it is named, understood and interpreted in the different religions. (GR, 53)

Hence, the following question remains to be answered: Why is it that an Absolute can provide an overarching meaning to us while embracing and permeating individual, human nature and indeed the whole of human society?

It is my contention at this very juncture that in order for

an Absolute to be able to provide an overarching meaning for us humans (say, evocatively) while embracing and permeating individual, human nature and indeed the whole of human society (truly immanently), the Absolute must presuppose and satisfy two conditions: (1) the immanent, loyal relatedness of the Absolute to the all-encompassing ontological power (*dynamis*, *potentia*) of relationality as such in the universe; and (2) the factual, loyal relatedness of each and every creature in the universe to this power in an intrinsic manner (i.e., Beauty) prior to other manners available to humanity, including intended instrumental and pragmatic ones (i.e., Goodness and Efficacy). It is solely because of the Absolute's satisfaction of these two conditions, it seems to me, that we are entitled to speak, as Kung does, of the religious authority which presents ethical demands quite differently from a merely human authority (cf. GR, 53).

Let me then ask further: How is the Absolute capable of satisfying the said two conditions? My answer is that in the Absolute's attitudinal loyalty, as is attested by Christ's kenosis (Phil. 2: 6-8), to its immanent, ontological loyalty to the all-encompassing power of relationality thereby proceeding paradoxically to call forth and activate our creaturely loyalty from the state of *esse* into the state of *bene esse*.⁶ In this answer I am using the first and the third ideas in my thesis of "God as the principle of loyalty in the universe" mentioned at the outset of this article: namely, (1) God is supremely loyal to Emptiness; and (3) God is the only one in the universe who can evoke loyalty in us creatures. Then what about the second idea, namely, the idea that (2) Emptiness empties itself?

The second idea is important to me in that it precludes mistaking my first idea to mean the subjugation of God to Something called "Emptiness" as an Entity or a Concept—a metaphysical idolatry. This is not what I have in mind when I say that God is supremely loyal to Emptiness. This is not only because to think of anything in the universe as "greater"

(*maius*) than God is theologically untenable since the time of St. Anselm, but also because to see Emptiness not as emptying itself, thus not as tending to be absolutely affirmative of the rest of the things in the universe due to the dynamic process of double negation inherent in itself, is absolutely contrary to the Buddhist vision of Emptiness since the time of Nagarjuna.⁷

If Emptiness empties itself within whatever there actually is, including God and creatures, this certainly will signify that the inner core of everything and everybody is dynamically open and relational to the rest of the things in the universe. If so, we cannot ascertain the source of religio-ethical imperatives other than in the God who is supremely loyal to Emptiness. The real “source” of the source (named the Personal Deity) of religio-ethical imperatives is God’s loyalty to Emptiness emptying itself. From this perspective, it appears that what Kung writes in what follows needs some revision:

At least for the prophetic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—it is the one unconditional in all that is conditioned that can provide a basis for the absoluteness and universality of ethical demands, that primal ground, primal support, primal goal of human beings and the world that we call God. This primal ground, primal support, primal goal does not represent alien control over human beings. On the contrary: such grounding, anchorage and direction open up the possibility for true human selfhood and action; they make it possible to frame rules for oneself and to accept personal responsibility. So, properly understood, theonomy is not heteronomy, but the ground, the guarantee and also the limit of human autonomy, which may never deteriorate into human arbitrariness. Only the bond to an infinite offers freedom in the face of all that is finite. To this degree one can understand why after the inhumanities of the Nazi period, in the preamble to the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the twofold dimension

of responsibility (before whom and for whom?) has been retained: 'responsibility before God and humankind'. (GR, 53)

Why is it that this primal ground, primal support, primal goal does not represent alien control over human beings? As far as Kung's scheme of global ethic is concerned, there would be no other deeper rationale than the idea of theonomy that is needed for its own sake as the guarantee and the limit of human autonomy. But it seems to me that this understanding of theonomy is devoid of its basis for being a divine *nomos* or a divine dynamic. How can God be evocatively normative over human beings without manifesting in the Godself a principle of God's own in which God is sincerely related to the frame of reference of God's own being?

In my opinion, it is only due to God's personal loyalty to Emptiness, as this latter operates as the intra-Trinitarian relationality *cum* the bond or covenant between God and the people, that is, creation as a whole, that God is capable of evoking loyalty in us creatures as the source of religio-ethical imperatives. God as the loyal one can only be the guarantor and caller of our faithful loyalty, based upon God's own experience of being loyal. For this very reason, I contend, what Hans Kung refers to as "the twofold dimension of responsibility (before whom and for whom?) should rather be threefold (before whom, for whom, and on what basis?): namely, responsibility before God and for humankind, based upon God's loyalty to Emptiness.

II. The Second Principle "A fundamental demand: Every human being must be treated humanely" and the Problem of Fidelity

If the foregoing argument is reasonably clear, it follows that we can properly evaluate the second principle in the Declaration: namely, the fundamental demand that "every human being must be treated humanely" (GE, 23). The authors of the Declaration are well aware of the specifically religious

task we have in our global age with its problems. They write:

We know that religions cannot solve the environmental, economic, political, and social problems of Earth. However, they can provide what obviously cannot be attained by economic plans, political programmes or legal regulations alone: **a change in the inner orientation, the whole mentality, the 'hearts' of people**, and a conversion from a false path to a new orientation for life. Humankind urgently needs social and ecological reforms, but it needs **spiritual renewal** just as urgently. As religious or spiritual persons we commit ourselves to this task. The spiritual powers of the religions can offer a fundamental sense of trust, a ground of meaning, ultimate standards, and a spiritual home. Of course religions are credible only when they eliminate those conflicts which spring from the religions themselves, dismantling mutual arrogance, mistrust, prejudice, and even hostile images, and thus demonstrate respect for the traditions, holy places, feasts, and rituals of people who believe differently. (GE, 22)

As already noted, we believe that the inner core of everything and everybody is Emptiness emptying itself, thus being dynamically open and fundamentally relational to the rest of the things in the universe. No being is free from its ontologically loyal relatedness to this core of its existence, to Emptiness, although it might be in disarray, attitudinally speaking, with the preceding ontological loyal relatedness to Emptiness that inheres within the core of its existence. Hence, what is crucial religiously in terms of "spiritual renewal" is the problem of attitudinal loyalty to ontological loyalty, not the creation of something totally new at the core of our existence. This loyalty to loyalty I would like to call "fidelilty," in the sense of our faithful, exact cor-respondence with what is already there within the core of our existence.

Incidentally, I have borrowed the notion of “loyalty to loyalty” from Josiah Royce’s *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908).⁸ He writes beautifully about this when he says:

And so, a cause is good, not only for me, but for mankind, in so far as it is essentially a *loyalty to loyalty*, that is, is an aid and a furtherance of loyalty in my fellows. It is an evil cause in so far as, despite the loyalty that it arouses in me, it is destructive of loyalty in the world of my fellows. My cause is, indeed, always such as to involve some loyalty to loyalty, because, if I am loyal to any cause at all, I have fellow-servants whose loyalty mine supports. But in so far as my cause is a predatory cause, which lives by overthrowing the loyalties of others, it is an evil cause, because it involves disloyalty to the very cause of loyalty itself. (PL, 118-119)

Clearly from the above, what Royce has in mind is basically the problem of promoting the spirit of loyalty in society in terms of “loyalty to loyalty.” This is understandable because his idea of the very cause of loyalty itself is an attitudinal one, as is most manifest in his definition of loyalty: “Loyalty is the will to manifest, so far as is possible, the Eternal, that is, the conscious and superhuman unity of life, in the form of the acts of an individual Self” (PL, 357). By contrast, my idea is a theological “apotheosis” of his notion of loyalty, in the sense that the supreme devotee, God, is Godself loyal to the *trans*-personal unity of life, which, to my mind, is most manifestly represented by the Buddhist vision of Emptiness emptying itself. It entails that the notion of loyalty to loyalty is significant in reference to all human endeavors, religious and ethical.

It is in this sense that the following remark in the Declaration makes sense:

In the face of all humanity our religious and ethical

convictions demand that **every human being must be treated humanely!**

This means that every human being without distinction of age, sex, race, skin color, physical or mental ability, language, religion, political view, or national or social origin possesses an inalienable and **untouchable dignity**. And anyone, the individual as well as the state, is therefore obliged to honour this dignity and protect it. Humans must always be the subject of rights, must be ends, never mere means, never objects of commercialization and industrialization in economics, politics and media, in research institutes, and industrial corporations. No one stands 'above good and evil' [ethically] —no human being, no social class, no influential interest group, no cartel, no police apparatus, no army, and no state. On the contrary; possessed of reason and conscience, every human is obliged to behave in a genuinely human fashion, to **do good and avoid evil!** (GE, 23)

III. The Third Principle "Four irrevocable directives" and the Problem of Truthfulness

The problem of loyalty is concerned with the "source" of religio-ethical imperatives. The problem of fidelity deals with and articulates the realm of a global ethic in terms of "loyalty to loyalty." Now, the problem of truthfulness clarifies phases of the global ethic as involving four irrevocable directives: (1) Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life; (2) Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order; and (3) Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness; and (4) Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.

In conceiving of these four phases of the global ethic I would like to use the concept of truthfulness, in the general sense of "the genuine conformation of Appearance to Reality,"

as it is explicated by Alfred North Whitehead as a key category in his *Adventures of Ideas* (esp. Chapters 16 and 18).⁹ Thus, it now turns out that we have the four phases of “pure experience,” “self-realization,” “re-presentation,” and “re-cognition” as constituting the creative advance of the universe in a process-relational manner, which is explicable under the general category of truthfulness (the last two phases constituting one whole stage of explanation, to my mind, though).¹⁰

We know that the problem of “the conformation of Appearance to Reality,” here characterized as giving rise to the notion of “truthfulness,” was originally explicated by Whitehead in processive terms in his *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (1927)¹¹: “The ‘substantial’ character of actual things is not primarily concerned with the predication of qualities. It expresses the stubborn fact that whatever is settled and actual must in due measure be conformed to by the self-creative activity” (S, 36-37). And this is reminiscent, as far as I am concerned, of what Kitaro Nishida writes about the task of his philosophy: “For many years I wanted to explain all things on the basis of pure experience as the sole reality.”¹²

What I am deriving from the thought of these two thinkers is the fact that the universe as it can be philosophically conceived divides into three phases of a sequence of events named the creative advance: (1) “pure experience” or “whatever is settled and actual”; (2) “self-realization of pure experience as the sole reality in our lives” or “the self-creative activity”; and (3) “explanation of all things from this perspective—i.e., the perspective of the conformation of Appearance, in the sense of the self-creative activity, to Reality, in the sense of whatever is settled and actual.”

A. Truthfulness to Life as “Pure Experience”—in answer to the question, What does it mean to commit ourselves to a culture of non-violence and respect for life?

In view of the fact that “all over the world we find

endless hatred, envy, jealousy and violence, not only between individuals but also between social and ethnic groups, between classes, races, nations, and religions" (GE, 24), the authors of the Declaration schematize four basic issues facing us today on Earth: life, peace, the environment, and concern for others. However, they do not clearly articulate their fundamental perspective in dealing with these issues. Let me then put forward my own perspective which is that of truthfulness to life as "pure experience." For I believe truthfulness in this sense is fundamental to all the issues in question here.

First, let me explain my perspective of truthfulness to life as "pure experience" religiously. If I am correct, truthfulness to life as "pure experience" is at the core of Zen enlightenment. In this sense, truthfulness is a direct truthfulness, in the sense that one intuitively grasps that one does not need to insert any kind of "*ergo*" (therefore) between what Whitehead designates Reality (i.e., life as "pure experience" that is incessantly causally efficacious until now without one's own conscious, objectifying knowledge) and what he refers to as Appearance (i.e., one's own self-creative activity from now on) and that one indeed lives this *non-ergo* right now. This, I think, is fundamentally a non-violent way of existing inasmuch as it involves no coercive connection of whatever kind between "Reality" and "Appearance." As is clear here, in the case of Zen enlightenment one is directly truthful to the "*non-ergo*," unconditional Reality at the foot of one's existence, the Appearance.

In the Christian faith, this same direct truthfulness is manifested by St. Paul in these words: "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7: 24–25) Here Paul as a whole person is raising an existential question in despair, but in one and the same breath he confesses: "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Despair and gratefulness at the same time—this is the Christian case of direct truthfulness with no need at all for an *ergo* between human existence and

the grace of God, the case which the Reformer Martin Luther referred to as *desperatio fiducialis*, “despair full of trust.” It is in this sense that Luther writes as follows: “When we are told to hope, we are certainly not told so in order that we might hope to have done what we should, but that the merciful God who alone can see [directly] into the innermost depth of our being (beyond the surface of which we cannot penetrate) will not impute our deeds in sin to us so long as we confess to him.”¹³

Here one is directly truthful or faithful to the “*non-ergo*,” unconditional grace of God only in the midst of confessing one’s own despair. Despair, when confessed, retrieves the grace as it already exists in one’s life “even before one asks” (Matt. 6: 8).

If that is truly the case in both religions, it becomes clear, secondly, that peace as a matter of global ethic is the incessant constructive human endeavor of dismantling step by step all sorts of coercive “*ergos*” that we mistakenly think we might need in order to procure security of our own at the various stages and levels of our communal and private lives. This is solely based upon the first, direct insight into the needlessness of an “*ergo*” between the Reality and the Appearance.

Let me emphasize in this connection that if one wants to secure, as did the founder of Aum-Shinrikyo, Shoko Asahara, one’s apocalyptic-eschatological state of communal wellbeing or salvation (such as is typically symbolized by Asahara’s clinging to the Christian idea of “Armageddon”) by means of some evil actions (such as the sarin atrocities in Tokyo on March 20, 1995), this is simply because one has come to perceive that one’s religious practice (for instance, Tibetan Buddhist meditation for Asahara and his followers) alone is insufficient. Here we can observe an instance of religious nihilism, which is the very cause of violence in the case of the Aum-Shinrikyo incident and in many other religious cruelties.

Third, with regard to the environmental issues we can say that it is René Descartes’ idea of “*Cogito, ergo sum*” that has

given rise to the overestimation of the human mind while minimizing the values inherent in the environment. Only the thinking being (*ens cogitans*) is thus entitled “to be” owing to his/her rational capability to the exclusion, from the status of proper existence, of creatures other than humans. Hence, there has occurred the environmental crisis in modern times which, as attested to by the Declaration in question, is a burning issue on a global scale today. This state of affairs is clearly to be seen if it is traced back philosophically to its origin.

Some new ways of philosophical envisioning are urgently needed. One of the ways is presented by Jean-Paul Sartre when he says: “Existence precedes essence [even the thinking essence of humanity].” Second, Alfred North Whitehead thinks of existence in terms of its intrinsic value, Beauty. For him, the thinking essence of humanity cannot obtain its truthfulness apart from Beauty. He writes: “Truth derives this self-justifying power from its services in the promotion of Beauty. Apart from Beauty, Truth is neither good, nor bad” (AI, Mentor, 266). Third, Kitaro Nishida provides a conceptual reversion with regard to the relationship between the individuals and experience when he says: “It is not that the individuals first exist and then have their experience. The truth of the matter is the reverse: experience exists first and it gives rise to the individuals next” (IG, the Preface [1911]). John B. Cobb, Jr. concurs with him by saying:

According to the dominant philosophy the only reality of which we can usefully speak is human experience and its perceived objects. We cannot speak of what these perceived objects are in themselves. Hence, before human experience began could there be the objects of human experience—sun and moon, wolves and cattle, sticks and stones—whether these are conceived as sense data or as perceived objects.¹⁴

Conscious sense perception must be seen to have developed

gradually out of some more primitive form of experience. Whitehead points out that we know physiologically, too, that conscious sense perception is the product of complex events. There is no reason to suppose that it is a simple and primary form of experience, or that all other aspects of experience must be explained by it. We are well advised to seek more fundamental aspects of experience even if they are outside of clear consciousness. (IITL, 63)

Fourth, concern for others is now to be defined on the basis of the foregoing argument for “pure experience” as the concern for the promotion of Beauty or intrinsic value in the lives of others. If not, it will be regarded as simply an attitude of condescension toward others with no appropriate understanding of their self-reliance.

B. Truthfulness to Decision as “Self-realization”—in answer to the question, What does it mean to commit oneself to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order?

The authors of the Declaration critically attend to the current economic problem with these words:

Numberless men and women of all regions and religions strive to live their lives in solidarity with one another and to work for authentic fulfillment of their vocations. Nevertheless, all over the world we find endless hunger, deficiency, and need. Not only individuals, but especially unjust institutions and structures are responsible for these tragedies. Millions of people are without work; millions are exploited by poor wages, forced to the edges of society, with their possibilities for the future destroyed. In many lands the gap between the poor and the rich, between the powerful and the powerless is immense. We live in a world in which totalitarian state socialism as well as unbridled capitalism have hollowed out and destroyed

many ethical and spiritual values. A materialistic mentality breeds greed for unlimited profit and a grasping for endless plunder. These demands claim more and more of the community's resources without obliging the individual to contribute more. The cancerous social evil of corruption thrives in the developing countries and in the developed countries alike. (GE, 26-27)

What is important is to know how we can and should make our economic and political decisions in an honest and truthful spirit. Here people, including nationally respected writer Ryotaro Shiba in his final years (who passed away on February 12, 1996), begin to speak of the importance of the role of the Absolute in the economic and political spheres. It is in this connection that Hans Kung turns to the problem of "Japanism." He writes:

Critical publications, in particular including Karel van Wolferen's *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (1989), may be uncomfortable and one-sided, but they do ask questions about the unconditional, universal validity of certain truths and ethical principles in the social and political reality of Japan. Of course there is a strict and detailed code of behaviour for family and social life in Japan. But is it not true that in social and political life people largely continue to keep at bay the unconditional moral demands of original Buddhism and Confucianism? And that they do so in favour of a Shintoism which sanctions all political deals and social practices; a reverence for nature and ancestors which is only ceremonial, and which has hardly developed any moral doctrines; and in favour of a folkloristic recourse to different religions depending on the time of day and time of life (e.g., Shintoism on a birthday, Christianity at weddings, Buddhism at death)? (GR, 11)

These critical observations are important for Kung in that they can be traced back to their origin, the civil religion of Japan which he refers to as “Japanism.” And he continues:

Here questions arise not only for individuals but for the Japanese system, which is supported by a strong alliance between industry, a highly-qualified bureaucracy and a conservative party in government, for that ‘Japanism’ as a substitute religion which tacitly regards and treats ‘Japan’ as the supreme value. And indirectly questions also arise about a ‘Christian’ Europe or America which may in theory know of an ethic that makes universal and unconditional demands, but in practice very often acts on the basis of a ‘situation ethic’ which adapts itself pragmatically. (GR, 11)

Within this context it appears that truthfulness in the midst of our economic and political decisions cannot simply be straightforward because of our wicked nature or depravity. Rather, truthfulness should be repentant, like Paul’s and Luther’s, as noted before. In the case of Japanese spirituality, this repentant truthfulness was rightly acknowledged and profoundly articulated by Shinran, the founder of Jodoshinshu or True Pure Land Buddhism. For Shinran, that which is called “a most sincere heart” does not mean, as for his master Honen following Shan-tao, “a genuine and true heart”—that is, “one’s actions, words, and thoughts [that are] without pretence, and [are] in accord with, and an expression of, reality.” For him, the devotees “do not manifest the appearance of wisdom, goodness, and purity externally, because [we] are vain and fals within.”¹⁵

For this very reason Shinran’s satori or self-realization in the act of True Pure Land faith takes the form of “gratitude” such as this: “When I consider well the Vow upon which Amida Buddha thought for five aeons, (I reflect) it was for me Shinran alone. O how grateful I am for the Original Vow

hich aspired to save one who possesses such evil karma” (SGPG, 33). For Shinran, truthfulness is, primarily, the truthfulness of Amida to us; only secondarily, is it our repentant truthfulness to Amida. I firmly believe by this profound insight into the matter of truthfulness the figure of Shinran will be more and more crucial in forming a global ethic of loyalty/fidelity/truthfulness hereafter in Japan and beyond.

Conclusions:

The authors of the Declaration count two more commitments. The third commitment is the one to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness; and the fourth, the commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women. Given our threefold articulation of a global ethic in terms of loyalty/fidelity/truthfulness, it appears that these two issues have to be schematized in the spirit of repentant gratitude while at the same time directly loyal to the *non-ergo* relationality between human practice and Divine Grace.

Hence, with regard to the third commitment, insofar as we are repentantly grateful, we are “truthful” only in and through our confessional acknowledgment of our wickedness. In this sense, ours is a mediated truthfulness. However, this does not mean that the relationality between human practice/experience and the Divine Grace/Amida’s Vow is also a mediated reality. Rather, it is a direct, immediate reality, in the sense that there is *nothing between* the Divine Grace/Amida’s Vow and our human existence. We don’t even need to add any “*ergo*” (therefore) to the “unconditional relationality” of God/Amida to us: it is simply there together with us graciously and mercifully as the “most encompassing place” of our existence. We just need to *re-present* it at each and every new instant in and through our confessional acknowledgment of our sinfulness and errors, thereby making ourselves representatives or “ambassadors of Christ” (2 Cor. 5: 20) or Bodhisattvas who are actively in search of the Way of Buddhahood in the midst of our lives.

On closer introspection, however, we are suddenly reminded that our confessional *re*-presentation of the “unconditional relationality” of the Divine to us is, in reality, the *Self*-manifestation of the Divine in and through us. As Paul Tillich insightfully states, “He who speaks through us is he who is spoken to.”¹⁶ Zen Master Ryokan expresses the same truth in the following poetic words¹⁷:

waga nochi o
 tasuke tamae to
 tanomu mi wa
 moto no chikai no
 sugata narikeri

While beseeching Thee
 For mercy after my death
 Lo I find myself
 Already embodying
 The Original Vow now!

It follows with regard to the fourth and last commitment—the commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women—that we *re*-cognize anew this same “unconditional relationality” between God/Amida Buddha and humanity within the confines of human sexuality and gender issues—and this even in and through our confessional, repentant acknowledgment of our mistaken attitudes in the past. Mutual recognition as fellow-partners is the act of affirmation of equal rights as natural laws inherent in all humans, male or female. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer rightly affirms, “One can have a natural right of one’s own only if one respects the natural rights of others.”¹⁸

However, we actually know that this principle of *suum cuique*, to each his or her own, reaches the limits of its applicability. For it rests on the assumption “that the given natural rights can be made to accord with one another, in other words that

there are no natural rights which fundamentally conflict" (E, 151). Significantly enough, when the conflict arises the said principle necessarily demands the intervention of positive rights. These are, as Bonhoeffer keenly notices, the "rights which are introduced from outside nature, and these positive rights are to be both divine and secular" (E, 152).

Yet the more significant question, at least to my mind, is, Whence come the positive rights, then? My answer is that they come from the "unconditional relationality" of the Divine to us, as does the said natural principle, solely because the Personal Deity who is unconditionally with us, is primarily and supremely loyal to the "unconditional relationality," which is the Whence of all actualities, divine and creaturely.

It is precisely in view of this answer that I hold that the positive rights of various kinds can evocatively visit us as religio-ethical imperatives representing and re-affirming the one who, in the words of John Cobb, "calls us ever forward in and through the ordinary events of daily life and the often terrifying occurrences of human history."¹⁹ Only the one who is supremely loyal, let me contend anew and conclude, is legitimately entitled to call forth our creaturely loyalty in us with global religio-ethical imperatives or principles such as those put forward so marvelously in the Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions.²⁰

NOTES

*This is a paper originally delivered at The Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies 1996 Conference: "Socially Engaged Buddhism and Christianity," DePaul University, July 27–August 3, 1996, Chicago, IL, U.S.A. In order to produce the present article I revised the original paper to a considerable degree. In this revision process I am indebted to Professors Allan Blondé and Sanford Goldstein, my colleagues at Keiwa College, for their critical suggestions.

1. Hereafter cited as GE.
2. Hereafter cited as GR.
3. See my two articles, "Principles for Interpreting Christ/Buddha: Katsumi Takizawa and John B. Cobb, Jr.," *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 3 (1983), 87–89; and "Sunyata, Kenosis, and Jihī or Friendly Compassionate Love: Toward a Buddhist-Christian Theology of Loyalty," *Japanese Religions*, 15/4, July 1989, 50–66.
4. See my article, "Hartshorne and Hisamatsu on Human Nature: A Study of Christian and Buddhist Metaphysical Anthropology," *Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No.5, February 29, 1996, 1–49.
5. Cf.: "To say that God has no essence really means that God is a beyond-essence. This is best expressed by saying that God is the being whose essence is to be beyond essence or, in other words, God is the being whose essence is to be" (Etienne Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, Westport, CONN: Greenwood Press, 1960, pp.133–134).
- 5a. While in part articulating my theology of loyalty, this remark in part reflects my understanding of the spirit of Whiteheadianism which is best explicated in the following words Whitehead spoke at the final stage of his philosophical career (i.e., on November 11, 1947, forty-nine days before his death on December 30, 1947): "It was a mistake, as Hebrews tried, to conceive of God as creating the world from the outside, at one go. An all-foreseeing Creator, who could have made the world as we find it now—what could we think of such a being? Foreseeing everything and yet putting into it all sorts of imperfections to redeem which it was necessary to send his only son into the world to suffer torture and hideous death; outrageous ideas. The Hellenistic religion was a better approach; the Greeks conceived of creation as going on everywhere all the time *within* the universe" (*Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead*, as recorded by Lucien Price, London: Max Reinhardt, 1954, p.366). Further,

Whitehead ended up with this dictum: "God is *in* the world, or nowhere, creating continually in us and around us. This creative principle is everywhere, in animate and so-called inanimate matter, in the ether, water, earth, human hearts. But this creation is a continuing process, and 'the process is itself the actuality,' since no sooner do you arrive than you start on a fresh journey. In so far as man partakes of this creative process does he partakes of the divine, of God, and that participation is his immortality, reducing the question of whether his individuality survives death of the body to the estate of an irrelevancy. His true destiny as co-creator in the universe is his dignity and his grandeur" (*ibid.*)

6. I can refer, for instance, to Luther's idea of "*synthesis*" and Shinran's idea of "*shinjin-no-gosshiki*" (the acknowledgment of the karmic principle by the believing heart) as representing *esse*; faith is *bene esse* for both of them. See my article, "Toward a Global Hermeneutic of Justification in Process Perspective: Luther and Shinran Comparatively Considered," *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 12 (1992), 112-115.
7. See my article, "How Can Principles Be More Than Just Epistemological or Conceptual?: Anselm, Nagarjuna, and Whitehead," *Process Thought*, No.5, September 1993, 93-10
8. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1914; hereafter cited as PL.
9. A Mentor Book: New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1933; hereafter cited as AI.
10. Here I am resorting to the threefold articulation of the matter of philosophy in Kitaro Nishida by Shizuteru Ueda that I studied in comparison with Whitehead and Pannenberg in my article, "How Can Pure Experience Give Rise to Religious Self-awareness and Then to the Topological Argument for the Existence of God Cogently?: Nishida, Whitehead, and Pannenberg," *Process Thought*, No.6, September 1995, 125-150.
11. Capricorn Books: New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959; hereafter cited as S.
12. Kitaro Nishida, *Zenshu* (Complete Works) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1947), Vol. I, p.4 = *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), p.xxx; hereafter cited as IG.
13. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, ed. W. Pauck (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p.88.
14. John B. Cobb, Jr., *Is It Too Late?: A Theology of Ecology*, Revised Edition (Denton, TX: Environmental Ethics Books, 1995), p.61; hereafter cited as IITL.

15. Alfred Bloom, *Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press), 1965, p.33; hereafter cited as SGPG.
16. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p.192.
17. See Makio Takemura, *Ryokan—Nihon no kokoro no genten* (Ryokan: The Origin of the Japanese Mind) (Tokyo: Koseido Shuppan, 1994), p.292; Eng. trans. mine.
18. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, Touchstone Book Edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p.151; hereafter cited as E.
19. John B. Cobb, Jr., *God and the World* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p.66.
20. As to this overall theological-ethical stance I espouse, see also my recent article, "A New Possibility for Logos Christology through Encounter with Buddhism: Tillich and Takizawa Critically Considered and Compared (Part Two)," *Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No.8, March 30, 1999, 132-133.