

BOOK REVIEW

Christoph Stückelberger and Jesse N. K. Mugambi, eds., *Responsible Leadership: Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives*, Nairobi: WCC Publications, 2009, pages: 358; ISBN: 978-2-8254-1516-0.

This book, co-edited by Stückelberger and Mugambi, is very enriching as it offers formative orientations and strategies about the responsible leadership in a global context. It is a collection of 39 contributions (speeches and papers) from 21 countries which were presented in the conference organised by Globethics.net (September 2005), whose founder and executive director is Stückelberger himself. The authors are scholars in applied ethics, ethicists and practitioners from different continents. According to the editors, "All authors are rooted in their own context and try, at the same time, to overcome it in situations of transformation and to confront it with global challenges" (2); hence, their contributions are rich, fascinating, innovative, and open towards new global perspectives about responsible leadership and good governance.

There is a general trend identifiable throughout the book. All authors are somehow convinced that each group of human beings has one or many leaders, from a small couple/family without a child up to the United Nations. No group or association can live or survive without a leader. At the same time, there is a general feeling that these people are badly governed, especially as most of associations, families, governments, and religions lack in responsible leadership. Plato was among the first philosophers to notice this indisputable fact and thought that his *Republic* would make radical changes in which the philosopher would become the Philosopher King: "Finally, I came to conclusion that all existing states were badly governed, and that their constitutions were incapable of reform without drastic treatment and a great deal of good luck" (Plato, *The Republic*, trans. D. Lee, 6). I think this edited book is similar to Plato's *Republic*. The authors of different articles are on the same line and feel the necessity to form or educate people for a good leadership starting from our families. In our increasingly globalized world, there is a need for more interaction among value systems for the emergence of good governance and to fight against corruption. Trade, media, tourism, encounters, conferences, migration, internet, publications, etc., constitute the first few ingredients in inculcating a value-based society.

The book is divided into five parts. The first part is dedicated to responsible family leadership. Experiences are taken from China, Cameroon, South Korea, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, Kenya, and Ghana. The major topics discussed are engendering, dialogue between a Confucian and a Christian, marriage, and the value of family itself.

So fascinating is the second part which makes an urgent call for a "responsible religious leadership." This part is worthwhile to be read. Twelve different authors from different religions discuss the problem of leadership in religions and demonstrate that even religions lack leadership just like what is happening in the secular societies. Issues like freedom of belief, rights of religious minority, gender responsibility, role of women in the churches, corruption and integrity, and segregation (racism/tribalism/caste) are clearly discussed and each author tries to give a specific orientation to a given challenge in the given context.

The third part of the book deals with "Responsible Business leadership." This part did not appeal too much for me. It discusses the issues that are regularly discussed in the media about our globalised world of business/money and its challenges. Today's world is business minded and the seven authors ask themselves the following question: Is there any business ethics? All of them agree on the necessity to have a code of moral principles and rules of economic activity by strengthening the new value of common good. The earth is our supreme common good because we are all guests on earth, and responsible stewards.

The fourth and last part is the most crucial one. It is about "Responsible Political Leadership." Without responsible political leaders, it is very difficult to achieve other aspects of human life like education, health, peace, security, environment protection policies, freedom, fight against poverty, etc. Good politics is a goal that has to be implemented. As far as good governance is concerned Asia, Africa, and Latin America have still a long way to go. Most of their countries suffer from oppressive leaders, corruption, and military rule without any policies to protect the environment.

The conclusion of this book, "Globeethics.Net Elements for Responsible Leadership," offers a summary of the results of the international conference held in Bangkok, Thailand, 22-26 September 2005. For the realization of responsible family leadership, they suggested that the overall criterion in family leadership is love and education understood as actions. Responsible religious leadership becomes

ridiculous by being oppressive in the name of God; therefore, it should take into account the rights of religious minorities, promote dialogue with other religions, and should be independent from politicians or state. Most of serious crises have as their origin, explicitly or implicitly, financial control and money. Therefore, a responsible business should be transparent, fair, and honest. Finally, there is an urgent need to foster a responsible political leadership. They should keep promise, seek and protect common interest and think globally but act locally according to the context.

Finally, this work offers an effective opportunity to relate various themes covered to the contemporary events and recent catastrophes that have shaken the stability of many parts of the world, especially in Japan. The tsunami and earthquake in Japan on Friday 18 March 2011, which was the direct cause of the burst of the nuclear stations of Fukushima and the radioactivity leaks, show that common policies are needed to protect our world. But all this can be applied in different areas of human life, as we live in the global village, and thanks to the media, we know more or less what is going on in different parts of the world. An awareness of these events and the much needed ethical deliberation facilitated by the responsible leadership that Stückelberger and Mugambi have successfully initiated in this edited work for the emergence of a global as well as contextual ethical perspectives.

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