



Chumir Ethics Forum

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Thinking About Ethical Leadership: “Everyone Is Supposed To Matter”

By Janet Keeping, President



One of the principles of ethical leadership in a democracy is that everyone matters and everyone is supposed to matter equally. The idea is embedded in the rule of law – part of the bedrock of our system of governance – which requires that law be applied equally to everyone. It is even explicitly stated in the Canadian Constitution that everyone is entitled “to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law”.

And so our shock to hear Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf make fun of us several months ago for grieving our soldiers killed in Afghanistan. Musharraf said “four or five” Canadians had been killed, although the number at the time was closer to 45. But 5 or 45 is all the same in Musharraf’s view: such numbers are trivial, nothing to be concerned about.

But we should not have been surprised by such callousness. In countries without a tradition of democracy, it is the inequality, rather than equality, of citizens which is the operating principle. On the other hand, it is the equal dignity and worth of people that

lies at the heart of the drive for self-government, that is, democracy.

My close encounters with anti-democracy have all been connected with the former Soviet Union. It was not until I understood that countries such as Russia are actually *founded* on the inequality principle – and thus in practice individuals are cannon fodder for the State – that I understood why so much of what their leaders say is so consistently off-base from our point of view. It is not just that specific policy positions, spending priorities, and so on, conflict with those of more democratic states. It is that the basic set of assumptions is often diametrically opposed to the democratic.

As offensive as President Musharraf’s views on the expendability of Canadian soldiers are, his sentiments are useful in reminding us of what are supposed to be our basic principles. Such occasions provide an opportunity for reflection upon how well we are actually living up to those values. Our hearts break – as they should – for each of the dead and wounded in Afghanistan. But do they also break for the mentally disabled who roam the streets of Canada’s cities homeless, for poor parents in

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despair over their inability to provide properly for their children, or for those children who will never have an equal chance at the Canadian good life? If they do, then where is the ethical leadership on correcting those inequalities? And if they don't, what does that say about our democratic values, and the real ethical convictions of Canadians?

Janet Keeping

Letter From Prince George *Is there an ethics of marketing for universities?*



In late August, 2006, Lakehead University launched a marketing/recruitment campaign "Yale/Schmale" (sic) that featured a picture of George W. Bush (Yale class of 1968) with the message that

"graduating from an Ivy League university does not mean you are smart". The many responses to that advertisement on the web are interesting, but none speak to the issue of an ethics of marketing for universities. Many people were amused. Others noted that Lakehead University seemed not to understand Yiddish and had misspelled 'schmale'. Some referred to Lakehead as Flakehead, a university of last resort that was clearly using desperation tactics to recruit students. Some of the latter comments also noted that Lakehead was using give-aways and contests for prizes as well — none of which were bursaries or scholarships or related to the purpose of a university education.

I asked my ethics class what they thought of the Lakehead Yale/Schmale marketing campaign and received comments, such as, it was important for students to know that they could be successful attending other than Ivy League institutions and also important that they were aware that money and connections could buy you a place in some prestigious American universities. There was also an echo of the desperation comments reported on various websites. While these are interesting perspectives, they still do not address the ethics and advertising issue.

Universities have a long-standing sense of competition among themselves whether this is measured by the number of Rhodes Scholars they produce or the success of various competitive sports activities. Generally, recruiting activities and marketing strategies focus on the excellence or special strengths of the institutions (e.g., research productivity of faculty or small class sizes). As long as there is truth in advertising, this seems an uncontroversial approach to attracting students.

If we remind ourselves of the purpose of a university, it is generally accepted to have three aspects. These are: teaching students both the specialized knowledge they will need as working people but also broader values of citizenship and responsibility; research and the creation of new knowledge; and service — both to their professions and to the larger community. If we understand these, as many have, as the vocational obligations of professors, it raises the issue of how an advertising campaign like Lakehead's can further these goals. The appeal is mean-spirited and venal. It does not inspire students to be their better selves or to think of nobler educational goals as they choose which university best meets their educational aspirations.

Of course, other values which universities hold in high esteem are freedom of expression and academic freedom. If Lakehead University chooses to recruit its students using a personal attack against one of Yale University's currently unpopular graduates, they certainly have the right to do so. But some of us believe that this is a real shame.

Deborah C. Poff teaches political science in Prince George.



View of Prince George from the University of Northern British Columbia

Race And The Media In South Africa

Apartheid ended twelve years ago, and the world celebrated. South Africa developed the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* to deal with the racism, imprisonments and torture carried out to uphold apartheid. The process aimed at bringing together a divided nation. But, it did not redress injustices. According to Melissa Levin, Sheldon Chumir Foundation Media Fellow, this shortcoming has affected media development since. Media forgetfulness abounds. It has been the media which has argued vehemently for freedom of the press yet, according to Levin, stereotyping has persisted. Is stereotyping a part of media freedom, she asks?



*Melissa Levin, 2005-06
Sheldon Chumir Foundation
Media Fellow*

Levin, a former media strategist and speech writer for Presidents Mandela and Mbeki, illustrated her point by discussing press coverage of the rape trial of Jacob Zuma. As the trial began several months ago, Zuma was second in command in the South African government and candidate for leadership of the ruling African National Congress. Zuma was portrayed by both the tabloids and mainstream newspapers as a typical, uneducated African man driven by base sexual instincts. He was contrasted with the well-educated, somewhat aloof, self-controlled President Thabo Mbeki. The teen girl involved was cast as a “bitch” by The Sowetan and a political opportunist by other media. In Levin’s view, the trial was turned into a leadership succession platform. Important political matters were trivialized by gossip-style media coverage, she contended, and reporting reinforced racist and sexist stereotypes. There is a cost to demeaning politics in South African media coverage – “cynicism breeds contempt,” Melissa Levin concluded.

RFIDs—What’s The Frequency, Kenneth?:

Radio Frequency Identification And The Future of Humanism

A radio frequency identification, or RFID, is a microchip containing a unique identifier that is imbedded in an item or product that you buy. That identifying information is transmitted to retrieval devices using radio waves, and can be read even at some distance and through barriers such as shopping bags, briefcases and clothing, at any point in the item's lifespan. Companies can then market to individual shoppers based on their purchasing habits. RFIDs can also be used to track missing persons and property.

RFID systems can be used to monitor people's actions or communications. The collection and storage of product information and the matching of it with customer data are at the heart of many privacy concerns regarding RFIDs. If their full tracking and monitoring capabilities are realized, regardless of the nature and quality of the information obtained, RFIDs will constitute a form of surveillance.

Together with the Privacy and Security Lab of Dalhousie University's Faculty of Computer Science, the Foundation organized a public discussion of RFIDs

entitled "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?: Radio Frequency Identification and the Future of Humanism" The event was held in Halifax on October 3, 2006, and featured three experts – Jacquelyn Burkell, Information & Media Studies, Univ. of Western Ontario; Ian Kerr, Law, University of Ottawa; Valerie Steeves, Criminology, University of Ottawa. These panelists urged us to engage in a substantive public discussion about the potential social implications of chip-based ID systems, tracking devices or payment schemes. As well, they called on us to rethink the meaning of concepts such as ‘surveillance’ and ‘privacy’.

We need to ask how we view information acquisition. What do we want to know and why? How do we balance privacy concerns with the potential for increased safety? Do we believe the positive consequences of using this technology outweigh the negative? Is it possible to allow the consumer choice in participation? Finding a balance between public safety and individual privacy concerns is always challenging, and requires continued public discussion and debate.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words



Two recent media stories about bad behaviour by Canadian high school students lend support to the old saw that ‘actions speak louder than words.’ It was not merely the student’s behaviour that raised public ire, but also the response of the respective school administrations. The transfer of a Jewish teacher subjected to anti-Semitic taunts by several students left many observers wondering what message the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) was trying to send. Similarly, the National Capital Secondary School Athletic Association’s (NCSSAA) decision to ban the boys’ soccer league post-game handshake due to fighting provoked national consternation.¹ In both cases, an opportunity to reinforce core values was lost. Instead, the school administrators’ *actions* sent the following message to students: ‘If you behave badly, we will accommodate you rather than hold you to account.’

Granted, in the CBE case the students were suspended for five days – the maximum allowed under the School Act – and, according to CBE Chief Superintendent Dr. Brendan Croskery, the school did institute diversity education and a Calgary Police program entitled ‘Hate Hurts.’ All of these measures are laudable, but none of this was made public in a timely enough fashion to show ethical leadership on promoting religious and racial tolerance in public schools.

The harassment endured by teacher Mark Abrams in 2003-04 was reported by Calgary Herald columnist Don Braid in October, 2006. The students admitted making ongoing religious slurs; nonetheless, the teacher was the one transferred out of the school, not the offending students. Thus, regardless of the CBE’s efforts to punish the offenders and initiate anti-prejudice education in the school, the message that hatred and prejudice are unacceptable did not come through loud and

clear. As CBE board chairwoman Pat Cochrane admitted, “Maybe we are too cautious sometimes in not stepping outside the really strict boundaries we have about what we can and cannot say. But I hope people understand that we really do fight intolerance.” Timely and convincing condemnation of prejudice is important. But actions speak louder than words. Transfer of the offending students, rather than the teacher, would send the right message.

In the Ottawa soccer case, the NCSSAA banned the post-game handshake in order to avoid physical and verbal altercations between competitors. A spokeswoman for the association claimed that the directive was concerned with player safety and “is not to discourage sportsmanship in any way. It is to keep things from happening.” Unfortunately, this sends the message that we expect violent, un-sportsmanlike behaviour from our young men (the girls’ league did not institute a ban). Moreover, the ruling contradicts the sportsmanship lesson that the game is not about winning, but about playing fair, respecting your opponent, and leaving it all on the field. Instead of punishing the poor sports, the decision says: ‘if a few bad apples don’t play by the rules, we will change the rules rather than toss out the bad apples.’

In these media-saturated times, it is understandable that organizations – particularly publicly-funded ones dealing with children – try to avoid negative publicity. However, this response is not enough. These cases demonstrate an important lesson: it is never imprudent to model good behaviour and to stand up for what is right. In fact, it is essential.

Daniel Shapiro

The Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership is seeking applicants for the

2007 - 2008 Internship in Ethics in Leadership

Applications are invited from senior students or graduates in programs in any field relevant to ethics in leadership. For further information please visit our website at www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca

Deadline for application: March 19, 2007

¹ For example, the issue provoked an editorial condemning the Athletic Association in the Globe and Mail (7/10/06, A16) and was featured on CBC Radio’s ‘As It Happens’ (6/10/06).

Islamophobia And Anti-Semitism: Everyone's Business

Anti-Semitism has been called “the longest hatred;” however, in recent years anti-Islamic sentiment has led to similar expressions of hatred directed towards Muslims, for example: stereotyping, profiling, hate propaganda and physical violence. In honour of International Human Rights Day, the Foundation joined the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre and the Committee on Race Relations & Cross Cultural Understanding on November 29th to discuss issues of Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism and our collective responsibility to eliminate hate.

“When personal characteristics are used to sort out people,” said Janet Keeping, “no one is safe.” When people lose sight of others’ moral status, when they are capable of robbing even one person of his or her dignity, anything is possible. Economic arguments against discrimination can certainly be made, but the social cost of hatred is even greater. “*Isms* and *phobias* affect all of us,” she said. Intolerance and hatred does harm not only to the hated, but also to the hater and the observer.

*First they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for me
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.*

by Rev. Martin Niemoller, 1945

Discrimination, in its many forms, weakens us all. We are, therefore, all responsible for battling indifference to the persecution of others. Quoting Elie Wiesel, Judy Shapiro of the Calgary Jewish Community Council reminded the audience that “the worst sin is to stand in silence when another suffers.” Hatred of the “other” must be distinguished from legitimate criticism and political debate. Sheikh Alaa Elsayed of the Muslim Council of Calgary further reminded the audience that ignorance is the root of this problem in our society. We must look not only to see where there are differences but also to recognize what we have in common.

University of Calgary Law student Michelle Lee concluded the panel presentation with the observation that the first step to overcoming discrimination is in recognizing, and acknowledging, that it exists. It is, therefore, necessary for all communities – religious, racial, or in any other way defined – to be active in making the world a safe place for all, where a celebration of one culture neither supports nor requires the denigration of another.



Panellists Elsayed, Shapiro and Lee

Ethical Leadership On Diversity

There are reasons to think that we are in a period in Canada when our high level of diversity is presenting special challenges. We see, for example, both violence and allegations of racial profiling in Caribbean-Canadian areas of Toronto and Vietnamese-Canadian communities in Edmonton. There appears to be widespread aboriginal discontent manifesting itself in land disputes in Caledonia, Ontario, and fishing disputes in New Brunswick. ‘Old country’ conflicts continue to be brought to Canada, as in the Palestinian-Israeli division at Concordia University in Montréal. Gender equality is meeting strong resistance in some sub-cultures, including parts of the Indo-Canadian community in BC, and there are deep divisions over sexual orientation. Balancing national security with civil liberty protections for Canadians who ‘look’ Muslim or Arab has been a significant concern since 9-11.

How can we live well together in the face of our enormous diversity? What would ethical leadership on dealing with difference, including the accommodation of difference, look like? These are the key questions the Sheldon Chumir Foundation will ask over the next five years in a project on diversity. This work will include a series of consultations in major cities across Canada, one or more colloquia open to the public, some independent research and engagement at the international level.

Ethics And International Development

What was the Chumir Foundation's involvement in the International Partnerships Symposium (IPS)?

The International Centre at the University of Calgary asked the Foundation to provide ethics observers at the IPS which was held in early October. The International Centre brought 75 people from 18 different countries together to discuss how academic research might contribute more than it currently does to progress in development. How might it produce a bigger 'development dividend'?

Our task as ethics observers was to attend as many symposium events as possible to identify ethical issues that would otherwise go unnoticed and to report in plenary sessions on our observations. It was a unique opportunity for Foundation staff to experiment with this kind of role.

What were some of our observations on ethical issues?

We drew participants' attention to the primary ethical assumption upon which the symposium was based, that is, that university research *should* contribute to overcoming poverty. This is a substantive, normative proposition, with which not everyone would agree. Many people still think the university is a place for the pursuit of truth and it is up to others to apply that truth to the practical problems of the world.

We noted too some of the strong views expressed on questions, such as, whether solutions to poverty *should* be found in market mechanisms? Not everyone would see such views as ethical in nature, but they certainly are. And there was a cluster of issues connected with the ethical aspects of problem definition in development work, for example, who *ought* to be defining 'the problem', and whose standards *should* be applied to determine when people are better off?

In general, we found that as observers, issues connected with communication amongst the Symposium participants presented themselves more clearly to us than to the participants themselves. We saw a whole cluster of these issues as constituting a kind of 'ethics of cross-cultural communication' and noted that participants should try to avoid the

use of acronyms, abbreviations, obscure technical terminology, and the like, for what are we actually trying to do in cross-cultural settings if we are not making an effort to communicate with one another effectively?

We were also able to report to the group that not only did some of the language used exclude certain participants – usually those from the developing world – but that technologies employed also excluded some participants. For example, the electronic blackboard which participants were urged to use was not fully useable by many participants with access to less advanced computer systems and Internet service.

As one would anticipate, the issue of ethical relativism was lurking in at least some of the discussions during the Symposium. For example, in one discussion group there seemed to be a difference of opinion on what ethics dictates when you are met with the statement in a developing country that "women have nothing to contribute and therefore don't need to be at the meeting". Do you have to accept that practice (the exclusion of women) because it is 'their culture' and ethics are relative, or are you under the moral obligation to try to resist the imposition of that practice because it is ethically (and therefore universally) wrong to treat women as less than full human beings? We were sorry that more attention was not paid to addressing ethical relativism – a truly pernicious view – at the Symposium.



Forum Theatre Presentation at the IPS

Some Reflections On The Rule Of Law And Democratic Development

From 1992 to 2005 I was deeply immersed in development projects in Russia. In the early days I was sometimes intimidated by other Canadians with whom I worked. They seemed so confident that their specific proposals were right for Russia. But I was less sure: what was the likelihood that our approaches would work in a country where decisions are not made according to law, but according to personal power relationships?

Fortunately, I spent enough time in Russia to have my intuitions borne out. One-off law reforms cannot succeed unless the institutional context necessary to making such reforms work is in place; for example, at least some commitment to the rule of law.

So I found myself in strong agreement with Hernando de Soto, who spoke as part of the IPS. De Soto argued that until developing countries adopt 'facilitative' legal rules, which allow, for example, for the creation of companies and effective protection of property, there is no way they can aspire to first-world levels of development. While I had long been aware of the importance of the rule of law, his emphasis on 'facilitative law' provided a fresh perspective.

De Soto's primary concerns are economic, but the rule of law is also important to democratic development. For if citizens cannot rely on law to enforce the fairness of both elections and the implementation of government programs and policies, then there simply is no democracy. One can have the façade of democracy without the rule of law, but not the real thing.

Real life teaches us that democratic development, rule of law and ethics are deeply intertwined. These relationships are clearest when we look at countries which are not yet democratic, and especially those which have strongly anti-democratic traditions. They almost certainly will not attain any kind of authentic democracy

without developing an ethical stance towards the political institutions in their jurisdiction.

Consider Hungary and events there as they were developing this fall (2006), about 50 years after the uprising against the Soviet Union. As the anniversary date approached, the current Hungarian PM revealed that he and his party had systematically lied to the Hungarian people about the state of the economy in order to get themselves elected. The truth is that the economy is a shambles: as Sebestyén Gorka wrote in the October 24 *Globe and Mail*, "this former economic tiger – which, in the 1990s, attracted more than 50 percent of all foreign direct investment in Central Europe – now struggles with the greatest regional deficit burden since the Berlin Wall fell". The public response was furious: street protests in Budapest were more explosive than anything that had been seen since October 1956.



Prior to this fall, the received view was that Hungary had successfully made the transition from former satellite of the Soviet Union to a democracy worthy of NATO and European Union membership. But as one commentator put it, "the transition [in Hungary] from dictatorship to democracy is far from complete". In his words, nations must be "grown rather than manufactured." Where "the culture and spirit of free markets and political democracy are absent or little understood" democracy does not take root – at most you have the external trappings, for the culture and spirit of democracy are to a significant extent ethical, involving "a moral-cultural system which is pluralistic and, in the largest sense, liberal". As many others have also noted: "without a moral compass, democracy will never flourish, no matter where its seed is planted."

Research which expands our understanding of the ethical dimensions of institutions we often take for granted, such as democracy and the rule of law, could contribute an enormous 'development dividend.'

Janet Keeping

What Is Wrong With Celebrity Causes?



These days, it is hip to be famous, wealthy *and* a philanthropist.

Musicians like Bob Geldof and Bono have been ‘hip’ for some time – committed to addressing world poverty and hunger for twenty years, in a very public way. Angelina Jolie’s commitment to refugees is long-standing, as is actor Leonardo di Caprio’s concern for the environment and sustainable development. Rock stars bring their friends to play at benefit concerts and raise large sums of money for Hurricane Katrina aid in Louisiana or Red River flood victims in Manitoba. Angelina Jolie seems to have influenced her paramour, Brad Pitt, to speak out for the *Make Poverty History* campaign. It has been suggested that Jolie’s actions prompted Madonna to adopt a child from Malawi, with abundant media criticism that Madonna was just following a trend.

So is this just the latest fad? Should we care? These celebrities



Madonna in Malawi

and philanthropists are making a difference in social justice terms and that effort can be applauded. But something about this trend just does not feel right.

It seems crass to advance a social cause as a publicity stunt, and most of us instinctively react against such blatant insincerity. When a cause like poverty in Africa becomes the *flavour of the month* for celebrities, we may initially pay attention and yet over time become cynical about the motives of those involved. And who then suffers from our scepticism? Perhaps the celebrity does, as in the case with Madonna. More seriously, the social cause may suffer as well. Our society cannot afford to be cynical about addressing poverty in Africa because of ill-considered public relations exercises by celebrities.

When individual philanthropists make large enough donations or have enough fame behind them, they do much more than just give to social causes. They influence government policy directions. Arguably, some such as Michael J. Fox impact election outcomes. They set aid agendas, as in the case of Bill and Melinda Gates, whose Foundation budget is larger than that of many poor nations.

When the Gates Foundation decided to tackle Vitamin A deficiency worldwide in the late 1990s the disease was elevated to a major health concern, despite the fact that it is not one of the top causes of death of children anywhere.

The level of influence these philanthropists wield is of concern for two reasons. First, they are not accountable to anyone for their actions or expenditures. They do not represent public will on an issue as their actions are purely their own. But they certainly can influence public will and policy-setting. Second, their involvement – while often exceedingly well-intentioned – may mask governmental inaction. Private donations are inherently less stable than public funding.

Entrepreneur Warren Buffet is spending most of his \$40 billion donation to support microbicides for HIV prevention in Africa. In response, donor governments like Canada and the USA may decide to move their aid funding from HIV prevention to girl child education. If Warren Buffet changes his mind or his stock values plummet then microbicial HIV prevention becomes severely limited as governmental funds have already been redirected.

Philanthropy is laudable. It demonstrates compassion for others, a generous spirit, and a desire to improve conditions for those less fortunate. It is a tangible demonstration of our ethics. It cannot replace, however, collective action, public funding, and the compassion of a nation.

Poverty Amidst Affluence: Food Insecurity In Canada

“Some things are bad and some things are wrong. Food insecurity is wrong and yet we treat it as though it were merely bad.” So began the 2006 Elizabeth Flagler Memorial Lecture entitled “Poverty Amidst Affluence: Food Insecurity in Canada” by Dr. Lynn McIntyre.

Because failure to achieve nutrient requirements impairs physical and mental health, in Canada we tend to view food insecurity simply as a poor health outcome. According to Dr. McIntyre, it is a political issue, and a question of fundamental human rights – under international law, hunger is illegal. Yet, in Canada, hunger is seen to be bad rather than wrong. If we thought of food insecurity as an issue of social inequality or poor social policy would we be more likely to consider it as unacceptable?

Food insecurity was first recognised in Canada in the 1980s and food banks and school feeding programs were established to address the issue. Since 1990, though, our achievements in hunger abatement have stalled or reversed. We have the resources and ability to feed all our citizens and yet people have too little food in Canada because they are too poor to buy it. We have deep and pervasive poverty across the country, in spite of our affluence. Why do we not think this wrong?

At present, roughly three million Canadians experience hunger and food insecurity. A disproportionate number of these are children and their mothers. Those on social assistance have a still higher risk of going hungry, as do lone-parent led families and off-reserve Aboriginal people. Social policies are consistently increasing economic disparities, and our response is to encourage increased support for food banks and feeding programs.

Is the institutionalisation of food banks an appropriate means of addressing food insecurity in Canada? Is donating to the local food bank the right thing to do, or do food banks simply allow government to evade responsibility for this issue?

Dr. McIntyre contends that the issue is not one of charity, but of human dignity. “People in our society have a right to buy their own food, and they have a right to do so in the way the normative population does.” If we considered hunger to be wrong, we would recognize that neither a ‘hand-out’ nor a ‘hand-up’ is an appropriate solution to the problem. Instead of telling our leadership that doing nothing is unacceptable, we have allowed a sub-group of our population to fall into an abyss.

“I know I need it [milk]—the doctors have told me, ‘You’ve got calcium deficiency, you need it’, but if I need money for a bill or rent, that always come first right” ~ survey respondent

“...That is one of the hardest things to decide—knowing that you have only one bag of milk left—who is going to get it and you go from the youngest to the oldest. That’s what you do--go from the baby to the middle child to the oldest. It didn’t feel right because I actually had to decide. It breaks my heart.” ~ survey respondent

It was remarkable to note that after Dr. McIntyre’s lecture many audience members indicated that what resonated most with them were the personal anecdotes she had shared. Does this suggest we need to elicit some form of emotive response in order to engage people on this issue? As we cannot mandate social involvement, what then is needed to move us to action? How do we inspire the shift from feeling bad to feeling outraged? In 1997 a group of outraged citizens demanded ethical leadership in the banning of landmines. Imagine the pay off from a ‘food security dividend’ if we were to similarly call for ethical leadership in ending poverty.

Megan Burrows



Ethical Leadership on Poverty Amidst Affluence

In these oil-boom times the poverty in our midst becomes even starker than before. Canadians are grappling with the increasing rich-poor gap in Alberta and in other parts of the country. Ethics relates to notions of equity, fairness, and dignity, and so there is a role for the Sheldon Chumir Foundation to play in promoting public discussion of the issues. When we feel it is needed and when our voice will add something to the deliberations, we will continue to call for ethical leadership on addressing poverty amidst affluence.

The Election That Wasn't

The Alberta Progressive Conservative Leadership Race 2006

There is something amiss when a party leadership race rivals or outstrips a provincial or federal election in terms of advertising, political commentary, media coverage, and even voting site information.

Yes, we all understand that Alberta is virtually a one party state. Does this mean, then, that the leadership race is as good as a general election?

If you want to ensure that your vote is felt, that your franchise has meaning, should you not vote for the next leader? We all have a vested interest in the outcome of the Alberta leadership race – citizens of Alberta, and those in the rest of Canada though they are ineligible to vote in this context. Many people did choose to sign up for a party membership at the last minute and make their voice heard.

The PC party itself strongly encouraged membership applications, kept the price low (\$5), and told Albertans to vote for the Alberta they wanted, not just the PC leader. In fact, some members of both the Alberta Alliance Party and the Alberta Liberal

Party encouraged citizens to buy a PC membership and vote for the candidate whom they felt best reflected their respective party values.

When opposition parties promote buying memberships in the governing party, then that is a sign of serious democratic deficit. It is hard to imagine a stronger message of defeatism. And when the ruling party promotes membership buying among those who have no interest whatsoever in the health and future of that party, and even some who hope to sabotage the party, then short-sighted political opportunism must be at play.

Without doubt, there was much at stake in the Alberta PC leadership race. But perhaps, in the long-term, there is even more at stake than was realised. If we resign ourselves to determining our political future within one party's leadership race rather than in the parliamentary system, this threatens the health of our democracy and the ability for us – every one of us in Alberta – to choose the government we want in a general election.

Heather MacIntosh

MLAs and Constituents: How Can We Work Better Together?

Politicians receive the lowest trust approval ratings of all public figures and are often met with cynicism and apathy. This is exacerbated by the inherently adversarial nature of politics evident in soundbites and round-the-clock coverage. How might our democracy be different if we concentrated more on dialogue and consensus than metaphors of fighting and winning? What would we say if we got the chance to engage with politicians to discuss the actual process of democracy? The current means of influencing politicians are advocacy and public pressure. Would we prefer dialogue?

Participants in the first event in the Foundation's "Dialogues on Democracy" series in September explored these questions with three sitting and three former MLAs. The consensus from the MLAs was that the real work of democracy lies in interaction with constituents.



Dialogues on Democracy—MLA Panel

There was much talk of what we expect of politicians, but what do they expect of us? Former MLA Dave Russell urged citizens to vote, be "reasonably informed," and willing to "listen to both sides." MLA David Swann remarked that in a democracy the outcome you want is not guaranteed, but it is the process that matters. After a rousing, and sometimes heated, audience discussion the evening ended on a lighter note with Mr. Russell's reminder: "Don't expect government to do everything for you; if you do, you'll be sorry one day because we'll do it."

Why 'Good' Managers Make Bad Ethical Choices?

This is an abstract of Saul W. Gellerman's article, "Why 'Good' Managers Make Bad Ethical Choices?", published in the 2003 *Harvard Business Review on Ethics*.

Gellerman explores why decision-makers sometimes act unethically. Based on three corporate cases, he identifies and analyzes the roots of the misconduct managers confront across different kinds of businesses. He then provides practical recommendations and examples to ensure ethical behaviour.

The author identifies four commonly held rationalizations that explain why decision-makers behave unethically: (1) a belief that the activity is not "really" illegal or immoral; (2) a belief that the activity is in the individual's or the corporation's best interest; (3) a belief that the activity is "safe" because it will never be found out or publicized; and (4) a belief that since the activity helps the company, the company will condone it and even protect the person who engages in it.

Regarding the first rationalization, Gellerman argues that in order to avoid misunderstandings, companies must establish ethical guidelines for all employees. When employees face an ambiguous situation, some may conclude that whatever has not been predetermined as wrong must be correct. The author recalls the old principle: "When managers must operate in murky borderlands, their most reliable guideline is: when in doubt, don't."

In the second rationalization, ambition plays a key role. Ambitious managers look for ways to attract auspicious attention by reaching the expected results, even if it ultimately implies putting the organization at risk. Many managers have been promoted on the basis of the results obtained in those ways because of the lack of an objective review of their successes. The author suggests that

one way to avoid this is to hire an independent auditing agency that reports to outside directors.

The third rationalization, the author notes, is perhaps the most difficult to deal with because much of the restricted behavior escapes detection. How can we prevent wrongdoing that is unlikely to be detected? "Make it more likely to be detected," argues Gellerman. He proposes increasing the frequency of audits and spot checks combined with other techniques, such as scheduling unannounced audits.

The fourth rationalization – a belief that the company will condone actions that are taken in its interest – is linked to the issue of company loyalty. Gellerman argues that while executives have a right to expect loyalty from employees, they cannot expect such loyalty to be against the law or against common morality. Organizations should instead formally and regularly stress that loyalty to the company does not excuse acts that jeopardize its reputation.

Gellerman concludes that the most extreme examples of corporate misconduct were due to managerial failures. Thus, clearer communication and better, more objective and more frequent control mechanisms are effective ways to avoid unethical management behavior.

Abstract by Soledad Mackinnon
Inter American Development Bank

Event Announcements

JANUARY

Alan Borovoy, General Counsel, Canadian Civil Liberties Association: **Alberta Lecture Series**

1) “Canada’s War on Terror – Some Ethical Fallacies”

Co-Sponsored with University of Calgary Peace Studies Consortium

January 10, 2007, 12-1pm

4259 Professional Faculties/Social Work building, University of Calgary, CALGARY
contact Jamie Taylor at 220-2136, or by e-mail at peaceuc@ucalgary.ca

2) “Civil Liberties 2007: Current and Growing Dangers”

January 10, 2007, 5:30-7pm

Kahanoff Centre, 2nd floor, 1202 Centre Street South, CALGARY

Light refreshments served.

contact Elaine Wojtkiw at 244-6666, or by e-mail at info@chumirethicsfoundation.ca

3) “Keeping God in His Place: Religious Faith and Secular Clout”

Co-Sponsored with the Centre for Constitutional Studies

January 11, 2007 12-2pm

Room 231, Law Centre, University of Alberta, EDMONTON

Light lunch served.

contact Amber Holder at 492-5681, or by e-mail at aholder@ualberta.ca

FEBRUARY

Dialogues on Democracy: Where are all the women?

Co-Sponsored with the Famous Five Foundation

February 6, 2007 5:30 – 8:00pm

McDougall Centre, 455 6th Street SW, CALGARY

Tickets: \$15. Light supper served.

contact Elaine Wojtkiw at 244-6666, or by e-mail at info@chumirethicsfoundation.ca

MARCH

Webber Junior High Regional Debate **Tournament**

Topic of Debate: *Should internet companies boycott China until it allows its citizens unrestricted access to the Web?*

March 3, 2007 8:00 – 4:00pm

Queen Elizabeth Junior High/Senior High School,

512 – 18th St. NW, Calgary, AB

Contact (403) 777-6380

All are welcome



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