



For the Common Good

For the Common Good

The Ethics of Leadership in the 21st Century

EDITED BY JOHN C. KNAPP

Foreword by Jimmy Carter

PRAEGER

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This volume is published in honor of

Betty L. Siegel

*whose twenty-five-year tenure
as president of
Kennesaw State University
exemplified leadership
“for the common good.”
The following lines, written
in her honor for this
volume, are by the poet
David Whyte.*

I Am Thinking of Women

(For Betty Siegel)

I am thinking of women of nobility
and purpose, the way they catch the light
and magnetize a crowd, the way men
of individual power standing outside
that gravity well of relational desire
are helpless before the tide, and I think
of them especially, when I think of Yeats,
walking innocently into a room in Dublin
and falling for that woman
haloed in spring light who stood, head high
by a vase of fresh apple blossom
and how then, he pursued her, writing

I will find out where she has gone
And kiss her lips and take her hands
and how he put her into plays depicting
the history of a country struggling to be born
sometimes casting her as a young girl
sometimes as the older woman
who struggles in at last to save the past
from itself and all the while
in love with her from tip to toe
she refused him in marriage
five or six times through the years
so he had to write her
larger and larger in the mind of a nation
to make some good
of the not to be borne, close-in loss.

These women, half enticing, half frightening
these noble profiles imperiously caught,
creating, under the outward stylish drama
cradles of competency, these Maudes,
Eleanors, Indiras, and Elizabeths, sailing
on and above the fray, into present time,
over the surge of history, putting together
whole worlds, universities, conversations, new nations.
They stand in our minds so completely now
some frightening simplicity at their center,
some impatience with that outward show,
we imagine them, suddenly, placed in an ordinary life,
all outward help withdrawn, standing in rags
at the corner, starting blithely again,
with a first helpless stranger
the talk for which they were born,
we see them issuing the first unstoppable invitation,
arranging the welcome shelter from selfishness,
broaching that first beautiful and beckoning
uncertainty, outlining the emerging and finally,
inescapable understanding,
the one that ends with changing the world.

—*David Whyte*

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Foreword

*As we face changes and challenges, we need to hold on to the things that don't change, the foundations on which we can build our lives despite the uncertainty and danger of the future.*¹

I wrote those words just before the dawn of the present century, unaware of just how challenging the next decade would be for America and the world. Global terrorism, war, political unrest and natural disasters remind us daily that ours is indeed a time of uncertainty and danger.

The early 21st century is a moment in history that calls for a new kind of leadership, capable of addressing complex, global problems while holding fast to the timeless values our faith and experience have shown us are essential to a good society. Such leadership requires what I have called *social courage*—the strength of character to rise above political and societal pressures in order to serve the common good of humanity.

In this volume, you will read about trends that are changing our world in ways we can hardly imagine. The opening chapter by analyst Erik Peterson predicts that the next two decades will be a period of revolutionary change in population, conflict, resources, technology, information and economic development. As these sobering trends reshape global society, one conclusion is inescapable: their combined effects will be to deepen the divide between rich and poor in our world. Today, as 10 percent of us consume 56 percent of the world's resources, one-half of the global population struggles to subsist on less than \$2 a day, often lacking clean water, adequate sanitation, basic nourishment, and access to health care and education.²

Shortly before the close of the 20th century, I was asked to give a speech answering the question of what I considered to be the world's greatest challenge in the new millennium. I did not have to ponder the question long, for in my experience at The Carter Center—whether in resolving political conflict or working to eradicate diseases—it has been increasingly clear to me that the widening chasm between the world's wealthy and its desperately poor is a genuine threat to *all* people.

So what kind of leadership is required to meet such a challenge? In these pages, John Knapp has assembled a distinguished group of leaders who offer thoughtful responses to this question as they discuss a variety of timely concerns. Not surprisingly, they say that tomorrow's leaders must be collaborative, resourceful and able to see problems from a global perspective. But more important, they share a conviction that leadership *for the common good* is both an ethical imperative and a practical necessity in the face of our uncertain future. Their views are well worth reading.

I am delighted that this book is dedicated to Betty Siegel on the occasion of her retirement after 25 years as president of Kennesaw State University. Rosalynn and I have counted Betty and her husband, Joel, among our friends for many years. As the nation's longest-serving female president of a university, she was a visionary leader who guided a small four-year college to become a leading university with seven colleges, 55 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and nearly 19,000 students from 120 countries.

This special book is a fitting tribute to Betty Siegel, who has tirelessly promoted the idea that institutions of higher learning have a duty to provide moral leadership in society. In her final year as a president, she invited a group of her peers to gather at the University of Oxford, a place of significant symbolism and historic meaning for today's universities. Over a five-day period, university leaders from across the United States crafted a declaration of beliefs and ethical principles to guide them in using their resources and influence to more effectively address the challenges threatening 21st-century society.

We must hope that this vision will be shared not only by university presidents, but also by leaders in business, government, health care, and other vital institutions, all of which must do their part in providing leadership for the common good.

—Jimmy Carter

Introduction

This is a book about the future. In these pages you will explore the ethical requirements of leadership in a century that is already witnessing faster, more sweeping change than any period in human history.

It is also a book about the past. You will read first-hand accounts by several remarkable leaders whose own lives in the late 20th century helped set an enduring standard for good leadership. Their wisdom, together with personal recollections of exemplary leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Peter Drucker, serves to ground our discussion of the future in the hard-earned lessons of the recent past.

Most of us today take it for granted that our world is changing and will change even more dramatically in the decades ahead. But that was not so for people living at the turn of previous centuries. “Our forebears expected the future to be pretty much like their present, which had been pretty much like their past,” observes artificial intelligence pioneer Ray Kurzweil.³ How many of our great-grandparents had an inkling of what the 20th century would bring?

In his incisive book, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, Jonathan Glover writes, “At the start of the century there was optimism, coming from the Enlightenment, that the spread of a humane and scientific outlook would lead to the fading away, not only of war, but of other forms of cruelty and barbarism.”⁴ Of course, we now know that it was a short-lived season of hope, yielding all too soon to the brutality that was to mark the bloodiest century in human history.

The opening years of the 21st century have witnessed no such naiveté. The millennium awoke to terrorists in New York, Washington, London and

Madrid; greedy criminals in corporate boardrooms; famine, genocide and an AIDS epidemic in Africa; deadly floods in Asia and America; new nuclear threats from unstable despots; and the uncertainties of globalization in a world we were told was “flat” after all. Yet even with our generation’s knowledge and expectations, Kurzweil warns, “the future will be far more surprising than most observers realize: few have truly internalized the implications of the fact that the rate of change itself is accelerating.”

One who fully grasps the magnitude of this is Erik Peterson, director of the Global Strategy Institute at the Center for Strategic & International Studies, whose sobering chapter, “Scanning More Distant Horizons,” is our first chapter. He paints a vivid picture of the stormy waters 21st-century leaders will be called upon to navigate, describing seven revolutionary trends that already are redefining global society. Are leaders prepared for the upheaval to come? “In my view the conclusion is as inescapable as it is uncomfortable,” he warns. “Across the layers of social organization—government, business, civil society, academia, and elsewhere—we are mired in pervasive short-termism precisely at the time when we need to be more forward-looking. The stakes are profound.”

LEADERSHIP FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Few people would disagree with the proposition that good leadership is more crucial than ever, especially as it is increasingly apparent that our collective future depends in very large measure on the actions and priorities of the few who lead powerful institutions. But we also know that *good* leadership requires more than just effectiveness in getting things done. It is as much about who leaders *are* as what they do. And it is about the ends they value and the means they choose to pursue them.

The chapters that follow are concerned principally with what may be called *the ethics of leadership*—that is, the obligations of leaders to promote justice, fairness, trust, and the conditions necessary for people to live well in communities that flourish. We have chosen to attend to practical matters in these writings, leaving the dissection of leadership theory to others. It is our hope that the trenchant insights and diverse backgrounds of those who have collaborated to produce this volume will contribute to a much-needed public discussion of these issues among people of all cultures.

Ethics involves many things, but it is primarily concerned with understanding and achieving human well-being, especially in the context of our relationships with one another. The ultimate aim of ethical action may be seen as what Aristotle called “the common good of all.” He recognized, as

we do, that there are differences of opinion about what is good, and about which goods are best for all concerned. But this is precisely why he thought the matter deserved serious discussion. In our time, it is the task of leaders to invite this discussion and work with others to formulate a vision of the common good might finally bridge the political, social, and economic chasms that divide us.

We must have no illusions about the difficulty of this task. Indeed, as David Hollenbach has said, “the idea of the common good is in trouble today—serious trouble.” This loss of hope flows from contemporary assumptions about the fragmentation of our cultural landscape. “Pluralism, by definition, means people disagree about what the good life is, so if we respect their freedom, there seems little possibility of attaining a shared understanding of a common good.” Yet the idea may find new life as globalization increases interdependency and technology forges new linkages between disparate peoples. In Hollenbach’s words,

The pursuit of the global common good thus has social, intellectual, and institutional dimensions. It calls for a social struggle to move the patterns of global interdependence away from domination and toward reciprocity based on equality. It requires intellectual commitment to listening as well as speaking in a genuine dialogue with those who are different. And it calls for transformation of the institutional centers of decision-making in our increasingly interconnected globe. In theological terms, it calls us to seek a world of greater communion.⁵

If the world were to agree on a vision of the common good, what might it be? Frances Hesselbein argues that to some extent such a vision already exists, one that “embraces healthy children, strong families, good schools, decent housing, and work that dignifies, all in the cohesive, inclusive society that cares about all its people.” There can be little disagreement that this is “the dream that lies before us,” she insists, but we must be realistic about how hard it will be to accomplish, especially when extended to a global community wracked by poverty, disease, hunger, war and injustice. It is certain that governments cannot do it alone; therefore, “great corporate leaders . . . religious leaders, university and college presidents, and the leaders of voluntary organizations need to add their vision and voices to the leadership effort.”⁶

GOOD LEADERS IN THE 21st CENTURY

So just what is it that will distinguish *good* leaders in the 21st century? Erik Peterson begins Chapter 1 with the words of Gandhi, who calls all of us to

“be the change” we want to see in the world. His chapter does much to illuminate the scope of transformation leadership must yet undergo, providing a clear-eyed analysis of the global condition of humanity and how it is being radically altered by several trends. Hunger, environmental degradation, warfare, and disease are among the looming threats, not only to the most vulnerable populations but also to the common good of all. He concludes, “Our overarching challenge is to provide the knowledge for leaders to develop vision, to inculcate them with the understanding to execute on their vision, and to help them develop a conceptual and ethical foundation on which difficult—sometimes, excruciating—trade-offs will have to be made.” He worries, however, that leadership is “being replaced by management, strategy by tactics, long-term planning by triage reactions, principle by expediency, and far-sighted vision by mere management by the numbers.”

In Chapter 2, Lynn Barendsen and Howard Gardner ask, “What are the traits of good leaders across time and how do these leaders adjust to rapidly changing times?” To answer this, they draw from their own primary research with leaders and from the examples of successful role models, including the late John Gardner, an influential leader and often-consulted expert on the subject. Their conclusion: good leaders are highly committed to three things: excellence, ethics and engagement. Throughout their chapter, they provide helpful case examples of leaders who maintain these commitments in the face of globalization and market pressures. But they also point to the scarcity of such leaders. One, perhaps surprising, role model is the world-class cellist Yo Yo Ma who “does not worry about globalization, but instead, shows us how it can diversify and deepen our cultural understandings.” He is an example for all leaders by being “fully engaged in his music, and equally engaged in his service of others.”

Each of our contributors shows how the changing context for leadership calls for changes in leaders themselves. No place is this more true than the arena of public opinion, where a growing chorus of critics demands constant accountability and puts leaders to the test in ways their predecessors never imagined. The third chapter looks at this phenomenon and the attendant deficit of trust in institutions and their leaders—a disturbing and deepening worldwide problem. The implication is that 21st-century leaders must develop new skills and higher degrees of emotional intelligence in order to maintain necessary relationships with the range of diverse stakeholders whose interests intersect with their own. Emotional intelligence involves both social awareness and self-awareness; the latter requiring a measure of personal humility not always encouraged or rewarded by business and government institutions.

A more personal account is found in Chapter 4, where Frances Hesselbein offers wise insights about leadership in a warm tribute to the late Peter Drucker, her close friend and the 20th century's foremost expert on management. She is, of course, a distinguished leader in her own right—serving as the highly successful CEO of the Girl Scouts of America, mentoring and teaching the top brass of the U.S. Army, and receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. She reminds us of Drucker's maxim, "Leadership cannot be taught, but it can be learned," even as she repeats her own adage, "Leadership is about how to be, not how to do." Ultimately, the aim of leadership must be the common good, for all leaders need to accept responsibility not just for their own institutions, but also for what Drucker called "the community as a whole."

The second section of the book considers the ethics of leadership in the daunting contexts of global conflict, environmental degradation and malnutrition. We begin with a chapter by Nobel Peace Prize laureate John Hume, the great peacemaker of Northern Ireland. He acknowledges, "we are living through one of the greatest revolutions in the history of the world," yet he is nonetheless optimistic that as transport, technology and telecommunications make the planet smaller, "we are in a stronger position to shape that world." In his view, 21st-century leaders have a better opportunity than those of any earlier generation to put an end to war and major conflict. Laying out a set of principles for this process, he proposes that the United States' original motto, *E Pluribus Unum* ("out of many, we are one"), might someday be "a summary of the philosophy of the entire world." His conclusion calls for the European Union and the United States to form a "permanent international body" to promote global dialog and resolve conflicts.

Arun Gandhi is the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, from whom he learned many of life's lessons as a child. In the sixth chapter, he describes the principles of self-discipline and nonviolence that leaders must embody in order to reduce the intensity of conflict in a dangerous world. Discussing some lessons of India's history, he shows the consequences of ethical compromise and stresses that successful leaders "must be wedded to a high standard of ethics and morality." Rich with personal anecdotes, his chapter includes an illuminating account of the childhood experiences that formed his legendary grandfather's character as a leader. What he learned about love, respect, compassion, understanding, and acceptance may be even more essential for 21st-century leaders.

No serious effort to cope with global change could be undertaken without the active involvement of business leaders. Yet it is they who are often vilified by leaders in government, education, and the social sector for their roles in

environmental, human rights and other problems. Can leaders in business be brought to the table as equal partners in a collaborative pursuit of the common good? Ray Anderson not only thinks so, he has found himself at the head of the table as co-chair of the President's Council on Sustainable Development. His inspiring story, found in Chapter 7, demonstrates the power of one visionary leader to make a meaningful difference and blaze a trail for others to follow. The founder of a billion-dollar manufacturing company with factories on four continents, a late-life epiphany brought him to grips with the harmful environmental impact of his company. Since that time he has led an initiative to neutralize his company's effects on the environment, create a model of sustainability for industry, and turn his 5,000-employee firm into an "*eco-system, in which cooperation replaces confrontation*, and one that includes Earth in win-win-win relationships." His chapter also sounds a dire warning about the harm that will be suffered by future generations if industrial leaders fail to wake up to long-term consequences of their practices.

The environmental crisis is not unrelated to the problem of feeding the world's hungry, as E. T. York shows in Chapter 8. Internationally known for more than 40 years as an advocate of solutions to hunger and malnutrition, he declares this to be "the great moral challenge of our generation." He draws on his deep experience as a researcher and advisor to six U.S. presidents to make a compelling case that global hunger can be alleviated with the help of advances in science, technology, and agriculture—but only if leaders have the will and moral vision to make it happen.

It is not coincidental that E. T. York is also chancellor emeritus of the University System of Florida, for higher education is as indispensable to solving the problem of hunger as it is to addressing every other issue raised in these pages. Erik Peterson contends that *only* higher education is positioned to "ask how we develop our leaders, how we condition their thinking, what their moral and ethical frameworks are, and what priorities for action are being contemplated." For this reason, the last section of this book explores the roles, responsibilities, and untapped potential of higher education as a locus of thought leadership and a developer of good leaders for future society. If there is anything common to today's leaders across virtually all sectors, it is a university education.

But are universities prepared to embrace this opportunity? And are they able? Beheruz Sethna takes up these questions in Chapter 9. As president of the University of West Georgia and the first immigrant of Indian origin to lead a university in the United States, he sees an "awesome responsibility" for universities: "We have the opportunity to influence 18 million young (and not so young) minds and help them obtain the tools for ethical leadership in

America—and, because America still is in a leadership position in world higher education—in the world.” Echoing our theme that good leadership begins with who leaders are, rather than what they do, he argues that the primary mission of universities is “*changing lives*,” rather than the traditional triumvirate of teaching, research and service. He does not flinch from acknowledging the difficulty of this mission, and ends his chapter with a call for his peers to “embrace that duty, that challenge, and that responsibility.”

Yet even if university leaders rise to the challenge, they cannot succeed by going it alone. Therefore, Chapter 10 examines the imperative for institutions to collaborate across sectors in order to tackle complex, global problems that are beyond the reach of any one discipline or sector. David and Michael Siegel, both scholars who study higher education leadership, believe collaboration is often resisted because it “complicates conventional understandings of place and purpose.” Using the higher education enterprise as a fulcrum, they identify key features of multisector collaborations, address some of the problems inherent in them, and consider the changing role of leadership and leaders in such undertakings. In their words, “A greater sense of mindfulness and attentiveness in the development of cross-sector collaborations—a conscientious attempt to know as we wish to be known—would benefit the process immeasurably and ultimately create a more symbiotic connection—literally and figuratively—among the vast maze of pipelines.”

Our final chapter brings us back to the words of Gandhi that open Chapter 1. Lawrence Carter’s chapter on the development of future leaders is entitled, “Global Ethical Leadership and Higher Education: ‘Being the Change You Wish to See.’” As dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. Chapel at Morehouse College, he has a passionate interest in the formation of leaders who are “spiritually aware visionary activists.” For examples, he points to Gandhi, King, and Daisaku Ikeda, the Japanese philosopher, educator and social activist who said, “What our world most requires now is the kind of education that fosters love for human kind, that develops character, that provides an intellectual basis for the realization of peace and empowers learners to contribute to improve society.” The chapter concludes with the declaration of the Oxford Conclave on Global Ethics, a statement by university leaders calling for the transformation of universities to make them more effective agents for the transformation of society.

A CLOSING WORD

It has been a rare privilege to work with the distinguished group of thinkers and leaders brought together by this project. That all are friends of

Betty Siegel, to whom this volume is dedicated, is a testament to the extent of her influence and her passion for educating ethical leaders. Howard Gardner may have best expressed our collective regard for this very special woman: “When significant American educational leaders of the last quarter century are listed, Betty Siegel will be in that select company. And when the list is trimmed to those leaders who are innovative, ethical and spirited, there will be a special place for Betty Siegel.”

We are more convinced now than when this project began that the extraordinary challenges of the 21st century call for nothing less than ethically astute leaders capable of, and fully committed to, seeking the common good of all. It is our hope that this collection of chapters might contribute something of value to those who heed this call.

—*John C. Knapp*
Atlanta, Georgia

SECTION I
THE NEW CLIMATE FOR LEADERSHIP