

**NATIONAL LAW STUDENT CONFERENCE, SPONSORED BY QUEEN'S
BRANCH OF CHRISTIAN LEGAL FELLOWSHIP (CLF) AND CLF NATIONAL
AT QUEEN'S LAW SCHOOL
Faith in Practice of Law and Public Life**

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Permit me to start with leadership, which is important to a successful law practice or public service. I define a leader as a principled person, who wants to make a positive difference daily to his/her practice and community. Christian leaders, like members of other faiths, do our best to apply the tenets of their faith whenever feasible.

To give a famous example, it was lawyer Konrad Adenauer's Christian faith and political principles that made co-operation as Cologne's mayor in 1933 with Hitler impossible. He was officially dismissed as mayor, his bank accounts were frozen, and he was imprisoned briefly in June 1934. During the ensuing Nazi years, Adenauer changed residences often for fear of reprisals and managed to live in seclusion and to become a renowned Chancellor of Germany after 1945.



Work-life balance panel at conference (l. To r):Jonathan Kulathungam, Valerie Parker, Calvin Beresh, Ruth Ross

Speaking about leadership in general, Has Fazel has described ten errors leaders make. Here are three:

- “Because I am the boss” is not a successful strategy. Good leaders see themselves at the bottom of an inverted pyramid as servant leaders. Very often, the best ideas come from people at the bottom of an organization's structure because the front-line workers have a better knowledge of those they serve.

Henri Nouwen

- Don't put paperwork before people. The late and much-loved Henri Nouwen of Harvard U and later of Toronto's L'Arche community highlighted an older professor, who noted: “I have always been complaining that my work was continually interrupted,

until I slowly discovered that my interruptions were my work.” He also said, “People will never care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

- We all need affirmation, praise, compliments. Good leaders understand the power of the personal touch of kindness. They show respect, recognition and spend time with their team.

I realize that as junior lawyers you will for a time be on the receiving end of others errors; your patience, enhanced by your faith, should assist you to cope with bad leadership when you encounter it with integrity.

Angela Merkel

In my view, Chancellor Angela Merkel is the best national leader in the world today. You will be aware that her father was a pastor in then East Germany. One of her Bundestag party members has indicated that she told a party meeting that accepting refugees was part of the Christian foundation of the CDU/CSU.

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln in the view of many of us is still the greatest American president. His religious views are of interest among scholars and the public; here is what Wikipedia-- which I realize scholars must not cite-- says in part:

Lincoln grew up in a highly religious Baptist family. He never joined any church, and was a skeptic as a young man and sometimes ridiculed revivalists. He frequently referred to God and had a deep knowledge of the Bible, often quoting it. Lincoln attended Protestant church services with his wife and children, and after two of them died he became more intensely concerned with religion... several people who knew him personally...believed in Christ in the religious sense...

The preface of the book, *Lincoln*, by David Donald of Harvard tells the reader that his work pays close attention to his subject’s “unquenchable ambition, to his brain-numbing labor in his law practice... and to his repeated defeats...how often chance or accident played a determining role in shaping his life and emphasizes his enormous capacity for growth, which enabled one of the least experienced and most poorly prepared men ever elected to high office to become the greatest American President.”

Leadership Principles

Sound principles give leaders the ability to maintain the trust, respect and support of stakeholders, whether clients, voters, customers, fellow students, work colleagues, or whomever.

Accountability

1. The decline of some major organizations is often linked to a lack of accountability. One way of doing this is through sound policies to protect whistleblowers. Far too often across Canada, ‘information patriots’ risk their

careers and jobs in heroic efforts aimed at safeguarding the public interest or their employer.

2. Without core convictions, leaders yield to all kinds of pressures and achieve little of use to anyone. They must ensure that their organizations remain steadfastly loyal to their basic philosophies, their *raison-d'être*. Leaders must also prepare their organizations to evolve in order to meet the challenges of a changing world. Good values and the pursuit of excellence have been tested over time as the best combination for organizations.
3. In successful organizations, inclusiveness can take on the form of no special “perks” for senior management only. Nucor Corp., a steel manufacturer, one of the most-admired U.S. organizations, is a good case study. Every one of its 30,000+ employees is a full member of Nucor’s team. The “no favourites” philosophy under its CEO Daniel R. DiMicco is demonstrated by giving employees the same amount of vacation days and insurance coverage, and no one gets a company vehicle or assigned parking spot.
The freedom to try new ideas gives Nucor a distinct competitive edge: a creative, get-it-done workforce. As a result, Nucor has been honoured as one of “100 Best Corporate Citizens,” the “best in class”, “Best Big Companies” for environmental responsibility, corporate ethics, fairness toward employees, accountability for local community and many other criteria.

BUSINESS ETHICS AND VOLKSWAGEN

You all know that Volkswagen placed a software in their diesel vehicles to allow them to cheat emissions tests by the US government. Prof Henry Mintzberg, professor of management studies at McGill University, wrote (September 22, 2015 *Globe and Mail*) that what happened at Volkswagen was not a scandal, but a syndrome. While practising law or in public life, you will probably see this syndrome in action, so please be vigilant to your principles and the ‘better angels’ of legal ethics. I agree with Mintzberg so fully that I’ll simply quote or paraphrase some points in his short analysis and invite your comments:

- “If you buy a Chevrolet, watch out for the ignition. If a Toyota, duck if the airbag comes your way. There is a corruption pattern in Europe, the United States, Japan and most everywhere else that transcends the automobile industry. How about banking in the United States and Europe? How about politics, most everywhere? Now Brazil is receiving a lot of attention, while the utter corruption of U.S. politics – private money in public elections, a level of lobbying out of control – carries merrily along.”
- “A good deal of the corruption is criminal, and so can be prosecuted... And why don’t we set the fines to indicate that corporate crime doesn’t pay? If you wish to steal, don’t grab somebody’s iPhone; the government will throw the book at you.

Devise some financial manoeuvre – a little more clever than a Ponzi scheme – to defraud many people of much money...”

- “Far more insidious, however, is the legal corruption, because it is so prevalent. Goldman Sachs allegedly manipulated the market for recycled aluminum so that it could siphon off \$5-billion (U.S.) by moving ingots from one warehouse to another. What were they thinking? That’s easy: \$5-billion. The company claimed to have broken no law. And that is precisely the problem: Our societies are being destroyed by this legal corruption.”
- “It turns out the Berlin Wall fell on us: Predatory capitalism has been triumphing since 1989, throwing much of the world out of balance, on the side of private sectors...”

Here is another Henri Nouwen quote: "Christian... leadership must be rooted in the permanent, intimate relationship with the incarnate Word, Jesus, and they need to find there the source for their words, advice, and guidance...when we are securely rooted in personal intimacy with the source of life, it will be possible to remain flexible without being relativistic, convinced without being rigid, willing to confront without being offensive, gentle and forgiving without being soft, and true witnesses without being manipulative."

Conclusion

Effective efforts are required from all leaders. Are we replacing the rule of law, for example, with rule by lawyers as the historian Niall Ferguson suggests? More than ever, our nations and world demand that leaders set their eyes on interests greater than that of their own, or their political party or organization. More than ever, leaders need to keep their eyes on the long-term vision for a better world of human dignity, equality and rule of law for all.

Thank you.

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