

Educational Leadership Ethics: Which side is the Dark Side?

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Abstract

The question of 'what makes a good character' is increasingly important in our world of supporting young people. However, this question is increasingly more difficult to pursue in the world of training those in the helping professions, because the definition of 'what is good' is so variable.

Teacher training is not immune to this, and a number of reviews over the last number of years have exemplified the struggle of trying to plan for improvement in our schools, whether those run by the government or in independent schools.

This presentation will posit that the Ten Words from the Creator still have role to play in this discussion, in both religious and secular based helping communities (including schools). This was the clear expectation of Christian leaders such as Augustine, Luther and Calvin. With the struggle to keep the 'realities of the unseen' (as per William James in 1901) alive in the Western Academe, the general relevance of ethics that relate to our soul directly has been greatly diminished.

Yet, within this apparent demise of the link between spirituality, ethics, character and leadership, the hunger for meaning and purpose simply does not go away in the hearts of our young people, even in spiritually dry Australia. Thus, the need for God's Ten Principles of Life are still relevant for the strengthening of civil society. In short, Christian Leaders have more and more opportunity to be the salt and light makers they are called to be, regardless of their specific context.

Further, it will be strongly put that without such a soul focused base in considering the ethics of leadership, then we will not even be able to say what is the 'Dark Side' and what is not.

CHARACTER AND THE GOOD

I remember one day I had in China very clearly. We had been to visit one of their highly sophisticated ICT schools, and it was by any ICT standards very impressive. We were then invited to a special morning tea with the leadership of the school.

As we arrived at the room, the translators who were with us let us know that the Chinese (and Communist) leadership were interested in comparing notes with us about how to develop student leadership. The South Korean academic with whom I was travelling was from a Christian education context, as was I. We took this wonderful opportunity to explain two things:

- a. How we used the Bible as the basis for training into good character: that we believed that inviting young people into Godly character was the best leadership we could offer; and
- b. We were invitational in how we taught our students in terms of them considering their deep commitments, in contrast to simply knowing *about* what was good.

This caught the attention of one of the seniors at that school. While we were going on our guided tour, she continued to ask lots of questions, via the interpreter, about these two things. At one point I thought I should try and understand her interest more clearly, and so asked her ‘what is it that you say here in China to teach students about leadership?’

Her answer was clear and stark: “Only one thing – do what the Party says”...

I hope my reaction was polite on the outside, because I found this simple statement startling (although on reflection, it made perfect sense). The good news was that we could then go on, with the limited time we had, to discuss some assumptions about the nature of who we are as people. The translator worked hard that day.

This example is a dramatic one in my memory, but are the principles that drove us to consider these different approaches to training for good character - training for leadership - only confined to Western versus Communist contexts? I think not.

Some definitions – there has been a lot written about how to define ethics and values. In this essay, ‘ethics’ is understood as how we think we are supposed to live; ‘morality’ is what we demonstrate is important to us by how we actually live; ‘integrity’ is when the two come close together; and ‘hypocrisy’ is when our ethics and our morality are very different¹.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO GOOD IN OUR WESTERN WORLD?

For us to be leaders of principle, we need to consider this question about how to define what is good. Two responses to this question are represented by James Davison Hunter, “The Death of Character” (2000), and in a lighter vein, but just as profound, Peter Hitchens “How Atheism Led me to Faith” (2010).

In Hunter’s work, he traces the move in the United States of America from a Biblically based foundation for moral education to the current era. The sub-title of his book summarises the quandary that he believes has arisen – “Moral education in an age without good or evil”. The first section of his work is of particular interest, because in it he traces the move from an explicitly moral standard of conduct being the basis of character, to one based on the psychologically focussed and therapeutically minded one of “personality” (p. 7). He links this shift in thinking to deep and pervasive changes within education, from the foundation of

¹ See Matthew 23 for a case study in this.

Sunday Schools to State run but Biblically based day schools (Biblically based at least in terms of explicit moral foundations for teaching character), to the current situation.

His summary of this movement that has occurred within a progressivist mindset is that:

Finally, there has been a transformation in the *purpose of moral education* itself – from mastery over the soul in service of God and neighbour, to the training of character to serve the needs of civic life, to the cultivation of personality toward the end of well-being.... [all the major paradigms now are] at root, self-referencing and oriented toward the end of personal well-being.... (p. 147)

Hunter believes there are dangerous consequences that are arising from this historical shift:

There is simply is no rational consensus, even among highly rational and sophisticated thinkers... Without a coherent moral philosophy, rooted in social institutions and reflected in a communally shared narrative, moral codes can only deteriorate into arbitrary personal preferences whose only sanction is the emotional weight of subjective experience. (p. 200)

He is thus reflecting the concern of CS Lewis², and other authors of his time, that without any moral absolutes, mankind would be thoroughly relativistic. The social concern about relativism is that those who have the most authority grow in absolute power, because they are the ones who define not only what is right and wrong for themselves, but for all of society. Lewis described this as pruning a tree while sitting on the limb that was being cut.

Does this context have other implications for our school leadership ethics in current times? Well, yes, of course, the most central one being that it challenges the basis of defining right and wrong in a social context. And schools are very much social contexts.

One astute observer of the social implications of all of this is Peter Hitchens. Born in a Christian household, he became an avid atheist (like his famous atheist brother), and then came back to faith – Peter Hitchens seems to have lived through the very essence of what is the basis of good in society, and thus the basis of forming ethical leadership. His summary of the situation, if we want to compare the impact on societies of different leadership ethics, is as follows:

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13). The huge differences that can be observed between Christian societies and all others, even in the twilight afterglow of Christianity, originate in this specific injunction.... In [any] society where the absolute code has been jettisoned and we have all become adept at making excuses for shirking such duties, selflessness of this kind will become less common.... There is far more love offered for those who honestly attempt to follow the law, and unbounded forgiveness for all who seek it.... And that is why, while it is perfectly possible for convinced atheists to do absolutely good deeds at great costs to themselves – not least because God so very much wishes them to – it is rather more likely that believing Christians will do such things.

²C.S Lewis, (1943 / 1978). *The Abolition of Man*. Glasgow: Collins

And when it comes to the millions of small and tedious good deeds that are needed for a society to function with charity, honesty, and kindness, a shortage of believing Christians will lead to that society's decay.³

Hitchens' challenge to Western society is to review the very core of what it means to lead within a good ethic. For those of us in schools, we are similarly challenged. Think how many times you might have heard it said "but other schools do this"; or "best practice is this..."; or the phrase that people use to really convince others, "the research says this!"⁴

Our task as Christian educational leaders is to test these things out, because of God's mercy, so that we can test His good will, so that it is on Earth as it is in Heaven⁵.

So we need to consider the basis of good on which we base our ethics. That is why John Hare's book title is so apt – "Why bother being good?" (2002). More than his title, his analysis of the bases of good in our modern world is highly instructive. He noted that if we act without considering answers to the ultimate questions about the meaning of life, then our moral life:

... becomes desperate, or grim, or compromised.... We pretend to ourselves that we are better than we actually are, or that the moral demand is just an ideal and not something to which we are actually accountable. Or we fill the gap with various attractions, or self-realisation schemes, or rational systems, or communal attachments, none of which succeed by themselves in the task we give them.⁶

There is another theme that runs through these considerations of the bases of good in our society. They are based on the belief that how we live is deeply connected to how we answer the distinctly human deep meaning questions of life. The works already quoted are expositions of the belief that life and spirituality are integrally linked. I would suggest therefore that any consideration of ethics is essentially a spiritual exercise, and it reflects our beliefs of what it means to be a person in relationship with others.

James R Peters' book "The Logic of the Heart" (2009) explicates this in detail. In his words, he sets out to:

Recover a robust conception of passionate reason. Despite the legacy of modernity that pervades our lives today, I believe that we can reasonably embrace the following radical claims: first, that the proper function of reason in human life is to enable us truthfully to locate ourselves in our world and to live wisely by recognizing who we are and what our proper place is in this world; and second, that reason cannot perform this proper function apart from the guidance of the human heart... it is only by cultivating habits of lore, properly understood, that we can discover the

³ Peter Hitchens (2010) *The Rage Against God – How atheism led me to faith* Zondervan pp. 143-145

⁴ It is not an overstatement to say that Hitler and other controlling leaders used all of these strategies in convincing people of their ethic – see *Hitler's Ethic: the Nazi pursuit of evolutionary progress*, by Richard Weikart, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009

⁵ Romans 12:1-2, Matthew 6:10

⁶ Hare J (2003) p. 210. Another similar analysis is Charles Colson's turn of the millennium challenge "How now shall we live?" (2005)

truth about ourselves and make fully rational judgements about the most pressing questions for any age: Who are we? How should we treat one another? And just what is our proper place in a diverse world composed not only of diverse peoples and nonhuman forms of life, but also of human communities and natural landscapes? These are questions cannot be answered by a dispassionate intellect, but only by “passionate reason”. (17)

We are unwise, if this logic of the heart is true, to develop our educational leadership ethic on the simplistic basis of reductionist dispassionate cognitive only intellect. What follows is two case studies which seek to demonstrate the difficulties if we do engage in educational ethics with heart.

THE PROBLEM OF UNDECLARED BIAS IN LEADERSHIP – EVEN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

The recognition that there may be something more to understanding human moral frameworks than through reductionist natural science or relativist social ethics is being considered in many different contexts. For example, an honest self-appraisal of the difficulties in different groups of people understanding how they view morality by an social evolutionary psychologist is Jonathan Haidt’s “The Righteous Mind – why good people are divided by politics and religion” (2012). He notes that:

There is now a great deal of evidence that religions do in fact help groups to cohere, solve free rider problems [those who are destructively non-compliant], and win the competition for group-level survival (298) ... *the very ritual practices that the New Atheists dismiss as costly, inefficient, and irrational turn out to be a solution to one of the hardest problems humans face: cooperation without kinship* (p. 299 – italics in the original)

Does this have any practical outworking for everyday life? Haidt thinks he has found evidence for it:

Putnam and Campbell put their findings bluntly: By many different measures, religiously observant Americans are better neighbours and better citizens than secular Americans – they are more generous with their time and money, especially in helping the needy, and they are more active in community life. (p. 310)

After being convinced of the bases of good that he was describing, Haidt then took his research to another level. He wanted to try to understand why those on one side of politics (the ‘left’) had so much trouble understanding those on the other side of politics (the ‘right’), and vice-versa. One of his key findings was that:

Nonetheless, if you are trying to change an organization or a society and you do not consider the effects of your changes on moral capital, you’re asking for trouble. This, I believe, is *the fundamental blind spot of the left*. It explains why liberal reforms so often backfire, and why communist revolutions usually end up in despotism. It is the reason I believe that liberalism – which has done so much to bring about freedom

and equal opportunity – is not sufficient as a governing philosophy. It tends to overreach, change too many things too quickly, and reduce the stock of moral capital inadvertently. Conversely, while conservatives do a better job of preserving moral capital, they often fail to notice certain classes of victims, fail to limit the predations of certain powerful interests, and fail to see the need to change or update institutions as times change (p. 343)

This is important for us in educational leadership. Much of what is developed for us within education generally, and in leadership studies in particular, comes from what Haidt would call the Left's pre-occupation with the two ethical focus areas of care (and not harm) and fairness (release from oppression). Yet our faith would suggest that what is good is more than this. Consideration of the 'the good' relates to the whole measure of living as we were meant to live, as described by the Creator of the Universe.

Before we consider a Biblical approach to leadership, we will take note of examples of the Haidt type of bias in the Australian educational scene.

THE PROBLEM OF QUOTING RESEARCH IN FINDING THE GOOD in EDUCATION

The first example is one of the background reports that was part of the Gonski report (a Federally commissioned review into education in Australia⁷). The other is the subsequent report by the following Federal Government into Australian Curriculum.

The Nous group were one of the think tanks and research groups who contributed significantly to the formulation of the Gonski report. Its report highlights the reductionist trend with social science research. For example, the Nous report had a research approach that used narrow and misleading statistical constructions to supposedly compare Australia with countries like South Korea and Finland. They neglected the differences in social context, and the social cost that has occurred in countries like South Korea in attempting to increase only the technical side of educational competency (while neglecting the relational and character developmental contexts).

Thus, Nous did not report that South Korea now have the highest level of youth suicide on the globe, and a special police group to monitor and close down late night tutorial centres. Singapore has similar difficulties (I was there recently and their leading newspaper had reports on the character struggle of their students two days in a row).

Similarly, the Nous report did not distinguish between correlation and causality within its presentation of statistical findings – and so its application of economic based solutions to liberal arts education is misplaced.

The report that reviewed the Australian Curriculum⁸ also identified patterns of selectivity (in the direction⁹ of the 'new elite', to quote Nick Cater⁹). One of its summary findings in the Executive Summary was that:

⁷ THE NOUS REPORT *Review of Funding for Schooling Panel Schooling Challenges and Opportunities*, 2011

Indeed, in the context of the Melbourne Declaration's aspiration that the national curriculum would enable students to understand the 'spiritual and moral' dimensions of life, there appears to be a distinct imbalance in the Australian Curriculum as these key aspects have been neglected. (p. 5)

Interestingly, the form of bias that was reported was not limited to content. The reviewers also noted that a certain approach to thinking about education (as described by Haidt above) could also have an impact on how things are taught:

As the Review progressed, it also became evident that the Australian Curriculum privileges certain learning styles and pedagogies. The curriculums for geography, history and science all privilege inquiry-based and student-centred teaching and learning. Such an approach is often associated with constructivism and a focus on skills and capabilities at the expense of essential knowledge and the need for explicit teaching of which direct instruction is one example. While the Reviewers are not suggesting that there is no place for inquiry-based learning in the classroom – indeed, all good teachers use a variety of pedagogical approaches – caution should be exercised so that certain pedagogies are not overly privileged or become the prevailing orthodoxy in comparison to other evidence-based approaches. (p.5)

How do we approach these types of issues ethically? Given the definitions cited at the start of this essay, we can extend this question into four areas:

1. What should we do as Christian educational leaders with this kind of information (our ethics)?
2. How do we monitor what we actually do in our schools with regard to such issues (our lived morality)?
3. In what areas do we have integrity between our ethics and morals?
4. In what areas are we hypocritical between our ethics and morals? And extension of this consideration is also the question 'in what areas are we simply uncritical in our thinking?'

We do not have time to explore all of these areas, and so for the rest of this paper, we will attempt to make a start in answering question 1 from one Biblical framework of understanding ethics that can apply to our everyday educational leadership.

WHAT BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS CAN WE TURN TO?

Are we made to live in a certain way, or are we not? CS Lewis, particularly in his prophetic work "The Abolition of Man" would clearly say "yes". So would authors of novels such as "Brave New World" and "A Canticle for Leibowitz".

⁸ *Review of the Australian Curriculum*, Federal Government, 2014

⁹ Nick Cater, *The Lucky Culture: and the Rise of an Australian Ruling Class*, Harper Collins 2013

I would suggest that these writers (like many before them, including Ancients like St Augustine) are reflecting the Biblical principle that there is a Creator who has shown us how we were meant to live.

However, we also live in an era where ethical issues are increasingly complex due to a combination of factors, two of which include rapid advances of technology and increased personal choice within relativised permissiveness. Here are some examples to demonstrate some of the complexities of our times:

- a. A single female staff member comes and tells you she is pregnant. Under what circumstances do you ask her to leave the school, or stay?
- b. A student and his parents say he used to be a boy, but is now functionally a girl. What is your school's response to such transsexual experiences and commitments?
- c. As an extension of this, a feminist colleague comes to you (maybe not from your school) and says she is upset because a transsexual male to female wants to come to her feminist activities – what advice do you give her?

I would suggest that the core Biblical principles from which we can *start* to consider these issues are given to us early in the text, and are then expounded (and thus confirmed) through the rest of the Old and New Testaments.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS CHALLENGES FOR LIFE – A SUMMARY

The assumption for this section is that the Decalogue (or the Ten Words, or Ten Commandments) is part of the graciousness of the Creator in revealing to His World, and to those made in His Image, how to live as He has made them to live. The Words are an aid to help us get back to Edenic relationship patterns. Eden was what life was like when we were in perfect fellowship with God, and therefore in shameless relationship with each other¹⁰.

However, when we decided to be like God by defining right and wrong for ourselves, we became moral competitors to each other¹¹, rather than comparable companions¹². God in His graciousness continued to walk with Adam and Eve and their family, but the relational fallout of our independent moral agency continued to interfere with the possibility of safety and care in our relationships. Such safety and care is the baseline for the adventure of human intimacy.

While God's Called People were then being established, trained and nurtured, they were given various instructions on how to live as it was intended for them to live. The need for this was twofold, at least. Firstly, there was (and is) the personal tendency towards self-definition of right and wrong, as noted above. Secondly, there was (and is) the constant pull of wanting to live the way 'everyone else does' – in the Old Testament context, that referred to the meaning making traditions and practices of the surrounding tribes and nations¹³.

¹⁰ Genesis 2:25

¹¹ Genesis 3:6-7

¹² Genesis 2:18-23

¹³ Even a cursory read of Numbers and Deuteronomy paints this picture clearly.

What is also assumed here is that these Words, often called the Moral Law, are not ways to earn one's reconciliation with the Creator. They are supposed to be the response to the gratefulness of Yahweh's faithfulness to the Covenant with His People¹⁴. The same is true in the New Testament, where the new Christians are to live in response to the New Covenant in Jesus Christ¹⁵. In both cases, it is clear that any of Yahweh's reconciled children are considered thus because of faith¹⁶.

How then are we to read these Words from God? Here are notes from Dr Klaus Bockmeuhl¹⁷ when he was teaching at Regent College, Vancouver:

Moral Law – this is the keystone/heart of Biblical law that is repeated and developed in the New Testament¹⁸. It reflects the heart of the Creator God in His intent in how we should live with Him and each other. It is summarised in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 and is called the *Decalogue* (the Ten Words of God). Even though it appears at first reading as mainly negative, it should be remembered that 'every moral act is at one and the same time a refraining from a contrary mode of action and an adoption of its opposite' (Walter Kaiser) – for example, refraining from murdering someone as an external act has as its equivalent not harbouring murderous thoughts internally (Matthew 5:21-22), plus praying for enemies (Matthew 5:43-44) and doing what one can to help anyone who needs it (Luke 10 – the story of the Good Samaritan).

All of the Old Testament Law was supposed to be on the hearts of the God loyal people. They were never intended to be simply shallow religious acts or a burden of religiosity (see Psalm 119 for an example: also Micah 6:6-8). This is what they became in practice (see Matthew 23).

Implications for understanding the Decalogue:

- a) Interpret each commandment with its purpose in mind.
i.e. what reflects the character of God in this aspect of life ?
- b) Take each as it applies to all of our lives.
i.e. internally (our hearts), externally (our actions), positively (the good works that God calls us to as a response to faith) and negatively (what we refrain from because it is not in the character of God).

That is, as it applies to our thoughts and actions, in what we refrain from and in what we actually do. This fuller use is what Jesus reminded people of in his explanation and application of the commandments of God in Matthew 5 & 6.

Application for our Educational Ethics

The first four of these commandments remind us what it is like to be right with God. These Words are the conceptual principles that Paul uses in Romans 1 and Ephesians 4 to explain

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 4

¹⁵ Romans 12:1-2

¹⁶ Hebrews 11

¹⁷ Lectures on Biblical Ethics, Regent College, 1987

¹⁸ E.g. Matthew 5:17ff, Matthew 15:4-6

that if we ignore the unseen reality of the knowledge (and presence) of the One and True Creator god, then our thinking becomes futile, and our lifestyles become less sensitive and ultimately reckless¹⁹. These Words therefore remind us as educational leaders that the starting point of our ethics is to ask the question “what is the purpose and focus of our educational endeavours and decision making – in the direction of the Creator, or not?”

These Words challenge us to remember that if we wish to live as Children of the Creator, our purpose is to help each other find their calling and hope in Christ. Our focus is to help each other grow more deeply in this understanding and our relationships with God and each other. In summary, they can be expressed as follows:

1. *Have No Other Gods* – Instead, in response to God’s salvation, Love Him through the renewing friendship of prayer. Or does our educational endeavour simply focus on getting ahead in some generic educational and work sense?
2. *Have No Idols* – Have Faith In God – we are not to become involved in any other distractions from loving Christ in our daily worship – which is how we live our daily lives. How is our decision making an example of worshipful faithful presence of the Spirit of Christ? Or does our decision making act on impulses of control (harsh use of justice) or sentiment (extreme and uneven mercy)?
3. *Do Not Misuse God’s Name* – we are to use God’s name well in calling in out to Him in distress, and praising Him in thanks for what He has done and is doing. Do we involve spiritual disciplines in our decision making? Or does our decision making simply reflect the usual marginalisation of God-ward reference and the minimisation or absence of spiritual disciplines?
4. *As Part of God’s Mercy, Remember the Sabbath* – rest for our souls, and not taking our own work too seriously, is the intent of this Word from God. Can we keep our need for achievement, and the achievement of our staff and students, in healthy balance with reference to the purpose of human life? Or does our decision making and personal patterns of life give implicit or explicit messages for non-stop work?

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¹⁹ Romans 1:16- 32; Ephesians 4:17-19

²⁰ Romans 1:16- 32; Ephesians 4:17-19

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The next part of the Ten Words helps us to learn how to live with each other. These principles of life help remind us as Christian educational leaders that teaching and learning is a relational enterprise. We are made to live with each other in certain ways. This can be called practical holiness. We are released, through these Words, to live freely within God’s intentions for us.

These next six will be generally summarised, and then compared to the findings of Haidt. It is up to each reader to consider if they think which emphasis is best for their educational ethics. The assumption for me in this essay is that the closer we are to the Words given to us from the Creator, then the closer we are to being light as leaders...:

5. *Honour your Parents* – this commandment extends through the rest of the Bible to teaching us to trust God’s Order in how he has established the need for authority in our lives – in the family, the church, and in civil life. Without people in our world who will exercise this proper authority, we become hurtful in our relationships with each other because we let our own needs (our personal ones or the ones of our ‘tribe’) dictate how we act.

Haidt dimension – Haidt says that conservative thinkers (and in this essay, I am also assuming leaders as thinkers) understand the role of authority. I am suggesting that what he is finding in his research about whether people accept those in authority, or only see authority as something to be cynical about, reflects this Word from the Creator to honour those in authority over us. Biblically, this authority is to be used properly (see Ezekiel 34, Matthew 10:1-21 and Ephesians 6:4 as examples). Haidt says that people on the ‘left’ of thinking carry mistrust towards authority because they believe it cannot be used properly.

6. *Do Not Murder* – instead, we are to do all we can to maintain life and to protect life. This is most clearly explicated by Jesus in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). This includes how we operate our economic, health and education systems as well as our police and armies.

Haidt dimension - Haidt says that one of the key moral values that he has discovered is whether people support the sanctity of life, or move towards a degradation of what it means to be human. This again seems to mirror this Word from the Creator. Those thinkers (and leaders) on the left have softer approach to the sanctity of life – for example, they are freer to accept levels of abortion and assisted suicide. Those more on the ‘right’ of thinking do not support these developments. However, those on the right can be blind to victims of authority and vested interest groups within authority structures.

7. *Do Not Commit Adultery* – instead, we are to protect and build marriages and families. The related principle is faithfulness – do we keep our Word as an act of integrity and honesty of heart before God? That is, if we say ‘yes’ to something, do we mean it?

Haidt dimension – Haidt has found what he calls the care versus harm dimension in his moral values framework. He sees it as one of the two the dominant values of those who identify as ‘left’ thinkers. These leaders place compassion and care (given as release from some kind of harm) above almost anything else. For example, those who support the redefinition of marriage do so, in this way of thinking, out of compassion for others. I take this as a form of ‘faithfulness’ to the object of the compassion which trumps any reference to other moral values such as sanctity of life. Interestingly, Haidt found that those on the ‘right’ side of thinking also accepted the need for care (faithfulness to the person), but with reference to the other moral values. Once again, I suggest that the tension about the priority of this value reflects the thumb print of the Creator’s Word to us, and our response to it. We need to consider the relative value of care in our leadership ethics if we wish to work towards helping our people live the way they were meant to live.

8. *You Shall Not Steal* – instead, we are to be accountable for our individual effort. This not only applies to how our efforts have an impact on us, but also our family and society – for we are to provide for our families, but then we are also to help the needy in our world (e.g. Ephesians 4:28).

Haidt dimension – this is about the third moral value that those on the ‘left’ see as important. It is described as whether people are being dealt with fairly in terms of what they deserve as victims. The ‘right’ tend to see this as people getting what they deserve according to their effort. Is this an ‘either/or’ situation, or a ‘both/and’ one?

9. *Give No False Witness* – instead of slandering other people, we are to speak helpfully and with encouragement, according to their needs (e.g. Ephesians 4:29). This is inside the courtroom and out of it; it is inside the church and outside the church; and it is inside our families and schools and outside of them.

Haidt dimension – Haidt uses a number of examples of politicians who appeal to loyalty when discussing the importance of certain national issues. All of these examples come from the political ‘right’. They appeal to the disappointment of loss of loyalty, which is betrayal. In this analysis, this corresponds to edifying others by thinking only the best of them (e.g. 1 Corinthians 13:7) rather than betraying their character. However, others note that ‘sticking with someone’ can also lead to ‘blind loyalty’. What discernment do we need in evaluating the difference between loyalty for loyalty’s sake, and simply stating what is true in any situation, with the people for whom we are responsible, in a way that helps them?

10. *Do Not Covet* – instead, we are to be content whether we have much or little. We are to learn to be generous in accordance with what God has given to us, to serve others in the love of Christ (e.g. 1 Peter 4:10-11). To do this we must pray and seek God’s will for our lives.

Haidt dimension – next to the care / harm value in the moral framework, Haidt has found the value of liberty against oppression the other main value that is important to those on the ‘left’. Biblically, not coveting is the basis for serving others. Genuine heart care of another is not possible if one wants something from them. However, for the ‘left’ thinkers, this care takes on the form of affording privilege to those who have been oppressed in some way. While the ‘right’ thinkers can be blinder to oppressive structures, they do have a sense of relieving oppression, but with sensitivity to not affording privilege beyond what people work to achieve. The Biblical challenge is to act in a compassionate way without focussing on partiality or greed (e.g. Leviticus 19:15, James 2:1-4, 1 Timothy 6:6-10).

SO WHAT REALLY IS THE DARK SIDE?

On the basis of seeing: the loss of certainty in our Western world in how to define good (our ethics); the pressure to ignore God in our daily public lives (our morality); and the inherent biases within the leadership of our academic worlds (our leadership centres); we can define the 'dark side' as anything in our leadership ethics that pushes aside the knowledge and presence of God in determining what is right and wrong for us and for those in our care. If we can recover the knowledge of His Words to us through the guidance of His Spirit²¹, then, and only then, we may more clearly lead in helping our people know how to live as they were made to live²².

²¹ John 16:13

²² Deuteronomy 30:11-30, Matthew 7:24-28, Romans 1, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

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Themes

Theology of Leadership, Leadership Ethics, Educational Leadership and the Dark Side

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