

Final Script Text for 2-12-09: Prepared for presentation concerning values to 100 Smittcamp Honor College students at California State University, Fresno on February 12, 2009.

Slide 1: *Remains on screen while setup and introduction are taking place.*

Rodemeyer: Dr. David Ross is the Acting Director of University 1, a professor of French, & a former associate dean of the graduate division. University 1 is an elective orientation course taken by 25% of new freshmen at Fresno State. Etc.

Ross: I wish to thank my colleague Dr. Rodemeyer for his invitation to share with you a Colloquium session and discussion concerning the important topic -- values. Please feel free to ask questions as they occur to you – at any time.

Slide 8: (it is viewed in several parts ... as are many of the slides)

--On screen: Your College Experience Ch. 15Values

--1. Students, please write your values on the piece of paper just handed out: anonymously; do not sign your name.

(A few minutes later, Ross collects the papers and reads a representative number aloud).

--2. Students usually write the same values ... (compare to Colloquium students' values)

Ross comments: If students are able to articulate their own values already, what remains in the lesson on values to explain? -- A lot! We need to define values and relate them to the educational process in college. Education involves the transformation of the nature of the individual: education means change. Education should even make a student feel uncomfortable at times. After four or five years on campus when a student receives a bachelor's diploma, he or she should not leave the university with the same ideas and all the same values as when he or she started studies at the university.

Slide 9:(screen message has three steps):

--3. "Gardner's purpose is to teach a broader notion of what is meant by values."

--4. "Gardner defines values as attitudes or beliefs that we choose and affirm with pride,

--and that we confirm by our actions and behavior."

Slide 10: (screen message has multiple steps):

--Garner's key points are:

--As a result of a university education students must realize from the start that:

--Very probably they will adopt some new values:

--They need to learn tolerance and acceptance of other's values in order to function well in a multiracial, multicultural, pluralistic, diverse, democratic society.

--They need to concern themselves with the common good of society and involve themselves in the resolution of social injustices, society's contradictions and value dualisms.

Ross comments: At the university students meet persons from many other ethnic and religious backgrounds. An educated person needs to accept and to value ethnic and cultural diversity. As educators we ask you to contribute in a positive and idealistic way toward the betterment of society in the Fresno community through volunteer community service activities, such as were highlighted in the Monday edition of the *Fresno Bee*: Volunteer activities, such as: Bulldog Pantry, Poverello House, Marjorie Mason Center. My students have such a requirement that makes up 15 per cent of their final course grades in university 1. A better world, more just, with fewer social problems, is possible. Educated persons should feel a need to step forward to provide leadership, and to contribute both time and money to community organizations, to Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Church associations, and others such as those named earlier – organizations that raise money to help the less fortunate among us in our community.

Slide 11: (screen message has several steps):

--The US is the World Leader in:

--Homicides perpetrated by minors

--Of the 18 most industrialized countries in the world, in the US one encounters:

The biggest gulf between rich and poor; a gulf that is expanding.

At least 14% of the US population has no health insurance coverage.

Ross comments: In a country that is fortunate to possess the extensive resources that the US does, it is shameful and obscene that widespread poverty exists. Educated persons should involve themselves as leaders in finding solutions to the problems associated with poverty.

Slide 12: (On screen: photo of a woman walking by a homeless person)

--(her private thoughts are): "I believe that if a person is poor it's because God wants him or her to be poor, and that if a person is rich, it is because God wants him or her to be rich."

Ross comments: The lady's opinion is fatalistic, and false. What would be a positive action that she could initiate? --Perhaps she could volunteer for or contribute money to an organization that assists the homeless.

Slide 13: The End of Poverty.

--**Ross comments:** Jeffrey Sachs is a recognized expert on the topic of world poverty. In his book he demonstrates that the richest countries could end poverty in the world if they only had the requisite political will power to do so.

Hi book also has a chapter which I highly recommend: it concerns the ideals we have inherited from the Eighteenth-Century period of the Enlightenment, which happens to be my own special area of scholarly interest and reflection. How is the Enlightenment related to fundamental US values?

Slide 14: The Enlightenment and Fundamental American Values: The Declaration of Independence (1776). Photo of Jefferson (the principal author), Franklin, and Adams. Comment: What principles (values) are included in the Declaration's "self-evident" truths?

--self-government (Not mentioned, but the fact of Declaring indep.)

--equality (All men are created equal and have the right to ...)

--life

--liberty

--&the pursuit of happiness.

Ross comments: What pointed critical remarks may we make concerning these fundamental values and ideas? (Pause for s.o. to answer). These values and rights were not extended to slaves, to native Americans (Amerindians), or to women. There has been progress on these issues over a period of 233 years, but the potential and promise of these ideals remain a work in progress, and there is more distance to go, isn't there?

Slide 15: (On screen: Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence).

--(Jeff's portrait appears)

--(the words "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" appear)

Ross comments: In our own time, where is there another politician, statesman and intellectual with President Jefferson's stature? –Could it be someone seated in this auditorium? Why not?

Slide 16: (On screen: The Constitution (1787), Preamble):

--Justice (the rule of law)

--Domestic tranquility

--National defense

--General welfare

--Liberty (individual)

Ross readtext of the Preamble to the US Constitution: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.

Ross comments: Our venerable Constitution established a political system capable in theory and in practice of correcting itself – even if improvement sometimes has been very slow. Of the basic values on the screen are there any unmet potentialities or problems? --Individual liberty historically has been greatly valued at the expense of the concept of general welfare or common good. This is the land of the "self-made man." Am I correct? Europe and Canada have developed more of a balance between individual freedom and social equality, their social "safety net" includes health coverage for everyone. What do you think of the European reality of mixed economies (socialism and capitalism combined) and universal health coverage?

Slide 17:(On screen: The Philadelphia Constitutional Convention):

--(photo appears)

Slide 18: The Bill of Rights (1791). Additional basic US values are expressed in the Bill of Rights:

--(Madison coin appears)

--(Freedoms appear one at a time): Freedom of speech, assembly, religion, petition; the right to bear arms & others ...

Ross completes the list: “freedom from unreasonable searches, self-incrimination, cruel and unusual punishment; the right to due process and to a speedy trial. **Ross comments:** Does anyone find any problems with these values? There is frequent debate over the meaning and interpretation of these rights, and the ones found earlier in the Declaration and the Preamble to the Constitution. If there is controversy, what does that mean?

Slide 19: Have the documents and events we have alluded to had an impact on other nations? Can you think of any?

Ross enumerates some examples: The American Revolution provided a model for revolt against a tyrannical monarchy: the 1789 Revolution in France was linked to the Revolution in America in which, ironically, the French crown had been involved in the supply of funds and weapons to the insurgent Americans. To our south in the early Nineteenth Century the colonies of New Spain revolted against the “mother country” and declared their independence following the US precedent.

Slide 20: The interpretation of fundamental American values continues and the discussion is often heated, dynamic, vital.

--(doctored photo of recent presidential candidates appears)

Slide 21: (On screen): *Our endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*.

--(title appears to right of book):

Ross reads: A book by former president Jimmy Carter, a man of integrity, a Christian intellectual, a moderate and a centrist. His book concerning endangered values took the recent Bush administration to task on the question of traditional values: The infusion of religion in politics, the preventative war in Iraq, the lack of respect for international treaties and human rights, and civil liberties.

Carter criticized the Bush administration for manipulating the so-called cultural debates for political gain: women's rights, abortion, and homosexuality.

Slide 22: The ideas of the Enlightenment produced our modern world.

--(Voltaire's photo appears)

Ross comments: The Enlightenment thinkers valued reason, humanism, tolerance, deism, and natural religion. They rejected all traditional authority and reexamined everything in the light of reason. The most progressive, democratic, moderate, secular and liberal countries today are those most influenced by Enlightenment values and ideals.

Slide 23:

--Rousseau and

--Diderot's photos (one appearing after the other)

Comment:two of the main figures of the Enlightenment, with Voltaire whose portrait is next ...

Slide 24: Candide

--Voltaire's portrait.

--Ross' edition, --(turns a flip!)

Comment: The Enlightenment is sometimes called the Age of Voltaire. How many have read Candide or Optimism by Voltaire? It is the most accessible masterpiece of the Enlightenment. (How many read my introduction to Candide that was handed out by Dr. Rodemeyer for you to read in preparation for this Colloquium?)

Side 25: Are there other values that we have not mentioned?

--What do you think? (these words appear slowly)

--(Photo of overweight individual + oversized hamburgers)

Comment: You can see where the American pursuit of happiness has led this individual: to obesity and a heart attack for certain. In the US there is an overwhelming preoccupation with individual well being.

Slide 26: Who earns more, professional athletes or teachers and professors?
What does this say about our society's values?

--(baseball player appears); --(prof Einstein appears).

Slide 27: Conclusions: From the beginning& for over 200 years the most important American values appear to be:

--Representative self-government

--Individual liberty

--The pursuit of happiness

--Concern for the general welfare.

Comment: Americans appear to value individual liberty more highly than collective social justice and equality.

Slide 28: (On screen: book "American Values: Opposing Viewpoints):

Comment: There is an excellent series called American Values, Opposing Viewpoints – Available at the library reference desk and located with "hot topics" books.

*****Slides 29-59

Comment: Let's go quickly over the sixteen questions* distributed to students to prepare for this Colloquium; I'll read questions and answers; please feel free to ask questions, add information, and so on.

*These are questions that I developed in teaching University 1;

My students (just as you Smittcamp Honor College students) were assigned to read chapter 15 in Gardner's "Your College experience: Strategies for Success," my introduction to "Candide or, Optimism," and the list of 16 questions:

Prepare for the Colloquium Concerning VALUES

February 12, MCL 121, 7:00 PM

- **Read Dr. Gardner's chapter: "Exploring Your Values."**
- **Read Dr. Ross' essay: " What Was the Enlightenment?"**
- **Write a brief statement in response to each of the following questions:**

1. What are values?

2. Are there positive values and negative values? Which are emphasized by Gardner?
3. Is there a relationship between one's values and one's behavior?
4. Where do values come from?
5. What is the "human condition" or "situation" and how are values related to it?
6. What are the different types of values?
7. How may values change in the process of education, especially at the post-secondary level?
8. What do you suppose Dr. Ross's values are as a professor and an intellectual?
9. What do you consider the fundamental values of American society to be?
10. What are the liberal, humanistic, secular values of the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment enshrined in the US Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights?
11. College educated persons usually become more tolerant of others' values. Why is this beneficial to society?
12. What does Gardner mean by "cultural relativism?" What do you think?
13. Are there reasonable or even necessary limits to tolerance?
14. What "value dualisms" or apparent contradictions in US society does Gardner mention?
15. What is the chief difference between an American and a European interpretation of liberty and freedom?
16. Do you think that there may be -- in considering universal human values -- a middle ground upon which moderate to progressive Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, humanists, agnostics, atheists and others can agree? What about the following?:
Protecting democracy, civil liberties, civil rights, human rights, women's rights, the environment, planetary sustainability; working for peace; ending poverty, colonialism, racism, homophobia, and the growing gap between rich and poor nationally and globally.

Identify any of the foregoing issues to which you cannot subscribe and explain why: