

2021 Year in Review

Introduction

The most important work of the Caux Round Table in 2021 began accidentally in late 2018. While working with a local imam here in Minnesota, we became aware of certain covenants with Christian communities made by the Prophet Muhammad during his ministry. In these covenants, the Prophet used what we would call the “moral sense,” inherent in all persons, to offer those Christian communities respect and protection. Since these covenants seemed to validate the foundational ideals of both moral capitalism and moral government – concern for others and faithful stewardship in our personal and official uses of power – and since both distinguished Muslim scholars and Christian intellectuals were part of our network, the Caux Round Table decided to lend its good offices to a study project seeking to learn more about these covenants of the Prophet.

In February, 2021, we released a report on the covenants explaining their history, analyzing their provisions and commenting on their relevance to today’s global community. We were extremely honored to receive a note of warm thanks from Pope Francis for this collaborative, scholarly undertaking. You may read the report here: (*add link*)

During 2021, a small group drafted a proposed community compact to apply the interfaith precedent of the covenants of the Prophet to today’s Christian and Muslim congregations. That draft has encouraged Christian and Muslim leaders to reach out to each other in Iraq and Lebanon.

Our drafting group also shared suggested language based on the spirit of the covenants of the Prophet, as reflected in harmonious passages from Qur’anic and Biblical scripture with the offices of Pope Francis and the Grand Ayatollah Sistani prior to the Pope’s visit with the Grand Ayatollah in Najaf, Iraq.

Our response to the conditions of the pandemic was twofold: first, to use internet technology to bring people together in dialogue remotely over Zoom protocols and secondly, to double-down on the importance of ideas as change-makers. When anxiety and uncertainty unsettle our hopes and plans, good thinking is needed as the most important pre-condition for taking successful action and inspiring leadership. We perceived that good thinking seems to solidify moral resolve and so contributes to courage and the assumption of personal responsibility, without which there can be no leadership. I was often reminded keeping up with the news and listening to our round table discussions of the sound advice given in the Biblical book of Proverbs: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18)

With distractions arising from the pandemic, we were not able to convene a Global Dialogue in

2021, nor were we able to make a Dayton Award for distinctive leadership in moral capitalism in Minnesota.

Given the cultural tensions over the continuing alienation of many African Americans from middle class wealth and educational achievement in the U.S., the Caux Round Table proposed taking a new approach to the economic “elevation” of some 56% of Americans of African descent, about 4% of the entire population, who make do as best they can with incomes and wealth below middle class expectations. The Caux Round Table recommended a focus on social and human capital formation and accumulation within the African American community with new concern for families, early childhood education and improvement in public schooling. Our recommendations were published in the June issue of our newsletter, *Pegasus*.

Also in the U.S., in response to concerns for ineffective and, at times, dysfunctional policing with respect to African Americans and their inner cities communities, the Caux Round Table brought forth in Minnesota the fundamental ideal of its ethical principle for moral government – that a public office is a public trust. We convened a workshop with law enforcement and community leaders to consider the better integration of policing and community values around such standards as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility and personal integrity.

For-profit Proposal

The pandemic caused difficulties in executing the existing business model of the Caux Round Table – the focus of our work on in-person round tables to develop new understandings of the integration of moral concern with the economic side of capitalism and the authoritarian nature of government. We also perceived a turning point in history with our contemporary era being one of transition from a post-World War II order of de-colonization, modernization of traditional societies, the growth of an interconnected world with the internationalization of manufacturing, trade and finance to something qualitatively different, but, as yet, ill-defined and unstructured.

We witnessed elite failures, the rise of populist nationalisms, the fragmenting of comity and relevance of international organizations and a growing lack of trust in institutions and leaders.

As one of our advisers succinctly put it: “Everyone senses that we are at the end of an era. No one knows exactly what is coming, so they do today only what they did yesterday.”

In looking at new options and directions, we have started to explore adding an educational capacity to our work. We are thinking of offering online certificates in moral capitalism and moral government, short modules of about 15 minutes each, posted on a special website, along with readings and examinations, which can be aggregated into a curriculum suitable for the award of a certificate of educational achievement.

Special Initiatives

During 2021, to adapt to the distance learning modalities of the Covid pandemic, the Caux Round Table initiated a number of special projects.

Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad with Christian Communities

The Caux Round Table published a report in February 2021 on the covenants, given in his lifetime, by the Prophet Muhammad to respect and protect specific Christian communities.

Code of Ethics for Social Media

The Caux Round Table proposed application of its principles to dysfunctional sectors of American society by proposing codes of ethics for those who are empowered to use social media, serve as teachers in public schools and work as journalists for media businesses.

Social media seems to have evolved into an unseemly and unhealthy concatenation of uncensored emotions, disparagements, narcissistic meanness, unnuanced accusations and alleged misinformation and disinformation. Some call for regulation of social media content by the private sector platforms which provide it to users. But the power unleashed by social media is, in fact, not exercised by the platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and TikTok, but by individual users. Should they not be held accountable for what they say and post? Should not ethics apply to their choices of how to use social media?

Code of Ethics for Teachers

In the U.S., efforts to change going forward past dynamics of marginalization and ostracism of African Americans justified by prejudicial racial stereotyping have brought higher use of racism, this time stereotyping white-skinned Americans, into schools in application of an ideology called critical race theory. Such teaching raises the ethical question of what are the duties of teachers? Those who are hired by the government to teach in public schools hold offices of public trust. As trustees for their students, are not teachers under a fiduciary obligation not to impose their personal values and preferences on students?

To focus attention on the responsibilities of public school teachers, the Caux Round Table drafted a proposed code of ethics for teachers.

Code of Ethics for Journalists

Fourth and also in the U.S., media companies have evolved away from journalism as a profession to entertainment as a profitable business. Newspapers like the New York Times and Washington Post and television channels like Fox and CNN “play” to segmented audiences. To build audience appeal and so increase their revenues from subscriptions or advertising, media companies are less and less objective and more and more biased, using appeals to emotions and prejudices to attract the attention and loyalty of readers and viewers.

Thus, media companies have newly brought themselves within the decision-making purview of business ethics. A code of ethics different from the old codes applicable to professional journalists is now necessary. The Caux Round Table has stepped up to suggest just such a code.

Code of Ethics for Artificial Intelligence

Also in 2021, as interest in commercialization of artificial intelligence grew and its possible misuse by governments became a concern, the Caux Round Table drafted a code of ethics for those who use such programs.

Networking Leadership Breakfasts in St. Paul

In an application of Caux Round Table’s new approach to wealth creation emphasizing social and human capitals, we obtained a grant for a pilot project in St. Paul, Minnesota to revive regular, informal networking breakfasts for prominent stakeholders in business, neighborhoods, politics, ethnic communities, charities, religious communities and the arts. We believe that intentionally stimulating networking will improve social capital stocks in the city, as stakeholders come to trust one another, more and more. Improved social capital stocks will contribute to better governance and more economic development. Vibrant social capital will, we believe, accelerate enhancement of human capital, individual by individual. Individuals, then, will be more willing and able to build additional social capital in a virtuous cycle of improvement in community well-being.

Pegasus

We published 12 issues of our monthly newsletter, *Pegasus*, in 2021.

The essays addressed current economic and social concerns linked to a deeper intellectual context and broader cultural perspectives. The articles served and continue to function as discussion starters among citizens, information reservoirs to be used in building personal and institutional rationales and moral criteria for evaluating institutional and personal behavior in the process of creating wealth (excellence).

In the teeth of the pandemic, *Pegasus* tackled issues of how different questions from science, literature and philosophy might be used in calculating wealth assets and their valuations. And, of course, the largest issues of the year – truth – was addressed, as well as the fear that our institutions were atrophying. Our December issue was particularly insightful, as it captured the moral depth of first graders, as they expressed gratitude in both pictures and words – from the mouth of babes.

Here's a selection of readers' favorites:

- From the January issue, these two pieces on the pandemic, including reflections from our fellows, stood out:
 - "Pandemics: The Stakeholders' Dilemma" by Richard Broderick
 - "Quo Vadis, World?" by Richard Broderick

- The entire April edition was on the issue of entropy:
 - "An Important Advantage of Ethics: Optimizing Entropy in the Self-System" by Stephen B. Young
 - "QAnon, One of Entropy's Political Faces" by Rich Broderick
 - "On Entropy: The Second Law of Thermodynamics – Application for the Good Life" by Michael Hartoonian

- The June issue addressed historical economic inequities:
 - "A Caux Round Table Proposal: Addressing an Historic Disparity in Accessing Capital Assets" by Stephen B. Young

- The November edition was devoted to truth:
 - "An Epistemology of Truth" by Michael Hartoonian
 - "Company Truth" by Stephen B. Young
 - "The Genealogy of Truth" by Stephen B. Young
 - "Opioids and Truth" by Stephen B. Young
 - "Self-truth: Real or Imagined?" by Stephen B. Young

*** All the issues from the year can be found [here](#). (*add link*)

Zoom and In-person Round Tables

We held a number of Zoom and in-person round table events throughout the year, including:

- Strength of Our Constitutional Republic (Zoom)
- Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad with Christian Communities (Zoom)
- American Crisis (Zoom)
- The Coronavirus: One Year On (in-person)
- High Tech and Moral Capitalism (Zoom)
- Infrastructure: A Public Good or Private Good? (in-person)
- How Can the Caux Round Table Principles Help Solve Global Warming? (in-person)
- How Deleterious for Social and Human Capitals is Social Media? (in-person)
- Are Journalists Responsible for Telling the Truth? (in-person)
- Brad DeVos of the American Institute for Economic Research (Zoom)
- Klaus Leisinger on his new book, *Integrity in Business and Society* (Zoom)
- Program on community policing (in-person)

Books

We published a book, *Integrity in Business and Society*, by our colleague, Klaus Leisinger, and put together another book on the American crisis, which will be published in 2022.

Fellows of the Caux Round Table

The Fellows of the Caux Round Table play a most important role in the intellectual health of the think tank. They provide substance and direction, without which, we would be rudderless in a sea made turbulent by the vagaries of political popularity. Understanding, reconciling and balancing conflicting ideals of life, democracy and moral capitalism are the joys and work of the Fellows and their contributions to the content of the Caux Round Table are beyond measure.

We held quarterly round tables via Zoom with the Fellows.

New Fellows Appointed

Several new Fellows were appointed throughout the year, including Mary Gentile, Creator/ Director of Giving Voice to Values and the Richard M. Waitzer Bicentennial Professor of Ethics at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business; Richard Bents, Partner at Future Systems Consulting, Inc.; Matt Bostrom, President of the Center for Values-Based Initiatives and former Sheriff of Ramsey County, Minnesota, the state's second most populous county; Anil Sakya, Honorary Rector of the World Buddhist University in Bangkok, Thailand; and John Dalla Costa, Founding Director of the Centre for Ethical Orientation.

The complete list of Fellows can be found below.

Email Notices

Email notices on relevant and timely topics were sent out two to three times a week throughout the year.

Website and Social Media

Our website received tens of thousands of hits throughout the year. Our Twitter and Facebook pages were updated, on average, 5 to 10 ten times a week and we released several videos on YouTube every month. We have 159 videos currently which, combined, have thousands of views.

Networking

We developed relationships with congenial groups as a way to reach new audiences with our work. Those organizations included the American Institute for Economic Research, State Policy Network, Atlas Network, Council for Inclusive Capitalism and Impact Economy Foundation.

Leadership

Board of Directors:

Brad Anderson, Chairman – United States
Devry Boughner Vorwerk – United States
Doran Hunter – United States
Mark Ritchie – United States
Steve Young – United States

Advisory Council:

Brian Atwood – United States

Daniel Brennan – United Kingdom
Karel Noordzy – The Netherlands
Anand Panyarachun – Thailand
Noel Purcell – Australia
Heribert Schmitz – Germany
Frank Straub – Germany
Herman Wijffels – The Netherlands
Domingo Sugranyes Bickel – Spain

Senior Fellows:

Ronald Baukol – United States
Kevin Cashman – United States
Morihsa Kaneko – Japan
Bob MacGregor – United States
Fred Senn – United States

Fellows:

Abdullah Al-Ahsan - Malaysia
Michael Bates – United Kingdom
Richard Bents – United States
Matt Bostrom – United States
Yury Blagov – Russia
Isabella Bunn – United Kingdom
John Dalla Costa – Italy
Jose Luis Fernandez Fernandez – Spain
Mary Gentile – United States
Michael Hartoonian – United States
Arkady Izvekov – Russia
Stephen Jordan – United States
John Knapp – United States
Michael Labrosse – United States
Alexandra Lajoux – United States
Baocheng Liu – China
Alistair Macdonald Radcliff – United Kingdom
Ibrahim Mohamed Zain – Malaysia
Lester Myers – United States
Chris Pierce – United Kingdom
Steven Pyser – United States
Anil Sakya – Thailand
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Kazuhiko Togo – Japan
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