

Today's morals hold next century hostage

Speaker says shared values to save world

By John Fulwider
Staff Reporter

Global survival in the 21st century will depend on a shared set of core values, said the president and founder of the Institute for Global Ethics at a lecture Tuesday.

Rushworth Kidder, the first lecturer in the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues lecture series, gave a lecture entitled "Shared Values, Troubled Times: Global Ethics for the 21st Century" at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

During the lecture, Kidder focused on the Institute for Global Ethics' search for common values and ethical standards around the world.

Kidder said the world can't survive the next century with the 20th century ethics.

The nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986 proved that, he said. Two electrical engineers who were performing an unauthorized experiment to shut down a reactor caused the accident, he said.

The engineers bypassed six computer fail-safes, locked valves in the open position and held other workers at gunpoint, he said. Kidder called their actions "deliberate, calculated and unconscionable."

The engineers were "bright, working in a large scale system and amoral."

Of those factors, Kidder said only morality could be controlled.

The engineer's actions during the Chernobyl accidents showed the effect of technology on morality, he said. Disasters such as Chernobyl and the Exxon Valdez oil spill wouldn't have happened in the 19th century, he said.

The technology of the time did not allow a ship to carry enough contaminants to cause a disaster anywhere near the scale of the oil spill near Prince William Sound.

The potential for disasters caused by immoral actions will become even greater in the 21st century, he said, making it important to find a common moral ground.

Kidder said that many university students often choose unethical actions.

Studies show university students are dishonest, he said. One survey found that 76 percent of business graduate students lied to get into graduate school.

That doesn't make much of a formula for business success, he said.

Kidder gave two definitions for ethics and morality.

The first, "obedience to the unenforceable," dealt with the difference between ethics and law. He said a person's ethics determine what he would or would not consider doing.

For example, ethics prevented people from elbowing aside an elderly lady in the supermarket to take the last shopping cart, he said.

But when ethics fail, law fills the void, he said. Society is becoming more regulated by laws, he said, because ethics are declining.

He said the second definition was "a question of right versus right."

Great ethical dilemmas stem not from questions of right versus wrong, he said. Instead, they emerge from a choice between two things that seem equally right, such as justice and mercy, Kidder said.



Rushworth Kidder, the former senior editor of the Christian Science Monitor, talks with Chancellor Graham Spanier during a reception at the Lied Center for Performing Arts Tuesday afternoon. Later, Kidder spoke about global ethics as part of the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues.

Gerik Parmelo/DN

Kidder said it was difficult to solve problems of ethics by teaching students and others about it because of disagreement about what ethics should be taught.

"We are all so intensely individualistic, that there is no sense of common values," he said.

In his research, Kidder said he found eight universally agreed upon

values: truth, love, freedom, fairness, unity, tolerance, responsibility and respect for life.

Those values came from a survey he gave that allowed participants to choose definitions for values. Kidder said he found a majority of those who took the survey agreed on the definitions of five of the eight values.

Kidder concluded his lecture by saying that ethics and morality will be very important in determining the world's survival.

"If we are to survive the 21st century, it will be because ... we are already moving toward a much clearer sense of what the core, shared values are going to be as we get into that 21st century," he said.

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BACK INTO SUCCESS WITH NSE

Proud pigsty dwellers may roll in dough

From Staff Reports

Milton Bradley is rewarding students for being sloppy. The company is sponsoring a search for the messiest residence hall room on college campuses across the country.

The contest is a promotion for a Milton Bradley card game called "Pass the Pigs."

Entrants must be nominated by their resident assistant. The grand prize winner will receive \$1,000, a professional room cleaning,

an on-campus party for 100 friends and a Milton Bradley prize pack. The person who nominates the grand prize winner also will receive \$1,000.

Additional winners will be chosen from each state and will receive a "Pass the Pigs" game and T-shirt.

To enter, applicants should contact Milton Bradley for the address and send a 4-by-6-inch photograph of their room and a brief paragraph explaining why they are proud of their pigsty.

Entries must be postmarked by Nov. 1.

Autopsy

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concern about the incident.

Monzon said he thought some good would come from the tragedy.

"I think that there will be more awareness to the needs of Hispanics and minorities in Lincoln, Nebraska," he said.

He said Renteria's death and the ensuing response that came from the Hispanic and Lincoln community would make society pay more attention to minorities.

"We have a voice in this society," he said, "and we will not be taken for granted."

He said the Renteria family appreciated the community support. The family was planning to hold a funeral for Renteria Thursday, he said.

Renteria's death also sparked a response from the UNL community.

Chancellor Graham Spanier announced Monday a committee would investigate the University Police Department's role in the incident. The four-member faculty committee will review police policies and procedures that are relevant to the case.

William Lewis, who was appointed by Spanier to lead the committee, said he hoped the committee's investigation would be completed within two weeks.

"We will do our best to be timely," Lewis said Tuesday.

Lewis, who is the chairman of the department of mathematics and statistics, said committee members were trying to take time from their busy schedules to pursue the investigation. The committee planned to meet two or three times this week, he said.

Lewis said the committee would begin its

investigation by reviewing the policies and procedures of the University Police Department. He said that included looking into how the department trained and assigned tasks to officers.

Then, Lewis said, the committee would investigate the University Police Department's role in the incident. He said the committee would begin that part of the investigation by interviewing University Police Chief Ken Cauble.

Lewis said Spanier assured the committee that it would have access to any campus information regarding the incident. He said that probably meant the committee would have access to university police records.

The committee would not seek information about the incident from the Lincoln Police Department, Lewis said.

"That's clearly outside of the job we've been asked to do," he said. "The chancellor has asked us to look at the matter from the perspective of the university."

Lewis, who has been at UNL since 1971, said he thought Spanier chose him to lead the committee because he had represented UNL faculty as president of the faculty senate and as president of Lincoln's chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

Spanier probably chose the other committee members because they also had represented UNL faculty, he said.

"He wanted people who would carefully, honestly and independently look at what happened," Lewis said.

Other members of the committee are Teresita Aguilar, associate professor and vice chairwoman of the department of curriculum and instruction; Christina Brantner, associate professor of modern languages and literature; and Ronald Ross, associate director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity.