
EDITORIAL OBSERVATIONS

By Thomas D. Lynch

This issue of GVER consists of three articles and one book review. The issue begins with Jack Kem addressing the public policy issue of the appropriateness of the federal government supporting faith based initiatives. Next, the issue turns to Jonathan Anderson's satire that helps us appreciate the relationship of doing the public's business and the important subject of the meaning of life. The final article for the issue is written by Stephen L. Esquith, who addresses the ethical subject of corporate reparations for such past acts as slavery and genocide. The issue ends with Sandra J. Reinke presenting a movie review of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, which she notes stresses the role of virtue ethics in human decision-making.

Jack Kem, from the Department of Public Administration, North Carolina State University, wrote "Weighed and Found Wanting: Finding the Proper Balance Between Faith-Based Organizations and Government." In particular, he addressed President Bush's new Faith-Based Initiative. He notes that views vary on this topic. Some see the need for partnering with faith-based organizations as a natural use of existing stable organizations to provide much-needed social programs throughout the country. In contrast, others see this initiative as a dangerous precedent that crosses a distinct line between church and state. He explores the important ethics related to this public policy subject. He sheds light on the subject by examining the life of Daniel mentioned in the Jewish Bible and thus notes the danger of this new policy.

Jonathan Anderson, from the Department of Public Administration, University of Alaska Southeast, wrote "A Modest Proposal on 'The Meaning of Life'", which is a satire building on the work of Jonathan Swift. He posits that Public Administration facilitates "The Meaning of Life." His first section locates personal "meaning" in individual empowerment and concludes that this empowerment is best achieved through a democratic system of collective action. His second section asserts the definitional boundaries of Public Administration should be drawn to include the democratic political system, which

controls decision making and shapes implementation. Public administration, as the field that addresses the implementation of democratic collective action, facilitates the Meaning of Life!

Stephen L. Esquith, from the Department of Philosophy at Michigan State University wrote "Corporate Responsibility for Reparations." He notes that corporations benefited from such actions as the Holocaust and slavery in America. Thus, he examines the ethical question of those corporations paying reparations. By clarifying these responsibilities and considering possible ways in which reparations could be made, he sheds light on the inter-dependence of genocide and slavery. Esquith notes that corporations argue that they were usually innocent bystanders to genocide and slavery or else coerced to participate against their will. He declares that such arguments may be comforting but they are not realistic excuses. He stress that such a view does not capture the complex way in which responsibility depends upon future benefits as well as past deeds.

Saundra J. Reinke, from the Department of Political Science, Augusta State University, wrote a movie review of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. J. R. R. Tolkien's epic tale of good and evil has finally made it to the big screen and Reinke reviews the first installment, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. It opened to rave reviews and huge audiences nationwide. Her review examines how the movie portrays and resolves ethical dilemmas as the movie is rich with scenes depicting ethical decision-making. In several memorable scenes, the deontological, utilitarian and virtue ethics approaches to ethical decision-making are contrasted. She notes that Tolkien has a preference for the virtue ethics approach and this preference remains quite clear in the movie.