



“What exactly is a Roundtable?”

Toronto Ethics Roundtable – October 27, 2009

I am taking this opportunity to spend a couple of minutes to explain a little bit about the history of the Roundtable and why this has relevance here.

The concept of the Roundtable comes from the Arthurian legend, and his knights of the Roundtable. This is a concept of equality among all of the participants. Although Arthur presided at the meeting everyone had equal access to speak.

Just for the record, according to my very basic research, the character of Arthur is based upon a real person – a retired Roman General who was living in the Roman Province of Briton. When Germanic barbarians invaded after the regular Roman troops went to defend Rome, this Roman “Arthur” coordinated the defence of Briton through a number of retired Roman army officers. “Arthur” selected a round table to indicate the accessibility for every one of the officers.

Lately, there has been a growing trend to rid the language of the term “roundtable” utilizing the term “round table.” Just because there is a physical round table has little to do with the concept of the equality of the roundtable.

I find myself at odds with the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* since I believe that the one word “roundtable” relates to the Arthurian concept conciliarity. In our facility there are numerous round tables. There is no direct correlation between the style of the table (i.e., round) and the conciliar ideal of the roundtable.

Why does the professional Association of Certified General Ethicists invite non-members to contribute?

First, Certified General Ethicists recognize that all stakeholders are responsible for ethics in any enterprise.

Second, you are here because you know that ethics is important. You would not be here if you did not see any benefit to ethical standards.

Third, many professional associations do not have the high standards of CGE yet CGE recognizes the significant contribution by the ethical standards and data provided by these professional associations. These professionals have appropriate education for their particular situation. For many, ongoing professional development is an extremely important component, since they are involved with fast-paced change.

The Association of the Certified General Ethicists decided to undertake the development of Roundtables since they saw the validity of ongoing dialogue with the numerous stakeholders.

Let me take a minute or so to explain why Certified General Ethicists require a doctorate as their basic standard.

First, there are numerous ethical categories that require a tremendous amount of knowledge and understanding.

Second, most of the ethical categories have been around for a great period of time. Consequently, there is a massive amount of data related to and interpretations of each category.

Third, there are numerous contradictory views in many of the ethical categories that require clarification. It is impossible for any enterprise to have opposing ethical categories within its structure.

Let me state my conflict of interest prior to further information about ethical categories. I am the chief advocate of the Theanthropic Ethical category. This is one of the few scientifically-based ethical categories.

Over the past centuries there have been ethical categories within the group of the Divine Command Theory.

During the period of the Industrial Revolution and beyond there were a new brand of ethical categories, such as Utilitarian.

As professions developed in the nineteenth century through today, there was the recognition that members required ethical standards to maintain order within their respective profession.

All ethical categories have relevance. Our Association will attempt to rectify any apparent demarcations within our profession, just as the accounting profession did a century ago.

Now, let us return to the Roundtable.

This is your opportunity to contribute your perceptions about any aspect of ethics, ethical standards, or ethical categories.

You are invited to participate in the Roundtable, since CGE believes that everyone is a stakeholder in ethics.

In Canada, you have input to the ethics of every jurisdiction; whether this is a city, such as Toronto; a province, or for Canada. Canadians have a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to express, directly or indirectly, in any governmental jurisdiction. This may be observed in elections, but there are other times as well.

This Roundtable can allow various stakeholders to present their concerns about unethical situations that could and should be addressed at a Roundtable.

Each Roundtable will commence with a short, eight to ten minute presentation. This will allow you to contribute your ethical views or concerns to all participants in the Roundtable.

With the participation of Certified General Ethicists, you will have the opportunity to have professional input at no cost to you. You will begin to realize that CGEs are not "ivory tower" types.

Over the months and years, we will have significant opportunities to have a better appreciation of the numerous ethical categories and standards.

Roundtables will give all of access to incredible amount of data, and expertise that you would probably have no idea that exists.

One of the important realities here is that the Roundtable is an important development in the Association of Certified General Ethicists. We are proud to be the first Roundtable in this Association.

A Roundtable must have at least access to one Certified General Ethicist in order to be registered with the Association.

The goal may be the establishment of a CGE Chapter, but there will always be a Roundtable open to numerous stakeholders. Our Association does not require that you be an expert in ethics.

This has been built into the material provided by our Association in the establishment of Chapters.

One of the stakeholders is a Certified General Accountant who maintains high ethical standards in her profession. Certified General Accountants maintain very high ethical standards for their profession.

As a stakeholder, access to CGE members can prove to be invaluable. You can request input without obligation from a number of ethicists as the Ethics Roundtable grows.

For instance, there are services and products available from the Ethics Institute offered for your appraisal here today.

Your Enterprise has the opportunity to bring material about what you do professionally. There is no charge during the first year of our abbreviated year.

At a future Roundtable, perhaps you will have the privilege of presiding at a Roundtable on one of these topics.

In fact, next month, Captain John Murray of the Salvation Army will be presiding at the December Roundtable. The Salvation Army operates the Ethics Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In addition, Christmas is virtually synonymous with the Salvation Army and their work for the less fortunate children. This reality is their ethics.

Every stakeholder is important to the Toronto Ethics Roundtable. This is an official Roundtable in Association of Certified General Ethicists.

Now, as a Roundtable let us communicate with one another in this tremendous forum.