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# Good governance

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**T**HERE is a third value that almost invariably comes up. It comes under many different names: a few call it "no corruption"; others refer to it as "being graft-free"; still many others insist on "integrity and dutiful service." However, given the recent fad for "good governance," most would opt for this terminology, when made to see that "no corruption," "freedom from graft," "integrity and dutiful service" are all included under "good governance."

The fact is that "good governance" covers a wide ground indeed, and three other constituent values have been appended to it. These are:

- **Fairness:** We have to render to everyone what is due to them, e.g. ordinary citizens have to be given the dutiful service they are entitled to.
- **Transparency:** The more sunshine comes into our transactions, the less dirt and the fewer germs can thrive in them. Thus, the need for disclosure, following standards and conventions.
- **Accountability:** Everyone has a set of duties and performance commitments, and they should be held accountable for living up to them professionally and diligently.

While these three terms are generally appended to "governance," there is a fourth that everyone takes

for granted as being fundamental to it, and this is "responsibility," or better "social responsibility." It is no longer enough to be responsible for carrying out one's duties and delivering on one's commitments; it is also necessary to do so with a deep and operative regard for the "common good" or the good of the general public, the entire community, or even the whole nation.

Given the many good things that good governance covers and embraces, it is difficult for many not to include it among the core values they choose. But those who actually do, often need to be reminded that "good governance" is not just a nice-sounding phrase, which has caught

the attention of many; it also makes very stringent demands. It actually asks for them to take time out and think deeply about the core values they profess and commit to adhere to in actual practice. It asks them to be very clear about the mission they have to pursue and carry out, time in and time out, as well as the vision they set for actual realization within a definite time table (with a deadline set for a few years down the road). Then, there are road maps and performance scorecards, and regular reporting of performance using those scorecards. The whole governance business can get very involved and engaging. It can be very bloody, entailing a lot of "nose bleed." Given the time and ef-

fort spent on it, it must deliver real, genuine, game-changing, transformative results.

Does it actually do so in the real world? The evidence suggests that for those who are serious about observing the discipline of governance, the results can be real and visible after some time. Low-lying fruits can be harvested almost immediately (i.e. within a year or even over a shorter period of time). But results of the genuinely game-changing type may take some time; However, again as many experiences show, more than half the fun is in actually getting there, since many significant milestones are reached and passed on the road along the governance pathway.

For every fad, there are skeptics. In fact, governance has to be subjected to a lot of skepticism, especially in our context (the Philippine), simply because given where we have been coming from, good governance sounds to be too good to be true. For more than a few, it is a pipe dream; for others who have become jaded by so much graft and corruption they see every day, they have taken on a defeatist attitude that the system can never be reformed. But this is where the idea of a core value comes in: It may not be a reality today; but the hope and expectation is for it to prevail sometime in the future, if we strive and struggle to shape that future accordingly.

\* VALUES  
\* GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL  
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