

## WHAT IS ETHICS?

What is ethics? Many years ago in a Paris Lecture, the great humanitarian and philosopher, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, offered this definition. He said, "Ethics is the name we give to our Concern for good behavior. We feel an obligation to consider not only our own personal well-being. But that of others and of society as a whole."

Not a bad definition, for a philosopher. Good behavior. A felt sense of obligation for others.

Ethics is in the news constantly, but it seems always to be the *lack of ethics*—on Capitol Hill, on Wall Street, in our cities, in our homes. Good Behavior and a sense of obligation Get displaced by greed and meanness of spirit.

Yet ethics is a beneficial and natural mode of behavior—for the individual as well as for Society. When people accept responsibility for their own conduct and for the well being of others, ethics serves to stabilize society.

Simple honesty is an illuminating agent, throwing a light on the real problems so they can be solved. Then our resources can be use more efficiently and effectively. And honesty breeds faith and confidence—in one another and in our institutions.

What is ethics? Ethics is the antidote to the despair and cynicism that is crushing our spirit and clouding the future. Ethics is our hope

For Ethics at Work, this is Gary Edwards,