

*EXTRACT OF PRESENTATIONS*

## CONVERGENCE OF SCIENCE, ARTS, AND DIPLOMACY

### THE ROLE OF OUR YOUTH

BY

J. Edsel Edmunds\*

I am pleased to address this distinguished multidisciplinary gathering on a subject of equal multidisciplinary content. I hope it will stimulate your thought processes on my journey as I ponder on the subject in its different expressions as a scientist, artist, and published poet within the context of the challenging world of diplomacy in which I was immersed over many years and my engagement with our youth, leaders of today and tomorrow.

For those of you who never found it necessary to deal with microscopic organisms, I am pleased to inform you that my doctoral thesis was in the field of phytonematology. Since few of you may not be familiar with this field of science, permit me to introduce you to this discipline of study, little known to the rest of our civilized world. It is the study of microscopic worms, microscopic organisms which damage plants, their interaction with one another and other organisms and the damage they inflict on plants.

The question usually posed to me is, how did I converge from nematology to diplomacy. My reply is, that while nematology is the study of microscopic organisms in their different environments, diplomacy is the study of macroscopic organisms (human forms), their interaction with each other, and the damage they cause to humanity and how to control or avert that damage.

On a personal note, I take advantage of this august audience to mention in passing, that I reached the pinnacle of my scientific career when a British scientist discovered a nematode which had not been previously described. He requested my permission to name it after me as a tribute to my contribution to the field. He named it Longidorus edmundsi. I did not like the looks of this worm but accepted

this tribute as the highest accolade a scientist could have conferred upon him – an organism carrying his name.

Those of you who are curious enough to view Longidorus edmundsi should visit the Imperial College in London where a specimen is embalmed for posterity.

This brings me to my convergence with diplomacy and international affairs. As a nematologist, which is a branch of plant pathology, as in science, we seek to define problems before setting about finding a solution. Unfortunately, in international affairs, too often, problems are not clearly defined before taking corrective action and very often decisions are made based on lack of human understanding, or at times as a result of vested national or sector interests.

The history of our world is replete with examples of conflicts which have arisen through this fault in human understanding where perception is often far removed from reality. Further, like bad medicine, we often treat the symptoms rather than the cause. For example, the treatment of an ulcerated toe with external ointments would not cure the problem if it is related to diabetes. I recount this because I have experience in this area where the cause of my problem was diabetes which could not be cured by external ointments. A vascular doctor saved my left leg from amputation which had become a specialty of some surgeons.

I address this issue because in international affairs, as indeed with human affairs in general, we should strive to understand the history, culture, and circumstances related to conflicting positions. Too often, leaders make the fundamental error of taking action without such an understanding.

The role of the diplomat is therefore, among other things, to contribute to an understanding of the cause of the problem as it relates to interpersonal, national, regional, and international events and to seek a resolution to conflicts. This is often very difficult when the problem is deep rooted. I am of the view that with the application of the scientific principle of reasoning, man should be in a position to better define the problem and accelerate the process of conflict resolution. I am therefore of the view that scientific reasoning should be applied to national,

regional and global politics through diplomacy. I would therefore not dissuade you scientists from involving yourselves in politics.

With reference to deep rooted problems, I was struck by the complexity of the human dimension in international affairs in my interactions and interventions at the UN, OAS and more recently at UNESCO as a member of its Executive Board. For example, at UNESCO we had much discussion on the need for a rapprochement of cultures which could bring about peace in our world. I recall looking around at the faces of the representatives from different countries and pondered as to whether some country representatives would ever change or attempt to alter their indoctrinated cultural norms.

This led me to address my fellow UNESCO members on the need for early childhood education based on global humanism, reflecting the commonality of man at birth. In this regard, I have endeavored to express my thoughts in my art and poetry.

I refer you to my following published and unpublished poems which I am pleased to read: "Them and I" (1), "The Killings" (2), "Of Common Ancestry, Let There Be Peace" (3) and "A Tribute to the Caribbean" (4).

These poems reflect my inner perturbation regarding our world in perpetual turmoil and are a call for human understanding and peace among nations in spite of our inherited differences which, from a DNA perspective are very small.

My poems are intended to portray the futility of human slaughter in "The Killings"; the realization of our common ancestry in "Of Common Ancestry, Let There Be Peace" invoking Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac and their offspring in reference to the Middle East; the juxtaposition of "Them and I" as a potent reflection of our place in this world and our overwhelming influences; and the genetic heterosis of our Caribbean people, living in peace in "An Ode to The Caribbean". Here I exalt the cultural fusion and social cohesion of Caribbean people of disparate generic pools reflecting a cultural diversity of multiple historical dimensions - perhaps a fitting example of what our world should be.

My paintings on display are also a manifestation of the origins of man, converging human horizons, and the use of things of nature to manifest my personal creativity, emanating from the right side of my brain. I refer to “Afro centric Evolution”, “We Came From Africa”, “Mother and Child”, “Converging Horizons” and the use of aluminum foil, ice, mulch and different methodologies and mixed media to express different dimensions and forms – different human expressions and creations with scientific experimentation in art.

My artistic creations are based upon my freedom of expression attempting to give life and meaning to diplomatic expression as what is achievable through the convergence of science, art and diplomacy. I express my artistic creations in this statement:

**“Art is the expression of the inner self. It is the human interpretation of the Creator’s mastery. It is the translation of the subliminal into earthly transformations. Art is one of the few freedoms left to man. In that freedom, man’s creativity transcends the reality of time, space and place. Art forms and expressions are omnipresent in nature, awaiting discovery and embellishment. Nature provides us with multiple forms and media awaiting our re-creation, our translation, and transformation from what is into new resurrections for the joyous good of humanity”**

In like manner, in addressing the problems of our world, we need to apply human understanding and creativity to dig deep into the fabric of man from his roots and influences as manifested in his present being. This brings into focus the concept of “Global Humanism, Man’s Moral Responsibility” (6), and “Global Humanism in Public Policy and International Affairs” (7). These concepts are eloquently articulated by Irina Bokova of Bulgaria, Director General of UNESCO in her many addresses and writings at international gatherings as well as other scholars who have been seized with this area.

This takes me to the importance of youth in shaping our future world “for the joyous good of humanity”. Here I refer to my book entitled “The Triangle of Success: For our Youth, Leaders of Tomorrow” (5). Time does not permit me to give full coverage to its message. Suffice it to indicate that its intent is to motivate, and empower our youth to reach their fullest potential through the setting of well defined goals, development of self confidence, (belief in self), and hard work symbolized by the geometric interrelated points of a triangle. It also

articulates “The Edmunds Hypothesis” which I venture to present in mathematical terms. It conceptualizes that if we define the diameter of a circle as existing knowledge and its area as what we do not know it may illustrate to some extent that what we know as individuals is infinitesimally small compared to what we do not know and therefore the importance of continuous learning. Upon reflection, it also poses by extension, the question of the calculation of the infinity of knowledge, and how can we calculate and express the same from our knowledge base.

There again, I attempt to bring into focus, the application of science to knowledge and the arts as they relate to each other in the creativity emanating from the right side of the brain which is hardly used by most. The need for the development of leadership qualities in our youth is brought into sharp focus. The Triangle of Success alludes to the differences and commonalities of humankind, and points the way towards a reduction of youth crime and violence as well as human conflicts.

In this presentation, I have only focused on my personal experiences, in science, art, diplomacy and the importance of youth leadership for our future development. These parameters are too extensive and all embracing to cover in one presentation. There is, nevertheless, a vast body of knowledge which can be distilled and extracted to illustrate this convergence as it has manifested itself through the ages and the influence it has had on man in the development of our world. My presentation emanating from the microscopic to the macroscopic is a small example of this embodiment.

I thank you for permitting me to share my thoughts with you from my personal experience and hope I have inspired you to think beyond your circumscribed, perhaps narrow, professional training “for the glorious good of humanity”.

#### REFERENCES

1. J. Edsel Edmunds, Many Horizons, A book of 99 poems published by Caribbean Diaspora Press Inc., Medgar Evers College (CUNY), Brooklyn, New York

2. J. Edsel Edmunds, Unpublished
3. The Washington Diplomat, Volume 13, Number 10, October 2006
4. Unpublished
5. J. Edsel Edmunds, The Triangle of Success: For our Youth, Leaders of Tomorrow, Published by Author House
6. Joseph Edsel Edmunds, Global Humanism, Man's Moral Responsibility. Panel presentation on Global responsibility in the 21 st Century: Group/Corporate and National Responsibility. Ralph J. Bunch International Affairs Center and the Department of Philosophy, Howard University. January 31, 2003
7. Joseph Edsel Edmunds, Global Humanism in Public Policy and International Affairs, Address at Graduating Ceremony, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs , University of Pittsburg. August 26, 1997

\*Former Ambassador of St Lucia to the UN, OAS, and US

[www. The Edmunds Group International.com](http://www.TheEdmundsGroupInternational.com)

[www.edseledmunds.weebly.com](http://www.edseledmunds.weebly.com)