

## BOOK REVIEW

**Bill Clinton (2007). *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), pp. 240, \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-307-26674-3**

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What does it mean to give? Why does Bill Clinton define the process of giving as an essential principle of leadership? These two questions, I argue, should serve as the focus of this book and this review since the relationship between these two terms has not been thought-through either in the conventional theories of leadership or in recent theories of social entrepreneurship. This book then can be read as a contribution to either or both of these areas since Bill Clinton has pursued these themes vigorously not only in the run-up to his two-term presidency, but after retirement as well. These themes are however elaborated here with a specific focus on those individuals and organizations that have made important breakthroughs in not only understanding but furthering the relationship between giving as a principle of leadership and giving as a modality of social entrepreneurship. Each of the chapters in this book then revolves around an analysis of a set of brief cases and includes profiles of unusual individuals that illustrate a particular form, modality, or theme of giving in the context of social entrepreneurship. This book then should be of interest to anybody who is thinking-through the challenges of making a contribution to the domain of the public good without necessarily being an occupant of high public office or an organization that has a specific organizational preoccupation with this area. It will, needless to say, be of use to non-governmental organizations as well. Clinton however is not advocating mindless charity which merely gives without empowering the recipient. He is, instead, as a lawyer trained in the liberal traditions of Yale Law School, picking up on the professional tradition of pro bono work that has been a part of the social responsibility that both conservative and liberal law firms have always taken seriously in the United States.

What is at stake then in the process of giving is not reducible to money and things -- though that is often an important pre-requisite. The process of giving must also encompass, if possible, the gift of time and the gift of professional skill-sets to empower the underprivileged. This again is in the tradition of the 'lawyer-statesman' that Anthony Kronman celebrates as an important legacy of the founding fathers in the United States. These lawyer statesmen had a notion of the law that was not reducible to a mere set of forensic techniques in the process of litigation, but encompassed instead a broader notion of jurisprudence as a form of socio-political cognition. These forms of empowerment through the process of giving then are much more sustainable than charity per se in the traditional sense. These forms of giving not only require a lot of thought, but have the potential for transformational change: both for those who give and for those who receive. The traditional notion of charity however is often reducible to an asymmetric transaction which makes the recipient secretly ashamed of having to be in a position of receiving; hence, the significance of the subtitle which focuses on 'how each of us can change the world.' A transformational form of giving in political life that Clinton discusses, incidentally, pertains to forms of political 'reconciliation,' as witnessed, most famously, by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, following the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Not all forms of change however are necessarily linked to the institution of formal commissions and committees. Individuals can bring about change as well by joining specific initiatives which are dear to their heart or sense of identity, which is often the case, especially with those who survive a particular form of life-threatening illness such as cancer, heart disease, and/or those illnesses which are presently incurable. Clinton cites a number of such initiatives in this book as instances worthy of emulation for those who want to make a difference, but don't quite know how to go about it.

Working out whether or not a sustainable approach to the public good (as opposed to merely devoting a modest amount of effort in such endeavors) is possible has been a major

preoccupation in liberal theories of political economy in the Anglo-American world. This is because a systemic solution to the sustainability problem is always better than sporadic efforts no matter how well-intentioned. As somebody trained in this tradition of socio-political thought, it is not surprising that Clinton feels the need to supplement his earlier policy initiatives (during various stints in government as governor and president) with a new set of initiatives from the locus of the Clinton Foundation. These initiatives focus on matters that require urgent attention from policy makers and from those who are willing to get involved in taking corrective measures on a range of social problems that are either under-funded in the domain of official policy or which require the prestige of the Clinton name as a way of raising both public consciousness and the requisite funding. These narratives can be understood then not only as brief case studies, but also read as sources of inspiration on how individuals triumph over innumerable odds and pass on their skill-sets to those who need them. These narratives however are not restricted to a particular domain, but encompass a number of areas of public awareness and concern including disaster relief, education, health, sports, law, governance, etc.

The sheer number of activities and initiatives described in this book are also indicative of the change in the expectations of the American people on what retired presidents are expected to do with their time. There was a period when a retired president could just hole up in his bungalow like Harry Truman did in Independence, Missouri and spend the rest of his days sorting through his official papers, raising funds to build a presidential library, and catch up on his reading. He might also give a number of interviews to potential biographers or anybody else of consequence who might be interested in chronicling the era in which he lived and worked. But contemporary presidents are expected to do a lot more. This is especially the case with those who come in the wake of Jimmy Carter who initially pioneered the idea of a hectic retirement by setting up the Carter Center. The Clinton Foundation is itself inspired, to some extent, by the Carter Center, which is listed amongst those organizations doing the type of work that Clinton admires. To put it simply, the burden of expectations today in the United States and elsewhere is that a retired president must do a volume of work that will at least attract the attention of the Nobel Prize committee whether or not it actually translates into one. A specific instance that is described in this book is the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, a bipartisan effort, to not only raise funds but provide timely relief to the victims of the tsunami that affected many parts of south-east Asia not too long ago.

Amongst the more interesting profiles of giving in this book are Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, who pooled their resources together in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Foundation works in the area of public health and is particularly interested in trying to eliminate the scourge of malaria in tropical countries. What is interesting about Bill Gates however is not merely the fact that he stepped down from an executive position to concentrate on the activities of the Gates Foundation, but also the efforts that he has devoted to worrying about what, if anything, must be done to make these processes of giving systemic and self-sustaining. While there is no simple solution to the sustainability problem, it is possible, as Gates argues in his Commencement Address at Harvard University in 2007, that 'if we can find approaches that meet the needs of the poor in ways that generate profits for business and votes for politicians, we will have found a sustainable way to reduce inequity in the world.' Gates, of course, has no illusions about the difficulty of this task; which, as he puts it, 'is open-ended' and 'can never be finished.' An interesting instance of a person who took up the relentless challenge of making a difference knowing fully-well that the task cannot be 'finished,' especially in serving the needs of the poor who are unable to afford decent health care, is Paul Farmer, a doctor who trained at Duke University and Harvard Medical School. Farmer not only founded the Partners in Health initiative but has spent all his time on such non-profit endeavors. Farmer gained international attention when he made a breakthrough in working with those afflicted by tuberculosis and AIDS in Haiti by reducing the number of deaths in the 'catchment areas' of central Haiti to zero. He has also taken his health care model to Rwanda, which was trying to

recover from a genocide, and started clinics 'with electricity from photovoltaic cells provided by...the Solar Electric Light Fund.' Farmer, incidentally, is known as the contemporary Albert Schweitzer and is a role model for young people in American medical schools. As Clinton points out: 'I have told Farmer's story...to demonstrate the incredible impact one fine person with a fine mind, boundless energy, and a passion for justice can have.'

While Gates and Farmer are discussed in the context of those who have given incredible amounts of money and time to the pursuit of public health, it is also important to be able to give things or raise the resources to buy the essential things that are necessary to sustain life during natural disasters. Clinton cites, in this instance, the work of the American India Foundation (AIF) to provide relief supplies and support for the victims of the Bhuj earthquake in Gujarat in 2001. AIF is still involved in developmental activities in Bhuj and provides the funds and resources necessary to rehabilitate the inhabitants of the area by providing 'microcredit loans, training and skills development for women entrepreneurs, and support for people working on farms, in salt mines, and in poor urban areas.' The AIF initiatives in Bhuj are also important in the context of the growing strategic relationship between India and the United States. As Clinton puts it, 'I have told the AIF story at some length because America has immigrants from more than 180...nations, many of them with needs similar to India's. If groups of successful immigrants organized and acted in the same way, it would help an enormous number of people and show America's best face to the world.'

The long term success of the individual endeavors reported in this book depends, as both Bill Clinton and Bill Gates point out, on learning to think differently about questions pertaining to sustainability. There is a need therefore to develop a discourse of ideas around questions such as the modalities of giving, building models of sustainability, and providing examples of success to young people who are interested in pursuing such options. An interesting case study in this instance is that of Bill Drayton, a McKinsey consultant who while serving at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the Carter administration, came up with the idea that businesses must be made partners in 'protecting the environment through market-based incentives like emissions trading and replacing regulations that micromanage business decisions with overall pollution targets that let businesses determine the most cost-effective way of meeting them.' Drayton's breakthrough in social entrepreneurship came when he went on from the EPA to found an organization called Ashoka, whose fellows are preoccupied with discovering, as David Bornstein points out in a series of profiles, the modalities involved in changing the world. While there are innumerable instances of initiatives in social entrepreneurship in this book, I have mainly tried to choose examples that will be of immediate interest and relevance to management.

While these initiatives are no doubt important, Clinton also goes on to provide the basic rudiments for a theory of social entrepreneurship in the hope that it will initiate a debate amongst both thinkers and doers; and, sooner or later, a full-fledged theory of social entrepreneurship that can provide effective business models for initiating sustainable change. In order to do so, he provides a different perspective on some of the basic assumptions of capitalism like the very definition and nature of markets, for instance, without falling prey to the usual binary opposition on whether change must come only from government or the private sector. In fact, the example of Drayton is interesting insofar as it symbolically captures the ideological essence of the New Democrats who believed in the need to incorporate pragmatist approaches to problem solving in public policy even if it occasionally meant taking cues from the Republicans given the preoccupation with market-based solutions in the aftermath of the Reagan and Bush presidencies. The worries, if any, about market mechanisms for the New Democrats then was not about the nature of markets per se, but with the inequities and inefficiencies generated in the markets from time to time and the ethical need to find supplementary solutions.

I will conclude this review then by assembling the hints that Clinton offers in the last few chapters of this book on how, if at all, we should think about 'organizing the markets for the public good' and the 'role of government' in this process before spelling out his advice on what citizens who are concerned about these questions should do in their individual capacity. Clinton starts by expressing a sense of incredulity at the fact that businesses and organizations do not spontaneously see the opportunities that are available in these spheres. An interesting analogy here is that of C. K. Prahalad's incredulity at how long it has taken industry to sense the incredible opportunities to do business with the poor in a non-exploitative way by harnessing the 'bottom of the (economic) pyramid.' Likewise, what we have here, in Clinton's rendition, is the hope that relevant stakeholders will understand soon -- especially those working in the NGO and private sectors -- that the basic problem is not the absence of a market per se for public goods but the fatalistic assumption that it is necessarily 'disorganized' and 'small.' Take, for instance, 'the problem of climate change,' which 'presents an existential threat to the future of civilization.' While those who seek to raise public consciousness on the matter of climate change, like Al Gore, have succeeded admirably, the political will to act on the matter is lacking on the part of the leading nations. So, it is commonplace now for the United States, India, and China to find some reason for not being able to cut down decisively on the emissions of greenhouse gases, or introduce drastic measures to increase their levels of efficiency in the use of fossil fuels. Despite the short term costs in doing so, it is necessary, argues Clinton, to find out-of-the-box solutions to the problem of climate change.

Clinton cites the instance of countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and Spain which understood that there is a huge market in developing alternative forms of energy without succumbing to the wide-spread fears of the economic consequences of doing so by going along with the Kyoto Climate Change Treaty in the United States. It was only when the bill for fossil fuels shot up in the aftermath of the Iraq war that a more pragmatic approach to the Kyoto Treaty became possible amongst those who thought 'that it would destroy the economy.' Redefining the crisis of climate change as an opportunity however will make it possible to develop new markets in solar energy, wind energy, and support systems for these forms of energy. Clinton also cites the examples of companies such as Cisco, GE, Home Depot, Sanyo, Swiss Re, and United Technologies as those that are trying to harness their 'ecomagination' in an attempt to find a sustainable model to go 'green' by supporting initiatives in the use of clean energy technologies wherever possible. Clinton also cites the work of Amory Lovins who has been arguing for a number of years now that clean energy is an incredible opportunity to go beyond the impasse of fossil fuels and not necessarily a constraint to businesses. Lovins 'has never wanted to do anything that doesn't make economic sense, and he has been demonstrating the financial benefits of energy conservation for a long time.' In addition to energy, the area in which markets can be organized for the public good is through the notion of 'fair trade,' where in return for access to markets, firms agree to improve labor conditions in their factories in third world countries.

Just as 'for-profit' markets can be organized, argues Clinton, so can 'non-profit' markets. An interesting instance in this context is the efforts made by Ira Magaziner, at Clinton's request, to 'establish and fund systems for the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS' in the Caribbean. The simple but effective measures that Magaziner took included the purchase of generic drugs directly from the pharma companies; this, needless to say, reduced the cost of essential life-saving drugs which the poor could not afford earlier. The market was also reorganized by bringing together the producer of generic drugs and 'retired manufacturing executives' to work with a new business model, which essentially involved a 'shift from a low-volume, high margin, uncertain payment business to a high-volume, low-margin, certain payment one.' These innovative attempts to change the business model were also accompanied by initiatives to reduce the cost of the diagnostic equipment necessary in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, along with fund-raising efforts to reduce the cost of treatment in a number of countries around the world. This then is a simple instance of what can be done to organize a

non-profit market for public goods albeit with the cooperation of a large number of stakeholders. The efforts of Jeff Immelt to promote clean energy in business, Amory Lovins in the domain of clean energy advocacy, and Ira Magaziner in the context of social entrepreneurship, will, writes Clinton, 'do a world of good,' since, in the process of 'doing so, they give everyone else the opportunity to participate, by changing the way you consume energy and buy products, or by giving you the chance to increase the impact of a donation of time, skills, or money.' What is the role of government then in organizing and regulating these markets? In the specific context of giving through private initiatives that have already been discussed, it is important for concerned citizens to engage with the modalities of policy making. The areas in which strong participation in policy can help include the fight against terrorism, finding a solution to the problem of climate change, increasing economic opportunities, health care reform, building energy security, and poverty reduction in poor countries. While this book is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the options available in the context of giving, it is an attempt to delineate what is involved in attempting to do so both at the level of theory and practice. The notion of giving then represents a point of convergence between a theory of leadership and a theory of social entrepreneurship.