Mike was a Professor and a Dean of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences at our school for several years, but Professor Sigurður Kristinsson will take us through that period in his talk later today.

I had the honor to work with Mike while I was a professor at the University of Iceland. There we were part of a research group managed by Professor Johann Axelsson where we studied health-related matters of Western Icelanders living in Manitoba.

The theme of today's seminar is "What is morality". We will be introduced to different aspects of that theme in twelve presentations today.

When the program of the colloquium appeared on our homepage we realized that all of the speakers were males. That is not according to our Act for gender equality. However, when the matter was looked into, we saw that the organizers had made a real effort to get female presenters but did not succeed, unfortunately.

My background is in Life sciences but I have great interests in matters that relate to moral issues. Moral aspects are one of the most complicated sides of most matters and almost everything has a moral aspect.

However, we have no international standards for morality

We often hear about the concept of *moral obligation*, especially in political discussions, as in Iceland today when we are getting close to the Election Day.

But what does the concept moral obligation mean?

Examples:

Icelanders have been debating if it was their moral obligation to cover the lost deposits of British and Dutch customers as well as those of Icelanders when our banking system crashed.

The financial minister of The Faroe Islands said that his countrymen had a moral obligation to assist the Icelanders during their financial crisis.

We agree that we have moral obligations to regulate our fishing in a responsible way.

The wealthy nations have moral obligations to support their poor neighbours.

In ethics we usually make a distinction between what you are obliged to do and the things that are praiseworthy to do but you don't have to do.

When you are obliged to do something but you don't do it, then it is morally reprehensible, at least if you don't have a strong excuse.

Peter Singer says "If it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it"

But be aware, now I'm possibly on thin ice as a layman.

Dear guests, enjoy the presentations here today and I am sure that by the end of the day we will have better understanding of "What is morality"

I declare this colloquium open.

Share this:

Share