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Unity Through Crisis: How a Latino and Lebanese American Coalition Helped Save Democracy in the City of Bell

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Running head: HOW A UNIQUE COALITION HELPED SAVE DEMOCRACY IN
BELL

Unity Through Crisis: How a Latino and Lebanese American Coalition Helped Save
Democracy in the City of Bell

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Author Note

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ABSTRACT

This white paper explores how a Latino and Lebanese American coalition helped save democracy in the City of Bell, CA, where an atrocious misappropriation of public funds was uncovered in 2010. The paper provides a brief history of Bell, followed by an explanation of its shifting demographic makeup to a majority Latino municipality. In the 1970s, a small group of immigrants from Yaroun, Lebanon, moved to Bell, establishing a Lebanese American community that currently numbers approximately 2,000. In the aftermath of news coverage of outrageously high municipal salaries in the city, the Bell Association to Stop the Abuse (BASTA) formed with the intention of restoring good governance principles in the city. By holding its meetings at the El Hussein Community Center, a unique coalition of two cultural groups—Latinos who were primarily Christian and Lebanese Americans who were primarily Shi’ite Muslim—worked together to fight corruption. This partnership served as an icebreaker to abolish some stereotypes and begin bringing unity to this community.

CRISIS AS A UNIFYING FORCE

Former Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley coined the Bell scandal “corruption on steroids” (as cited in Gottlieb, 2014, para. 9), and Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Kathleen Kennedy said, “It’s kind of like the whole city of Bell was a very poorly written soap opera of personalities” (as cited in Knoll, 2014, para. 4). If this were a soap opera, there are many lenses that one could examine the Bell scandal through that resemble the five essential elements of storytelling: plot, conflict, theme, character and setting (Electronic Literature and Language, 2004). Chapman University’s City of Bell Scandal Revisited conference focuses on the lessons we can learn from the controversy. While sadly, this is not a fictional story, there are many elements of the ordeal we as academics can scrutinize in determining what happened and what we can learn. The plot is well established. Two *Los Angeles Times* journalists published an article in June 2010, titled, “D.A. Investigating Why Bell Council Members Get Nearly \$100,000 a Year for a Part-Time Job” (Gottlieb & Vives, 2010a). The next month, the same journalists published another article titled, “Is a City Manager Worth \$800,000?” (Gottlieb & Vives, 2010b). This put into motion a series of events including a citizen activist movement, recall, arrests, trials, guilty verdicts on some corruption charges, no contest pleas, and jail and prison sentences. Conflict was apparent throughout the ordeal, as citizens gathered to remove the established public officials and public administrators, many of whom were in positions of power for years. The theme of the Bell story is that an engaged group of citizens could organize, fight for justice, and prevail against corruption.

This paper focuses on two particular elements that have often been underreported: character and setting. Sometimes overlooked in examining the Bell scandal is that it took a unique coalition of two cultural groups—Latinos and Lebanese Americans, primarily Christians and Shi'ite Muslims respectively—to help institute positive change in this community. The setting for this movement was a Muslim community center where these activists would organize. This paper explores how this coalition helped save democracy in Bell. It provides a brief history of the city, overview of its shifting demographics, an exploration of its Latino and Lebanese American communities, and a description of Bell Association to Stop the Abuse (BASTA) meetings at the El Hussein Community Center.

Brief History of Bell

As with the rest of California, the City of Bell's heritage encompasses Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and American settlement of the land. The Gabrieliño Indians occupied the land before Spanish settlements in the 16th century. Spanish aristocrat Don Antonio Maria Lugo established a 30,000-acre settlement, Rancho San Antonio, on the area that now encompasses Bell, and the King of Spain granted the acreage to Lugo, who would eventually become Los Angeles mayor, sometime between 1810 and 1813.

The Lugo family fortune diminished between 1855 and 1865, and by 1865, much of the rancho was sold for a fraction of a dollar per acre. Between 1870 and 1890, substantial portions were divided into lesser-sized holdings and purchased by new settlers, including James George Bell, the city's namesake, who bought approximately 360 acres. (Bell's home is pictured in Figure 1). A farming community developed, and families raised alfalfa, vegetables, chickens, ducks, and some livestock. The area grew

from 1900 to 1915, as homes, churches, businesses, and a mutual water company were established. From 1920 to 1935, roughly 15 years after World War I, a population boom occurred, resulting in business, school, and community organization growth. The Bell Chamber of Commerce and Woman's Club were formed, as was Bell High School and a sanitation district for the area. George O. Wheeler founded the now-defunct *The Industrial Post*, a newspaper that served Bell, Cudahy, and Maywood (Garavaglia, 1966).



Figure 1. James George Bell House. Located at 4401 East Gage Avenue in Bell, the home serves as headquarters for the Bell Chamber of Commerce. (Photo: Michael A. Moodian)

Bell incorporated as a city in 1927 and developed parks, recreational programs, and a sewer system. The area grew exponentially from a portion of Rancho San Antonio to a small municipality in Los Angeles County (Garavaglia, 1966).

Bell's Shifting Demographics

Since its incorporation in 1927, Bell's demographics have shifted significantly as the city made the transition from a ranching-based economy to an industrial-based

economy. Tables 1 and 2 display Bell's census population and income data from 1990–2010.

Table 1

Bell's Population, Median Age, and Unemployment Data, 1990–2010

	1990	2000	2010
Population	34,365	36,664	35,477
Percent of Los Angeles County Population	0.39%	0.39%	0.36%
Median Age	Unavailable	25.9	28.9
Number of Households	9,013	8,918	8,870
Unemployment Rate	12.37%	10.83%	16.60%

Note. Adapted from *Gateway Census Data*, n.d., California State University, Long Beach, Department of Economics.

As Table 1 states, population-wise, Bell is a small city with 35,477 residents in 2010. Unemployment in 2010 was high (16.60%). The city's geographic size is 2.5 square miles.

Table 2

Bell's Average and Median Household Income, 1989–2009

	1989	1999	2009
Average Household Income (in 2010 dollars)	Unavailable	\$51,674	\$46,158
Median Household Income (in 2010 dollars)	\$39,593	\$39,195	\$38,473

Note. Adapted from *Gateway Census Data*, n.d., California State University, Long Beach, Department of Economics.

Table 2 shows that Bell in 2009 had a low average household income compared to many other Southern California cities. Table 3 displays Bell's most recent census data.

Table 3

Bell's Most Recent Census Data

	Bell	California
Population, 2013 estimate	35,948	38,332,521

Population, 2010 (April 1) estimates base	35,477	37,253,959
Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013	1.3%	2.9%
Population, 2010	35,477	37,253,956
Persons under 5 years, percent, 2010	8.8%	6.8%
Persons under 18 years, percent, 2010	32.0%	25.0%
Persons 65 years and older, percent, 2010	6.8%	11.4%
Female persons, percent, 2010	49.6%	50.3%
White alone, percent, 2010 (a)	53.8%	57.6%
Black or African American alone, percent, 2010 (a)	0.9%	6.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, 2010 (a)	0.9%	1.0%
Asian alone, percent, 2010 (a)	0.7%	13.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, 2010 (a)	[near 0%]	0.4%
Two or More Races, percent, 2010	4.4%	4.9%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2010 (b)	93.1%	37.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2010	4.9%	40.1%
Living in same house 1 year and longer, percent, 2009–2013	89.4%	84.2%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2009–2013	44.4%	27.0%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2009–2013	88.5%	43.7%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2009–2013	45.3%	81.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2009–2013	5.9%	30.7%
Veterans, 2009–2013	520	1,893,539
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2009–2013	28.8	27.2
Housing units, 2010	9,217	13,680,081
Homeownership rate, 2009–2013	27.2%	55.3%
Housing units in multiunit structures, percent, 2009–2013	36.6%	31.0%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2009–2013	\$282,700	\$366,400
Households, 2009–2013	9,102	12,542,460
Persons per household, 2009–2013	3.81	2.94
Per capita money income in past 12 months (2013 dollars), 2009–2013	\$12,076	\$29,527
Median household income, 2009–2013	\$35,985	\$61,094
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2009–2013	30.2%	15.9%
Total number of firms, 2007	2,224	3,425,510
Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	3.0%	4.0%

American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent, 2007	[suppressed]	1.3%
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007	[suppressed]	14.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007	[fewer than 25 firms]	0.3%
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	[suppressed]	16.5%
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	34.1%	30.3%
Manufacturers shipments, 2007 (\$1,000)	396,628	491,372,092
Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 (\$1,000)	639,470	598,456,486
Retail sales, 2007 (\$1,000)	212,422	455,032,270
Retail sales per capita, 2007	\$5,840	\$12,561
Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 (\$1,000)	41,813	80,852,787
Land area in square miles, 2010	2.5	155,779.22
Persons per square mile, 2010	14,185.1	239.1

Note. Adapted from *Bell (city), California*, n.d., United States Census Bureau.

Bell's Latino and Lebanese American Communities

As Table 3 displays, in the City of Bell, 93.1% of its population is considered Hispanic or Latino. Bell's significant Latino growth occurred in the late 1970s and 1980s. According to data on record at the Bell Library (n.d.), the city's 1990 Anglo population was 3,981, a 53% decrease from 1980, and its Hispanic population was 29,583, an 85% increase from 1980. Violeta Alvarez is a Bell city council member who moved to Bell from Mexico in 1979. "It was primarily only white people here in the City of Bell," she said (V. Alvarez, personal communication, February 3, 2015). "I remember that I could not see anybody that speaks Spanish, and I would get frustrated because I could not practice it with anybody" (V. Alvarez, personal communication, February 3, 2015). This surge occurred elsewhere in Los Angeles County in the 1980s, as *Los Angeles Times* staff writers Michele Fuetsch and Tina Griego (1991) wrote, "Asian and Hispanic populations have surged in Long Beach and the Southeast Los Angeles County area over the last decade, while the Anglo population in almost every community has dropped, according to U.S. Census data released this week" (para. 1). The *Times* article cited southeast cities

other than Bell with the heaviest Latino populations as Maywood, Huntington Park, Commerce, Cudahy, Bell Gardens, Pico Rivera, and South Gate.

According to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Mexican immigration to the United States from 1981 to 1990 totaled 1,655,843, up from 640,294 from 1971 to 1980 (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1997), an increase reflected in the City of Bell. In exploring push-pull factors, economic opportunity in the United States brought a large surge of Hispanics to the U.S., particularly Los Angeles County, during this time. In her *Wall Street Journal* article, Tammy Audi (2010) wrote, “Longtime Bell residents say white residents began to leave Bell in the 1960s for more spacious suburbs in neighboring Orange County” (para. 7). She added, “Race riots in Los Angeles drove more whites away. By 2000, says the U.S. Census, 90% of Bell’s 37,000 population identified as Latino” (para. 7). Figure 2 displays a retail store that markets itself toward Bell’s Spanish-speaking community.



Figure 2. Zapateria La Mexicana. With a thriving community of first and second generation Latinos, Bell has many storefronts with Spanish signage. (Photo: Michael A. Moodian)

In the 1970s, a small Lebanese American community established itself in the city. These immigrants came primarily from Yaroun, Lebanon, a village located on the southern Lebanese border, just north of Israel. The Lebanese Americans in Bell are primarily immigrants or descendants of immigrants who fled civil war in the 1970s. Ali Saleh is a Bell city council member and the city's first mayor after the recall. In referencing Lebanese immigration to the city, he said, "They came here, like my father, in the early seventies. My dad was one of the first that came into this community" (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). He added, "I guess there were one or two gentlemen that were living here in the early seventies, and when people would get visas, they didn't know who to call. They would call whoever they knew that was in Los Angeles" (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015).

As more Lebanese immigrants arrived in Southern California, "They would pick them up at the airport, bring them to Bell, they would live a few weeks in the apartment, and they would start working and get their own apartment. That's how typically it kind of grew," Saleh shared (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). "There were probably 20 or 10 people living here. Little by little, as people came, they would move into Bell and get apartments in Bell and later people would start buying homes. It all started in the early seventies" (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). In addressing his father's entrepreneurial spirit, Saleh, whose family came to the United States with nothing, said, "He would go buy stuff from downtown L.A. from the market, either stereos or so on, and go sell door to door, until he moved on from there and started selling at swap meets and created his own business" (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015).

Los Angeles Times reporter Raja Abdulrahim (2010) described Bell's Lebanese Americans as living in an enclave of roughly 2,000 on Otis and Brompton streets, near city hall. She wrote, "They have mostly kept to themselves, creating an insular community where only people from their native village in southern Lebanon—Yaroun—are welcome, and outside social and civic involvement is mostly shunned" (para. 8). Bell's Lebanese American community is composed primarily of Shi'ite Muslims; its Latinos are Roman Catholic and Protestant (Audi, 2010). Figure 3 displays a former bakery with a sign in Arabic. Because of the growing number of Lebanese Americans, Bell High School is a rare American secondary school that offers Arabic classes.



Figure 3. Golden Bakery. A former bakery in the City of Bell with an English and Arabic sign. (Photo: Michael A. Moodian)

When Saleh campaigned for city council in 2009, the year before the scandal erupted, fliers emerged at a local market featuring his head superimposed on a figure holding a sign reading "Islam will dominate the world" (Becerra, 2009, para. 4). The flyer featured photos of people with black hoods standing above a hostage, radical cleric

Muqtada al-Sadr, and the burning World Trade Center towers. The bottom of the flier read, “Vote NO Muslims for the City Bell Council 2009” (para. 5). Saleh lost the election, receiving only 375 votes. “That did not go well for me,” he said (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). “They used my religion [against] me. Right when I lost, I decided that, you know what, I should have never ran and this is not for me, and all it did is hurt the Lebanese community here in Bell” (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). Saleh continued to go to council meetings, and helped form BASTA, but not, he said, with the intention of running again. “I said, there’s no way a guy with the name of Ali and the last name of Saleh will win in a community of 95% Latino” (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). Saleh was the top vote receiver in Bell city council elections 2 years later.

BASTA Meetings at the El Hussein Community Center

BASTA was formed immediately after news broke about outrageously high municipal salaries in the city, and it was one of the council recall’s driving forces. Saleh stated, “When the *L.A. Times* article came out that evening, we sat down the next day, me and Cristina Garcia, who is now an assemblywoman” (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). He added, “We were talking about how we were going to organize the community against what’s going on in our city” (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). For its mission, BASTA states on its Web site, “We are committed to the empowerment of our residents and stakeholders through honesty, respect and integrity. We demand good governance through transparency and accountability while respecting the community’s diversity” (BASTA, n.d., para. 1).

Activists behind the formation of BASTA were individuals such as Saleh, Garcia, and Dale Walker and Denisse Rodarte, who both ran a Facebook page that attempted to expose corruption in the city. Saleh shared, “So what we did is the next day we went to city hall. We noticed a lot of people; we started talking to a few people, and kind of recruited some people to be a part of BASTA” (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). He said, “What we started doing is we started printing out flyers and putting flyers in front of people’s homes, inviting them to come to the next meeting to speak against what was going on in the city” (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). Alvarez said, “It was kind of hard because I didn’t have experience on how to get people involved. But you learn as you go and the media helped us a lot” (V. Alvarez, personal communication, February 3, 2015). Addressing the abundance of media coverage, she said, “It was constantly in the Spanish media, English media, all the channels from different parts of the world. That helped us a lot to get the movement bigger” (V. Alvarez, personal communication, February 3, 2015). Garcia (2015) explained that BASTA was successful because of its ability to tie together activism, funding, media exposure, and other elements.

The Bell Resident Club, cofounded by current Mayor Nestor Enrique Valencia, was also an active community group with an anticorruption platform. Valencia and some others were critical of BASTA. He said, “It is my strong and firm opinion that BASTA was started for the benefit and interests of the police officers’ association here with the police department (N. E. Valencia, personal communication, February 5, 2015). The *Los Angeles Times*’ Corina Knoll reported on criticisms of BASTA in her September 18, 2010, article “Bell residents question city’s grass-roots organization.”

As the BASTA movement grew, where would participants meet? Saleh explained, “After a while, we noticed that there was a lot of interest and a lot of people that wanted to be involved in the movement.... We just didn’t have a spot to meet” (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). He added:

First we would meet at somebody’s house, and then it became that we couldn’t even fit, and yet alone we still had a lot of people that wanted to come. So we started talking, and we were like okay, we don’t have money to rent a place, there’s not a lot of big places that we can choose in the city, and somehow we said the El Hussein Center [Figure 4], but we were skeptical about having the El Hussein Center because first you’ve got Muslims, and you’ve got the whole media. We didn’t know how that would be received. To my surprise, when we did do that, the community was very open about it. They were very receptive. I remember when we first opened it, people started looking around, [asking] what is this? They were kind of looking at the walls and all they saw were four walls with nothing on there. One side of the wall just had all these religious books; it’s like a little mini library, and some photos. What we would do is we would have all these stackable chairs, and we would have to take them one by one to have people sit down, and after a while, either me or somebody else would open the door to the El Hussein Center, and they would walk in by themselves and start organizing the chairs like it was their own house, which was neat because you kind of saw that okay, we’re working together, they felt comfortable being in here, and it’s kind of great that they feel they’re a part of us, that we’re all one. That’s where it kind of all revolved. The media started coming. We had at one point 600 to 700 people at

the El Hussein Center and it was packed to the last chair. (A Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015)



Figure 4. El Hussein Community Center. Located at 6840 Gage Avenue in Bell, the center served as BASTA's primary meeting location. (Photo: Michael A. Moodian)

In the aftermath of 9/11, Muslims in Southern California have at times been victims of bigotry, discrimination, and xenophobia. For example, the Islamic Center of Temecula Valley drew opposition from community members when it attempted to build a mosque in Temecula. The *Los Angeles Times* quoted Calvary Baptist Church Pastor Bill Rench as saying, "The Islamic foothold is not strong here, and we really don't want to see their influence spread" (as cited in Willon, 2010, para. 5). Additionally, "There is a concern with all the rumors you hear about sleeper cells and all that. Are we supposed to be complacent just because these people say it's a religion of peace?" (para. 6). Separately, protestors accosted Muslim families attending an event in Yorba Linda in 2011 with statements such as "Go home," "Terrorists," "You beat your women, your wife, and your children," and "Why don't you go beat up your wife like you do every

night?” (as cited in Nelson, 2011, para. 3). A 2010 Pew Research Report stated that 30% of Americans had a positive view toward Islam (as cited in Audi, 2010). However, in Bell, it was a Muslim community center that served as the gathering place for a great American activist movement.

The Aftermath

How have Latino-Lebanese American relations changed since the BASTA movement, recall, and election of new councilmembers? “The election kind of opened doors,” Saleh said (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015). Alvarez added, “Before [the BASTA movement] it was like everybody was in their own world. That really brought us together at that time” (V. Alvarez, personal communication, February 3, 2015). “I’ve been knocking on doors [for reelection] and people know who I am, know my name, are very receptive, and want to support me,” said Saleh (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015).

My mom one time was at the market. My mom wears the hijab, which is the scarf cover, and my mom is also fluent in Spanish, as I am. And she was in the line, and a lady and husband were right behind her, and she started talking in Spanish to her husband and said, “Oh, this lady is the same as our mayor.” My mom turned around and said, “Oh, that’s my son.” They started talking and having a good conversation. Even in the schools, my kids go to school here locally and they’re very receptive. I didn’t have that when I was young. Now they’ve become one where they play together; they go out together. It’s a city where everybody’s receptive to everybody. (A. Saleh, personal communication, February 3, 2015)

Addressing some people’s discomfort with meeting in the El Hussein Community Center,

Garcia (2015) wrote, “Everyone learned to be respectful of the center, ask questions of each other, and, by working side by side, some of the hesitation about each other’s cultures started to melt away” (p. 14). The coalition had its challenges, including the need for Saleh to gain approval from the center’s elders to allow BASTA to continue to use the facility, which received threats. “I won’t pretend it was perfect or we broke down giant barriers, but we definitely moved stuff in the right direction” (p. 14).

Others have a different viewpoint. “There isn’t a good fit between the Latino and Arabic/Lebanese community. It’s fabricated, it’s artificial,” said Valencia (N. E. Valencia, personal communication, February 5, 2015). Valencia elaborated on what he believes is a lack of engagement among Lebanese American students in public schools. “Like any immigrants, past, present, or future, the acclimation is not a smooth one” (N. E. Valencia, personal communication, February 5, 2015). Additionally, “The Lebanese and Muslim communities are still stigmatized because of 9/11 and all that, and it’s unfair to them” (N. E. Valencia, personal communication, February 5, 2015). He added, “When they did get together, it was for mutual gain, mutual tit for tat, and it was artificial. Above all, artificial. It was fabricated for the purpose of the police department” (N. E. Valencia, personal communication, February 5, 2015). In an e-mail conversation, Bell Councilmember Ana Maria Quintana, who declined a telephone interview for this paper, wrote, “A Lebanese leader surfaced from the scandal but I would most definitely not frame it [as a Latino-Lebanese American coalition that saved democracy]” (A. M. Quintana, personal communication, February 2, 2015). She wrote, “The common factor was simple outrage at the abuse. Everyone, humans from all over the world and walks of

life, had a similar reaction” (A. M. Quintana, personal communication, February 2, 2015).

Takeaways and Concluding Remarks

There are three salient takeaways from the BASTA movement. First, scholar Cheryl Hamilton (2013) writes that steps people must take to communicate successfully across diversity are becoming culturally literate, having the ability to view diversity as an opportunity, taking steps to avoid ethnocentrism, creating dialogue, and refraining from condescension. BASTA activists practiced some of these steps and generally seemed to increase at least slightly their intercultural competence. As Audi (2010) wrote, “For most Bell residents, the community meetings that started at the Islamic center in early August are the first real contact they’ve had with a Muslim community that has been in the city for at least four decades” (para. 8). According to Audi’s piece, these meetings created dialogue and enabled these two cultural groups to learn more about each other. In attempting to enforce harmony and perhaps prevent condescending dialogue among its members, BASTA (n.d.) instituted a code of conduct, the last point being, “I will be tolerant with regard to race, gender, age, creed, religious beliefs, national origin, sexual orientation, physical appearance or disability” (para. 14). By uniting, these two groups worked to abolish some stereotypes.

Second, the Bell scandal is a story of corruption and human frailty, but it is also a story of community groups composed of many first-generation Americans helping save democracy in their city. Latinos and Muslim Lebanese Americans are sometimes targets of bigotry and discrimination in the United States, but there were no greater

representatives of American ideals than these activists who fought government corruption.

Third, it is possible that another outcome from the Bell scandal is that the recall and election of a new council might signify the start of a long process that transforms Bell from its current state as a cultural plurality, in which a minority Lebanese American community lives in an ethnic enclave, to an amalgamation, in which the city could eventually take on a new cultural identity based on the unity of two or more cultural groups. A Lebanese American, someone who received 375 votes in 2009, was the leading vote receiver in 2011 elections, and the forthcoming March city council election features 11 candidates from various cultural backgrounds. Diverse groups becoming more involved in the political process could work toward unifying residents of the city and abolishing insularities.

Among the lessons learned from Bell, one of the most significant is never to underestimate the power of community organizing and activism. The ill effects of former administrators and elected officials' corrupt practices will hurt this city's residents for many years to come. Hopefully, an engaged citizenry focused on transparency and good governance will ensure that no calamity like this will ever happen again.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael A. (Mike) Moodian is a Chapman University College of Educational Studies faculty member, chair of the United Nations Association of Orange County Advisory Board, and former chairman of the World Affairs Council of Orange County. He is the editor of *Contemporary Leadership and Intercultural Competence* (Sage, 2009), a book that examines the application of cultural comprehension to organizations and the measurement of intercultural competence. Contact Moodian through his Web site (www.moodian.com) and follow him on Twitter (@mikemoodian).

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