Christian Social Ethics

Models, Cases, Controversies

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Introduction

In the wake of the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer in the spring of 2020, many protestors took to the streets calling for an end to systemic racial injustice. People of all colors marched together under the banner of Black Lives Matter. Noticeably, significant numbers of these protestors were members of Christian congregations who were asking themselves, "What would Jesus do?" The answer was that Jesus would call them to seek repentance for their complicity in America's "original sin" and to stand in solidarity with their brothers and sisters of color to change the policies, laws, and institutions that perpetuate these injustices.[1] One congregant, James Blay, writes: "We must call out injustice, we must scream out that it is unacceptable to dehumanize and criminalize black people, LGBTQ people, brown people, and Native American people, we must drown out those who fail to realize that all lives can't matter until black lives matter."[2]

Other Christians disagree. While they affirm that the love of God extends to all persons regardless of race, the Bible also teaches respect for law and civil authorities. "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Rom 13:1–2). Some Christians argue that engaging in such protests undermines the authority of the people in charge and goes against God's will. Moreover, many of these protests embrace other policies such as LGBTQ rights and reproductive rights, which violate Christian teaching on homosexuality and the sanctity of all human life.[3]

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[1] Many church leaders issued statements condemning racial injustice. For example, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, released this statement: "Opening and changing hearts does not happen overnight. The Christian race is not a sprint; it is a marathon. Our prayers and our work for justice, healing and truth-telling must be unceasing. Let us recommit ourselves to following in the footsteps of Jesus, the way that leads to healing, justice and love." See "Presiding Bishop Curry's Word to the Church," May 30, 2020, https://episcopalchurch.org.

[2] James Blay, "Who Told You?" sermon, College Park Baptist Church, Greensboro, North Carolina, June 13, 2020.

[3] See Kent Dunnington and Ben Wayman, "How Christians Should—and Should Not—Respond to Black Lives Matter," ABC Religion and Ethics website, June 3, 2019.

Ethical debates among Christians on significant social issues are occurring at family gatherings, in the congregational gatherings of churches, in the classrooms of academia, in the halls of government, and on the streets of our cities. Each position claims that the weight of Christian morality is on its side. Who is right? What would Jesus really do? I wrote this textbook for those seeking some clarity on these debates and the Christian social ethics interpretive frameworks that support the differences in their positions. It is my hope that by exploring the concepts and backgrounds of different approaches and the arguments they develop on important social issues, readers will gain a richer understanding of and appreciation for the breadth of Christian social ethics and its relevance for resolving some of the most pressing issues of our day.

DEFINITIONS

Many students who attend my Christian ethics classes, especially those who see themselves as spiritual but not religious, ask some common questions: Is there a difference between morality and ethics? How is the Christian ethics I teach different from the ethics they learned in their required moral philosophy class? Can one be ethical without being Christian or religious?

In terms of the first question, given that many people use the terms *morality* and *ethics* interchangeably, including most of my students, some question whether we should make any distinctions between them. While I am sympathetic to their concern, in this book I want to highlight some slight difference between them, like the distinction one might make between theory and practice. Most of my students see themselves as moral persons. What they mean is that when they encounter a situation or engage with people in their lives that calls for some moral response, they draw upon the moral feelings, habits, values, or codes that they learned from their families, their schools, their society, and their personal experiences to discern directions for their behavior and relationships. For example, when a cashier gives them more change than they were supposed to get, instead of pocketing it, they return the money to the cashier because they value honesty, even if they are not conscious of their motivation at the time. This constitutes their morality. Ethics, on the other hand, is a systematic, critical study concerned with the evaluation of human conduct and character; it is more focused on understanding all the elements—the facts of the situation, the values and beliefs, the social location, and the moral reasoning—that underlie our moral choices and behaviors. Ethics is an attempt to bring these elements to light for examination, review, critique, and assessment. In the example above, an ethical analysis would encourage the students to ferret out and reflect on the values that motivated their honest action, discern the source(s) of those values (family, religion, and so on), seek to identify the moral reasoning or principles they used (could it be the Golden Rule, that is, do to others what you want others to do to you?), and assess the appropriateness of this moral framework for this and

future moral actions. To engage in this reflective process, of course, students need time and space away from the moment of moral decision making and action.[4] What better place to do this than in the classroom!

Regarding the second question, religious ethics and moral philosophy often overlap. In their philosophy class students are likely to encounter three normative approaches to ethics: those based on laws and duty, those based on the ends sought, and those exploring moral virtues. The first two address norms for moral conduct; the third looks at norms for moral character. All three of these normative approaches can be found in Christian ethics.[5] In response to the basic moral question, "What should I do?" a law- or duty-oriented approach would ask, "What is the relevant rule, principle, or law?" Using our reason, we discern which rule applies in each situation, and we follow the appropriate rule. What makes the action right is that our behavior conforms to the rule. The virtue that is praised here is the virtue of obedience; the actor is obeying the moral law in this situation and fulfilling his or her obligation. This is known as the ethics of deontology (from the Greek word *deon*, meaning "duty").[6] Clearly, this approach to ethics is *nonconsequentialist,* that is, one abides by the rule, law, or principle regardless of the consequences. We can certainly find this approach in some models of Christian ethics. For example, some Catholic and conservative evangelical Christians who oppose abortion often point to the sanctity of human life as a fundamental, God-given principle. From this they derive a basic rule or law: it is morally impermissible to do any action that undermines the sanctity of human life. Abortion violates this principle and is, therefore, an immoral practice. Abortion opponents may agree that having a child may be financially ruinous for the person or the family involved. They may feel sympathy for the woman who does not want the child and offer counseling on adoption. The bottom line, however, is that the consequences for the woman or the family or even society are ultimately immaterial. What matters, abortion opponents argue, is that the child has a fundamental right to life, and we ought to respect that right.

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[4] See June O'Connor, "On Doing Religious Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7/1 (1979): 81–96. O'Connor uses the metaphor of a ladder, where climbing each rung offers a broader view of the elements in ethical practice, from the worldview level (values, beliefs, and so forth) to the epistemological level (raising questions about why one's interpretive framework is appropriate).

[5] Most Christian ethicists are well-versed in moral philosophy; it is part of their education, which is enhanced by their biblical and theological studies. You will see some reference to these in many of the models of Christian ethics discussed in Chapter 1. The next few paragraphs draw from my chapter on religious ethics in Nancy C. Ring, Kathleen S. Nash, Mary N. MacDonald, and Fred Glennon, *Introduction to the Study of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), chap. 5.

[6] The moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant is a good example of this approach. See his *Foundations for the Metaphysics of Morals,* ed. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

The ethical model that focuses on ends as the basis of ethical obligation is teleology (from the Greek word *telos*, which means "end"). The response an ethics of ends provides to the moral question, "What should I do?" is "What ends am I seeking to achieve? What are the best means for achieving them?" Then the person uses the most efficient or most ethical means for achieving those ends. Unlike law, the moral action has more to do with the actions themselves and their consequences than with the intention of the actions. That is why this approach has been labeled *consequentialism*.[7] No matter how good the intention of the actor is, if the action does not result in the goal or end sought, the morality of the action is called into question. Let's say a person with no medical training stops to help an accident victim and in the process of helping ends up causing more serious injury. We understand and appreciate the intention of the helper, but we judge the actions by their consequences as well. Christian ethics also includes ends as the basis for moral obligation. For example, the Bible advocates the norms of justice and mercy, because they will generate a specific kind of moral community, enabling all members of the community to experience meaningful, fulfilling, and abundant lives. So, visions of community are moral ends that require certain moral actions to achieve them. This understanding was evident in the civil rights movement in the United States. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. advocated nonviolent resistance as the means to achieve his end, the "beloved community." The beloved community entailed the norms of equality, justice, and peace for all regardless of race. To achieve that end using violent means would be destructive of the very community he was hoping to achieve. Thus, participants in the struggle were trained in the principles of nonviolent resistance.

Discussion of moral norms, laws, and ends limits our focus to the actions themselves, the *doing* of ethics. We also make moral judgments about people, however, as when we say someone is a moral or ethical person. When we make these judgments, we are making judgments about character, the *being* of an ethical person or community. Being and doing are obviously related. It is often the case that because a person has a certain type of character, we know that he or she will do a certain type of action. The difference is that the moral judgment of character focuses more on the inner motivations—the traits, habits, or dispositions a person possesses to act a certain way—than on the actions themselves. This third approach to ethics is called *virtue ethics* (from the Latin word *virtus* and the Greek word *arete*, which combined mean "moral excellence"). When we say that someone has excellent moral character, we are declaring that when moral situations arise, that person tends to do the right thing because he or she has a certain way of being in the world and is predisposed to act in moral ways. Often our description of those persons

[7] The moral philosophy of utilitarianism described by John Stuart Mill is part of this approach. See Mill's *Utilitarianism*, ed. Oskar Piest (New York: Liberal Arts Press, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1957).

includes various virtues, such as compassion, wisdom, or courage.[8] A biblical example of this approach is found in Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan. In this story a man asks Jesus what he needs to achieve salvation. Jesus tells him that salvation is achieved through living out the twofold command to love God and to love one's neighbor. The man responds with a question, seeking to limit his ethical obligations: "Who is my neighbor?" Instead of answering this question, Jesus responds with the story of the good Samaritan, a story that stresses the moral character of the hero over the fulfillment of the commandment. Briefly, three individuals encounter someone who has been robbed and beaten and is lying by the roadside. The Samaritan is the only one who stops to ensure that the victim receives the care and assistance needed to restore him to health. After telling the story, Jesus asks which of the three persons who passed by embodied the virtues of love and care essential to *being* a neighbor. It is the Samaritan who is the neighbor; it flows from his being because he has the covenant written on his heart.

Understanding the overlap between moral philosophy and Christian ethics helps to answer the third question: Can one be moral without being religious? In today's secular society we may not see the intricate connection between religion and morality clearly. We may agree with the so-called new atheists who contend that religion and morality are separate and distinct human endeavors.[9] It may be possible (or, from the perspective of new atheists, preferable) for us to have morality without religion. In support of our view we can point to numerous moral decisions we have made that had nothing to do with our religious beliefs. We tell the truth because we believe that lying undermines the possibility for genuine relationships. We tutor disadvantaged children in reading and math because we think that all children deserve a good education regardless of economic status. What do these actions have to do with religion? The answer may be nothing or everything, depending upon the source of these underlying values.

While it may be possible to have morality without religion, I contend that the reverse is not true. Religions help people find answers to human questions of ultimacy, including questions about morality: What must I do? What kind of person should I be? How should I relate to others and to the nonhuman world? Religions suggest possible answers to these questions based upon their perceptions of the ultimate ordering of life. Thus, what distinguishes secular morality, ethical ideals, or norms without conscious religious support from religious ethics is that the latter are grounded in some perception of that ultimate ordering. Religions provide the norms for both conduct and character for their practitioners. By advocating particular moral principles,

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[8] A classic example of this approach is Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thompson (London: Penguin Books, 1953). For a more recent example, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

[9] See, for example, Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2008).

laws, and virtues, religions prescribe what religious people and communities should do and the kind of people they should become. Thus, they encompass both moral doing and being. Moreover, religions sanction some ways of doing and being as most in keeping with the perceived ultimate ordering in the universe. Religions help their practitioners to believe that their way of living in relationship to one another and to the world is not simply what ought to be but also what is "really real." How many children have been told that the reason they should respect their parents is because this is what the Bible says? By invoking the name of their sacred text, parents declare that this is not simply what they think is good behavior, but also what God wants. The reverse is also true: acting contrary to what the Bible says can bring about divine judgment. Such examples are a part of what sociologists of religion define as religion's *legitimating role,* an explanation and justification of society's moral order.[10] The moral authority that religions assert may be oppressive or liberating or both. Regardless, religions enable people to answer the question of why a particular moral order is in place.

Christian ethical perspectives contend that there is something in the Christian faith—revealed in the Bible, in Christian history, and in its current embodiments—that can and should provide guidance for Christians when it comes to ethical issues.

> He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
> and what does the LORD require of you
> but to do justice, and to love kindness,
> and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic 6:8)

> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (Jn 15:12–13)

Notice, however, that I emphasize perspectives and not just a singular perspective. As will become clear in this text, there are many approaches to Christian ethics. On the one hand, they are shaped by Christian theologians, churches, and communities that develop theological interpretative frameworks on what Christian faith means and apply it to the ethical issues they face. On the other hand, they are also shaped by other social-institutional locations, loyalties, and experiences that influence the lenses through which they see the issues and their solutions. Examples of such influences that we explore in this book include gender, sexual orientation, race, class, and ethnicity.

This text discusses seven models of Christian social ethics. *Models,* as I am using the term here, are both representations of something and examples for imitation; thus, they are descriptive (models *of*) and prescriptive (models

[10] See Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Random House, 1967).

for). These models, which include situation ethics, evangelical ethics (conservative and progressive), natural law ethics, and liberative ethics (feminist, womanist, and Hispanic), are all Christian (models of) because Christian beliefs and insights about the nature of God, humanity, love, and justice ground significant parts of their ethical frameworks, even though they may understand those beliefs differently. They are also descriptive models in the sense that they represent the breadth of Christian social ethical perspectives that have emerged in the field that any text on Christian social ethics should include.[11] Moreover, they are descriptive because I have chosen to use the writings of one person to represent the model in discussing the ethical framework and how that position would address the social issues embodied in the case studies. The models chosen are also prescriptive (models for) for a similar reason. The representatives chosen for each model are worthy of imitation because they embody the best of that approach in terms of careful articulation of the framework, drawing insights not only from theology and philosophy, but also history, literature, and the natural and social sciences; they also use their experiences and vision to engage many of the most pressing issues society faces. Moreover, the choice of models is prescriptive in the sense that I feature three liberative ethics frameworks prominently in the hopes of raising their exposure and solidifying their position as viable alternatives to natural law, evangelical, and situation ethics approaches.

When writing about Christian ethical perspectives, many texts suggest that they all embody four critical sources: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. These are often referred to as the "Wesleyan quadrilateral," a methodology for theological and ethical reflection that is credited to John Wesley, leader of the Methodist movement in the late eighteenth century.[12] Different Christian ethical approaches emphasize all four of these sources to some degree, although they might accentuate one over the other. For example, the Bible is fundamental for most Protestant evangelical ethics as the primary source of ethical insight and norms. For Catholics and natural law ethics, tradition and church teaching are the most important sources because they reflect the collective wisdom of the church; the Bible is vital, but to a lesser extent (although that has changed some since the Second Vatican Council, 1962–65). All Christian ethical traditions highlight the importance of reason in ethical decision making. While the Bible and tradition are important sources for ethical insight, they require the use of reason both to understand them

[11] Some readers will note the omission of two Christian ethical approaches: Gustafson's theocentric ethics and the character/virtue ethics of Stanley Hauerwas. I have two reasons for omitting them. First, these two traditions focus primarily on the Christian community and the moral life of Christians and less on the implications for the social issues this text seeks to engage. Second, their perspectives are represented in some form in the models I do discuss, and so for the sake of space I chose not to include them.

[12] See Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1964), iv.

and to apply them in specific contexts and situations. Christians must use their God-given capacity for rational thought to discern the moral action to take. Experience and context, especially the experiences of those who have worked to overcome oppression and marginalization, are critical to most traditions, particularly situation and liberative ethics. Experience often changes an understanding of what counts as biblical truth, questions the traditional views of key moral concepts, or posits the possibility of a different way of moral reasoning. Experience is also the fundamental datum for raising ethical concerns and questions about the patterns and structures that run counter to the ideal of justice and community—the kingdom of God—envisioned by Christianity.

One final definition to consider is what we mean by Christian *social* ethics, which is part of the title of this book. Some Christian ethics focus on the norms that individual Christians should apply to moral situations they face. Should individual Christians participate in a war they consider immoral and to which they conscientiously object? Some treatises on Christian ethics take this individual approach. Christian social ethics looks more at the institutional and structural issues that create problems for society and the collective response likeminded Christians should take to address them. What should Christians do to address the systemic racism, America's original sin, which generates wide disparities and unequal treatment by whites against persons of color in our economic, educational, and criminal justice institutions? It is not that individual and social ethics are separate. As many feminists rightly claim, the personal is political. The point is that in this text we explore these larger social issues—corporate responsibility, immigration, the environment, and so forth—and all the questions and concerns they raise through the lenses of different Christian social ethics models that advocate for collective actions to address them.

METHOD

In this book I combine two different descriptive comparative approaches: conceptual and direct.[13] I use the *conceptual comparative* method to describe key ethical concepts from the models of Christian social ethics mentioned above, as articulated by a significant representative of that model, in a neutral way to inform the reader about the contours of each model without any judgment on my part about which model is best. Where there are criticisms of other models, they emerge from the representatives themselves, because these models are not generated in a vacuum but often in contrast with the other models. It is only natural that some of the criticisms of one another would become evident. The *direct comparative* approach emerges in the case

[13] See Mari Rapela Heidt, *Moral Traditions* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2010), 12.

studies about significant social issues. I develop the responses to the same issue from two different models, which allows readers to explore the similarities and differences between the two and also encourages them to make some comparisons between them. Here again, I make no judgment about which model best addresses the social issue at hand. There are no "straw men" here, in which one sets up a different perspective by developing its weakest views and then knocking them down.[14] Instead, I make room for each position to speak for itself about its perspective on the social issue raised in the strongest light, in the hope that students and professors who use this text can place their own views in dialogue with these other perspectives.

This approach is different from some normative, single-method texts, which take one model of Christian ethics and then use that model's interpretative framework to come to conclusions about the ethical implications of the social issues they address.[15] In my experience with such texts, students often agree or disagree too quickly with the argument without taking the time to comprehend fully why that stance was chosen. Instead, this text's combination of models, cases, and controversies exposes students to a range of assumptions, frameworks, and experiences, and it provides them with opportunities to locate themselves, to "try on" different models to see which model or combination of models fits them best. In my view this more comprehensive representation helps to resist easy ideological pigeonholing.

This book also uses the case study method (CSM) to explore the social ethical issues in the text.[16] Why case studies? Most people who use CSM, regardless of their discipline, do so because they claim that it helps to develop critical thinking skills; encourages reflective practice and deliberate action; helps students understand the complexity of real-life situations where theory and practice may not match; and engages students in their own learning.[17] It seeks to affirm John Dewey's contention that the best learning takes place when students are given something to do, not something to learn.[18] In my years of using case studies as a pedagogical practice to teach Christian ethics, I agree with that assessment. Two of the most common case studies are those that require a decision and those that require an appraisal. In the first,

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[14] This does not mean I have no perspective on these models or issues. Even the choice of which ethical positions to include and which to exclude provides some hint about my views if the reader is perceptive enough to glean it.

[15] I do draw from some of these single-method texts to articulate the interpretive frameworks of the models of Christian social ethics I discuss.

[16] The case study method (CSM) is generally associated with the series of case studies developed and used at the Harvard Business School that have become a model for other case studies series. See L. B. Barnes, C. R. Christensen, and A. J. Hansen, *Teaching and the Case Method: Text, Cases, and Readings,* 3rd ed. (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1994).

[17] Katherine Merseth, *The Case for Cases in Teacher Education* (Washington, DC: American Association of Higher Education, 1991).

[18] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 154.

students are required to decide about an issue and a course of action. In the second, they must give their assessment of an issue that the case explores, the problems and concerns it raises, and discern possible alternative solutions. In this text I use the second type of case study. These tend to be open-ended, that is, instead of providing a set conclusion, the focus is on the process that students use to judge the case. Thus, they are more student directed.

This does not mean the professor has no role to play. When I use case studies, I may not function as the main source of information, but my expertise in the content of Christian social ethics and skills in moral reasoning provide the basis for helping students come to grips with their difficulties in understanding the complexities of cases and mastering the content of the models. With appropriate interventions, such as providing background materials, raising provocative questions, and illustrating parallels among student responses at opportune times, I can raise discussions to a higher level and lead students to a greater depth of understanding and critical thinking. At the same time, the case method enables me to do this in a more dialogical and engaged fashion, using active learning strategies rather than relying solely on traditional, lecture-oriented pedagogy.[19]

While case study texts hold many advantages, case studies alone present similar educational difficulties to normative presentations of Christian social ethics. In isolation, case studies fail to provide sufficient background for students to appreciate the full range of discourse. Like the response to normative, single-method texts, case study texts tend to reify students' preexisting assumptions. Students read cases like newspaper articles or "hot topics" of casual conversation. Pitted against contrasting readings by other students, once again without sufficient theoretical grounding or contextualization, ethics becomes mere exchange of opinion. At worst, this reductionism lends credence to a creeping nihilism. The leading case method text in Christian ethics attempts to mitigate this problem by providing author analyses of given cases. In my experience, however, students often read these author analyses without recognizing their factual or reasoned underpinnings. An author's analysis of the case becomes simply one more opinion. I contend that frameworks or models are necessary foreground to successful use of CSM. Theoretical models sketch the landscape of the discourse; case studies color in the trees. This combined approach, which introduces theoretical models and then proceeds to case studies and concomitant analysis, bears the advantages of the case method without its evident disadvantages.

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[19] Karim Rebeiz argues: "When successful, the CSM elevates the interaction of 'teacher-students' and 'students-students' to a higher order of critical thinking and learning in the Bloom's taxonomy than the traditional method of instruction. The ultimate experience is a sustainable learning experience that stays with the students for a long period of time" (Karim Rebeiz, "An Insider Perspective on Implementing the Harvard Case Study Method in Business Teaching," *US-China Education Review* A 5 [2011]: 592).

STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

From what I have written above, the reader already has a sense of the structure of the book. Chapter 1 outlines the seven models of Christian social ethics developed in the American context, discussing key theological beliefs, ethical principles, modes of moral reasoning, and the contexts deemed central to the development of that model, even though each model may emphasize one starting point for its interpretive framework over another. Each model is represented by a Christian ethicist(s) whose writings are recognized as a significant embodiment of that model and who has contributed to its development. Collectively, these models incorporate some or all the aspects of normative ethics discussed above: nonconsequentialist, consequentialist, and virtue ethics. At the same time they push the boundaries of normative ethics by incorporating the concrete realities of people whose concerns have not been adequately represented in traditional approaches to ethics.

Chapters 2 through 9 discuss cases about social ethical issues that are being currently debated among ethicists, parishioners, politicians, and citizens. These include debates about sexuality and marriage, corporate responsibility, medicine and health care, immigration, the environment, criminal justice, the relationship between church and state, and violence. While there are many possible cases that could have been developed for each social issue, I chose these cases because they represent relatively recent events and because they have been cases my students have been debating in class discussions and on social media. Professors who use this text should certainly supplement these cases with other relevant cases they deem appropriate at the time. The description of each case is followed by a discussion of the relevant ethical issues and concerns the case raises for persons considering the case. These are drawn both from arguments from commentators about the case and from my own musings on what the case involves. These are not meant to be exhaustive, and my hope is that students and professors will raise additional arguments in their own deliberations in the classroom.

Following the issues and concerns are two analyses of the case from the perspective of the representative of the models. The choice of which positions I use on each issue may seem somewhat arbitrary to the reader. Obviously, any of the models could be included to analyze any of the cases for the purposes of comparison. I could even have looked at each case from all the models discussed, but that approach would have made for a much longer and more expensive book! Instead, my goal was to use the models that made sense for that case study or where the representative of that model had specifically addressed the issue. More important, my decision to limit the case analyses to two perspectives was done in the hope that the professors and the students who use this text will assume the challenge to explore the other models as they wrestle with the issues themselves.

I have made every effort to make this text easy to read and easy to use because I know that students arrive at our classrooms with a variety of life

experiences. Perhaps many of them fit the mold of traditional late-adolescent, full-time college students, but we also teach part-time students, parents, workers who have been laid off, retired people, former military personnel, and others who have never had a chance to complete a college education. As I wrote I tried to keep all these people, as well as others, in mind. I trust that this book will be useful to college students and to others, such as church groups, who would like to think more systematically about Christian social ethics. As an aid in that endeavor, at the end of each chapter I include some pedagogical resources for use by the professor, students, and church leaders. These include discussion questions, pedagogical activities, readings, and audiovisuals. The questions seek to draw student attention to the content of the chapter as well as invite them to consider the implications for their own ethical frameworks. Students may pursue the pedagogical activities on their own to demonstrate their learning or professors can assign one or more as class activities. Many of these activities are research based, and many of them culminate in a public presentation of some sort. I expect that professors and students who use this book will select supplementary readings from these lists or other texts that they find helpful. Given the fact that many students are visual learners, the suggested audiovisuals could provide a different medium for exploring the issues and their ethical implications. Here again, my goal in including them in this book is for everyone who uses this text to continue the ethical conversations that the cases and their analyses have begun.

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