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Reader's Guide
for

***MORE THAN
THINGS:
A Personalist Ethics
for a Throwaway
Culture***

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A Preliminary Word about the Reader's Guide

Individuals, small groups, and classes can use this reader's guide to enhance their engagement of the material in *More Than Things: A Personalist Ethics for a Throwaway Culture*. The aim of this resource is to aid the reader in reflecting further on each of the thirteen chapters and to make ethical determinations related to the various vital ethical subjects discussed in the book.

The following four categories constitute the framework that accompanies each of the thirteen chapters in the reader's guide: Unique Features, Definitions of Key Terms, Follow-Up Questions, and Case Studies. The intent is not to be exhaustive, but regulative and suggestive. It is hoped that each person using the study guide will employ it as a catalyst for grappling further with, extending, and going beyond the subject matter of the book in their ongoing research and daily living.

My colleagues and I pray God's blessings on you in your use of this reader's guide on your personal, ethical sojourn. May we remain alert as we travel down life's road in our search to move from a culture of things to a culture of persons.

—*Paul Louis Metzger*

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Chapter 1: The Search for Missing Persons

I. Unique Features.

- This book presents a personalist moral vision and compass for leading us forward from a culture of things to a culture of persons. It addresses a variety of pressing ethical issues and orients us to see that human persons and society are made for more than things. This chapter reflects upon the pervasive loss of personhood or what might be called “missing persons” and how to go about finding them.
- Chapter 1 emphasizes that “This volume is a personalist philosophy of life or moral vision applied to various ethical issues in dialogue with various ethical systems in our pluralistic society today.” This personalist ethical vision will engage various ethical systems, such as deontological ethics, which highlights “the good ideal”; consequentialist ethics, which focuses on “the good result”; and virtue ethics, which promotes the “good/virtuous person.” This volume does not privilege one ethical system over others while arguing for a personalist philosophy of life.
- The author maintains that “persons” and “human dignity” are not to be identified with any facet, feature, capacity, activity, or relationship. We are more than any of these traits or dynamics. Moreover, we are ends in ourselves rather than things others can use. Each one of us is unique (incommunicable) and cannot be disposed of as replaceable parts. The inherent dignity and worth of human persons must be affirmed to guard against commodification and valuing things above persons.
- The prevailing cultural value system reduces persons to things, including the three-headed monster of militarism, economic exploitation, and racism identified by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his Vietnam War address. This volume will address these three dynamics, among numerous others, in our pursuit and cultivation of a personalist moral vision and practice.
- Human value and dignity are grounded in humanity being created in the triune God’s image. Human value is not based on any ability a human possesses or how the market establishes worth. Rather, the triune God gives humanity inherent value and dignity through creating humanity in the divine image.
- The following point is not explicitly mentioned in the chapter, particularly the language of “theology.” However, it has pertinence for the entire volume. Theology always gives rise to ethical deliberations. Often, the theological or philosophical convictions driving one’s ethical deliberations are tacit and operate silently in the background. This volume will seek to make those assumptions explicit at various turns. The book provides a model for how to think and reason theologically and ethically from a personalist vantage point. The reader will find a distinctive approach to theologically and philosophically reasoning about complex ethical

issues from a personalist vantage point rather than an exhaustive survey of the various prescriptions and positions on each ethical issue under examination.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Commodification: Commodification entails treating others as mere means to one's own ends, which involves using them, exchanging them for profit, and abusing them.

Image of God: Humans bear a fundamental connection to God as the apex of creation. What the image entails is a matter of debate. Often it is associated with a capacity like reason, an activity like dominion, or moral qualities. Sometimes it is framed relationally. In this book, the triune God is viewed as a relational, communal being. Those created in God's image have various capacities and qualities that flow from this foundational relational dynamic.

Incommunicable: An inexpressible quality, one that is beyond description. Everyone's personhood is mysterious.

Inviolable/inviolability: Related to sacrosanct or untouchable. No matter how much violation an individual endures, their personhood remains intact.

Personalism: An ethic that perceives the person (both God and human) as the primary unit of value in any ethical consideration. Also, as stated in the volume, "Personalism claims that each human person is unique and irreplaceable, has infinite dignity and worth, and that we must never treat one another as mere instruments or means. Rather, all persons are ends in themselves in vital relation to others."

Personhood: According to the author, "The concept of human personhood in this volume entails such qualities as human agency and individual freedom for relationship with others. The doctrine of human personhood involves an expansive and emerging sense of one's embodied self, including spiritual energy. This teaching affirms every person's incommunicable and unrepeatable identity, inviolability, and dignity...All humans are persons. As such, they are mysterious and unique subjects with inherent worth and the right to self-determination in fostering vital community."

Trinity: The historic Christian doctrine teaching that there is one God, who is three eternal persons in communion.

Unrepeatable identity: Fundamentally unique, inimitable. Each human person breaks the mold. There are no copies. No two human persons are alike.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- The author claimed that none of us wants to be treated as things, but we all find it difficult to treat one another as persons. Let's assume he's correct. In that case, why do you think we all wish to be treated as persons rather than things?
- The chapter includes a quote from Barbara Johnson, who claims: "the problem is not, as it seems, a desire to treat things as persons, but a difficulty in being sure that we treat *persons* as persons." What do you make of Johnson's point? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?
- Do you have concerns about naming a boat by a woman's name or calling a virtual personal assistant for a phone by names like "Siri," "Alexa," "Bixby," and "Watson"? Why or why not? What about calling a human being by the name of a thing, like "Rock" or "Peaches"? Again, why or why not? Now, what if we were to name body parts after people—would that be okay? Please provide your rationale, considering such examples as "Adam's apple" and "Achilles tendon." Can you think of other examples, or create some new names along such lines? And what about using a bodily organ such as the brain or heart, or even a sexual body part, to refer to a man or a woman? ("She is the brains of the organization." "He is the heart and soul of the team.") Moving beyond names, would it be okay in your estimation to treat a car or inflatable doll as a person? What about treating a person as a tool or puppet to use? Why or why not?
- Can you think of a recent movie or song that conveys the need for a personalist sensibility? What is it? Please specify how this piece of art accounts for a personalist way of life.
- Can you think of moments in your life when you felt reduced to a thing? What caused you to feel this way? Do you ever find yourself reducing others in your life to things? To turn it around, what are some situations where you have engaged others as persons, treating them not as a mere means, but as an end in themselves?
- Do you think the three-headed monster of racism, economic exploitation, and militarism is still alive and well in the world? How might this monster manifest itself in our current cultural context racially, economically, and militarily?
- How do you define person? What is the rationale for your definition of a person?
- What do you think of the author's urgent call to think and reason theologically and ethically about personhood in our complex and fast-paced world? On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, where would you place such careful consideration of personhood on your list of priorities? What would you rate higher and/or lower, and why?

IV. Case Studies.

We have biological drives, but we are more than them. We are racial and gendered beings but cannot be reduced to these distinctives. We have economic interests and consumer passions but are not exhausted by them. Personhood intersects and involves these and various other traits but goes deeper. How can we learn to treat people as more than any of these things, while still accounting for them? When you look at others, what do you see? When you go through the checkout line at a store, how do you engage the staff? How does the checkout person engage you?

Develop a scenario where you are a customer evaluating and choosing between various brands of vacuum cleaners, coffee makers, washing machines, or cars to purchase. Considering the above traits and drives, sketch out what it would look like if you and the salesperson at the store engaged one another as things. How might it look for you to engage each other as things when encountering each other's gender, race, class, and other features in this scenario?

Also, articulate what it would look like for you as the customer and the salesperson to engage one another as persons in evaluating, purchasing, and selling a given product. How might engaging the other as a person affect how you interact with the above traits? Please be specific and concrete.

A transgender African American person named Riley (they/them) is shopping at a high-end retail chain. Without being asked, a salesperson immediately points Riley in the direction of the sales rack. The staff indicates that other items in the store might be too expensive. Riley ignores the possible slight. They find a really cool leather coat elsewhere in the store and try it on. It fits perfectly. Riley asks the staff to unlock the door to the men's changing room so they can try on some slacks and tops. The staff member refuses to open the door, stating that Riley is not a guy. Riley is now very upset and asks to see the manager over what they take to be transgender and racial discrimination.

The salesperson, who is also the assistant manager, states that his supervisor is away from the store on lunch break. Instead of alerting the manager, who happens to be you, the salesperson calls security to report Riley as a possible shoplifter. Security arrives and attempts to escort Riley out of the store. Riley refuses and demands to wait for the manager to return from lunch. An argument ensues between Riley and security. Security calls the police.

You return to the store after lunch break, just as the police arrive. You and the police try to sort out what has transpired. A few frequent customers have by now gotten involved and thank the salesperson/assistant manager for doing his job. You immediately think of what the corporate office will think of this ordeal and what you might do to intervene. No matter what decision you make, this incident is not good for business, and business has not been good the past quarter. That said, you prize seeing all individuals in conflict situations as persons. Over your desk hangs

a plaque with a quote from Barbara Johnson that reads, "Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved." This quote has inspired you in how you seek to approach various dealings with customers and staff. What would you do to try to deescalate and resolve the situation, and why?

Chapter 2: More Faith, Hope, and Love

I. Unique Features.

- God is triune and the personal ground for Christian theological and ethical reflections. Christians must account for God as Trinity in theological and ethical deliberations. Many dilemmas that have affected Christians over the last few centuries resulted from a lack of careful, robust Trinitarian theological engagement. The Trinity is not a magical panacea but is certainly central to Christian theological and ethical deliberations. Therefore, the triune God is the transcendent ground and object of Christian faith, the telos of Christian hope, and the fount and fullness of Christian love.
- This Trinitarian metaphysical or archetypal framework makes possible a personalist methodology of human ethical inquiry of faith, hope, and love in a culture often espousing cynicism, pessimism, and narcissism. Discussion in this chapter centers on an entangled ethic of faith, an eschatological ethic of hope, and an embodied ethic of love. The chapter develops these categories along “vertical” and “horizontal” lines. While vertical does not necessarily entail supernatural in contrast to natural and can simply mean ideal in contrast to the natural or normal state of affairs, a Christian ethic operates from a supernatural basis. Thus, faith, hope, and love are not subjectivist in orientation. The metaphysical framework put forth entails consideration of the vertical dimension of the Triune Faith, Triune Hope, and Triune Love. The methodological framework entails consideration of the horizontal dimension of faith in conversation with critical realistic rationality in engaging a plurality of ethical systems in pursuit of humanity’s hoped-for envisioned telos involving perfecting love of God and neighbor.
- Trinitarian emphases appear throughout the chapter, including the import of Trinitarian reflection for God’s love being completely gratuitous since God exists eternally in loving communion. Moreover, God enters this tired and weary world torn apart by indifference and hate. God transforms it from the inside out through his embodied or incarnate Son—the eternal Word—in the perfecting power of the Spirit who unites us to the Father and Son as God’s indwelling personal presence. From a Christian standpoint, the moral ground, grid, and goal of the universe is personal and relational. The Father grounds justice, the Son embodies it, and the Spirit completes or perfects it.
- The triune God is inherently relational and grounds the nature of reality as personal and relational. Therefore, Christian ethics as such must involve a person-first rather than thing-first approach. For example, there can be no discussion of duty or moral obligation in Christianity without a prior discussion of the one God as three divine persons in eternal union and communion. Nor can we talk about a distinctively Christian response to ethical situations without first understanding the nature and character of humanity as created in the image of this God. Such personalist emphases determine the contours of ethical deliberations in this present venture.

- Any ethic that prioritizes other ends above the concrete individual person in communion with other persons cannot be Christian. A Trinitarian understanding of reality seeks to guard against ethical orientations that treat human persons as means to an end of such things as materialistic and mechanistic forces.
- One must guard against projecting one's preference for social relations and constructs onto the relations of the three Persons of the Trinity. The Trinity is not a tool to support one's social agenda. However, the risk of projection should not keep one from seeking to discern and apply the implications of the biblical revelation of the Trinity to how one is to live as a divine image bearer.
- A truly Christian ethic must seek out and care for the marginalized and the oppressed. The God of the covenant reveals himself to his people as their named God. The biblical narrative reveals God's constant concern for the care of the marginalized and oppressed. In love, he determines to liberate his named people, including the orphan, widow, and alien from objectification and commodification.
- An entangled ethic of faith seeks to work collaboratively with other systems of thought and beliefs wherever possible in the pursuit of its Trinitarian personalist ideals for human flourishing. It safeguards against a hegemonic posture and acknowledges the fallible nature of all human judgments this side of glory. It guards against privatized spirituality and parochialism on the one hand and relativistic pluralism and syncretism on the other hand.
- An eschatological ethic of hope lives in the tension between the partial experience of the triune God's kingdom here on earth now and its full realization in time and space in the future. A Christian ethic is marked by a distinctive hope in God's transforming power and justice in the present, while also operating with the conviction that God will completely heal and transform the world at the culmination of human history.
- An embodied ethic of love seeks to concretely manifest the triune God's eschatological kingdom through humble, compassionate care and solidarity with the world in its plight. The church, as a community, must not isolate itself from the world but live with and for the world by embodying Christ's radical empathy and enemy love. Through its embodied witness the church invites the world at large to worship the triune God.
- Christian ethics operates from the overflowing love of God to humans. One's strength to live out an ethic guided by the triune God does not come about from one's own self-generated powers but is graciously given to each believer and the entire community through intimate, vital, interpersonal union and communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Altruism: Altruism refers to those situations where people pursue the well-being of others freely and selflessly.

Commodification: Any action or process that treats someone or something as a mere unit of exchange. This can occur both at an explicit level (the slave trade being a very obvious example, or pornography) or implicit level (insurance is ostensibly *for* people but the insurance industry often ends up treating its customers as units of economic value and wealth).

Consequentialist Ethics: Consequentialism answers the question, “What is the good result?” Ethical decisions are made based on what is deemed to bring about the greatest good as in the greatest amount of pleasure or preferred interests. The greatest good can be framed in individual or group terms.

Critical Realism: “Realism” entails the idea that there is objective truth, which we must seek to ascertain. However, “critical” signifies that we must remain circumspect. Human finitude and human depravity require that we must account for the possibility that our truth claims may be false in whole or in part. Therefore, we must continue to enter public debate about the merits of various ethical positions.

Deontological Ethics: Deontological ethics ask the question, “What is the ultimate good or inherently right ideal to which to adhere and obey?” This ethical system believes that there are certain actions and decisions that are inherently right. Reason, nature, or divine command are often used to discern the good.

Emergence: This process involves the development of social and personal dimensions of life that arise from the biological, and which in turn shape it.

Embodied Ethics: Christian ethics must entail the embodiment and cultivation of interpersonal communion and cherish the sacred regard for all life. It takes seriously the incarnate reality of Jesus in the Spirit and his call for the maturation of the beloved community envisioned in the Sermon on the Mount.

Empathy: Entails an emotional identification with another person and compassionate care for their well-being.

Entangled Ethics: Christian ethical reasoning cannot involve top-down impositions. Rather, followers of Jesus must make distinctive Christian claims in ways that account for and address our neighbors and their ethical stances in truly open, dialogical terms in pursuit of common ground wherever possible.

Eschatological Ethics: Our ethical positions must always stem from, and reflect, a hopefulness in view of Jesus' kingdom's culmination. Jesus' kingdom is already present in our midst but not

yet fully realized. This hope energizes believers to live now in view of what will be manifest at the end of history.

Modalism: A faulty view of the Trinity that understands the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as merely aspects or modes manifesting the one God in order to execute different functions or operations in the creation. Modalism undermines the inherent integrity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and suggests that we do not in fact know the true God, who is hidden behind these modes as an actor is behind their mask. Sometimes this concept is referred to as Sabellianism because of the supposed view of a theologian in the early Church, Sabellius, who held that the one true God successively takes on the form of Father, then Son, then Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation.

Perichoresis: A term indicating that each person of the triune Godhead fully indwells the other two members. Originally this term was used in the early church to refer to the interpenetration of Christ's two natures. It has now come to refer generally to the relationships of the three divine Persons of the One triune God. The term "coinherence" is sometimes used as a synonym. At times, it is described as a "dance" based on a false etymology. Rather, peri-chorein means "to make room for, to go around."

Personalism: An ethic that perceives the person (both divine and human) as the primary unit of value in any ethical consideration. Though Personalism is a broad term, it often refers to a philosophical movement that arose in the first half of the twentieth century. Personalism is often opposed to other ethical systems like deontology and utilitarianism in that they see them as elevating commands (deontology) or pragmatic considerations (utilitarianism) above consideration of the person. It is important that whenever such ethical systems are employed, they serve the personalist orientation rather than subsuming personalist aims.

Reductionism: This mindset involves reducing or limiting persons to biological drives, various pleasures and consumer appetites, roles and occupations, sex, gender, race, and other demographic factors.

Sabellianism: See: Modalism.

Social Trinitarianism: A sometimes ambiguous phrase that refers to any model of the Trinity that relies on viewing the Trinity as a particular type of social construct which, in turn, grounds a certain organization of human society, whether complementarian, egalitarian, democratic, socialist, or other. A constant critique of social Trinitarianism is that it is using an idealized model of human society and projects it onto God to justify its own position. Social Trinitarianism is not necessarily tri-theistic but often leans in that direction.

Subordinationism: A faulty notion of the Godhead whereby God does not constitute and engage creaturely life as three divine persons in eternal communion. Jesus is a human being, but not fully God. On this faulty view, Jesus is not coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Spirit.

This problematic teaching may view the Spirit in impersonal terms, quite possibly as an impersonal, divine force.

Sui Generis: A Latin phrase meaning “of its own kind,” or “unique.” As used in this chapter, it is meant to indicate the age-old idea that “God” does not name a category, of which there happens to be only one instance and to whom we direct our worship. God is not a genus, but is a category unto Himself, transcending but also grounding all our categories for human meaning and value.

Tritheism: A faulty view of the Trinity in which the persons of the Godhead are understood as so distinct from one another as to be separate. They form a collective like any three individuals in human society no matter how close-knit or related.

Virtue Ethics: Virtue ethics answers the question, “What constitutes a good person?” It is a form of ethics that emphasizes the moral development and maturation of a person’s character in ethical deliberations rather than one’s duty (deontological) or the consequences of a decision (consequentialist).

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- What serves as your ‘guiding light’ for making ethical judgments? Is it a belief in a higher power, a gut feeling, a preferred outcome, a faith community, peer group, popular opinion in society at large, a role model, someone else, or some other factor? Why do you make your ethical decisions based on this ‘guiding light’?
- Consider what difference Jesus’ beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount and Sermon on the Plain make for ethical inquiry. We can easily view the beatitudes as platitudes, since we have heard them so often. It’s like *The Simpsons*, where Homer responds to his wife Marge’s judgment: she scolds him so often that her rebuke has lost all meaning. But the beatitudes are not platitudes, no matter how often we repeat them, or take them for granted. Rather, the beatitudes are a vision and call of what a blessed and honorable life before God looks like. So, let’s ponder what difference it would make for Christian ethics if Jesus had conceived the various beatitudes in the following terms: “Blessed are the proud in spirit” or “Blessed are those with the most toys. They win” (in contrast to the New Testament: “Blessed are the poor in spirit” or “Blessed are the poor”); “Blessed are the comfortable” (in contrast to the New Testament: “Blessed are those who mourn”); “Blessed are the out of control and controlling” (in contrast to “Blessed are the meek”); “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for material gain and consumer goods” (in contrast to “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”); “Blessed are the merciless” (in contrast to “Blessed are the merciful”); “Blessed are those with lustful and murderous intent” (in contrast to “Blessed are the pure in heart”); “Blessed are those who divide and conquer, who maintain that might makes right and who take vengeance into their own hands” (in contrast to “Blessed are the peacemakers”); and “Blessed are those who torture others, who would never be willing to

suffer for justice, and who crave popularity and fame” (in contrast to “Blessed are those who are persecuted” for righteousness). And what if the essence of the Christian faith were about loving only those who love us, who are like us and whom we like, not enemy love, which is fundamental to Jesus’ view of holiness in the Sermon on the Mount and Gospels?

- How important to you is it to understand other ethical positions than your own? Why or why not? If you cannot convince someone of the rightness of your ethical view, would you still wish to engage them and seek to understand their position? Why or why not?
- Would you ever admit that you could be wrong, and someone else might be right, about an ethical judgment? How might all of us balance between holding firmly to our ethical convictions based on the pursuit of sound interpretation of sacred scriptures and other classic texts as well as careful argumentation, and at the same time admitting that we are still fallible in our understanding?
- Would you ever be surprised if you found resonance on key ethical points with someone of a very different belief system, lifestyle, and outlook on life? Why might there be more resonance than we think given all the partisanship and culture war phenomena in our society today? Take for example the outrage many people felt following the cardiac arrest of the Buffalo Bills football player during a game with playoff implications in January 2023. Scores of people were upset by the apparent assertion by a famous sports host that the game should have continued rather than be cancelled following the Bills’ player’s emergency transport to the hospital. Why do you think there was such widespread support from across the cultural and ideological spectrum for the player and disgust over any possible suggestion that the game is more important than a person who plays the game?
- Bob Dylan’s song on blues music, slavery, and racism, “Blind Willie McTell,” poignantly accounts for belief in a transcendent, good God coupled with an honest assessment, perhaps resignation, that humanity is really distorted and broken here below. Dylan sings about our abuse of “power,” “greed,” and messed up condition or “corruptible seed” from birth, by which I don’t think he means “bad genes.” How might God as the ground of faith, hope, and love secure us from the threat of cynicism, pessimism, and narcissism when we look at so much faithlessness, hopelessness, and hatred and indifference here below? What keeps you going rather than lose faith, hope, and love amid so much pain, suffering, and depravity in society?
- How might the doctrine of the triune personal God affect your moral reasoning? What difference would it make for ethical deliberations if you and I are created in the image of a personal, communal deity? From the opposite angle, what difference would it make in our ethical explorations if you and I are emanations of a detached, self-absorbed deity, or the result of impersonal forces of nature?

- What do you make of the relative importance of names? What's the big deal if God is ultimately nameless and we approach one another as nameless, faceless social security numbers or demographic statistics at home, at school, at work, and in society at large?
- How might valuing all people as made in the image of God as three divine persons in eternal communion affect moral decisions related to genetic engineering, sexual relations, immigration reform, and environmental well-being in our throwaway culture? What keeps you from throwing others away based on little or no resonance with them, including a perceived lack of abilities, fame, fortune, and beauty? Keep your answers in mind as these questions are explicitly explored in the various chapters to follow.
- Colin Gunton and Christian Smith account for relational components in analyzing human personhood, as well as embodiment, unlike many proponents of the classical Western rationalist tradition. We are more than individuals who think, that is, more than disembodied brains (functionally speaking). What goes into your assessment of human personhood?
- What do you make of medical ethicist Robert Lyman Potter's three questions for ethical deliberations, which he draws from H. Richard Niebuhr and Harry Frankfurt? Those questions are: "What is going on here?", "What should I care about?", and "What is the fitting response?" Are there questions you would add? Why or why not? What difference would your list of questions (whether the same or different from Potter's) make for your own ethical deliberations on various subjects?
- Before going further in the volume, pause to consider how you would prioritize the ethical subjects that appear in the following chapters. How would you number them from 1-10, with 1 being the most important to you, and 10 being least important? Please give your rationale for the numbering sequence. If you don't prioritize them, but view them as equally important, please explain their symbiotic relationship. The ethical subjects that follow are: abortion (chapter 3); genetic engineering (chapter 4); sexual expression (chapter 5); gender relations (chapter 6); end-of-life care (chapter 7); race relations (chapter 8); immigration reform (chapter 9); drone warfare (chapter 10); the environment (chapter 11); and space exploration (chapter 12).

IV. Case Studies.

Christian Smith claims that human dignity is to personhood what wetness is to water. It is real, but difficult to explain.

Let's say you argue, based on a divine decree found in a sacred text like the Bible, that people have inherent dignity which can never be taken away. How would you make your case to those who don't accept the Bible or believe in God, and who argue that dignity is based on certain natural capacities like reason or well-functioning bodies? Or perhaps they argue that dignity is a

human projection subject to personal or societal preferences and whims. How might you reply in the effort to engage them meaningfully rather than simply dismiss them as being 'godless' or 'unbiblical'?

Alternatively, if you maintain that dignity is bound up with certain capacities, what impact does that have on your view of individuals with disabilities of various kinds, severe brain injuries, or mental illnesses? How would you respond to those who would argue that your judgment divides humans up into 'dignified' and 'undignified' classes of people?

Or, if you believe human dignity is a projection based on preference, how would you feel if the subjective preference of others turns against you, or when it is your loved ones, regardless of their mental and physical status, whose well-being is at stake? What principled standard would you put forth for a well-functioning society with a moral standard and code of conduct to guard against nihilism or moral relativism where each individual or group can simply do what they want or prefer?

Craig asserts that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and must remain so if we are to retain our distinctive character as a society and cherished freedoms. He laments the rewriting of American history and how Christianity is often viewed as an albatross or burden that must be discarded if the United States is to flourish. Craig is especially concerned about the influx of various "non-American religions," especially Islam, and fears the imposition of "Shariah law." In contrast, he applauds those jurisdictions that have prominently sought to display the Ten Commandments and Christian symbols in public spaces, including courthouses.

Craig's family resonates with his particular convictions, all except his younger sister Crystal. Craig often tells her: "You have always been rebellious, way too eager to be different from the rest of us." For her part, Crystal thinks Craig is a control freak. In fact, Crystal finds her entire family overbearing, especially as she is the youngest of four children.

While Crystal is a Christian, she does not share her family's Christian nationalistic views. Crystal makes a clear line of distinction between the church and state. Moreover, she does not think America was founded as a Christian nation and that the United States is inherently pluralistic. Crystal thinks this country has a checkered past and that American Christianity has often been complicit and at times promoted such evils as Manifest Destiny with its talk of "Kill the Indian. Save the soul." Crystal actually works for a non-profit organization that advocates for refugees, many of whom are Muslims.

Craig tells Crystal she is undermining Christianity's witness by advocating for Muslim refugees, many of whom he thinks are "terrorists in the making." Crystal counters that the best way to be an effective Christian witness and to safeguard against Craig's presumed "terrorists in the making" is by caring for refugees, including those who are Muslims.

Craig wonders how Crystal can even bear witness to Jesus since the organization for which she works is secular. It rejects proselytism. Crystal responds by saying that while she cannot share her faith, she can tell people it is because of her faith that she serves those in need. Finally, she adds that Christianity and Islam have a long history of esteeming love of one's neighbors and offering hospitality to strangers in peril. Moreover, Christians are singularly called by Jesus to love those whom many consider our enemies, just as God loves his enemies. If Christians in America wish to highlight the truth claims of the faith and Jesus' incredible love and mercy, it is important that they care for refugees, including Muslims, who come in search of religious and cultural freedom.

Craig references the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem after the return from exile. It was because Israel and Judah went after foreign deities that God punished the Northern and Southern kingdoms and led the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem's temple and walls. Craig does not want to see the same thing happen to God's chosen nation today, the United States. He grieves over the plethora of mosques and temples of various religions sprouting across our country's landscape and equates them with the shrines, altars, and idols of pagan deities, like Baal and Asherah, that led to Israel and Judah's downfall. Craig takes issue with those political and judicial leaders claiming protestors "desecrated" the US capitol on January 6, 2020. He argues that those very political and judicial leaders have allowed liberalism to prevail and have desecrated our sacred trust as a people before God.

Crystal says we need to tear down walls. She draws attention to Jesus' parable of a Samaritan, who demonstrated incredible mercy in caring for a man beaten, robbed, and left for dead. Jesus hails the Samaritan, who would have been despised by Jesus' Jewish audience, as a true neighbor to the man in need (See Luke 10) Crystal goes so far as to say that perhaps Jesus would replace the Samaritan with a Muslim if Jesus shared the same parable today in our hearing. Crystal goes so far as to say the Muslim villager recounted in the movie *Lone Survivor*, who provided aid and refuge to a wounded American Navy Seal fleeing from the Taliban in Afghanistan, was a good Samaritan.

With whom do you resonate most, Craig or Crystal? Why? More specifically, what do you make of Craig making a parallel between the United States and Israel, including his account of Nehemiah and the wall, and the importance of this country being a Christian nation? Also, what do you make of Crystal's point of parallels between Christianity and Islam on hospitality and love of neighbor, along with her emphasis on Jesus' singular emphasis on enemy love, which distinguishes the two religious traditions? In your view, what are the perks and perils of aligning Christianity with a nation, like the U.S.? If you were to enter the conversation, how might you seek to cultivate understanding and mediate a way forward between the positions held by Craig and Crystal, who respectively represent the views of many Christians in our society? Please be specific.

Chapter 3: More Than Abilities

I. Unique Features.

- We must avoid narrowness when discussing abortion and account for a great variety of factors that play into the ethics related to it. Such consideration includes accounting for social structures, the well-being of all ethical stakeholders in the debate, the sacredness of all human life, and economic and financial concerns.
- Contemporary society is a “throwaway” culture and needs to move to cherishing all life. This includes valuing all humans, including those with disabilities, as inherently valuable.
- Utilitarian ethical systems are often used to support the abortion of Down syndrome babies due to the belief that abortion reduces overall suffering. However, depending on how one frames happiness, a Utilitarian ethical system can just as easily argue against the abortion of Down syndrome babies. Ultimately, the grounds for Utilitarian ethics (at least along the lines envisioned by John Stuart Mill) are shaky and even vacuous because they must unintentionally default and implicitly rely on some presumed objective standard or agreed upon norm of virtuous conduct for determining greater and lesser pleasures.
- Key questions that require answers are: What is happiness? What is fulfillment? A Christian personalist ethics seeks to answer these questions based on the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. What it means to be made in the image of God as a human person plays a key role in understanding true happiness, suffering, and fulfillment.
- We must take into consideration that the Christian faith requires its adherents to be extra attentive to society's most vulnerable members. Decisions about abortion should not be made based upon the potential greatness of the person. Instead, God's love for all persons should guide ethical decisions related to abortion and society's care of the vulnerable. Christians must work hard to make society a place where abortion is less desirable.
- The “Golden Rule” applies here both to the mother and the child – “do unto others as you would want done unto yourself.” The love of Christ frees the church to become a place where the mother and child are made full participants and their suffering is alleviated through compassionate, holistic care.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Ableism: Ableism refers to the ideology, institutions, patterns of relation, behaviors, and activities that depict a certain vision of able-bodiedness. Whoever does not fit that framework of perceived normalcy is rendered disabled and thereby marginalized.

Categorical Imperative: Immanuel Kant formulated the categorical imperative with its negative line of demarcation: do not treat people as mere means or objects to use, but as ends in themselves. It is often viewed as a modern refinement of the Golden Rule. John Paul II's positive personalist construal goes beyond Kant's negative delimitation: "the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love." Elsewhere, Kant articulates the categorical imperative in these terms: "act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature" (Refer to the book for these quotations and references). The categorical imperative treats the principled action as the point of reference rather than the individual's disinterested benevolence, as in the case of Mill's utilitarian paradigm.

Disability Paradox: Those deemed moderately or seriously disabled are found to experience a meaningful quality of life bound up with a balanced view of self and harmonious set of relationships contrary to set societal perceptions.

Down Syndrome Advantage: Studies show that families with a Down syndrome child or sibling report less stress, better marriages, and claim to be better people than those families with members experiencing other disabilities and sometimes no disabilities at all. Similarly, individuals with Down Syndrome report having far better adaptive skills than their IQ scores would suggest.

Eugenics: Typically defined as the attempt to improve populations through controlled breeding and thus increasing desired characteristics and reducing undesirable characteristics. However, it can be used in a broader and less literal sense to cover the control of traits that may not be heritable like autism. Thus, in its broadest sense eugenics refers to a form of valuing humans based upon capabilities and an attempt to control or enhance those capabilities in the human race.

Incidental and Instrumental Causation: These terms are sometimes applied to the abortion debate. Those who use these terms claim that the killing of a fetus must be incidental, not instrumental, to be ethically warranted. Take for example a mother who has uterine cancer. The mother may die during pregnancy due to a cancerous uterus. In that case, the fetus would die, too. The aim to remove the cancerous uterus during pregnancy is not to kill the fetus, but to save the mother's life. The unintended and undesired consequence is that the baby will die.

Quality of Life Indicators: A set of markers that are used to gauge whether someone is experiencing a meaningful quality of life.

Throwaway Culture: Pope Francis developed this phrase against the backdrop of his Christian tradition's belief that "human life is sacred and inviolable." In contrast, our consumer capital society promotes an "economy of exclusion and inequality." "Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a 'throwaway' culture which is now spreading" (Refer to the volume for the source of the quotation).

Utilitarianism: A form of consequentialism. Consequentialism defines the good life based on results rather than an inherent property, ideal, or conduct. Utilitarianism comes in various forms,

including judging a state of affairs as good that results in the maximum amount of happiness or pleasure for the greatest number of people (Mill), or that honors people's preferences (Singer).

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- How would the perspectives, values, and well-being of all stakeholders in the decision to keep or abort a fetus carrying Down syndrome weigh into your decision-making? Consider the vantage point of the unborn child, mother, father, other family members, and surrounding community. How would you prioritize them, and why?
- How would factors like increased happiness and reduced suffering affect your view of whether to abort a fetus? To what extent would such factors like the Disability Paradox and Down Syndrome Advantage play a part in your decision-making, and why?
- What do you make of quality-of-life indicators? For the purposes of discussion, provide your own set of quality-of-life indicators. How many of them are based on standard societal sets of abilities or popularly perceived advantages?
- Do the categories “pro-life” and “pro-choice” adequately describe the range of positions one must account for when considering abortion? Why or why not?
- Debates over abortion often turn upon the discussion of rights, for example, the “rights of the child” vs. “the rights of the mother.” How does this way of addressing the subject fit—or not fit—with the many complexities brought up in this chapter?
- Do you consider the embryo or fetus a person or not? Is the embryo or fetus a potential person? What factors go into your definition of a person? How might your determination of whether an embryo or fetus is a person influence your decision as to abortion, including cases involving Down syndrome?
- If personhood entails individual autonomy involving certain capacities, how developed and ‘normal’ must those capacities be to preserve individual autonomy? Similarly, if a fetus were to be born so prematurely that it would die, would it then be permissible on your account to abort a fetus in the early stages of pregnancy? If personhood entails the establishment of inter-relational connections, would the connection between fetus and mother prove sufficient, or would such a connection count only after birth?
- How might a pregnant woman feel about herself as a person if she has an abortion? Will she feel diminished as a person by her decision and no longer feel accepted by God? If you were trying to provide comfort to a person who has had an abortion and is enduring such weighty emotions and perceptions, what would you say or do?

- In view of Socrates' claim that an unexamined life is not worth living, how important is it for people no matter their persuasion to develop and reflect upon their theological and philosophical convictions when addressing questions about personhood and feelings of diminishment and/or acceptance? How would you encourage others to guard against an unexamined and, in effect, 'aborted' life by developing and accounting for their own theological and philosophical convictions in making ethical determinations, processing psychological states, and providing counsel?
- Men and women alike should ask themselves the 'golden rule' question in the abortion debate: How would I like to be treated, if I were in this individual's situation? For example, how would I like to be treated if I were the woman debating whether to have an abortion, or a woman who has already had an abortion? How would I like to be treated if I were the fetus?
- Would you permit "exceptions" in the case of abortion? What might they be, and why? A few examples often noted are rape, incest, and the mother's health.
- Can one ethically call for a ban on abortions without also providing significant help and assistance to the mother or parents raising the child? Likewise, can someone advocating for abortion do so without considering that it is often vulnerable minority communities and the poor who suffer most because of legalization? Please provide a rationale for your answers.
- To what extent are the debates over abortion dictated by financial and market considerations? Recall what Pope Francis claimed, as recounted in this chapter: although "human life is sacred and inviolable," we live within an "economy of exclusion and inequality." "This economy kills. Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a 'throwaway' culture which is now spreading." What is sacred in a consumer capitalist society?
- Sometimes it is argued that politicians who are pro-abortion take this stance because they seek to free society from having the financial responsibility to feed, clothe, and educate poor members of minority populations. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this point about financial and market considerations impacting our stance on abortion, especially for those on the margins? To what extent do you see the many assumptions of a market society—the autonomy of the individual, the need for freedom in spending, and so on—impinging upon the decision-making process involving abortion one way or another?
- Considering Paul's account of the weak members of the Christian community in Corinth being indispensable (1 Corinthians 12:22), what kind of community do you think we should cultivate, and why? Should the envisioned community include people with what society deems serious disabilities? How might it be indispensable to include them, as many disability advocates would argue, or irresponsible and cruel not to abort them, as Richard Dawkins might contend?

IV. Case Study.

Let's say you and your spouse or partner are expecting a baby and you have an ultrasound. The specialist indicates the results reveal that your fetus carries an increased risk of chromosome abnormality. The specialist recommends a cfDNA test, which is expensive. Still, you proceed in that you wish to know the likelihood of whether your child will have Down syndrome. The prenatal screening results indicate there's a strong possibility your child carries Down syndrome. Now you are faced with the choice of whether to pursue certainty with a diagnostics test. Would you (as a couple) proceed? You would need to weigh various challenges. Would knowing your child carries trisomy 21 help you be better prepared for what lies ahead, or would it overwhelm you emotionally? Would confirmation that your child has Down syndrome lead you to consider aborting the fetus? Please note that the diagnostics test can increase the risk of miscarriage slightly, as when amniocentesis is offered. How would you proceed, and why? To what extent would the "Down syndrome Advantage" discussed in this chapter play a part in your decision-making process? Further to the questions posed earlier in this chapter's reader's guide, how would the perspectives, values, and well-being of all stakeholders in the decision to keep or abort a fetus carrying Down syndrome weigh into your decision making? Consider the vantage point of the unborn child, you and your spouse, other family members, and the surrounding community. How would you prioritize these various stakeholders in making your decision, and why?

Chapter 4: More Than Genetic Perfection

I. Unique Features.

- We need to differentiate between what we can do, and what we should do. There are multiple ethical concerns with genetic engineering such as the risk of creating a new form of classism and racism, the possibility of impacting the rights and nature of humans, and the potential for a lack of resilience and endurance due to experiencing limited struggles.
- Science is not capable of telling us what to do ethically. We must appeal to other ways (or modes) of knowing or epistemological frameworks that involve theological and philosophical considerations. Science only reveals what is the case in the realm of nature, not what ought to be done.
- Genetic engineering is meant to improve life, but it may do just the opposite. We must guard against a posture of self-grasping and feigned omniscience involving a reductionistic view of humans that equates them with their genetic makeup. Beyond reductionism, genetic engineering can readily lead to a bifurcation and exploitation of humanity.
- As with anabolic steroids doping in sports, which is generally banned as cheating, we naturally tend to assume performance enhancement paradoxically reduces the agency of persons. However, one could also argue that genetic engineering is a manifestation of hyperagency—the drive to be like God and create a new human nature. A major question that needs to be asked with genetic engineering then is: how will it affect our notions of people, giftedness, and value?
- Seeking perfection creates a conditionality to love as performance. However, the Christian community ideally operates based on a relational model of community that welcomes and loves all grounded in the overflowing and unconditional love of the triune God. Human worth is inherent, not earned or gained.
- The love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it. Those who have truly tasted God's unconditional love hopefully live out God's grace in their regenerate state of being. Perfection is not bound up with one's genetic makeup, but instead comes from living in union with Christ and communion with one's community.
- An embodied ethic accounts for making society a more hospitable, caring, and empathetic place for those who do not meet society's standards of "genetic perfection." Rather than focusing solely on individual causes and desires for genetic engineering, one must consider how societal structures contribute to a desire to fix or perfect human nature.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Bodhisattva: A person who delays nirvana to teach others out of compassion for them.

CRISPR: The term stands for “Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats,” a family of DNA sequences used by organisms like bacteria. These sequences are used as guidelines by scientists to cut specific DNA sequences and edit the genome within organisms.

Evangelical Contextualism: This view prefers to speak of graces as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life as opposed to virtues which are the unfolding of human potential. The goal of an evangelical ethic along these lines is the transformation of the human person through the gracious working of the Trinity.

Extreme Environmentalism: The opposite of genetic essentialism, it maintains that no significant behavior results from biological or genetic sources. The only forces that shape humans are environmental or cultural structures and institutional byproducts.

Gene: A unit of heredity which is transferred from parent to offspring and which in part produces some of the traits of the offspring.

Genetic Engineering: It is sometimes called genetic modification. It entails altering the DNA in an organism's genome to treat or cure diseases and prevent genetic disorders. It may also involve efforts to enhance the genetic capabilities of individuals, their progeny, and species.

Genetic Essentialism: An exclusive focus on genetic and biological processes that contribute to human development. It does not account for environmental, non-genetic factors, and reflexivity, which also shape human persons.

Genetic Determinism and Reductionism: It refers to an ideology that conceives genes as determining human beings rather than viewing humans as persons with motivations. Human beings are nothing more than biological and neurological organisms.

Human Germline Modification: The deliberate alteration of genetic traits/codes to be passed on to children and future generations. It involves the remaking of human nature, the metamorphosis of humans as genetically modified individuals.

Hyperagency: Michael Sandel defines “hyperagency” as the drive “to remake nature, including human nature, to serve our purposes and satisfy our desires.”

PGD or Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis: During the IVF process, an embryo can be prescreened for genetic disorders before implantation in the uterus. This screening is used to help couples make informed decisions during the IVF process.

Reflexivity: This dynamic involves critical self-reflection that gives rise to breaking rules of which stem from our genetic and biological constitution.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- How does genetic engineering reflect a drive for perfection? And what kind of perfection does it seem to imply?
- Michael Sandel writes that there are various scientific endeavors in play today that “verge on theology.” He offers four examples, as noted in the chapter: “muscle enhancement, memory enhancement, growth hormone treatment, and reproductive technologies that enable parents to choose the sex and some genetic traits of their children” (Refer to the chapter for the source). In your estimation, what are some of the theological assumptions that may be present in these pursuits?
- Sandel defines “hyperagency” as “a Promethean aspiration to remake nature, including human nature, to serve our purposes and satisfy desire.” Sandel also argues, “The problem is not the drift to mechanism but the drive to mastery.” The consequence of seeking genetic enhancement may be a loss of “appreciation of the gifted character of human powers and achievements.” What do you make of Sandel’s concern over the loss of appreciation for the gifted character of our existence, including capabilities and successes?
- What do you make of Martin Luther’s claim that God’s love creates the attraction, not our attractiveness? How might that impact the decisions you could make regarding the possible alteration of your child’s genetic makeup?
- Could there be a sense in which a society seeking to earn genetic perfection will exclude those who cannot pay the price and who have ‘inferior’ genes? Please support your answer: why or why not?
- In what ways, if any, do you think genetic engineering might lead to exploitation and further oppression of the marginalized?
- We often decry athletes who use steroids in sports, as this appears to us as cheating and as reducing the agency of the individual in question through artificial enhancement. Do you find this to be a good analogy for genetic engineering? Why or why not?
- How might genetic engineering of humans affect notions of human value?
- What in our contemporary society makes genetic engineering attractive? What value(s) does this attraction reflect? Might it involve a predominant mindset of genetic reductionism? Why or why not?

- Contrary to “extreme environmentalism,” we certainly are our genes. But contrary to “genetic essentialism,” we are more than our genes. How might you balance between the two polarities? How might Christian Smith’s account of emergence from our biological basis along with the emphasis on reflexivity noted in this chapter play a part in your answer?
- If you were to make an ad that counters 23andMe, what might it look like? Why do you think 23andMe is so appealing? How might your ad guard against genetic essentialism and extreme environmentalism respectively?
- What do you think the balance is between trying to improve our lot physically, mentally, and emotionally, and the problematic orientation of “grasping,” which is what the Dalai Lama says is in play with genetic engineering?
- What are some of the relevant factors to consider as Christians, whether articulated in this chapter or not, as one reflects on the ethical import of genetic engineering?
- Parents who love their children will do almost anything for them, but should they? With that point and question in mind, what do you think of wealthy parents who paid a Harvard grad to take the SAT exam in place of their children so they could get into their schools of choice? The Harvard grad and these parents were caught and charged with fraud. Society looks down on such behavior as cheating. But what if wealthy parents paid for a medical procedure to enhance their children’s genetic makeup to increase their chances of excelling on the SAT? Would that also be a form of cheating, as in rigging or manipulating the gene pool? Would it be deemed as unfair, since only the wealthy can afford such procedures?
- If the SAT already favors the wealthy, as some have argued, regardless of whether wealthy parents pay to help their children get better SAT scores, what’s so bad if inequality of economic circumstances becomes inequality of nature where the wealthy parents pay to upgrade their children’s mental capacities?
- Switching gears, if your family is lower income, and you cannot afford to compete with the wealthy in preparing your children for the SAT exam, but received a grant to upgrade your child’s mental capacity, would you choose the procedure in the effort to even the playing field with the wealthy? How might fears of its import for the child’s entire being come into play in making your determination, or the future of the human gene pool? What could your child lose instead of gain based on your decision one way or another, as well as society as a whole? Are there other ways besides genetic procedures that you and or the society could pursue to even the playing field so that the children of wealthy parents do not always gain the upper hand in aptitude exams through inequality of economic circumstances? What might those alternative solutions be?

IV. Case Study.

Consider a situation in which a married couple, Trevor and Melody, finds out that the child to be born to them shows early genetic signs of autism. Trevor and Melody have the resources to pay for gene therapy to treat the condition.

Here are some additional items to consider:

- It is not clear from the test what the severity of autism might be.
- It is not certain whether the gene therapy will resolve the autistic condition entirely.
- Trevor and Melody discuss with one another and a specialist what the risks might be to the child's entire well-being down the road physically, mentally, and emotionally based on certain unknowns with gene therapy.
- Trevor and Melody also worry about whether the genetic therapy might hurt their relationship with the child given it was the child's body with which they "messed" to "fix." The child might think it was their own choice to make, not their parents' decision.
- Lastly, Trevor and Melody ponder whether the child might question their love for them. The child might think Trevor and Melody did not love them for who they were, only for what they wanted their child to be.

You are Trevor and Melody's close friend. They ask you for your advice. In view of these various stated concerns and variables, and perhaps others, would you encourage them to proceed with the gene therapy? Why or why not?

Chapter 5: More Than Sexual Pleasure

I. Unique Features.

- Contemporary culture's challenge to monogamous sexual relationships is indicative of the overarching concern of this volume, namely, the reduction of life to things, and the urgent need to cherish one another and ourselves as persons. People are often used in sexual encounters as a means or 'playthings' to fulfill one's desire for erotic pleasure.
- A sexual ethic based on a "mutual feel good" framework or rational self-interest does not adequately guard against the commodification of one's sexual partners.
- Kant's concern that humans treat each other as ends in themselves and not mere means helps to guard against the objectification of sexual partners. However, Kant's ethical system based on rationality does not adequately account for the uniqueness of humans and his concern to treat humans as ends in themselves.
- One's sexual relationships cannot be segregated from the other spheres of one's life. Sexuality and the act of sex affects everyone physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Suppression of sexuality is not the answer to our sexually ubiquitous culture. Rather the focus should be on appropriate channels for sexual expression.
- Human sexuality is a sign and indicator of our deep desire for spiritual intimacy with the triune God. Sexuality is ultimately about our spirituality. The desire for physical and emotional intimacy reflected in sexual desire highlights the deep human need for relational intimacy that is ultimately fulfilled in union with Christ.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Adultery: A consensual sexual relationship between a person who is married and someone who is not their spouse.

Casual Sex: The practice of consensual sex between individuals apart from any sustained, relational commitments.

Categorical Imperative: In Immanuel Kant's deontological ethical system, humanity's moral duties and obligations are derived from the categorical imperative, which is the ultimate commandment of reason. The Categorical Imperative is the absolute basis for declaring certain actions to be necessary. Kant's most famous form of the Categorical Imperative states, "Act only

according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”

Monogamy: The practice of being married to one person at a given time.

Polyamory: The practice of maintaining intimate relationships with multiple partners at a time with the knowledge of all partners.

Polyandry: The practice of women marrying multiple husbands. This is one form of polygamy.

Polygamy: The marriage practice of a person of either sex having more than one spouse at a given time.

Polygyny: The practice of men marrying multiple wives. This is the most widely accepted form of polygamy in the world.

Profane: In contrast to sacred, the term connotes that which is common, possibly even defiled or degrading. Generally, societies conceive adultery as profane or a defilement of marriage. In this chapter, consideration is given to Ayn Rand's controversial view that monogamous relations that do not honor her code of rational self-interest are profane.

Rational Self-Interest: Ayn Rand's philosophical and ethical tenet that conceives virtue in contractual terms whereby everyone pursues their own well-reasoned, selfish desires for individual advancement. This view rejects altruism, which conceives virtuous conduct as prizing care for another's well-being with no regard for one's own benefit. Rational selfishness is also known as objectivism, which involves the notion that things exist independent of thought and perception.

Sacred: In contrast to profane, the term refers to that which is conceived as hallowed and revered in a particular religion or society. Generally, societies regard marriage as sacred and view extramarital affairs as profane. In this chapter, consideration is given to Ayn Rand's highly contentious view that consensual sexual relations between two adults who operate according to rational self-interest is sacred.

Sexual Counterrevolution: The call to affirm the freedoms won by the sexual revolution while also seeking to guard against the sexual exploitation of others.

Sexual Revolution: The counter-cultural movement that arose in the 1960s that among other things hailed the removal of restrictions on sexual practices, including the limitation of sexual intimacy to monogamous relationships. The movement also affirmed the proliferation of contraceptive devices, as well as championed the agency of women, including their empowerment in the workforce.

Situational Ethics: Situational ethics favors making an ethical decision that creates or confirms the greatest amount of love in a given situation. Ethical decisions are evaluated based on the particular context, not by absolute moral standards. Laws, principles, and rules are viewed as contingent on the situation and may be broken if they do not serve to create or confirm the greatest amount of love.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- Our culture often emphasizes the importance of consent in sexual relationships. Do you think consent is all that really matters? Should age be a delineating or qualifying factor? What about income level, shared life interests, intellectual aptitude, and cultural affinities? What about marriage—should sexual intimacy be limited to consenting adults in a marriage relationship?
- Speaking of consent in marriage, what if one of the spouses no longer wants to have sex? Does the other partner have the right to demand sex from their spouse, or perhaps resort to alternative means to fulfill their sexual desires?
- On your view, should sexual intercourse be limited to a monogamous, marital relationship? Why or why not? As you provide your answer to these questions, please account for the claim made in this chapter that monogamous marriage, if approached rightly, best safeguards against using someone for sexual pleasure.
- What do you make of Joshua Schulz's account of how to experience sexual pleasure in a virtuous manner from a Kantian perspective? First, a lifelong monogamous marriage, especially one that is legally sanctioned, can help to ensure virtuous sexual activity. Second, the union involving sexual intimacy features all the accompanying constraints, especially as preconditions for sexual intercourse, including cohabitation, the mutual sharing of assets, and joint care for a couple's offspring. Third, the monogamous sexual union entails the mutual beneficent care and cultivation of virtue in one's spouse. Do you think these parameters make it possible for the two parties to pursue sexual intimacy in a morally virtuous manner? Why or why not? Would you add to or subtract from these qualifications? If so, what would you add or subtract, and why?
- Do you think there is ever a situation where sexual intercourse outside of marriage is ethical? Why or why not? If you answered in the affirmative, what might a possible situation be?
- Consider Joseph Fletcher's example of the woman who commits adultery while in prison in hopes of being impregnated and released in order to go home to care for her family. On your view, is her intent and action virtuous? Please support your answer.

- Is casual sex ever really “casual” if we are psychosomatic unities whereby our bodies and minds/souls/emotions are inseparable and intimately connected? Why or why not?
- Consider the movie *Friends with Benefits*. Two friends decide to hook up sexually while determining to stay clear of romantic and emotional entanglements. Do you think it's ever possible for two friends to hook up without developing resulting romantic and emotional ties? Why or why not?
- How can one guard against the objectification of one's sexual partner(s)? Does marriage provide the necessary safeguards against objectification or can objectifying, or commodifying, tendencies arise even within a monogamous marriage? If so, how?
- How would you apply the concepts of this chapter to the subject of pornography? In your view, does pornography, which aims to stimulate sexual pleasure, objectify the person or persons one is viewing? Would you be in favor or opposed to pornographic material if those being represented were a married couple expressing their deep love for one another sexually, and your own aim was to help cultivate sexual intimacy in your own marriage through their example? Why or why not?
- Why do you think the biblical narrative has plenty of examples of polygyny? Do the plethora of examples suggest that such sexual behavior is biblically sanctioned or does the biblical sexual ethic evolve throughout the narrative where such activity is now prohibited in all cultures? If prohibited, what would you require of people in polygamous relationships who convert to Christianity from societies where polygamy has been a widespread practice over the centuries? Should they divorce all except their first spouse? Why or why not?
- What difference does it make to our sexuality and sexual expression if we perceive a deep spiritual desire for intimacy with God that is signified in our sexual awareness and practice?
- What do you make of the claim we cannot have a sexual re-revolution until our hearts find rest in God?

IV. Case Study.

Traditional wisdom for couple therapy often argued that if you cultivate the relationship, sexual intimacy and satisfaction will follow. Today, some argue that one must first fix the sexual practice if the relationship is to grow. What do you think?

Consider the following situation. Bob and Susan began their married life in a normal way. They were in love and were able to express their love sexually, but with some restraint. Susan was more interested than Bob in intimate relationships, including sexual intercourse. Bob did not want to talk about his reserved approach to their intimate relationships, but he did reveal that his

parents had difficulty in their marriage. His attitude toward sex was stunted because he had not observed how marriage could include romance. The couple tried counseling, but with no improvement in their relationship. Bob eventually became functionally impotent, and he sought medical help for some possible organic cause.

Bob's doctor concluded that the problem was psychological, not physical. The physician suggested that Bob watch pornographic videos to stimulate sexual interest in hopes of cultivating intimacy with Susan to rebuild their struggling marriage.

Bob followed the doctor's recommendation and watched pornographic films for a brief period, but without improvement. The doctor then suggested that Bob and Susan watch the videos together to see if that could stimulate his ability for sexual intercourse. The doctor hoped that jointly watching the videos would help Bob to open up and share more freely. They might also discuss what they find more pleasurable and appealing in sexual practice as they reference the pornographic resources, which could in turn arouse both married partners.

Based on the doctor's recommendation, Bob suggested the idea to Susan with some hesitancy. She reluctantly agreed after voicing several objections. In the end, do you think Bob and Susan will grow in their relational intimacy based on their use of pornography?

Moreover, in view of this chapter's claim that we should not use others as means to the end of our own sexual satisfaction, do you think Bob and Susan are objectifying those persons engaged in sexual activities in pornographic materials? Why or why not?

If you were in their situation, and were struggling to cultivate intimacy in your marriage, what would you emphasize to ensure that you and your spouse were not treating one another as means to an end of sexual fulfillment? What would it take to ensure that sexual pleasure is not the focus but fruit of relational intimacy?

Chapter 6: More Than the Battle of the Sexes

I. Unique Features.

- An ethic that is grounded in and reduced to biological factors has no hope of furthering human flourishing until future generations can change and manipulate genes. This is a form of biological Calvinism (genetic determinism) that reduces humanity to mere biological robots. It has significant difficulty safeguarding against gender domination resulting from hypertrophy.
- Patriarchy involving the domination of women is the result of original sin. In the Garden of Eden, part of the curse and fallout from sin included a disordered relationship between man and woman. Human freedom distorted by sin, not biological determinism, is the root of the male urge to have dominion over women.
- Jesus' work of redemption and interaction with women undoes the effects of sin and destroys its power. Christ's work is not accomplished from a position of domination over humanity. Instead, it is his humble, sacrificial love that breaks sin and its power, including the quest for domination.
- To avoid anachronism when evaluating ancient ethical systems on gender views, one must ask if the system in question reinforced cultural norms of patriarchy or challenged and amended the patriarchal treatment of women. This same attitude is necessary when evaluating other ethical concerns to avoid cultural hegemony.
- Jesus is the great humanizer and protector of human dignity. Through Jesus's example, one can live an embodied ethic that fights depersonalization and dehumanization in our society. One can battle for the sexes and against objectification instead of pitting the sexes against each other.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Anachronism: The fallacious imposition of contemporary cultural and moral norms on past individuals and societies. Balanced consideration of the past involves asking whether a tradition, or movement within a given tradition, serves as an advance in its historical setting, capitulation to the status quo, or a regression. For example, it is important to ask whether a particular ethical system reinforced prevailing models of patriarchy at the time, especially in ways that demeaned women in their historical settings, regressed from what was already in place, or challenged and amended such patriarchal models in support of women's value and flourishing. Present-day analysis of the past should clearly differentiate between these alternatives and show some measure of sympathy for those systems that advanced the status of women, even if their perspectives and prescribed social order did not attain to today's privileged moral standards.

Colonialism: The practice of controlling another people politically, economically, and ideologically. In gender studies, it involves the search for evidence of women exercising their agency in non-Western cultures in ways deemed favorable to Western values. This ideological system often results in a negative evaluation that is unfavorable to non-Western societies and their traditions.

Contextualized Feminism: In contrast to anachronistic feminist assessments of the past, this view favors complexification. It accounts for a dynamism that chronicles the direction or evolution of a higher regard and advocacy for more rights for women over time, as in the case of rabbinic thought in Judaism.

Extreme Environmentalism: A construct found in sociological and anthropological studies that exclusively features humans' environmental, cultural, and institutional influences on human behavior. It discounts any consideration of biological or genetic sources shaping significant developments in human conduct.

Feminism: A system of thought and practice that rejects male domination and advocates for women's well-being and rights based on the conviction of equality between the sexes in all spheres of society.

Foot Binding: A practice in China from the tenth century to the mid-twentieth century that altered the shape of girls' feet. It involved mutilation of the feet and tight wrapping with bandages. The practice often involved erotic associations and expressed refinement and status impacting marriage prospects.

Gender: The inner awareness and conception of our identity as humans according to categories of male, female, or some other identifier. While most people refer to themselves in "binary" terms, that is, as male and female, some individuals maintain their identity does not match their biological sex. Those who do not see themselves as being gender "binary" may use terms like "agender," "gender diverse," and "gender nonconforming" to talk about their identity. The umbrella term for these categories is "non-binary."

Gender Dysphoria: A term referenced in the case study below to refer to the anxiety or disquiet a person may feel because of a disparity between their gender identity and biological sex.

Gender Expression: A reference to the manifold ways a person transmits their sense of gender identity, including various behaviors, stylistic features such as choice of clothing and hairstyles, and activities (which may or may not align with prevailing, acceptable patterns in society).

Genetic Essentialism: Biological or genetic sources alone shape significant developments in behavior. It discounts consideration of environmental, non-genetic forces that shape humanity.

Hunter-Gatherer: A largely nomadic lifestyle ascribing gender roles for hunting, fishing, and the search for vegetation. It is often claimed that prehistoric people assigned strict gender roles of hunting to men and gathering and raising of children to women. Certain scholars challenge this widespread claim based on some relatively recent archeological findings.

Hypertrophy: The extreme growth of preexisting societal structures that can involve monstrous, oppressive effects, as in the case of gender inequities. According to E. O. Wilson, hypertrophy was the key to the emergence of human civilization as we now know it.

Patriarchy: A system of governance and organization that favors men and excludes women from positions of power and influence.

Reflexivity: The dynamic in our human constitution that allows us to reflect on ourselves and break and transcend rules or tendencies that arise from our genetic and biological constitution, as in the case of sexual dimorphism and strict gender relations.

Sati (or Sutte): The practice in India where a widow burns herself on a husband's funeral pyre. *Sati* was viewed as the symbol of a virtuous woman's devotion to her spouse, according to some Brahman and noble castes. It has been argued that families often pressured widows to commit *sati* so they could receive the husband's inheritance in place of the widow.

Sexism: Discrimination based on gender, most particularly against girls and women. The most extreme form of prejudice against women is misogyny, which is the hatred of women.

Sexual Dimorphism: Differences in structure, size, color, and shape of males and females of a given species, collating with pregnancy and childbirth, as well as the hunter-gatherer differentiation involving men and women.

Transgender: An overarching category for persons whose gender identity, associated behaviors, and characteristics do not correspond to that gender generally correlated with the sex they were designated at birth. Not everyone who operates in gender non-conforming ways identifies themselves as transgender.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- How do you see sexism manifesting itself in Western culture today? What are some examples of sexism you have seen or experienced?
- How might the idea that gender domination is part of humanity's biological makeup affect the way one approaches the issue of sexism? Is singular consideration of biology for understanding sexism helpful? Harmful? What about singular consideration of environmental or social factors?

- Where does your hope for cultural and ethical change lie? How does your basis for hope change the way you view the current situation and the possibility of change involving gender dynamics?
- How does your understanding of original sin and Christ's work of redemption shape your views on gender and the roles of men and women dating back to biblical times?
- What did you find noteworthy in the various religious traditions' views on women accounted for in this chapter? What did you find helpful? Problematic?
- How does the suggestion to avoid anachronistic and culturally hegemonic judgments by evaluating how traditions confronted or capitulated to their patriarchal cultural settings help you in evaluating and judging other cultures?
- What would humanizing gender relations look like in your life? Our culture? How might Jesus's example of countercultural gender relations guide your thinking and living in this area?

IV. Case Study.

Steve and Cindy's thirteen-year-old son Tommy was "innocently" interested in "girls' things" as far back as early childhood. Throughout his childhood, Tommy enjoyed playing with "girls' toys," reading and listening to poetry, and dressing up in colorful clothing while wearing makeup. "Boys' things" just seemed so bland and boring in comparison. Tommy preferred to play with girls and was not really interested in the sports in which other boys at school competed.

Steve and Cindy were "liberated" in their attitude toward mixing gender roles up until adolescence. They believed this stage in development, which follows the onset of puberty, would naturally give rise to the separation of boys from girls, including in Tommy's case. But now that Tommy is thirteen, they have grown uneasy that these same interests and behaviors persist. So, they reach out to a Christian counselor. The counselor tells them they need to stop Tommy from doing these things since it goes against "the order of creation."

Steve and Cindy are not so sure the counselor's advice is sound. Tommy's already getting hassled at school for being "different." They fear that if they do what the counselor recommends, they will add to the growing sense of isolation and shame that Tommy is already experiencing at school and in his neighborhood. Their call to stop would communicate to the boy that there is something deeply "wrong" with him. Moreover, they wonder about the counselor's interpretation of Scripture. It doesn't seem that he accounts for the surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultural context that would shed light on why God condemned such practices as men and women wearing clothing associated with the other sex (See Deuteronomy 22:5).

If you were in Tommy's parents' shoes, what would you do? To what extent do you think Tommy's interests reflect a distorted sense of gendered identity, even gender dysphoria? (For what it's worth, not all forms of pushing the cultural boundaries and patterns of gender roles reflects gender dysphoria.) How might your understanding of Tommy's situation, and whether he is experiencing gender dysphoria, influence your decision?

If you were to dialogue about the matter with Tommy's parents, and support or challenge the Christian counselor, what would you say? Consider whether you would enforce or erase the taboos that separate toys, sports, clothing, and colors according to gender.

Account for Anthony Leeds's effort to balance between genetic essentialism and extreme environmentalism and the import of "reflexivity" as you interact with Tommy's parents and counselor.

Chapter 7: More Than the Mere End or Extension of Life

I. Unique Features.

- “Quality of life” must be framed in communal rather than commodifying terms. Any discussion of quality of life must be framed in terms of personhood. People are more than things, including their perceived usefulness and value to others. Such an emphasis on quality of life takes seriously the sanctity of dying patients (and other stakeholders in end-of-life-care matters) as persons.
- Those who support physician-assisted suicide assert that the individual must be free of outside pressures. There are many complex ethical questions related to physician-assisted suicide. However, assessing whether a person experiences outside pressure is difficult to evaluate given the subtle, often unacknowledged, power differences between the medical provider, family, society at large, and patient. The complexities surface even more among patients from vulnerable and marginalized people groups.
- Philosophical and theological anthropology comes into play when making end-of-life determinations. For those who operate from a utilitarian framework, pleasure or happiness is prized over one's duty to adhere to an external moral law. In a situational ethical framework, which like utilitarianism is consequentialist or outcomes based, love or compassion framed in terms of quality of life replaces adherence to a law that prizes what the situationist might call sanctity of life. An emphasis on sanctity of life often if not always entails deontology or moral duty, as in Kantian ethics, which maintains that people are more than mere means, but rather ends in themselves. It also includes divine decree models, as in the Judeo-Christian tradition with its doctrine of humanity as created in God's image and the divine command not to kill.
- We must account for the totality of an ethical system when making judgments on that system's conclusions on a particular ethical issue. Ethical decisions that often seem contradictory make sense when considered within the complete framework of an ethical paradigm.
- Virtue Ethics reflects on *what kind of person* is required to provide good care to a dying patient or family member. The virtues of compassion, benevolence, and respectfulness are all necessary for a physician or family member when engaging with the terminally ill person. Essential to virtuous conduct is an attitude that honors and respects the patient's ethical and religious convictions.
- The Christian view of redemptive suffering based on Jesus' humble, cruciform being frees one to empathically engage those who are dying. An individual's fear of death and the shallow desire to avoid all human suffering hinders one from genuinely ministering to those who are dying.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Cathecontic: A form of ethics articulated by H. Richard Niebuhr that emphasizes “an ethic of appropriateness or fitting response.”

Eudaimonism: An ethical model that approaches the virtues by way of human flourishing, according to which flourishing is equated with performing humanity's distinctive function or vocation of rational deliberation well.

Euthanasia: A doctor is allowed by law to end a person's life by a painless means, just so long as the patient agrees.

Here are some specific forms of euthanasia:

- **Active Euthanasia:** The determination by a patient or another party to use lethal substances or other means to end a patient's life.
- **Involuntary Euthanasia:** The termination of the life of a rationally competent patient without their consent and/or against their will. This act is considered murder.
- **Nonvoluntary Euthanasia:** The ending of the life of a patient who is incapacitated and unable to provide consent. In this case, a person who is considered the most appropriate party makes the determination after seeking to discern the quality of life and level of suffering.
- **Passive Euthanasia:** Entails withholding life-sustaining treatments, which in turn leads to the termination of a patient's life.
- **Voluntary Euthanasia:** The ending of a patient's life with their consent.

Hospice Care: The provision of comfort, alleviation of pain, and support for a terminally ill patient. There is no attempt to cure the individual. Nor is an attempt made to hasten the end of life.

Physician-Assisted Suicide: The practice whereby a doctor helps a patient commit suicide. The physician prescribes a lethal dose of drugs at the request of the patient. Upon evaluation, the conclusion has been made that the patient is free from outside pressure and rationally competent and able to communicate their wishes on such weighty matters. Generally, such assistance is provided for someone who is terminally ill and will die within the next several months. Some advocates for this practice prefer terms like “death with dignity,” “physician-assisted death,” or “physician aid-in-dying” to guard against the stigma and fear associated with the word “suicide.”

Quality of Life: This doctrine often emphasizes the minimization of suffering and maximization of human autonomy and freedom for human flourishing. Medical ethicist Robert Lyman Potter puts it this way: “Maximize human flourishing and minimize human suffering.”

Sanctity of Life: This doctrine often accounts for a particular religious tradition's emphasis on humans being created in the divine image, possessing the seed or spark of divine nature, and/or adhering to a divine command irrespective of the level of rational capacity, human flourishing, and/or level of suffering.

Situation Ethics: Situation ethics is not anti-law. Nor is it “legalistic.” Situation ethics for Joseph Fletcher is never about “anything goes,” or self-gratifying desire, which is an antinomian outlook. Nor does it entail adherence to external, legal codes as ends in themselves. Rather, for Fletcher, situation ethics is attitudinal in the sense of the Christian rendering of love as *agape*. It always involves keeping unconditional concern for God and others firmly in mind. Fletcher claims to follow Augustine's lead: “Love with care and then what you will, do,” not the antinomian “Love with desire and do what you please.”

Slippery Slope: Slippery slope arguments are not always fallacies. A slippery slope fallacy jumps from an action to a series of actions with no proof of causal connection. A legitimate form of slippery slope argument only makes causal claims when there is proof. Alternatively, it will suggest possible connections rather than project links or connections beyond the evidence. Proper slippery slope arguments will also caution against hasty determinations in view of possible negative outcomes.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- While not explicitly mentioned in this chapter, *agape* love appeared in prior chapters. An ethic driven by *agape* love will not make ethical decisions based on a person's perceived market value or usefulness to society. *Agape* love does not discriminate against the seeming “valuable” and “invaluable,” but seeks to create and preserve community with all people. Why might this theme of *agape* love be pertinent to the discussion of end-of-life decisions?
- What type of people are considered valuable in our society in your estimation? Why? What shapes our society's determination of a person's value, including critically and terminally ill patients?
- How do you define “quality of life”? Is it important to you to differentiate between “quality of life” and “quantity of life”? Why or why not?

- From a personalist perspective, how important is it to ensure that we do not impose our beliefs, ethical convictions, and suffering on other persons, including patients who face major life-care decisions?
- What do you think a “good death” and “dignity” in dying looks like for a terminally ill patient?
- In your estimation, what would it look like to model radical empathy to someone who is suffering from a terminal illness? Please illustrate your vision of what radical empathy would entail in this situation.
- On a scale of 1-5, with 1 representing lowest in importance and 5 representing highest in importance, how would you rank the five ethical issues discussed in part two of this book? They are abortion, genetic engineering, sexual expression, gender roles, and physician-assisted suicide? Please provide the rationale for your rankings. Include consideration of how your individual and/or familial experience involving these ethical matters influences your sense of each ethical topic's level of significance. For example, if you have a family member with a disability, how might that influence your evaluation of whether to abort a fetus that manifests early genetic signs of a particular disability? How might the experience of witnessing a family member on life-support influence your ranking of end-of-life care decisions?
- In view of the immediately prior questions on personal experience and value judgments of ethical issues, do subjective inclinations along these lines undermine objectivity in ethics? Or does the possibility of an individual's past experiences shaping ethical judgments simply show how truly personal we all are? In other words, do such dynamics suggest that no matter how hard we try, we are situated beings whose kind and level of experience influences our ethical decisions to various degrees? If this is true, how important might it be for you to become increasingly aware of your own value judgments based on events and persons in your life history?
- In your estimation, whose views should you take most seriously in making end-of-life care decisions? The presiding physician, the patient, close family members, close friends, a pastoral or religious leader, insurance companies, society at large? Why or why not? Whose views would take precedence to someone working from a personalist ethical vantage point? Why? Whose views would take precedence to someone working from a market society approach to ethical determinations? Why?

IV. Case Study.

Kate is thirty-five years of age and very industrious and athletic. One evening, upon returning home from her work as a physical therapist, she is severely injured in a car accident. Kate

endures a traumatic brain injury, a broken arm, some broken ribs, and severe damage to the lower spine, which has left her legs paralyzed. Kate's in a coma for weeks due to the traumatic brain injury. Finally, she emerges in a minimally conscious state. However, she cannot communicate presently. Kate is recently divorced and her only surviving relatives are her mother, grandmother, and two small boys.

Kate's mother recalls how when Kate was a teenager, the family watched Clint Eastwood's movie *Million Dollar Baby*. Eastwood is a boxing coach whose protégé and surrogate daughter endures a catastrophic injury during a title match. The young boxer breaks her neck and will remain on a ventilator the rest of her life and cannot reposition herself. She develops bed sores, which requires the amputation of one of her legs. The young boxer begs her coach and surrogate father to pull the plug. He refuses. However, after she bites off her tongue in the effort to die from bleeding, he consents, albeit in a tormented state. She is his life's breath. Moreover, as a Roman Catholic who seeks his priest's advice, he realizes the moral and spiritual consequences for killing her, not to mention the legal problems. Even so, he removes the ventilator from the young boxer, turns off the warning signal, and injects her with an overwhelming dose of adrenaline to end her life.

While the story may appear far-fetched today, as medical staff rather than family or friends would remove life-sustaining treatment, *Million Dollar Baby* wasn't far-fetched to a teenage Kate. She would want to die, too, if she were ever faced with a similar situation.

Kate's mother agonizes over what to do. Kate is her life. She doesn't know how she will continue to live if she loses Kate. And what about the boys if they lose their mom? Moreover, Kate's mother and grandmother are "born-again Christians." Kate gave up the faith after watching her father die a long, agonizing, cruel death from cancer. Her mother and grandmother fear that unbelieving Kate will go to hell if she dies. And yet, Kate's mother also wants to honor Kate's decision. Unfortunately, Kate does not have an advance directive. All her mother has to go on is that conversation Kate had with the family following the movie years ago. Would her very industrious and athletic daughter tolerate not being able to breathe on her own and walk and run again? Would Kate ever forgive her mother if she keeps Kate alive?

Let's say you are a chaplain in the hospital. Kate's mother and grandmother involve you in conversations with the medical staff and want to know what you think. Here are a few additional details to consider. It has only been a few months since the injury. Kate may become more conscious in time and be able to communicate and make important decisions. Moreover, Kate likely never imagined really being in this state when she was a teenager and said she would rather die if something like "Million Dollar Baby" ever happened to her. If she increases dramatically in consciousness, Kate might be able to adjust her expectations for what a meaningful quality of life would entail. After all, as a physical therapist, she has witnessed countless injuries and observed how people have adapted to extreme conditions involving the loss of various bodily functions and still find a meaningful quality of life.

Account for the various relational, spiritual, and medical dimensions, as you consider how you will respond. Ask yourself the three questions set forth in this chapter before answering the

mother and grandmother: What is going on here? What ought you to care about? What is the fitting response?

Closing Note: The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is the contact for all suicide prevention resources in the U.S. For more information, please refer here: <https://988lifeline.org/>.

Chapter 8: More Than Racial Divisions

I. Unique Features.

- We live in a racialized society. Many people assert that society has moved past racism due to the Civil Rights Movement. The denial of racialization had led to it becoming completely entrenched in society. A racialized society does not operate according to fixed, static categories such as slavery and Jim Crow legislation, but evolving variables. Moreover, individual acts of overt hatred do not constitute a racialized society, but the construction and reinforcement of social structures that are generally overlooked, ignored, and/or forgotten. Such social structures take shape in education, housing, medical care, and religion, among other domains.
- Race is a social or psychological construct rather than biological reality. We tend to excuse disparities between communities as natural phenomena whereas they are social constructs that can influence minority groups' well-being in negative ways. All humans belong to the same biological race.
- Biology and genetics may explain the human tendency toward the arbitrary creation of rival groups or what E. O. Wilson calls "tribalism" for survival. However, biology doesn't provide a way for us to move beyond "tribalism." It cannot prescribe the correct behavior or attitude but only describe reality as it is.
- To move beyond excessive dominant cultural in-group loyalty and racialization, one must listen to marginalized groups with empathy and an open mind to effect systemic change. Following Reinhold Niebuhr's analysis, individuals may be inclined to effect change. However, those in the dominant culture tend to ignore, dismiss, and reinforce racism in society. However, this only leads to further dehumanization of minority populations. What is required is "coercive love" seasoned by hope in view of the beloved community.
- Participation in the life of the triune God of love gives rise to an ethical framework involving benevolent care for all people. This ethic is opposed to exclusive in-group loyalty (inordinate love for one's own group) and individualism (love for self above others), which are both rampant in contemporary culture.
- Love that reflects the Trinity affirms both the individual person and the community. The love of God calls humans to self-transcendence by actively seeking the good of others. Self-transcendence does not negate the idea of self-love. Rather, self-love and self-transcendence work in tandem in keeping with Trinitarian ontology.
- Social structures and not just individual choices and achievements must be accounted for when discussing racialization. Evangelical Christians, for example, are often prone to an individualistic outlook that fails to account for the way society is structured in dynamic and

evolving terms. The structures of society, including economics and the penal system, foster racialized barriers that are extremely difficult to penetrate and eradicate.

- Agape love must be embodied in non-violent, just, equitable action for the common good of all. Love that is not just is merely sentimental and further entrenches marginalization and dehumanization. Justice that is not coupled with love only leads to further forms of segregation. God forms us in union with the cruciform and victorious Jesus through the indwelling Spirit as the catalyst for a truly embodied form of unconditional and just love.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Agape: Refers to an unconditional and all-powerful form of love that cares for one's enemy in effecting change that fosters justice, equity, and mutuality. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote: "What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic . . . power at its best is love . . . implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love." Agape is never ethereal, weak, or passive, but embodied, strong, and active.

Ahimsa: Entails an active love that does no harm to others and acts to shield them from injury. For Mahatma Gandhi, such active love entails a forceful grasping or coercion to keep others from doing harm. These themes resonate with King's view of agape.

Altruism: The practice of disinterested or selfless concern for the well-being of others. For the purposes of this book, altruism is a virtuous trait that must be exercised toward all people, not just one's own tribal group.

Beloved Community: The inbreaking of God's kingdom involving coercive and non-violent civil disobedience to effect change for the equitable and dignified love of all people.

Biologized Racial Fallacy: The framing of race through a biological lens rather than through its function in society.

Complacence: According to Jonathan Edwards, complacence is the feeling of satisfaction, delight, and pleasure in another being obtaining the good they desire.

Compounded Self-Love: Edwards conceived this form of love being grounded in and arising from the life of the triune God. As in God's life, this form of love is creative, all-encompassing, and communal. Such love involves self-transcendence, not merely self-esteem. It entails pursuits of union and communion that cherishes another's well-being.

Consent: Jonathan Edwards used the term consent to mean the love of benevolence for another person's well-being. Consent is an inclination to the good of another.

Disinterested Benevolence: A form of love that entails no consideration of oneself, but only care for the well-being of another. According to Samuel Hopkins (in contrast to his mentor Jonathan Edwards), true love is always disinterested and makes no place for love of oneself.

Racialization: The creation of a society or social system where one's ethnic identity matters greatly in life experience, opportunities, and relationships. Racialization allocates resources differently to communities based on race. Racialization operates by variables rather than constants such as Jim Crow laws, or the "new Jim Crow".

Racism: While people of all subcultural backgrounds can operate according to racial prejudice, "racism" (as defined in this book) signifies prejudice that entails power imbalances favoring the dominant culture. The effort to dismantle a racialized society must account for present day power imbalances, as well as the historical impact on present day situations.

Simple Mere Self-Love: A destructive form of love that only entails self-concern and excludes care for another person's well-being (see the discussion of Edwards's treatment of love in the volume).

Simple self-love: A form of love that involves self-care, personal preservation, and happiness (see the discussion of Edwards's treatment of love).

Tribalism: In our current context, it usually describes the behaviors and attitudes toward others caused by strong loyalty to one's "tribe" or social group. Tribalism is often associated with a culture that is divided along political lines. E. O. Wilson views tribalism as a fundamental human trait based on our elementary drive to form and take pleasure from in-group membership.

Please note: It is important to realize "tribalism" is not a forgone conclusion whenever one finds group solidarity. Ingroup dynamics do not inevitably lead to intergroup divisions. Those who invoke the term "tribalism" may intentionally or unintentionally foster distrust between groups and suppress those groups or dissenting members within their own groups to safeguard collective or individual status or prominence. We must be alert to the use and employment of the term. For more on this subject, refer to Dominic Packer and Jay Van Bavel, "The Myth of Tribalism," (tagline: "Beware of the false notion that group solidarity leads inevitably to conflict"), *The Atlantic*, January 3, 2022; <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/01/tribalism-myth-group-solidarity-prejudice-conflict/621008/>; see also their book, Jay J. Van Bavel and Dominic J. Packer, *The Power of Us: Harnessing Our Shared Identities to Improve Performance, Increase Cooperation, and Promote Social Harmony* (Little, Brown Spark, 2021).

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- Do you think the United States is a racialized society? Why or why not?

- What oppressive social structures are you aware of in society? Have you experienced or observed a dehumanizing structure that makes rising above one's situation extremely difficult?
- What reasons would you give someone for including the theme of power or power imbalances in a definition of racism in view of what Reinhold Niebuhr and Martin Luther King, Jr. claim?
- Have you ever found yourself dismissing someone else's claim of racial prejudice? Why did you dismiss his/her assertion? How might listening with empathy in an open and inquisitive posture prove instructive to engaging people's claims of racial prejudice?
- How do you understand the difference between sentimental and anemic love and agape love? What would "coercive love," as King understood it, look like in your present context?
- How can you move beyond the 'natural' human tendency that manifests itself in ethnocentrism and excessive in-group loyalty on the one hand and radical individualism on the other hand?
- What would solidarity with all people look like? How can someone who is from the dominant culture engage in agape love and solidarity without being patronizing and benignly hegemonic?

IV. Case Study.

Hank and Jim go to the same church and have been friends for a long time. However, for the past few years, Jim has become increasingly interested in the topic of racism and it has led to some difficult conversations with Hank.

Jim recently gained approval from the church leadership to begin a class titled "Race and Christianity in the US." The course features books from minority voices and on the history of racism in this country with special consideration of Christianity's role in the conflict. Hank attends the class but has become increasingly frustrated.

A few weeks ago, Hank accused Jim after class of being "woke." For Hank, "woke" conveys political correctness on matters pertaining to race and includes the unpatriotic effort to rewrite history in view of "critical race theory." Moreover, Hank thinks the topic has no place in a local church setting, as it takes away from focused consideration of the gospel.

Jim retorted that, if anything, the term conveys a sense of political incorrectness in view of the dominant culture's backlash. In Jim's mind, the word "woke" conveys positive connotations, namely, that someone is keenly aware of racial prejudice and discrimination against minority

populations. Jim claims that he only wants to introduce fellow congregants to diverse voices on the topic of race and study the history of racism in this country, including Christianity's role, both good and bad. His aim is not to dismantle this country's underlying values or discount its virtues. Nor does he wish to hurt the church's unity but strengthen diverse unity in the body. Jim hopes that charitable and critical consideration will help strengthen the U.S., as well as the church as a prophetic community pursuing love and justice. Furthermore, far from being a distraction to gospel witness, Jim maintains that racism, past and present, hinders the advance of the gospel. He goes so far as to quote from Martin Luther King Jr's "Paul's Letter to American Christians" at the close of the class one Sunday morning at church:

There is another thing that disturbs me to no end about the American church—you have a white church, and you have a Negro church. You have allowed segregation to creep into the doors of the church. How can such a division exist in the true body of Christ? You must face the tragic fact that when you stand at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning to sing "In Christ There Is No East or West," you stand in the most segregated hour of Christian America. They tell me that there is more integration in the entertaining world, in sports arenas, in other secular agencies, than there is in the Christian church. How appalling that is. I understand that there are Christians among you who try to justify segregation on the basis of the Bible. They argue that the Negro is inferior by nature because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham. Oh, my friends, this is blaspheming. This is against everything that the Christian religion stands for. I must say to you, as I have said to so many Christians before, that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. Moreover, I must reiterate the words that I uttered on Mars' Hill: "God that made the world and all things therein hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/pauls-letter-american-christians-sermon-delivered-commission-ecumenical>).

After reading this quote, Jim tells the class that this statement is still true today in the American Church—including their congregation.

Tensions have now risen to boiling point. Jim has started raising the topics of policing and the prison system and has claimed that they are racialized power structures. Hank and a few others in the class get into a heated exchange on the subject. Hank argues that the 2023 beating and murder of an African American man by African American police officers in Memphis illustrates that policing is not racialized. Moreover, he asserts that "the problem is isolated to a few bad cops."

The weekly discussions have become increasingly intense with two groups emerging in the church. The conflict has spilled out into the congregation with a vast number of people taking sides. The church leaders feel the need to weigh in and try to reconcile the two strident groups. The church elders ask the new outreach pastor, who is African American and the son of a police officer, to talk to Jim about possibly toning down the topics or putting the class on hold for a

while. The pastor feels conflicted about being asked to play this role given that he is still getting acclimated and feels the racial problems nationally and the church community's cultural dynamics are very complex. But he does not wish to refuse given that the church authorities who hired him want him to talk to Jim about the class and conflict.

If you were a church leader, how would you seek to address the current situation involving the class and topics, as well as try to mediate the growing tensions in the church?

Chapter 9: More Than Import Market Value

I. Unique Features.

- An adequate understanding of immigration reform must account for the often subtle and sometimes obvious role the United States (and other countries) plays in various migration patterns and regional conflicts. The past displacement of people groups and the past and present role of the United States in foreign countries through global free market economics and foreign policy decisions cannot be discounted when seeking to understand the complexity of immigration concerns. The border crisis is, in part, the result of the U.S.'s own political and economic policies in other countries.
- A personalist ethical model seeks to safeguard against framing immigration policies primarily in free market or economic terms. A government that constructs immigration policies solely in terms of economic and market benefits discounts people's human worth and dignity. The Bible repeatedly speaks against such commodification. The church must resist such objectifying measurements of human worth.
- Empathy involves inquiring and recognizing the valid ethical and moral considerations set forth by those of different political persuasions. Instead of living in a binary world, it is important to account for the legitimate concerns over immigration on 'both sides of the political aisle.' Such empathy increases the possibility of finding equitable solutions for all.
- Jesus' divine migration from heaven to earth as "the last man" should frame one's thinking about the stranger in our midst. The Bible's command to care for the alien among us and Christ's migration from heaven to earth to love the lost, the last, and the least warrant a compassionate response to the complicated issue of immigration reform. This does not suggest discounting valid concerns over safety and societal assimilation or integration.
- Those who are affluent often experience failure of memory. Affluenza leads to amnesia. In the chapter, the author wrote: "It is quite likely that we conveniently forget such stark realities on our nation's shores. We have a hard time recollecting the distant and recent past immigration policies that [Emma] Lazarus would have found repugnant. Perhaps it is fair to say that it is very difficult to recall the past correctly when we have invested so much and gained a great deal from trade and investment/extraction policies in the distant and recent eras. One of the crippling effects of affluenza is how it distorts our memories and frames our narratives regarding 'us' and 'them,' such as between US nationals and foreign migrants. Affluenza easily gives rise to amnesia."

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

American Exceptionalism: The erroneous claim that the United States is unique in virtue and worthy of the international community's undying adulation.

Disaster capitalism: A strategy that utilizes catastrophic trials in various societies to put in place structures of extreme privatization combined with the privatization of the accompanying disaster response.

Manifest Destiny: The doctrine that the United States has a divine mandate to expand and have dominion over North America, which includes the flourishing of democracy and capitalism. It involved the removal of indigenous peoples from their native land and their attempted indoctrination.

Market Society: Entails the transformation of society where free market economics pervades all aspects of society. In a market society, even moral values and decisions are framed in economic terms. In keeping with Michael Sandel's thesis in *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, a free-market economy is one thing, but a free-market society is quite another, and must be opposed.

Merit-Based Immigration: An approach to immigration that awards entry based on individual merit (meritocracy), such as skilled labor and economic viability, rather than based on need and family cohesion.

Moral Foundations: A core set of moral intuitions developed by Jonathan Haidt and his colleagues that spans the social spectrum and informs political judgments. The core set is harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect, purity/sanctity, and liberty.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- Do you know your family's story of migration to the United States? Has this framed or influenced your political views on immigration in any way? Why or why not?
- Have you ever considered how the United States has played a key role in creating the immigration crisis? Does considering the role of global capitalism affect your views on immigration?
- Why do you think affluenza can readily give rise to amnesia on US incursions in foreign lands that might foster mass migration patterns to the US today?
- How has listening and acknowledging the concerns of someone you disagreed with changed the conflict and relationship? Why is this important for the debate on immigration reform?

- How does contemplating the divine “migration” of Jesus Christ from heaven to earth influence your views on immigration?
- Which of the following arguments would you find possibly more persuasive for retaining rather than returning undocumented people to their countries of origin, and why? Please label what ethical models they might possibly reflect.
 - The undocumented migrants in question perform tasks that most American citizens will not do, providing invaluable services for industry in support of the U.S. economy.
 - The undocumented migrants have been displaced due in part to U.S. incursions and exploitation of their countries of origin. We have a responsibility to care for them.
 - The Bible commands God’s people to care for orphans, widows, and aliens or foreigners in their distress.
 - A country that refuses to welcome people in need fails to grow in compassion. Compassion is like a muscle. If you don’t use it, you lose it. Compassion is essential to a country’s greatness as a people.
- Please watch the following two Ted Talk videos featuring social psychologist Jonathan Haidt. How would you apply the various moral intuitions Haidt outlines in his Moral Foundations Theory to immigration reform in the US on its southern border? Those moral intuitions are as follows: Care/Harm, Fairness/Cheating, Loyalty/Betrayal, Authority/Subversion, Sanctity/Degradation, and Liberty/Oppression (liberty was added later to Haidt’s moral foundation theory). Please be specific, including an explanation of why you favor this approach? How would you seek to engage others empathically in view of what Haidt argues in the second video below?

https://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_the_moral_roots_of_liberals_and_conservatives?language=en

https://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_can_a_divided_america_heal?language=en
- Now consider the Evangelical Immigration Table. How do the various principled values resemble Haidt’s spectrum of moral intuitions? Please be specific and draw comparisons between the two frameworks:
 - Respects the God-given dignity of every person.
 - Protects the unity of the immediate family.
 - Respects the rule of law.
 - Guarantees secure national borders.

- Ensures fairness to taxpayers.
- Establishes a path toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify and who wish to become permanent residents.

<https://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/#PRINCIPLES>

IV. Case Study.

Ben has just found out that his good friend Felipe is undocumented. He is married to an American citizen. They have a small child, who was born in the US. Recently, a law was established in your state requiring US citizens and permanent residents to inform authorities of any person who is here “illegally.”

In view of the new law and increasing debate on the issue in Ben's state and his Christian community, the pastor at his church recently gave a sermon on Romans 13 about God's call to obey governing authorities. The passage includes the following statement:

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. (Romans 13:1-5 NIV)

The pastor drew attention to Dr. King's “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” wherein he argued:

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: “How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?” The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that “an unjust law is no law at all.”

https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

The pastor pointed out that throughout the history of the church Christians broke what they took to be unjust laws to honor God's law. Even the early church refused to submit to Jewish and

Roman authorities who demanded they stop preaching in Jesus' name, and they willingly and joyfully suffered the consequences of their disobedience. He also drew attention to Christian conservatives who are arrested for protesting in front of abortion clinics. He asked the congregation whether they think they must obey every governmental law. The pastor did not provide a conclusive argument but left it open-ended.

Ben left church that Sunday wrestling even more over the issue of immigration reform. Should he report Felipe? It is also important to keep in mind that Felipe's wife has major health issues and would not be able to join her husband if he were deported. How would you encourage Ben to respond, and why?

What do you think Jesus would do? Please provide your rationale.

Chapter 10: More Than Just War

I. Unique Features.

- Hubris (i.e., excessive pride) often keeps Americans from reflecting on the morality of the US's military methods. All too often, politicians, military leaders, and civilians throw around terms like "just war" to justify our military's actions. Drone warfare must be evaluated against just war theory to discern if it meets the criteria. Otherwise, drone warfare runs the risk of being part of a war *of* terror.
- The principle of publicity demands that drone warfare requires independent oversight to ensure that drones aren't weapons of terror. Without some form of independent oversight, drone warfare can easily become an uninhibited weapons strategy used recklessly throughout the world.
- Just War theory includes the principle of necessity, which asks whether the use of force is the only or best way to end hostility. Especially when considering the unique situation involving terrorist groups, drones are often viewed (rightly or wrongly) as the best military option available.
- Just War theory includes the principle of discrimination, which states that a government has the moral responsibility to discriminate between civilians and enemy combatants and to target only the latter. Drones cannot be held morally culpable since they do not have freedom or intention. Rather, they require human moral agents to operate them. The question arises: does a drone operator's lack of intent to strike civilians remove moral culpability in the event of civilian casualties?
- Just War theory includes the principle of proportionality, which maintains that the foreseen but unintended harm must be in proportion to the military advantage gained. Drone warfare not only includes unintended civilian casualties (though it is argued that such casualties are far less than with traditional means of warfare), but also the steep emotional and psychological harm for populations living in constant fear of the imminent threat of drone strikes.
- One must reflect on how Christianity influences the United States' policies on war given its role as the largest religion in the country. Moreover, based on the conviction that theories of the state are often secularized theological concepts, a country's political and wartime tactics are reflective of the "god" or "gods" of that country. The question becomes, what type of god (or gods) is revealed in the United States' use of drone warfare?

- Dialogue and diplomacy are needed to seek peace with one's political enemies. The triune God is love. This unconditional love grounds all attempts to seek peace in conflict and love one's enemies. One necessary step towards peace is to listen with an open mind to the perspectives of those in other countries, including Muslim majority countries.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Drone Essentialism: The presupposition in a technological society that drone technology dictates or determines its application. This presupposition fatally presumes that drones are incapable of civilian casualties. It also fails to account for the human element in technological applications like drone combat, including human error and the required "relational" resources, namely, proximate bases from which to operate drones in the region and local partners who will assist in drone strike operations. As noted in the chapter, "to err may be human, but to consider drones in abstraction from the human, relational component is also erroneous."

Jihad: A term in Islam that refers to "struggle." While it can entail military conflict, its primary meaning focuses on the individual Muslim's internal, spiritual, and moral struggle to adhere to the way of Islam.

Just War Theory: A doctrine or set of beliefs that seeks to make sure war is morally justifiable and that the actions taken in war are moral. Usually, a set of principles is used to determine whether a war is morally justifiable, or that actions taken during war are moral.

Military Humanism: Noam Chomsky employed this term to critically assess the U.S.'s military involvement in Kosovo. The United States' democratically elected leaders often claim to wage war for the benefit of democracy and the well-being of the international community, yet without being subject to the canons of international law and without United Nations oversight. It is claimed that the U.S. often functions as if it has exceptional status, as if we bear the burden of an unwanted messianic role of restoring law and order through force in a world in chaos and moral decay. Chomsky's own critical analysis maintains that the U.S. covers its insatiable ambition for greater geopolitical and global market advantages with talk of human rights violations and civilians' well-being.

Publicity: The Kantian principle of publicity is designed to help ascertain the morality of political maxims. A maxim is evaluated as unjust if it must be kept secret to succeed because it will be met with universal opposition. Many interpret this as a negative regulative principle. Passing the test of publicity does not ensure the morality of a decision. However, a decision cannot be moral if it does not pass the test of publicity or public scrutiny.

Principle of Discrimination: The second cardinal principle of just war theory. It seeks to prohibit indiscriminate killing. A government has the moral responsibility to identify and determine enemy combatants. Along with such determinations, there must be no targeting of civilian populations.

Principle of Necessity: The first cardinal principle of just war theory. It seeks to determine whether the use of force is the only or best way to bring an end to hostilities. It seeks to ensure that all other options have been exhausted.

Principle of Proportionality: The third cardinal principle of just war theory. Whereas the principle of discrimination seeks to safeguard against intended harm to civilians, the principle of proportionality accounts for the unintended though foreseen and anticipated consequences of civilian casualties, among other things. Any devastation resulting from warfare must not be excessive, but be in proportion to the enemy threat.

Technological Society: For the purposes of this chapter, it is a society in which presumed technological efficiency, such as drone technology, dictates (wrongly) what is deemed morally appropriate.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- What are your initial reactions to the ethics of drone warfare? Do you see drone use as an advance in warfare? Peacemaking? Why or why not?
- What do you make of the statement that the United States often views itself as a morally upstanding keeper of the peace? How might an uncritical self-awareness of our past and present posture impact our conduct in global affairs? Consider Dr. King's rebuke in his Vietnam War address referenced in this chapter: "And don't let anybody make you think that God chose America as his divine, messianic force to be a sort of policeman of the whole world. God has a way of standing before the nations with judgment, and it seems that I can hear God saying to America, 'You're too arrogant!'"
- Does Just War Theory provide the necessary moral safeguards to ensure warfare is in fact just? Do you think the Bible supports Just War Theory? Why or why not?
- Do you think the psychological and emotional effects of drone warfare cause enough harm to violate the principle of proportionality? How might these effects perpetuate cycles of violence throughout the world?
- What does the use of faceless machines to do our dirty work say about our ultimate aims as a society? What does it reveal about our view of our own humanity? What does it entail for the humanity of those standing on the other side of the drone? "Who" ultimately are culpable, and to what degree are they culpable, for the deaths caused by drone warfare? Consider U.S. citizens, elected officials, military leaders, and drone operators. Consider at this juncture Hannah Arendt's famous statement: "In general the degree of responsibility increases as we draw further away from the man who uses the fatal instrument with his own hands."

- What do you think of the argument that theories of the state are based on secularized theological concepts? Does this change your view of the sacred versus the secular? What type of deity is revealed in drone warfare? Are we reasonably able to separate the “Christian God” from the United States’ foreign policy and wartime tactics?
- Have you ever experienced a time where listening to someone very different from yourself completely changed your perspective on their belief system, lifestyle, and person? Has that experience changed the way you interact with others? How might this be helpful in global conflicts?
- How might Kant’s moral argument for publicity, as well as the Just War principles of necessity, discrimination, and proportionality, play roles in our various interpersonal conflicts, and not just drone warfare?
- How might drone essentialism reflect a broader mindset and problem in looking to technology, including AI, as humanity’s savior, as if it can operate vicariously? In this regard, consider the following:

Mark Zuckerberg has pointed to “AI Tool(s)” to solve all difficulties that Facebook might encounter. But how will AI be able to address the problems of “transparency and accountability,” as one article at the Electronic Frontier Foundation noted? (Sydney Li and Jamie Williams, “Despite What Zuckerberg’s Testimony May Imply, AI Cannot Save Us,” Electronic Frontier Foundation, April 11, 2018, [off.org/deeplinks/2018/04/despite-what-zuckerbergs-testimony-may-imply-ai-cannot-save-us](https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2018/04/despite-what-zuckerbergs-testimony-may-imply-ai-cannot-save-us).) Here’s the statement in context:

Zuckerberg’s most common response to any question about content *moderation* was an appeal to magical “AI tools” that his team would deploy to solve any and all problems facing the platform. These AI tools would be used to identify troll accounts, election interference, fake news, terrorism content, hate speech, and racist advertisements—things Facebook and other content platforms already have a lot of trouble reliably flagging today, with thousands of human content moderators. Although Zuckerberg mentioned hiring thousands more content reviewers in the short term, there is uncertainty whether human review will continue in the long term to have an integral role in Facebook’s content moderation system.

How would you respond? Can AI serve as the best content moderator for Facebook and other forms of social media? How might you extend consideration analogically to fears over drone essentialism and how it does not account for the need for “boots on the ground” and relational networks? In conclusion, it is worth seeking to answer: Will humanity ever be able to solve relational problems with things?

IV. Case Study.

Grandma Johnson is showing signs of increasing senility in addition to suffering from the effects of a severe heart attack. Karen and Camilla are Grandma's adult children. They seek to represent their mother as best they can. They are fearful that there is a level of negligence and even abuse at the long-term care facility where Mom is a resident based on her reports. However, given Mom's mental status, they are not sure what to make of the concerns she raises. Even so, Karen and Camilla proceed and request a meeting with leadership.

What makes the situation even more challenging is that due to renewed COVID concerns in view of the vulnerability of many residents, the move was made at the facility to have all meetings involving medical personnel and family members and guardians over Zoom. What is more, the facility is preparing for a state inspection, which means that leadership is frantically preparing for the visit. The staff member responsible for coordinating the meeting asks if they could delay the Zoom conference call until after the state inspection in two weeks. Given the gravity of their mother's fears and anxiety, as well as the possibility of neglect and abuse, Karen insists that it is critical they meet within a week's time.

During the meeting, the lead administrator at the facility appears distracted. He also seems to minimize their concerns based on their mother's present mental status. The social worker who is supposed to serve as an advocate called in sick that morning and could not attend the Zoom call. No one else in leadership steps in to take up their concern. Karen is under a great amount of stress at work and does not take kindly to the administrator's insinuations. Camilla tries to intervene, but the situation worsens as one of the other staff members informs them that perhaps they should simply find another care facility for their mother. Given their mother's situation, and their own financial and other life circumstances, it would prove very difficult to transition to another care facility at this juncture. Karen grows increasingly agitated based on the callousness of the administration.

Camilla is fearful that as the conflict between her sister and the administration becomes increasingly toxic, their mother will be the innocent bystander or "civilian" who suffers the consequences of the fallout. The meeting is about to end, and she decides to request another meeting for the week following the state inspection. Camilla also states that it will be vitally important for the social worker to be present. Everyone concurs before the meeting terminates.

In drone warfare and conflict more generally, the following principle stands: anything that is less than immediately personal begins to degrade the relationship. We more readily "kill" someone we have never really seen or been in the presence of relationally. Depersonalizing the target leads us down the road of hitting "the nuclear button" in a given conflict. We need to personalize the opponent rather than depersonalize them.

If you were Karen and Camilla, how would you seek to account for the importance of the personalizing principle now that the first meeting has concluded? For one, they cannot control how the various administrators will respond during the next meeting. What do you think of

Camilla's attempt to deescalate the situation by asking for a second meeting, and with the mediation of the social worker? How might you apply analogically the just war principles of necessity, discrimination, and proportionality in this scenario? What is the last straw before you would go 'nuclear' in the conflict, that is, if the leadership team refuses to acknowledge and engage adequately your concerns after the second meeting?

Chapter 11: More Than Domination of the Earth

I. Unique Features.

- The interconnected nature of all reality does not allow concerns about environmental justice to be disconnected from concerns on race, economics, and gender. Humanity lives in an “inescapable network of mutuality,” which means that injustice in any sphere of life affects all others.
- The triune God working directly in and through creation reveals the importance of the physical creation and matter. Christ’s incarnation is the greatest affirmation of the material world. The incarnation along with the biblical eschatological hope in a transfigured earth support the importance of environmental care and justice.
- During the Modern period, the misconstrued understanding of the biblical command to have dominion in Genesis led to an anthropocentrism that valued creation merely for its usefulness and benefits to humans. This interpretation of the text arises from historical circumstances. The Bible does not view humanity’s role as violent domination but as peaceful rule.
- A Christocentric understanding of the command to have dominion does not lead to domination but approaches life as an integrated whole. Christ’s work of recapitulation is done from within creation, not from outside creation. The work of recapitulation challenges and repels all commodifying uses of nature and humanity.
- Imperialist and colonialist forces viewed other lands and their inhabitants as things to be dominated because of the desacralization of nature and the mechanical outlook of modernity. As nature became subordinate and an object to be controlled, indigenous people and the land they inhabited but did not ‘own’ could grievously be ordered, manipulated, and subjugated.
- A sacramental ecosystem views all human life and creation as sacred and not mere property for use and consumption. Human flourishing is inextricably bound up with caring for the environment because humanity is *part* of the sacred ecosystem. Though humanity, as the pinnacle of creation as the *imago Dei*, is given dominion of the earth at creation, this entails the proper stewardship and concern for all of creation’s well-being.
- There is a remarkable correspondence between one’s view of creation and humanity. When worth is no longer given to creation by the Creator but assigned to creation in terms of its market value, there is a danger of easily transferring this same attitude to one’s fellow humans. Market valuation, when extended beyond economics to identity, has led to the marginalization and exploitation of many minority populations and their land.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Anthropocentrism: Positively speaking, it can simply refer to humanity as the pinnacle of creation; however, anthropocentrism, if not properly construed and constrained, can lead to the violent domination of nature.

Desacramentalism: The rejection of the view that nature has transcendental or sacred significance.

Disenchantment: Scientific progress in the modern period was often associated with undermining mystery and demanding rationalistic and positivistic explanations. Similarly, such progress entailed opposing spirit to matter, which conceived matter as “lifeless stuff.”

Docetism: The heretical belief that Jesus only appeared as human and did not live a fully human or embodied existence.

Doctrine of Discovery: The manifesto developed under colonialism, which created and enforced justification along religious, political, and legal lines for the seizure and colonization of land not yet occupied by Christians.

Ecowomanism: An approach to environmental justice from a womanist perspective. Ecowomanism contends that social and environmental justice are parallel concerns based on the oppression and domination that both the earth and women experience.

Gnosticism: As defined in this chapter, it is a deeply problematic worldview that entails prizing spiritual reality to the neglect and degradation of the material world. Gnosticism creates a dualism between the spiritual and the material that places ultimate value on the former.

Manifest Destiny: The colonialist move to reinterpret God's call to Israel to enter and rule the Promised Land. This perspective was applied to the United States' drive to conquer and have dominion over the new world, including displacing indigenous people and taking their land.

Materialism: The view that nature operates solely according to inert, mechanistic forces.

Recapitulation: The idea that God's Son and Spirit enter the world to heal and transform the entire creation from the inside out, making all things perfect or whole.

Sacramental/Sacramentalism: These terms convey the idea that the creation is not lifeless matter or stuff that can be commodified as mere property to use for economic gain. They involve the notion that nature is distinct though inseparably related to spiritual and personal reality.

Theocentric: An approach to the creation that places a divine check on the human exploitation of nature and emphasizes stewardship of the environment as God's handiwork.

Vitalism: The view that a vital force animates living organisms and explains their nature and operations, which cannot be reduced to physiochemical factors.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- Have you ever observed the fundamental connection between environmental, economic, racial, and gender health and well-being?
- Why is it important to recognize the interconnected nature of reality when reflecting on the different areas of ethical concern?
- How does our global economy hinder or help our ability to discern that we are incorporated into an “inescapable network of mutuality”?
- How does Christ’s incarnation frame the way you value and understand creation? Why is the God who became matter essential to our understanding of environmental concerns?
- Do you see any gnostic tendencies to value the spiritual over the material in your faith tradition? Why or why not? How might your tradition’s eschatological views influence and shape how one treats creation?
- Humanity as the pinnacle of creation is commanded by God to have dominion. What does this command mean to you? How does the way we exercise dominion reflect how we understand God? What type of God is revealed in the way you fulfill the command to have dominion?
- How might your sense of wonder in creation enhance your worship of God?
- What import does the history of colonialism and imperialism have on your understanding of environmental concerns? Why is this a significant factor in how we live and think about creation today?
- What does treating all creation as sacred look like in your specific context? What are concrete examples of ways that you can honor all humans as well as creation as sacred?
- What do you make of the claim that being cruel to animals erodes our humanity and dignity?
- Why do we often call organizations committed to caring for animals “humane societies” rather than “animal societies”?

- What does the biblical command prohibiting Israel from boiling a baby calf in a mother's milk say about God and his covenant people?
- Wendell Berry calls for an ethical model of "restraint". As stated in the chapter, "A restrained eschatology that accounts for finiteness, limitations, and embodiment is key. We are not infinite or immortal. We cannot transcend our creaturely limitations no matter how much we try. Technology is not our savior. In fact, our fixation on technology to solve our problems is part of the problem. It reflects a gnostic or disembodied metaphysic and outlook on life, which discounts morality. As Berry writes, the energy crisis is not technological, but moral. What we need to cultivate is a moral argument of 'restraint.' We have yet to develop 'mechanical restraint.'" How might grandiose notions of humanity, envisioning us as divine and without limits, shape our approach to technology? How might it shape our consumer patterns that in turn affect the environment? How might *less* be *more*—as in less consumptive patterns and consumer drives leading to greater human and creaturely flourishing?

IV. Case Studies.

Aaron is the new youth and young adult pastor at a small urban church in a revitalized neighborhood. The congregation is generally older and commutes to the church for Sunday services. The congregation hired Aaron to help reinvigorate the youth group and young people's ministries in their changing neighborhood.

Aaron has all kinds of fresh ideas on how to energize ministry. One of those ideas is building a community garden and a chicken coup on the church property. He had observed how a Zen Buddhist congregation's community garden and chicken coup really blessed the community in the west coast city where he had been raised. People in the neighborhood built a great bond with the Buddhist congregation, as they planted fruit and vegetables in the shared space. A local high school partnered with the Buddhist fellowship to build the chicken coup on the property. A nature class at the high school helped to take care of the chickens during the school year. Aaron thought his new Christian congregation could make a great bond with people in the church's neighborhood, as well as their own local high school.

The congregation was not too keen to these ideas. For one, they were concerned that homeless people might overrun the gardens and take the fruit and vegetables. Moreover, they were concerned that the chicken coup would be difficult to maintain and could create a real mess, especially if Aaron left in a few years. Finally, the church was thinking of turning that space into parking spaces given that the store with adjacent parking lot they had used for years on Sunday mornings for worship services was recently sold and being turned into a townhouse complex. There was now a lot more congestion on the streets given all the revitalization and most of the congregants commuted from the suburbs. So, parking was a real concern.

Aaron was given an opportunity to present his plan at a congregational meeting. In addition to people sharing their concerns about the lack of parking space, the garden being overrun by vagrants, and maintaining the chicken coup, one of the elders expressed his concern that Aaron should focus most of his energies on Bible studies, evangelism, and mission, and not invest so much time copying and implementing novel “green Buddhist” ideas. He wondered out loud if Aaron really wants to evangelize people to become Buddhists rather than Christians.

Aaron shared the findings of a study that surveyed 30,000 young people about when they felt closest to God. The study revealed that most of those surveyed felt closest to God when they were out in nature. Next on the list was when listening to music. At the bottom of the list was when they were studying Christian doctrine. Aaron showed the congregation a short video clip of an evangelical environmentalist and former Foursquare youth pastor, Peter Illyn, talking about the study (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92aIoLhM_mw). Illyn closed by saying that youth pastors should likely “do more hiking” with their youth groups “and less preaching.” Aaron added that not only did he want to create and maintain the garden and chicken habitat, but also do backpacking trips with youth in the national park a few hours away. This only raised more concern for the elder, as he believed Aaron was losing sight of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Aaron replied that the biblical story started in a garden in Genesis (1–2) and closes in a garden city in Revelation (21–22). If anything, Aaron believes that the divine call to have dominion on the earth set forth in Genesis 1 is as much a part of the Great Commission as anything else. Such dominion is better served by building gardens than building parking lots. Moreover, he added that the first gospel promise is in Genesis 3:15, where God promises to deliver his people through the promised Messiah. Such deliverance would entail restoring fellowship between God and humanity, removing the enmity between Adam and Eve, and taking away the curse on the land all of which resulted from human rebellion against God recorded in Genesis 3.

Do you resonate with Aaron's ideas about reaching out to youth in the local community and his interpretation of Scripture? Why or why not? Please give your own interpretation of Genesis 1–3 and Revelation 21–22. What do you think of the elder's concerns about evangelism and nature care, remarks about “Green Buddhists,” as well as other church people's fears about the homeless, maintenance, and limited parking space? If you were a member of the congregation, how might you enter the conversation in pursuit of a resolution to the matter?

How would you approach the following subject if you were engaged in overseeing public policy?

The government has determined to partner with a major corporation to build an oil pipeline running from Canada through the U.S. It would run below a river and its surrounding wetlands and woodlands on tribal domains. The tribe in question and environmental groups are in an outrage. For one, the tribe argues this move breaks longstanding treaties with the U.S. government that secure land use and water rights for the tribe in perpetuity. Moreover, the tribe

and environmental advocates fear the possibility of oil spills that will poison the ground water system and ruin the wetlands and surrounding forests.

The government calls on their critics to be reasonable and consider the advantages to the society at large. The pipeline will make possible less dependence on foreign oil from the Middle East and Russia. More competition means lower prices since there will be less chance of monopolies. Lower prices for oil and gas will lead to more reasonable prices on various other products, including food items, given decreased costs for transportation. Such cost savings will especially benefit those with limited incomes.

Some critics argue the government should not make indigenous people bear the brunt of the dominant culture's desire for resources once again. Moreover, critics argue that the government should go beyond merely decreasing dependence on foreign oil. Instead, they should seek to avoid dependence on oil entirely, whether at home or abroad. To do so, they should transition fully from oil and gas to electric energy for transportation, as well as other needs. This transition would include providing people with tax credits and rebates to purchase electric vehicles, as well as install solar and wind energy systems. The government could also partner with universities, tech schools, and businesses, to provide subsidies and job training to build this industry and its workforce. While the cost to make such changes could be greater in the short-term as it relates to the oil industry and its workforce as well as consumer products, critics claim that the long-term cost to the environment, the tribe, and even the society at large, including the global economy, could be much less.

How would you seek to resolve this matter for the well-being of the tribal people, society at large, and nature? How might you balance the competing interests and concerns of the tribe and general populace? How might you go about addressing short-term and long-term costs to the economy, environment, and people? More generally, how do you approach questions about whether to prioritize creation care and human care? Please provide a rationale for each of your answers.

Chapter 12: More Than Space Exploration

I. Unique Features.

- The type of deity one worships frames one's vision of what it means to be human. There is a reciprocal relationship between human beings and their vision of the god they worship. Space exploration allows one to reflect on one's vision of God and humanity.
- The infinite humility and mercy of the triune God revealed in Christ through the Spirit counters any notion of domination and hegemony bound up with the doctrine of divine sovereignty. One's understanding of sovereignty is reflected in the way one relates to the earth and explores space. A decentered deity leads to a decentered humanity and decentered earth.
- Space exploration often involves eschatological reflection. Here it is worth repeating a statement taken from the chapter. From a Christian vantage point, "the transformation Jesus brings about in his glorified state is not the removal of creaturely limits but our perfection within those limits." Moreover, transformation from a Christian vantage point must account for *kenosis*, which entails humble service in the creation to the glory of God. Any discussion of transhumanism, especially as it relates to space exploration, must be reconciled with these Christological and cruciform parameters of glory.
- Space exploration, as it concerns eschatological and embodied ethics, should not cause one to abandon the earth and its problems but should lead to envisioning a better life on this planet. The eschatological vision driving space exploration determines how one lives and treats the earth now.
- When space exploration is viewed as a "space race," it leads to greater national and ethnic divisions. However, space exploration can work against polarizing in-group and out-group dynamics by uniting groups together as one human race. Whether space exploration is collaborative or competitive depends on one's goals and intentions.
- How one understands property rights and human rights in space exploration reveals what narrative drives one's life and ethical decisions. It becomes clear whether the philosophy of the free-market, narrative of the triune God, or some other story dictates one's thinking when one answers questions about who gets to go to outer space if the earth is abandoned and who owns property in space.
- God awards to humanity its distinctiveness in the act of creation. Therefore, the attempt to upgrade human nature (to conquer and exploit?) through technology involves a fundamental change to what it means to be human.

- One's vision of divinization and aesthetics determines whether space exploration is used to conquer or connect. What it means to become like God and what is deemed truly beautiful is based on one's view of God. The mechanistic god of the free market and the triune God of entangled webs of love frame two completely different approaches to life and ethics.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Cosmism: A philosophical system and cultural movement that functions as a new religion, and that involves the aspiration to leave Earth to cultivate humanity, build a better society, and attain perfection.

Decentered: The notion signifying that God and humanity are not self-focused or self-consumed, but turn outward in care for the well-being of all life, including life beyond this planet. Therefore, it entails not simply a notion of a decentered deity and decentered humanity but also a decentered view of the earth.

Hegemony: Inordinate control that involves domination of others.

Historiography: A particular interpretation of history, whether religious, philosophical, or scientific.

Kenosis: Refers to self-emptying, as when Jesus poured himself out as divine and human in humble service to the creation.

Multiverse: The concept that there are multiple universes coexisting and comprising all that is.

Transhumanism: A philosophy that advocates for the transformation of the human condition through technology. Technology would be used to enhance human abilities so that human limitations could be transcended. Those so enhanced would be fundamentally different beings, namely, posthuman.

Theosis: Also known as the doctrine of deification, which states that the goal of the Christian life is the transformation of the human person through union with God to become like him in every way except in nature.

Virtue: As stated in chapter twelve of *More Than Things*, "Virtue (*arete*) entails such things as right intent (not simply right action). It is more than a habit. It is a disposition that goes all the way down to the core of one's being. It is also more than an emotional state, for it entails practical wisdom (*phronesis*), which signifies that it takes a long time to cultivate and cannot be done by 'children' who may possess emotions of compassion but who do not act virtuously, which entails practical wisdom cultivated over a lengthy period of time, as in the case of morally mature adults. Morally good people who are compassionate will not operate immorally. Such moral virtue constitutes *eudaimonia*, an ideal moral state of happiness or human flourishing. As

such, it is not wanton pleasure or merely a subjective state of happiness.” As pointed out in this context in the chapter, virtue ethicists assert that those who dedicate themselves to experiencing base pleasures and accumulating wealth do not attain *eudaimonia* but forfeit their lives.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- What do you make of the following claim taken from the chapter? “For many secular-minded people, space exploration can function as an alternative soteriology and eschatology—‘don’t get left behind’—as the human race pursues deliverance and glorification on another planet far, far away. We are destined to face judgment even in a secular eschatology, where outer space becomes our eternal estate of heaven or hell. After all, as with orbiting planets, so with ethical actions and their import—what goes around comes around.” What are some of the ways in which you might see this secular soteriology and eschatology in play in the news, movies, and the broader culture generally? What does this soteriology and eschatology reveal about our understanding of humanity? Moreover, what does it reveal about our understanding of God?
- What vision of divinization guides your life and ethical choices? What do you make of the following claim taken from the chapter? “*Kenosis* (self-emptying) is *theosis* (becoming like God). We are most like God in Christ, the decentered deity, when we pour ourselves out for others.” Please unpack your answers.
- How do you understand divine sovereignty and God’s providential care? How might space exploration reflect people’s concept of divine sovereignty and God’s providential care?
- Building on Peter Harrison and Dennis Danielson, the modern rejection of humanity’s centrality in creation led to human minimization and worth, environmental degradation, and a desire to conquer unknown worlds beyond this globe. What is the moral to this story for how we should value humanity in relation to the world and universe (or possible multiverse) at large? What is the basis for humanity’s centrality in Psalm 8 and how might that impact your view of the Copernican Revolution’s possible import for human worth and dignity?
- How can space exploration serve to enhance the earth rather than serve as a means of escape from earth? What happens to our current ethical considerations and life on earth if space exploration becomes a means of escaping the earth and its problems?
- Why is the question regarding colonization in space important? What implications does it have for life here on earth now?
- Should humans attempt to upgrade and overcome the limits of our nature through technology? Why or why not? What does the discussion of transhumanism communicate about what it means to be human?

- Further to what the author maintained, what ethical issues that we have discussed in the book reappear in space exploration? It is quite likely that the examples the instructor engages in this chapter are not exhaustive in addressing prior chapters' themes. What are some ethical issues that arise in space exploration beyond what are treated in this chapter and book?
- What do you think of the following claim? *Regardless of whether we treat robots like people, it is vital that we do not treat people as robots or automatons.*
- What do you make of Isaac Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics"? Do you resonate with them? Why or why not? Would you update and/or add to them in view of increasing concerns about humanity eventually becoming obsolete in the future due to advances in AI? Here are Asimov's three laws for your consideration: (First Law) "A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm"; (Second Law) "A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law"; (Third Law) "A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law."
- How important are aspects like altruism, empathy, and compassion to our identity as humans here and in outer space?
- On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being most important to you), how would you rank the ten primary ethical issues addressed in sections two and three of this volume? The ten issues are in order of appearance: abortion and people with disabilities; genetic engineering; sexual expression; gender equality; end-of-life-care and physician assisted suicide; race reconciliation; immigration reform; drone warfare; environmental well-being; and space exploration. Please explain your rationale for the valuation, including your awareness of each issue's perceived relevance to you and your loved ones' own life experience.
- As referenced in *More Than Things*, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" the following words: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson (New York: Warner Books, 1998), 189. If this is the case, how might each of the ethical issues covered in this volume serve as an entry point to many, perhaps all, of the others? With this point by King in mind, consider how space exploration might serve as a lens through which to shine light on ethical issues involving disabilities, genetic engineering, race, immigration reform, and environmental stewardship?
- Far from being an escape, consideration of space exploration can help us live better lives here on the planet Earth. As Carl Sagan wrote, "It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of

human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known." Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1994), 7. Please watch this short video Sagan produced that reflects upon this theme: <https://youtu.be/GO5FwsblpT8>. How might astronomy humble you and build your character to be more kind to those around you and to preserve and cherish your immediate surroundings and environment?

IV. Case Study.

In a space travel version of the hypothetical lifeboat dilemma, who would you select to go into space if a dying earth had to be abandoned suddenly due to a nuclear catastrophe?

Given the planet's sudden demise, and the costliness and limited availability of such technological sophistication, there is only one spaceship deemed capable of making this imposing journey. The spaceship named Noah's Ark can only carry 100 people and 100 animal species and forms of vegetation.

Please provide numbers or percentages of selected individual types or people groups, as well as your reasoning behind your selection of what "people groups" or classifications of people you would send into space in hopes of the survival of our species. You may wish to include consideration of chapter twelve's points on how the presence of people with disabilities on Earth and the poor, as well as opportunities to cultivate authentic altruism, may help humanity flourish in outer space.

Here are some categories of "people groups" to account for in your determination. But you may certainly include others.

Engineers	Mechanics	Doctors	Nurses	Scientists	Teachers
Artists	Musicians	Poets	Politicians	Lawyers	Custodians
Ethicists	Philosophers	Theologians	People with Disabilities	Different Races	
Infertile Individuals		LGBTQ+ Individuals		Genetically Enhanced Individuals	
The Rich	The Poor	Men	Women	The Elderly	Small Children

Taking this case study a bit further, how might it impact your decision making if those you love most are represented by one or more of these categories? Ethically speaking, how important is it that you remain objective and detached from personal considerations like relationships in making your selection? Why or why not should total objectivity be important to you as a person making ethical determinations?

Chapter 13: Rediscovering Persons

I. Unique Features.

- This chapter highlights and brings home the perennial feature of the volume: humans are more than biological and sexual drives, market forces, consumer appetites, or cogs in a machine; we are more than things. To put the matter in aesthetic terms, following Copernicus's disgust over Ptolemy's conception of the universe, humanity is not an assemblage of dismembered, disjointed parts that constitute a cosmic monster. Rather, we are whole persons in communion. God has made us for more.
- An entangled personalist ethics in pursuit of human personhood requires many traveling companions as well as Jesus as the north star to make the arduous journey. Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 highlight the anthropocentric and Christocentric framework of biblical anthropology.
- When we realize that we are at the center of God's affections, we do not demand to be at the center of the universe. Those who demand to be at the center devolve into cosmological monsters that dismember personhood and that oppress and destroy everything in their path.
- An eschatological and embodied personalist ethics requires that we give full weight to the desire for our eternal destiny by living more fully as human persons here and now. We should live now in this world more fully as human persons knowing that later we will be completed and perfected as human persons in God rather than give in to less than worthy attractions.
- We must be very careful to discern whether we focus on people or things. For example, those who reduce people to things focus on the choices, functions, and exchanges we make as humans, and on the appetites and interests we express. In contrast, those who view people as more than things focus on human persons *who make* rational choices, *who function* in various social systems, *who exchange* goods and services involving cost-benefit analysis, and *who express* certain tastes and cravings.
- To build on C. S. Lewis, we are assisting one another to one of two destinations. We are either becoming expansive and godlike in our human personhood or becoming restrictive and distorted monstrosities. May we take seriously our calling to help one another affirm and cherish and live more fully in view of our incommunicable and unrepeatable identity, inviolability, and dignity as human persons.

II. Definitions of Key Terms.

Aesthetic: For the purposes of this volume, a compelling vision of what is beautiful and which shapes and directs us in our ethical journey.

Biblical Anthropology: A biblical understanding of humanity.

Christological Telos: A principled focus on Jesus as the goal of humanity, making it possible for us to become fully what God has called us to be as human persons.

Entangled Ethics: See chapter two.

Eschatological Ethics: See chapter two.

Embodied Ethics: See chapter two.

Human Personhood: See chapters one and two.

Secure attachment: For the purposes of this volume, the experiential, reassuring knowledge that God is love and loves us in Jesus through the Spirit, freeing us from inhumane positioning and posturing to be at the center of the universe.

III. Follow-Up Questions.

- What are ways in which you can readily (even if unintentionally) reduce people to things in your choice of words and judgments?
- What are concrete ways in which you seek to cultivate an expansive sense of people as more than things in your choice of words and judgments?
- What do you make of C. S. Lewis's statement in *The Weight of Glory* quoted in this chapter? How might it shape your view of the various people with whom you interact on a daily basis?

The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you say it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves,

all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilisations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1980), 26.

- How might Jesus as the “great humanizer” presented in Hebrews 2 (which was also quoted in this chapter), serve as the ground, grid, and goal of humanity, and frame each human’s weighty glory (Lewis) in your various forms of interaction with people? Please provide a specific example. Here is the selection from Hebrews 2:

It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified:

“What is mankind that you are mindful of them,
a son of man that you care for him?
You made them a little lower than the angels;
you crowned them with glory and honor
and put everything under their feet.”

In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:5-9; NIV)

IV. Case Studies.

Various passages of Scripture encourage us to help one another on the way to the more glorious of the two destinations C. S. Lewis envisions in *The Weight of Glory* (quoted above). Call to mind the following biblical texts: 1 Corinthians 13:7 where we are informed that love always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres; 2 Corinthians 5:16 where we are instructed not to look at anyone any longer from a worldly vantage point; Philippians 2:3 where we are encouraged to consider others better than ourselves; and Philippians 4:8 where we are invited to focus on what is lovely and admirable.

How can realizing and cherishing God’s hopeful love for us provide secure attachment and help safeguard us from turning others and ourselves into self-fulfilling prophecies of the horrific creatures Lewis claims may be found in a nightmare? We are made for more than things and should treat people as more than things. But this focus does not discount holding others and ourselves responsible and accountable for past faults. People who seek to affirm their human dignity and that of others exhort and encourage one another to pursue Jesus’ higher, humanizing call, and to take full responsibility for their actions.

Please bring this orientation to bear on a case study of your own making in which you or someone you know discounted and dehumanized another individual for significant mistakes they made. How did such discounting of these individuals reduce them to things whereby you or someone else “dismembered” another person (like Ptolemy’s cosmic monster) into various parts, such as their race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, income level, societal status, and/or physique, or even merely the faulty actions themselves? Provide a contrary example in which you envision doing the opposite, namely maximizing the identity of a person who has let you down repeatedly while holding them accountable so that you both grow through the situation and flourish?

Karen attended a Christian high school known for its excellent sports programs. During Karen’s junior year, the team won the state championship. Karen was their leading scorer. It was the third time in ten years the school’s team won the state championship. The coach was a bit of a celebrity in the small town. After Karen’s senior year, the coach, who was also the school counselor, became the town’s mayor. He was also an elder at the same church in which Karen grew up.

During her senior year, Karen went to her coach for counseling, as her parents were getting a divorce. She and her coach developed a very strong emotional bond that became sexual during the summer after graduation. They broke off the relationship during her sophomore year of college. But soon afterwards, she learned that over the years other female students had been in romantic relationships with her former coach and counselor.

Karen had stopped attending church due to her parents’ divorce and the affair with her former coach. But she feared what might happen to other young women who looked to him for guidance at school and/or at church. Karen decided to approach him and share her grievances and fears. He confessed that he was sorry, and that he had determined never to have an affair again. He said she needed to forgive herself and accept his apology and confession of sin to her.

Karen was not content. She went to the senior pastor of the church, who told her: “Release the matter to God. Let the past stay in the past. Karen, forgive him. If the news were to go public, it could cause major upheaval in the church and town. He’s a pillar in the community. It would also ruin his marriage and family. You don’t want to be responsible for that, do you, Karen?” The pastor closed by quoting Scripture: “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8 NIV). He encouraged Karen to think about all the good her former coach has done over the years for the team, the school, the church, and community, and not reduce him to these few incidents of misconduct.

If Karen then came to you for counsel, what would you encourage her to do? Forgive and forget? Not allow the past to lead her to “dismember” her former coach and turn him into a monster? Or

would you encourage her to go public, even though it might lead to public rebuke and shame for her? What role might you play in seeking reconciliation and healing for Karen, other women, the former coach, the church, and community? What might it look like to seek to make whole, not get even in pursuing redemption for all parties?

In closing, let's return to a few ethical questions that were raised in the book: What is going on here? What ought you to care most about? What is the fitting response? Please account for them in providing reasons that justify or provide grounds for your ethical decision. Also, please account for the overarching claim of the entire book: persons are more important than things, including those persons who don't have power, affluence, and status.