Cecil Thompson PHI 801-52 (Ph.D) Ethics in a Global Society 20 Day Assignment April 21,2023

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Omega Graduate School

PHI 801-52 Ethics in a Global Society

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**20 Day Exercise Submission**

1. Write an honest and truthful two- or three-paragraph response for each of the following scenarios. In your response, explain why you decided on the action you did and provide biblical support.

a. You are an employee at a fast-food restaurant in charge of the grill. It is busy today, and many orders are coming in fast. In the cooking process, you drop a hamburger patty on the floor. Your manager passes by and says, “Just pick it up and serve it.” What would you do?

b. Pastor Jerry and his wife, Charlene, have become close friends with you and your family. Your pastor comes from a wealthy family and has an easy life overall. Charlene, however, was raised by a single mother. Her father died when she was young, and her childhood was difficult. Many times, she has said that Jerry was the best thing that could have happened to her. They have struggled to have a child, but so far they are childless. One day, you are eating lunch in a restaurant alone, and you see Pastor Jerry sitting at a table with another male. Pastor Jerry and the other man are kissing passionately. He sees you, quickly walks over to you, and explains that he wants you to keep this a secret, but he is gay. He begs you not to tell anyone. Both men leave the restaurant together. Later that week, you see Charlene shopping for baby clothes. She tells you that is pregnant and very happy. What do you do?

1. You at the grocery store and see a very expensive roast while looking at the meat selection. You place it in your cart, thinking it will be a special treat for the family. However, when you get home, you notice that the cashier did not charge you for the roast. What do you do?

1. Your teenage son has been getting into much trouble. First, he was arrested for shoplifting. Then, you were called by the school because he was in a fight. Oh yes, then there was that time the police smoking pot and drinking caught him. It has been difficult. However, one day he promises you he will do better. Sure enough, he seems to be cleaning up his act. Then, one night, you get a call from the police. Your son was arrested for an armed robbery. He was the driver of the getaway car. Do you go to the police station to support him, or do you let him suffer whatever consequences the law gives? Why?
2. One day, you are out shopping with a friend. As you pass an ATM, you notice several $20 bills sticking out of the machine. What do you do?

1. My first inclination would be to pull the manager aside and let him or her know that I would not be able to make myself pick up the hamburger patty off the floor and serve it to the unsuspecting customer. I would also remind him that the meat patty fell on a surface that was trampled by foot soles that may have trodden on sputum, fecal matter or worse. If the manager still insisted that I do as I was told, or consider myself dismissed, I would promptly drop the patty into the nearest garbage can, pick up a clean plate, place a freshly grilled patty on it, and proceed to serve the customer, and expect the worst. As a Christian, I would be asking myself if that was what I would have wanted done to me (Matt. 7:12). Although, in part, my decision would obviously have been driven by the “moral imperative” of my religion. And even while I would have been contemplating the seriousness of the manager’s threat to fire me, the action I had taken would also have been guided by a well-seasoned ethical restraint from my training in food service.

As a student at Berry College, Rome, Georgia, I worked in the Ford Dining Hall that served all of the daytime meals to the entire school community of approximately 2,000 students and a handful of professors. There, my work-study assignment began with a brief stint in the scullery before I quickly scaled the ranks to become one of three, or four, student-cooks. I never questioned the reason for my rapid rise before, but looking back, now, I can see that as one of the few students who attended mostly late afternoon and evening classes , I was available for longer hours than many during the

daytime. To be a cook was a big deal because you got to advise the managers on requisition, which meant that you always knew in the back of your head what items were in short supply. And, in that capacity, keeping serving-trays replenished on the serving line required non-stop action, especially in the spring. It was not unusual for meat patties and the likes to fall on to the floor, and, sometimes, what fell was one of the last few pieces of a high-demand food item—a hamburger patty, for example. In such cases, whichever of the two lady-managers (Miss. Phillips or Miss. Abrahams) was in charge, at the time, would invariably insist that dropped food be thrown out. With the except of these two lady managers, the food service operation was staffed and run entirely by students of different races, ethnicities, and nationalities, coming in and out of work all day. Yet, the ladies remained completely indifferent to those superficial differences among “their children”. My sense was that their position on “dropped food” and their fairness to the diverse young impressionable staff working under them, seemed perfectly consistent with a combined “normative ethical-utilitarianist” attitude, apparently bred from mores not hostile to the theory of the natural goodness in humans.

Whether the “organizational management” style of these two Berry College food service managers had spilled over into their unbending policy regarding the matter of

“dropped food” was part of their training, their religious background or culture, they were unwittingly modeling for us, both the ethical and moral positions to be taken when commissioned to the service of other people who trusted you to “Do the Right Thing”. For me, the ingrained cultural recall from that period of my food service experience would come to the fore, consciously or unconsciously, in any like situations. And now that the question has been asked, I am taken aback to my Dr. Tui’s Berry College lecture notes on Far Eastern philosophies and religions as well. He taught that Confucianism, at its core, proposed that, “Man is inherently good but, because of his [man’s] natural propensity to be greedy and egotistic, the individual may have to be educated in order for him to dredge up his natural goodness at a whim.”

1. My chanced discovery of Pastor Jerry and his male friend helplessly lost in a state of locked-lips, in a public restaurant, would have sent a whole slew of crazy thoughts racing through my head. It was disturbing, not as much because I had stumbled upon the fact that the pastor was either bi-sexual or gay, but because he had turned out to be a master scam artist who had successfully manipulated so many people by

misrepresenting himself as “spiritual leader” of the congregation, as well as a loving, devoted husband to his wife, Charlene (sin of lying). Neither would I have been able to gather my wits about me sufficiently by the time he mustered enough gall to come over and ask that I not mention what I saw to anyone. But, as I reflected more on what I saw, how he classified himself sexually, and how, the action that I might be forced to take, thereafter, would probably have some disastrous impact on a number of other innocent, unsuspecting folk, I began to realize that the situation was far more delicate than I had, at first, imagined. Even so, I knew I had to do something, but whatever action I decided to take would require something more than just a hot-headed, off-the-cuff promulgation of the incident based on our tendency to self-righteously rush to judgment and condemnation of people with Jerry’s moral dilemma. What further complicated the matter was that I would soon realize that Pastor Jerry’s wife, Charlene, was going through a period of immense happiness in her life over recent news of her pregnancy. It meant that I definitely could not tell her. Nor could I share the pastor’s immoral confidence with anyone who might tell her about her husband’s cruelty. The question was how, and to whom would I be able to unload the burden of Pastor Jerry’s sin in a manner that would cause the least amount of pain. With that I grew some confidence in the idea that the Bible would help furnish the solutions for my questions.

Since I would not be able to broach Pastor Jerry’s moral failure with his wife, Charlene, or any other member of his congregation without also being the source of tremendous pain for them, the only person I would be able to approach would be Jerry, himself. In preparation for such a meeting with Pastor Jerry, I felt I needed to do my homework. I needed to acquire a full grasp of the nature of his sin, without playing God. With that in mind, I began to reflect on a recent exchange I had with my thirty-two year-old nephew who almost never goes anywhere without a copy of his “Bible”—his *Quran*. We had a discussion about his sacral companion, and he came just short of saying that he was Muslim. I asked him what did the *Quran* mean to him. He responded succinctly, “it is a manual on how to live.” I asked him what he thought of the *Bible*. He said it was the same. Reflecting on that exchange, I came to the realization that, if the *Bible* is indeed a manual for living, I should be able to find guidance on how to disentangle that complexity of Pastor Jerry’s sin, and how best to confront him. Well! There it was: the *Bible*. I needed to take a non-judgmental, brotherly approach in discussing with him the tremendous fault line he has opened up, and how its revelation will inflict even more hurt on his wife and the congregation (2 Timothy 2: 23-26). This was a gargantuan undertaking for me. For, before I could take the nuclear option by giving him the counsel he needed, while protecting the others from the impending radioactive fallout, I would have to speak to God and become a student of the nature of Pastor Jerry’s sin. A big part of my studentship would require me to grapple with the question, “Was Pastor Jerry’s sin his homosexuality?” At length, my advice and counsel would be three-fold. When we finally sat down, I told him that he needed to spend some quality

 time with God and ask Him to help determine whether he was “helplessly” gay, or whether he was bisexual who might, eventually be able to permanently recondition himself to choose a “side”. Second, he should await the birth of his child, then, tender his resignation to the church. And, by the end of the year following the child’s arrival, he should have gradually prepared his wife for a divorce, should he determine that there is no chance of a sexual readjustment (Matt. 19: 9-10). Remember! “No one but you, God and the few who already know about your sexual orientation or preference need be told.”

Clearly, Jerry’s sin was much less about his being homosexual than it was about his willful multi-layered lies and deceptiveness. His homosexuality may not even have been a matter of choice as it appeared to have been in the case of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. In that situation, the men of the twin cities of sin were men distinguished by a unique type of twisted lust. It was a twisted lust that seemed too natural to these men for their sexual deviance to have been the product of any of nature’s occasional mistakes. Rather, it was a searing pattern that appeared to have taken form within a community of people who welcomed much the same abhorrent behavior, fed by practice until it had become a way of life, spawned from something in the cities’ social milieu—perhaps a short supply of women—that may have given rise to this uniquely depraved social identity exhibited in the men of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:8-10). In Pastor Jerry’s case, though, there was no evidence that he had acquired it from similar conditions to that in the twin cities. It could even have resulted from a quirk in nature.

For, normally, the twenty-third pair of chromosomes in men comprises of one male (Y) and one female (X). While, in a normal woman, the pair is composed of two female chromosomes (X) (X). In a relative modicum of cases, though, some men wind up carrying something of a trisomy (Y)(X)(X) at the sex chromosome site number 23. If Pastor Jerry was one such man, he would not have had a choice; he would have been gay or some other thing because he would have been born that way (Matt 19:12. NAB). Similarly, in the case of a down syndrome child, there is also a trisomy situation on chromosome number 21. So that, the phenotypic anomaly, and attendant mental challenges that occur in the down syndrome child, which is referred to as mongolism [sic], has a genotypic basis, as in the case of those we term to be “inalterable” homosexuals. Sadly, there was a time when children with down syndrome were put away or exterminated. Today, we are still staggering with our uneven gait, trying to place one foot in front of the other, each, to somehow fit tidily into the trail of footprints left by Jesus. We are no longer seeing the need to relegate our down syndrome children to the cruel fate of confined hopelessness or death. And, in the meantime, we are learning to harness, at least, the unchecked moral right we think we have to dismember from the body human, those who have sexual differences that are outside of the norm. By acknowledging that fact, I was also able to make that Kierkegaardian leap across the chasm into the state of a new realization that I am not qualified to pass judgment (John 8: 15 KJV) as to whether Pastor Jerry’s gayness was a gayness by dint of choice or genes. And so, I leave that part to God (Matt 19: 11-12). But Pastor Jerry, by his own admission, had exacted extreme cruelty upon those in his orbit from the very start. He had committed unpardonable sins against the woman he married and against his congregation, and, in so doing, he had sinned against God. He had connived and schemed to use his marriage to Charlene as a prop for distracting others from the reality of his gayness.

1. Upon coming to the knowledge that I had accidentally taken an expensive roast from the supermarket that is not accounted for on the cashier’s receipt, I realize that I was

confronted with a moral question that required a response. Obviously, if I chose to do nothing about it, the supermarket would have no way of knowing that I had left the

store without paying for the roast. I believe that, in our lifetime, most of us have had purchasing-incidents that worked out either way. I have also had my share of return trips to the store in order to retrieve items that appeared on my receipt but were never packed. However, I have also had to make return trips to pay for items I received but were not charged. Whether the roast was inexpensive or not does not matter. What

matters is that to take an item from another person or establishment that was not billed to you is theft.

 Almost all of us would consider it right and just to be able to return to the store

to claim an item that we paid for but did not receive. In my experience, store managers usually offer little or no resistance to such claims coming from customers. A few stores may have cameras for their own protection against shop lifters, and are able to do an instant video check for evidence of what was packed in a customer’s bags. If, after the video review, the manager finds that you were right about your missing item, but still refuses to reimburse you or supply it, the manager would be guilty of theft. Likewise, if the situation were reversed and the customer feels justified to play the same game as the manager, when the ball is in his court, it would be just as much “theft”. The Bible

says that a person is guilty of stealing and lying if he or she hold on to someone else’s lost property, despite having knowledge of its rightful owner (Leviticus 6: 3-4. KJV).

1. I am the father of a teenage boy. One night, I received a telephone call from a police precinct informing me that my son had been arrested. The voice on the phone said that my son was being held for allegedly driving a getaway vehicle from the scene of an armed robbery. I cannot say that I was entirely surprised since my son’s young life had become replete with flagrant juvenile delinquent acts, in and out of school. Over the years, his conduct had not improved, despite his promise to do better, and, as a result, I

myself had become fearful that his repeated relapse into criminality would, in time, prove to be his undoing. So, while I was forced to treat the natural parental urge to rush over to the precinct and provide “moral support” to my son as *non-sequitur*, I was

forced to act in accordance with my own “situational” necessity to hurry over to the station and be a protective presence for my son. Why so?

I am a Jamaican-born naturalized American, and according to my *23 and Me* DNA analysis, I am 95.8% Sub-Saharan African and 3.2% Northwestern European. I am a Black man. By the same system of measurement, my son’s Tennessee-born mother is 99.7% Northwestern European and 0.2% Senegambian—a White woman. My son who is 52.9%

 Northwestern European and 46.8% Sub-Saharan, is for all practical purposes, a child of

color. Historically, the American police-community has had a terrible record when young

 people of color are in their custody or when they are put in a position that leaves

them staring at the barrel of a gun (Isiah 1:17; Acts 10: 34-35).

I realized that my son’s arrest record was reason enough for me to be there with him as a parental presence that would probably prevent the highly possible police unreasonable force. One of the many examples of this, occurred in New York City, in the mid-1990s. It was a day when an African American adolescent male took-off running after being commanded by an NYPD officer to stop. The officer gave chase while firing shots into the back of the fleeing teen until the teen fell dead. In an effort to gloss over the police officer’s unwarranted deadly force, Mayor Giuliani made a statement in which he claimed that the deceased young man had a long rap sheet. Apparently, it did not matter to the mayor that the police officer had over-stepped the established system of justice in order to exact vigilante justice based purely on race (Micah 6: 8 KJV). Rev. Al Sharpton took the mayor’s comment to task and labeled it an issuance of government licence to NYPD to hunt down and shoot Black children with reckless abandon. In response, Sharpton posed a rhetorical question, “Did the officer see the teenager’s rap sheet on his back” (TV news). From a biblical perspective, one cannot ignore the moral question, “Would the young man have been meted out such deadly injustice, if he were a White teenager male?” (Zach 7: 9-10). Unfortunately, Black parents have to be cognizant that this kind of ungodly behavior is not the aberration, but the norm. For, as recently as July, 2016, Abby Ohlheiser and Sarah Larimer writes, in *The Washington Post,* of the tragedy of a young African American college graduate, named Sandra Bland, who was on her way to fill a job opening in Texas. She carelessly switched lanes without putting on her blinker. A trooper pulled her over. After some verbal altercation between the two, Sandra was remanded into custody. The arrest occurred on Friday night. By Monday, Sandra was found hanging in a cell. These two instances are just a scratch on the surface of what sometimes happens to Black youth who find themselves alone in police custody without adults in the room. God is watching, and parents should be watching too (2 Corinthians 5:10; Roman 2:6, 11; Gal 6: 10; Gal 3: 28).

1. If one day, a friend and I, while shopping, came upon an ATM machine with twenty- dollar bills sticking out of it, I would go over to the machine pluck the bills out, pocket them, and leave. If my friend chose not to participate, it would be no matter. I would depart without investing a second of my time to check to see if there was contact information anywhere on the machine. I am aware that this position of mine appears perfectly antithetical to Scripture (Deuteronomy 22:1-3 KJV). However, it is an action I would take because it is consistent with “situational ethics” and the relative malability of “natural law” as it applies to morality in special situations. In my experience, when

the shoe had been on the other foot, as when I was the one suffering the loss, that process has not worked.

 Over the last two or three weeks, my car has had a slow leak from the front left tire. These days, most of the air pump machines at the local gas stations require a

minimum of a $2 insertion of quarters or a credit card. A couple of weeks ago, I stopped at a local gas station to inflate the low tire and was surprised to find that it only required

 one dollar—an insertion of four quarters. I inserted the quarters and heard the

 compressor rev up, but when I pressed the pump nozzle up against protruding air valve

inside the rim, I heard a hissing that sounded somewhat like escaping air. I figured that if it were even causing some air loss, it was very likely putting in more air than what was escaping. I was wrong. I soon realized that the air-loss was reaching crisis proportion, and the tire was becoming almost flat. So, I stopped, got into the car, and drove home. The following day, I took the car to one of the nearby establishment gas stations. Use of the air pump machine there was priced at two dollars—the tender-medium was quarters or a credit card. I squeezed eight quarters into the slot, but the machine never came on. The display-window showed, “$2 paid.” I felt desperate, so I slid my Visa into the credit card slot. It showed that $2 were taken from the card but the machine never came on. I went inside the gas station convenience store and reported that the machine had gobbled up $4 from me and I would like to be reimbursed. They told me that the

parent company of the air pump system in the gas station was a separate entity from the gas station. Neither did the store manager have a telephone contact for the air

pump company. At this point, I was beginning to recall that, over the years, I had suffered similar losses with parking meters from which I was never able to recoup a single penny from the money I lost in those machines.

 I had come to a reckoning that, even if the people who ran these money-machine companies, were driven by moral imperatives in most aspects of their lives, they had put no catchment system in place to help people such as I recover our losses in their machines. Naturally, then, there is probably no system in place to help them recover losses like twenty dollar-bills sticking out of an ATM machine that went berserk, either. In my mind, it was not even as much about returning the money, but more about the question, to whom do I return it. Do I return it to the bank, to the unknown customer whose request the machine failed to answer until he had given up, and left? Or, Do I return it to the customer whose account, the computer had misread because of a bug in the code—a comma in the wrong place, perhaps? So, how do I now toe the line of demarcation between the Christian morality taught in the Bible and immorality (Leviticus 6:3, NIV)? Do I treat the “find” the same way that I treat the monies I have lost in traffic meters and air pumps? In these situations where I am the loser, I have been taking the loss and moving on. Now that I am the finder, in the ATM situation, I would be taking the money and giving a chunk of it to charity.

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