

# Methodologies of christian social ethics

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



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A particular group of people for centuries together practices certain principles which are approved by the group; society or community for generations is called customs.

Character: Our behavior, conduct or repeated practice of habits become a character. According to medical science it is easy to steal. Repeated habits lead to character. Even our character or habits form our personality. Society which we came from plays a lead role in forming character and our culture plays a role in formation of our character.

Morals: The word morals come from the Latin word "mos" which means "way of life" or habits. Ethos means customs or character. In modern world the word moral and ethics have been used interchangeably. Both the terms connote those duties and responsibilities which persons have with reference to right and wrong conduct or ultimate purpose of life. Ethics talk about what is right and wrong, then duties and responsibilities, and then the commandment. The second point is ultimate purpose of life. Morality is the description of human behavior. Traditionally the word moral was used in descriptive sense. In today's world the word moral is used in restrictive sense.

As an adjective: To describe behaviors of persons or people commonly regarded as right, good or appropriate.

As a noun: To refer to the norms or principles practiced by a particular group of people regarding right or wrong conduct. In order to revive sound moral judgment, we need to have two main things; 1 Vigorous pursuit of relevant information, (Work hard to get information) 2.

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More complete data to illuminate the nature of the problem Ethics: Ethics is a Praxis oriented or reflective reflection on morality in order to give sound moral Judgment. Morals is a descriptive or to describe human behavior or conduct. While ethics reflect on morality, morality describes the behavior of a person.

Mackenzie (1860 - 1935)

A 19th century philosopher defines ethics as a study of what is right or good in human conduct or the science of the ideal involvement in human life. Staunch Sinai says " Ethics is a normative science which is systematic knowledge..... T is a science in so far as it depends upon the observation, classification and explanation of human conduct with reference to an ideal". It is an ideal consist of view set by what is right or wrong. Conclusion: Ethics evaluates the voluntary action and habitual actions of persons and considers their rightness and wrongness. Ethics is a systematic study of human conduct, individual as well as cooperate. It is concerned with determining what conduct is right or wrong, good or bad, fitting and non-flitting. Christian Ethics Ethics plus Bible is known as Christian ethics.

Sources of Christian ethics are 1) Bible and 2) cultural norms and traditions. Some scholars say that we can learn from other religions also. Bible: The study of ethics based on bible is known as Christian ethics. Ethics is a critical reflection on morality basing on the word of god. To understand moral Judgment first source available for Christians is bible. Other sources for doing Christiana ethics is Bible normative. Cultural Norms: Traditional moral

principles say that we can learn from other traditions or other cultural norms. Our experience is also a source of Christian ethics.

If Bible is not there, there is no Christian ethics. Definitions on Christian Ethics Signal Paul: According to Signal Paul " Christian ethics is a critical reflection on human conduct or the issue and the problem that we face in our society basing on definition Critical analysis of Christian ethics is based on a) data and b) teaching of he bible Adams: According to Adams " reflection on human conduct ? .. Aim to achieve clarity and consistency with respect to the ground and goal, the motives and the norms, the means and consequences of right action conceived as the response to and the working of the grace of the God. 20. 06. 2012 Hunter P Mammary: " The living reality of God as understood through Christ and Judo- Christian tradition - is the distinctive component in serious reflection on human moral conduct". James M. Gustafson defines Christian ethics as " ethic must be Christian and is Christian in a universally applicable sense because it is in Christ that all things are created and he is the Lord of all things. This definition Justifies the first one. Ethic must be Christian because the community is called to absolute obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord.

Conclusion: Christian ethics is a listing kind of discipline and it is also different from other fields of studies. Also Christian ethics help to study the social sciences. Christian means the help of other social sciences we are to see the relation of Christian ethics with other social sciences.

Psychology helps us in order to understand human behavior. Social analysis is sociology which is more critical and racial. Social analysis helps to

understand the origin and development in society. Sociology will help us to understand Biblical history and structure of the society.

Sociology and history of Christianity will help us to understand issues, development context of O T and N T and changes in many Christian traditions. Theology helps us to see and analyze Church. History of Christianity helps theology. It becomes abnormal for us to look back our church tradition, when it comes to serious conflict. Study of theology helps to know how theology was originating and developing. It helps us to listen to our issues. Biblical Studies: The Most important help we get in terms of Christianity is from biblical studies. We deal with origin, purpose, occasion, date and development in biblical studies.

Most importantly we do interpretation I. E. Hermeneutics. In short hermeneutic means interpreting origin and development of text. The theological background from where we came is matter while interpreting Bible. We believe Holy Spirit is one person who interprets Bible to us. Holy Spirit manifest to us in different ways where we may have topography experience. Most times our theology will affect our Biblical Hermeneutics.

21 . 06. 12 Conclusion: To conclude the purpose of Christian ethics it is not that we discover perfect solution. Christian ethic has to do with Christian morality and values.

Christian Ethics teach us about singular relationship between God and Man

22. 06. 12

MODES OF ETHICAL DISCOURSE:

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Deontological Ethics, The word demonology derives from the Greek word "Eden" means " necessary or imperative". It is also known as traditional ethics or classical ethics. Deontological Ethics is imperative absolute and obligatory, independent of their ends and consequences. Most of the deontological will say that some of our actions are consequences or results. When important is given to means it does not bother about ends. If Bible says do not steal we should not.

Many deontological will say that this ethics concentrate on means not consequences. Different types of Deontological Ethics. 1. Rights According to Robin Gill " rights" is a more recent example of deontological ethics. He gives the example of right to live, right of the women to choose. The best known contemporary defender of deontological approach to rights is by Ronald Deerskin. He argues that rights should not be over ridden by consideration of social well-being. 2. Legalism or Absolutism Legalism is a law. This is one of the most widespread models of deontological ethics.

Deontological attempts to state what kinds of acts are either require or forbidden. They claim that by the very nature of things certain kinds of acts are always obligatory. It requires a person to apply a rule or code which has already been formulated. 3. Rule Ethics Rule Ethics points to an already existing authority - Truth Reentered-. Deontological ethics are also presented as rule ethics which is considered as the answer of tradition. The answer of the ethical tradition or of rule ethics points the questionnaire to an orderly existing authority.

Though Reentered talks about the rule ethics, his concern is more of an ethical tradition which implies a separate speculative world or situation ethics. 4. The Divine Command Theory The divine command theory is also known as theological voluntarism which holds that the standard of right and wrong is the will or love of God. Proponents of this view believe that right and wrong - is that commanded and forbidden by God. 5. Obedient Love. This is one of the most important types in Deontological Ethics propounded by Paul Ramsey. According to Paul Ramsey the central ethical notion on category in Christian ethics is obedient love.

This is the sword of love the gospel describes as love fulfilling the law and Paul designates as faith that works through love. Ramsey defines it as " faith that works though love". 6. Categorical Imperative. Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) stressed on Categorical imperative. The most important theory of Deontological ethics is Categorical imperative of Emmanuel Kant. His book is Critic of Practical reason. In Kantian theological theory, an action is Justified by showing what it is right not by showing that the consequences of acts are good.

According to Emmanuel Kant each individual is rational and is able to reason and arrived at the right decision regarding his or her own actions. Reasons according to Emmanuel Kant transcend all groups, cultures, societies and dialects and a set of rational principles which are to be obeyed by all. Emmanuel Kant tries to establish the ultimate basis for the validity of moral rules - is pure reason, not in intuition or conscience. In his view a moral

principle gains universal applicability when that principle cannot be rationally rejected.

So the ultimate basis of morality rests on principle of reason which all rational creatures possess. 25. 6. 12 The Critique of Pure reason of Emmanuel Kant (1781) He talks about reason. Religion could be established on the basis of practical reason. About obligation. Deontological are not concerned with end results. Traditional Christians follows deontological ethics. They take moral principles without seeing consequences. They just said don't do or do with absolute attitudes. Emmanuel Kant says do your duty though the heavens may fall.

The deontological are of the view that " the end does not always justify the means" Kant's Theory on Categorical imperatives or Three important Principles of Kant Kant's theory on Categorical imperatives includes: 1 . Autonomy (self-governs) Here we have freedom to choose. It talks about autonomous will of a person. Emmanuel Kant bases his entire moral system on the affirmation that every rational being exist as an end in himself not merely as a means, according to binding moral rules valid for everyone - for arbitrary use by these or that will happen when a person behaves according to binding moral rules valid for everyone.

He considers that a person has an autonomous will. Hence the principle autonomy is never choosing except in such a way that in the same volition the maxims of your choice are also present as universal laws. This means that it should be within the principles of universal laws) Therefore a person's autonomy consists in his ability to direct himself/ herself according to these



moral maxims. 2. The Goodwill What make an action right or wrong are not the consequences of the act, but rather the principle guiding the act.

He spoke of the will as something that is within our conscious control as opposed to a wish that is not within our conscious control. In other words he states that the good will is not because it achieves good results. Even if it were unable to obtain the ends it would still be good in itself and have a higher worth than the superficial things gained by immoral actions. 6. 6. 12

3. Duty and Moral Laws: Emmanuel Kant explains the relationship between goodwill and duty. A good will is one which acts for the sake of duty. Human actions have moral worth only if they are performed from duty.

Actions that result from inclinations or self-interest maybe praise worthy if they happened, for whatever reason to accord with duty, but they are not moral. According to Kant the dutiful person takes the maxim of helping others to express or embody a requirement, just as Law does. What we understand from Kant's categorical imperative is that the categorical imperatives should tell us that our axiom themselves must be laws which is universal being the characteristics of laws. It tells us to act on those principles which are laws. Therefore, Kant argues for the importance of action from duty.

The only thing good without qualification is goodwill and a person acquires both good will and moral worth by acting from duty. Therefore one's duty is to act in accordance with objective moral values and laws and such laws are categorical. The teaching of deontological ethics is if some moral principles are laid down we are to follow it. It is the teaching of deontological ethics. All

the laws amended in the Bible are to be followed by the Christians whether we like it or not. Summary CNN: You need to critique deontological ethics. Can we apply deontological ethics of the Bible all the times?

Are all the Bible commandments applicable for all in relation to Indian context? Teleological ethics comes into being because some found deontological ethics not gives any freedom. Ideologists say that in all aspects teleological ethics involved. It comes into being on process to an end or goal. We do right today in order to achieve a high good in the future. An action should not be done for the sake of Jesus only. Ideologists say all circumstances will not work. It focuses on ends and goals. There is no choice but absolute obligation. We cannot live in the world of dos and don'ts. We should live on aspirations for the future.

The right action which we do today will lead us to future. Our action should have goal purpose. Teleology comes from Greek word telos means "end" "purpose" or "goal". Teleology ethics is for ends and goals so that moral decision making are to be judged in the light of an end or goal. The ideologists look at the consequences of actions rather than to any intrinsic goodness or badness in action. In other words it is ethics of aspirations good or ends also referred to as consequential ethics. This approach is concerned with questions regarding the highest good or final goals of life toward which persons should aspire.

Most prominent deontological are Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant and Earle H. Bausch. Different approaches or Theories on Teleological Ethics 1. Quantitative utilitarianism It simply means

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greater happiness or number. All the philosophers who talk about quantitative utilitarianism are indebted to Jeremy Bentham (1784 - 1818). An action is right when there is absence of pain. If we talk about happiness it has to be with greatest number. The idea of the greater happiness of human kind as the end of morality was placed in a secular framework by Jeremy Bentham.

Jeremy Bentham believes that man always sticks to his own pleasure. He agreed with Epicurus that the ethical or the right is that which produces the most pleasure. Though there are similarities, Bentham however developed his theory farther than Epicurus. Epicurus mainly talks about one's own pleasure but Bentham along with pleasure on individual talks about the pleasure of the community. In other words, Bentham states that right action is always the promotion not simply of one's own pleasure but of the community of all persons.

## 2. Scatological Ethics

It is either of the end or the ethics of the future.

Scatological ethics means ethics of good at end. Within Christian tradition certain ideas about the ultimate good or the final end of history and how one is to relate to this end has been a dominant motive in several strands/ types of ethical thoughts. Models built on this theme emphasize the sovereignty of God and the expected establishment of God's righteousness in all hinges, but deviate regarding whether the sovereignty of God is future or present, individual or societal a future condition for which one must wait for a condition of righteousness within history for which one must labor.

Other worldly model It talks about future happiness in heaven even though if we suffer at the present world. In other words it is the behavior that the

ultimate purpose of our life is in the heavenly kingdom, not in the world. Its main concern is future world of happiness. Followers of this approach believe that true life exist only in heaven, a world beyond this present life.

Consequently, for them life in this world is viewed as a testing ground. It emphasis the cultivation of certain qualities of the spirit which they believe the conservative believes in this understanding of true life that will come beyond death.

It explains the cultivation of certain spiritual qualities in anticipation of life beyond death. 3. 7. 12 ii Kingdom of God This model gained prominence during the early part of the nineteenth century and it is associated with the social gospel movement by author Walter Reaches Bausch. The followers of this theory believe in the proper norms and principles for how to live in the society. This model talks about the present world. It is actually talking about Christianization of social order. This model is rooted in the belief that the proper norm regarding how society should be organized and arranged by the kingdom of God concept.

The followers of this model claim that an understanding of Kingdom of God provides both a version of good society and authority which enables the followers to work for grater approximation of kingdom within history. They understand that the Kingdom of God is nothing less than " humanity organized" accord not the will of the God. Therefore a according to the Kingdom of God model the hive task of Christians and churches is to labor for the Christianization of the social order. It regards individualistic salvation as

totality inadequate for dealing with the problem of evil, which has become institutionalized in the structure of the society.

Sin is seen not merely as the corruption of the individual will but of the institution. lii) Liberation Model Liberation model which has come to existence in recent years, especially in third world has its root historically in the struggle of oppressed people to be freed from dependence and exploitation. It has the scatological hope for freedom and liberation. It takes the biblical image of the Christ as the liberator and conceives liberation as both spiritual in terms of after life and takes the historical and the temporal as the arena where Christians must struggle for liberation.

It is for a radical break within unjust social order and realizations of salvation as qualitative and not merely a quantitative dimension of life. This model provides a strong motive and power to the struggle of the oppressed. 3. Qualitative Utilitarianism Though Beneath formulated the universalistic pleasure theory, later universalistic and utilitarianism found this theory failing to meet certain difficulties. One of the foremost proponents of the qualitative latter utilitarianism was John Stuart Mill (1806 - 1873), whose father was a friend and follower of J Beneath.

John Stuart Mill almost agreed with Beneath concerning the central formula of Utilitarianism. But the major difference is that Beneath took quantitative approach to happiness whereas Mill argues that the quality of the happiness should be our primary concern. According to John S Mill the quality of happiness should be the major concern in our ethics of discourses. Social points how John S Mill explains his theory; 04. 07. 12 I) Empiricism It talks

about experience from field research. Mill is from classical theory. He talks about experience as source of all ideas. When he talks about empiricism, he talks about inductive approach.

Inductive means particular to general and deductive is general to particular. A study begins with particular to general. It needs a field study. He says experience should lead to general uniformity about the right action. 'I) On Mill would talk about the freedom of an individual. Complete liberty should be given to individual provided that their action should not cause any harm to anyone. He also states that there is a relationship between ethics, individual freedom and democracy. In other words Mill says that we are cultural moral beings only when we act for the benefit of the whole humanity.

For that kind of act compulsion should not be there and should be out from free will. C. Contextual Ethics I. Contextual ethics of Paul Lehman Contextual ethicists say that they are not comfortable with the approach of deontological and teleological approach. They say we need to look at the circumstances of moral action. Contextual ethicists say that deontological ethics will not be appropriate in different contexts. Contextual ethics talks about moral judgment of an action should be fitting to the context. The place of context or circumstances of moral action is important in relation to moral Principles and rules.

Roman Catholics use the word moral theology whereas contextual theology is applicable and popular among Protestants. Contextual ethicists emphasize the moral context as most critical element in the determination. In other

words it stresses the importance of concrete setting of human behavior. There are many contextual ethics from western context and Indian context. Contextual ethicists look at the circumstances of the moral action. For e. G. , observing Sabbath strictly. Contextual ethics is very popular among the Christian tradition. Article: " contextual ethics" found in the Dictionary of the Christian ethics deeds.

Manchuria. Among contextual ethics Paul Lehman is one of the contemporary theologian and philosopher. He is one of the most important proponents of contextual ethics. In Paul Lineman's contextual ethics the focus is shifted from larger goals to actual context. When we look at Paul Lineman's ethics in Christian context, he provides an articulation of his change in focus and actually applying the contemporary context. He is actually speaking the anthropometry focus where all norms are challenged. Traditions are losing its ground in the midst of that we see the emergence of different possibilities for human life. 9. 07. 12 Kayoing Ethics At this point he talks about contextual ethics which is known as kayoing ethics and also known as community ethics. In the kayoing ethics, he insists upon the importance of context in which Ethical insights and practices are nourished or how moral developments take place. Secondly, Canonic ethics is concerned with relations and functions in the society and Thirdly for Lehman, Okinawa ethics is oaken as a starting point for ethical reflection. In other words contextual critique is contextual ethics of absolutism.

An action should be speaking to the context According to the Paul Lehman kayoing ethics is introduced by Jesus Christ himself. In the Okinawa ethics,

Christian ethics is starting point of all ethics. Contextual ethics is critique of all ethics. Kayoing ethics is concerned with relation and functions in community not only on Christian principles. The ethical question in the kayoing ethics is not what ought I do but " what am I to do"? Ought to factor to cannot be ethical realty. The primarily ethical realty is the human factor, the human indicative in every situation involving the interrelationship and the decisions of man.

The humans are the indicators of what is happening. In the kayoing ethics Paul Lehman clearly sees God's activity in the world and he says that God is acting in the world to keep human life and that through the participation in the kayoing. Human life can be called human when they participate in the community. Community with only human life can be called humbugging. His kayoing ethics is a humbugging ethics which enables people to grow in the Christian maturity and be agents of the immunization in the world. Therefore its aim is consistency between these factors within specific context rather than uniformity of acts in all contexts.

In summary it is sensitivity to human ethics. Summary So far we have seen three model of ethics; Deontological ethics, Teleological ethics, Contextual ethics. Contextual ethics is divided into three; Contextual SituationResponsibility- Relationally Ethics Paul Lehman Joseph Fletcher Richard Nibbler II. Situation ethics It became popular in 1960 through the effort of Joseph Fletcher. Through his book situation ethics, he developed this approach at the background of Paul Lineman's antenatal ethics with some



dissatisfaction. He says Lehman looks at contextual ethics in liberal term and looks at particular situation not general context.

According to Joseph Fletcher an action should be fitting to the situation or circumstances. The situations rejects the idea that there are timeless rules which are never to be violated and the idea that there is a group which is objectively given in the nature of things. In other words the situations takes seriously the concrete character of moral life and holds that human conduct is to be evaluated in relation to specific situation rather than universally binding laws. The situations recognizes the love commandment as the only absolute moral principle and examines each situation carefully to determine what love requires then and there. 0. 7. 12 Situation etches of Joseph Fletcher In this approach he is not doing with all the demonology ethics. The principle, Joseph Fletcher talks about is Love, the obedient love. He says that there is only one universal principle that is love which enables us to take right decisions. He says that agape love is the summary commandment, to love God and the neighbor. To him situation ethics is not a system or a program of living according to principle, but it is n effort to relate love to a world of relativities through obedient love. According to him the only one law or principle that is binding is Love.

The principle which is always good and right is Love. He says situation ethics is not a system or a program of living according to principle. His effort was to relate love to a world of relativities through obedient love. Ethics of obedience of commandment is love. His six propositions of theory of situation ethics agape love or obedient love 1. Love one thing only is always

good: The first preposition " only one thing is principally good, namely love nothing else at all". By this statement he means that Love is a principle a formal principle expressing what type of real actions.

Christians alone is always good and right in every situation. It is the only universal principle, because whatever is loves in any particular situation is good. Joseph Fletcher quotes Richard Nibbler " God nowhere commands love for its own sake because love is for the sake of people and it is not good in itself". 2. Love is the only norm or love is the only principle: " The ruling norm of Christian decisions is " love" nothing else". He explains that situation ethics reduces the law from a legal system of rules to the love anon alone. He gives the example of Jesus and Paul replaces the principle of Torah with the living principle of agape 3.

Love and Justice are the same for Justice. For justice Love is distributed nothing else. In other words Fletcher says that Love does not only care but is careful. He also says that it is diligent in serving the neighbor. He also says that prudence and love are not just partners but they are one and same. Love is to seek neighbor's welfare and Justice is being fair as between neighbors. From here we understand that Justice is Christian love using reasons by calculating TTS duties, obligations, opportunities, resources and Justice is also love coping with situations. 4.

Love is not liking. " Love wills the neighbor's good whether we like him or not". According to Fletcher Love is discerning and critical but not sentimental. In other words in the situation ethics the neighbor is anybody. It is an ethics in which justice is impartial an inclusive. Justice and love is one

and the same thing. Justice is as personal as love and love is as social as justice. Therefore agape seeks the good of anybody and everybody because it seeks the will of neighbor's good whether we like it or not. 5 Love Justifies means: Only the end Justifies the means nothing else.

According to Joseph Fletcher unless some purpose or end in view to justify any action, we take it is literally meaningless. Every action without exception is haphazard (Incomplete), if it is without an end to serve and ends in turn needs means. 11. 7. 12 6 Love decides then and there: This proposition, love decisions are made situational not prescriptively. According to Fletcher for real decision making freedom is required which is an open ended approach to situation. Close ended approach did not have any option. Therefore situation ethicists always suspect prescriptive laws.

They say that according to the love, decisions are made situational not prescriptively. In other words the decision making is always depends on the case is question. Situation ethics are critical about principles of deontological ethics especially about their laws. III. Relationally - Responsibility Ethics 13. 07. 12 Responsibility means what we ought to do. When given a responsibility we are accountable. How responsibility relationally model of ethics came in to being or how it came as a median? It involves two notions. They are; 1 .

Accountability, Obligation and 2. How we are accountable to God. Hunter P Mamba coined it what Richard Nibbler have already said. According to Mamba, here comes a median that will bridge two extremes. One extreme talk about duties that talk about deontological model of ethics and other

extreme is the end. Accountability looks back to some deed done and obligation looks forward to moral demands that need to be met in relationships. Responsibility therefore has to do with relationships, deeds and accountability is being answerable for ones' action or