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**Qualifying Exam in Ethics for the Theology Department**

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**1. H. Richard Niebuhr proposed a typology for describing different approaches to ethics. Describe Niebuhr's typology, drawing on one theologian or philosopher to represent each type. Identify strengths and weaknesses of the work of each person you present. Also, give some attention to whether you believe Niebuhr's typology is adequate for describing the discipline of Christian ethics.**

Different approaches to ethics are not only divided by the conclusions they make concerning specific human behaviors, but also can be differentiated at a more fundamental level by the assumptions they make concerning the nature of the human agent. In *The Responsible Self*, H. Richard Niebuhr takes these fundamental understandings of the moral agent as the point of entry for developing a typology of three different approaches to ethics. The two dominant pictures of the human moral agent are the "human-as-citizen" and the "human-as-maker," to which Niebuhr adds "human-as-answerer" as a third option. On the basis of its basic orientation, each type asks an ethical question prior to the question, "What shall I do?" The human-as-citizen begins with duties and so asks the deontological question, "What is right?" The human-as-maker begins with ends and so asks the teleological question, "What is good?" The human-as-answerer begins with the concrete situation and so asks the contextual question, "What is fitting?" And so these three images of humanity correspond to the three basic aspects of ethical reflection: the right, the good, and the fit.

This summary of Niebuhr's typology is intentionally skeletal in order to get a sense of the big picture. In order to put flesh on these bones I will discuss and critique

representative figures from each type: (1) Immanuel Kant as an instance of the deontological type, (2) John Stuart Mill as an instance of the teleological type, and (3) Paul Lehmann as an instance of the contextual type. I will conclude (4) with some evaluative remarks on the adequacy of the typology as a whole.

(1)

In his *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant offers an illuminating instance of the deontological type of ethical reflection. His focus is on the duty of the moral agent as a citizen of the universal human community. In order to ascertain this universal duty, Kant begins by asking what makes a person or action good. He sets aside the consequences of an action as inadequate for discerning the morality of an action. This is because our ends are guided by inclination, not by reason alone. The goodness of an action lies instead in the willing process itself, because the will is governed by reason. What universal rational standard can be applied to guide the will rightly? To be universally applicable, the *content* of such a rule must arise from the very *concept* of a universal rule. Accordingly, Kant posits the categorical imperative: act by that maxim which can at the same time be willed to be a universal law. Kant goes on to ask after the conditions for the possibility of such an imperative in the structures of human reason, but at this point enough has been said to illustrate Kant's picture of the human moral agent as a citizen with duties to the universal human community.

What are the strengths of the deontological type of ethics? (1) *Intrinsic Value*. By locating the morality of an action in the willing process itself, Kant attributes intrinsic value to human moral agency. The goodness of actions is not found in some purpose or condition. This means that not only human doing but also human being is treated as an

end in itself. The human person is never to be treated as a means to some other end, however good. (2) *Accountability/Responsibility*. By narrowing the moral field to what the agent knows and intends to do, humans can be held accountable for their willed actions. Deontological ethics hopefully prevent blame or shifting of responsible on account of circumstance or the justification of evil acts by appeal to unintended positive results. (3) *Commonsensical*. Although Kant works at a high level of abstraction, the categorical imperative bears uncanny resemblance to much common sense moral reasoning. Especially in the context of communal duties, it is not uncommon to hear someone ask, "What if everybody did that?" Such parity with common sense conversation does not conclusively establish the truth of deontological ethics, but it is certainly a point in its favor.

What are the weaknesses of the deontological type of ethics? (1) *Absolutism*. Deontology shies away from attention to complex concrete situations where duties are not so easily applied. It seems that some attention to the situation and its relative goods would be appropriate for moral decision-making. (2) *Narrow Moral Field*. By narrowing the moral field to one's willed intentions, many acts are rendered morally neutral even though they may have unintended immoral consequences. It seems that at least some attention to consequences would be appropriate in such cases. (3) *Self-justification*. In its emphasis on universal reason as judge of moral actions, the human being is put in a position of self-justification. Although Kant posits God as a universal lawgiver, he still falls short of a story of a personal God who stands over against human action as its judge.

(2)

In his essay *Utilitarianism*, J. S. Mill aptly illustrates the teleological approach to

ethics. For Mill, humanity is the maker of a life worth life. His focus is on ends and what actions contribute to these good ends. He relies on the logic of consequences to determine the moral value of action: actions that contribute to these ends are good and actions that detract are bad. The end Mill has in mind is happiness. Mill's utilitarian form of consequentialist logic is not to be confused with egoism or hedonism, because an accumulated social wisdom has shown that happiness that is shared and centered on virtuous pleasures is superior. And so Mill integrates these stipulations into his rule for guiding human action, known as the principle of utility: do that which results in the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This principle can be supplemented by its negative counterpart: do that which results in the least suffering for the least number. Such a principle of utility is a clear instance of teleological ethical reflection that understands humanity as maker of a life worth living.

What are the strengths of teleological ethics, especially of the utilitarian variety?

(1) *Social Concern*. Because of its widened moral field, utilitarian ethics funds a thoroughgoing social agenda. There is not only a contingent historical connection but also a necessary philosophical link between utilitarian thought and social reform. (2) *Empirical*. By attending to actual consequences of actions, teleological ethics (including but not limited to the utilitarian variety) characteristically take an empirical stance. The success of empirical inquiry in other spheres of life makes it reasonable to expect its fruitfulness in the moral sphere. (3) *Concern for Consequences is Commonsensical*. It is not uncommon for persons to take into account the potential consequences of their actions when making decisions. Mill offers a theoretical explanation and basis of this human habit. Again, although parity with commonsense is inconclusive, it is not

irrelevant.

What are the weaknesses of the teleological type of ethics, especially in its utilitarian form? (1) *Moral Causality is Difficult to Trace*. Utilitarianism must justify the causal link between certain actions and certain results. Although in some cases such a link is evident, it is not always clear which human action is the determinative factor within the complex web of causation. The causal chain can only be stretched so far. Limits must be set. But if these limits are based on appeals to the knowledge and intentions of the agent, then the consequentialist logic is undermined. (2) *Happiness is Difficult to Measure*. Although utilitarianism promises a moral calculus, no incontrovertible method of prioritization has in fact emerged to guide moral actions. (3) *Instrumental Value*. Consequentialist moral thinking makes moral action into an instrumental value, and therefore endangers also the intrinsic worth of the agent as well. Utilitarianism cannot account for the moral worth "doing the right thing against all odds." Although Mill explicitly offers his account as alternative to basing moral judgments on conscience, one still must attend to the conscientious character of at least some moral actions.

(3)

Niebuhr's third type understands the human moral agent as the answerer or responder to the complexities of each situation. Such an agent first asks, "What is going on?" and then seeks to find a fitting place within this context. In his *Ethics in a Christian Context*, Paul Lehmann exemplifies this type of ethical reflection. He begins with the context of the church as determinative for Christian moral thought and action. This is not an appeal to institutional authority, for Lehmann understands "church" to name any place

where God is working to make and keep life human. Hence he prefers to speak of "koinonia." God is less concerned with the morality than with the *maturity* of human beings. Becoming mature means participating in God's humanizing activity in the world. And so the basic question of Lehman's Christian contextual ethic is not the imperative question, "What shall I do?" but the *indicative* question, "What *am* I, as a following of Christ and a member of his church, to do?" By beginning with context and seeking after one's fitting place within it, Lehmann illustrates the contextual approach to ethics.

What are the strengths of the contextual type of ethics? (1) *Concreteness*. Contextual ethics attends to the complexities of each situation. Thus, relevant data is not ruled out beforehand on principle. Ethical reflection is not pursued in a vacuum. (2) *Exceptionality*. Contextual ethics are not plagued by extreme cases with intolerable choices. In fact, the exceptional character of every situation is respected. The moral choice is not always obvious, but making mature choices when it is not obvious is itself morally commendable. In some cases, one's options are highly limited, but even here a moral action or at least moral development is possible. (3) *Theological Potential*. Because this type acknowledges all contextual factors, one's theological commitments may be made explicit within ethical reflection. For Lehmann, this theological aspect is determinative. Such openness is appealing for those who aim to practice theological ethics.

What are the weaknesses of contextual ethics? (1) *Is/Ought Problem*. It is questionable whether an ethical theory can rid itself entirely of imperative propositions. Lehmann's move to the indicative seems to try to overcome the is/ought problem instigated by David Hume (you can't get an ought from an is). But does it succeed? It is

unclear in Lehmann what distinguishes moral propositions for other kinds of indicative statements. (2) *Competing Visions*. Although Lehmann is right that there is no wholly abstract moral vantage point from which the agent can justify this or that action, there seems to be no way to adjudicate between competing visions of humanity put forth by different communities. Contextualism easily degrades in an unending proliferation of competing contexts. (3) *No Systemic Guidance*. Although contextual ethics frees the moral agent from the temptation to predict and control, some more general guidance would be helpful. At least in the raising of children and the leadership of societies, a desire for a more systemic approach is warranted.

(4)

Having illustrated and assessed each type individually, I will conclude with some evaluative comments concerning the typology as a whole. Although it offers a basic orientation to the kinds of options on offer, Niebuhr's typology is descriptively inadequate as a reading tool for the great figures in the history of ethical reflection. In order to squeeze figures into the typology, one is forced to be highly selective in their reading of texts. The great minds in the history of ethics (and therefore the ones worth reading) often transcend the boundaries of their given type. For instance, Kant's project has an indispensable teleological element referred to as the "kingdom of ends." The fact that the prime example of deontological ethics is able to bring on board the relevance of ends calls into question the descriptive adequacy of the typology.

Another instance of the descriptive inadequacy of Niebuhr's typology is the difficulty of categorizing traditional Catholic moral theology. On the one hand, it has a basic teleological orientation. On the other hand, it produces a rule-based casuistry that

is unmistakably deontological in character. So, placing Catholic moral theology and utilitarianism side-by-side within the teleological type is defensible and interesting, but obscures more than it reveals in light of the substantive differences between the two. So Niebuhr's typology must be used with great care when applied to specific figures and traditions.

In light of its descriptive inadequacy, what proper use does Niebuhr's typology have? Pedagogically, the typology could be introduced at the beginning of courses on ethics, yet without citing specific examples. Presenting the typology in such a generic or anonymous form will help to prevent prejudicial readings of text. While engaging historical texts and figures throughout the remainder of the course, students could be asked how their readings could be plotted on the typology. So Niebuhr's typology in generic form can be used as a basic orientation to the field of ethics provided its limits are acknowledged and students engage thinkers on their own terms and not merely as instances of a preconceived type.

**2. Karl Barth structured the *Church Dogmatics* so that Christian ethics is clearly embedded within it. Describe his understanding of the relationship between Christian ethics and systematic theology that is exhibited in the structure of *Church Dogmatics*. Then, drawing on *Church Dogmatics* II/2 and III/4 explain Barth's basic approach to ethics. Finally, show how Barth's understanding of ethics is exhibited in his reflections on war.**

Karl Barth not only is an important figure in modern doctrinal theology, but also is a significant voice and continuing influence in the field of theological ethics. In this essay, I will (1) situate Barth's ethics within the architectonic of his *Church Dogmatics*, (2) describe his basic approach as a critical ethics of correspondence, and (3) illustrate

this approach with reference to his treatment of the moral issue of war, showing how he sublates aspects of the just war tradition within his own distinctive perspective.

(1)

Perhaps Barth's most enduring influence is his move to include ethics *within* his dogmatics cycle of lecturing and publishing. According to Barth, dogmatics is the science by which the church critically tests her talk of God in accordance with the word of God. Ethics is the continuation of this critical task into the sphere of human action in response to the word of God. The gospel that speaks of God's action with and for humanity includes the call to human action. Since the word of God takes the form of command, dogmatic reflection must also hear this commanding word and reflect upon it. And so Barth's choice to include ethics within dogmatics is not a mere cosmetic decision. It structurally reflects an understanding of ethics as subsequent to but not separable from dogmatics.

The inclusion of ethics within dogmatics is not intended as a reduction of either one to the other. It is not that, if we simply get our dogmatics right, ethics will automatically flow from it. Nor is it that the truth of dogmatic statements rests on their ethical implications. Rather, ethics speaks of the being and action of humanity in light of the being and action of God with and for humanity revealed in the history of the covenant. Thus, as John Webster argues in *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*, the *Church Dogmatics* can be read as setting forth a moral ontology that describes the field in which human action takes place.

Where can Barth's ethics be found within the *Church Dogmatics (CD)*? At the end of each volume, Barth presents a sustained treatment of ethics. The location at the *end* of

each volume reflects that ethics is subsequent to dogmatics. The location at the end of *each* volume reflects that ethics is internal to dogmatics. Barth does not leave ethics to the end of the whole cycle, but introduces it within the trinitarian shape of the five-volume *CD*.

At the end of the first volume (prolegomena on the word of God), Barth argues for his inclusion of ethics within dogmatics (I/2, §22). At the end of the second volume (on the doctrine of God), Barth presents a "general" discussion of his approach to ethics (II/2, §36-39). The remaining three volumes follow a trinitarian pattern, appropriating the works of God to the persons of the trinity. At the end of each is found a "special" ethics that corresponds to the content of that volume. At the end of the third volume, Barth expounds the ethics of creation by focusing on the theme of the freedom of humanity as God's created covenant-partner (III/4, §52-56). At the end of the fourth volume, Barth expounds the ethics of reconciliation by focusing on the theme of the invocation of humanity as reconciled sinners (IV/4 fragments). At the end of the projected fifth volume, Barth would have expounded on the ethics of redemption (a.k.a., eschatology) by focusing on humanity as a child of God given the gift of eternal life for communion with God (V). Although each of these sections on ethics brings a distinct perspective, they cannot be separated as alternative approaches to ethics with different bases or audiences. The trinitarian basis of the structural distinction means that each aspect is united to the others as one commanding word of God. And so they must read in tandem with one another to avoid misunderstanding.

(2)

Bearing in mind the architectonic location of Barth's ethics, how might his basic

approach to ethics be described? As the general discussion in *CD II/2* indicates, the ethical task is to hear the gospel in its form as law. The good news of what God has done for us calls forth *corresponding* action by us. For human action to be good, it must correspond to the goodness of God's action. Human action is not some independent good, but is a good relative to the goodness of God's action. Humans are called to *confirm* God's action by *conforming* to God's action. And so, human action points back to God's action as its basis even as it is genuine human action.

But, since the God to whom human action must correspond is the living God, one cannot predict or control the goodness of one's actions. There is a critical distance between God's commanding word and all human words of ethical discernment. It is this *critical* element in Barth's ethical thought that leads him to argue against what he calls an "ethic of casuistry" in *CD III/4* (§52). An ethic that sets down rules in advance is inappropriate because (1) it puts ethics in the place of God as judge over the goodness of human action, (2) it makes the command of God into an empty rule which must be applied by human ingenuity, and (3) it undermines Christian freedom by introducing an intermediary. And so Barth's ethics of correspondence is a *critical* ethics that consistently rejects any absolute human rules.

Does setting aside casuistry mean that the human agent is left to hear the word of God in each moment willy-nilly? Barth says no, because the judgments of God have been revealed in the history of the covenant. In God's history with us, God's commands cohere together as points forming a *definite line*. God has revealed that human action must take place within historically articulated forms and relationships with a measure of constancy. Each historical action remains under the critical judgment of God, yet these actions

follow a pattern that makes thematic ethical reflection possible. And so Barth's critical ethics of correspondence respect the divine basis and judgment of human goodness even as they attempt to faithfully discern the will of God in human life today.

(3)

Barth's critical ethics of correspondence can be illustrated by his treatment of the moral issue of war. In §55 of *CD III/4*, Barth addresses the freedom of humanity *for life*. In response to God's affirmation of life in creating humanity for community with God and with other humans, human beings are called to the corresponding act of *honoring* life (§55.1). In view of God's continued action to preserve life in the face of sin and death, human beings are given a basic orientation toward the *protection* of life (§55.2). And life is honored and protected in order for humans to be free to bear witness to God, which is at the heart of the *active* life (§55.3). Within the middle sub-section on the protection of life, Barth discusses a number of life and death ethical issues, the last of which is the topic of war. Because the definite line revealed in God's history with us is that of protecting life, Barth begins with a critique of modern warfare. He states that pacifism has nearly infinite arguments in its favor. God's action for life stands as a critique of war's destruction of life. The corresponding human action is to stand in opposition to a nation's roll to war.

God's judgment also stands in critical distance from any principled opposition to war. We cannot say in advance that God would never will war, for human life, no matter how good, is a relative good in view of God's will for it. So here, as with each issue previously addressed, Barth introduces the critical element of the exceptional case (*Grenzfall*). There may be circumstances in which war is the way to correspond to God's

will and act. Despite the church's presumption against war, it must leave open the possibility of affirming such acts of the state. War as such is the alien work of the state, but it may be its work nevertheless.

In order to bring this possibility to concrete expression, Barth describes some of the conditions under which war may be God's command. In his description, Barth makes some use of the logic and language of the just war tradition, especially the *jus ad bello*. For instance, Barth speaks of a just cause, such as defense in the face of the threat of annihilation aimed at one's own state or perhaps a state's weaker neighbors. He also uses the language of right intention to unmask the nationalistic and economic motives of modern warfare. He also speaks at length of the importance of war as a last resort, perhaps elevating this criterion as primary.

In using such criteria, Barth does not treat them as casuistic rules, which by proper application justify one's actions. Rather, the criteria he outlines are intended to bear witness to the definite line and orientation of protecting life, which God has revealed in God's history with us. Barth's discussion of war thus aptly illustrates not only his critical ethics of correspondence but also shows how he critically appropriates other ethical tradition within his basic approach to ethics.

**3. Christian theological ethicists find connections between what Christians claim to believe (Christian doctrine) and what they are to do (Christian ethics). Drawing on the work of John Calvin and Martin Luther, explain what bearing the relationship between justification and sanctification has on Christian ethics.**

Because they concern the foundation of the Christian life, the doctrines of justification and sanctification have important implications for theological ethics. In particular, one's understanding of the logical relationship between justification and

sanctification (a.k.a., the *ordo salutis*) conditions one's approach to Christian ethical action and reflection. Since this doctrine was at the forefront of theological debate during the reformation period, I will draw on the work of John Calvin and Martin Luther to display how this conceptual relationship in Christian doctrine carries ethical significance. In this essay I will (1) briefly describe the respective accounts of Luther and Calvin with respect to the relationship between justification and sanctification, (2) explain how this connects to their different approaches to ethics, and (3) assess the contributions and drawbacks of each perspective in order to work towards a synthesis of their best insights.

(1)

Martin Luther assigns a clear priority to the doctrine of justification. Whatever is said about the Christian life under the heading of sanctification is developed with reference to God's justification of sinners in Christ by grace through faith. It is important to note that Luther does not use the streamlined categories of justification and sanctification found in the later polemical and systematic tradition. He speaks pointedly of justification while using a broad collection of images to describe the ongoing life of the believer in light of the doctrine of justification. Although the introduction of the more technical terminology is conceptually helpful and parallels the structural pattern of Luther's writings, his habit of speech testifies to the priority of justification. Not only is justification logically prior to any talk of the transformation of the Christian, but also justification materially shapes the content of the Christian life. God's justification of sinners is taken as the model for how the believer should live her life. As God has treated us, so we treat others. The sanctified believer is one who spontaneously responds to God's free gift of grace by living graciously with others. So Luther, by giving decisive

priority to justification, develops an account of sanctification that is limited by and derived from the gospel of God's grace to the ungodly.

The significance of Luther's prioritization of justification can be found throughout his vast corpus. It is particularly evident in the structure of Luther's 1520 treatise "The Freedom of a Christian." Here Luther begins with the basic paradox of the Christian life: we are both free from all and bound to all. He treats each side of this paradox, beginning with our freedom in Christ and only then moving to our freely bound relation to others. This movement corresponds to the priority of justification over sanctification and illustrates how the former informs the content of the latter. Because we are united to Christ, we receive him in all his offices. Therefore, we share his authority over sin, death, and the law. By binding himself to us, Christ has exchanged his authority for our bondage. And so we are free from all. The proper use and expression of our freedom is to become freely bound to others as Christ freely bound himself to us. As he served us, so we serve him by serving others. We are not obligated to serve by some new law, but are freely bound to others as an appropriate outworking of God's gracious act of justification.

In the generation following Luther, the protestant movement came under sharp criticism. Not least among these criticisms was the accusation that the doctrine of justification by faith alone undermines Christian morality. In explicit response to these criticisms, John Calvin develops his own understanding of justification and sanctification in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III. Calvin's way of responding to this criticism without abandoning the doctrine was to invert the order of presentation, dealing first with sanctification (or, in his terms, regeneration) and then turning to justification. Calvin is careful to point out that this order of teaching is the opposite of the logical

ordering of the concepts. The inversion is meant to respond to abuse, but Calvin's understanding of the relation between the two concepts is nevertheless distinctive.

Like Luther, Calvin does not use the technical pairing of justification and sanctification. Unlike Luther, however, Calvin does have a distinct pair of terms: regeneration and justification. This is important, because he does not treat the former as a mere outworking of the later, but rather treats both as concomitant benefits given by the Spirit to those united with Christ. The choice of the term "regeneration" (re-birth) is therefore fitting, as it speaks of the sanctification of the Christian from the perspective of its beginning. Regeneration and justification come together as the double grace (*duplex gratia*), grounding and propelling the Christian life. In regeneration we are renewed by the Spirit to live lives pleasing to God. This is worked out through a process of mortification and vivification, which is never finished but does progress. In justification we are assured of the forgiveness of our sins by the Spirit's imputation of Christ's acquired righteousness on our behalf. Justification thus prevents pride or fear as we are being regenerated. Justification sets a critical limit on the language of regeneration. But in Calvin's thought, regeneration has a certain integrity of its own. So, to use the technical jargon, justification and sanctification are materially equal in weight as benefits of the Christian's union with Christ, even as justification retains a certain logical priority over sanctification.

(2)

What does this have to do with ethics? These different understandings of the relationship between justification and sanctification lend themselves to different approaches to Christian ethics. For Luther, the decisive priority of justification informs

the content of sanctification. The Christian life is characterized by actions that reflect the manner in which God has treated humanity in Christ. This understanding leads to a radical ethic of forgiveness and reconciliation that is at times contrary to the expectations of justice. For instance, in his exposition of the Decalogue, Luther states that the negative command not to bear false witness implies the positive command to think better of others than they really are. Here he explicitly refers to the doctrine of justification, where it is announced that God treats us better than we really are. Although he encourages this kind of action for interpersonal relations, Luther concedes that this sort of radical ethic is difficult to extend into the sociopolitical sphere. Therefore, he appeals here to the ongoing use of the law to restrain evil within the kingdom of this earth. So the so-called "two kingdoms" doctrine in the Lutheran tradition coheres with Luther's material priority of justification over sanctification, for some conceptuality must be introduced to guide morality in spheres where the doctrine of justification does not apply.

For Calvin, the integrity of regeneration as a distinct aspect of God's grace allows for a stronger emphasis on the life of obedience in the Christian. Although the Christian life must always root out pride in one's self by trusting in the righteousness of Christ alone, the Christian does grow and mature by the power of the Spirit. This growth can and should be encouraged by the Christian community. The content of this life of obedience is not constrained only to the example of divine justification of sinners, but includes the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible. So Calvin appeals to the third use of the law, whereby the law regulates the life of the believer. The balance and breadth of the ethical content of regeneration lends itself to application beyond personal spirituality. And so the emphasis on sociopolitical reform in the Calvinist tradition

coheres with Calvin's teaching on the double grace.

(3)

In view of their ethical implications, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? The primary Lutheran contribution is the decisive priority of justification. By deriving the content of the Christian life from God's justification of sinners, Luther is able to make sense of much of the radical ethics of forgiveness and reconciliation found in some strands of the New Testament witness. The primary Lutheran problem is the lack of sociopolitical follow-through. The two kingdoms doctrine has a tendency to overlook social evil.

The primary Calvinist contribution is the extension of the Spirit's work in the Christian life beyond personal morality and into all spheres of life. Also, the basic notion of a double grace gives a sense of balance to Calvin's account. The primary Calvinist problem is treating the content of regeneration too independently from justification. Justification conditions of our attitude toward our regenerate life but does not decisively inform the manner of this new life. And so the turn to the third use of the law can be used fund a legalistic and even theocratic approach to communal life.

The best insights of Luther and Calvin on the relationship between justification and sanctification should be integrated in a way that mitigates their problems. In such a synthetic treatment, the double grace would be adopted, but with a clear priority to justification to avoid any misunderstanding. The parallelism between justification and sanctification would not only be formal but also material, so that the former shapes the content of the latter. And the ethical implications of this Christian doctrine should be extended into public life, searching for fitting sociopolitical analogies to God's

justification of sinners. In this way, the contributions of Luther and Calvin can be appropriated without falling into their respective traps.