



BOOK REVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Author: John Ishaku

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Establishing Perspectives

A book constitutes more than the bound pages of texts in chapters or blocks. It is a vessel and well spring of knowledge, history, memory, imagination, and wisdom. It preserves and perpetuates human thought across time and space by allowing ideas, experiences, and values to travel beyond their original context and influences. A book inspires, challenges, instructs, and consoles its readers. It is a mirror where readers see and discover their innermost capabilities and innate abilities. Consequently, a book is a window through which individuals can peer into and encounter worlds beyond theirs. The encounters enable personal growth, arouse and thrust companionship. These are achieved because books have educated from when they were codices in papyrus and parchments to their present form.

John Ishaku, PhD, has showcased these qualities of books in his 354-page piece entitled “Introduction to Christian Ethics and Contemporary Issues”. According to Dr. Ishaku, he conceived this book of Ethics and Ethics of Religion as a compass and map for navigating the often turbulent and morally ambiguous landscape of our contemporary world. An era defined and shaped by unprecedented technological advancements, rapid globalisation and profound social and cultural shifts causing groundbreaking changes in the ethical and moral dimensions of human life and socialisations. These changes require soft but firm, robust and morally sound ambient for constructive and productive decision-making that uphold the essence and dignity of humanity and its society. This book educates on the socio-ethical changes that have happened in humanity’s history for fruitful decision-making.

While the primary intention of Dr. Ishaku is to educate, expand understanding, provide clarity, and connect its readers to key ethical problems and issues, he projects to inspire the young and to perpetuate memory. His book’s unique stylistics of composition is eclectic of a few current moral and ethical problems debasing humanity and painfully impacting on societal dignity. His main objective is to enable his readers understand the nature, theories and praxes of these social and moral issues so as to arrive at constructive decisions for managing social ills bedeviling human beings. In the words of the late Prof Dickson Dyaji, who wrote its Forward, the book identifies some of the lingering global ethical issues like terrorism, kidnapping and the scourge of HIV/AIDS, drugs, sex, pornography, abortion, examination malpractice, birth control, surrogacy and stem cell with the deliberate view to proffering solutions to them. This book is not simply on understanding of the different ethical theories, but on developing the skills of ethical discernment,

critical reflection and responsible action. Hence, the book is a tool for ethical formation, and not just an academic survey of ethical ideas.

Depicting its Content

After a succinct establishing of the book's introduction in chapter one, chapter two explicates terms and concepts of theories on Christian ethics and moral theories, and clarifies them from key philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle; and from philosophies like stoicism, hedonism, consequentialism, and utilitarianism. The book provides theoretical analysis and evaluation of the moral issues demanding logical engagements with from chapter three to chapter sixteen. Chapter three deals with the history and factors responsible for kidnapping and terrorism. It outlines the lack of justice and equality, campaigneering and electioneering, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, religion and greed as some of their informing factors. It underscores that these vices create fear, trauma and economic regression. The chapter advised for the deployment of anti-kidnapping units, job creation and economic empowerment as solutions to kidnapping and terrorism. It equally laid the biblical foundations of how to deal with kidnapping and terrorism. Chapter four highlights how HIV/AIDS is contracted; it foregrounds their symptoms, preventions, transmission, history, and prevention. Among ways to prevent it, it suggested early and regular testing, use of polyurethane condoms and waterbased lubricants. It underscores the biblical position on the matter. Chapter five starts by presenting definitions of euthanasia and suicide. It is followed by the classification of euthanasia, its history and biblical disapproval.

Drug abuse is the issue showcased in chapter six. It talks about the impact, history, types, and effects of drug addiction. It evaluates community involvement in its prevention. Chapter seven deals with abortion, its types and consequences. It concludes with Christian views on abortion. Cultism is the issue dealt with in chapter eight. It chronicles its history, types, causes, effects on education, individuals and society. The chapter contends that the Bible depicts cultists as false apostles. Wanting to reflect on the ethics of organ procurement and transplant, chapter nine presents its regulatory framework, procedures and types of acquisition of organ and the nature of transplanting. This chapter gives much thinking to the ethics and morality of its procurement in the backdrop of religious and socio-medical perspectives.

Chapter ten looked into the thorny issue of pornography ravaging a lot of people's lives. It traced its history to the 18th century and warned of its dangers from a biblical perspective. One of the oldest professions in the world is prostitution. Chapter eleven explicates on it through a definition and a listing of its types. It asserted the causes and effects of prostitution, and concludes with its biblical condemnation. Chapter twelve concerns the highly debated matter of birth control. It traced its history and it suggests that it has been part of human society. It showcased the medical conditions and operations behind it and risk factors arising from their use. Examination malpractice in Nigeria is a phenomenon that is not welcomed in the academia and it is being vigorously fought as a serious immoral and unethical palaver. Chapter thirteen speaks of forms of its practice, its causes, and proffers effective solutions, one of which demands strengthening examination security and invigilation.

Chapter fourteen describes and explicates blood transfusion on the grounds of its usefulness and ways of acquiring it. It concludes with its biblical review. Surrogate motherhood is suggested as a solution to childlessness in marriage but it comes with its attendant consequences and moral

dilemma; chapter fifteen is dedicated to it. Science and technology have grown in leaps and bounds to make life easier and better especially in the area of medicine. Consequently, there have been mind-blowing medical discoveries like stem cell to battle and win hitherto “incurable” ailments but it has faced its problems and criticism. Chapter sixteen is about stem cell.

The moral implication of most of these ethical issues have not been fully understood by most Nigerians and especially Nigerian Christians. This book’s content fills that gap.

Style and Contribution

Stylistically, the book is engager because it is written in simple English expressed in a reflective tone. It avoids unnecessary jargons, making it suitable for Lecturers, students and every day enthusiasts of books for knowledge. Because the core focus of the book is to equip readers with the intellectual and moral resources necessary to navigate the moral complexities of the 21st century from a distinctly Christian perspective, it is worthwhile. The cover design is attractive. One could judge it to be good by its cover, especially that its characters are readable.

Dr. Ishaku’s ability to select and weave ethical and moral issues for the good of mankind enriches the book. The book’s greatest contribution is the instructive powers embedded in the issues it dealt with. To Lecturers and students, it offers a realistic account of the common issues we take for granted and just live on without questioning them. On the whole, this is a refreshing contribution to ethics in various shades of opinions.

Evaluation

While the book is commendable for its honesty and scope, one may note that certain sections could have benefited from tighter editing. In an attempt to make the book’s typesetting contemporary, exaggerated emphasis dots parts of it. The redaction of the book was hurriedly done as there are redundant repetitions. This quite affects the quality of the stylistics of the book because its style of citation is not uniform and the arrangement of arguments are not often logical and on complete syllogism. Chapter two of the book needs better grounding and expatiation. Hence, there is no serious moral and ethical evaluation and explication of the vices the book dealt with. For instance, in talking about HIV/AIDS, it does not educate its readers on the controversy and position of some Christian denominations that do not support and permit the use of condoms for whatever reason. Through the book, he gave biblical evaluation in the bid to establish Christian backgrounds, but did not look into the various Christian traditions behind these moral and ethical issues.