

one to give personally and selflessly. Calvin himself left money in his will not only for his family but also for a boys' school and for poor strangers. Charitable giving comes with good cheer—something that simply cannot be accomplished through an impersonal system of taxes and expenditures.

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Autonomy and Food Biotechnology in Theological Ethics

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Too often, environmental theologies gravitate to abstract concepts (e.g., global warming, environmental degradation) and in doing so tend to unfairly portray perspectives different from their own. Thankfully, Russell avoids that error by grounding environmental ethics in the practical question facing Ireland's policymakers, namely, should genetically modified (GM) crops be allowed to be grown? Her scientific training certainly enables her to navigate the confounding and highly technical issues involved in this issue. Her review of this complex topic is masterfully done. Her explanations of the economic and scientific issues (chapter 1) are comprehensible and fair to all sides of the debate but also commendable for their brevity. Those looking for a quick review of the difficulties facing policymakers regarding GM crops should consider reading this chapter. More importantly, as stated above, Russell's decision to engage the GM crops debate grounds readers in practical issues, while they struggle with the important and abstract aspects of environmental ethics that follow.

In chapter 2, Russell considers four ethical frameworks used by Christians to navigate complex moral questions. She begins with divine-command morality, noting that it downplays the role of human reason and freedom in favor of God's instructions as revealed in Scripture. Russell observes that Scripture plays a dual role with divine-command morality. On the one hand, Scripture provides Christians with a recognized source of authority to help adjudicate disputes. On the other hand, the benefits Christians gain from Scripture are dispersed because of disagreements over interpretation. The second ethical framework is called Christian communitarian or ecclesial ethics. Christian communitarianism deemphasizes individualistic and deontological ethics, in favor of virtue-based ethics. While commending communitarian ethics for its helpful corrective to individualistic ethical systems, Russell concludes that communitarian ethics still needs to properly account for secular reason as well as the dignity of the individual. She then turns to consider natural-law ethics and its revisions. Russell gives natural-law ethics high marks for its appeal to reason, recognition of objective morality and the common good, and respect for the givenness of the human situation. Although Russell finds much value in the natural-law perspective, she believes that an autonomy framework provides a better alternative.

Russell explains that autonomy-based ethics rests on the foundation of human freedom rather than human rationality and draws significantly from Kant's deontological ethics. She suggests that by recognizing our capabilities we encounter the limits of our reason and must appeal to universal value. Kant's categorical imperative comes to the fore because "morality begins with the rejection of non-universalisable principles ..." (125). A key benefit of her perspective lies in the manner by which the ethical value gap present between Christians and non-Christians may be bridged. Following Dietmar Mieth, Russell explains that the autonomy view allows Christians and non-Christians to act ethically by methodologically separating Kant's two questions, "What should I do?" and "What should I hope for?" This separation allows atheists to base their ethics (and thereby act in an ethical manner) on their answer to the first question, without having to consider their own ultimate destiny.

Russell's argument is simultaneously intriguing and disturbing. I am intrigued because the autonomy ethic frees Christians from the charge that they are trying to force their morality on society by allowing people to perform the same actions even though the full justification for those actions can be substantially different. In this way, autonomy provides a common moral language that can be used by radically different moral communities to achieve common goals. I am disturbed, though, by contemplating the unforeseen consequences this move might have on Christian moral theory. Given that the New Testament so tightly links hope (the future) with present duty, I wonder whether morality can be properly separated from hope in any objective sense. In other words, does our answer to Kant's first question provide a foundation strong enough to persuade us to act ethically when times get tough? I have my doubts. Nevertheless, I am thankful to Russell for raising this important question, as it could provide an avenue for Christians and non-Christians to discuss ethical issues facing society without each party having to accept the worldview of the other.

In chapter 3, Russell takes up the question of which environmental model should be adopted to apply the moral framework of autonomy. After a brief review of broad biblical concepts, Russell evaluates ideas such as environmental crisis, instrumentalism, ecocentrism, theocentrism, and anthropocentrism in order to discover which ones fit best within an environmental ethic compatible with Christian values. Her treatment of these topics is balanced, avoiding shrill doomsday predictions of environmental catastrophe while recognizing the need for human responsibility. Russell properly notes that any environmental ethic must be compatible with a Christian anthropology. She ultimately decides in favor of a modified anthropocentrism, arguing that alternative models downplay the significance of the individual; fail to maintain distinctions between God, humanity, and nonhuman creation; or are unable to provide distinctions useful for guiding ethical decisions. For Russell, stewardship, and more specifically servant stewardship, is the guiding rubric to regulate and modify anthropocentrism.

Interestingly, Russell rejects the pilgrim model of stewardship because of its low view of humanity in favor of a service model. The remainder of the chapter shows how a modified anthropocentric model can fulfill the goal of being environmentally

sustainable. In light of the way anthropocentrism has been excoriated by environmental activists, Russell's philosophical explanation of how respect for the dignity of people can include respect for the environment should be read by every Christian who considers the Bible's anthropocentrism to be incompatible with environmentalism. Russell is quite right to explain that a properly defined and understood anthropology will accrue benefits to the nonhuman community while avoiding solipsistic anthropomorphism.

The final chapter explores a theology of nature. Russell surveys the thought of Pannenberg, Northcott, and Deane-Drummond and carefully discusses and draws from their contributions. Nevertheless, she believes that Pannenberg's notion of creatureliness—being both an individual and connected to other creatures—has the most to offer. Readers should consider Russell's discussion of the tension between preserving/restoring creation and transforming creation as this tension lies at the heart of many disputes among environmentalists and eco-theologians. I do not doubt that readers will find concepts here worthy of prolonged reflection.

Despite my favorable view of the book, it does have several weaknesses. When addressing controversial points, I wish that Russell provided more evidence for her conclusions. For example, on page 101 she states, "As we have seen, libertarian economic thinking cannot deliver public goods, such as a clean environment and sustainable resource use...." I assume that she is referring to her discussion of cost-benefit analysis on pages 52–53 where she states that classical economics does not take into account environmental costs in its economic analysis. However, her statement begs some questions, such as, "Has the world ever really seen libertarian economics?" In my understanding, libertarian economics could protect the environment (a river for example) by appealing to the concept of property rights. A downstream landowner would have a right to clean water; therefore, an upstream landowner would have to watch what he dumped into the river. A similar claim could be made for Russell's discussion of Amartya Sen's argument that development can be understood in a way in which human freedom and environmental sustainability are not incompatible. I would like to have seen Russell engage authors critical of Sen's ideas to assure readers that they are receiving a balanced discussion. Second, the book needed to be more tightly organized. I suspect part of the problem lies with the abstract and nuanced nature of the material. However, at various points, I felt lost. I wondered how one section tied into another. In particular, I would like to have seen a more sustained discussion of environmental ethics throughout the book, using GM crops as an example, as a way to ground the material. Thankfully, Russell provides excellent summaries, which help the reader regain his bearings. Finally, I was disappointed that Russell did not provide some conditions under which she would consider supporting GM agriculture. I wonder, if Ireland's agriculture sustained a devastating crop disease that threatened the nation's food production, would those conditions warrant a new and perhaps more favorable look at GM crops?

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