**Ethical Dilemmas**

Choose only one of the ethical dilemmas below to address in your essay. The questions at the end of each dilemma are intended for you to reflect on. For your paper, you must organize your writing using the sections and underlined titles listed on the assignment page. Do not copy the case study into your essay.

**1. Pornography**

TJ secretly enjoys pornography. He gets a great deal of gratification out of viewing Internet pornography and masturbating, though he always acts behind closed doors and believes that his actions have no effect on others. He justifies his behavior by saying, "Who am I harming?"

Then he discovers a statistic on the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking website (http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues\_doc/labour/Forced\_labour/HUMAN\_TRAFFICKING\_-\_THE\_FACTS\_-\_final.pdf), stating that 43% of human trafficking victims are used for forced commercial sexual exploitation, of whom 98% are women and girls, and that the pornography business is a multibillion dollar industry (Global Initiative, n.d.).

His freedom to view pornography is now at odds with harm to himself (addiction) and others (abuse through forced trafficking and media exploitation). (More information can be found at http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/may/may\_17pornographycost.html, which is a report by William May called "The Social Costs of Pornography" provided by the Witherspoon Institute out of Princeton [May, 2010].)

How should TJ respond? Should he maintain his lifestyle because of his freedom of choice, or should he change his behavior because of the harm done? What is his responsibility for the harm that the pornography industry can cause, even if he himself is not directly harming someone else?

**2. Euthanasia**

Joni was 17 when she was swimming with friends in the Chesapeake Bay. She dove into the water, misjudging the depth, and fractured her vertebrae. This left her a quadriplegic, paralyzed from her shoulders down. As might be expected, she went into severe depression, even having serious thoughts of ending her life. Her quality of life was severely diminished. Her future looked horribly bleak. What could she ever hope to accomplish as a human being in such a weakened state? Why should she be forced to endure a life of suffering and hardship and be a burden to her family? Should her wishes to be euthanized be granted? What do you think? Should someone in her condition be permitted to have her life legally terminated?

**3. Abortion**

After trying for many years, Susan finally gets pregnant. Unfortunately, a blood test confirms that her baby has Down syndrome, and her doctors suggest she abort the fetus. Susan has a successful career and wants to maintain a healthy balance between her career and family. Yet she feels very uncomfortable with abortion. She seeks some advice from Richard, an influential professor of evolutionary biology who has spent his career seeking to further human potential and minimize human suffering. When Susan asks Richard if she should abort the fetus or give birth to a baby with Down syndrome, Richard replied that human beings should increase happiness and decrease suffering in this world, and that therefore he would suggest that she abort, though he also stated that she must make this choice for herself. Richard emphasized the lifelong suffering of both the child with Down syndrome and Susan as the child's caretaker and stated that it may be immoral to bring a baby into the world if she knew the kind of suffering the child would experience. In fact, Richard suggested that perhaps the most ethical course of action would be to prevent this baby from living a life full of suffering. (This scenario is based on the following article by Richard Dawkins (2014): https://richarddawkins.net/2014/08/abortion-down-syndrome-an-apology-for-letting-slip-the-dogs-of-twitterwar/). How should Susan respond? What decision should she make if her baby would suffer with Down syndrome, yet she wants to have a baby?

**4. Performance Enhancing Drugs**

As a successful young athlete, Paul has been working hard in the weight room and on the field, and he has earned a starting position on his team. As his team develops, some members of his team have been experimenting with a new performance-enhancing drug and have seen remarkable results. The drug is not a banned substance, largely because it is not widely known, and Paul has seen it work for several of his teammates, who remind Paul of the remarkable fact that this drug cannot be traced by any drug test available. Paul wants to succeed but is finding he may be left behind by those who are getting bigger and faster. The coach seems to be aware of the drug use but has turned a blind eye to it because the team has been winning so far and the drug is technically not an illegal substance yet. Paul was just told by his coach that some changes may be taking place and he may lose his starting position. His friend offered him a sample of the drug to "catch up" with the others. What should his response be in regard to legal, physical, and spiritual implications?

**5. Religious Tolerance**

In September 2014, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship was "derecognized" by the 23 public California State University schools because the Christian organization requires its leaders to hold Christian beliefs. Tina is a volunteer leader of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at a particular public university. The new university policy requires that recognized campus groups have a nondiscrimination policy that says an organization cannot require its leaders to hold any particular beliefs (Stetzer, 2014). Being a recognized group is important to Tina, since it affects such circumstances as free access to meeting rooms, advertisements at University sponsored events, and official engagement with faculty and students. Tina believes that student leaders must hold to essential Christian beliefs for the sake of the group's purpose, though InterVarsity has always welcomed anyone from any faith background to be a part of the group. Yet the University system requires all recognized campus groups to sign a state-mandated nondiscrimination policy stating that both membership and leadership positions are open for anyone, whether they support the beliefs of the group or not (Winston, 2014). How should Tina respond to the university leadership, if at all? What changes should Tina make to her chapter of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, if any?

References

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