

### 5-3-1 Assignment on Hollinger Chapter 4

#### Questions

1. What is modernity?
2. What are the three approaches of Hollinger to explain the nuances of modernity and its implications for Christian ethics?
3. What is the modernist approach to truth and truth seeking?
4. What were the two schools of thought on epistemology?
5. What is rationalism?

#### Answers

1. The modern world began roughly in the seventeenth century with the dawn of new scientific and philosophical understandings about the world and the human ability to control and shape the world.
2. Hollinger's approach to explain modernity in the context of Christian ethics consists of a focus on three areas. The three areas are intellectual, industrial/technological, and sociological.
3. Modernism's intellectual agenda was seeking the truth, with an anticipation of certainty. How that truth was sought out was not always agreed upon, but the pursuit of truth was a main factor. If truth could be found with certitude, it would serve to lead humanity to freedom and progress. Any obstacles to humanity could be overcome.
4. There were two essential schools of thought when it came to epistemology. One school of thought is known as rationalism, while the other is known as empiricism.
5. Rationalism, according to the philosopher Rene Descartes, believed that universal, self-evident truths could be discovered through innate rationality present in all humans. Rationalism stressed the separation of mind and matter, with the premise that all the world could be understood by the ordering of the mind.

#### Terms

*Rationalism*- philosophy of epistemology with the writings of Rene Descartes as one of its primary sources which establishes that humans have an innate rationality with which they can understand the whole world.

*Empiricism*- school of epistemology in philosophy which teaches that knowledge was based on experience and the senses. Truth is not gained through innate reason but through empirical analysis and examination of the world.

*Utilitarian forms of ethics*- an approach to ethics based upon either rationality or a mathematics-like quantification of consequences, independent of religious authority or content.

*Functional rationalism*- the transformation of rationalization through technology in which it is no longer theoretical, but all spheres of humanity are governed by calculation and scrutiny.

#### Summary

In chapter 3 of his book *Choosing the Good*, Hollinger dives into modernism and its influence on the development of modern approaches to ethics. Hollinger looks at intellectual, technological, and sociological developments that changed the way in which ethics was thought and applied. Modernity, looked at from these three approaches written about by Hollinger leads to the conclusion that humanity was being led to viewpoints of ethics that distanced or removed God altogether. These in turn can help to inform us about the practical implications of ethics based upon modernist philosophical ideas.