

Questions

1. What are empirical judgments in ethical decisions?
 - a. Empirical judgments have to do with interpretations of facts and data that shape ethical decision making.
2. State one example on how Christians can differ on empirical judgments.
 - a. Hollinger discusses how all Christians are morally obligated to help the poor, but Christians differ on the causes of poverty and approaches to alleviate poverty.
3. How do social mores affect empirical judgement?
 - a. Social mores are overarching norms in cultures which influence how we view the world and thus how we approach ethical decision making.
4. What is the ideology that is mentioned in the text which focuses on addressing social injustices?
 - a. Throughout the text, liberation theology is used as an example of ideology which affects some Christians theology, approach, and overall mindset towards social injustice.
5. What are personal dispositions?
 - a. Personal dispositions are defined in this chapter as differences in personality which can influence perceptions and takes on ethical issues.

Terms

mores: social norms widely accepted and practiced in a culture

ideology: a set of ideas and beliefs held by a group or an individual

vested interest: an individual or group holding some sort of personal stake or involvement

Summary

The eighth chapter speaks on empirical judgements in ethical decisions. Hollinger begins by using several cases where empirical data influences moral stances such as just war, environmental ethics, and poverty. Data and the varying ways to interpret this data influences how all people take a stand on each of these issues. What makes individuals lean towards one interpretation versus another have to do with social mores, ideologies, vested interests, and personal dispositions. There are larger systems at play such as norms and ideas which influence cultures, groups, and individuals. However, there are also individual factors such as beliefs, personality, and interests which affect our stances. Hollinger concludes that Christians, although fallible, should seek truth and dedication to the Word of God in the midst of all these influencing factors.