
E D I T O R I A L



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In this issue of *Dignitas* we feature two essays by emerging scholars as part of our ongoing effort to cultivate and promote the next generation of thought leaders in Christian bioethics. This is one of the primary emphases of BioethicsNEXT, which we unveiled at our 2018 summer conference amidst our 25th Anniversary celebration. BioethicsNEXT emphasizes two strategic priorities that will guide the Center's work over the next several years: 1) inspiring young thinkers to courageously promote human dignity and foster human flourishing, and 2) helping pastors guide their congregations to wisely face difficult issues in medicine, science, and technology.

The first essay in this issue is by Koos Sieger Tamminga, MA, a doctoral student in practical theology at the Theologische Universiteit Kampen in the Netherlands. In his essay, "Countering Ableism through Embodiments of the Gospel: The Roles of Practice and Reflection," he explores issues of disability, social engagement, and counter-cultural community based on his doctoral research. In particular, Tamminga examines the case study of Hart van Vathorst (Heart of Vathorst), a Christian community in the Netherlands that includes two

residential care facilities for individuals with varying disabilities across the lifespan, a church, a children's center, and a restaurant in a single building. By sharing their lives and not merely a building, Heart of Vathorst and Encounter Church seek to be an embodied Christian practice "striving to become more inclusive."

Tamminga introduces those unfamiliar with scholarship in disability studies and ethics to the competing conceptions for understanding disability and social engagement before turning to an extensive analysis of the unique social practices of Heart of Vathorst that confront social norms through a radically different, inclusive experience. In so doing, he examines the ways in which this community of inclusion stands consonant with developments in Dutch society (going with the grain of values like a "focus on personal attention and locality"), while also highlighting the ways in which this unique community functions at times counterculturally, going against the grain of Dutch society (e.g., highlighting legislative obstacles and deeper questions of social values and politics). This complex relationship of "going with" and "going against" the grain of their social context is underscored by a more sustained

discussion of the ambiguities in the relationship.

Tamminga concludes his essay with reflections suggestive of how Heart of Vathorst and Encounter Church serve as Christian embodied practices of inclusion, invoking theologian Stanley Hauerwas and his reflection on the L'Arche communities. Such action—doing, not simply reflecting—creates "counter-imaginaries, based on the Gospel" that open the possibility of reshaping social imaginaries in relation to disability. In this way, he challenges Christian ethicists (and Christian bioethicists) not only to reflect carefully, but also calls for "faithful Christian practice in response to the experience of disability."

The second essay in this issue is by Dominic Mangino. Readers of *Dignitas* may recall that we featured an essay by Julia Bolzon, recipient of the CBHD's 2018 student paper competition award, in the Fall 2018 issue. Dominic Mangino was awarded second place in the 2018 student paper competition, and this essay is adapted from that paper submission. In his essay, Mangino explores the role of shame in healthcare. Beginning with a philosophical analysis based on the work of Eleonore Stump, Mangino distinguishes between shame and guilt and emphasizes that desire for love stands at the root of shame. Through a three-fold

taxonomy of species of shame, he then proceeds to characterize “illness *qua* illness” and “patients *qua* patients” as something “underserving of shame.”

Turning his attention next to autonomy, Mangino underscores “how prominent American values—like productivity, efficiency, and autonomy . . . predispose the sick towards feelings of shame.” In so doing, he highlights the purported deficiency that stands at the root of the experience of shame in the clinical or bedside encounter. The asymmetry of the physician-patient encounter further exacerbates this feeling through an inherent imbalance of power in the

midst of intense moments of personal vulnerability (physically and emotionally). Having established the root concern, Mangino concludes the essay by offering a constructive path to combating shame by focusing on celebrating the dignity of the patient’s life and, more fundamentally, recognizing the patient as created in the image of God.

As noted, Mangino is the second of two essay contest winners featured as part of the Center’s inaugural student paper competition, held in conjunction with our 2018 summer conference. Both award recipients presented versions of their submissions as parallel paper

sessions during the conference and were invited to revise their papers for inclusion in *Dignitas*. This student paper competition is one among several initiatives that the Center unveiled as part of BioethicsNEXT. To learn more about BioethicsNEXT and how you can partner with the Center in making a difference among pastors, young professionals, and students, please visit cbhd.org/bioethicsnext.

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