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**0-612-52225-3**

**Canada**

**A Survey of Feeling as Motivation in Volunteerism and Ethics**

**by**

**Sung T. Shim**

**Bachelor of Arts, Honours, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1990  
Master of Divinity, Emmanuel College, 1993**

**THESIS**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Theology in Christian Ethics**

**2000**

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## **Abstract**

**This essay is based on a qualitative study which asks people to identify those factors which motivated them to undertake volunteer work in church and community. Among those factors identified, feeling plays a large role. The paper then reviews historical and theoretical issues in the discussion of the importance of feeling in making ethical decisions.**

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## I. Introduction

There are many theories about each person's ethical or moral decision making. Natural law, human conscience, tradition, moral imperative, religious orders, situations, etc., have been considered as the sources of ethics. These sources influence a person's ethical or moral decision making. I wondered how these sources actually work in the field of an individual's ethical or moral decision making. At the same time I also wondered whether there were any common sources for personal moral behaviour. These suggestions were the main reasons why I began the field study that was designed to find some sources of ethics at the grass roots. As the result of the survey, it has been found that personal feeling is an important source of ethics. At the same time personal feeling has a tremendous influence on each person's ethical or moral decision making. How is personal feeling able to be a source of ethics? What are these personal feelings? That is the main subject of this treatise.

Trutz Rendtorff defines ethics as "the theory of the conduct of human life".<sup>1</sup> Each person has one's own source or power in conducting one's own life. That source or power would be a core element to build up the theory of the conduct of personal ethical or moral decisions. What is the source or power enforcing a person to do good work, such as volunteer work? Is there any common source? If not, why not? The survey project was designed to focus on these questions. Through the survey it has been found that



personal feeling was a significant motivation to be involved in volunteer work. Especially in the younger group, under fifty years of age, 89% said that their source of volunteer work has come from feeling. This percentage led me to study further about feeling as a source of ethics. At the same time it is an important issue in ethics since it is already known that all kinds of discrimination such as sexism, racism, classism, ageism, and so on, begin with personal feeling. Feeling is a part of human nature.

As humans are social beings, individuals cannot survive being separated from a community. Modern society is characterized as pluralistic, rapidly changing, and multicultural. Diversity, variety, and convenience have dominated social, cultural, economic, political and even religious paradigms. Traditional moral standards and ethical norms are convulsed in the face of high and new technology and up to date scientific knowledge. In contemporary society it seems that "everything is okay," as long as it does not bother or hurt others. However, as Paul said, "all things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial." <sup>2</sup> Everything is not okay always. Everyone has a problem; who does not have a problem? It is important to find a common consensus to enable persons to keep on touching one another in a pluralistic, rapidly changing and multicultural society. We need a common ground to enable us to live together with harmony and prosperity in modern society. Modern society requires a new moral guidance to bind people together. We need unity in diversity. Through the survey

project, it has been found that there is a certain gap between the older and the younger generations in their sources for ethical or moral decision making. Among the various sources, feeling has taken a significant role to make up the gap between two groups. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter based on the results of the survey.

The treatise is composed of two primary sources, the results of the survey project and academic research about feeling in ethical or moral decision making. The purpose of the treatise is to examine how personal feeling becomes a source for ethics. What is the role of feeling in ethical or moral decision making? What relationship does feeling have with other sources of ethics? How does feeling work in ethical or moral decision making? The treatise will be focused on developing a theory of feeling as a source of ethics in the third chapter.

The fundamental goal of ethics is to build a just, caring and loving community. Therefore ethics is always concerned about "what is good?" "what is right?" and "what is a right relationship with others?." Ethics always pays attention to these issues in any time and in any place. Although human beings are social beings, nowadays each individual is easily isolated from one's own family, community and society. It is hard to get along with others without having a certain common element. Through the survey project, feeling has been found as an important source of each individual's

moral decisions. And feeling is a part of human nature. Therefore feeling might become a common element in human relationship, especially in modern society. Identifying feeling would play an important role to achieve the goal of ethics. In this point, this treatise is a way of putting a small corner stone in the process of building a just, caring and loving community.

## II. The survey project

### 1) Background

As it is stated in the introduction, the whole purpose of the survey was to find some of the sources for ethical decision making among grass roots. Usually the subject of sources of ethics has been an agenda for academic discussion rather than an issue for average people. As a result, a certain gap has developed between theory and practice. If human beings were ethical or moral beings, then there should be a source for their ethical or moral decision making. I wanted to discover some sources of ethics at the grass roots. An insistence on searching for an essential principle and developing a hypothesis of every day ethics, especially the sources of ethics at the grass roots, led me to begin the survey project.

Another hidden reason was my personal doubt or disappointment that has come from attending large and small workshops or seminars. In many cases the focus was on technique, skill and practice. There was too much focus on how to handle and how to solve the problem without having a proper rationale or basic principle and knowledge of the root of the problem. Implementation without principle is dangerous at the same time as principle without implementation is useless. The practicum of this project was concerned about principle rather than implementation in ethics in order to help people deal with ethical or moral issues.

Through the survey I would like to find some sources of ethics that are in each person's mind as a form of moral imperative. And at the same time I wanted to know if there are common elements among the sources of ethics in grass roots. If there is a commonality, then what is it and how to close it work in each person's moral decision making? Until having done the survey, I did not have any concrete idea about the sources of ethics in average people. However, I assumed that there should be something.

## 2) Purpose and Methodology<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of the survey project was to find out some sources of ethics through having an interview with as many people as possible of various age groups, status and races. Then the data about the sources of ethics were collected and analyzed using the methods of qualitative research. The method of the project was an individual interview with the questionnaires using informal dialogue with the respondents.

In order to minimize an unexpected risk and to match up the questionnaires, the objectives of the interview have been selected to focus on those who have an experience of volunteer work. Although the project was not a random sample survey, I tried to put many and various people in the list of the potential interviewees. All interviews were conducted by myself. I am a Korean-Canadian and

presently serve as a minister of a rural congregation of The United Church of Canada. The initial pool for interviewees consisted of members of the congregation. Through the church directory, twenty persons, ten male and ten female, who had obvious experiences of volunteer work were selected. There were added to the pool other persons of my acquaintance, including several Korean-Canadians and one native Canadian. In the course of the interviews, several more people were added to the list, totalling twenty-one females and seventeen males. Out of these thirty-eight, twenty-four persons were actually interviewed, fifteen female (62.5%) and nine male (37.5%).

The interview began with a brief introduction, the explanation of the purpose of the project and the method of interview. The interviewees were asked to read the consent form and fill it out. Generally each interview did not take more than thirty minutes; an average time was twenty to twenty-five minutes. In a couple of cases, the interviews of a couple (wife and husband) and a group (three persons who worked in the same place), were taken at the same time with the same questions for each person. In these cases the interview required about forty-five minutes to one hour.

It was attempted to match up the gender balance and age as well. But it was impossible to make it up without knowing the interviewee's age before making an appointment. As it shows in the

"Figure 1. Age," the result indicates a good balance between the younger group, under forty-nine years of age and the older group, over sixty years of age. The absence of 50-59 age group is the result of chance.

Figure 1. Age

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
20-29	3	12.5%
30-39	7	29.1%
40-49	4	16.7%
50-59	0	0%
60-69	6	25.0%
70 over	4	16.7%
<u>Total</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>100 %</u>

As it shows in the "Figure 2. Education," about 80% of the interviewees, 19 out of 24, had more education than just high school. Although it is difficult to say that more educated people have a tendency to have more involvement in volunteer work, it may be true that the person who has more education would be more sensitive to a moral issue. But it would not be true that higher educated people are better in ethical or moral decision making than less educated ones. Anyway, it does not become an issue in this project searching for some sources of ethics from the grass roots.

Actually, I could not find any difference in motivation for involvement of volunteer work between the two groups, high school and additional education.

Figure 2. Education

<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
High School	5	20.8%
<u>Additional Education</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>79.2%</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>100%</u>

### 3) Results of interview

A. The first question: "Do you have any experience of helping people or volunteering work?"

Each person had or has at least two or three different kinds of experiences of helping people or volunteering work. These are the respondents' experiences of their volunteer works: Hockey Coach, Tutor, Red Cross, Big Sister, Sunday School Teacher, Cancer Society, The United Way, Choir Member (local church or community), Official Board), Presbytery Representative, Community Nursing School, Mission Support, Food Bank, Hospital Visiting, Brownie Leader, Beaver Leader, Business Association, Community Health Centre, Skating Group, Toy Group, Big Brother, Korean-Canadians



Disabled Adult Community, Vacation School, Drop-in Centre, Youth Group, Alumni Association, Fund Raising event, and Environmental Issue.

An interesting thing is that almost none of them had or has the same experience of volunteer work except involvement in church activities. It seems that each person has a different way of using one's time, energy and talent to help people and to be involved in volunteer work.

B. The second question: "Why did/do you do it? Do you have any reason or motivation to do it?"

A lot of people, especially in the younger group, said that, "I did that because I felt I should do that." Except for the personal feeling, "feeling good after having been involved in volunteer work," most of them could not say any other reason to explain why they had been involved in volunteer work. I asked, "what feeling?" "I just felt I should do that." Some people said, "I did that, because I believe we are responsible to help other people." Or "I did that, because that is our responsibility to society." Some said, "I did that because it is our duty to return back something to society," or "to help society."

It was hard to distinguish between "responsibility" and "duty" to society. But I put each item separately so that I might see

what would the result it come out. Some said, "I did that in order to find a meaning for life" Some said, "I did that because I was brought up under that kind of environment." Some said that, "helping people is a part of my life," or "my personality". Some said, "To do good work is a Christian responsibility." Some said, "I was interested in helping people." A certain Korean lady said, "When I saw a miserable person, I pitied that person, so I helped." Some said, "I did that, because I had extra time." After the responses of the interviewees, I confirmed with them with a suitable word such as family influence, feeling, responsibility, personality, etc., that they would want to say as a motivation or reason why they helped or did volunteer work.

Many persons responded to the question with more than one reason or motivation. The survey did not choose just one response per person, rather collected all responses from each person to see what is the main reason or motivation of his/her involvement in volunteer work. Therefore, the percentage of the "Figure 3. Reason and Motivation" and the "Figure 4. Source/Power" is based on the twenty-four respondents. Therefore, the total of percentages is more than one hundred percent. The survey is interested in finding what is the most common reason or motivation of the respondents' involvement in volunteer work.

**Figure 3. Reason or Motivation**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Interesting	1	4.2%
Feeling	8	33.3%
Time Allowed	1	4.2%
Family Influence	4	16.7%
Religious Duty	3	12.5%
Duty to Society	7	29.2%
Just Society	1	4.2%
Meaning of Life	4	16.7%
Human Responsibility	5	20.8%
Personality	2	8.3%
Pity	2	8.3%

-----  
\* Percentage per total 24 persons. <sup>1</sup>

As seen in the "Figure 3", eight persons among twenty-four (33.3%) of the respondents said that feeling was the main reason to be involved in volunteer work. Among the 8 persons, 6 persons (75%) belong to the younger group, especially aged 20-29. Only the two persons (over 70 years of age) who have a higher education responded the same.

The second highest reason or motivation is the item of a duty to society, 7 persons (29.2%). The third rank is human responsibility, 5 persons (20.8%). It is difficult to distinguish

sharply between the two categories, duty to society and human responsibility. If these two items were put in the one category such as "duty and responsibility to society," then it would become the first reason for volunteer work, 12 persons (50%). Among the twelve persons were 2 aged 20-29, 4 aged 30-39, 2 aged 40-49, 3 aged 60-69 and 1 over seventy. 8 persons among 12 persons (66.7%) belong to the younger group, while 4 persons (33.3%) are in the older group. It also shows that the younger group has depended on each personal commitment as the reason or motivation to be involved in volunteer work.

Both family influence and searching for meaning of life, each of them 4 persons, are the fourth reason. An interesting point is that the majority, 3 out of 4 persons (75%) belong to the older group, over sixties. An elderly lady told me that since the older generation has grown up in a big family and did not have much time to enjoy modern technological civilization, the influence of the family, community and religion were crucial for them. Three persons said that religious reasons had led them to volunteer work.

Among the four persons in the category of searching for meaning of life, half of them, 2 people belong to the younger group, 1 aged 20-29 and 1 aged 30-39. One may conclude that there is an ontological reality in the source of ethics. It should be human nature to be enforced to do good work in the journey of life. It could be described as a "moral imperative." For 2 persons, pity and for 2 personal nature, are reasons for continuing on good work.

These reasons or motivation are considered to come from genetic or family influence.

C. "In your case, where does that kind of power or source come to you to keep on doing good work?" "What is that?"

Before answering the question, most of the interviewees paused to think about it. It was not easy to articulate an invisible power or source that exists in them. Some people answered this question with similar words to the responses to the second question. In most cases they articulated the power or source in their own words. An interesting point is that the answers to this question were more philosophical or metaphysical than the responses to the second question.

"It is feeling." Some said: "I have been influenced by my husband," "Recalling my child hood," "I want to be a role model for my children." Some said, "to keep my promise." Some said, "It comes from my religious power." "I just try do what Jesus had done." Some said, "I think that it has come from my family origin; it is genetic." Some said, "To find a meaning of life." "It comes from myself, being proud of myself, feeling good." "It is not personal achievement, but it comes from passion for people." Some said, "It is human duty to do good work." "I have to do this in order to receive the same thing from others." As I did on the second question, I confirmed with the respondents a suitable word.

The following figure is the summary of the responses to the question.

**Figure 4 Source/ Power**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Family Influence	9	37.5%
Peace of Mind	1	4.2%
Religious influence	16	66.7%
Feeling	9	37.5%
Heart	1	4.2%
Conscience	1	4.2%
Pity	1	4.2%
Meaning of Life	3	12.5%
Responsibility to Society	8	33.3%
Promise	1	4.2%
Role Model	3	12.5%
Passion for People	1	4.2%
Reward	2	8.3%
Self-Esteem	2	8.3%
Duty	2	8.3%
Ambition	1	4.2%

\* Percentage per total 24 persons.

Some of the above items duplicate the responses of the second question. It seems due to the confusion of some interviewees

distinguishing between the reason and source of their volunteer work or it may be in the questions that were not clear enough to distinguish between them. In any case, it does not interfere in finding out the sources of ethics from respondents, since reason or motivation is closely related with the real sources of ethics. Generally the items of the "Figure 4" are divided into two categories, collective or communal sources and personal ones. "Collective sources" means that the source have been given to the person by family or communal influences such as family influence or religion. "Personal sources" means that the power to do volunteer work has come from each person's individual commitment, reason or motivation such as peace of mind or reward. Of course, it is impossible for each person to create or develop one's own source of ethics by oneself, because no matter who they are, human beings are social beings. Nevertheless, the division into two categories becomes important sources of data to understand a trend or paradigm shift in the sources of ethics between two groups.

Collective sources: Family origin, Religious power, Responsibility to society, Role model, Duty, and Promise. Personal sources: Peace of mind, Feeling, Heart, Conscience, Pity, Meaning of life, Passion for people, Reward, Self-esteem, Ambition.

Collective sources: Nine persons are listed on Family Influence, among them 5 persons (55.6%) are over sixty. And the rest of the 4 persons are the younger group, 2 aged 40-49 and 2

aged 30-39. There is nobody aged 20-29. It will be an interesting field study to research for family backgrounds of the younger group, especially the young generation aged 20-40, to find sources of ethics.

Religion is an influence for 16 persons (66.7%), among them 10 persons under fifty and 6 over sixty. It is an interesting point that among the ten persons of the younger group, 4 are Korean-Canadians. A reason why religion has taken the number one place seems that most of them were Christians.

Responsibility to society is an influence for 8 persons, duty for 2 persons and promise for 1 person. Total 11 persons (45.8%), their sources of volunteer work are closely related with a community. Among the 8 persons, 4 persons are over sixty and 4 persons are under fifty. Concerning the 2 persons on duty, 1 person is aged 60-69 and 1 is aged 40-49.

As for role model for 3 persons and passion for 1 person, these items belong to the collective sources, since it has happened when a person had a relationship with others. An interesting point is that 3 out of 4 persons belong to the younger group; 1 aged 30-39, 2 aged 40-49 and 1 aged 60-69. If this item is put in the family influence, then family influence becomes 12 persons (50%). They mentioned that one of their family members had shown them a good model of helping people or of volunteer work. In total of the sources cited for driving volunteer work 62.7% come from



collective sources.

**Personal Sources:** The first rank in this category is feeling, 9 persons (37.5%). Feeling means a prime motivation to do volunteer work. For example, "I should help out, otherwise, I would have a guilty feeling." "I felt that I should do it." "Power has come from God, but it is in my mind." An inexplicable source that is in each interviewee's mind is categorized as feeling. It takes place in 41% of all the personal sources. Among the nine persons, 3 are aged 20-29, 4 aged 30-39, 1 aged 40-49 and 1 aged 60-69. Except for one person, 8 out of 9 (89%) of them belong to the younger group.

As for peace of mind, 1 person, heart 1, pity 1, these three items can be considered a feeling part, because people feel peace of mind, pity and heart rather than understand or think them. Psychologically, these are closely related to feeling or emotion. If these three items are put in the category of feeling, then for a total of 12 persons (50%), the half of the interviewees, the sources of good work have come from their own feeling. It takes place in 54.5% of all personal sources. Once again it reminds us that personal feeling has a strong influence on each person's ethical or moral decision making. Among 3 persons, 1 person is aged 20-29, 1 aged 60-69 and 1 over seventy.

Other personal sources are searching for meaning of life,

reward, self esteem and ambition. Some said, "It comes from a way of finding a meaning for life." "I have time, money, and health, so I have to do good work." Searching for meaning of life for 3 persons occupies 13.6% in the personal sources. Among them are 2 aged 60-69 and 1 aged 40-49. It is not only an ethical problem but also an ontological matter for human beings, "Who am I?" Reward is the personal source for 2 persons, self-esteem for 2 and ambition for 1. Some said, "If I do a good work for others, later someone will do the same thing for me." Sometimes the psychology of "giving and taking," could be a reason, motivation or source to do good work. Some said, "It comes from myself. I am so proud of myself while I am helping others." Some said, "Still I have an ambition to get over it." Among the five persons (reward 2, self esteem 2 and ambition 1) , 3 persons belong to the older group and 2 the younger group.

Among all sources for doing volunteer work, in this sample, personal sources represent 37.3% and collective sources 62.7%. In the total of 22 responses in personal sources, only 7 come from the older group. For the rest of the responses, 15 (68.2%) belong to the younger group. In collective sources, among the total of 37 responses, 21 (56.7%) come from the older group. When we remove religion, of the 16 responses from the total of 37 in collective sources, 13 out of 21 (61.9%) belong to the older group. The most interviewees were Christians, and 6 out of 7 Korean Canadians said that their main sources for doing volunteer work come from their

religious commitment. The results of the survey project bring out an interesting point. It hints that there is a paradigm shift in the sources of ethics between the younger generation and older generation. For the younger people, personal feeling has begun to play a more crucial role.

#### 4) Analyses of the results

It was easier to find female volunteer workers than males for the interview. It was not the purpose of the project to investigate the reason why more females are involved in volunteer work. As a result of the interview, I was not able to find any significant difference in the reason or motivation of involvement of the volunteer work between male and female. At the same time, I was not able to find any difference in their reason or motivation of involvement in volunteer work between those born in Canadian and immigrants. Each person had one's own reason or motivation and moral source for good work.

Before going to the further step of the analyses of the results, it is necessary to make a clear connection between volunteerism and ethics. Using Trutz Rendtorff's definition of ethics, "the theory of the conduct of human life,"<sup>5</sup> we find that basically any type of human life would be an object of ethics. However, the goal of ethics is to help people to discern what is

right and just and encourage them to do good and the right thing in a given situation. And the ultimate goal of ethics to build a just, caring and loving community. From this point of view, volunteerism is definitely ethical and moral action to help people and to build a better society. I believe that each one's motivation for volunteerism is the same source of each one's moral or ethical decision making. Depending on a surrounding circumstance, each one may conduct one's life differently, but the source or power of action is the same. As Paul's allegorical explanation of the relationship between "the body and many members,"<sup>6</sup> each one's ethical source, the same source may lead the person's action differently in a given situation such as volunteer work or one's own ethical or moral decision making. Volunteerism is a part of each one's own ethical or moral decision making.

As to the results of the survey, the age gap shows a significant difference in the sources or power of each person's good work, e.g., volunteer work. For the older group, over sixty years of age, the sources or power for doing volunteer work come from collective sources, such as family influence or being a role model for their children. For the younger group, those under than fifty years of age, generally the sources for doing volunteer work come from each person's own reason or feeling. I am also not able to find any difference in their reason or motivation to do good work in the education section. I suppose that more educated persons would be more sensitive to a moral issue, but it might not be true

that higher educated people are better in ethical or moral decision making than less educated ones.

It was a very interesting point that none of the respondents had or has the same experiences of volunteer work except involvement in church activities. I realized that each person truly has one's own unique character, personality and talent to help others. If more people were involved in more activities of helping people or volunteer work, it would be a way for the achievement of the goal of ethics to build a just, caring and loving community.

As to the result of the second question, reason and motivation for doing volunteer work, still the value of family, the sense of community, and religious influence take important roles in developing each person's moral decision, good work, especially in the older group. Three persons among twenty four (12.5%) responded searching for meaning of life as their reason or motivation to do volunteer work. We may be concluded that there is an ontological reality in the sources of ethics. It should be human nature to be enforced to do good work in the journey of life. That could be described as "moral imperative". Through the survey, I found that sometimes reason or motivation was closely related with the sources of moral decision, doing volunteer work. But it did not interfere in the final stage of finding sources of ethics at the grass roots.

The purpose of the survey project was "a field study to have some information about the sources of ethics for the thesis of Master of Theology in Christian Ethics." Having done the project, I was satisfied by the results of the survey, because I could have some information about the sources of ethics at the grass roots.

Through the project, three important things have been discovered. The first is that the sources of ethics at the grass roots did not contrast with those of the theories of ethics in academia. It proves that moral imperative, religious orders, conscience, love, power, justice, self-actualization, self affirmation, natural law, human nature, and so on, these sources have been found directly or indirectly from the interviewees as their sources of good work. It means that the survey has played a role in bringing the theory of the sources of ethics down into real life. For me, it was an exciting moment when the interviewees articulated their own source of good work with a proper word that was closely related to the sources of ethics in the theory. It is certain that the theory of ethics has come not only from the head but also from the heart.

The second significant finding is that the sources of ethics at the grass roots have been changing from generation to generation. It is a new trend, a paradigm shift from the older group to the younger group. As social systems and family structures are being transformed, the sources of ethics are also changing

from the collective sources to personal sources. There is a significant gap between the older generation and the younger generation not only in the sources of ethics but also in the moral behaviours. Indeed, we are living in a rapidly changing, multicultural, multi-ethical and pluralistic society. It has been changing from community-centred to personal-centred life, from family orientation to personal commitment, from legal moral standard to situation ethics, and from communal sense to personal feeling. These changes challenge ethical or moral decision making directly or indirectly.

The last important discovery is that personal feeling has become an important source of ethics. Especially for younger generations, personal feeling has a tremendous power to determine the conduct of life. Not only personal feeling has a power in their ethical or moral decision making but leads the whole life. Through the survey project, it has been proved that without understanding of personal feeling and/or re-investigating of the dynamic function of feeling to impact on each one's ethical or moral decision making, We would miss the whole point in dealing with the sources of ethics, especially in young generation.

### **III. Feeling as a source of ethics**

#### **1) What is the problem?**

In dealing with ethical or moral issues, especially the sources for ethical or moral decision making, reason has been dominant in all areas of ethics. It has been dominant not only in ethical issues but also in all academic fields, especially social sciences and natural sciences. Since the Enlightenment, the methodology of natural sciences has influenced all academic fields. Willard Gaylin sees this as a loss of the social sciences: "The natural sciences so intimidated to the poor social sciences that in attempting to adopt their methodology of data collecting, objectivity, measurement, and statistics, the social sciences abandoned their own grand tradition of insight and imagination".<sup>7</sup> This is one of the problems of dealing with ethical sources based on reason alone. Although the survey project has borrowed its methodology and data analysis from the scientific approach, the results tell us that reason is not the only factor in dealing with ethics. Feeling has a significant power to motivate individual decision making in ethical issues. What is feeling? Without identification of feeling it would be impossible fully to understand the sources for ethical action.

Since the time of Plato reason has been dominant in the field of philosophy in searching for the meaning of the world.



Philosophers have tried to understand and analyze everything by reason. Until finding a reasonable explanation, they did not acknowledge a meaning. Quentin Smith argues this issue and says, "Reason has been demonstrated to be incapable of comprehending such a meaning. If the only meaning the world is capable of possessing is rationally discernable meaning, the conclusion becomes unavoidable that the world is meaningless." <sup>8</sup> If we depend on reason only, then the reason would end up as an unreasonable conclusion. That is the reason why so many philosophers have different conclusions to the same issue. Reason has dominated philosophy too much since the time of Plato. According to Charles Taylor, Plato believed that "we are good when reason rules, and bad when we are dominated by our desires." <sup>9</sup> The idea of dividing into two parts sources that dominate human beings seems to miss an important point in understanding human beings. It is hard to accept that all human desires are bad and all reason is good. This dichotomous approach is no longer an effective method in social sciences or in natural sciences. It has already been discovered that the holistic approach is the most effective way to understand and to solve the problem, especially in human sciences. This approach will be discussed in detail in the section of "How does feeling work with other sources?"

It is particularly urgent at this time to explore the possibility that there is another mode of access to a meaning of the world. In our era people are dissatisfied with purely

scientific and technological explanation of themselves and their world. It is important to explore the possibility that there are other modes of access to meaning. As Quentin Smith points out, many are aware of the conclusion that "feeling provides such an access, and that the world possesses a felt meaningfulness." <sup>10</sup> Some would go even farther and raise "the possibility that (primarily) the kind of meaning the world possesses is felt meaning, and that feeling is the mode of access to this meaning." <sup>11</sup> If all this describes the point of view of the average persons, then it is clear that feeling as a moral source is an important area of discussion.

Before entering into further discussion about feeling as a source of ethics, the one question is "why did God or the Creator bestow on Homo Sapiens such an abundance of emotion? What is human biological function? Neither Plato, nor Spinoza, nor Schopenhauer could really answer this." <sup>12</sup> Without answering this question or at least thinking of the question, dealing with the sources of ethics itself is meaningless. Just as reason is a part of human nature, so feeling is also a part of human nature.

Morality is concerned with human action. It means that ethics is concerned with what is right to do rather than what is good to be.<sup>13</sup> Although ethics is concerned about what we ought to do, it does not exclude what is good to be, because the constitutive good as ethical source itself has a power to do a right doing. Let us

return to the question: Why did God give human beings an abundance of emotion, feeling, with reason and will power? If reason leads us to be good and to do right, then what of feeling? What is the role of feeling in ethical or moral decision making? Why do the respondents of the younger generation depend on their own feeling in moral or ethical decision making? It is time to answer the question. It is time to think about feeling as a significant source of ethics.

All humans are "wired to enjoy the positive affects and dislike the negative affects." <sup>14</sup> The basic "blue print" of human psychological function is to increase positive affect and decrease negative affect. "In our culture, emotion is discussed as something that interferes with rational, mature, neocortical thinking. It would appear that most of us, most of the time, would prefer a life without emotion."<sup>15</sup> "No matter how it is described or understood, all psychotherapy involves emotion."<sup>16</sup> Simultaneously "moral meaning is not invented, it is developed in response to a world in which we exist and which we must respect and enhance."<sup>17</sup> These statements support the important of developing feeling as a source of ethics that has already been working with other sources in ethical or moral decision making.

## 2) What is feeling?

When we deal with feeling as a source of ethics, feeling is

not simply a person's emotional reflection depending on circumstances. Rather feeling has to be discussed within the point of view of its dynamic functions in a person's action that eventually leads to moral or ethical decision making. Feeling is a part of human nature. Therefore, feeling has its own unique and characteristic function in human action along with other sources of human nature. According to a general definition of feeling, it is "full of expressing emotion or sensitivity."<sup>18</sup> "God has not created us as 'spirits' or as 'ghosts' but as psycho-physical beings."<sup>19</sup> This suggests that no matter how the existence of human beings is described or understood, feeling is there. Feeling cannot be separated from any other part of human nature. Feeling is a fuel tank to provide all power and energy to human action, even thinking. Usually feeling has been dealt with in the field of psychology. Because of that, other social sciences did not pay much attention to the role and function of feeling in their own fields.

Jung already had said that feeling has an evaluative function. "It evaluates the state of relationships. What do I really feel about this person, this relationship? Is this right for me, or for the family, and life?"<sup>20</sup> Feeling is deeply involved in value judgement. Actually ethical or moral decision making is a way of value judgement of deciding what is good and what is right to do. Feeling has a role and a power to evaluate a human relationship, whether that relationship is right or wrong and good or bad. Ethics

itself is the theory of human conduct, especially in human relationships. When we have a good and right relationship with others theoretically, legally, and reasonably, then feeling is good. If feeling is not good after having a relationship with the other, then something is wrong or we miss something.

The most important element in the sources of ethics should be the "moral imperative." According to Paul Tillich, the moral imperative is "the command to become what one potentially is, a person within a community of process."<sup>21</sup> The bottom line of the moral imperative is to become a true being, namely "self-actualization."<sup>22</sup> Everyone will be a true being when one becomes what one should be. Therefore a moral act is not an act in obedience to external law or human desire. It is the inner law of our true being whom we actualize.<sup>23</sup> There is always a certain gap between the essential being and the actual being.<sup>24</sup> It means that everyone has been struggling with the problem between what we should be and what we are. The moral imperative tells us that there is a gap between them. The most concrete and obvious sign of that is shown by feeling. Before "we think that....," or "we believe that....," we feel angry, sad, uneasy, uncomfortable or sorry about something. We feel that there is something wrong or something missing before thinking about or analyzing the problem. Feeling comes first before doing something further.

Feeling evaluates not only the inner relationship of ourself

between the two existences, essential being and actual being, but the outer relationship with others and community as well. It may be true that love is not feeling alone, but without feeling, love will not be completed. "Every human relationship which does not express love is abnormal." <sup>25</sup> "The unloving person is compelled to seek him/herself. The loving person, on the other hand, does not need to seek him/herself at all, for he/she has been found." <sup>26</sup> Because the person's creature powers are set free, the person is free from anxiety about him/herself, free for others.<sup>27</sup> A person feels to love and to be loved. A person feels to be set free. That is what the feeling function is in the relationship with oneself and others. It is a way of self-actualization.

In most cases in human relationships, true meanings come from felt meaning rather than rational meaning. The meaning of the world is not rational meaning but felt meaning.<sup>28</sup> It does not mean that feeling is against reason. Rather feeling serves reason or cooperates with reason. Moreover feeling leads reason to find out a true meaning in the world. Mystical feelings are not "irrational" but "superrational." <sup>29</sup> Mystical feelings are ineffable experiences that are thought to possess their own certainty and truth. Mystical feelings have been experienced by supernatural or superrational truth such as "God is both one and three" or "salvation through faith in Christ Jesus". Sometimes such mystical experiences are not able to be explained by reason or knowledge. An idea of holy or metaphysical feeling such as religious truth is

sometimes expressed only by feeling. That kind of religious truth is experienced whenever Christians attend a worship service on Sunday morning. Feeling is an essential source in religious truth and at the same time it becomes an invisible power to influence a what the person should be. Feeling is not against reason; instead, it serves, helps and works with reason. Before knowing what is right to do or what is good to be, we feel first and then we think and know what is going on. Such "thinking feeling is permitted to infer the existence of a cause." <sup>30</sup> Intuitive feeling is the beginning of the logic and the rational. Descartes said, "We feel sad or joyous without being able to give a reason." <sup>31</sup> That is feeling.

### 3) How does feeling work with other sources of ethics?

According to Tomkins' research, "thinking and feeling are inextricably interwoven and cannot be separated." <sup>32</sup> That is how God has created human beings. If we try to put reason and feeling asunder, what God has joined together, simply it does not work, because the dichotomous approach to understand human beings is against God's will and natural law. As the children of nature, humans cannot separate soul from body; reason and feeling go together in no matter what situation. They may be separated in their role and function, but they are never separated from each other. The most fatal tragedy is to separate reason and feeling,

form and content, and theory and practice. Reinhold Niebuhr said about the relationship between spirit and soul, "they may be distinguished but not separated and when distinguished, spirit is the principle of the soul." <sup>33</sup> I would say that feeling and reason cannot be separated from each other but they may be distinguished, when distinguished, feeling is the principle of reason.

According to Kant as for St. Thomas, conscience is considered as a faculty of judgment. "Conscience is the bond between duty and obligation." <sup>34</sup> According to the survey project, 33.3% of respondents say that their sources for doing volunteer work come from responsibility to society and 29.2% say that their motivation or reason why they are involved in volunteer work is duty to society.<sup>35</sup> There is no doubt that conscience is a source of ethics. H. D. Lewis says: "when the voice of God is heard within the voice of conscience, it is not the voice of easy accommodation, but that of depending on all that we already associate with conscience and with the accumulation of ethical wisdom in the past." <sup>36</sup> All sorts of inner voices or God's voices are heard by the heart rather than the head; then we respond to them. The response of conscience is more closely related with feeling. We hear and recognize inner voices by feeling.

Conscience is often presented as each person's guide to morals. But in dealing with conscience as a source of ethics, one wonders whether conscience is always good and right or whether



everyone's conscience is the same. According to the survey project, only one person said that conscience is a source of ethical or moral decision making.<sup>37</sup> The author of 1 Timothy already mentioned two kinds of human conscience, a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:19) and a damaged conscience (1 Tim. 4:2)<sup>38</sup> It is obvious that following the guide of the damaged conscience could produce evil. As St. Thomas says, there is "invincible and vincible ignorance"<sup>39</sup> in conscience. If error is invincible, not due to gross or deliberate negligence, there is no way that people can be blamed for their action. On the other hand if error is vincible, it is the person's duty to deal with the error by taking the appropriate way. In order to become a source of ethics, conscience should be good and invincible. As a source of ethics, good and invincible conscience works together with good feeling and reason.

According to Freud, the superego is the faculty of moral principle. Freud's concept of conscience is different from that of philosophy. As a source of morals, the superego has the same role as conscience. Ethics is the theory of the conduct of human life. Most ethical or moral conflict comes from the distance between an ideal ego and the real ego. He calls it "ambiguous".<sup>40</sup> Actually there are three different ways of the ambiguity in the ego part to identify oneself: ideal self, other self and real self. The ideal self means what the person should be, the moral imperative. The other self means who the person is, being evaluated by others. And the real self is who the real person is. If each self could be

united into one, then it would be an ideal person or a perfect being. However, there is always a distance from one another. The role of superego, moral principle, is to make them closer to one another. Of course Freud did not use the terms, reason, feeling or will power in his psychoanalysis. Will power could be an alternative word to superego, reason to ego and feeling to id. In human psyche id is imposed by the pleasure principle, ego by the reality principle and superego by the moral principle.

In summary, Freud has divided the psyche into three major systems: id, ego and superego. But the nature of operation of the three systems is not working in each one separately but in interactions among these systems. None of these systems can be defined without reference to the others and to the whole personality.<sup>41</sup> If id is the main energy tank to provide to other systems, both ego and superego receive tremendous influence from id, possibly an alternative word to feeling. The survey project shows that each respondent's feeling has a significant energy and power to control the person's action, especially in his/her ethical or moral decision making. It could be said that id, the pleasure principle, is not only the source of physical pleasure but also the important source of moral or spiritual pleasure. As pleasure comes from when a physical desire, libido, has united with the specific and concrete object and is satisfied in union with it, pleasure may come in an opposite way, for example, through becoming a specific and concrete object of another's desire for satisfaction.

It may be another dimension of pleasure. It is true that the true pleasure and joy would come from giving instead of receiving, loving rather than being loved, caring instead of being cared for. We experience that kind of pleasure without giving a reason.

According to Paul Tillich, ego self and conscience grow in mutual dependence and the self discovers itself in the experience of a split between what it is and what it ought to be. The symptom of this happening is expressed by guilt feeling.<sup>42</sup> In Freudian terms, "what it is" is related to "real self" and "what it ought to be" to "ideal self." As Tillich is pointing out, feeling, specifically guilt feeling, has the role of knowing what is going on within our inner mind. Although feeling is not everything in discovering a sign of separation between the two systems, feeling is the only thing to let us realize that something is wrong or missing in the inner self.

As a body cannot exist without a soul, there is no consciousness without unconsciousness. The result is that all kinds of physical or mental/spiritual functions are closely interrelated with one another and at the same time they are working together. If they were not dependent upon one another properly, this would be a symptom of illness or physical, psychological or spiritual sickness. This is the reason why God has created human beings to become a whole being. Feeling is a wave band to communicate and to bond together in the mental and psychic world. That is another way

in which feeling is working with other sources of ethics.

Tillich's favourite term as the source of ethics is LOVE, the agape love. "Justice is fulfilled in love. The moralism of justice drives toward the morality of love. Love, in the sense of this statement, is not an emotion, but a principle of life. Love is the ground, the power and the aim of justice. Love is the life which separates itself from itself and drives toward reunion with itself." <sup>43</sup> "Love is unconditional. There is nothing which could be conditioned by a higher principle. There is nothing above love and love conditions itself."<sup>44</sup> The magic word love is the source of ethics! How do we know that we are loving or being loved? How can we bring down the delicious pie in the sky to our dinner table? How can we have the fantastic experience of love both in loving others and being loved by others and God? It is possible when we feel that. Then we know what is going on, what we should do, and what we should be. Feeling is not able to create love, but love is able to be expressed by feeling. Love is given to us as our life was given by others.<sup>45</sup> Love becomes true love only when the love is expressed to others.

4) Feeling as a source of ethics, its dynamic function in ethical or moral decision making.

In this section, feeling will be discussed as a concrete

source of ethics. Although all humans are wired to enjoy the positive affects and dislike the negative affects,<sup>46</sup> naturally feeling is expressed by two different types, negative and positive. In both cases, feeling has a tremendous power and energy in ethical and moral decision making. Racism is the most representative example of the result of negative feeling. One of the causes of racism is due to a personal psychological problem; specifically it comes from prejudice or fear. Someone may say that "feelings are never right or wrong, no one will judge each person's feelings." It may be true. No one can evaluate each personal feeling, but when the feeling has become a source of human behaviour, then the feeling would be judged depending on the person's action.

"If you feel good about doing it, do it." This sometimes becomes a great temptation. No matter what a personal feeling is, or no matter what human nature is, if that feeling becomes a cause to hurt others or discriminate and oppress humanity, that kind of feeling and nature should be controlled, remedied and regretted. Racism is a human superiority or inferiority complex. It is a psychological illness and needs therapy.

The African American singer Dionne Farris states, "Before I am a black, I am a human. Because I am a black, I am a human." St. Paul also says, "all things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, I will not be dominated by anything."<sup>47</sup> Ethics is the theory of the conduct of

human life. Although feeling is a source of the conduct of human life, the negative feeling is the dangerous source of human action. The person has guilt feelings or becomes uncomfortable after racial action. Therefore ethics always pays attention to a concrete action and attitude to others and oneself as well as whether or not it is right and good in a given situation.

When the ego falsely makes itself the centre of existence and it is controlled by its pride and will to power in order to subordinate other life to its will, then it is an injustice to other life. According to the early church father, St. Augustine (354-430 CE) human pride is considered as an original sin. Among the human prides, pride of power, pride of knowledge and pride of virtue,<sup>48</sup> these three types of prides are representatives of human nature.

The pride of power pursues security and it becomes a cause of racism, sexism, classism and even ageism. Racism refers to "both individual and social attitude and actions to minority people, and social systems and structures which operate to discriminate against, oppress, exclude, and limit certain minority groups on the basis of race, while privilege or power to others is on the basis of race." <sup>49</sup> The second pride, the pride of knowledge, is an intellectual pride. This pride becomes a cause of manipulation, legitimized oppression, economic exploitation and colonization. The third pride, the pride of virtue, is spiritual pride, self

righteousness. It becomes a cause of religious fanaticism or hypocrisy. It is also another type of spiritual discrimination. These types of human prides are also an expression of another type of negative feeling.

Before dealing with the positive feeling, good feeling as a source of ethics, it is important to talk about one more negative feeling that becomes a cause of discrimination. That is a given privilege, an awareness of the feeling of privilege. Peggy McIntosh describes white privileges as "an invisible weightless knapsack of maps, passports, code book, visas, clothes, tools and blank cheques...Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average and also ideal. So that when we work to benefit others this is seen as work that will allow them to become like us." <sup>50</sup> To be born as white people must be good luck and a kind of blessing. Moreover it is nothing wrong. It is God's will as for other races. Their privilege and power are their unearned advantage. It is given to them. The result is that they have power and freedom to use their privilege and advantage to keep racism or to get rid of all kinds of discrimination. Anyway, it is another example of negative feeling as a source of ethics.

When we talk about feeling as a source of ethics, it is positive and good feeling that enforces a person to do good work and to choose the right thing. As is mentioned in the survey results, social responsibility for 33.3%, duty for 8.3% and keeping

promise for 4.2%, totalling 45.8% as their sources of volunteer work are closely related with a community. Ethics always strives to build a caring, loving and just community. A volunteer worker who had the experience of caring and being cared for says, "how much impact the work I have done for a while, I don't know. But it has made such a big part on my own life. I do it not just for intellectual reasons but for emotional ties."<sup>51</sup> It is true that the majority of volunteer workers find a meaning through their work. The meaning comes from not just what they should do or want to do but the work itself no matter what. It is an emotional satisfaction, feeling, instead of an intellectual reason why. I seldom see disappointed faces on those who are involved in volunteer work. It is feeling or feeling and reason both tied to each other.

Paul Tournier says, "emotion is indeed creative; every creative act is always full of emotion."<sup>52</sup> At the moment of winning a race athletes or team players jump up and delight in their full emotion. At the moment of finding a precious result after a long time studying and researching, the researcher is pleased with the result. At the top of a mountain, the alpinist is driven into ineffable joy and happiness. All kinds of exciting, challenging and creative actions, no matter what they are, directly or indirectly, have a relation with feeling, from the exciting beginning to the valuable ending as well. Feeling as a part of human nature is deeply associated with human physical achievement,



intellectual satisfaction and the goal of will power. After reaching a goal, only feeling, full emotion, joy, happiness and pleasure can be expressed as the sign that it has been accomplished. Look at the athletes who place the medals on their necks standing on the stage in the olympic stadium! Watch the recipients who receive their graduation diplomas in the convocation hall! See the happy and joyful faces on those who work in space after training for a long time and passing the difficult and complicated examinations! How can they achieve their dreams and goals without emotional support and the encouragement of feeling? These are examples of how feeling becomes a source of ethics enforcing a person to be good and to do the right thing.

Feeling makes a person a whole being. According to Willard Gaylin, "feelings are the fine instruments which shape decision making in an animal cursed and blessed with intelligence, and the freedom which is corollary." <sup>53</sup> In Gaylin's opinion, "all goodness and pleasure must be ultimately perceived in the richness of feelings." <sup>54</sup> Gaylin believes, "feelings are instruments of rationality not as some would have it, alternative to it." <sup>55</sup> "We are capable of and dependent on using rational choice to decide our futures. Feelings become guide to that choice." <sup>56</sup> The above quotations tell not only how feeling becomes a source of ethics, the conduct of human life, but also becomes the significant instrument of making a human a whole being.

All kinds of expressed feelings have an important meaning. Some feelings become warning signals to turn around from the present situations or actions to the right track. Some feelings are caution signals for people to look after their own situations. Some feelings are the positive signals to encourage individuals to keep on doing what they are doing and to remain what they are. Any feeling has its own meaning and tells something in the conduct of human life.

According to Gaylin, feelings are divided into the following important functions: 1) Signals for survival are: a. feeling anxious, b. feeling guilty, c. feeling ashamed, and d. feeling proud.<sup>57</sup> Although these feelings are negative and sometimes they might be causes of human problems psychologically, morally and physically, they are important signals to tell us that something is wrong. Not only do they indicate something wrong but also these feelings become a moment to find out some possible ways of getting out from them. Especially feeling guilty becomes an important source of ethics to do the right thing and to be good. Guilty feeling informs us that we have failed our own ideals.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, feeling guilty guides us leading into goodness and to the right track. As Gaylin comments, "Shame is the sense of exposure before someone; humiliation is the sense of exposure by someone."<sup>59</sup> Feeling guilty happens in relationship with others when we fail to act rightly toward them; on the other hand, shame and humiliation are the feelings of our own failures to us.

Feeling guilty is the failure to others, feeling ashamed is the failure to self. Of course, it is impossible to distinguish between these two sharply; both are always interrelated and interconnected with each other, because no matter what, the two feelings come from failures of relationships with others. So these two feelings, feeling guilty and feeling ashamed, are important sources for ethics, the conduct of human life. Beyond that, these feelings are important signals which help us have right and good relationships with others and enable us to be whole beings. Without having these signals, human beings would fall into the same behaviour over and over again as an animal does.

2) Caution signals are: a. feeling upset, b. feeling tired, c. feeling bored, d. feeling envious, and e. feeling used.<sup>60</sup> While the feelings for survival are due to failures of relationships with others and self, the feelings of caution are due to the other's failures of right or proper relationships with us. Namely, the feelings of caution comes from other's failures of relationship with us. We experience these feelings when we think that something is wrong elsewhere. Although these feelings are closely related to each person's character and personality, depending on praxis and context, these feelings generally become an instrument of measurement examining relationships with others.

Avoiding and controlling these feelings are not only good for each one's good health but also for developing a right and good

relationship with others. The feelings are warning signals to indicate specifically what is a problem and how to recoverd right relationship with others. As it has been mentioned earlier, any feeling has its own significant meaning and at the same time it causes us to think about the situation so that we can be good and to do right. Therefore feelings of caution also become sources of ethics, the conduct of human life.

3) Signals of success are: a. feeling touched, b. feeling moved, and c. feeling good.<sup>61</sup> The feelings of success not only come from a personal achievement of simplest things but also come from right and good relationships. Personal pleasure may arise out of stimulation or sense of touching and being touched through the five human sensory organs: hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling and touching. The feelings of success come from when we discover our potential ability and capability, for example, when a person discovers something new or enlightening about a certain truth. The feelings of success come from involvement in the process of developing one's own growth and improvement. That feelings come from participating in creative work, for example, in the process of cabinetmaking. These feelings come from the experience of production of something of worth. Feelings of success may come from joining in a team activity, such as being a member of choir or orchestra.<sup>62</sup> The feelings of success come from the discovery of something new and having an "Ahha!" experience from participating in productive activity and in the process self growth. The feelings

of success also come from the sense of being a part of a group or community.

The feelings of success stimulate a person to become a whole being with the pleasure that comes from the process of developing each person's own potentiality, talents and ability and discovering self identity. The goal of ethics is to help the person to discover who one is, self-actualization, and to know what one ought to do. In this point, the feelings of success become excellent sources of ethics and at the same time they have a dynamic power to stimulate the good and right way of the conduct of human life.

According to J. Moussaieff Masson, "feelings of course are always closely related to a particular time and in this respect the sense of timelessness."<sup>63</sup> Feeling can be intermediated between the concrete and general, the particular and universal, the temporary and permanent, the temporal and lofty, and the secular and sacred. According to William Schweiker, the moral life is "to be the imitation of the goodness, the gods or the one God."<sup>64</sup> The moral life as the process of the imitation of goodness includes all conduct of human life. The pinnacle point in Christian ethics is the realization of the image of God. As being pictured as the voice of creation,<sup>65</sup> True humanity can be achieved only through the mimeses of Christ, in his death and resurrection and by being, in Paul's terms, in Christ."<sup>66</sup> The above statements lead us to conclude that an ethical or moral life is the process of imitation

of the divine, in Christian ethics, Christ. Like light and shadow, "no light then no shadow," moral life is always dependent on the sources of ethics. The sources of ethics are the prime causes of an ethical or moral decision making in the conduct of human life. Among them feeling has a role of mediator between the ideal and real life as a source of ethics.

Although the moral life is to be the imitation of goodness, the world is not "the imitation of transcendent ideas but a dynamic transformation into figuration through forms of mimetic action ranging from understanding to the act of being self."<sup>67</sup> "We must know that this self is not substance but an agent, not a solitary 'I,' but a social self interdependent with other."<sup>68</sup> In real life, moral principles may be influenced by a given situation. As in the concept of Plato's "Idea," actual moral life cannot be an ideal or perfect action. It is dependent and relative. Depending on the situation, the norm of morality might be different.

Situationism<sup>69</sup> indicates that "every case is like every other case, and no two cases are alike."<sup>70</sup> Therefore in dealing with a specific ethical issue, the given situation should be considered as the primary influence. It seems to make sense. But when we talk about the source of ethics, whether or not a situation could be a source of ethics requires a further study. In the survey projet, one person responded that the motivation of being involved in the volunteer work is as "time allowed," and the source of his doing

this work has come from "keeping promise." In that person's case the situation might be a source of ethics. In the wider spectacle, keeping promise is a mimic action of goodness.

As Tillich said, "absolute concreteness is absolute universal."<sup>71</sup> Any concrete moral action stands for universal moral principle. Love is the ultimate moral principle, "including justice and transcending it at the same time."<sup>72</sup> "Love alone can transform itself according to the concrete demands of every individual and social situation without losing its eternity and dignity and constitutional validity. Love can adapt itself to every place of a changing world."<sup>73</sup> Love itself is concrete and at the same time ideal. Although Tillich did not include charity, emotion and pity as loving action, I am sure that love includes those items as a way of performing loving action in a concrete situation. Feeling, pity and charity should be ways of loving expression. The bottom line of love is the full range of emotions, creative feelings. Loving action is a way to express feelings. Therefore, it can be said that "morality is not to be defined in terms of any specific outcomes. The moral action is not marked as such by its outcome, but rather by the motive for which it was undertaken."<sup>74</sup> It may be moral imperative, moral reason or moral feeling.

Emil Brunner believes that "Christian ethics is not based upon a principle, but upon the process of divine restoration whose meaning is disclosed in justification by grace alone."<sup>75</sup> This

leads Brunner to the conclusion that "love is not only the fulfilment of the law, but also its end, and thus the end of all ethics." <sup>76</sup> Love and grace have come from God as the principle and source of ethics.

How can we respond to love and grace? What is human responsibility or the duty to love? If we have the divine image in us, then what is the matching thing to love in human psyche? As Friedrich Schleiermacher has defined religion as "the feeling of absolute dependence," <sup>77</sup> that is feeling. As the source of ethics, feeling stimulates and enforces reason and will to love self and others. At the same time, feeling becomes a prime cause to be good and to do right. "God has not created humans as spirits or as ghosts, but as psycho-physical beings."<sup>78</sup> Feeling is a part of human nature, God's image.



#### IV. Conclusion

As the Chinese proverb says, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step," the searching for the sources of ethics at the grass roots was indeed a small step toward further study of the sources of ethics. Still there exists a gap between theory and practice. This treatise has tried to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the sources of ethics through the qualitative research focused on the sources of good works, volunteer work , from grass roots and through reflection on the role of feeling in ethics. Although it is hard to say that there is only one source of ethics, it has been found that feeling has a tremendous power and energy in ethical or moral decision making.

We are living in a rapidly changing, multicultural, pluralistic and globalized world. Sometimes it is almost impossible to analyze and understand everything that happens quickly and suddenly in our life. Although we do not know exactly what is going on, we can feel that something is going on. That feeling could be a prime cause to stimulate reason to understand what is going on and to enforce will to reflect it. At the same time, feeling could become the source of human action.

As Rendtroff believes, "ethics is the theory of the conduct of human life," <sup>79</sup> to know what is the source of human action is the beginning of ethics. The conduct of human life begins with a

relationship, the relationship with others, community and even self. What is the first step of relationship? At the first through the five sensory organs all kinds of relationships are begun and developed. "Seeing is believing." Hearing is the beginning of communication. Tasting (eating) is the first step of survival. Smelling is the sensor of environments. Touching and being touched is the start of loving action. The first step of human relationships begin with sensory organs. The first reflection of sensory organs is feeling. In order to have a right and good relationship with people and nature and to live together, the development of feeling is necessary. Not only feelings of sensory organs, but thinking feeling, intuitive feeling and felt meaning become important sources of ethics in human relationships. In a complex, pluralistic and multicultural society, feeling becomes a major source of having a right and good relationship with others and nature. Therefore it is a genuine hope that this treatise would become a small step for further studying of feeling as an instrument of human science. Feeling is a part of human nature as reason is.

In conclusion, the ultimate goal of ethics is to build a just, caring and loving community and at the same time to make a human become the whole being which the person should be. It is a huge subject. It is not a easy task. In order to fulfil these two tasks, social responsibility and self-actualization, ethics must work with sociology, psychology, philosophy and religion. The results of the

survey project indicate that the sources of ethical or moral decision making come from diverse areas and they are intermingled with one another directly or indirectly. There is not one source of ethics, but sources. Among them, feeling has a significant role and function in everyday ethical or moral decision making.

At the dawn of the new millennium and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, new trends, paradigm shifts and new waves are flowing through all areas of human life. The results of the survey indicate that the source of ethical or moral decision making have been shifting from collective to personal sources, especially each person's own feeling. Feeling is not a new subject in the human sciences, but it is a rising star in the new age. It is appropriate to think about why God has created feeling as a part of human nature, since feeling has become an important source of ethics.

**Appendix: (The proposal of the field study)**

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**Trinity Centennial United Church**  
**P.O. Box 136 Rosemont, Ont.**  
**LON 1R0 (705) 435-656**

**September 1998**

**To: All Participants and Supporters of the field Study.**

**Dear Friends!**

Do you think that our society is getting better or worse? Of course modern technology and science have improved our life situation by making it convenient and more comfortable. Within twenty-four hours we can travel any place in the world and we are able to watch and know about all the global news in the living room all most at the time of it happening. We are in a pluralistic and rapidly changing and multicultural society. Thus surrounding environments are changing everyday. But I wonder about us, "Are people also changing?"

I am interested in the sources of ethics. Is there any unchanging source of ethics in us? If people have to try to be good and to do right to ourselves and others, then what is the source to do that? I want to know about it from you. In your case, what or where does it come from?

Where I need your help is to be an interviewee when I request. I will give you simple questions; then just answer the questions at your will. The interview would not be any longer than a half hour. You have the right to reject and/or withdraw any question at any time and any moment before or during the interview. It is just an academic research program for finding a source of ethics in ethical or moral decision making. Therefore there is no right or wrong answer, nor a good or bad response. Any kind of response and comments count as valuable data in this project.

By "Wilfrid Laurier University's Guidelines for Ethical Research," privacy and confidentiality are guaranteed. All personal information will be transacted anonymously in this project. After finishing all interviews, the results of the field study will be summarized and it will be used as raw materials for the thesis of Master of Theology in Christian Ethics in Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. If you are interested in the results of the project, I will be willing to make a copy for you. Please send me the consent form as soon as possible. I look forward to seeing you soon.

**Peace in Christ.**

**(Rev.) Sung T. Shim**

### **The Consent Form:**

The interview will be held in a convenient and comfortable place and at a suitable time by mutual agreement. It will not be any longer than a half hour. There is no tape recorder, video, nor any camera equipment during the interview. Your thoughts, ideas or comments will be summarized after the interview. The interview will be in the form of a dialogue with given questions. There is no obligation to answer to all the questions and at the same time you have the right and freedom to reject or withdraw from the interview at any time.

I am interested in your project and I am willing to participate in the interview with good grace.

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_\_ Male\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code

Tel: (       )       -

Age: Please check (20-29\_\_\_\_\_ 30-39\_\_\_\_\_ 40-49\_\_\_\_\_

50-59\_\_\_\_\_ 60-69\_\_\_\_\_ 70 over\_\_\_\_\_)

Education: High School\_\_\_\_\_ or More\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Signature\_\_\_\_\_

## I. Project Title

A field Study to have some information of the sources of ethics for the thesis of Master of Theology in Christian Ethics.

## II. The nature and purpose of the project

### A. Background

There are many theories in each person's ethical or moral decision making. Natural law, human conscience, tradition, moral imperative, law, situation, religious rules, etc., those have been considered as the sources of ethics in ethical or moral decision making. In the study of ethics, it is divided into three fields in dealing with an ethical issue, "deontological, teleological, and character ethics."

This field study focuses on deontological ethics in order to examine whether there is a common consensus in the source of ethics in ethical or moral decision making. This study has an interest in the source of ethics rather than practice or application of ethical principle or theory in a specific case, namely "What is" rather than "how to." It seems to be a philosophical or theological problem, but ethics cannot be separated from ontological human matters.

If "ethics is the theory of the conduct of human life,"<sup>1</sup> each individual has their own ethical or moral source or power in conducting their ethical life. As humans are social beings, people are also ethical or moral beings in their conducting daily life. Modern society characterizes as pluralistic, rapidly changing, and multicultural society. Diversity, variety, and convenience have dominated in social, cultural, economic, political and even religious trend. Traditional moral standard and ethical norms are convulsed in front of high and new technology and new ideas. In contemporary society, it seems that "everything is okay."

As long as you are not bothering or hurting others, it seems that everything is fine. However it is not. It is not fine. Everyone has a problem. The problem is simply camouflaged in the flowing stream of society. It is a reason why this project pays a special attention to each person's source of ethics in order to figure out whether or not there is a common source of ethics in

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<sup>1</sup> Trutz Rendtorff, Tran. By Keith Crim, Ethics Vol. I: Basic Elements and Methodology in An Ethical Theology, P.3.

conducting their life.

Another reason why this project has a special interest in each person's source of ethics is to examine and to find out what is the common element in their ethical or moral decision making. A fundamental goal of ethics is building a just, caring and loving community. "What is good?" "What is right?" "What is a right relationship with others? Ethics strives to achieve those in any time and any place. The field study is also a way of putting a small corner stone in the building of a just, caring and loving community. Actually Christian ethics cannot exist separated from the goal of Christianity, the eschatological hope, "thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

## **B. Nature and Methodology**

The nature of the field study is having interviews with as many people as possible with various age groups, status and races and collecting data to find some sources of ethics. It will be a qualitative approach, but the whole purpose of the project is to find out whether or not there is a common consensus of the sources of ethics at the grass roots. If there is no common ground of the source of ethics, then it will be analyzed by itself.

The main purpose of the field study is to have some information on the sources of ethics at the grass roots and to use them as the raw materials for the thesis of the degree. As a side effect of the project, the interviewees and the interviewer, both will have an opportunity to examine themselves in an ethical or moral point of view and become more sensitive to an ethical or moral issue in conducting their daily lives and building a better community.

## **C. Proposed Experimental Procedures**

First of all, I will meet an interviewee at a specific time and at a specific place by mutual agreements. The meeting place would be my church office, the interviewee's home or a third place such as a coffee shop, restaurant, library, park, etc..

The interview would be done in an informal way of dialogue with the questions. It will not be longer than a half hour and just one time. The interviewer will try to listen as much as possible except stimulating the interviewees to talk a lot. The interviewer would also be emphasizing that there is no right or wrong answers, nor good or bad responses in the interviewees' opinions.

There would be no tape record, video camera or any photography. The main ideas and important comments will be noted during the interview. But the whole contents of the dialogue will be summarized after the interview.

The results of the interviews will be analyzed and summarized. A copy will be handed in to the supervisor for the finalizing of the field study and the results will be used as the raw materials of the thesis. If the interviewee would request the results of the project, it will be made available.

#### D. Description of the Proposed Population

The whole purpose of the field study is to find whether or not a common ground of the source of ethics can be found at the grass roots. Usually the theory of ethics and methodological approach of ethical or moral decision making have been taught and given by the academic fields. This project has an interest in the source of ethics from ordinary people. What are the most influential source for them to make their ethical or moral choice or decision making. Is there any common ground in their sources of ethics, if so, what is it? or if not, why not? That is the main concerns of this field study.

Another purpose of the project is to observe whether the theories of ethics are working in people's actual ethical or moral decision making. If it is working, how does it work, this is a side purpose of the field study. Of course there are limitations and obstacles in achieving the goals through only having interviews with a few questions, but it is the beginning of the process of searching for the sources of ethics from the grass roots.

In order to achieve the above goals, I will arrange to meet the people, at least twenty adults, and also consider gender, age status, and occupations. At this moment, I am not thinking about any special characteristics.

#### E. Recruitment of Subjects.

A name list (up to forty persons) of suitable candidates for the interview will be made, then the information letter and the consent form will be mailed with the postage return envelope or approached by phone. I think that personal contact is the most effective way of recruiting subjects for this project.



#### **F. Risks**

There is no serious risks or dangerous situations in this field study. It may be expected to worry about the interviewee's psychological insecurity due to exposing their ethical or moral attitude, but it will be eliminated or minimized by giving the interviewee absolute freedom and right of withdrawal and to reject the interview.

It might happen on occasion to discover that an interviewee may need counselling regarding a person's own ethical or moral behaviours. But the questionnaires are focused on how to expose the person's ethical or moral source rather than how to examine the person's own moral attitude. For example, "why did you help out?" instead of "why didn't you do that?"

#### **G. Benefits**

As long as people are living in the world, it is impossible to avoid an ethical or moral decision. The interviewees have an opportunity to examine themselves in the ethical point of view and to become more sensitive about ethical and moral issues in their life.

#### **H. Privacy and Confidentiality**

All personal information will be transacted anonymously in the process of summarizing the data. The consent forms will be kept secretly in the researcher's personal file. Only summarized and analyzed material will be published.

#### **I. Feedback to Participants**

If the participants request the result of the project, a copy will be made available for them.

#### **J. Expecting Questionnaires**

It is expected that most of the interviewees would be people who do not have any special education in ethics. Some may have a certain knowledge of ethics, but they would not be considered as an ethicist. The questionnaires are focused on how to expose the person's ethical source through the person's own experience or thoughts. Each person will be asked the same questions.

1. Do you have any experience of helping people or volunteer work? Could you share it with me? (When, what, where, how, etc.)
2. Why did you do that? Do you have any reason or motivation to do it?
3. How do you get that reason or motivation to do it? In your case, what is it to urge you to do it?
4. Where does that kind of power or source of motivation come from? (helping the person to think of it in a simple way, not as a philosophical or metaphysical way)

## The End Notes

1. Trutz Rendtorff, Tran. by Keith Crim, Ethics Vol. 1; Basic Elements and Methodology in An Ethical Theology, p. 3.
2. 1 Corinthians 6:12 in New Revised Standard Version.
3. See the proposal of the field study in the appendix.
4. The number in the figure is the count of persons who gave the answer. Since each person has given more than one answer, the total of the number is not equal to the actual count of the persons.
5. Trutz Rendtorff, Ethics Vol. I, p. 3.
6. I Corinthians 12:12.
7. Willard Gaylin M.D., Feelings: Listen to Your Feelings and Understand them, P. 217.
8. Quentin Smith, The Felt Meanings of The World A Metaphysics of Feeling, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1986, p. xv.
9. Charles Taylor, The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 115.
10. Quentin Smith, The Felt Meaning of The World A Metaphysical of Feeling, p. xv.
11. Ibid., p. 14.
12. Issac Bashevis Singer's question, in ed. by Donald L. Nathanson, Knowing Feeling, Affect, Script, and Psychotherapy, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996, p. 35.
13. Charles Taylor, The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity, p.79.
14. Ed., by Donald L. Nathanson, Knowing Feeling, Affect, Script, and Psychotherapy, P.xi.
15. Ibid., p. 4.

16. Ibid., p. 4.
17. William Schweiker, "Understanding Moral Meanings: On Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theological Ethics," in ed., by Lisa Sowle Cahill & James F. Childress, Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects, Cleveland, Ohio, The Pilgrim Press, 1996, p. 87.
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20. Louis H. Stewart, "The Archetypal Affects" in Donald Nathanson ed, Knowing Feeling Affect, Script, and Psychotherapy, p. 284.
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22. Ibid, p. 20.
23. Ibid., p. 20.
24. Ibid., p. 33.
25. The Sources of Christian Ethics, p. 296.
26. Ibid., 307.
27. Ibid., p. 307.
28. Quentin Smith, The Felt Meanings of The World: A Metaphysics of Feeling, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1986, p. 18.
29. Ibid., p. 18.
30. Ibid, p. 97.
31. Ibid., p. 110.
32. Vernon C. Kelly's "Affect and the Redefinition of Intimacy" in Knowing Feeling, Affect, Script, and Psychotherapy, p. 67.
33. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation of Human Nature, New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1943, p. 179.
34. C. Ellis Nelson, ed., Conscience: Theological and Psychological Perspective, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1973, p. 33.

35. See Figure 5. Source/Power and Figure 4. Reason or Motivation in Chapter II What is the problem, 1) The Survey Project.
36. H. D. Lewis, "The Voice of Conscience and the Voice of God," in Ian T. Ramsey, Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy, London: SCM Press LTD, 1966, p. 179.
37. See the figure 5 Source/Power in the Chapter II, 1) The Survey Project.
38. "....through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2 NRSV).
39. Ellis C. Nelson, Conscience: Theological and Psychological Perspective, P. 126.
40. Ibid., P. 39.
41. Ibid., p. 192.
42. Ibid., p. 49.
43. Ibid., p. 70.
44. Ibid., p. 71.
45. See Trutz Rendtorff, Ethics Vol. I: Basic Elements and Methodology in and Ethical Theology, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989. He discusses the three basic elements of the ethical reality of life, 1) Givenness of life, 2) Responsibility of giving life, and 3) Reflection on life.
46. Donald L. Nathanson, Knowing Feeling, Affect, Script, and Psychotherapy, p. xi.
47. I Corinthians 6:12 (NRSV).
48. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation of Human Nature, p. 179.
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54. Ibid., p. 4.
55. Ibid., p. 7.
56. Ibid., p. 10.
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58. Ibid., p. 51.
59. Ibid., p. 66.
60. See the contents of Feelings: Listen to Your Feelings and Understand Them and the chapter.
61. See the contents of Feelings: Listen to Your Feelings and Understand Them, and the chapter.
62. Ibid., p. 216.
63. J. Moussaieff Masson, The Ocean Feeling: The Origins of Religious Sentiment in Ancient India, Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1980, p.71.
64. William Schweiker, Mimetic Reflections: A Study in Hermeneutics, Theology and Ethics, New York: Fordham University Press, 1990, p. 5.
65. Ibid., 21.
66. Ibid., p. 20.
67. Ibid., p. 134.
68. Ibid., p. 136.
69. According to Joseph Fletcher, Situation Ethics: The New Morality, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965, p. 26. In dealing with ethical norms, he divided them into three categories, 1) legalism: law of right and wrong laid down in its text book and morals; 2) Antinomianism: decision making situation aimed with no

principles or maxim whatsoever, to say nothing of rules. They claim that their guidance come from outside themselves by the Holy Spirit; and 3) Situationism: every decision making situation fully arrived with the ethical maxims of his community and its heritage, and treats them with respect as illuminations of its problem.

70. 'Ibid., p. 32.

71. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. 1., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951., p. 16.

72. Paul Tillich, Morality and Beyond, p.39.

73. Ibid., p. 89.

75. Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative, London: Lutterworth Press, 1964, p. 67

76. Ibid., p.79.

77. Friedrich Schleiermacher, trans. by John C. Shelley, Introduction to Christian Ethics, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989, p. 25.

78. Ibid., p. 193.

79. Trutz Rendtorff, tran. by Keith Crim, Ethics Vol. 1 : Basic Elements and Mythology in an Ethical Theology, p. 3.

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