

Biblical Moral Reasoning Used In
Moral Orientation and Mission Command

"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD..."



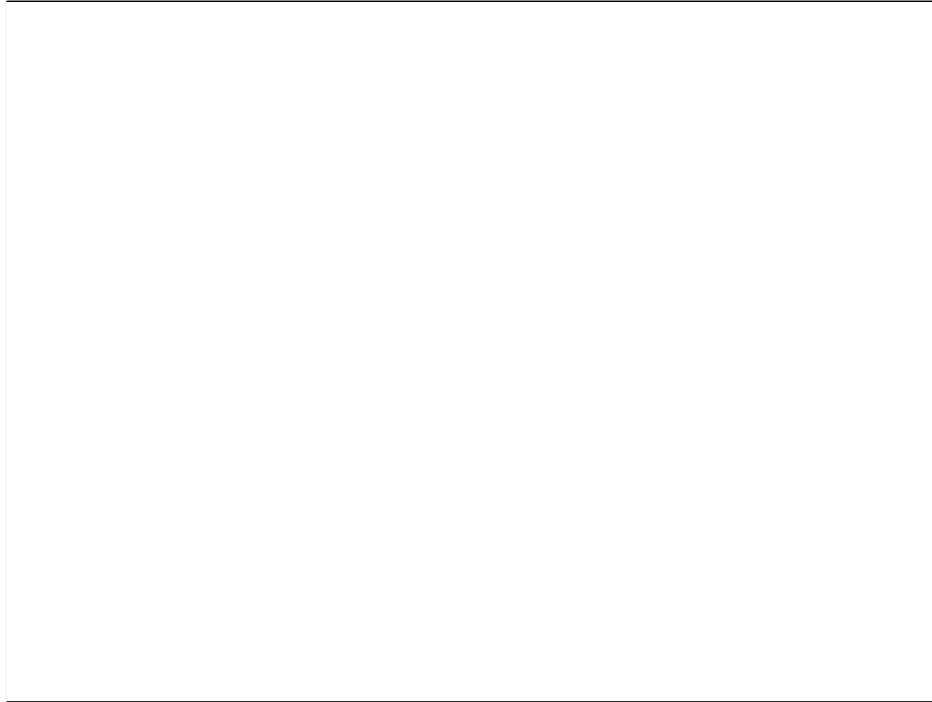


Basic assumptions

- **Worldviews (Beliefs) shape Moral Orientations (Faith)**
- **Moral Orientations (Faith) directs Ethical Practices (Reasoning and Actions)**

Our goal is to understand the use of moral reasoning systems as elements for Moral Orientation that can be used in ethics training as a framework for understanding and resolving ethical dilemmas similar to way we solve a Land Navigation Problem

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Some people believe that we are blank slates (tabla rasas) at birth – In the military we mistakenly believe that new recruits enter our ranks without pre-determined systems of values, orientations, and worldviews...



Land Navigation Moral Reasoning

Moral Reasoning for Moral Orientation and Mission Command

They are wrong – we are the products of creation (biology and socialization) from birth, and these influence our moral orientations throughout life. Our moral orientations are determined by the process that we use to determine right/wrong, good/bad, better/worse – as matters of self-identity and social judgements – personal and social ethics. In the military privates through generals are products of this previous orientation systems that have developed their spiritual/moral orientations and ethical practices...

The "Me" System

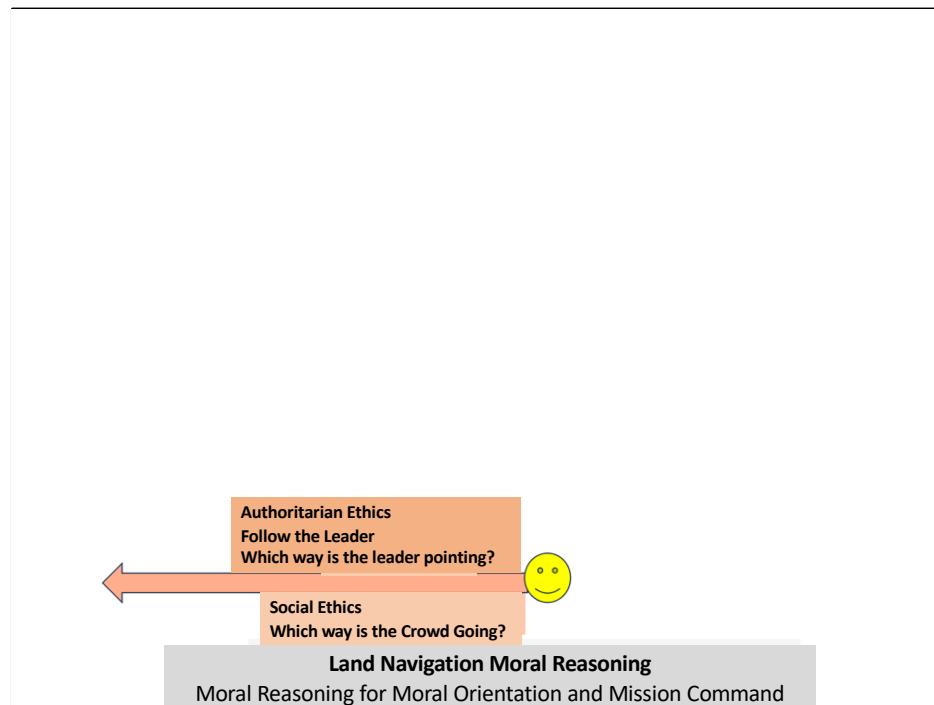
- Widely Used
- Not Accurate Description
- Disastrous Results
- Scripture
 - Judges 21:25 - In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes
 - Isaiah 53:6 - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;
 - Matthew 9:36 - When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.



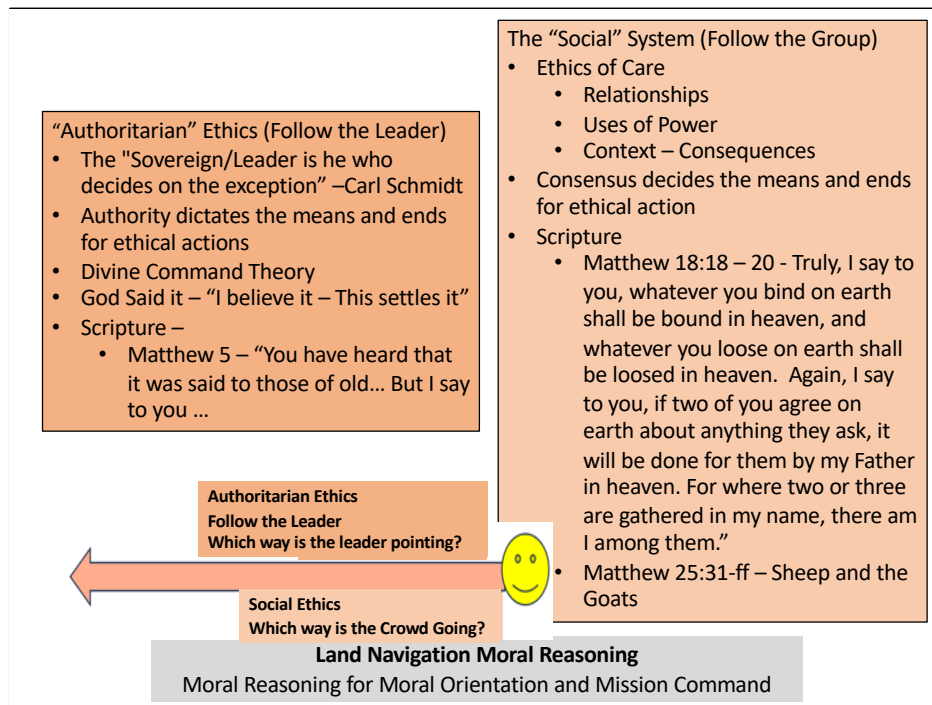
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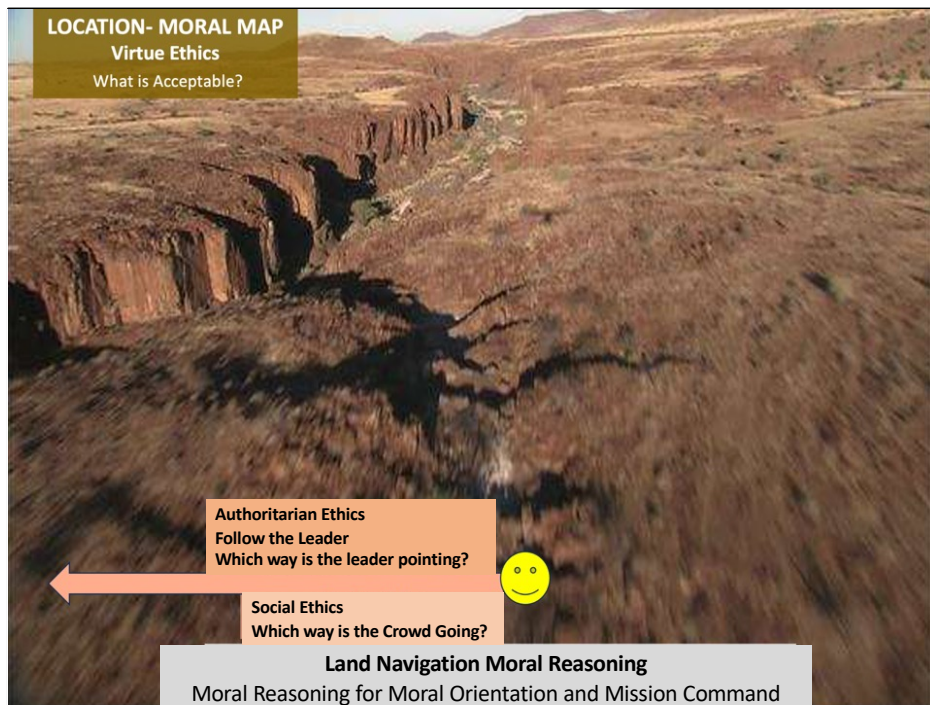


The first processes are the oldest – 1) Authoritarian Follow the Leader – whether a matter of Divine Command Theory (What God Directs) AND/OR Social Ethics with tribe, or our group of peers expects from us to perform (Foucault’s panopticon, or embedded tribal rules). In the military chain of command and unit cohesion function with these types of reasoning. Seeking conformity is the requirement of this type of moral reasoning. whether a matter of Divine Command Theory (What God Directs) AND/OR with tribe, or our group of peers expects from us to perform (Foucault’s panopticon, or embedded tribal rules). In the military chain of command and unit cohesion function with these types of reasoning. Seeking conformity is the requirement of this type of moral reasoning. The issue for social ethics is the deep thinking associated with a non-western Ethics of Care that focuses around three dynamics 1) Relationship 2) Power and 3) Context. One can find this in Chinese/Eastern and tribal cultures.

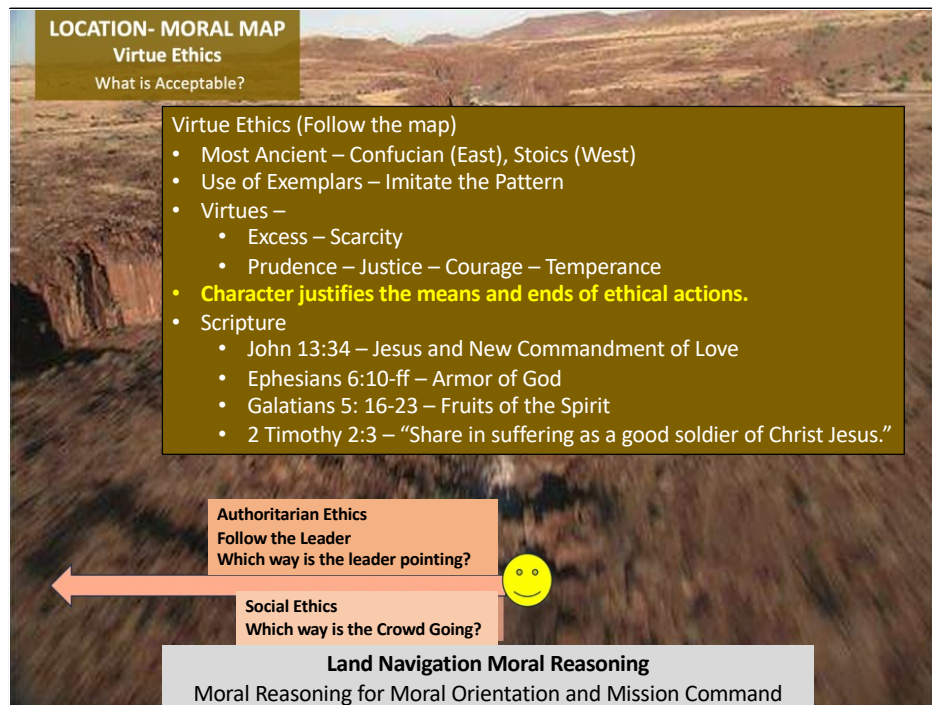


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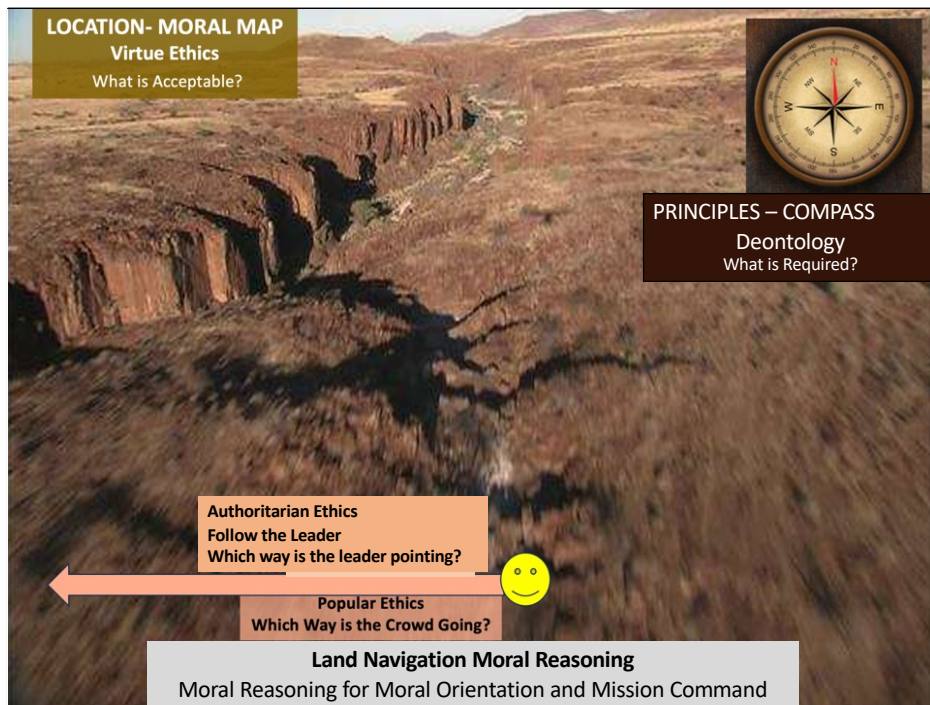
REGARDLESS OF THESE TWO SYSTEMS – THE LEADER OR THE GROUP MUST USE SOME OTHER PROCESS FOR THEIR REASONING --



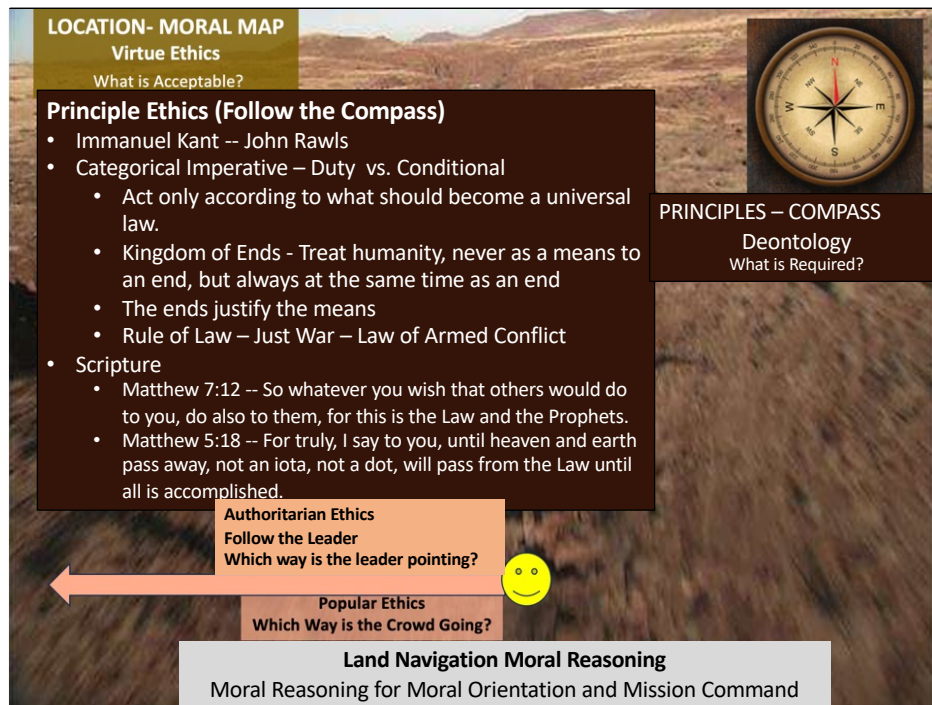
Another way we reason is through our acceptance of virtues/values/convictions which forms a map that allows us to orient our perceptions of our environments and self. We develop this map from exemplars. This is the system of Stoics, Confucious, Plato, Aristotle, Christian Theologians like St. Thomas, and Augustine... Arguably Buddhists... The military develops and expects its members to develop their moral orientations and ethical practices around standards of corporate values... Within mission command moral maps take into account service values, allow for use terrain analysis, provide for application of a moral compass, and destinations to determine operational actions



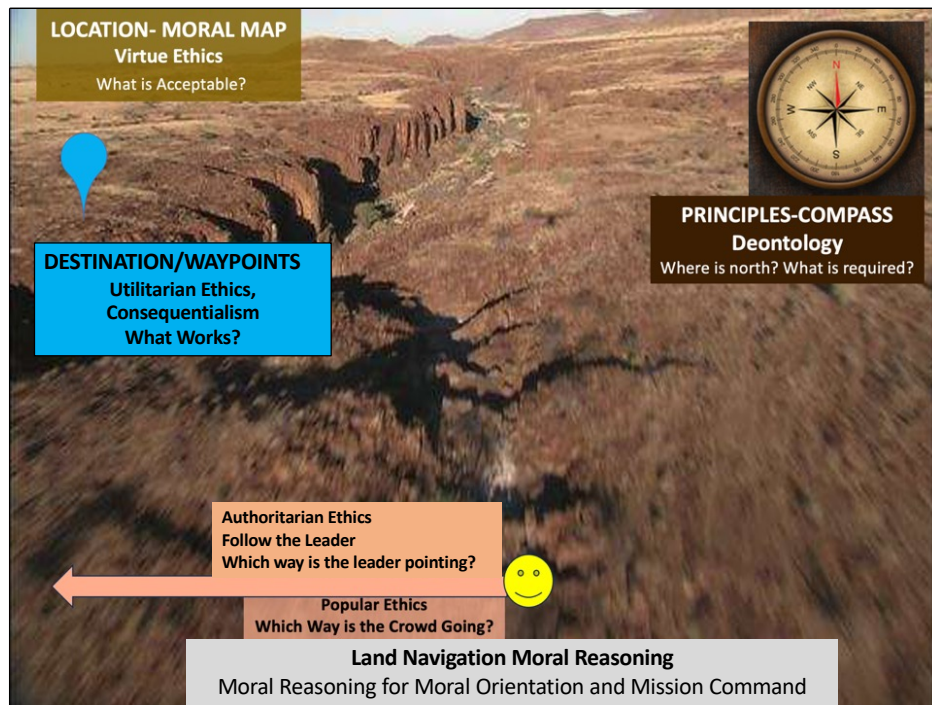
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Another orienting system is following the rules (Rule of Law – John Rawls) OR deed embedded/universal principles (Kant’s Deontology) These rules operate as a moral compass because they always point us in a fixed direction (though imperfect – magnetic vs. true north). In celestial navigation, this is the function of the north star. HOWEVER, a compass needs to be used in conjunction with a map to direct individuals or groups. Laws function this way whether a social/political order (International Humanitarian Law OR as a matter of religious guidance (Ten Commandments, Sharia Law). In mission command – orders, regulations, and SOPs function in this way. The military follows orders and obeys the rules.



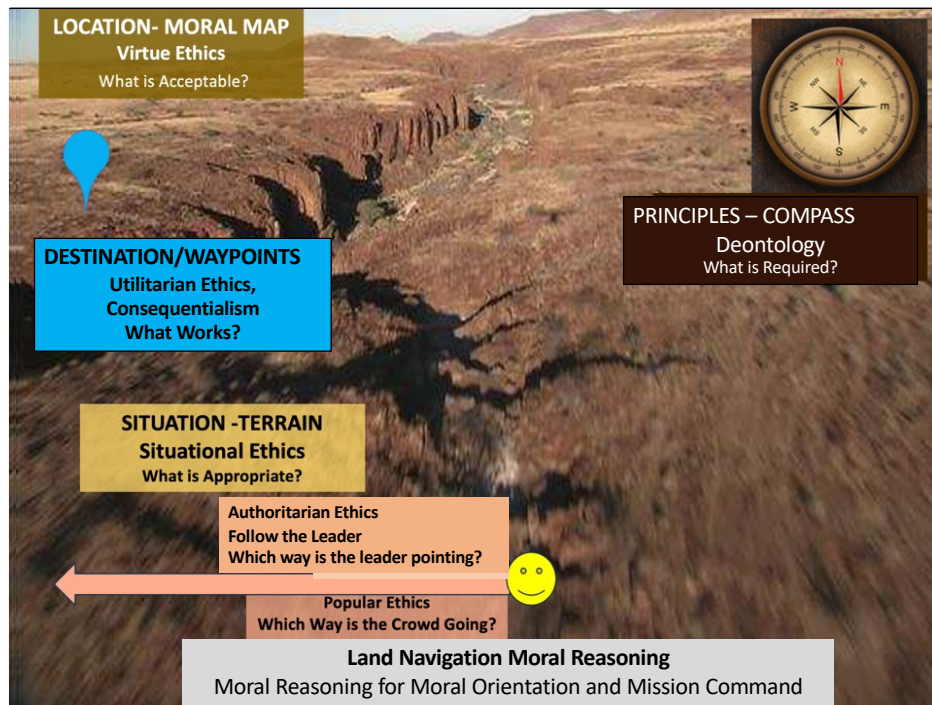
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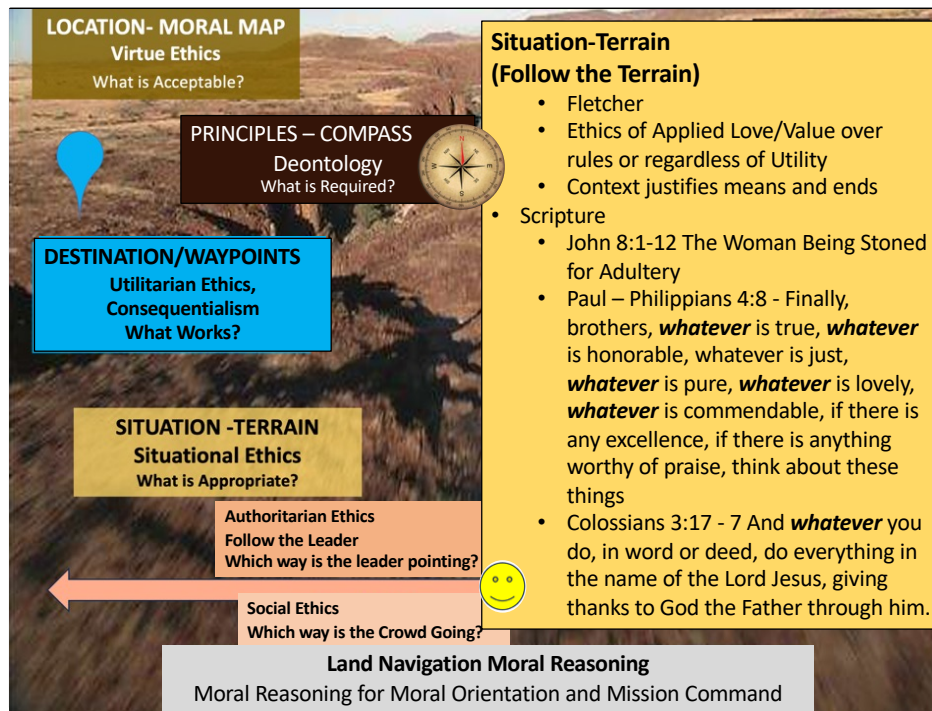
Another system for moral reasoning is based upon end points, consequences, and utility in achieving desired goals. President Lincoln is rumored to have said, “A compass can direct me but it cannot tell me my destination – the place where I ought to go.” Utilitarian moral reasoning is based upon destinations whether specific places (the pleasures of Epicureans or Libertarians) or social good (the greatest good for the greatest amounts of people). Utilitarian ethics is the work of Bentham and Mills but it also resides in the moral reasoning of Hobbs, Locke, Jefferson, Montesquieu and Marx. Sometimes this type of reasoning becomes characterized as “the ends justify the means,” but often it is a matter of “cost vs. benefit analysis.” Within mission command, utility is measured by desired endstates or assessed in terms of battlefield effects. When combined with moral maps (virtues/values), moral compass (principles/rules), utility provides destination and purpose. In religion, kingdom ethics and destination are used to justify the ethical actions of believers, but without law, and values/virtues the desired end state can betray the reason for the action.



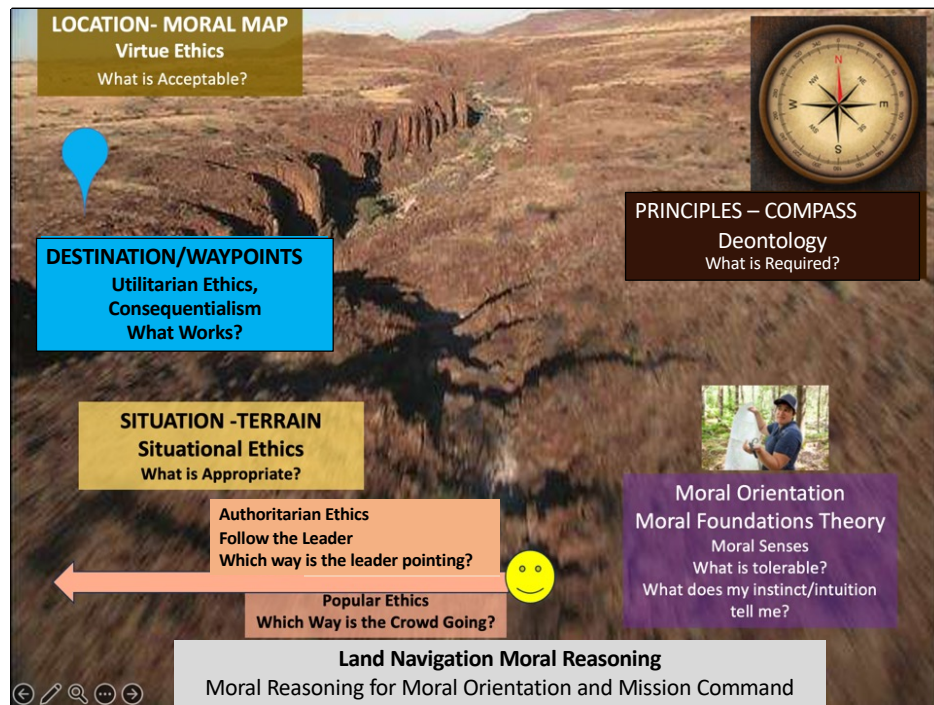
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We use situational moral reasoning. This can be explained by how we feel, or contexts we find ourselves in. However, Situational Ethics as a moral reasoning system developed from the need to apply principles, utility, virtues, and instincts/intuition to specific contexts. Within Christianity this was based upon the practices of mystics, early Church fathers, and theologians who applied principles such as love (agape) to specific contexts to account for changing conditions. One can find this type of moral reasoning practiced in conjunction with prayer and spiritual discernment. Within mission command it is practiced as situational awareness and terrain analysis. However, going for a “walk in the woods,” one can get lost and caught up in the terrain (all these trees look the same). But, terrain awareness can keep one from walking off a cliff or wading through a deep swamp when following what one assumes is a straight azimuth. Thus situation can be used with a moral compass, moral maps, and utilitarian end states to direct the ethics of individuals and groups.



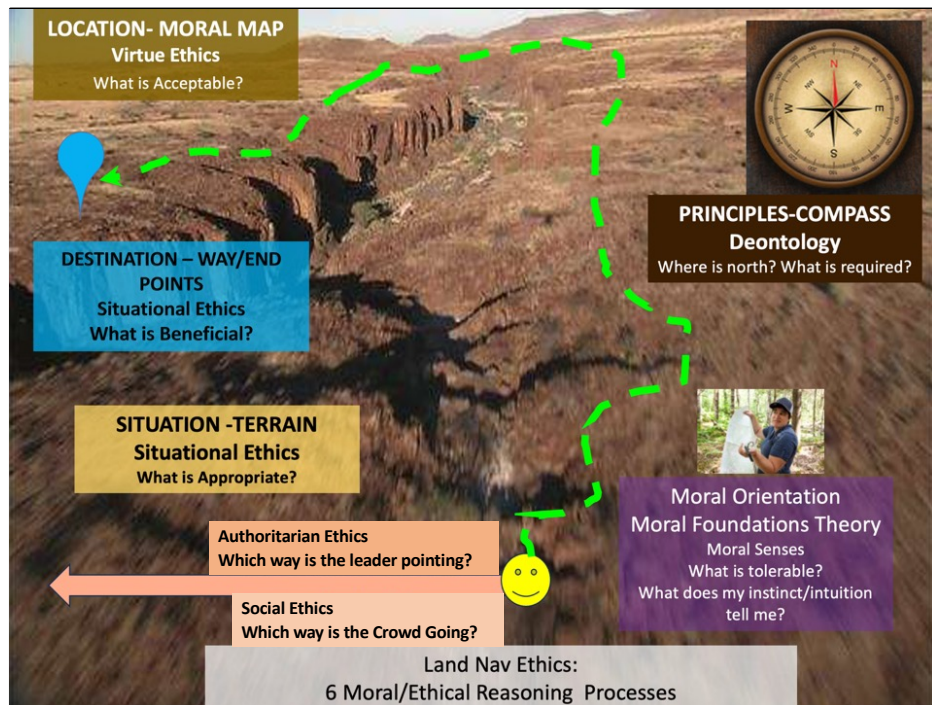
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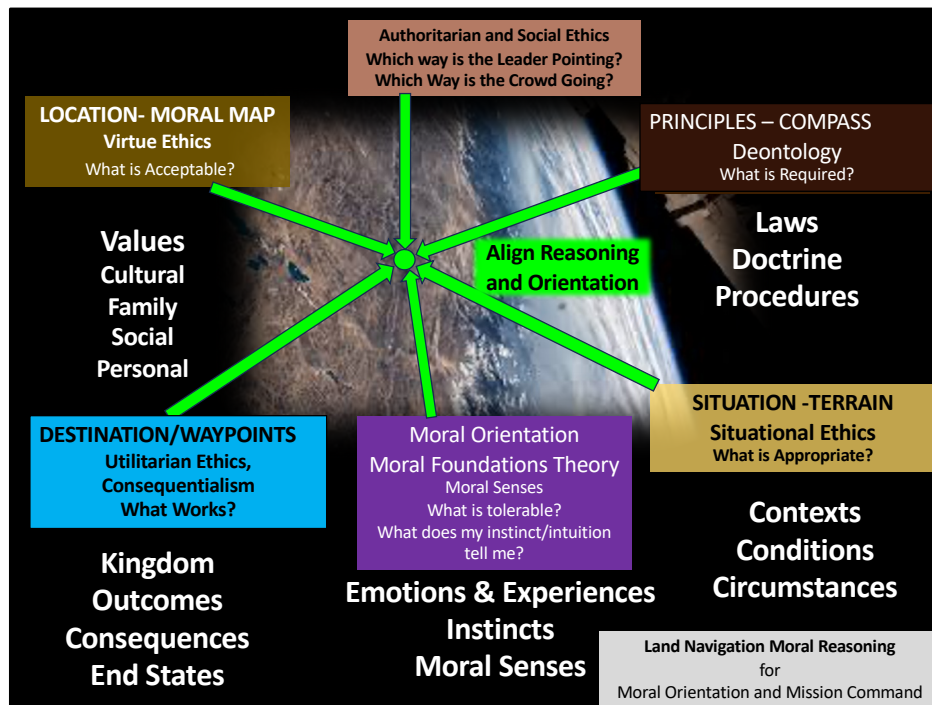
Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) is the ONLY empirically derived system for moral reason. It is based upon the work of Jonathan Haidt (The Righteous Mind) from Columbia University. MFT has found that human beings: 1) base their moral/ethical actions upon their emotional reactions and later justify their actions through their moral reasoning based upon, 2) moral senses (care, fairness, liberty, loyalty, authority, and sanctity) which are developed socially throughout their lifetime similar to way that we develop taste through our taste buds. These moral senses are present in different combinations within individual regardless of gender or culture. What differentiates individuals is how their social environments (political/religious) influence combinations and applications of their natural moral senses. This theory explains how human beings “feel their values” and develop “gut instincts” for ethical actions. Within mission command, the maturity of leaders (as virtuous character, experience as knowledge (compass), training as desired end states, and instinct) are factors within the decision-making process.



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Moral orientation is accomplished by combining virtues, principles, end states, situational awareness, and moral senses to select an appropriate route for individuals and groups to follow. It's that simple and that complicated. Consider this, suppose a soldier is asked to explain his reasons for doing a certain action. He/she may say, 1) "I was obeying orders (moral)told me (MFT), 6) I followed my unit, 7) I followed my leader. Any one of these explanations can be an appropriate response – they can also result in a court-martial because they resulted in a war crime (all were used to justify military actions at Nuremburg and other ethical breaches such as Abu Gharib. Now suppose the soldier can answer my actions were the result of obeying my commander's lawful order, which was appropriate to situation, upheld military values, accomplished the mission, consistent with moral senses and followed good unit discipline? I know this is idealistic, but this would allow the military to function in the way it says it should function. In a spiritual sense, this would be the prescription for preventing moral injuries.



If using a GPS analogy. Each of the moral reasoning systems functions a distinct satellite for determining locations and movement. What is better (or more accurate)-- a one-point fix or a six-point fix?

Moral Reasoning in Mission Command



Elements of Mission Command are US doctrine – but these elements are present within many nations. Notice how each element within mission command corresponds to a type of moral reasoning and how these moral reasoning systems can conflict. Orders can conflict with intents and end states which can also conflict with Situational Analysis, and orders, intents, and situations are dependent upon the condition or troops in terms of values, experience, and instincts. When talking about military ethics, we frequently talk about circumstances where we are given immoral or illegal orders – but as we become senior leaders the bigger moral issue will be when we are placed in circumstances where we have to avoid GIVING/ISSUING illegal or immoral orders to subordinates. In either situation, moral reasoning contributes to our ability to IDENTIFY and ALIGN information to choose the best solution... This alignment is scriptural.

Questions ?

