



# BAPTIST PRESS

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August 30, 1967

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Editor Defines Authentic Morality,  
Criticized Legalism, New Morality

RIDGECREST, N.C.(BP)--The editor of Christian Century Magazine, in a series of lectures prepared for delivery here, criticized both the legalistic morality of many churches and the so-called new morality of situational ethics, supporting instead what he called "authentic morality."

"Authentic morality," he declared, "is that human behavior that permits and encourages people to be persons within the bounds of freedom and love (that) God wills and provides for man." Neither the old legalism or the new morality passes this test of "authentic morality," he added.

Editor Kyle Haselden of the Christian Century in Chicago was scheduled to deliver the nine lectures at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly here, but suffered a "physical collapse" in Fredericksburg, Va., enroute to the meeting and was ordered to bed by physicians.

His prepared lectures on "Authentic Morality and the Mass Media" were read here by Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, which sponsored the conference.

Valentine said that Haselden was not in critical condition, but was suffering from exhaustion, tension, and stress, and had to have complete rest.

In the lectures, Haselden was critical of both legalism and situational ethics, but said that authentic morality combines aspects of both so subtly that what results is radically different from either.

He listed five dimensions of authentic morality, saying that "it focuses on people to produce persons, a process that requires freedom as an indispensable climate and a love that is more than all loves as its standard and energy. This love," he said, "is perfectly revealed to us in Jesus Christ, and has its origin in the God who is love."

Haselden cited specific reasons why he felt that neither a legalism based on literal interpretation of the biblical law, nor relativism based on judging each situation in relationship to "the test of love" met the tests of "authentic morality."

He was especially critical of churches and Christians that emphasize negative rules that say morality is based on a code that says "good people do not swear, lie, steal, dance, play cards, drink whiskey or work on Sunday."

This same code in the local (Southern Baptist) church in which he was reared also declared that good white people don't associate with Negroes, he added.

"This code was wrong because the rules were negative, prohibitive, arbitrary, cluttered with trivialities, and in regards to relations with non-whites, blatantly immoral," Haselden said.

By emphasizing that someone is good because of the laws he keeps and evil because of the laws he breaks, we could make saints out of well-trained monkeys, he quipped.

Because legalism emphasizes negative things of life, it does not open the human spirit to joy, adventure, surprise, but instead "turns the full man into a fraction, the free man into a prisoner, the questing man into a cautious score-keeper."

Under legalism, man becomes an automation, a programmed computer. "But God does not want a flawless machine, He wants a loving child."

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Legalism, he charged, also binds the future with its system of rules and precludes the working of the Holy Spirit.

Haselden added, however, that in Jesus' description of the good life, there is provision for rules, for a structured morality becomes authentic. "The Christian life must in some way incorporate, as Christ's commandments (to love God and neighbor) do, both love and law.

"Love is central and the law is peripheral; love is primary and the law secondary," he stated.

The editor and author said that in this respect the Christian situational ethics devotees such as Joseph Fletcher are correct in emphasizing that love is the dominant authority in ruling true Christian behavior.

"Situational ethics has much to commend it to Christian conscience and imagination," he said.

Haselden added, however, that the new morality (situational ethics) advocates oversimplify their definition of love in saying that it is benevolence, good will.

They believe, he observed, that every moral decision must be made depending on the situation and its demands for love and what love demands of the situation. Thus all ethical problems must be entrusted to personal, individual, subjective and spontaneous solutions.

"It is highly doubtful that man, even if he has come of age, is capable of handling such a challenge," Haselden declared.

"This is slippery ground and most people who try to stand on it plunge into a wholly unprincipled libertinism that Fletcher disavows. Thus you can get away with any kind of behavior if you can call that behavior love.

"Situational ethics is too easily distorted into license for immorality--especially into sexual permissiveness. It trusts everything to the dominant impulse of the moment and that impulse may be wholly foreign to Christian love that has its focus on the sacredness of persons.

Haselden charged that it is a naive waste of time, perhaps an immoral one, to speculate as some devotees of situational ethics do concerning the possibility that there may perhaps be bizarre situations in which some evils are not only necessary but positively good.

"By condemning incest, fornication, adultery, murder, false witness, voluntary addiction, we are not writing a new decalogue or endorsing legalistic moral codes. Rather we are saying that love--the only intrinsic good--has its derivatives, its laws.

"The new moralists say that love is the only absolute. But there is an absolute," he concluded, "other than benevolence, even Jesus Christ, true man and real person. He is the norm by which we measure what we are and do."

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Glorifying War More Obscene  
Than Sex, Haselden Declares

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RIDGECREST, N.C.(BP)--"The most monstrous obscenity of our time is the glorification of war and the glamorizing of the military tradition," a lecturer at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly declared here.

"Sexual obscenity--even the worst kind of pornography--is a mere nuisance compared with glamorizing of war," said Christian Century Magazine editor Kyle Haselden of Chicago in a series of lectures on "Authentic Morality and the Mass Media."

Haselden, a Baptist who edits a non-denominational religious magazine, said, that too many Christians become so pre-occupied with sex as obscenity that they ignore other types of obscenity that are far more dangerous to mankind.

Strongly condemning mass media for glorifying sex, however, Haselden observed that the fact that glorification of war is more obscene than sex does not mean that Christians can ignore the destructive effects of sexual degeneracy on society and persons.

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"Sexual obscenity is only one of the numerous threats to morality," wrote Haselden, who suffered a physical collapse enroute to the assembly.

His prepared manuscripts were read to the conference by Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission which sponsored the meeting.

Haselden listed as other forms of obscenity just as evil as sexual obscenity such things as vicious defamation of character, poisonous jokes that perpetuate slanderous stereotypes about Negroes and Jews, sickening rumors about national leaders, and diatribes against the National and World Councils of Churches "spewed over the country by radio's apostles of discord."

"In one week, Carl McIntire's programs (The Twentieth Century Reformation Hour) spread more vile and deadly obscenity over this country in his relentless accusations against responsible churchmen than a dozen girlie magazines do in a year," he stated.

Glorifying war is the worst of all obscenities, he said, because "war is the most dehumanizing of all human enterprises, not only in its effect upon those who are killed and wounded but also in its effect upon those who do the killing and wounding.

"Every television program, every movie, every bit of literature that exhaults modern war and dulls our awareness of its horrors is the most deadly kind of obscenity," he said.

In an earlier lecture on censorship, Haselden said that the suppression of information about United States foreign policy and the withholding of the truth about United States involvement in the internal affairs of other nations is probably the most dangerous form of censorship in America today.

Haselden said the people have a right to know about the nature, scope and purposes of this nation's international commitments because "in the end they pay the costs of tragic international blunders with their money and their blood."

Haselden said that censorship often is the suppression of man's freedom to know and to express himself, and thus censorship is hostile to authentic morality wherever it narrows the range of man's individual decision and personal choice, wherever it constricts his access to any knowledge and any ideas.

The editor based his views on both censorship and obscenity on what he called "authentic morality," which he spent two lectures defining as "that human behavior that permits and encourages people to be persons within the bounds of freedom and love (that) God wills and provides for man."

Using this definition as his guide for judging obscenity, Haselden strongly condemned the magazines of the "playboy" type, saying that many of them are worse than hard-core pornography.

Calling them "soft-core pornography," Haselden said the playboy-type magazines are obscene because they preach a fundamentally dishonest doctrine of sex that says that women are playtime toys for men to dawdle with, that love is just a sentimental impediment, that erotic pleasure is the greatest good in life.

Haselden added that Christians often ask the wrong questions about movies, television programs and publications that use material about sex. He listed as wrong questions: "How much flesh was revealed? Were dirty words used? Was the material sexually stimulating?"

Instead, Christians should ask "whether the material debased sex, imposed a false philosophy of the nature and purpose of life and their concept of the worth of human beings."

He added that this soft-core pornography of the playboy-type magazines is far more dangerous than the still-limited sale of filthy pictures, stag-party, films and sordid magazines because the mass media are so saturated with this kind of sex that Christians tend to accept it as a matter of course.

"Concerned people should concentrate not on censoring of pornography but on the creation of a climate in which commercials on television that exploit and glorify sex will fail to sell products and on which a degree of honesty returns to advertising.

On the question of the use of four-letter words, he said that such words should be evaluated in their context by the test of appropriateness and honesty. "Does the ugly word belong? Is it integral to what the writer is trying to say? Is the author merely a little boy trying to write an insignificant but shocking word on the wall?"

"The Bible," Haselden added, "is the superb literary example of the redemptive character of expediency and appropriateness. Almost every form of sexual activity known to man... is mentioned in the Bible. But few people have seriously contended that these passages should be taken out of the Bible or that the Bible should be taken away from children."

Haselden said it is tragic that Christians have concentrated the condemnatory word "obscene" on only one area of human experience, (sex), and have by inference declared that morality and virtue are threatened only by man's abuse of his sexual life.

When Christians look at the cover of a paperback book with a picture of a near-naked girl holding a revolver, too many times they condemn the nudity and ignore the revolver, he said.

"Christian people should be concerned wherever anything stunts man's moral, spiritual and communal development. But they are naive and hypocritical," he concluded, "if they act as though sexual obscenity were the only evil threatening man's becoming man."

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Airlines Fly Baptists  
Into Fairbanks Free

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ATLANTA (BP)--Seven U. S. airlines have agreed to fly about 100 Southern Baptist construction specialists into the flood-ravaged Fairbanks, Alaska, area free of charge.

The special skilled workers were requested by Alaska Baptists to help repair nine damaged church buildings.

As of Aug. 30, the Home Mission Board here had signed up more than 70 furnace workers, carpenters, tile layers, plumbers and other specialists, and calls and telegrams still were flooding in.

This response was based on the idea of churches, associations or individuals paying the expenses.

The airlines' decision to make the trip expense free for the volunteers came after Home Mission Board assistant executive secretary Fred B. Moseley contacted Delta to ask about getting tools and equipment shipped free of charge.

Delta, in response, decided to fly both men and equipment free and checked Civil Aeronautic Board regulations for approval. Since then, Pan American, United, Western, Northwestern, Eastern, Trans World Airlines and Braniff agreed to the idea, creating a nationwide transportation network for the volunteers.

Two furnace workers arrived in Fairbanks on Thursday, Aug. 31. The other volunteers were due to arrive on Tuesday, Sept. 5 to begin the race against freezing weather, looming only weeks ahead.

The Home Mission Board made the appeal for volunteers jointly with the Brotherhood Commission on Aug. 20. Since then, Moseley said, people from all over the country have rallied in response.

Nearly every airline contacted responded as Delta did. A woman from Pan American expressed thanks for the opportunity to participate in the project. And TWA offered to arrange for a special plane if all the volunteers could gather in one place.

With response from so many airlines, however, the decision was made to use the whole network. Various airlines were to route the volunteers to Chicago or the West Coast and then Pan American was to fly them into Fairbanks.

The Baptist Sunday School Board, at the request of the Home Mission Board, sent architectural consultant Ernest B. Myers into Fairbanks with a structural engineer to sound out the church buildings. Myers reported that the buildings had suffered only minor structural damages and could be repaired.

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On Aug. 25, the Home Mission Board authorized up to \$50,000 to guarantee pastors' salaries and to purchase construction materials. This included \$10,000 of emergency relief funds sent immediately.

The Home Mission Board also declared a moratorium on church loans interest and loan payments for six congregations in the area holding loans with the Board.

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Editor's Note: The Home Mission Board will be mailing direct to you later this week a list of the volunteers, from which you can pick out those from your state.

White, Negro Baptists Cooperate  
At Christian Study Conference

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MURFREESBORO, N.C. (BP)--The General Baptist Convention of North Carolina and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina held a four-day bi-racial meeting here "in the midst of Klan and John Birch Society activity."

The General Convention represents more than 1,700 Negro churches with over 300,000 members.

The first annual Chowan Week of Christian Study and Fellowship was attended by 138 persons from both conventions and featured worship, Bible study and recreation.

Corbin Cooper, secretary for the Baptist State Convention's department of interracial cooperation, said the meeting "in the midst of Klan and John Birch Society activity demonstrates that other, more meaningful, Christian activity is taking place."

Featured speakers of the week were James Potter, O. L. Sherrill and Jimmy Morriss. Potter is pastor of Pritchard Memorial Church of Charlotte, Sherrill is executive secretary for the General Baptist Convention and Morriss is secretary for the program services department of the Baptist State Convention.

The second annual Chowan Week of Christian Study and Fellowship is scheduled July 22-25, 1968 at Chowan College (Baptist).

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Northern Seminary Professor  
Joins New Orleans Faculty

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--James D. Mosteller, faculty member and former dean of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Oak Brook, Ill., will become professor of church history at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in September.

H. Leo Eddleman, president of New Orleans Seminary, said Mosteller "is considered one of the best church historians in the United States."

Mosteller holds bachelor and master of arts degrees from Oglethorpe University and bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Northern Seminary. He has written numerous articles and studied Puritanism at Oxford under a Lilly Post-Doctoral Fellowship in 1965.

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Missionary To Thailand  
Joining New Orleans Staff

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Ronald C. Hill, missionary to Thailand since 1952, will be professor of Missions at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for 1967-68 school year.

Hill, under appointment of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, is currently director of Baptist publications and radio-television work in Thailand. Before taking on his present duties, he was chaplain at the Baptist Hospital in Bangkok, general evangelistic worker in Bangkok, Chonburi and Nonburi and teacher in the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary in Bangkok.

Hill is a graduate of Baylor University and holds bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from New Orleans Seminary.

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C O R R E C T I O N S

Editors, note the correction in Baptist Press story about airline transportation.

Graph 1 - Six (rather than seven) U. S. airlines have agreed to fly about 100 Southern Baptist construction specialists into flood-ravaged Fairbanks, Alaska, free of charge.

Graph 3 - As of Aug. 31, the Home Mission Board here had signed up the needed number of furnace workers, carpenters, tile layers, plumbers, and other specialists and only standbys were being accepted. (rather than as of Aug. 30, the Home Mission Board here had signed up more than 70 furnace workers, carpenters, tile layers, plumbers and other specialists and telegrams were still flooding in.)

Graph 6 - scratch Braniff and Northwestern from list of airlines.

--Baptist Press