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D.C. Pastor Defines Christian Morality

ATLANTA (BP)--Fear rather than ethics often provides the basis of morality, Washington pastor, Clarence W. Cranford told a Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission Seminar here.

Cranford addressed the 400-member audience five times during the three-day meeting. Classifying other reasons for moral behavior he said:

"For many, morality is a response to the love and respect for loved ones...for some, the sense of morality is a response to an inner voice; an inner sense of what is right or wrong." Cranford said that the biblical query, "What doth the Lord require of th ?" is the valid basis for authentic morality.

The clergyman explained that the establishing of this morality necessitates choosing "targets" or goals for one's life:

"We must remember," he said, "anybody can do something and then think up a reason to justify his action. But it takes a person with real vision to choose his targets first and then aim at them."

Accompanying the knowledge of Bible-centered targets is the recognition of individual worth through a relationship to God, he said.

"Man is not just another animal. He is a creature made in the image of God, and therefore carries a spark of the divine within him." To treat a person as less than this, Cranford said, "is to offend God."

The seminar was clouded by controversy after the announcement that Joseph Fletcher, the father of "situation ethics," and Anson Mount, public affairs director for Playboy magazine would speak.

Answering Mount's indictment that Playboy is popular because of the church's failure to provide a relevant life style for young people, Cranford said:

"I don't think the Playboy philosophy demonstrates how stupid the church has been but how pagan the world is."

He blamed much of the permissiveness in society on Playboy and situationalism, labeling this permissiveness as "an infection."

"You cannot cure an infection just by putting it on display," he said.

However he commended the proponents of the new morality because "they are trying to do for our time what Jesus did in his, and that is break religion out of a confining strait-jacket of rules and regulations."

The pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, emphasized the necessity of including the Holy Spirit and prayer in decision making.

"God is at work in every situation," he said, "but prayer changes the situation." He described situations as "forks in the road." "Which way we turn depends on where we want to go. Do we want to go toward being a nobler person or a less noble one; closer to God, or away from him?"

He contended that those who would cast off God and rules should provoke th Christian to reexamine his faith and the church's authority and relevance to the world.

The era of the church's domination over moral behavior has ended, Cranford implied. "The church cannot impose its ideas of right and wrong upon a reluctant world. People are no longer accepting something as right or wrong merely because the church says so."

Cranford's final exhortation was on the significance of love. He explained that God requires man's obedience because of his love for man, and the world will be improved through love:

"If the world gets any better, it will be because of the people who try to bind up its wounds, and who stand in love rather than hate, depending on that way for victory," he concluded.

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Oxford Professor Named
To Southeastern Faculty

3/18/70

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Barrington R. White, lecturer in church history at Regent's Park College, Oxford University, England, has been elected professor of church history and missions, with tenure, at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

A specialist in Baptist history, White is a graduate of both Cambridge (M.A.) and Oxford (Ph.D.) Universities. He has served as pastor of Baptist churches in England and has taught at Oxford since 1963.

White was the Carver-Barnes Memorial lecturer at Southeastern Seminary in 1969.

The seminary's board of trustees also granted tenure to H. Eugene McLeod, assistant professor of bibliography and to Archie L. Nations, associate professor of New Testament.

Sabbatic leaves were granted to John E. Steely, Thomas A. Bland and to John T. Wayland.

The board formally expressed appreciation to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention for a recommended enlarged appropriation to theological education.

The board of trustees attended a Founders' Day Memorial Service for the late Sydnor L. Stealey, the seminary's first president.

Members of the board re-elected Claud B. Bowen, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C., president of the board, and James F. Heaton, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., as vice president. Nash Underwood, dentist in Wake Forest, N.C., was chosen as treasurer, and Henry L. Bridges, state auditor of North Carolina, was elected secretary.

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Baptist Professor Debates
Playboy Representative

3/18/70

ATLANTA (BP)--A Baptist seminary professor and a representative of the Playboy philosophy debated their viewpoints here before 400 Southern Baptists attending a national seminar on "Authentic Morality for Modern Man."

The debate pitted 36-year-old Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Professor William H. Pinson of Fort Worth against 44-year-old Anson Mount, public affairs director of Playboy magazine, Chicago.

Pinson answered critics who argued that Baptists should not recognize the Playboy philosophy as a debatable issue. The meeting was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"Anything as contrary to the Christian faith and as widely influential as the Playboy philosophy deserves our careful attention," Pinson said. "If we believe that Playboy is in error and if we care about the welfare of millions of Playboy readers, we should refute its philosophy. To refute it, we must know why people respond to its message."

Mount started by saying that although Playboy and Baptist churches have not arrived at the same conclusions on ethical problems, "I am impressed and gratified by your openness and willingness to listen to our views."

He traced the rise of popularity of Playboy magazine, saying it is read by 20 million young men and women each month--including the men between the ages of 18 and 24.

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He said this fact makes it easy to understand why he received not too long ago a letter from Billy James Hargis saying "We sure would be willing to be interviewed by Playboy Magazine." Hargis, Tulsa, Okla., evangelist and head of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, has been a vocal opponent of Southern Baptists sponsoring the seminar featuring the debate.

Mount traced criticism of the Playboy philosophy by churchmen who have argued that Playboy is anti-sexual and has tended to depersonalize women. He countered that religion, in stressing self-denial, has kept man from enjoying sex without guilt, and in equating sin with sex, has inspired harmful sexual repression. "Indeed, it is religion, not Playboy that has been anti-sexual...; that has looked upon woman as a depersonalized object..."

"We feel that there has been quite enough emphasis in our culture over the past 2,000 years on the dark, terrifying possibilities of sex," Mount declared. "All these centuries, almost everything the organized church has had to say about unmarried sex has been one word: 'don't.'"

"So if you people in the church feel it is your mission to remind people of the awful terrors of sex and the horrible implications that can result from going to bed with somebody without a marriage license having been issued, then go ahead, be our guest," Mount said.

"And if you do your job as well as we have done ours, and if you succeed in reaching the younger generation half as well as we..., and if you succeed in precipitating a total reexamination and reevaluation of moral and ethical precepts in this country, as we have, then I think you will be able to say you've done a good job," he continued. "Then, perhaps, we'll all be better off for it. Who knows, you might even convince us."

Pinson cited three basic differences between the Playboy philosophy and the Christian faith--the contrast in the way these two approaches value persons, the difference in the basis of human relations, and the differences in their understanding of the meaning of life.

Charging that the Playboy philosophy often pictures women as "things" and "toys", Pinson argued that Christ teaches that a person is of inestimable worth, and does not assign superior value to any person because of wealth or social prominence.

While Playboy emphasizes self-gratification, Christianity stresses self-denial. Pinson quoted Jesus as urging man to "take up his cross and follow me," and to deny selfish concern by emphasizing love for others. Playboy never mentions love as the motivation for helping others, Pinson charged.

Playboy suggests that happiness is the goal that gives meaning to life, while Christianity says that true happiness comes in following Christ "who knew who he was and what life was for," and who "promises to free us from our hangups, fears, and enslavements."

Concluding with an appeal to follow Christ rather than the Playboy philosophy, Pinson said, "In it all, you may never grow rich, own a sports car, or learn the ways of gourmet dining. These simply will not be your goals. You may be ridiculed, you may grow weary. But it will be an adventure...and you won't be bored. You will find meaning, freedom and joy.

"Others may go hopping down the bunny trail, but I'll follow him who said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life,'" Pinson concluded.

Mount argued it is "just unsound" to think that the benefits of sex in the development of the human personality, and the development of close, loving relationships between two human beings "can only be possible within marriage."

Mount quoted Hugh Hefner, the author of the Playboy philosophy as saying "It is possible for premarital sex to be moral...the thing that makes a relationship moral or immoral is the quality and nature of that relationship...."

"It's quite possible...for a sexual relationship to be rather casual and for it still to be...really quite moral, because, quite simply, I would define morality as that which serves the best interest of man," Mount quoted Hefner.

"It is a matter of recognizing that it is not the issuance of a marriage license that makes sex moral," he said.

Mount said Hefner is not concerned exclusively with sexual freedom, and in fact, his first seven installments of the Playboy philosophy dealt with matters other than sex.

During his hour-long, 29-page critique to the Playboy philosophy, Pinson argued that the Playboy outlook was full of vagueness and inaccuracies, presents and inadequate view of man, life, and the world, and is based on inadequate concepts. It can also be a destructive force, he added.

Pinson listed such vague and inaccurate precepts as: Its arguments rest on questionable interpretations of history; it is psychologically inconsistent, for it says it is bad to repress sexual desires, but also that guilt (caused by going against sexual standards of society) is "damaging,"; that Playboy's approach is to get society to change its standards to conform to sexual permissive conduct or "to make our creed match our deeds instead of making our deeds match our creed."

Pinson quoted the editor of the American Journal of Psychiatry as saying premarital sexual relations resulting from exposure to the so-called new morality have greatly increased the number of young people in mental hospitals.

The Baptist seminary professor argued that Playboy does not present an adequate picture of the real world, or the nature of man. While playboy expresses great faith in man's capacity to act rationally in his own self-interest, men often fail to act in such a way, he said.

The Playboy philosophy is a form of the old philosophy of hedonism---that mans' actions should be determined by whatever brings him pleasure, Pinson observed. Mount conceded in his speech that is a form of hedonism. "But one who pursues the pleasure principle may soon find himself spending all of his time in pursuit," Pinson charged.

Another major weakness is the Playboy philosophy is vague on how persons should make decisions concerning moral judgments, he argued. "One chief inadequacy is what it does not say. If adultery is justified, when and under what circumstances is this true?"

It is destructive in that it can create fantasy images of sex that no human can live up to, it can cause serious emotional problems, and it can undermine homes and the family, Pinson said.

During discussion following the two speeches, Mount charged that Pinson had been too subjective in evaluating the Playboy philosophy. Pinson replied he had tried as hard as he could not to be subjective. Pinson admitted he had difficulty understanding just what the Playboy philosophy is, because it gives no norms of sexual practice and never sets for the reader what is right.

Though the debate was not designed and structured to indicate one of the participants as "the winner", the majority of the 400 participants seemed to think that Pinson came out ahead, if applause and comments in the corridor were any indication, seminar spokesmen said.

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Abandon Silence On Sex,
Mace Urges Baptist Meet

3/18/70

ATLANTA (BP)--An authority on sexuality, speaking to about 400 Southern Baptists here, called on the church to abandon its conspiracy of silence on sex, confess its confusion and commit itself to a Christian reinterpretation of sex.

Participating in a Southern Baptist Conference on Authentic Morality sponsored by the SBC Christian Life Commission, Family Sociology Professor David R. Mace of Winston-Salem, N. C., declared:

"Christian thinking about sex has been paralyzed by taboo. The result is that our Christian view of sex is a hodgepodge of superstition and prejudice that answers to no set of coherent ethical principles.

"If Christianity persists in presenting itself as an anti-sexual religion, it is not going to get a hearing in this generation."

Mace, author of several books on sexuality, is currently on the staff of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest University where he instructs medical students in sexuality.

Recounting the history of the church's position on sex, Mace said the church's communication on sex has been unbiblical.

"The Hebrews," he said, "saw sex as something of which God entirely approved. To them, the function of sex, the mystery of life and their spiritual calling were all intimately and closely associated in a unity of thought."

Jesus, he said, was born into this tradition and accepted it, recognizing sexual sins but treating them with compassion.

"Jesus made it clear that sins of the flesh were far less serious than sins of spiritual pride and arrogance," Mace said.

"As the early church moved away from this Hebrew mode of thought, however, it began to assert that sexuality was the archenemy of the spiritual life," he said.

"It would not be inaccurate to say that for most of its history, the church has presented Christianity as an anti-sexual religion," Mace stated. "In fact, this is flatly contradictory to the teaching of the Bible."

Christians today must decide, he said, whether they are defending a medieval Christian view of sex, or whether they are prepared to make a reinterpretation of sex based on the teaching of the Bible and new scientific knowledge.

The collapse of sexual taboo and the barrage of sexual communication make sex education essential, Mace told the Baptist audience.

"If our children are to be exposed to anybody's half-baked views on sex, they ought at the same time to be given some responsible orientation to the subject, so that they may be able to view it in correct perspective," he said.

Sex education in schools, he added, was proceeding rapidly until the attack on it last summer by the John Birch Society and a fundamentalist religious group called "the Christian Crusade."

Mace suggested that sex education in schools should be offered in the form of elective courses, rather than required ones, emphasizing that parents often cannot effectively handle the problem themselves.

"Parents left alone," he said, "simply do not undertake this task, and if put under pressure they might even do it quite badly.

"There is a built-in psychological barrier between parents and young people in the area of sexual communication, which is healthy and necessary and must not be broken down," he observed.

It would be ideal, according to Mace, for churches to undertake this task, "but churches are still struggling with the ancient taboos."

Reacting to Mace's presentation, James Dunn, head of the Christian Life Commission for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said that the denomination, by default, has forced young people to seek understandings of sexuality in movies, magazines and music,

"Our timidity," Dunn said, "has deprived them of the facts they need to make intelligent decisions. It is immoral to perpetrate ignorance in the name of morality."

Throwing a share of the blame in the direction of denominational leaders and pastors, Dunn said the denomination was too sensitive to criticism and too ready to reevaluate its commitments to materials on controversial subjects such as sex education.

"Ten negative letters constitute an 'avalanche' in Nashville," he quipped. "It seems sometimes that the profit factor rather than the prophetic factor determines the posture of the denominational publishing house."

Dunn presented a long list of suggestions for the denomination, based primarily on providing resources for sex education and teacher training to churches and denominational groups.

In another speech later, Russell Noel, minister of education for First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., followed up Dunn's comments on Baptist-oriented sex education.

Noel said the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board had received 185 letters of protest against church-oriented sex education materials, and that 25 churches had returned their literature.

"The appalling and almost unbelievable aspect of this situation is that those who clamored longest and loudest that sex education belongs in the church and not in the school are now spewing their hurtful criticisms at the source of supply of the one helpful bit of guidance to appear on the fuzzy horizon in a long time."

Theme for the three-day conference was "Toward Authentic Morality for Modern Man."

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Seminary Professors Spar
On "Situation Ethics"

3/18/70

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists entered the ring for the first of two rounds with the new morality when two seminary professors sparred verbally with "situation ethics."

Joseph Fletcher, professor at Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass., known as "the father of situation ethics" explained his viewpoints, and Henlee H. Barnette, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., gave a critique of Fletcher's views.

"I am prepared to argue," declared Fletcher, "that Christian obligation calls for lies and adultery and fornication and theft and promise breaking and killing, sometimes, depending on the situation.

"The determining consideration in each situation is 'loving concern rather than adherence to law'," Fletcher said.

Barnette countered that Fletcher's situation ethics "is inadequate and leaves us with a mini-morality, in short," he said, "Fletcher's approach is not loving enough, situation oriented enough, and not theological enough."

Fletcher opened the dialogue with what he called a highly schematic outline of situation ethics.

The position of situation ethics is that there are no moral absolutes, no normative principles of conduct universally and unexceptionally obliging. "Each of the 10 Commandments should be amended by adding the word 'ordinarily.'

"Christianly speaking, our business is to live by the law of love and never by any love of law," Fletcher said.

Fletcher stated that his ethical stance is "a middle-of-the-road Anglican approach" somewhere between strict legalism and spontaneous or impromptu ethics which would reject any and all guidelines in the decision-making process.

Situation ethics, unlike legalism, treats law as "principles and guidelines and maxims, but never as laws and rules and prefabricated solutions."

It denies anything is bad or good in itself, but depends on the situation, Fletcher said. The situationist lives by the open endedness of loving concern, not by blind adherence to any law."

Barnette argued there may be "some exceptions in certain situations with reference to lying, stealing, and even killing, but in the case of rape, incest, cruelty to children and old people, it is difficult to imagine how these acts could under any circumstances be 'the most loving thing to do.'"

Barnette said Fletcher's approach was obscure in saying love is the only intrinsic good, and that malice is intrinsically evil. If so, then by his own definition, justice, prudence and benevolence would also be intrinsically good, and hate, contempt for persons and self-righteousness would be intrinsically evil.

Barnette charged that Fletcher's vigorous rejection of legalism "not to distinguish adequately between it and the law. He insists that love replaces the law."

Barnette said Jesus did set aside law in a number of cases, but "in every instance, Jesus set aside ceremonial, not moral, law. Jesus nowhere abrogated the moral law; rather he radicalized and interiorized it as seen in the Sermon on the Mount."

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No matter how mature, every Christian needs the restraint of the law because he has sinful tendencies, Barnette said. "Love is more demanding than the law, but it needs law to give it direction and concreteness. Otherwise, love remains impractical, amorphous and ambiguous."

In the discussion period, Fletcher said ethics based on law is a childish morality. Giving a child laws, however, sometimes is the loving thing to do.

Barnette added that many adults operate on the level of law because it is the only thing they understand. "I don't have much hope for them ever rising to the level of agape (love)," Barnette said. "They haven't the foggiest notion of what you mean by agape."

Barnette brought a roar of laughter from the 400 Baptist attending the seminar on "authentic morality" when he told Fletcher that "the most loving thing you could do in this situation is to let me outshine you."

The seminar, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, has been criticized by some Baptists who have argued that Southern Baptists should not give a platform for the advocate of the "new morality" and another speaker, Anson Mount of Playboy magazine who was debated by Southern Baptist Seminary professor William M. Pinson of Fort Worth.

Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the commission, said that much of the criticism had come from persons who apparently did not understand Mount and Fletcher would be confronted by the Baptist seminary professors.

Valentine said the seminar was designed to help carry out the theme of the Southern Baptist Convention for the years 1970-71, "Living The Spirit of Christ in Freedom and Openness."

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Use Influence for Moral Causes, Baptists Told

3/18/70

ATLANTA (BP)--More than 400 Baptists ended a national seminar on authentic morality by hearing a quartet of speakers urge them to communicate moral values through preaching, Christian education, and the proper use of power inside and outside the church.

"While this seminar has dealt with philosophy, morality, ethics, race, self-interest, greed, violence, theology, the power structure, poverty and peace, we must as we leave Atlanta...consider the how, the where and the who and the what beyond the glittering affirmations of this meeting," said Russell Noel of Tulsa, Okla.

Noel, minister of education at First Baptist Church, Tulsa, spoke on Communicating Moral Values Through Christian Education during the closing session of the seminar sponsored by the SBC Christian Life Commission.

Clyde Fant, professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, advocated preaching on moral issues, and John Claypool, pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Louisville, spoke on use of power inside and outside the church.

Kenneth L. Chafin, Southern Baptists top evangelism leader, strongly advocated what he called "authentic evangelism" as the basis for authentic Christian morality.

Claypool used three words to characterize Southern Baptist use of power. "The key words are insensitive, self-serving and materialistic; and when you put these together, they lead to a rather alarming conclusion that in our use of power, we are indistinguishable from our culture."

Claypool charged that Baptists have been insensitive to the use of power by allowing a strong man to utterly dominate a church, a group or an institution, and feeling no uneasiness of conscience about such domination.

Southern Baptists have tended to use their power for self-serving and materialistic goals, he said. Citing an "edifice complex" whereby church power has been used in building more and bigger buildings, he observed that the church of the 1970's is in danger of having almost capitalized itself out of business.

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"In our use of power, material concerns have received higher priority than human concerns," he said. "We have all tended to ask 'the investment question' when it comes to deciding what to do with what we have."

Claypool called for Baptists to reclaim the biblical perspective on power and start being witnesses to society rather than reflectors of society.

"If institutions like Southern Baptists cling to their present assumptions about the use of power, within two generations we will be reduced to impotency," he said.

Declaring that authentic Christianity is the only basis for authentic morality, Chafin, evangelism secretary, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said he was convinced that authentic Christianity begins with authentic evangelism.

He added that today's church lacks power because it seeks to build its message on a partial gospel.

"We have settled in and made an easy peace with the world," he said. "Consequently, it is difficult to preach that God is on the move and that we, at whatever cost, are at the very center of that movement."

Fant urged Baptist ministers to preach on moral issues with clarity and honesty and to restore to preaching a heritage and tradition of dealing with social and moral issues in sermons.

Noel made nine suggestions for communicating moral values through Christian education, including proposed improvements in the work and roles of pastors, education directors, church workers and parents, and a type of "Baptist catechism."

"There is, in my opinion, a need for a book, call it a catechism if you like, that will pose questions and give answers that can be committed to memory against the opportunity for application," Noel said.

He further urged more innovation and creativity in religious education, and more flexible attitudes and less legalism in the denomination.

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HEW Aide Urges Dialogue
On Pollution, Health

3/18/70

ATLANTA (BP)--A national health official called on Southern Baptists to participate in a national dialogue on population and its relation to pollution and health.

James H. Cavanaugh of Washington, D. C., stood in for Roger O. Egeberg, assistant secretary for health and scientific affairs of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Egeberg had been sent to London by HEW secretary Robert Finch. Cavanaugh is Egeberg's deputy.

Speaking to 400 participants in a Christian Life Commission Seminar on Authentic Morality, Cavanaugh announced that President Nixon had one day earlier created a Commission on Population growth.

The Commission would examine population problems, the relationship between resources and population, and the ethical implications of population, and the ethical implications of population control, Cavanaugh said.

On this point, he called on the religious community to enter the debate to bring the population issue to the attention of the American people, joining with government and the scientific community.

Cavanaugh did not see the role of government as that of imposed control, but that of research and the creation of a climate of information in which families would make their own decisions to limit birth.

He indicated that the ethical question of whether to limit births would be difficult to face, adding that "no agency of our society can ever be allowed to impose its attitude toward population on the individual."

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"Population growth in this country, while it has slowed, is by no means under control," and "it poses a threat to the quality of American life," he said.

"If the present rate continues, there will be 300 million people in the United States within 30 years," he said.

Tying this trend to pollution, Cavanaugh observed: "The ecological system on which our way of life and our very existence depend will seriously deteriorate if our efforts to conserve and enhance the environment do not keep pace with population growth.

"We are running on a treadmill, trying to catch up with a goal that keeps slipping further and further away as the size of our population gets ever larger," Cavanaugh warned.

Egeberg's deputy read the prepared text the health official had planned to deliver himself until called to London at the last minute.

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Julian Bond Gives
Violence Definitions

3/18/70

ATLANTA (BP)--Noting that violence is associated with Black Power in the minds of many people, Negro Legislator Julian Bond of Atlanta gave his own definitions of violence to nearly 400 Baptists leaders.

This is the way Bond described violence in his speech at a nation-wide seminar on Authentic Morality sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission:

"...Violence is having 30 million hungry stomachs in the most affluent nation.

"...Violence is a black child going to school and coming out with only five years of education.

"...Violence is having a disproportionate share of black people among the inductees and casualties in Vietnam.

"Violence might be said to be a country like this one where property traditionally is more important than people.

"Or it might be an economy like the one we enjoy in which we believe in socialism for the wealthy and capitalism for the poor...that spends \$900 every second to stifle and dominate the people of Vietnam but only \$77 per poor person per year to feed the hungry at home.

"Violence might be blowing up two young men on a Maryland highway and then somehow suggesting that they did it themselves.

"Violence might be complaints about rising welfare costs while 6,000 white American farmers receive welfare payments of \$25,000 and up not to work.

"Or violence might be the Congress of the United States putting cotton and tobacco and race ahead of people.

"This country," Bond added, "has visited death on thousands of Vietnamese and has had the arrogance to ignore centuries of pleading from our own domestic colony--the American Black People."

Bond also gave his own definition of Black Power, saying that it is Black people having power--the power to influence other people, things, events and institutions even against their will.

When asked what he had to say about the destructive uses of Black Power, Bond replied that he did not feel it was his responsibility to chastize Black people, or to accept the responsibility for all the things all Black people do.

He said the great quest for Black people is to achieve political power and economic power and ability.

Bond predicted that in the next four years, the number of Black people holding elected offices in the South would double from 400 to 800. Most of these would be in the small counties of the South.

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Asked about the extent of Communist influence among Black leaders, Bond said he would not deny the charge because he felt it was irrelevant. Oppressed people should not refuse help from anyone. He added he felt it was insulting, because it implies that Communists are so much smarter than Black people.

Bond also said that religion has little influence among Black Power advocates and among younger Blacks. He said he sensed some negative reaction among these people toward religion in general.

The white church has little credibility among Blacks today, but white church figures and some white church institutions and organizations have a lot of credibility, Bond said.

He told Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission Seminar on Authentic Morality that if Baptists are serious about doing something to help Black people, they will become concerned and involved in political action, and will tackle the issue of public school integration and bussing.

He also suggested using economic power by doing business with firms that have union employees and Equal Employment Opportunity practices.

When asked how he felt when he saw the "color of the audience," Bond laughed that he had expected the crowd to be predominately white.

The meeting closed with an address by another Black speaker, Frederick Sampson, pastor of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.

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Stagg Decries Church
Support of Militarism

3/18/70

ATLANTA (BP)--The church has failed to be the conscience of the nation, and no factor behind militarism and war is sadder than that it has church support, a Baptist seminary professor charged here.

Frank Stagg of Louisville, Ky., told a nation-wide Baptist conference: "The church has made peace with war and even war on peace. The government does not have to justify militarism and war before the churches for the churches assume the burden of relieving the conscience of government."

In his speech on "Authentic Morality and Militarism," Stagg, professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, asked for a reassessment of the character, authority, and role of the military establishment in the life of the country.

He also argued U.S. involvement had "raped" Vietnam, and in detail sought to show the contradictions of commitments which have kept us there. He said pride is the major factor in our reluctance to leave.

While his speech was generally well received and interrupted with applause, he was challenged by a number of those present in a lively discussion period.

From the floor, Cecil Sherman of Asheville, N. C., and others, while expressing sympathy for his basic thesis, questioned if the speech was not "unreal in its national expectation."

Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss., called the speech "as good a job of over-kill as you accuse the military of in Vietnam."

Cooper suggested that there is a realistic position that is capable of moving this nation to a more just policy and action.

Stagg had claimed in his speech to the conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission that we have granted the military the status of an autonomous, sovereign government. He said the military even has its own three branches--the legislative, executive, and judicial.

"When we draft a boy who is not allowed to vote and turn him over to a military establishment which can do with him almost anything it chooses, have we not in fact disenfranchised him?"

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His indictment of militarism and the Vietnam involvement led him to claim that "the alleged massacre of My Lai, if true, was no accident. Whatever the dimension of personal guilt, the system itself produces what is alleged to have occurred at My Lai. For it, we are all guilty.

"Militarism looks to war for fulfillment, and the object in war is to kill," he declared.

Stagg built his case on growing militarism in the U. S., charging that the country is the most militaristic nation in the world, spending nearly \$80 billion on armaments, more than twice that of Russia.

"Militarism is a major foe to authentic morality," he claimed. "Our egocentric concern for survival, cost what it may in any realm of value, is a violation of what Jesus proclaimed as God's first commandments: To love God and neighbor as oneself..."

"Along with our misguided mania for self-saving is our tragic neglect of what ought to be our priorities: health, food, education, housing, ecology, prison reform and all that upgrades human existence," he said.

Stagg called the sin against young people even greater: "We deny the ballot to people under 21, yet we draft 18 year olds and compel them to go 10,000 miles, to fight our schizophrenic, undeclared half-war, even while the Congress itself debates its legality, its morality, and its sanity."

Stagg's negative comments were not without a positive side. He called for an authentic world government, shaped by all the nations of the world, and empowered by those nations to police the member nations. "We have in the United Nations a step in that direction."

Stagg suggested authentic morality "could best be expressed should we at once withdraw from our wars in Vietnam and Laos, drop out of the arms race, and declare our new stance to the world.

"This would be a calculated risk, to some a reckless, foolish and possibly fatal risk, I believe not.

"Christian faith and conscience will take that risk if in so doing we should lose our lives, we would by all the wisdom of the cross thereby save ourselves."

As though anticipating his lack of criticism of other nations, he opened his speech with the comment that he was concerned with militarism's affect upon the church and the U.S., and given the opportunity he would speak to other nations about their sins.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Baptist Press will carry a wrapup story on the Christian Life Commission seminar in Atlanta in Thursday's mailing.