

EVANGELION

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SKANDALON

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ETHICS AND THE BIBLE

by James G. Ward

A much debated topic over the past decade has been that of morals or ethics and what changes, if any, have been brought about in our ethical systems. Moral topics have always enjoyed much popularity in this country. In fact, compared with many European nations, the United States seems to have a preoccupation with morals, especially those that have to do with sex. The United States is generally associated with a strict moral code that is a product of our Puritan-Calvinist heritage. This strict moral code or ethical system is substantiated using Christian scripture. It has been perpetuated by the religious institutions of this nation since colonial times. In fact, the question of ethics has been a prime religious issue and, in some instances, becomes the central point in an individual's religious convictions. Ethical behavior in general and sexual ethics in specific have enjoyed an hegemony in the American religious tradition. There is feeling that this entire subject needs reevaluation. Many critiques have claimed that the contemporary Church is out of touch with reality, and this seems to be one of the areas in which it is out of touch. This does not demand a complete non-adherence to our present ethical system, but only a serious reevaluation.

It is important, first, to consider the historical basis for our present "thou shalt not" moral system. A historical survey may give insight into the reason why Christians impose a strict, harsh moral code. For American Protestantism, which is responsible for this ethical system, this concept had its beginnings in the Puritan movement in England and the Calvinist movement on the continent. These were both movements of reaction, the first a reaction against Anglican laxity and the second against Roman Catholic laxity. It seems that the movement began before its apologists seemed to find basis for it in the Bible. This is how our strict set of values came into being and why Biblical sanction has been given to them. This in itself does not appear so bad, but when one seriously looks for evidence to support our ethical system, real scriptural evidence seems to be lacking. The only real basis is found in the harsh and unsophisticated moral writings of the Old Testament. A moral code like the one so prevalent in the thoughts of pious American churchmen cannot, in good faith and scholarship, be based on the teachings of Jesus.

The reader may now ask if an ethical system can be built on Jesus' teachings. The answer is in the affirmative and presents many interesting questions on its own. The system of ethics found in the New Testament is built on love. Here love is not only the aspect the Greeks called eros, but also agape and philia. Paul Tillich defines love as "reunion of the estranged." According to him, all mankind has a oneness. We could probably say that this oneness is the fact that all are the children of God. In loving someone we try to achieve this oneness or reunion. Incidentally, Tillich uses the word "estranged" because he says that we cannot love the totally strange. All through the Bible we find love as the basis for that which is good. Luke 12:30-31 provides evidence of this. Christ's two great commandments are based on love.

Our traditional moral code seems to be based on individual expression of ethical judgment without regard to the doctrine of love. These individual specialized cases cannot be turned into universal standards unless one remembers that love, first of all, should be the ethical consideration. But, on the other hand, these cases are not useless because they illustrate the one great universal - love. This is an ethic of love rather than the traditional codified ethic of individual cases. This latter system contains invalidity because it is not based in love and fails to realize that any particular expression of ethics is relative to the situation involved. The ethic of love has real Christian basis.

A practical example of this is the entire Christian outlook on sexual relations. The traditional ethic condemns sexual intercourse outside of marriage but allows it in marriage. This seems to have been gleaned from the individual Biblical expressions of ethics in relation to this subject. The ethic of love presents a slightly different outlook on the subject. Here, intercourse outside of love is condemned and is allowed if the motivational factor is love. This does not take into account the generally artificial bounds of marriage. This, in summary, could be said as sex in love, but not sex in lust. This love, although much more common

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in marriage than outside of it, can, nonetheless, be present outside of marriage. This love takes into consideration the people involved and the consequential possibilities. Sex with lust as prime motivation, whether in or outside of marriage, is for mere exploitation and not grounded in love and, therefore, is wrong. This actually does not permit more license than the traditional view, but is better grounded in Scripture and, therefore, is more of a Christian point of view.

The ethics of love may cause a moral revolution, but a revolution long needed. The ethic of love is a real Christian ethic, not a false, restraining code. It means responsibility, but also freedom. It means lack of an unalterable restriction, but expression of real love. Let us face up to ourselves and welcome it. Let us not be apprehensive, but joyous. Let us really follow Christ.

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POVERTY AND THE GHETTO

by Steven L. Brockhouse

Since he was ten years old a Negro boy described as "clean-cut" who lives in a ghetto of a midwestern city has never been able to work on Friday evenings. Why? This 16-year old has had to stay at home to help his mother run the family crap table, which provides the basis of the family income. More than likely it has never occurred to this youth that what he is doing is considered wrong by his society.

When Velma was five years old her mother and father had a fight; after the fight he beat every female in the room, left, and never returned. Velma's first sexual experience was at age 12 with a friend of her mother's, and at 14 she became pregnant. The father, an 18-year old gasoline station attendant offered to marry Velma, but both Velma and her mother considered this to be out of the question. Velma planned to become a beautician. Since then Velma has had three more children and has been in trouble with the police twice for shoplifting.

When he was 15, Danny was the president of a neighborhood gang. At 23, Danny never works, yet always seems to have plenty of money. How? In the words of another member of the gang, "Well, he keeps meeting these chicks, see, and they get pregnant. He keeps a little book and he knows when each chick gets the government check and then he goes around and collects his cut."

These are the disturbing examples used by Mark Battle, a U. S. Labor Department specialist in the War on Poverty, in his article, "The White Man Can't Help the Black Ghetto," in the January 29, 1966, issue of the Saturday Evening Post. They all point to the fact that money is not a cure-all for the Negro problem which confronts the United States. According to Mr. Battle, one of the major problems is, as he puts it, that "they (the lawmakers, administrators, and social workers) assume that white America's middle-class standards of sexual morality, parental behavior, social propriety, and economic success are universal."

Truly, the ghetto is the antithesis of American society, as it has been since the end of slavery. In this sub-society, if I may call it that, the woman, not the man, has been placed in the dominant position. It is the woman around whom the family is built. The woman has gained her position in the ghetto because she can find work, while the man, who is usually unskilled and uneducated, cannot. Hence, the man becomes an economic liability. We need only look at Velma to see this. Even when she became pregnant, she still planned to become a beautician; and to marry the father of her child would have only hindered her chances since he probably would have been in and out of work, and Velma and her mother would have ended up supporting him.

Since in many cases, such as this one, there is no true family, but instead just the mother who is probably working, another problem arises which only complicates the matter of correcting the entire situation in the ghetto community. With the mother working, often there will be no one at home to supervise and care for the children, who are left to take care of themselves. Under this condition the children receive little or no training in responsibility, respect, or the value of a good education. Left alone, with nothing to do and no one to supervise their activities, the youths in many instances release their energies in what we oversimplify as delinquency.

Hence we have the major problems of illegitimacy and crime, as seen above. What is the answer? Legislation? More welfare dollars? Slum clearance? Hardly! At this point they aren't going to solve anything, merely prolong it. I consider them to be superficial for the time being. In order really to solve the problem, I can see only one way - education, especially an education for the negro male. As the situation stands now, this is what the negro male needs to regain a position of worth in the family unit. He needs an education to get a steady job which will make him a productive member of society. Until this happens no great improvement or alleviating of the ghetto problem is likely to occur.

CHURCH OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY COMING EVENTS

- Friday, Feb. 18. Campus Christian Council Meeting, 501 State St. 4:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb. 19. Painting in the South End Poverty Area. Cars leave Chapel House at 10 a.m. and Brubacher at 10:15 a.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 20. Protestant Service, Chapel House. 9:45 a.m.
 Service according to Book of Common Prayer, Chapel House. 11:00 a.m.
 Campus Christian elections and panel discussion on "Mission of the Church," Chapel House. 6:30 p.m.
- Friday-Sunday, Feb. 25-27. Renewal Weekend at Delmar Methodist Church

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This is the first issue of Skandalon for this semester. We hope that we can continue to live up to the expectations of our readers. To facilitate publication our staff has undergone some reorganization. The members of our Editorial Board have assumed new titles and functions. Jim Ward is now our managing editor, and Steve Brockhouse is copy editor. Karen Clark is now in charge of the technical aspects of publication. The fourth member, Sandy Thomson, is enjoying a semester of study in France but will be our "foreign correspondent." Our staff is expanding, but anyone with an interest in writing or in assisting with publication is certainly welcome.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a sermon written by Douglas L. Sivers. The editors feel that the subject is particularly appropriate at the time in reference to the discussion and thought taking place in the Church of the University Community concerning Christian renewal and mission.

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

by Douglas L. Sivers

"What is this world coming to?" A question on the lips of many people in our times. With the war in Viet Nam, with a tremendous buildup of arms and men, with civil wars and military upheavals arising in every part of our world today, and with racial riots and other perilous activities being carried on, people have a right to question.

The leaders of our country and other countries throughout the world are traveling here and there trying to bring peace to the world. They are working day and night for an end which they believe is possible and an end which would benefit all mankind.

Maybe to have a better sense of what these men are going, let us look at our own homes or lives. Possibly one of us here today is seeking peace - peace of mind; peace in the family. This individual is working just as hard as the diplomats of world politics. He has a personal interest in his work as well as seeking the benefit of all.

Yet, whether peace is being sought at home or in the world, we all have an interest, and we all can play a part. For it has been a goal of man down through the ages for all mankind to live in peace with one another. To reach this goal, all men are going to have to participate.

Now, not all of us are going to be leaders in this great challenge nor will many of us ever become well known outside the communities in which we live. But, no matter how small your part may seem, it is mandatory that you work at it with all your might. If, in your part, you influence one person to live a better life you can feel a little success; but don't stop at one - there are millions in need of help.

In the Gospel of Luke we have a story of Jesus and His disciples. They are crossing the Sea of Galilee. A sudden storm overtakes them and their little boat is quickly filling with water. They were fearful for they were in danger of losing their lives to the sea. Rushing to Jesus, who was sleeping in the rear of the boat, they cried, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" It is recorded that when He awoke He calmed the winds and the waves. He turns to His disciples and asks, "Where is your faith?"

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?, cont'd.

In this instance Biblical scholars do not agree as to whether the storm was actually quieted by Jesus or if it is a tale attached to his actual episodes. Actually, it doesn't make any particular difference because the event is presented to show Christ's great power, and to lead to the ultimate end, that of Christ's question. For this question is relevant in our lives today, as well as in the time of Christ's presence on earth.

"Where is your faith?" How these words must have rung through the ears of these chosen twelve. And what they must have had running through their minds. We can almost visualize them now, "Where is my faith?"; "How blind I was"; "Here I am in the same boat as God's Son and I am afraid for my life."

What thoughts do these words bring to our minds? Can we answer the question? Let's try!

First off, a Christian's faith is found not in Jesus as the man, but is found in the Christ Jesus as the one who hung on the Cross for us. Jesus hung on that Cross because God loves us, and God gave Christ as a symbol of that love. For those who believe in Jesus Christ eternal life is waiting.

In our worship of God we use many symbols as expressions of our love to Him. We have the hymns we sing, an affirmation of faith, readings, the Cross, the celebration of Holy Communion. All of these means to an end, not the end themselves. They all point beyond themselves to the ultimate of every Christian - they point to God as expressions of our faith. Each of these symbols is transparent. We come to them and see through them the reality, the existence of God and everything for which God stands.

As we live our lives here on earth our faith is attracted or tempted by many things. Great riches, power, prestige are only a few of those things. Basically, these things are good, because God helped us reach them. But when they are used for purposes of personal benefit or group benefit and others are stepped on, pushed out, they lose their goodness and become a weapon in man's hands. This is when they tempt and pull our faith to them and away from God.

In our world today we are in danger, our Church is in danger. It might appear that Christ is sleeping. The sea gets rough, the winds blow, the boat begins to fill, and then the Christians cry, "We are perishing!" But Christ never said we were to have smooth sailing. He never said we wouldn't be in danger. Then through it all comes the assurance of faith that Christ is not asleep, that he has the power over the wind and raging waves. At the end of our journey the sea is calmed and we have the satisfaction of seeing the job through, of seeing another person happy because you stayed with the boat. And we can see the calm after the storm, the calm which Jesus' victory over the power of evil will bring.

The men with Christ feared for their lives. We who live with Christ today fear for our lives. But it need not be that way. For Christ suffered man's hostility - He was put to death on the Cross - but He was raised from the dead. He demonstrated the power of God over the evil forces of sin and death; and this power is available to those who belong to Him. Through Christ's death on the Cross, I have found my answer.

"Where is your faith?"

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T H E G O L D E N E Y E

presents

"The Jew as Shown in Recent Fiction..."

Readings and Discussion with Mary Strine,
Sheila Minton, Olivia O'Donaghue, and
David Fractenberg

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Nine to Midnight

THE GOLDEN EYE...FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18...NINE TO MIDNIGHT...ALL WELCOME...THE GOLDEN EYE

STAFF

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