# VCE Religion and Society Unit 2 Area of Study 2: Religion and Ethics

Ethical principles and Christianity
Thurs 25 February 2021

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### Structure of presentation

- (1) Sources of ethics: general principles and the process of implementation
- (2) Ethics and Christian tradition: Steps in assessing ethical questions
- (3) Specific case studies about justice and love/compassion examining scripture and tradition of collective inquiry
- (4) Christian responses to slavery: abolitionist debate and Martin Luther King, Letter from Birmingham jail

### Three principal threads:

- (1) the authorities, principles, values, norms and ideas informing ethical perspectives of at least two religious traditions in societies in which multiple worldviews coexist:
- Christianity (with references to Judaism, Islam and Buddhism)
- (2) the ethical decision-making methods, including the philosophical traditions that have influenced the understanding of ethical perspectives of the religious traditions
- Ways of coming to an ethical judgement: in Scripture, medieval Christianity (Aristotelian ethics), modern Christianity (virtue ethics)
- (3) how the ethical perspectives of religious traditions inform the moral judgments of their religious communities
- Examples of moral judgments: Christian views of war, slavery, sexual violence and exploitation

### social convention, morality, and ethics

 Social convention: what society considers as appropriate or inappropriate behaviour

 Morality: behavioural norms and expectations, good and bad behaviour

• Ethics: discussion of the principles undergirding behaviour

Coming to an ethical judgement: sifting through each of these levels.
 How many of us get beyond social convention?

## Three types of normative ethics: What are strengths and weaknesses?

 Utilitarian Ethics/Consequentialism: greatest good for greatest number; based on majority decision [Jeremy Bentham]

Positives: seems democratic

Problems: what about the cause of minorities (eg the handicapped)?

• **Deontological Ethics**: based on obligation, doing one's duty to others [Kant]

Positives: seems sensible in the public sphere

problems: too static? How do we get agreement on obligations?

 Virtue Ethics: based on notion that there are moral virtues worthy of development [Aristotle]

Positives: establishes ideals of behaviour in private and public sphere

problems: are virtues socially conditioned? how do we get agreement on virtues?

### Varieties of religious ethics

- Some ethical systems are based on consequences (teleological ethics; utilitarian ethics), others are deontological, others virtue ethics
- Religious ethics can be formulated in a similar range of ways:
   Do good because you will get a heavenly reward or punishment
   You have a religious duty to do good, and avoid doing bad
   Religion requires you to develop virtuous behaviour
- Another way of explaining the need for ethics:
- Law of karma (What goes around, comes around; As you sow, so shall you reap): Example: If you are angry with another driver, a driver will be angry with you. What type of argument is this?

Religious ethics can focus on consequences, on obligations, or on virtues. Ethics has always been up for discussion and has never had a simple answer.

## Is religion necessary to be ethical/moral?

- Being religious is no guarantee of behaving ethically
- No specific religion has a monopoly on being ethical.
- Does absence of religion lead to moral relativism?
- What are sources of ethical norms and values outside of a religious tradition?
- Law? Literature and film? Respected exemplary figures? Social convention? What teachers and parents say? Discussion with friends?

What is conscience?

## Religion and ethics.

Being religious is no guarantee of being ethical—false religiosity is as old as the hills

Discussing ethical questions is an important way of understanding any religious tradition.

Religions formulate ethical principles in a way that helps challenge unethical behaviour—and false religiosity.

Religions give authority to ethical principles, a way of saying that they are more than just social conventions. They involve a call about how to live.

Secular humanism has to become a value system with authority to be enforced as a quasi-religious world view.

What are key challenges you have found in teaching Unit 2 Religion and ethics?

## 6 Steps in the ethical process (type of decision making)

- Define the problem
- List possible options and their consequences
- Explore opinions—as provided by ethical opinion (common wisdom), religion --scripture and tradition (collective opinions)
- Choose the option that seems most effective: work of conscience
- Implement the option, engaging in necessary action, collective if required
- Evaluate results
- [Relate to (i) sources of ethical authority; (ii) forming a view; (iii) implementing that view in action

### Sources of ethics in Christian (catholic or universal) tradition

- Shared principles, called natural law in Stoic tradition (Cicero), taken over in catholic tradition: (ius naturale)—what nature teaches
- Scripture (Old and New Testaments)
- Tradition of inquiry: collective wisdom, always under discussion, and always evolving in new ways
- Conscience: personal judgement, informed by all three stages

## Ethical questions relating to religious traditions: (Add your own)

- euthanasia [relating to issues of right to life]
- Is it legitimate to engage in warfare?
- Indigenous rights and racial equality
- Civil rights, to have equal access to the law
- Excessive wealth
- Exploitation of children
- Sexual violence versus right to privacy
- The rights of refugees

## 6 steps to approaching ethical questions: example 1: euthanasia

- **Define problem**: Should an individual be allowed to end their own life?
- Explore options: Refuse permission and prolong suffering; no restrictions—but then this might lead to epidemic of suicides; impose conditions
- Explore opinions: from normative ethics, from scripture and tradition of inquiry (teachings of Church); Exodus 20:13 used to be translated 'Thou shalt not kill', but now more accurately translated as 'You shall not murder' [scripture and tradition of inquiry here bound up with each other;
- Conscience: come to a personal decision—about law (if the situation arises), or more dramatically in a personal situation, allowing a loved one to take their own life. Church may say one thing, but conscience another.
- Implementation: establishment of strict controls to ensure no pressure
- Monitor: continually check implementation of behaviour is not having positive consequences

## 6 steps to approaching ethical questions: example 2: rights of refugees

- **Define problem:** should Australia allow those who seek refugee status the same rights and privileges as Australian citizens
- Options: Maintain strict detention of those who came on boats, as a deterrent to others; allow open-door policy; grant citizenship with certain conditions
- Explore opinions: Human rights conventions; look at scripture (requirement to care for outsiders in Dt 19:33: "If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself—for you were once strangers yourselves in Egypt."
- Conscience: Come to a decision about what you think drawing on above.
- Implement: take public action to change law; look out for migrants in community
- **Monitor**: Evaluate the situation, consider whether society is behaving in an ethical fashion.

### How clear are these sources?

- Ethical principles/ natural law: all may agree in principle, but how do we implement in practice? Common wisdom needs to be communicated and so can be shaped by particular interest groups.
- **Scripture:** 10 commandments may express core principles, but they do not address every situation; are they written for a different age?
- **Tradition:** Collective inquiry in the past is based on debate; one particular group may give answers, but are these only views?
- Conscience: This can be subjective, unless informed by these other sources

## Sources of authority for ethical principles in Christianity (and Jewish and Christian parallels)

- (1) Ethical principles/Natural law: formulated by philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Cicero etc), poets and writers—but also passed on in numerous religious traditions; how otherwise does it have authority?
- (2) Scripture: Old and New Testaments [Torah and the Prophets; Quran]
- (3) Tradition of Collective Inquiry: Church Fathers, scholastics, modern thinkers [also rabbis; In Islam the *ulama*]
- (4) Conscience: Cardinal Newman: "If I am obliged to bring religion into after-dinner toasts, I shall drink...to Conscience first, and to the Pope afterwards"

Ethical judgments in Christianity are based in varying ways on all of these elements (as also Judaism and Islam), informed by the contemporary situation

### Shared principles: versions of the Golden Rule

- Treat others as you would like others to treat you
- That which you hate to be done to you, do not do to another
- Lev 19:18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your kinsfolk. Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD
- Hillel: What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn
- Matthew 7:12 Treat others as you would like them to treat you;
   that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets
- Is all ethics a working out of the Golden Rule?

## The ten commandments: 1-4 respecting God; 5-10 expanding on the Golden Rule.

- 1. "You shall have no other gods before me."
- 2. "You shall not make yourself a carved image,."
- 3. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
- 4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 5. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."
- 6. "]"You shall not murder." [earlier translations: Thou shalt not kill]
- 7. "You shall not commit adultery."
- 8. "You shall not steal."
- 9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
- 10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

### Collect different perspectives

#### euthanasia [relating to issues of right to life]

Ex 20:13; God is the source of life [Ps 36:9; Acts 17:28]; John 3:15: If you refuse to love, you must remain dead; to hate your brother is to be a murderer

Story of death of Saul, who asks for someone to kill him in battle; a servant refuses and he kills himself (1 Sam 31:1).

#### Is it legitimate to engage in warfare?

Numerous accounts in Exodus of God urging the Israelites to fight their enemy.

Matthew 5:8 Happy the peacemakers

Matthew 5:38-39 (also Luke 6:27-30): "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' <sup>39</sup>But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

### Conflicting authorities: need for evaluation

- Slavery and economic exploitation Exodus 5:6-18 Exploitation of Hebrew slaves by slave masters
- Proverbs 22:6 Because a man is poor, do not oppress him, nor at the city gate, oppress anybody in affliction; for Yahweh takes up their cause, and extorts the life of their extortioners.
- BUT Ephesians 6:5 Slaves, be obedient to the men who are called your masters in this world, with deep respect and sincere loyalty.... You can be sure that everyone, whether a slave or a free man, will be properly rewarded by the Lord for whatever work he has done well.

#### Exploitation of children

- Mark 9:37: Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me.
- Eph 6:1-4: Children, be obedient to your parents... Parents, never drive your children to resentment, but in bringing them up, correct them and guide them as the Lord does.

Pause for discussion: what questions work?

### Key values in Judaeo-Christian tradition

- What are the core values associated with Christianity?—three aspects of the Golden Rule
- Human dignity: we are all called to flourish and prosper, manifesting:
- Justice: recognition of human dignity of all, no matter what their outward position in society; equity, focus on action of individuals within society
- Love: compassion, charity, concern for one's neighbour, forgiveness; focus on action towards individuals

### In what situations might love and justice conflict?

- Argument: within any religious tradition, there may be competing values, promoted by different interpretations of what are its core principles.
- Can emphasis on forgiving sins become a way of tolerating injustice? [think about issues of child abuse or sexual violence—has Christianity emphasised love and forgiveness at expense of love?]

Christianity is no different from Judaism, Islam or Buddhism in that there is rarely (never?) a clear-cut answer, as individuals have to work out ethical principles: sometimes from a foundational text, sometimes from philosophical principles.

## Common ethical principles in Abrahamic traditions

- We are all made in the image of God
- (Gen 1:26): God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.
- This raises a question: is this teaching about male and female gender roles, or the fact that all people carry a divine image?
- If modern science understands male and female as simply the tip of a more complex iceberg that includes LBGTQIA+, Gen 1:26 can be used to argue that all are in the image of God.

## Justice: Sources in *Torah* and prophets

 Justice: recognition of human dignity of all, no matter what their outward position in society; equity, focus on action of individuals within society

**Exodus 22: 21-22:** You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.

**Isaiah 1:17:** Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

[In classical ethics, there is not same attention to orphans and widows]

## Justice: Sources in the New Testament: stories and principles

 New Testament (especially synoptic Gospels) teach ethics through stories

- Luke 10:25-28 You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself [= Dt 6:5 and Lev 19:18]
- Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) Who is my neighbour? Example of a priest, a Levite [assistant to the priest[ and a Samaritan
- Explain that Samaritans follow the Law of Moses but did not accept the Temple in Jerusalem—they were Israelites, but *not* Jews.

### Justice as lack of favouritism in St Paul

- Romans 2:11 God has no favourites
- Ephesians 6:9 he is not impressed by one person more than another.
- Colossians 3:25 anyone who does wrong will be repaid in kind and he does not favour one person more than another

## Justice as lack of favouritism in James, Peter and Gospels

- James 2:1 My brothers, do not try to combine faith to Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people.
- I Peter 1:17 If you are acknowledging as your Father one who has no favourites and judges everyone according to what he has done, you must be scrupulously careful as long as you are living away from your home.
- Mark 10:42 (response to who is the greatest) You know that among the pagans, their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No, anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all.... Cf Mt 20:24-28

Ways of coming to an ethical judgment in scripture: did followers of Jesus have to follow the Torah?

- Key problem was whether followers of Jesus had to follow all aspects of Jewish law that were followed by Jesus. Did males have to be circumcised? Did everybody have to keep *kosher*? (Told in Acts ch 15)
- On one side, those who followed James, brother of Lord, who became leader of the Jewish followers of Jesus in Jerusalem insisted on priority of **Tradition (the** *Torah***)**.
- On the other side, those, following Paul, argued that what mattered was faith in God, as manifested in Jesus; one had to respect Jewish practices, but not impose them on others.

## How did this ethical debate get resolved?

List options and consequences; consult authorities; choose; implement; evaluate

Coming together at Council of Jerusalem—roots of conciliar tradition—ethical debates decided by discussion and argument

- Appeal to core aspects of tradition:
- Acts 15:9 "God made no distinction between them [pagans] and us [Jews] since he purified their hearts by faith. [no favouritism argument]
- Letters, discussing debate, ie St Paul Galatians 2:11: "When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, since he was manifestly in the wrong. His custom had been to eat with pagans, but after certain friends of James arrived, he stopped doing this... for fear of the group that insisted on circumcision."

How do the ethical perspectives of religious traditions inform the moral judgments of their religious communities?

- In a pluralist society: St Paul on Areopagus appeals to pagan philosophical tradition:
- Acts 17:28 "as indeed one of your own writers have said: "We are all his children" (quoting Aratus, 3<sup>rd</sup> cent CE). "Since we are the children of God, we have no excuse for thinking that the deity looks like anything in gold, silver or stone that has been carved and designed by a man."
- Pauline Epistles are product of ethical discussion that draws on both scripture and what he understands as natural law. Paul 1 Cor 13:13 emphasizes faith, hope and love, and greatest of these is love.
- Compilation of New Testament by mid 2<sup>nd</sup> cent:--many different perspectives on teaching of Jesus; what matters is that they are all represented.

## Ethics in natural law and medieval Christianity

- Christian ethics draw on both philosophical discussion and scripture
- Long established interest in cardinal virtues (especially Cicero & Stoics)
- Justice Prudence Temperance/Moderation Fortitude/Courage
- But which is most important?
- Cicero, De inventione "Virtue may be defined as a habit of mind (animi) in harmony with reason and the order of nature. It has four parts: prudence, justice, courage, temperance."

Cicero says prudence (St Benedict, discernment) is mother of virtues

Are these cardinal virtues, Roman elite male virtues?

St Paul was challenging these by speaking about love (agape-caritas):

## Many medieval voices continue to support Justitia as foundation of ethics

- 'Twelve abuses of the age' (Irish text of 7<sup>th</sup> century, widely copied throughout middle ages):
- 'The justice of a king is to oppress no-one unjustly through power, to judge between one man and his neighbour without favouritism, to be the defender of strangers/refugees, orphans and widows...
- Potential student discussion: are there modern equivalents of this teaching? Do religiously inspired politicians in modern day still follow the same principles?

## Ethics as discussed by medieval Christian thinkers (like St Thomas Aquinas)

- Alternative views of ethics:
- Four cardinal virtues (justice, prudence, temperance, courage)
- St Paul. "theological virtues": faith (trust), hope, and love
- Augustine knew Ciceronian tradition, but felt that Roman ethics did not consider human weakness and original sin), or our need for divine grace to grow, deriving from divine love.
- Scholastics debated different views of ethics and how much we could be virtuous. Aquinas admires Aristotelian ethics, with its emphasis on moderation, but also conviction that 'cardinal' virtues (common wisdom) can be combined with 'theological' virtues.

## Need to compare different views to formulate our own view (example of Aquinas on slavery)

- Thomas reports view of Aristotle that slavery is natural, but: "Others affirm that the rule of a master over slaves is contrary to nature, and that the distinction between slave and free man exists by law only, and not by nature; and being an interference with nature is therefore unjust" (1253b20-2). He admits that those who hold this opposite opinion from his "have in a certain way right on their side" (1255a4)
- "Since slavery was imposed in punishment of sin, it follows that by slavery man forfeits something which otherwise would belong to him, namely the free disposal of his person, for a slave, as regards what he is, belongs to his master" (II-II, q.189, a.6, arg.2).—not a modern view.

## Pause for discussion: are there similar ethical debates in our own day?

 Past generations accepted as part of our sinful state, what we no longer accept.

• Are there other practices (like equality) that were once socially accepted as part of "sinful" state, that we no longer accept?

#### Slavery in the Roman world

- Roman Empire built on the institution of slavery (in Italy, 30% of population were slaves).
- There was also a big distinction between citizen and non-citizen
- Gal. 3:28: There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- Baptism involves forgiveness of sin, and a new moral code
- In first 300 years Christianity expanded particularly among women and slaves; it presented a vision of future equality.

### A brief history of slavery and Christianity

- 4th century: slavery goes out of fashion
- 313 Official toleration of all religions (including Christianity)
- 385 Official imposition of orthodox Christianity, ban on all others (except Judaism, tolerated under strong limitations)
- St Augustine (354-430) condemns slavery, but becomes increasingly pessimistic about human potential; he develops doctrine of original sin, that we are slaves to sin, and are redeemed by divine love.
- 4<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> cent Slaves replaced by serfs, working land, but there still survived trade in Slaves from Asia and Eastern Europe (Slavs); even in 1066, 10% of English population, made of slaves

#### Slavery and Christianity

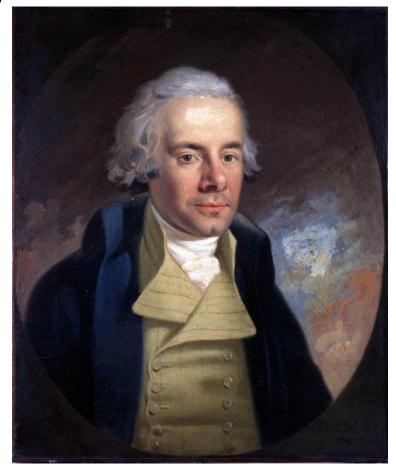
- 1435 Eugenius IV excommunicates Christians enslaving inhabitants of the Canary Islands (the earliest Portuguese and Spanish outpost in the Atlantic);
- 1462, Pius II declares slavery a "great crime";
- 1537, Paul III demands freedom of all American Indians (condemnations repeated over next 100 years); Bartolomeo de las Casas (1485-1560) argues against slavery, drawing arguments from Cicero, based on our common humanity:
- "The reason why the Christians have killed and destroyed such an <u>infinite</u> number of souls is that they have been moved by their wish for gold and their desire to enrich themselves in a very short time."
- This does not prevent massive growth of slave trade to the Americas between 1600 and 1850.
- 1750-1850 abolitionist debate in US and UK
- 1807 Anti-slavery act in Britain
- 1861-65 American Civil War
- Christianity and Black Slavery | Christian Research Institute (equip.org)

#### Christian defence of slavery

- Genesis IX, 18–27: About three sons of Noah, and the curse on Ham (presumed to be ancestor of all African peoples).
- Ephesians, VI, 5-7: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

### William Wilberforce (1759-1833)

- Wilberforce, William (1807), <u>A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave</u>
  <u>Trade, Addressed to the Freeholders of Yorkshire</u>, London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, J. Hatchard [chapter on justice, then religion]
- Wilberforce, William (1823), <u>An Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire in behalf of the Negro slaves in the West Indies</u>, London: J. Hatchard and Son
- Argues on basis of religion, justice and then humanity
- Why argue on both grounds? [Thomas Aquinas does the same, arguing from Aristotle and then scripture]
- Ethical debate leads to political process, resulting in 1807 Anti-slavery act



## Martin Luther King, Jr Letter from Birmingham Jail https://letterfromjail.com (1963)

- MLK accused by leaders of various Christian groups or engaging in political protest action; he writes a defence of civil obedience, based on an ethical call.
- Use text to show the way an ethical argument can be made:
- Beyond this, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the eighth-century prophets left their little villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns; and just as the Apostle Paul left his little village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to practically every hamlet and city of the Greco-Roman world, I too am compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my particular hometown. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

#### MLK on nature of justice

• Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.

- In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive, negotiation, selfpurification, and direct action.
- [relate this to three steps in Unit 2: values; decision making methods; how ethical perspectives inform moral behaviour.

### Justice may demand standing up to prejudice

• I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension that is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, we must see the need of having nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

#### Ethics and freedom

 We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have never yet engaged in a direct-action movement that was "well timed" according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation.

• One may well ask, "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: there are just laws, and there are unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "An unjust law is no law at all."

#### Just and unjust laws

• Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. I

#### the need for resistance to bad laws

- Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up the segregation laws
  was democratically elected? Throughout the state of Alabama all types of
  conniving methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered
  voters, and there are some counties without a single Negro registered to vote,
  despite the fact that the Negroes constitute a majority of the population. Can any
  law set up in such a state be considered democratically structured?
- Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was seen sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar because a higher moral law was involved. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks before submitting to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience.

# The call for action—how moral perspectives are implemented

- But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If the church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authentic ring, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. I meet young people every day whose disappointment with the church has risen to outright disgust.
- They will be young high school and college students, young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience's sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters they were in reality standing up for the best in the American dream and the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage.

## Conclusions: forming a judgement from conscience

- Conscience: the deepest level of moral awareness, based on:
- **Common wisdom**, the golden rule: treat others as you want to be treated yourself.
- Scripture (in Catholicism, arguing from scripture has been rediscovered, especially since II Vatican Council
- Tradition : A tradition of collective inquiry and debate—but this always evolving

Importance of being reminded of core values, notably of justice and love/compassion.

Role of religion: provides authority, example, and inspiration—in Christianity, through teaching of Jesus about the true meaning of the *Torah* 

#### Reminder of six stages

- Define the problem (how do we respond to racism, or exploitation)
- List possible options (wait for changes to happen, protest, disobedience)
- Investigate each option: what are consequences
- Explore opinions—as provided by ethical opinion (common wisdom), religion --scripture and tradition (collective opinions)
- Choose the option that seems most effective: work of conscience
- Implement the option, engaging in necessary action, collective if required