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## "Role of Religion and Community Values (Session 1)"

John Jackson

Dee Anne Westbrook

Byron Haines

Edsel Goldson

Bernard Devers

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John Jackson, Dee Anne Westbrook, Byron Haines, Edsel Goldson, Bernard Devers  
"Role of Religion and Community Values (Session 1)"  
March 16-18, 1978  
Albina Arts Center

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[recording begins mid-sentence]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: ...from religious teaching to guide me to my ideal action and...

[tape skips and restarts mid-sentence after about 35 seconds]

MRS. HEALD: ...we feel that it will be not only beneficial spiritually, but academically as well. We have invited some of our professors from the University, Portland State. We have invited some of our ministers from the community, and of course we have invited you. So we would like to welcome you to the program and at this time we are calling the program to order. First off, we would like to introduce to you the program director, Dr. William Little, and we would like for him to come up to the front so that everyone would recognize him and see him for the man that he is. Dr. Bill Little... could we have a hand for him please?

[applause]

We would like to ask our own pastor, Reverend Jackson, to come up before the group and now give us the invocation. After the invocation we will be blessed to have Mrs. Gladys Young, who is a member of the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, my church, pastor Reverend Devers. She is in our midst today and she is going to bring us an A.M.E. selection, the music will be

provided by her. After which, we will go into our panel discussion, and as you can see on the program, the panelists today are as follows: Dr. Dee Anne Westbrook from Portland State University, Dr. Byron Haines, also from PSU, Reverend Edsel Goldson, president of the Albina Ministerial Alliance, and my own pastor, the Reverend A. Bernard Devers, president of the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. So, at this time we will begin with the invocation and I'm sure that everyone has signed up—those of you who are students who have registered for course credit. We're looking for your attendance each and every day, we are asking that you participate and that you pay attention. We think that the program will be of benefit to everybody involved, so at this time we'll have the invocation by Reverend Jackson.

REVEREND JOHN JACKSON: Shall we bow our heads please? To the eternal God we come together grateful because thou has given us a day of sunshine, thou has given us an opportunity to come and to express ourselves concerning that which is intimate in the eternal life of man. We thank you for those whose ingenuity and concern and innovations have made [...] possible. We thank thee for those who are with us because of their interests and others who will come to be participants at a later date. We ask that you continue to bless us with the blessings that are necessary for the life of mankind, and in the midst of the turbulence and the problems that confront us and the possibilities of war that are rumbling about us. We ask that you make us remember that you told us, "My peace I leave with you." Give us the guidance necessary throughout whatever we do in this coming together to hopefully banish it. May we go away with the sense of having been brought clearer and closer to each other, and more aware of how our lives can be instrumental in making our community a better community to live in. We ask this in the name of our Lord. Amen.

MRS. HEALD: Thank you for that. We would also like to introduce to you Mrs. Betty Overton. Mrs. Betty Overton is the president of the Albina Women's League and she is the proprietor of this facility. She has graciously worked with us and helped us to get the building together. So we would like to thank her and acknowledge her for her work and effort. Mrs. Overton? [pause] Well, maybe she's in the back; we'll see her later. At this time we'll ask Madam Young to come before us in her own way and provide us with a couple of selections. So we'll just relax and enjoy the music.

GLADYS YOUNG: Thank you, Mrs. Heald. [...] for me to be here with you this afternoon and I was... when Mrs. Heald asked me if I would come over and sing for you all, I thought what could I sing? [...] And I thought, there are so many beautiful songs and there are so many things that... each song has a message in itself, and I don't know what we are aware of with that... when we hear songs we just hear it, or do we hear what the words are saying, or do they mean something to us, or just what? So I picked a couple of songs and one of them is from *Green*

*Pastures* and it's "I'm a Poor Pilgrim of Sorrow," and if you listen to the words, it kind of tells about hardships of... not white people, but people in general, and there is a bright day ahead.

[singing]

"I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow, Lord  
I'm tossed in this wide world alone  
No hope have I got for tomorrow  
I started to make Heaven my home

"My mother  
Has reached that home  
O your glory, Lord  
My father's still walking in sin  
My brothers and sisters, Lord  
They don't own me  
Because I'm trying to get in

"Sometimes I'm tossed  
O, and driven  
Sometimes I don't know where to roam

"But I've heard  
O I've heard of a city called Heaven  
And I'm trying to make Heaven my home

[speaking] Where I come from in the state of Oklahoma, people had... we had an *a capella* choir at church, and as we as Black people know you don't always need music to feel good...

[chuckles] and it's what's on the inside that counts. And I think a lot of times we get to have our little hang-ups about this and that and we... I think if we kinda let go and get rid of some of these hang-ups that we'd have a better world today.

[singing]

"Wade in the water  
Wade in the water, children  
Wade in the water  
[faster] God's gonna trouble the water,  
Oooh, oooh, wade in the water

Wade in the water, children, wade in the water  
God's gonna trouble the water  
All the glory on the earth, what do I see?  
God's gonna trouble the water  
Looks like the Holy Ghost's comin' after me, wade in the water  
Wade in the water, children, wade in the water  
God's gon' trouble the water  
Ooh, ooh, wade, ooh, ooh, wade, ooh, ooh, wade in the water  
Wade in the water, wade in the water children, step on out and wade in the water  
God's going to trouble [rising] the water  
[slower] God's going to trouble the water..."

[applause]

HEALD: We thank Madam Young for those two lovely numbers, and at this time we would like for everyone in the back to please move to the front, so that we can kinda get a little closer together. [background noise as people move around] If we have more closeness then maybe we can feel each other's vibrations and we can get into what we are trying to do today. So those of you that are in the back, [...] to the sound of my sweet voice and come forward. [chuckling from audience, shuffling] At this time we're going to continue on with our program. We are going to ask Madam Dee Anne Westbrook, instructor from Portland State University, to please come forward and be seen. She is one of our guest panelists today and we're grateful to have her. [pause] Excuse me.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Go back, go back. [laughing]

HEALD: I'm gonna ask Dr. Little to take over at this time and I... [chuckling in background] I will go to my post... [background noise continues]

DEVERS: [off microphone and barely audible] We're early... we could clear up... yeah. If we could have our guest sing a song again...

HEALD: OK... [DEVERS still speaking, muffled, in background] Well, good; well, since we have fifteen minutes, we could have additional music, and I saw just a few minutes ago Madam Ruth Thompson enter the building, and she is also noted throughout the Pacific Northwest for her singing ability; I don't know if she left the room or what, but she just came in a few minutes ago... would you see if she's back there? Madam Ruth Thompson. So, while she is coming forth, I think she was going to give for us a couple of... oh, here she is now, she's coming in the

building. Good. We'll ask her if she would do a selection. Madam Thompson, we're happy to have you, and we're asking now if you would come forward and do a selection for us at this time. Ruth Thompson, please. Thank you.

Ruth is just new in the city of Portland. I think she's been here less than two years and she has found it to be not such a bad place. She's a student at Portland State; I just met her about, oh, this past term, and I understand that she's a pianist and she's known throughout the Pacific Northwest for her talent. At this time we will leave it up to her. [some conversation and laughter in background] Well, five minutes left... would you like to say something? [noise and voices in background] I don't know if this'll reach...

RUTH THOMPSON: Well, I have been here less than eight months in Portland. However, I am enjoying being out to Portland State and in [...] and some other space that's familiar... I kind of have forgotten my gifts here... what better to try than "Lift Every Voice And Sing," the national Negro anthem; and I have not rehearsed it in over a year, so I certainly hope that you might not be able to detect any errors.

[singing]

"Lift every voice and sing  
'Til heaven and earth ring  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea  
Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod  
Felt in the days when hope unborn has died  
Yet with a steady beat  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our father sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered  
Out from the gloomy past  
'Til now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast."

[applause]

HEALD: At this time, ladies and gentlemen we're going to start the program with the panel discussion, and we ask that you listen attentively because these people can really tell you what it is.

DEVERS: Good afternoon, everyone. That's awfully quiet. Good afternoon everyone. [audience responds "Good afternoon."] Yes. We are indeed happy to be here today, and the group who has been introduced already from sister Heald will present to you their prepared statements, and following that I think we have group discussions; and some more detailed workshops will be involved with each panel member in a one-on-one. First, I will be talking with you from the specific topic of the role of religion and community values, and I'll explain to you during the discussion what I'm... what point of view I'm taking on that. Following my presentation, Dee Ann will speak to you on her specific topic, and then Dr. Haines will speak, and then we'll be concluding the discussion with the president of the A.M.E., Reverend Goldson.

Now, my particular topic today is the role of religion and community values. The relationship of man and his religion has not changed; the role of religion in the community of man has not changed, and in both situations, religion provokes man to exhibit his best, and the best of himself. Now, I count it a joy to have the distinct privilege of joining this panel of my peers and fellows and educators and community leaders of the clergy, in having the historic position of being the first... [recording error interrupts with *UNKNOWN SPEAKER: And religious bodies such as the council of churches...* and then DEVERS resumes] ...a group of concerned students and citizens of the community, and with humble pleading I greet each of you.

I've come today, in my opinion, on this great occasion, to address the concerns of the role of religion and contemporary community values. I think that to best approach the topic is to be fully cognizant of its meaning; therefore I will define "role" as "a customary function," "religion" as "a recognition on the part of man of a controlling superhuman power entitled to obedience and reverence and worship, and our feeling of the spiritual attitude of those recognizing such a controlling power with the manifestations of such feelings and conduct of life and in the practice of sacred rites or observances." Religion is also defined as a particular system of faith and of worship of a supreme being or God or gods; a state of life where the members of a religious order practice a devotion or consciousness. Contemporary is "that existing currently or occurring at the same time and belonging to the same date." Community we define as "the state of being held in common. Enjoyment, ally abilities, common character, agreement, identification, association. Life in association with others. A social state; a number of individuals associated together by the fact of their residence in the same locality. Subject to the same laws and regulations, a number of persons having common ties or common interests and being in the same locality as a public." Values are defined as those qualities, customs, standards and

principles of a people that are regarded as desirable. Values are enduring criteria that is used in making judgements. Knowing that, then, you would not desire to spend extended amounts of time discovering definitions, I therefore decided to just simplify our discussion when we con... we'll then concentrate on this main idea: The function of recognition of the part of man of a faith in and worship of the supreme being, our God, today, by those individuals associated together by the fact of residence and locality formulating the enduring criteria that is used to make judgements of the qualities, customs, standards, and principles of people that are regarded as desirable.

As a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, my interests are terminally religious. As a fellow constituent and inhabitant of the common residence, my interests are acutely humanistic. I hold a further conviction that the church and the community are inseparable. Those who form the community form the church. Those who form the church form the community, thereby producing a dichotomized existence of the people. From this recognized reality, we can see that the customary functions of religion in establishing the values of the community remain consistently essential. Religion has taught us in the past that—and reconfirms daily—that man is leaning more predominantly to his evil tendencies than to his good, while he possesses both. History confirms that left to look only at himself, man heads for destruction. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire is illustrative of the catastrophes of man considering himself as deity. The recognition of God by a community of people have always resulted in a peaceful and prosperous coexistence among the inhabitants of that particular area.

By the aid of thought, it is even seen that in those areas of conflict and division such as in Ireland with its Catholic/Protestant war and Lebanon with its Christian/Muslim conflict, yet the communities that have common values remain in unity. Some tend to reject the value of the divine under the banner of personal freedom, and yet, we recognize that personal freedom has its incarnate limitation. One is only so free that his freedom does not infringe upon the rights and freedoms of others. The role of the customary function of religion has been and yet remain that social institution that teaches man how to live with other men. The apostle Paul emphasizes the community of man and its need as having needs in common for the supreme; Paul says that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. In the light of the common character of this common need within us, which of us is so fit that we can speak or that we can say for others?

On an occasion of historical note, a young man came to Jesus. He was aspiring for prosperous longevity, and he spotted words of flattery in the use of the objective good and Jesus let him know to... and let him recognize his association of the community of man when he said, "There is but one that is good, and that is God." The values of the community are oriented to that

which brings out the best in the people. "They are good," and to recognize that too, and to understand the shortcomings of man, logic alone would induce one to look beyond man. David the Psalmist, in the thoughts of Carl Rogers, was self-aware and he spoke a humble confession of recognition of his association in the community of man; he said, "I was born in sin, and shaped in iniquity."

Attempts to elude the divine under the pretense of personal freedom are inadequate maneuvers on the part of humanity, but in fact recognition of the divine emphasizes and enhances one's freedom. In John, the eighth chapter and the thirty-sixth verse, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The functions of religion retains its essentialness by perpetually communicating its principles in today's language, even when today was yesterday. When yesterday was today, religion spoke in contemporary ora, and when tomorrow becomes today, religion will speak in the linguistics of the day to communicate to man that these are the oracles of the supreme being: "Learn and live together in peace and in love." And I would conclude then that the relationship of man and his religion has not changed. The role of religion in the community of man has not changed, but in both situations religion provokes man to exhibit the best of himself. Thank you. [applause]

MRS HEALD: What do you want me to do? Do you want to make time for discussion, or would you proceed?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I would proceed.

DEVERS: Proceed.

HEALD: OK.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I think we're going to go ahead and then discuss after...

DEVERS: All right.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I think that was the plan if I remember correctly...

REVEREND DEVERS: Our next speaker will be Dr. Dee Anne Westbrook, and I would encourage that you would take notes for following each presentation; after all of the panel have made their presentations, we'll have time for discussion.

DR. DEE ANNE WESTBROOK: Do I need to be closer, do you think?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: No, you don't.

WESTBROOK: Let me say first of all that I'm delighted to be here, and I was especially delighted with the marvelous music you had at the opening—I don't think I've heard anything that good in ages—it was just a delight. I'm here, I think, with a very special kind of knowledge; I teach the Bible as literature. I am not what you would call a religious leader in any sense, but I thought that inasmuch as I do teach the Bible as literature, it might be interesting to review the subject of our discussion as it is found in the biblical literature.

The role of religion and contemporary values of society is our particular subject, but in a larger or broader sense, I think we're concerned with the effects of urbanization on fundamental human values; and it occurred to me as I began thinking about that subject that in a way we're on the horns of a dilemma, because in a sense society and city are inseparable. That is, before we had cities, in a sense we had no society. All of our finest achievements, I suppose, in art, in science, in literature, in all those things we call culture, have probably emerged from the settled communities or the cities. And so, in a sense, we can say that we don't make much progress outside the city. On the other hand, cities seem to breed human misery of a kind which is not even imaginable outside the walls of the city. Perhaps misery is bred in the anonymity, in the crowding, in the poverty, in the danger, in the disease that we only find in the cities. In any event, I thought it might be useful keeping this paradox in mind to examine biblical views of the city.

Were the cities of thousands of years ago different from our cities? For example, were they better? What, according to biblical writers, were the cities like? Was there then, as now, a quote "city problem" unquote? When did the city problems emerge? Did they, as we do, think about just what the ideal city might be like? Did they have any ideas about how to bring the ideal city into being? Well, I just got out my Bible and started looking through the early books of the Old Testament, and I was amazed once I started doing it, although I knew about the cities, that I really hadn't focused on in the past... and very early on one encounters Babel. We all know about the tower builders of Babel and their marvelous wish to reach heaven, a desire which was thwarted by the confusion of tongues, the breaking down of communication. Someone has said that rhetoric is the history of language since the tower of Babel. Prior to that time, we didn't need it.

Then there are Sodom and Gomorrah, and we all know about those twin cities of perversion and violence. There's a little place called Shechem, the city of Dinah's unfortunate suitor; some of you may recall that story. There is Rameses in Egypt, where the Israelites were held in

slavery; there was Jericho, the Canaanite city, whose walls are so famous. There was another city that always has fascinated me by the name of Amalek, the city where King Saul came to such grief. None of those *stories* are important, but the image of the city that emerges from all these biblical metropolises is rather interesting; that is, the images of a place of evil; evil abides in the city. Nineveh, one of the cities mentioned in the Old Testament, has been likened to Berlin of the nineteen-thirties and forties during Hitler's ascendancy. The Israelites, as I said, tended to view the cities as a place of evil, and there is a good reason for this; that is, they were nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples who did not come from the cities. They lived on the fringes of the societies, and as they came into Canaan in the time of Joshua to take possession of the land that had been promised them, they had a bit of a problem—there were already people living there in the promised land—and it wasn't just a question of taking the land over, it was a matter of conquest, and especially of conquest of those in the cities. The city-dwellers were farmers as opposed to keepers of flocks and hunters and so on. We tend to think of farmers as being different from city-dwellers now, but at that time the farmer was the city-dweller, the "settled person."

As I said, these people were perceived as the enemy, as evil. The Canaanites, always, according to the Israelites were weird, they were strange. They followed unspeakable cults and engaged in primitive rites worshipping those other gods. The Israelites were not above falling under the sway of those other gods, but the Canaanites were conceived of as being rather wicked people, and they were the city-dwellers. So the first biblical solution to the city problem was in many ways simple and very effective. That is, it consisted of simply wiping out the cities. You've got a city problem: you kill every man, woman, and child, and every goat and lamb and dog in the city, and you no longer have a city problem, which was often what happened in those early conquests. God himself would sometimes take a part in the destruction; sometimes buildings and all were destroyed, sometimes just the living things were destroyed. Remember, Sodom and Gomorrah was consumed along with its inhabitants in a dramatic rain of fire and brimstone. Joshua, remember, with help of God in a marvelous bit of military strategy, brought down the walls of Jericho. But even if the city itself was not destroyed—and I'm speaking now of the city apart from its people—the inhabitants of the cities were destroyed in this first of all solutions to the city problem. This sort of primitive and ultimate solution was not effective for very long as you can well imagine. For as the Israelites became established in the land, they themselves became the city-dwellers.

Now the archetypal city, I suppose, the archetypal Israelite city and the archetypal city as far as western civilization is concerned, is Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the site of Solomon's temple or the site of Solomon's palace, the temple of the Lord housing the Ark of the Covenant, which was conceived of as the actual footstool or throne of God. That is, the city of Jerusalem was a

dwelling place *for* God. The smoke of the divine presence would fill the temple. We don't have cities like that today, but at that time Jerusalem was a holy city in the sense that it was filled with the presence of God, according to the biblical writers.

As time went on, though, various religious leaders, the prophets began to perceive that the Israelite cities and Jerusalem, like the Canaanite cities before them, were becoming the scenes of idolatry, of injustice, of poverty and misery existing alongside luxurious self-indulgence. That is, there were the typical kinds of stratifications developing in the cities. Instead of being all one people as they had been in their nomadic days, there now developed the class system, a rich... a group of rich people, a group of poor people, a group of tradesmen. That is, the city was falling into line as it has done. Some people were living in abject poverty, misery, disease and so on. Others were very well-off. And this bothered the prophets. The cause of this, as they understood it, was the fact that the people were not holding to the holy covenant, the Old Testament. Those in power were more concerned with their own well-being than feeding the poor; the people as a whole had a remarkable tendency, as I said before, to fall under the influence of those foreign gods. This was always the... The typical Israelite crime was apostasy.

At this time, we begin to see in the prophetic literature predictions of God's abandonment of the city, and of his judgement on the people; but especially his judgement on the holy city. There developed a tendency about this time which may be thought of as the "wilderness longing." Looking back across time, the prophets thought of the time spent in the wilderness with Moses as being in many ways an ideal time, a time of closeness to each other and of closeness to God, of peace in every sort of way, an idyllic, pastoral sort of existence. So that one solution proposed to the city problem now was a return to the wilderness, and curiously enough I think I have... we see that tendency among young people today; that is, "If I can just get my sleeping bag and my backpack and get out of the city I can get my head back together," that sort of feeling is what I'm talking about when I speak of the "wilderness longing." Hosea brings, for example, this message from God: "I will again make you dwell in tents, as in the days of the appointed feast." The idea was that after the wilderness day the time of purification or becoming more natural again. The cities are artificial places; man would become more natural in wilderness, but then after this period of time in the wilderness, the cities could be renewed, this time not as city but as garden.

Again from Hosea, these are the words of the Lord, as the message brought through Hosea: "I will be as the dew to Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, he shall strike root as the poplar, his shoots shall spread out, his beauty shall be like the olive and his fragrance like Lebanon. They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden, they shall bloom as the vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon." This is a whole people seen as a

garden. The tendency of city men seems to have been always in some ways the same: to look around him, to see the ills of city life, and to imagine one of two things. Either a time in the past when things were different, or a time in the future when things will be better. One tendency takes the form of the golden age myth, and the other, the myth of progress or the apocalyptic vision. Those are not the same; the apocalyptic vision and the myth of progress are alternative views to the better future. On the one hand we have Eden then, and on the other hand we have the New Jerusalem.

When he looks to the past, man imagines a time when there were no cities, when the world was new and green and fruitful, when mankind was innocent, free from illness, misery, death. Traditionally there was no wind and no winter in Eden; it was a time of perpetual spring/summer without cold harsh winds and changes of season and so on. The garden is not a wilderness, however; it's interesting to notice that the Greeks also had their Eden, although they called it the Garden of the Hesperides. The Babylonians had a similar Eden, only they called it Dilmun. The garden is not a wilderness; it's something like a city in that it is structured, it's tended, it's planned. Like a city, the garden has walls, walks, paths, fountains and so on, but unlike a city, the garden produces useful kinds of things, soul healing things, it gives peace, greenery, and so on.

When he looks to the future, on the other hand, biblical man imagines the cities restored with many of the attributes of the lost Eden. As time passed, the holy city was captured, as we know, and its inhabitants were scattered into exile, and it was during this exilic period that biblical man developed a homesickness, a yearning homeward, but not especially toward the old cities, but to a restored holy city where everything would be well. There were some among the biblical writers who began to suspect that this sort of holy city, the ideal city, could not be established in the world as they knew it at all, or inhabited by mankind as they knew them: mankind, flawed and failing and touched by original sin, simply could not be the inhabitant of this marvelous city which they envisioned. These were the apocalyptic writers who believed that time was ebbing out. There were two ages; there was this age of time of sin, of death, and then there was the next stage when there would be no sin, no death; no night, a curious idea, only daytime in that new age. They thought that the new age would dawn—you know, this reminds me in a way too of our song, "this is the dawning of the age of Aquarius," there's that sort of feeling about that kind of song—the age of peace. This new age would dawn and the tree of life would be renewed; you remember the tree of life from the garden of Eden? This was the tree from which Adam and Eve were shut out after the fall. That is, they were cast out of the garden, a cherub was placed at the gate; they could not get back in, they could not get back to that tree of life, the fruit of which granted immortality.

According to the apocalyptic writers, then, in the new age, the tree of life would be restored, growing appropriately enough in the center of the holy city, a holy garden city, which is at once the garden of Eden restored and the New Jerusalem. The writer of Revelations is typical in his feeling about what this city will be like. He says, "And I saw no temple in this city, for its temple is the lord God the almighty and the lamb, and the city has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light and its lamp is the lamb. By its light shall the nations walk, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gate shall never be shut by day and there shall be no night there. They shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations, but nothing unclean shall enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those whose names are written in the lamb's book of life. Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal." This is that fountain which we have found in Eden, originally. "Bright as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb through the middle of the street of the city. Also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." All right, this is the apocalyptic view, then. The holy city; the ideal city cannot be established inside time, but only outside of time with a new kind of man, a man somehow made better. Restored, renewed—perhaps returned to that initial prelapsarian state—the state before the fall.

Other biblical writers, however, the prophets especially, imagined that the holy city would be restored and renewed in this age, in time, in the present age. The task would be accomplished by a deliverer who would rule the people and establish a peaceful, flourishing empire. This figure was always conceived in political terms—or almost always conceived in political terms—by the Old Testament writers. The restored land, though, as in the apocalyptic vision, would be an intimate blending of city and garden. This from the closing verses of Amos is illustrative: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowmen should overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes, him who sows the seed"—which is a marvelous image in its own right—"the mountain shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I shall restore the fortunes of my people, and they shall build the ruined cities and inhabit them. They shall build vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land which I have given them." Again, a people as garden.

All these biblical attitudes towards the city suggests that for a long time now, mankind generally and religion in particular has taken the view that the city is antithetical to many human values: peace, justice, human kindness, mutual responsibility, and even life itself. On the other hand, I've suggested too that the cities are the sites of human progress: the guardians, if you will, of human culture. Is the city, then, something that we cannot live within and cannot

live without? To whom do we look for answers? To the government? To the religious leaders? To ourselves? The biblical problems seem to be with us yet. Are any of the biblical problems workable in this twentieth century? If we want to reject destruction as the solution to the city problem, either with time or at the end of time, what are the alternatives? If we change the cities, their structure, organization, appearance, distribution of wealth, ratio of grass and trees to cement, and so forth, do we solve the problem or must we change something else? Ourselves? How? In what ways? Where do we begin? Have recent trends and events indicated that we are moving towards solutions, toward making our cities the nurturers rather than the graveyards of human values? How do we conceive the ideal city? What is our New Jerusalem like? What can we do to bring it into being? Thank you.

[applause]

DEVERS: I want to thank Dr. Westbrook for her presentation, and at this time we will receive the presentation from Dr. Byron Haines, who is a professor in the philosophy department at Portland State University.

DR. BYRON HAINES: Thank you. Is this working? Thanks. As you were told, I'm a philosopher, and specifically an ethical theorist or moral philosopher, and when I asked to participate in this program on religion and contemporary values, I was both flattered and embarrassed. I was flattered to be thought—especially by one of my more thoughtful students—to have something to contribute, but embarrassed because I wasn't sure that I did. If I were a psychologist, I might be able to tell you something about how the acquisition or loss of certain religious beliefs may affect people in terms of what they value and how they behave and so on. Or if I were a sociologist, I might be able to tell you, for example, something about how religious institutions affect and are affected by movements for social change. If I were a historian, I might be able to inform you of some interesting things that have happened. I might tell you some things you didn't know.

But philosophers, at least in their professional capacity, are not into fact-gathering or establishing causal connections. They ask questions like, "What is truth? What is knowledge? What is justice? What is wisdom? What is a human action?" Philosophers then give critical consideration to various proposed answers to such questions. Well, such questions are interesting and in their way important, and skill at asking and giving critical consideration to proposed answers to such questions has its value, but it's not a skill such as to make one automatically an astute observer of the contemporary scene. Of course philosophers are people too, and one could imagine a given philosopher who perhaps by virtue of having religious affiliations himself, or perhaps simply out of curiosity has made careful observations of

religion, religious institutions, beliefs, practices and so on. However, that's not true of me, I hold no particular religious beliefs, and I'm not a member of any religious organization. I can't even say with complete confidence that some of my best friends are. [laughter]

It would be extremely unlikely if, with respect to religion [tape skips and a few words are lost, then resumes] ...sort than what a sociologist or historian might have to say and of a different sort than what a thoughtful participant in a religious institution—of which there are many at this conference—might have to say. In spite of my initial embarrassment about my ignorance, it struck me, as I reflected, that I might, as a philosopher, have something to say. I came to that conclusion in this way: to speak of values is to speak of people valuing things. And when people value things, they judge them to be or not to be valuable; they judge them to be good or bad, better or worse, and so on. When they make those particular valuations we call moral, they judge actions to be right or wrong, institutions to be just or unjust and so on; they make such judgements for reasons. Sometimes the reasons are good ones, sometimes they are bad ones. The same is true of religious institutions or of leaders within religious institutions; it may be that it's the role of churches to carry out God's work on earth, but it is a role filled by persons with the strengths and weaknesses of persons. Preachers preach, and when they preach they tell us what they think is right and what they think is wrong, and they give their reasons and they exhort us to do what they think is right and refrain from the wrong.

While sometimes they may have very good reasons for the things they tell us we ought to do, sometimes the reasons may not be so good. It was in this consideration of reasons for and against doing certain things that I began to see some connections between religion, contemporary valuing, and things philosophers might say. For when ethical philosophers raise questions such as "What is justice?" or "What makes right actions right and wrong actions wrong?" what their inquiry leads them to focus on are the reasons on the basis of which those actions can be properly said to be right or wrong, institutions just or unjust, and so on. If philosophers have any particular expertise that bears on this topic, it is in this area of moral reasoning. Unlike psychologists, sociologists and so on, philosophers may have very little to say about what *is* the case. They should have something to say about what *should* be the case. They may not be all that good at solving particular moral problems, at giving specific bits of moral advice, at telling the person they should do this or shouldn't do that, 'cause all these things require attention to facts of particular cases, but they should have something to say about what is relevant to the solution of moral problems; about what are good reasons, what are bad reasons, and so on.

There are, of course, innumerable moral arguments that are raised in the context of religious belief and practice. I wouldn't have the time to give critical review to all of them even if I had

the knowledge and ambition to do so, which I don't. In reflecting on the little bit I know about religion and contemporary values, however, in the light of my professional concern for moral reasoning, it struck me that there was one very simple but general distinction which applies to moral reasoning. Which if properly understood and adhered to, would enable religion to play the morally useful role of which it is capable, and not play the morally dangerous role of which it is also capable. It is the distinction between a justifying reason and a motivating reason. In my remaining remarks, I wish to clarify this distinction and explain and defend the following claim: religious belief can properly provide motive for morally significant action; religious belief cannot properly provide justifying reasons for action. Put slightly differently, the same but slightly differently, the same point is as follows: once we have decided on the basis of moral reflection what we ought to do, religious belief and practice can provide further motive or incentive for the doing of it. Religious belief cannot properly be a means for finding out what we ought to do.

First the distinction, that's the easy part. It is a simple one, we are all aware of it. We need merely to be reminded of it. Philosophers are good at that, reminding people of things that they already know. We get such reminders by considering simple cases, real or hypothetical. Consider the following simple case: I am driving down the street at a moderately high rate of speed. I am eager to meet a pleasant engagement. I approach a school; I notice the school is letting out. I have reason such as to justify my slowing down: it has to do with the safety of the school children. If I am a properly moral person, such reason will be sufficient to motivate me to slow down. I may not be such a person, or on this occasion be behaving as such. A friend of mine, sitting beside me, may remind me that this street is carefully patrolled by the police. The fear of being apprehended by the police and punished by the courts may motivate me to slow down, even though the reason that justifies or makes right my slowing down has to do with the safety of the children. The above motivating reason had to do with fear.

In not all cases where the motivating reason is distinguishable from the justifying reason, is fear involved. Consider the following simple case: I know that I ought not treat my young daughter deceitfully. Still, on occasion it might be tempting. It's sometimes easier, for example, to claim that something she wants me to do is impossible than to give the good reasons for why I shouldn't do it. Sometimes I may yield to such temptation. Something that may restrain me is the thought of my own parents; would my own parents have treated me in that way? No. Could I be proud of my own actions if seen through my parents' eyes? No. I'm not afraid of my parents, I am sufficiently far removed from them not to fear their wrath, even if they were wrathful people, which they are not. Still, seeing my actions in relation to persons I admire can sometimes motivate me to do things I know I ought to do when the mere belief that I ought to do them will not.

In a variety of ways religious beliefs can help to provide moral motivation. For some people, some beliefs have motivated them out of fear. Some people have no doubt been motivated to refrain from doing what they know they ought not do out of fear of hellfire. Inasmuch as fear tends to promote confused thinking, this is probably not a very reliable source of moral motivation. Some other religious beliefs function in different ways. For example, some people have claimed, no doubt truthfully, to have been moved to help those in need out of the love of Jesus. There is typically good reason to help those in need, whether or not one loves Jesus. However, this may be for some added incentive. Other religious beliefs may function to motivate in other ways.

For example, the belief in some divine assistance in just causes may help to provide courage to do things that might otherwise be difficult to do. Sometimes, merely the belief that persons, as in some sense the children of God, may, in spite of observed selfishness, lack of generosity, obstinance, unimaginative, rise to occasions of moral imagination, generosity, and courage, and may inspire us in certain ways. When the late Dr. King proclaimed, "The arc of the moral universe bends slowly, but it bends towards justice," he was not presenting an argument to the effect that we ought to work for racial justice because time was on our side, which would have been a very bad argument indeed; he was encouraging us to have hope, faith, that others would recognize the justice of the efforts here begun, and carry them out. This brings us to an important example with which to illustrate my main point.

The civil rights movement in the United States in the fifties and sixties, when it was closely affiliated with churches, seems to illustrate what I am claiming is the proper role of religion with respect to the distinction between justification and motivation. There, there was clear thinking about the moral justification of actions independent of any religious belief. There was thought about the violation of persons with respect to their human rights, and thought about how to correct this injustice with minimum injury to innocent persons, and even persons not so innocent. Religious beliefs, music, the congregating together, helped to provide motive to do things in the cause of justice that sometimes require great courage and self-sacrifice.

In not all morally significant situations is the function of religious belief and feeling of practice so fortunate. I'm not into cataloguing all of the bad moral arguments, which are bad because employing, in confused ways, religious premises, but some spring readily to mind. For example, a few weeks ago I read the remarks of a high-ranking Israeli official. I've forgotten which one, who claimed that Israel ought not give up the settlements in the Sinai because it was part of God's plan that Israel possess the Sinai. I do not know whether or not Israel ought to maintain the settlements in the Sinai. I do not know in general what ought to be done to solve Middle East problems. If I knew such things, I would no doubt be derelict in my duties by remaining a

teacher of philosophy. Without knowing such things, though, I can know that whatever Israel should do, this is a bad argument for it. One can find out God's plan for the Sinai, if there is such a plan, only by finding out the right thing to do; and that will involve, presumably, thinking about what will most likely bring peace, safety, justice to all inhabitants of that region; Israelis, Palestinians, Egyptians and so on. In general this is true: one can find out God's plan or what God approves of only by thinking about the morality of the situation. One cannot find out about the morality of a situation by thinking of what God approves of.

I have so far only asserted this; I need now to sketch an argument for it. It goes as follows: God, if God exists, is a good being. A powerful being not good, would not merit the name "God" and certainly not merit our worship and respect. An essential feature of a good being is approving of, and where relevant, doing right actions because they are right. If God approves right actions because they are right, it follows that it is not God's approval that makes right actions right. This can be strictly proven, but I will not here give a proof, but remind you that we all think that way anyway. If it were God's approval that made an action right, then God could, by changing his inclinations, make it right to torture innocent people, enslave people, rip off the hard-earned savings of one's neighbors for fun and profit, and so on. You will no doubt say correctly, that God would not approve of such things, but that reveals that you recognize that there is something about such actions that makes them such that a good being would not approve of them. So, we can find out what is right and hence what God approves of, if there's a God and so on, by thinking about the morality of our actions.

I now want to show that we must find out in this way. To do this, we need only consider how we test whether a message or a revelation or what have you comes from God. We must do this by considering the moral content of the message. As humans, we stand with respect to God as Johnny stands to his mother in the following story. Johnny is at school one day. While there, he keeps being handed typewritten messages. At the bottom of each note is typed the word "Mom." The messages say such things as the following: "Johnny, don't forget to eat your lunch. Mom." "Johnny, don't forget to thank Billy for the nice birthday present. Mom." "Johnny, don't give the substitute teacher today a hard time. Mom." Johnny is puzzled; he doesn't know how or why Mom is sending him these messages. He is not even certain that they do come from Mom. Still, he does know that these are the kinds of things Mom could be expected to remind him of. They *could* come from Mom. Suppose now he gets a message that reads, "Johnny, beat up little Joey. Steal his lunch and break his glasses. Mom." Mom? Johnny, if he has a grain of sense, will not conclude that the ways of Mom are mysterious, but that such a message could not have come from Mom. He does this on the basis of the content of the message. Mom would not tell him to do such a thing. In a similar way, persons who believe in God must determine among the various religious claims that various people in various religions make,

which ones *could* come from God. If there are good moral reasons for doing an action, then God, as a good being, would favor it. And if God does communicate to persons directly, through scripture or in any other way, then that is the sort of thing God could be expected to say. If not, not.

Attention to this simple point would not solve all moral problems. However, I am convinced that proper attention to it would clear the air of many bad religiously-based moral arguments. It would improve enormously the effect religion has on contemporary values. I've already mentioned God's plan for Sinai, but my point can be illustrated with other matters. Consider, for example, homosexuality, which has been sometimes in the news of late. Sometimes homosexuality is opposed on the grounds that it violates God's laws, and sometimes even bits of scripture are cited which allegedly back up that claim. But this is a confused way to reason. One can determine whether or not homosexuality violates God's laws only by thinking about the morality of homosexuality, and this involves thinking about the various good and bad things that can be done by persons to persons within the context of homosexual relations. This is not the place for a full-fledged discussion of that issue, but my suspicion is, that if it is considered—as it should be—independently of religious prohibitions, homosexuality as such would cease to be a very morally interesting category, and that particular homosexual relations would be seen as other intimate sexual and non-sexual relations between persons are seen; capable of doing persons great good, but also open to possibilities for deceit, exploitation, and so on.

It follows from all of this that whether or not we are religious, we ought to expend less of our limited thinking energy on trying to prove that God is on our side, and more in trying to ensure that we are on God's side. We can do this if we evaluate moral issues on their moral merits. Once this is done, religious beliefs, for those who possess them, are properly appealed to: to motivate us to act in the way that moral reason directs. Religion has this proper role to play in relation to contemporary human values, not the least important aspect of which is the creation of that spirit of goodwill and trust among persons, in which clear moral thinking and imagination in the solution of hard moral problems can occur. Thank you. [applause]

DEVERS: I want to thank Professor Hines for that—Haines—for that presentation. We're gonna ask each of you if you would just take a moment and just stand up; we realize that you've been sitting for about an hour, if you could just take a moment and just stand up. Everybody just stand up and stretch a moment.

WESTBROOK: Seventh-inning stretch?

ONSTAGE: Seventh-inning stretch, yeah.

DEVERS: [off microphone] Man, I needed that. [laughs]

[tape pauses and resumes mid-sentence]

DEVERS: ...final panelists before we move into another phase, the Reverend Edsel Goldson, who is the president of the Albina Ministerial Alliance, will speak to us now.

REVEREND EDSSEL GOLDSON: Thank you, Reverend Devers. I deem it a privilege to have this opportunity to share some reflections on this topic today. I feel very inspired by previous presentations and have learned, and am hoping that my reflections would add something to your own thought as you reflect yourself on this subject.

By definition, religion, to me, primarily is concerned with relationships. As a theologian, minister, my understanding of that relationship has two components: a transcendent category, a vertical relationship, which is defined in terms of my relationship with God, and an immanent dimension which describes my relationship with my fellow human beings. In my judgement, both are inextricably interrelated. Biblical heritage, both Old and New Testament, has given us some very definite prescriptions as to the nature of those kinds of relationships. The Old Testament is filled with many distinct laws governing man's relationship with his God, and also what his relationship should be with his fellow persons. Judeo-Christian religion grew out of a setting—probably more agrarian—a lifestyle that was somewhat very simple. But the understanding of those who were part of that community, in terms of their relationship to God as well as their relationship to their fellow human beings, grew out of the context of that relationship. And so, there was always that tension between the values, the understanding of how one was related to another person, as opposed to that which was externally imposed upon them.

However simple that sense of community was, it seems obvious to me that the emphasis, the highest value, was always on relationships. And that, in essence, was religion. The religious community at that time performed a multiplicity of tasks. The religious community was responsible for the educational experience, the cultural experience as well as the religious. And so there was not that kind of fragmentation in terms of roles, responsibilities, and the fragmentation of the community itself. Certain fundamental values seem to have developed during that community as they interacted, as they lived within that interface between the reality of their earthly community and their understanding of what God expected of them. And out of that interaction came the value of justice, that somehow their God was perceived as a just God, and the inference was that somehow, that justice had to be demonstrated in one's

relationship with one's fellow beings. A sense of trust was another value that seemed to have evolved in that early community. That if a person trusted this God, then somehow this trust also had to be translated into trust for fellow human beings. Responsibility, another value that seems to have developed. If God is responsible for the community in terms of initiating that community, in terms of giving sense of direction, purpose, meaning, then somehow that also should be translated in the metrics of relationships between beings, human beings. Freedom. A value that perhaps developed later in the biblical tradition, the Old Testament did not present God, at least in my judgement, as one who gave a great deal of freedom in terms of what should be the character of human relationship. It is perhaps more in the New Testament that we understand the concept of Christ enabling us to be free and authentic human beings. Nevertheless, there seems to be those kinds of values in the biblical tradition.

As I try to transpose my mindset from a heritage that I believe and appreciate, historically, into my existential, my present situation in terms of an individual living in a very urban and transient and complex community, I try to transpose some of those values and to see the impact that they could have on my behavior as an individual. One of the first things that seemed obvious is that the religious value of cohesiveness, of solidarity, places a great challenge upon what I experience in community today as "rugged individualism," a sense of "me, myself, and I" and no interest and no relationship to anyone else. And one of my hopes is that as a part of the religious community, that heritage can continue to remind us that it is in our relationship to the other that I am really actualized as a person. That my sense of worth, my sense of who I am as a person—my value—cannot be experienced in and of myself, but has to be experienced in relationship to others.

In terms of justice, I think the mandate of fairness, religiously, that has been handed down through the religious tradition, again can inform us of the kind of just society that we can live in. There are some ethical prescriptions, definitions, defining what the nature of that justice should be. I do agree that in this sense, the religious community can inform more about the why and less about the how in terms of the pragmatics of that justice. I think also, in the value of work, lifestyle, the religious community can remind the urban kinds of community of which we are part, that somehow, work is an extension of our self, and that almost every activity that we become involved in has to, in some way, contribute to the enhancement of the community. It's a sort of a transcendent value that that community has, and one of the important reasons why I have to be always related to some kind of community; organizations, groups, families, churches. It is because of a transcendent spiritual value that I think is innately, inherently, characteristic of any kind of community that seeks to live out its true identity.

The Christian religion inherited a philosophy which had its origin in Greek thinking, and it was somewhat unfortunate, at least in my thinking, a sort of dualistic understanding of the world, or the universe. A thinking that said that somehow that which was earthly, tangible, was bad, and somehow the intangible, the invisible, was better; and the Christian religion interpreted some of that to try to explain the understanding that was pretty much characteristic of Jesus' teaching as he talked about kingdoms. I think that was one of the most difficult things for the people of the New Testament and perhaps those of us today who are part of the religious community: What did Jesus Christ mean when he talked about the "kingdom of God?" Is he talking about an earthly kingdom or is he talking about a kingdom that is very transcendent, futuristic? My position is that that kingdom has to do, not in totality, but to a very great extent, with my existential situation. In other words, I'm not that preoccupied with a kingdom in the distant future and I'm not quite sure if I'm really that... [tape cuts off for about sixteen second and resumes mid-sentence] ...knowing very well that that in itself does not describe all that can be.

One of the theologians that has made a very significant impact in my thinking is Richard Niebuhr, who once wrote a book on Christ and culture in which he tried to explain different kinds of relationships that Christ could have to the culture. Christ could be "for the culture," which means everything that happens in the culture, you think of Christ approving it; Christ could be against everything in the culture—a sort of a dualistic kind of a thing—Christ could be "above the culture," very transcendent and having nothing to do with earthly kinds of things; Christ could be "of the culture," in other words, coming out of the metric of the culture itself; and finally, Christ being transforming the culture. And my own personal position is to adopt a transformation... a transforming attitude, because by inclination, I guess, I'm an idealist who believes that human beings can be transformed. Not in any transcendent, esoteric kind of way, but transformed in the sense that we are continued to be motivated to live out something that is basically a part of ourselves.

My definition of human beings, my doctrine of man and woman, says that we are basically good; that we are created that way and that we are created with a drive towards community, to be with each other in a sense of solidarity, and that my responsibility as a member of that community is to help to actualize that potential which is within me and to help to give expression to that which is also within my fellow human being. So, I guess, as I looked on the impact that religion, institutional religion in the general sense, can and continue to have on the values in the community, I see a positive role. I see a role that has been historically changing. I see a role that is still significant. It's a role that is perhaps not uniquely carried out by the religious community, but I think that the religious community has significant tradition that can

add to that kind of a motivation, and I see myself as trying to add that dimension to other dimensions about how we should live as people in the community. [applause]

DEVERS: Thank you, Reverend Goldson, and we thank each of you for your attention. I'm concerned from the coordinator now, if you were ready for us to go on with the question and answers or if you want to just break at this point. [pause] So it'll be... If there are any questions that you would like to direct to any member of our panel, feel free to do so, and then following the break I think that we're programmed for group discussions and evaluations.

[question posed off-microphone, inaudible]

All right. Yes. You need... need the mic in the... I'll wait here. And if you can identify to whom you are addressing and that way we can...

UNIDENTIFIED ATTENDEE: Well, I'm addressing it to Reverend Goldson...

DEVERS: All right.

ATTENDEE: Inasmuch as... in considering the community, and looking at the responsibility of the community and the church, I'd like to know: what is your idea of the responsibility of the church toward the community, as far as their civic duty is concerned? There are some people who really don't buy the paper, or look at TV or radio and those kind of things, and there are a lot of things that they should know and would like to know, and it concerns them. And I wonder how far it is the minister thinks his responsibility goes in keeping the people, the community, informed?

GOLDSON: I have never had any difficulty in seeing one of my primary responsibilities as a minister, or one of the primary responsibilities of a church, to enable its members to be not just aware of life around them, the issues in their community, but to be also responsive to those issues. My definition, my understanding, of the role, purpose, of the church is one that does not permit me to dichotomize, to segregate, one era of life as opposed to another and to put a particular value on that. One of the tensions that I continue to live with as a pastor is how much time, what kind of priority, do I give to my so-called church—the nucleus of people to whom I am directly related to each Sunday morning and during the week—as opposed to the broader church. And there are times, perhaps more than most people would want to allow for me, when I'm not sure I make any distinction in terms of that inner church, that small church, and the broader church community. So, in direct response to your question, I encourage, I try to enable, people to realize that they do have a responsibility to live out their Christian faith in the

particular issues that are brought forth from the kinds of communities that they represent. Anything that enables that sense of community, whether it be in the church or out of the church, I think should be responded to, so. It's a duty to become concerned and to be active.

DEVERS: All right, if there are any other questions...

GOLDSON: I... Oh.

DEVERS: Go ahead. All right.

[an attendee asks a question off-microphone]

WESTBROOK: For me?

DEVERS: Yes.

[questioner continues]

WESTBROOK: I'm sorry, I couldn't quite hear...

DEVERS: Culture.

[questioner continues]

DEVERS: That culture emerges from the community.

WESTBROOK: Ahh, yes.

[questioner continues]

WESTBROOK: The reason for my statement was, that when we... when we have as we did with the early Herbrews, in the Mesopotamian area... when you have a nomadic people, the sheer nature of their existence precludes carrying around art objects, or books, or being concerned with anything that isn't absolutely essential to their existence. Even pots, even a pot that you cook in, for example, is going to have to be the lightest, most utilitarian sort of thing possible. I was making that observation, in part, with the authority of Mr. Bronowski and his *The Ascent of Man*, and a woman by the name of Ruth Whitehouse, who has a book called *The First Cities*,

who talks about the fact that you need settlement, you need some sort of staying in one place, for the trappings of culture to develop, to emerge.

ATTENDEE: So in other words... culture originates from... from a [...] people.

WESTBROOK: From a *settled* people, yes.

DEVERS: All right. Right here.

ATTENDEE: My question is to you...

DEVERS: [quietly] Sister Westbrook.

ATTENDEE: You did mention, referring, that... you know, there was some primitive type of solution to some of the problems with ancient cities, such as the punishments on Sodom and Gomorrah, “brimstone and fire” and all that...

[WESTBROOK laughs]

ATTENDEE: That was a type of solution in those days...

WESTBROOK: Yes.

ATTENDEE: But today... and I do feel in my own judgement that the degree of evil is probably more than there was in those days. And, you know, for now, brothers, because they are protected from that type of judgement, you know, “certain judgement” from the people... what do you think would be a solution to our problem for our present—you know, where we cannot get a problem without those evils. You know, how to just trust the human values and the community development of, probably, the good of cities?

WESTBROOK: I’m not sure that I’m quite as pessimistic as you are about the proportion of good and evil in the community. I tend to think there is as much good as there ever was, and maybe more. I meet with young people in my classes at Portland State everyday, I have yet to find an evil one. That is, they are uniformly good. I don’t know whether I could... if I would know an evil person if I bumped into him or her, but I just don’t see evil around me. Or at least any more, I suppose then, for example, do you remember... do you recall when Abraham was bargaining with the Lord? The Lord said to Abraham, “I am sending my angels into the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to check out reports I’ve received. There’s a great outcry in the city and I want to

find out if it's true," and Abraham says, "Suppose you find fifty righteous men in the city, will you destroy it?" and God says, "No, not if there are fifty," and Abraham says, "How about forty-five?" and—you remember that conversation?—it's marvelous, because he finally gets down to ten, "Suppose there are ten..." and God says, "No, not for ten would I destroy it." But when the angels get there, how many do they find? One. And so they remove that one and then go ahead and destroy the city. I think we could find a lot of righteous here.

[laughter and a smattering of applause]

SPEAKER IN FOREGROUND: Amen.

DEVERS: All right, OK. Again, go. Wait a minute, we have one question over here first.

ATTENDEE: No no no, not... [indistinct]

DEVERS: OK. Then the gentleman in the blue.

ATTENDEE: [partly inaudible] Well, I'm directing my [...] for this [...] of the panel. What I'm asking is, is religion imperative?

DEVERS: Say that a little slower.

ATTENDEE: Well, I'm asking if religion is imperative.

HAINES: Imperative.

DEVERS: If religion is imperative. All right. [laughter] From the philosopher, what do you think?

HAINES: You want my opinion?

ATTENDEE: Yes.

HAINES: No, I don't think it is. I mean, I think it does some good things on occasion and some bad things on other occasions. [attendee interjects] I suspect we could live without it; we'd need to replace some of the sense of community and so on that is referred to here in other ways. I mean, I think there are real human needs that religion administers to, but I think that could be handled without the various theological beliefs and so on.

ATTENDEE: If that is the case, what then is the business of common law?

HAINES: The business of the common law?

ATTENDEE: If yours... is the case, what is the basis of the common law?

DEVERS: What is the basis of the common law.

HAINES: Oh, well, a mixture of good sense and confusion I suspect. [chuckles dryly, attendees chuckle] But, one hopes that, over a period of years good sense emerges, I think...

ATTENDEE: So then we are a victim of... of values?

HAINES: Well, I don't see the "victim" role, particularly.

ATTENDEE: Because, you know, if fear was, you know, what arises and what is from religion, fear of God, the values of...

HAINES: Yes...

ATTENDEE: If religion is not imperative, what then is the problem with our common law?  
[question continues, inaudible]

HAINES: What's the purpose of it? Well I suppose it's proper purpose is to, y'know, regulate human affairs in just kinds of ways. I don't suppose it always, in fact, functions in that way, any more than the official laws of state always does, does it. I mean we're familiar with built-in injustices in the law.

GOLDSON: I'd like to address the question there. Religion, to me, is imperative because it not only deals with cognitive concepts, ideas, but more importantly it has to do with the essence of humanness. I conceive life as basically a spiritual experience. And religion, for me, is the channel, the form through which that keeps us, that—Black people say "soul"—you know, "what's in there" can be expressed in some real ways. I experience religion in probably... in a very broad sense. It takes place in the celebrative community of the church, it takes place in other contexts, and for me that's very important, and probably not an experience that can be duplicated or be made in law.

[attendee responds off-microphone]

No, no no no, no, that's not a... it's, for me yeah, it's personal, that's where I am personally, but it's significant because I see that expression in others. Religion is not a personal thing for me, as such; something that has to be shared in the sense of community.

DEVERS: All right...

[attendee continues speaking indistinctly]

GOLDSON: Oh no, no.

DEVERS: No, no.

GOLDSON: Uh-uh.

DEVERS: We've got the gentleman with the hat on, again.

ATTENDEE: Oh, yes. When you are talking about religion, you aren't necessarily just talking about Christianity? Or...?

GOLDSON: Definitely not, as far as I'm concerned.

DEVERS: No. Not especially. Christianity is a form of religion, but it's not the only religion.

ATTENDEE: [remarks are off-microphone and mostly unintelligible] Yeah, well, it seems to me that we, you know, usually tend to have a self-interest. From an American point of view in relation to [...] we tend to sort of chauvinistically gravitate [...] that can crush others, uh, under God... [...] So, if you can talk about religion and not have to bring up when you talk about Christianity in the context of, this concept of... what did you call it? Going to jail, [...] based on different moods, then Christians can [...]

GOLDSON: Do you mind if I say something? Yeah, I do have some problems at times with the universalism of Christianity. And, you know, as a Christian—perhaps more by accident than by choice—I didn't have the choice, I was brought up in a Christian home and my whole religious upbringing, my socialization process... I often think of what might have happened if I were born in Bangladesh or India, or somewhere in China, that my religious orientation could have been very much different. As a citizen of the world, so to speak, which is more and more where I see myself, the religious dimension of that citizenship says that there are some general qualities

that takes... gives expression in a very particular setting. I, by virtue of being a Western citizen, happen to be a Christian.

DEVERS: On that, also, Christianity has not always been even in the—especially in the East—it was not always the predominant... in some cases, it's still not the predominant practiced religion, in those particular countries. Here we are, we are born into a religious—in a Christian—so-called country, and this would begin to be the first native of the native, particular, religion that we know of. There are, in Christianity as in others, there are a coming-in of people who were once... who practiced another form of a religion, who have become Christian, as well as there is the exodus of those who practice Christianity going to some other form, and it depends upon the individual's analysis. I feel like each individual has some innate characteristic, a leaning, toward a recognition that there are powers beyond their own. Even men of wisdom and philosophers have to, I believe, recognize a certain order, where they may not practice Christianity in the form that we know it or that we are acquainted with, also have some form of deity which may or may not be religion as we know, or Christian faith. Now, Reverend Jackson, and this gentleman standing.

JACKSON: [in background] I wanted to [...] I wasn't sure... [...]

DEVERS: Mm-hmm.

JACKSON: [continues, inaudible] ...forming Christianity, in that sense, as a place of refuge...

DEVERS: Mm-hmm.

JACKSON: ...as a religion. I've always understood religion as being a system of behavior of what is [...] to meet a need. Wherever a need exists [...] To me, the function of religion... [...] for the savage to be happy, so [...] where a man walks along, and a log falls down and hits him on the head. Well, he wants to figure out what can he do about that. So religion arises within a need and also to control the universe around him. Man wants to plant his seeds and have a good crop, so he wants to control that.

DEVERS: Mm-hmm.

JACKSON: Or he wants to prevent a storm, and the storm kind of upsets him. And he wants to know, in that storm, what can he do? And so religion arises out of the fact, that there are—and fear is a good word—are fears and needs, that become the face of it. And if ever religion doesn't meet a need, it goes on [...]

DEVERS: Mm-hmm, all right. The gentleman that's standing.

[question in background]

GOLDSON: I followed you about halfway through and I... what I heard, the last few statements, I'm not sure I agree because I heard you... an assumption about a separation that I don't make, in terms of...

JACKSON: What I'm saying is, religion is a human staple for [...]

GOLDSON: Mm-hmm.

JACKSON: ... and we didn't have no choice...

GOLDSON: Not... yeah.

JACKSON: ... and what I'm saying is if you had to choose, would you choose a Christian idol or another idol?

GOLDSON: You mean, oh, what if I had a choice... would I choose another religious tradition?

JACKSON: Yeah. Now, you said [...]. Now I'm saying, would you choose something else...

GOLDSON: OK, that's what I thought you were... OK. If that choice would be given out, it wouldn't be a logical choice, because religion, as I said, is a response to something in terms of who I am. At the age of thirty-two, my religion has to respond to how I perceive myself, how I perceive myself relationship to the world, and that's pretty much set in some definite form, not in a static sense, but it's pretty much formulated. So my response—my religious response—is coming through a form, a system, that sort of made some sense sort of, of that perception of myself and my relationship. And if it were to shift, that would sort of be a chaotic kind of experience for me.

DEVERS: All right, right here. [question in background] Anybody voluntarily answer that? I think that I'd like to respond to that one, because I believe that today, the youth need to practice a form of religion. I'm quite impressed, or concerned, about man's drifting to individualism and to a thought of a unitarian idea that man himself is supreme, and I don't see a clot of supremists as forming a very well-ordered society. And I think that the youth need to recognize that where humans have been, where humanity has a great deal of learning, and a great deal of

capabilities, that man himself is not the last word in the universe; and I think in recognition to that, that there is one or that there is a being beyond us, we learn to live with each other even better. I think that when we get really individualistic, we get more exalted in our own ideals, and there is no uniformity in our action, a commonness in our approaches with one another, and therefore it permits a ground for greater expressions of conflict than what I can see under a group that practices a religion. All right, way in the back.

[question in background]

All right, sister Westbrook.

ATTENDEE: I'd like to know how does... how is it that the Bible, if you chose this, as a text, for a class, and does that person or is that person, interested... 'cause...

WESTBROOK: Well, we... you're asking about the structure of the Bible class. When we read the Bible as literature, which is the title of the course, we're interested in reading a book which has probably influenced more poems, novels, plays, and so forth than any other single work. So we're curious to learn about the narratives, how they work, the characterizations, the themes, the symbols, and so on. That is, we read it with close attention to what it says, the word on the page, to the ideas that are being developed, and so on. We try not to read it from—through—a screen of theological theory. That is, "now to then." We try to understand what the ideas were at the time the works were formulated or written down and so on. Just as we would with Shakespeare, we'd want to know something about Shakespeare's cosmos. We wouldn't want to use our concept of the cosmos to interpret one of Shakespeare's plays, so we're going to... we want to learn something about the history of ideas and so on.

[response in background]

WESTBROOK: Well, in the course that I've described it really wouldn't make any difference.

DEVERS: All right, we have one lady over here in the blue, and then after this, after the answer to this question, we're going to break for just a moment, and I think there's some refreshments at... supposed to have been at three-thirty... yeah, following your question.

ATTENDEE: [in background, mostly inaudible] I would like to just say that to a community... [...] we know the influence that the church has had in other communities, the community at large, but is it... is there a breakdown wherein you know me, the readings of the church, across the

whole [...] to educate the people... how we can go out and pass on the good things here for our community as far as what we can do together? [...]

DEVERS: Are you saying is there a breakdown... ?

ATTENDEE: Is there a breakdown in communication?

DEVERS: I don't think there is a breakdown in communication; I think one of the things is that civic groups as well as other organizations that view the church, view the church as another civic organization. And I think that we have to bear in mind that—now, I'm speaking primarily from the framework of a Christian church—and even more defined than that, from a Baptist church in particular. We have to bear in mind that our existence is not because of the fact of civil government. We are existing because of the fact that we practice a religious observance, we observe a particular system of faith, and we are there for that major purpose. Now, irregardless of whether there is a hundred or two-thousand people. And the problem is that the larger a particular gathering is, the more attractive they look for a civic organization to say, "Well, let's get the information there, and automatically it's going to be distributed." Now, in many cases, we screen information and pass that on as much... you know, to the group as possible, those things that are helpful, those things that we know that are helpful and beneficial, as well as those things that we know that the people have an interest in and are concerned about or need to know. But basically you cannot, if you break time down, you cannot give more time to civic affairs than to the primary purpose for being. And that's... you know, the church is basically there for religious work in the sense of studying the gospel and preaching the gospel and learning those things related to that particular religion, and those civic things that can be done by the church... they do it, they participate in it, but the primary purpose cannot be negated for other causes. All right.

[comment in background]

DEVERS: I think that... in getting up [chuckles] I think that we can stand interaction, as long as the interaction does not negate the primary purpose, and again I'm back down to that biased community, that bias strictly talking about the Christian Baptists right now.

[response]

DEVERS: The primary purpose again, that... all right. The primary purpose for the particular church that I work with is that we come together to practice religion, to preach the gospel and to study it, you know, to educate those members that become a part of it. All right, that's the

primary purpose. Now civic action and interaction, civic activities can be done, you know; we can participate in groups and do all of those things within the community and to help the community, as long as the purpose of the group is not negated by the interactions or the extended activities. In other words, that you're not totally giving them all of your time or most of your time to other causes and the primary cause is being left undone. All right. We're going to take a break now.

[tape runs in silence about six minutes; program ends]