

## Lecture 13 – The Resolution of Moral Conflicts (Part I)

### Case Study: The Village of Le-Chambon

*The Holocaust produced numerous instances of the struggle between competing ethical standards, but none so telling as the conduct of the villagers of the Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in the mountains of southeastern France. Led by the village's Huguenot pastor and his wife and assisted by several "Darbyist" (Plymouth Brethren) families in the surrounding countryside, the Chambonnais successfully rescued some six thousand persons – mostly Jewish children whose parents had already been murdered by the Nazis in central Europe – from the jaws of death.*

*From their first attempts to help Jewish refugees Pastor and Magda Trocme learned that they would have to conceal their efforts from the authorities and others unsympathetic to what they were doing. "To reveal that help would be to betray the refugees, to put them in harm's way. Either conceal them or harm them – those were the alternatives."*

*But in Le Chambon in the beginning of the 1940's, concealment meant lying – lying both by omission and by commission. It meant not conveying to the authorities any of the legally required information about new foreigners in Le Chambon, and it meant making false identity and ration cards for the refugees so that they could survive in Vichy France.*

*Given their commitment to the duty of truthfulness, this presented a profound moral dilemma to the Trocmes and their co-conspirators. "To this day, Magda remembers her reaction to hearing about the making of the first counterfeit card ... She remembers the horror she felt at that moment: duplicity, for any purpose, was simply wrong ... Even now, Magda finds her integrity diminished when she thinks of those cards. She is still sad over what she calls "our loss of candor."*

As quoted in Jones from Philip P. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper, 1979).

### Key Terms

Consequentialism, tragic morality, hierarchialism, ends & means

### Objectives

- \*Identify and briefly describe consequentialism.
- \*Identify and briefly describe tragic morality.
- \*State problems with each theory.

## The Resolution of Moral Conflicts (Part I)

### Introduction

- A. Emergency situations / borderline situations
- B. Villagers of Le Chambon, France
- C. Is falsehood ever justifiable? If so, on what grounds?
- D. Exclude two types of conflict in resolutions
  1. Internal conflict when duty is difficult
  2. Choices made because of limitations of time or resources
- I. Consequentialism (Utilitarianism; Situational Ethics)
  - A. Definition of consequentialism
    1. An act is right if it is intended to produce...

2. No human acts are good/bad in and of themselves...

3. Moral principles are not absolute...

B. Fletcher

1. Only one absolute: act responsibly in love

2. Love equated with utilitarianism

C. Five objections to consequentialism

1. It wrongly sets...

2. It depends upon an impossible...

3. It reduces to...

4. Situations are not so unique as...

5. There is a tendency toward...

D. Rejected by evangelicals

II. Tragic Morality

A. Definition of tragic morality

1. Faced with choice in which both...

2. Choose the lesser of two evils, but...

B. Objections

1. Evil is ambiguous

2. Lesser of two sins

3. Would God place us in a situation where we must...

4. Will allow you to do anything...

C. Distinguished from tolerating evil in order to promote good

1. OT divorce

2. Condom distribution