

February 1, 1991

Hewitt Delivers Faculty Lecture At Southeastern

Dr. T. Furman Hewitt, Professor of Christian Ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, delivered a faculty lecture on January 29 entitled "Freedom as a Moral Concern." In his lecture, Hewitt discussed how the concept of freedom has developed over the course of history and addressed the needs for additional freedoms in today's world.

Hewitt said that three areas of personal freedom are being threatened today, both in American society and the Southern Baptist Convention: the freedom of people to think, the freedom to communicate their thinking, and the freedom to act on their thinking.

"Pluralism, the right to make choices, should not be taken for granted if Baptists realize the rock from which we are hewn," he said. "Freedoms today are not granted to everyone, nor are they handed out evenly."

Freedom is a prerequisite for being responsible, according to Hewitt. "A person is free to the extent that she can choose her own conduct, without coercion from any outside authority," he said. "Moral obligation has no significance apart from freedom."

"If I have no choice in my actions, I am not responsible," Hewitt continued. "It is plausible to assume that, for all people, there is a basic freedom to choose, on which all moral obligations are based."

Hewitt says that, as the this century ends, the idea of freedom as a right of all people still stands. "The extent of freedom in society is based on the variety of ideas allowed to exist in that society," he said. "Mere affirmation of freedom will not suffice."

