

Sanctity of life bigger than one issue, Gushee tells UMHB

March 17, 2011

BELTON—Sanctity of human life transcends politics and reaches far beyond one or two hot-button issues, Christian ethicist [David Gushee](#) told students and faculty at the [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#).

“Sanctity of life is the biblical conviction that all human beings are to be perceived as sacred, as persons of equal and immeasurable worth and of inviolable dignity,” said Gushee, distinguished university professor of Christian ethics at Mercer University.

Christian ethicist David Gushee addresses sanctity of human life as a multi-faceted issue during a lecture series at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. (PHOTO/Jennifer Jones/UMHB)

“This includes human beings at any and every stage of life, from womb to tomb; in any and every state of consciousness; of any and every race, color, and ethnicity; of every level of intelligence; whatever their religion, language, nationality, or gender; of every type of character and behavior, physical ability or disability, potential, class and social status; and whether they are friends, strangers, or enemies to us. Everyone. No exceptions.”

Early Christian writings reflect a strong commitment to recognizing the sanctity of all people, said Gushee, speaking in a lecture series sponsored

by the UMHB Center for Baptist Studies and the university's honors program.

"Christians once changed the world through their Christ-drenched love for the abandoned of the world—lepers, slave, prostitutes, beggars, abandoned infants, and those condemned to die," he said.

Today, many people associate sanctity of life only with discussions of abortion or capital punishment, but its implications actually are more far-reaching than those issues, Gushee emphasized.

"The sanctity of life is not a slogan," he said. "It cannot be confined to a single issue, and it is not owned by any political party. The sanctity of life is God's will for the world he has made.

"Honoring that sanctity is our comprehensive moral obligation as Christians. If God has decided that each and every life is sacred, then God's people have no choice but to do the same."