THE CHURCH AND THE SEGREGATION

CRISIS IN THE SOUTH

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PREFACE

The end of an era in the United States was marked on May 17, 1954. On that day the Supreme Court of the United States declared that racial segregation in the public schools was unconstitutional. All of the people of the nation were affected, either directly or indirectly, by this ruling. Not the least affected were individual Christians and the churches who were faced with the question, "What is demanded of the Christian as regards race relations?"

The pattern of worship and membership the churches have followed are along the lines of segregation of the white and Negro races. It is often said that "eleven o'clock Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of American life." As Dwight Culver said, "The Christian Churches, Roman Catholic and Protestant, are the most segregated institutions in America."1

In 1946 Frank Loescher made a survey under the auspices of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and found that less than 1 per cent of the white congregations had Negro members, and less than 1/2 of 1 per cent of the Negro Protestants in the United States were included in white congregations. In most instances where it

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occurred, the mixture of Negro and white groups composed only two or three Negro members in an overwhelmingly white congregation. The pattern of segregation has been accepted as a common practice, and on the whole, religious bodies are divided on a racial basis. So common is the acceptance of the segregation pattern that fellowship between white and colored individuals is awkward and unsatisfactory. While people of color are not usually absolutely barred by rule from so-called white congregations, the self-consciousness and resentment their presence in the congregation arouses serves to bar them from freedom of worship and fellowship with such churches. This attitude in the churches could be referred to as the silent segregation policy. When announcements are made to the effect that all are welcome, a Negro noticing the invitation knows that, in most cases, if he accepted he would not be welcome, or the embarrassment on the part of the congregation would be such as to destroy any sense of spiritual fellowship. These same congregations give money for the support of Negro hospitals, orphanages and schools, but would be embarrassed at accepting Negroes into full fellowship in their church activities.

\[2\text{Liston Pope, } "\text{Caste in the Church: The Protestant Experience,}" \text{ Survey Graphic, (January, 1947), p. 59.}

\[3\text{Will W. Alexander, Racial Segregation in the American Protestant Church (New York, 1946), pp. 5-6.}

\[4\text{Ibid., p. 175.}
As uncherished as this fact may be to the church member, it would be difficult to imagine an unsegregated church in the segregated community characteristic of the South. Yet some church spokesmen have maintained that even in a community which is highly segregated, the church should be moving away from the pattern of segregation.\(^5\)

Merrimon Cuninggim, Dean of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University said, "The South today is the best laboratory in the world for testing both Christianity and democracy."\(^6\) The claim has been made, in fact, that church and religious influence has been one of the factors leading toward the end of segregation. Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, said:

> Two great factors have been at work on segregation and the problem of race. One is secular, the other religious. The Christian of today cannot help but wince at the full implications, and the jarring clash of his creed, with discrimination against any person because of color ... Christianity cannot well afford to be on the wrong side of a moral force, as it was in some areas when it defended slavery.\(^7\)

Segregation, as in the other realms of American life, is a great problem of the churches. Dwight D. Eisenhower, president of the United States, in an address before the National Conference of Christians and Jews, said:

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Problems of such magnitude as American race relations and intercultural good will can be dealt with most effectively on the moral and spiritual plane. Courageous action by the leaders of the three great religious traditions of our country is basic to all other steps that must be taken. 8

Although the Supreme Court decision and call for action by the President have produced few revolutionary changes, the churches of the South have taken steps to cope with this problem. Slow and faltering though these moves may be, they represent a new awakening on the part of individual churches to a pressing social responsibility.

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CHAPTER I

RECENT CHURCH ACTION PRIOR TO MAY 17, 1954

The general practice of churches on segregation prior to May 17, 1954, was manifested in the fact that most of the churches had no formulated policy regarding the matter and little discussion had even been given the problem among its leadership. When a policy was established, each local congregation made its own decision relative to it. In general Negroes were not received into the membership, however. Generally there was no direct law forbidding Negro membership, but social custom was the strongest law.¹ The size of the church, the liturgical or informal type of worship, the centralized or congregational authority, or the type of theology prevailing seemingly were not factors of any special relevance to segregation in the local congregations.² Negro membership in white churches usually occurred in villages and small towns where Negroes were so few in number that they did not form a distinct social group, or where it was difficult to organize a separate Negro church. Comparatively few churches containing both Negro and white members were found in urban centers with large Negro populations. In the South Negroes are primarily restricted to separate residential areas. From the standpoint

¹Frank Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro (New York, 1948), p. 64.
²Pope, "Caste in the Church," p. 60.
of convenience, custom and community interest it is but natural that the congregations of churches largely conform to these divisions. For that reason, among others, few white churches were directly confronted with the issue of admitting Negroes into their membership.

In a survey sponsored by the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches, in cooperation with the United Lutheran Church, the Christian Congregational Church and the Presbyterian Church, found among the 13,597 churches with 237,000 members, 405 which contained non-white members. Where the non-white members were found, only 26 members had left in opposition to the receiving of Negroes into their membership. Of the total membership, only 6,442 or approximately 2.7 per cent of persons were of minority groups. The percentage ranged from 1 per cent to 7 per cent.  

Writing in 1946, Will W. Alexander said, "The altar of every Christian church must actually and freely open to every man, woman, and child who desires to worship there, regardless of race, color, or national origin. The time must speedily come when it will not seem strange for people of different races to worship together." He advocated that one of the most useful services the church could perform would be to announce that they were out to make every local congregation, where it was at all possible, interracial in its membership, and to make

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church fellowship so broad that men of all races would feel in it a satisfaction that could be found nowhere else. 5

The activities of the Federal Council have been outstanding in regard to the problem of segregation in the church and race relations generally. The problem was recognized in 1921 when it established a Department of Race Relations. 6 This department for years tried to awaken interest among Protestants, but there was little denominational recognition of the heart of the problem—segregation. Since 1922, the Department of Race Relations has sponsored "Race Relations Sunday" each year. 7 Tens of thousands of churches, both in the North and the South, have participated in such things as the exchange of pulpits for the day with Negro and white ministers, cooperative church services and mass meetings containing both Negro and white, and the distribution of study and worship materials. In the South, white and Negro ministerial associations in many communities have conducted joint meetings, but the arrangements were usually so formal as to preclude discussions of real issues of genuine brotherhood.

The Federal Council in 1942, representing 25 denominations with a membership of 25,000,000, appointed a special commission to meet two urgent needs:


6Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro, p. 16.

7Pope, "Caste in the Church," p. 102.
1. to strengthen the bases of democracy at home,

2. to make more effective the Church's witness to and practice of the Christian principle of brotherhood.  

The purpose of this commission was largely for research and analysis of the whole range of intergroup relations in so far as the churches were concerned.

In a special meeting at Columbus, Ohio, in March, 1946, the Council adopted a statement on segregation which committed it to "work for a non-segregated society" and urged the various members of the Council to study and correct their own practices in the matter of segregation. The resolution stated that "the pattern of segregation in race relations is unnecessary and undesirable and a violation of the Gospel of Love and human brotherhood." In 1948 the Council made further pronouncements in a resolution known as "The Churches and Human Rights." This resolution stated that the Council did not believe that the American form of government and way of life could permanently endure on a basis of discrimination and segregation. It further stated that "it is still true that this country cannot exist half slave and half free." This brief was opposed by only the Southern Presbyterian Church

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8Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro, p. 17.


and the Southern Baptist Church, which then was not a member of the Council. 11

On June 11, 1952 the Council encouraged all members of the organization to adapt the following principles as a standard of measurement:

A. Membership
   All persons who accept Christ as Lord and Master and the doctrinal standards of the communion ought to be invited and welcomed into membership of our communion's parish churches.

B. Fellowship
   Christian fellowship means that all who accept Christ as Lord and Master are united by bonds of brotherhood which transcend race, color or national origin.

C. Worship
   Worship opportunities inclusive of all groups ought to be available both regularly and frequently, so as to make such worship a normal expression of our common worship of God without self-consciousness or embarrassment.

D. Outreach of the Minister
   The outreach of the minister should be inclusive. This means that his services ought to be available to persons of all groups in the community without discrimination.

E. Educational and Welfare Services
   Church-related schools, colleges, hospitals, homes for children and aged and other institutions have a responsibility to serve persons who are members of their communion without regard to race, color or national origin.

F. Employment
   Christian churches demonstrate belief in the essential worth of persons because they are the children of God when they provide full opportunities for the employment at all levels and on the same basis of character and ability, of all persons

found in the membership of their communion, including those from racial and cultural minorities.\textsuperscript{12} This report in 1952 stated that there were some encouraging examples of church leaders and congregations at the local level who had come to grips with the dilemma of the segregated church. It stated that some congregations and especially Sunday church schools and vacation church schools were racially inclusive, and that other church groups were in the process of becoming so.\textsuperscript{13} It also acknowledged the fact that the pattern of segregation was more general in the churches in worship and fellowship than in public education.

A pamphlet prepared by the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations in 1952\textsuperscript{14} stated that churches had carried out one or more of the following activities: They had strengthened Christian fellowship through offering membership to all regardless of race, had evaluated what had been done in race relations and made plans for a race relations program that would continue throughout the year. They had organized a group within the church which maintained creative attitudes about race within the congregation and sponsored study groups, forums, worship services and other activities designed to bring people of different racial


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 7.

\textsuperscript{14} Liston Pope, Of One Blood (New York, 1952), p. 2.
backgrounds together for the purpose of discovering common needs and interests.

As early as 1922 it was being advocated by some that the Christian ministry should accept a full share of the responsibility for the solution of the race problem. One writer said, "A faithful and united ministry could soon change the views of the people and turn the tide for fair play and constructive righteousness in behalf of these twelve million oppressed people."{15}

In most all of the ecumenical meetings from 1928 on, segregation in the church based on race and color was strongly condemned.{16} One of the first signs of a shift toward non-segregation came at the Oxford Conference in 1937. At this world-wide gathering of practically all Protestant denominations a resolution was made to the effect that in the church, especially in its own life and worship, "there can be no place for barriers because of race or color . . . no place for exclusion, or segregation because of race or color."{17}

At a meeting of eight interdenominational groups in Cleveland, Ohio, in December, 1942, a resolution was made to rid the church of Jim Crow in these words:

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{17} Dwight W. Culver, Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church, (New Haven, 1953), p. 325.
As an institution, we, the church, must cleanse our own temples of the sin of race discrimination, segregation and Jim Crow and thereby make ourselves more fit to minister to the soul and spirit of man, not the white man, not the yellow man, or the brown man, the red man, the black man, but man.\(^{18}\)

One of the most far-reaching resolutions by an individual church group prior to 1954 was made by the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1943. In a report in the *Living Church*, it stated:

1) Fellowship is essential to Christian worship. Since there is no racial distinctions in the mind of the Father, but all are one in Jesus Christ, we dare not break our Christian fellowship by any attitude or act in the house of God which marks our brethren of other races as unequal or inferior.

2) Fellowship is essential in Church administration. Through the privilege of exercising initiative and responsibility in church affairs, through fair representation and voting power in all its legislative assemblies, will Negro churchmen be assured that their fellowship in the Episcopal Church is valid and secure.

3) High standards must be maintained in every department of our work with the Negro. This principle applies to buildings, equipment, maintenance, personal and general policy in the case of institutions, and especially to training and support of the ministry. Where separate facilities are still maintained, they would provide the same opportunities as those which are available to other racial groups.

4) It is both the function and the task of the church to set the spiritual and moral goals for society, and to bear witness to their validity by achieving them in her own life. The church should not only insure to members of all races full and free participation in worship, she should also stand for fair and just access to educational, social and health services, and for equal economic opportunity without compromise, or self-consciousness of apology. In these ways the church will demonstrate her belief that God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.\(^{19}\)

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Other groups and organizations worked for the relieving of racial segregation and prejudice within the church. In 1943 an undertaking known as the "Missionary Education Movement" did wide-scale work in the preparation of study materials for more than 40 denominational groups affiliated with it. During the years of 1943 and 1944, this organization devoted its entire work to the subject "The Church and America's Peoples." The National Conference of Christians and Jews set up commissions and committees which gave leadership through the preparation of study materials and projects for local churches. These materials were given a wide distribution among the members of the organization.

During this time the Negro leaders were not silent concerning the problem of segregation in the church. In 1944 a group of 100 Protestant Negro leaders made the following statement to white churchmen:

Freedom of worship, if it means anything, means freedom to worship God across racial lines and freedom for a man or woman to join the church of his or her choice, irrespective of race. Segregated churches fall short of the requirements of the Christian ideal. . . . When the Church presents the open door, we may still have what we call Negro and white churches and they may be separate churches, but not racially segregated churches. . . . Either the Church must be actually and potentially a Church for all the people, irrespective of race or color, or it should cease to proclaim the doctrine of Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.


21Pope, "Caste in the Church," p. 103.
Another Negro leader, in a more pessimistic vein, set forth the choice for the Negro in 1944 by stating that the Negro could expect no immediate and important changes in the present condition and thus must accept the injustice and inequality of our society as being so rooted and grounded that nothing short of a long process of education could relieve it. He advocated that the Negro accept the imposed dualism under which he lived and that he use it to the fullest by playing the true role of a minority within the nation and thus avoiding violence. This to him was the only Christian and modern solution to the problem. 22

In 1947 there were four types of segregation in the Catholic Church. 23 First, there was the "traditional" type which was a relic of earlier slavery and post-slavery conditions. This type was observed principally in the old parishes of the Catholic districts of Maryland and Louisiana. It was coupled with a form of paternalism and was varied in its discriminatory effects according to local attitudes. One would find two races worshipping in common in the same church, and receiving the same sacraments, but a complete biracialism would prevail in public worship and in details of the ministry and church organization. The second type was "compensatory segregation." In this type were listed the separate institutions which were

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maintained because it was thought to be the only means under the circumstances where the church could provide facilities for minority groups. This segregated feature was not one merely of survival but was regarded as a necessary alternative to complete neglect. The third type was "theoretical or planned segregation." This was a deliberate instrument of ecclesiastical policy which rationalized the separate institutions on the theory that it was the best way to handle the problem of the Negro. The fourth type of segregation was "voluntary segregation." Separation of institutions of this nature could be found within any minority group. There was, for example, in the Catholic church an all-Negro sisterhood, the existence of which need not imply exclusion from the sisterhoods which were predominantly white.

According to Vincent Waters, Bishop of Raleigh, North Carolina, the beginning of segregation in the Catholic Church in North Carolina was to "give special impetus to the missionary work among the colored people." Several years ago there were no special churches for colored but all worshipped God together irrespective of race. Former Bishops contracted with various religious communities for specialized work among the colored people and the establishment of special churches and schools for them. This did not mean that the Catholic Church abandoned the teaching of "one fold and one shepherd" or that the Negroes were forbidden to

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worship in any Catholic church except those especially provided for them. It meant that there was no division, but simply that special attention was given to a few. However, this did not deny the fact that separate churches did exist and that the problem was deeper than appeared on the surface. 25

An editorial which appeared in May 1947 in America, an official Catholic publication, stated that "it cannot be too strongly emphasized that racial segregation is a moral question; in plain words, that it is a grave sin, just as adultery and murder are grave sins." 26 By 1947 the Catholic aim was complete integration in the church, and full and complete integration of the Negro in the Catholic Church in the United States was a future certainty. Yves Congar said,

Any form of racism, even in modified guise, attacks the very heart of Christianity . . . There is no more church for each race or nation than there is a God for each nation or race. 27

In 1948 a poll was made of a group of Methodist ministers and superintendents on the possibility of a non-segregated church. 28 Of the


26 LaFarge, "Caste in the Church," p. 106.


500 questionnaires checked there were representatives from both the North and the South and from both the Negro and white races. One of the statements to be checked was, "A Christian goal is a non-segregated church in a non-segregated society." Fifty four per cent of the white superintendents agreed, 26 disagreed and 20 per cent left the statement unmarked. Among the ministers the agreements were higher but not complete. Geographically 75 per cent of the superintendents replying from the Western and the two Northern jurisdictions agreed and 10 per cent disagreed. In the two southern jurisdictions 37 per cent agreed and 41 per cent disagreed. The Negroes who answered were unanimous in approving non-segregation as a Christian goal. The plan was not carried out but it did indicate the feeling of those questioned.

John H. Marian, Jr. of Richmond, Virginia, headed a committee that presented a document concerning the problem of segregation to the 1949 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Several items were included in the recommendations. It recognized that the conflict over civil rights had a great significance to the nation as a whole since it is a problem of paramount moral importance to every individual. It pointed out that the South's insistence on state's rights had deep roots in southern history and feelings, but the claims of the American minorities to full civil rights had a sound moral and historical basis. It stated that the South had made commendable progress in extending and protecting
civil rights of its minority peoples, but that those rights were still widely denied or restricted. It was pointed out that the large unfinished task in the field of education and action which was before the churches must be undertaken in order to preserve their vitality.\(^{29}\) The Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., called upon its congregations to offer membership without regard to race and color in 1952.\(^{30}\)

The first time a West Virginia institution of higher learning definitely abolished racial segregation was in the church-related West Virginia Wesleyan College at Buckhannon. In the fall of 1949 the Methodist college admitted Negroes as regular students eligible for degrees. At the time they admitted Negroes the state of West Virginia prohibited teaching of white and colored in any state or tax supported school.\(^{31}\) Another church related incident regarding race relations occurred in 1952 when the delegates to the regional conference of Methodist students voted to boycott swimming facilities at the assembly grounds.\(^{32}\) They voted 250 to 12 to boycott the facilities on the official conference grounds until the management lifted its ban on interracial use of the lake.


\(^{32}\) "Seek to End Segregation in Methodist Church," *Christian Century*, LXIX (July 9, 1952), p. 797.
Plans were in process in 1936 to divide the Methodist Church into six jurisdictional conferences, each to elect its own bishops and exercising, independent of one another, great autonomous powers. There was to be one jurisdiction, known as the Central Jurisdiction, that would be an all Negro jurisdiction. Actually, the plan would make formal and official a plan of segregation in the church. A vote taken in 1936 regarding the proposed Central Jurisdiction showed a significant portion of white Methodists were not only unconvinced of the merit of segregation in the church, but were willing to oppose the same. Forty one per cent of the whites and 76 per cent of the Negroes responded to the questionnaires. Among the ministers responding 583 were in favor of the plan and 823 were against it. The laymen responding opposed the plan 477 to 253. Nevertheless, the Central Jurisdiction was established in the Methodist Church in 1940 as a concession to bring the southern Methodist Church into union.

One of the major reasons why the South favored the plan of the Central Jurisdiction, no doubt, was because it contained all of the Negro conferences. Many in the South felt that this was the best plan that the Methodist Church could work out relative to the problem. An editor of the Alabama

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35 "Seek to End Segregation in Methodist Church," p. 797.
Christian Advocate wrote in 1951 that there never would have been unification in the church if some such arrangement as the Central Jurisdiction had not been adopted. He contended that the Negro had a greater voice in the Central Jurisdiction than they had ever had in the affairs of the church. Writing in defense of the Central Jurisdiction plan, Lewis N. Sturkey said that the plan was in the best interest of the colored man and for once people should arise above prejudice and think in terms as to what is best for the colored man. He said the Negro would have a greater opportunity and voice in the religious development of his people under that plan than any other.

Not all were satisfied with the arrangement of this plan—especially the Negro himself. D. R. Fletcher of Philadelphia said, "We should get the record straight. It is charged by many white leaders of the church that we Negroes are satisfied with the jurisdictional arrangement and with a segregated church society. We are not." At a meeting of this all-Negro jurisdictional conference held in Philadelphia in 1952, the segregated status of the Negro in the church was referred to as "second class citizenship." It was said that the church must be a brotherhood


39."Seek to End Segregation in Methodist Church," p. 797.
embracing all races in one great fellowship of love and equality without any semblance of racial inferiority and superiority. A group of 168 Negro ministers of the Methodist Church attending a segregated jurisdictional institute in Houston denounced segregation within the Methodist Church as "unchristian and a betrayal of our faith." Many individuals went so far as to advocate complete abolition of the Central Jurisdiction and that the 350,000 members be incorporated in the five geographical jurisdictions.

Despite such scattered dissent, what the church did for the Negro prior to 1954 was largely within the pattern of segregation. This was true of the Protestant Churches as well as the Catholic Church. The difference is to be found in the fact that most Protestant churches are to a greater extent a social organization as well as a place of worship; the Catholic Church placed more emphasis on worship and was more nearly an altar before which men are equal. Gradually over the years prior to 1954 the churches became sensitive to America's race problem. After the first World War it condemned lynchings and violence; during the depression it called for equal opportunity of work; during World War II came the recognition of racial discrimination in political, economic and civic affairs. After the war pronouncements began to be made from the growing ranks of those who believed the heart


of the problem of Negro-white relations was segregation—in employment, in education, in housing, and in the church. However, there was little evidence that the convictions of the rank-and-file membership of the various churches were greatly influenced by the official actions.

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42 Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro, p. 50.
CHAPTER II

ACTIONS OF COLLECTIVE CHURCHES SINCE MAY 17, 1954

Some church groups and organizations, so far as official records are concerned, have no policy with regard to the matter of segregation within the church or in the matter of racial tensions generally. This is true in part because they either do not recognize it as a problem or because no tensions are prevalent within that particular church. In some instances where the problem is recognized, the church has formulated no policy relative to it. It has assumed that the problem is inherent in society and therefore inevitable, and that there is nothing that the church can do about it. In other instances, the church recognizes the problem but assumes that it has no greater significance than any other of human relationship which must be solved by a change of attitudes of individuals. Believing that the attitude of man can be changed through teaching and conversion, its policy is simply to convert more individuals.¹

Many churchmen have spoken out as individuals, or as representatives of administrative bodies, against discrimination, but generally speaking

the churches have moved cautiously in meeting the real issue of segregation within the church. There are three major groups among the ministers of the various churches relative to the problem. There are those who defend segregation not only as a way of life but also as the teaching of the Word of God. They, therefore, pronounce their blessings upon it. There are many other ministers, probably a majority among the preachers of the South, who believe segregation is contrary to the purposes of God but who have decided for the time being to remain silent on the issue. They may follow this policy out of fear of the consequences of any other course, or out of a sincere conviction that in the long run it will best serve the church and the problem. The third group, which in most sections of the South is a small minority, not only believe that segregation is wrong but say so in private and from their pulpits. A poll of the Southern clergy, made by the Pulpit Digest, a nondenominational monthly publication, showed that the majority of the Protestant preachers favored integration and obedience to the Supreme Court's ruling in this respect. In only about twenty churches and institutions, where they took positive action regarding the problem of segregation have ministers been displaced because of their actions.

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2 Thomas B. Maston, Segregation and Desegregation (New York, 1959), pp. 36-37.


There are six degrees in the pattern of segregation in the church. The first is avowed support of integration and the practice of it in the organization of the church and fellowship. The second is silent acceptance. Segregation has been no problem to these churches and they plan to deal with it strictly through conversion. The third is apologetic compliance. They have adopted the policy but are waiting for a gradual process of education and social change. The fourth degree is strategic tension. This pattern challenges the community pattern by demonstrating practical and appropriate ways of modifying the pattern of the community. The fifth is the repudiation of, but compliance with, the law. They practice integration in membership but do so only so far as is permitted by the laws and customs of the community. The sixth degree is the rejection of the community pattern and open challenge to law. While no example of a church with this pattern is known, it is certain that some church leaders advocate this policy.

The Federal Council of Churches was among the first to hail the Supreme Court's decision outlawing segregation in public schools and to declare it as "a milestone in the achievement of human rights." The Council also declared that the pattern of racial discrimination was an offense against God:

The problems of race, difficult as they are, insoluble as they sometimes appear to be, provide an opportunity for Christians . . .

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5 Intergroup Relations, pp. 42-44.
6 "What Will the Churches Do?" p. 17.
The whole pattern of racial discrimination is an unutterable offense against God, to be endured no longer. It is the duty of the Church to protest against any law or arrangement that is unjust to a human being. Some of its members may even feel bound to disobey such law. The church cannot approve of any law which discriminates on the grounds of race.7

The Council's division of Foreign Missions and Christian Life and Work met in Boston, December, 1954, and from this meeting came forth a resolution urging churchgoers everywhere to demonstrate principles of Christian brotherhood by combating injustice, discrimination and segregation based on color.8 It also commended church bodies for speaking out against racial exclusiveness, but said they needed to increase their efforts to actually wipe out the practice of segregation. The National Council said, "The decision will test the good will and discipline of people in many communities."9 At the closing session of the division of foreign missions of the National Council, December 11, 1958, there was noted a deep concern over racial segregation and they called on all constituent churches affiliated with the Council "to promote at every level at home and abroad equality, justice and unrestricted fellowship in the fulfillment of our world Christian mission."10

Almost all of the leading church groups rapidly endorsed the Supreme Court's decision. In fact, Religious News Service reported that

9"What Will the Churches Do?" p. 17.
10Saint Louis Post Dispatch, December 11, 1958.
between June 1 and June 23, 1954, the ruling was endorsed by eighteen Protestant church bodies in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas and Missouri. 11

The Florida Council of Churches in October, 1954, made the following resolution:

Be it resolved . . . The Florida Council of Churches go on record as: Favoring this decision of the Supreme Court . . . which provides equality and justice to all the citizens of this great nation regardless of color. Urging the people of this state of Florida to remember their obligations as a people under God and to act in charity, tolerance and wisdom in bringing this state into conformity with the will of the conscience of the nation as expressed through the supreme judicial body of the United States. Calling all the people represented by the member bodies of this Council of Churches to prayer and prayerful study of the problem that Christian principles and not worldly prejudices may prevail in the solution of this difficult social problem now confronting the people of the state of Florida. 12

Individual churches saw a different response, however. A survey taken by the Miami Herald revealed that the churches of Miami, Florida were slow to do and say anything about the problem of segregation. 13 The questionnaire was sent to all Roman Catholic, Jewish and Protestant ministers. The ministers of the Disciples of Christ, Christian Science, Church of God, Congregational Christian, Jehovah's Witness, Church of Latter Day Saints, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic Churches all ignored

the questionnaire. Half of the ministers who responded said they had never mentioned the problem in a sermon or had taken a public stand on the question. Those who had taken such a stand favored integration of the races six to one, but in different degrees.

The state Church Council of Georgia pled for toleration in regard to the problem. The executive committee of the Georgia Council of Churches asked all Christians in the state to oppose racial discrimination. They called on all church groups to make a "calm, intelligent Christian study of the issues involved"\(^\text{14}\) and to speak openly and uncompromisingly for action in accordance with the principles of Christianity. A statewide segregation study commission was set up in Georgia under the direction of Mrs. Robert MacDougall of Atlanta who represented united churchwomen's groups, state league of women voters and B'nai B'rith. This group also suggested that Georgia comply with the Supreme Court's decision. A group of seven men, representing some of the leading denominations of Atlanta, agreed that the pattern of segregation could not be defended on the basis of Christian principles.\(^\text{15}\) Each also agreed that in all probability it would take a considerable amount of time before the ideals represented would be generally accepted. Ministers of Atlanta also showed a concern about the grave issue of segregation in these words:


\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 987.
These are days of tremendous political and social tension throughout our entire world, but particularly in our nation and beloved southland. The issues which we face are not simple, nor can they be resolved overnight. Because the questions which confront us are in so many respects moral and spiritual as well as political, it is appropriate and necessary that men who occupy places of responsibility in the churches should not be silent concerning their convictions. 16

These ministers set forth some basic principles for consideration: the fact that freedom of speech must be preserved, and as Americans and Christians one must obey the law; the public school system must not be destroyed; the hatred and scorn for those of other races cannot be justified, and communication between responsible leaders of the races must be maintained; the realization that the problem could not be solved on the strength of their own wisdom.

In 1956 the executive board of the Georgia Council of Churches, representing twenty-one of the member denominations said:

Free schools, freedom of speech, press and pulpit are foundation stones of a free nation. Let us, in the name of the Lord, resist any encroachment on our God-given freedoms. 17

In 1957 a group of eighty white Atlanta ministers said:

Resorts to violence and to economic reprisals as a means to avoid the granting of legal rights to other citizens are never justified . . . We believe that the sentiments which we express are shared


by a multitude of our fellow citizens . . . who know that hatred, defiance and violence are not the answer to our problems, but who have been without voice and have found no way to make their influence effective . . . To suggest that a recognition of the rights of Negroes to the full privileges of American citizenship . . . would inevitably result in intermarriage is to cast as serious and unjustified an assertion upon the white race as upon the Negro race. 18

The New Orleans Council of Churches made an official statement approving the Court's decision on June 23, 1954, as "consistent with the Spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ" 19 and stated that it was nothing more than the official position which Christian churches had followed for many years. The Council urged the legislature to find just ways of implanting the decision by exercising clear and calm judgment and Christian good will. They confessed that they had not yet achieved what was believed to be the will of God in this area of human relations, and said, "We face the critical adjustment between the absolute Christian ideal and the human level upon which a retarded and hesitating Christian conscience moves." 20

Texas church leaders soon after May 17, 1954, went on record as favoring the Supreme Court's famous decision and opposing any effort which would nullify the ruling. A group of leading Texas churchmen under the auspices of the Texas council of churches made a statement

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20 Keeman, "Church Leaders on School Segregation," p. 379.
of opposition of all efforts to nullify the supreme law. Some racists of Texas had proposed to bar members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from any public employment, the state to help pay for the education of students in private schools, and to require advocates of integration to register with the secretary of state.\footnote{Ronnie Dugger, "Texas Christians Stem the Tide," \textit{Christian Century}, LXXI (May 26, 1954), p. 912.} It was this type of legislative effort that the Texas churchmen opposed.

The following statement was adopted at the 1956 Texas Council of Churches' General Assembly:

1. That we assert our conviction that racial discrimination is contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. That we recommend to our constituent church bodies that they caution their members to think carefully before joining or giving endorsement to any type of councils, by whatever name, which have as their purpose the circumventing of the Supreme Court decision on segregation in public education.

3. That they urge their members to oppose all legal subterfuges which seek to evade compliance with the Supreme Court decision.

4. That they urge their members to practice Christian patience and forbearance and pray daily for God's guidance as we deal with this difficult problem in human relationships and move forward to a higher plane of Christian democracy.\footnote{Texas Churches \textit{Speak on Integration} (Austin, 1956), p. 1.}

A group of three hundred Dallas, Texas, ministers, representing thirteen church groups, made the following observations and recommendations concerning the problem of segregation:
1. These problems can be solved only as people seek God's help.

2. Law and order must be maintained as Dallas faces desegregation of its public schools.

3. Churches, service clubs and community organizations have a responsibility to aid in the solution of the problem.

4. The citizens of Dallas have a responsibility to assist the School Boards as they attempt to lead the community.

5. Christian parents can be of great help in creating proper attitudes towards race.

6. The exchange of views among people of different races is necessary for a reasonable solution to the problem. 23

The ministers did add, however, that they were speaking as individuals and not necessarily as representatives of any group or organization.

A group of Arkansas religious leaders also spoke out against legislative bills designed to curtail integration. The two bills which they opposed called for the establishment of a state supremacy commission similar to one appointed in Mississippi and provided that all organizations register with the state a list of all members and finances. Many of the religious leaders in the state joined in expressing their opposition to the two proposals. Typical of the arguments against the measures was made by J. W. Bryson, a Pine Bluff Presbyterian minister when he said,

Enforced segregation of the races is discrimination which is out of harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures, Christian theology and ethics. The segregation bills before the legislature have far-reaching implications affecting basic human freedoms. 24

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In spite of the churchmen's opposition, the bills passed the Arkansas senate by some six votes.

Billy Graham, a noted religious evangelist, stated in a radio broadcast over several Arkansas stations,

The violence, the hatred, the intolerance come from man's rebellion against the moral laws of God. We must love our fellow man . . . we must love him without ever thinking about his race or the color of his skin.  

This statement was made to the people of Arkansas during the crisis in Little Rock over the problem of segregation in the public schools.

A Protestant Conference on human relations was conducted in Nashville, Tennessee in 1957 under the auspices of the Tennessee Council of Churches and the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen. Four thousand five hundred were invited but only 350 attended. Apparently human relations were synonymous with race relations and the problem of segregation.

From this conference did come five recommendations:

1. More seminary training in interracial work;

2. Negro and white congregations should exchange ministers occasionally;

3. Church members should be sent to interracial conferences;

4. White and Negro ministers should bring their congregations together for joint counseling before school integration begins;

5. Protestant churches should sponsor lectures on the focal points of whites' fears---intermarriage, Negro health and morals, etc.

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The Kentucky Council of Churches made the following statement approving of the Court's decision in April, 1955:

We approve and commend the decision of the Supreme Court concerning segregation in the public schools and . . . we call upon our churches, our agencies and our institutions to re-examine themselves in light of the implications of Christ's gospel and to initiate and encourage voluntary, racially inclusive community groups to plan for full compliance with the gospel of Christ, as well as definite techniques for full compliance within their own bodies. 27

The Virginia Council of Churches approved the decision in October, 1954 with this statement:

We call upon the churches of Virginia and their people to face with resolution the enormous task of helping the citizens of this commonwealth to make the necessary adjustments to the Supreme Court's decision which is in accord with Christian principles. We urge all Christians to move with Christian patience and hope upon a course of good faith and wisdom in order that they may not become victims of despair. 28

Although the Virginia Council approved the decision, there were difficulties in implementing the Council's actions. For example, in 1958 the Prince County, Virginia schools were expecting a court edict ordering them to integrate. The Educational Corporation had carefully drawn a plan by which they could subvert the law. As soon as the edict would come, they were to close all twenty schools. Then tuition-free private schools would be opened in the ten or twelve church buildings in the county. These schools would be provided for the white students, but no provision


28 Ibid., p. 166.
was made for the 1,860 Negro students. Four of the leading churches—the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal—agreed to offer their buildings for the private schools.\textsuperscript{29} Much opposition arose from church leaders throughout the nation to this plan. W. M. Elliott, Jr., moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and minister in Dallas, said,

I am opposed to the churches allowing their facilities to be used in this way... the church must not be used by any group to destroy our public schools, or to circumvent the decisions of our courts.\textsuperscript{30}

Benjamin E. Mays, president of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia said "...Churches should not support the state in this evil circumvention of the court's decision."\textsuperscript{31}

One writer recognized the great influence the churches would exert in this effort. He said:

They also need the sanction of religion for their morally and legally wrong enterprise, for without it many people will hesitate to support the enterprise. We hope the churches realize that the whole scheme will collapse if they refuse to give it their sanction. On the other hand, if they bless it or cooperate with it, they will be held responsible for its consequences, which will be grave indeed.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{29}"Church Accessories to the Crime," \textit{Christian Century}, LXXIII (January 8, 1958), p. 36.


\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 124.

Billy Graham conducted an evangelistic meeting in the city coliseum at Charlotte, North Carolina in 1958. It was hailed by many as an example to the South, for both Negroes and whites attended the meeting and sat side by side. Negro ministers participated in the services and Negro singers were a part of the 2,000 voice choir. A Charlotte minister wrote that on one occasion he worked in counseling beside a Negro minister who had as one of his charges a white person who had responded to Graham's invitation. 33

The North Carolina Council of Churches approved the decision of the Supreme Court in July, 1954. It urged all of the represented churches in the council to accept the decision and endeavor, in the spirit of Christ, to realize integration in the public school system. 34

The most widespread change in regard to segregation among the collective groups of religious organizations in the South was in the integration of ministerial associations. Twenty such instances were found between May 1954 and May 1956. 35 Four of these groups went even further and elected Negro officers, and the Episcopalians in Oklahoma and Texas elected Negroes as delegate and alternate to their national conventions.

34"Protestantism Speaks on Justice," p. 166.
Many of the church related schools were nonsegregated in 1954. In the Southern and border states, twenty-one Catholic institutions, twelve Protestant seminaries and thirteen church related colleges or universities which had been previously all white were then opened at least partially to Negroes. 36

Churches, insofar as they approached the problem of segregation at all, sought principally by educational means to improve interracial understanding and cooperation among the races. The chief contribution of the collective groups was their pronouncements concerning approval of the court's decision and urging their constituent members to cooperate in applying the principles set forth by it.

The General Assembly of the Council of Churches claimed that in 1957 ten per cent of the nation's churches were said to be integrated and that that was five times the percentage in 1947. This percentage figure includes all churches in the nation, and, no doubt, the figure was much smaller in the South. Francis Pickens Miller, a Presbyterian lay leader of Charlottesville, Virginia said, "... that in Virginia and a half dozen other Southern states, racial relations were steadily deteriorating." 37 A survey sponsored by the National Council in 1958 found that while most church groups had endorsed the Supreme Court's decision, only a few of


37Arkansas Gazette, December 5, 1957.
them had undertaken initial efforts to respond to the spirit of the decision, and none had made any substantial move toward integrating local congregations. One Protestant lay leader asserted that 85 per cent of all Southern churches were still segregated and added, "Lots of them are going to stay that way for a while." It was freely acknowledged by many church leaders that they did not expect many churches in areas with large Negro populations to do much at first toward desegregation, but they expected the official resolutions to add strength to the minister's support of the decision before their congregations. One individual wrote, "Even the diehards down here recognize that it is only a matter of time; that segregation is not God's idea, but man's, and they are trying to find ways of accomplishing God's will without splitting the churches." Oscar Lee, head of the National Council's department of racial and cultural relations admitted in 1955 that the churches in all sections had a long way to go to achieve complete fellowship according to the mandate of the Christian gospel. But he added that it was very encouraging to note the progress that had been made since World War II and it showed that many American Christians were conscience stricken about the churches lagging behind other institutions and services in lowering racial barriers.

38 Chattanooga Times, September 29, 1958.


40 St. Louis Post Dispatch, October 9, 1955.
Merrimon Cunniggim, dean of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, commented on the reasons some give for their hesitancy in accepting integration. He said:

"the Negroes lack the standards in health, morality and marital fidelity," of whites. Then, if so, let's get to work on them. What do we do when the house catches fire, even the back room? Take a walk? . . . Most of us are getting tired of seeing ministers and laymen react as Southerners first and Christians second. 41

A challenging thought is presented to church groups in the words of Robbins Ralph when he said,

I love this church, and the people in it: I love them very greatly. Could I come to church some Sunday morning with a Negro friend and could we worship quietly together? I don't know. We had better do some thinking and praying about these things. 42

Several church groups have taken that advice. They have made pronouncements concerning their approval of the Court's decision and expressed a willingness to work for the implementation of it and toward an unsegregated church. Quite obviously, however, the results of these moves could be measured only in terms of the reactions of individual church leaders and congregations.

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CHAPTER III

ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CHURCH GROUPS

CONCERNING SEGREGATION

The Baptist Church

The Baptist Church is one of the largest and most influential church groups in the South. It has approximately seven million members and its reaction to the problem of segregation could have a great influence on the entire South. As early as 1947 the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a charter of principles protesting against racial injustice and prejudice and endorsing the movement of the Negro for the rights granted him under the constitution. ¹

When the Supreme Court made its decision concerning segregation in the public schools in 1954, the Baptist Church quickly endorsed it. At the Southern Baptist Convention which met in St. Louis in June, 1954, the issue was brought before the 9,000 individuals assembled. After the resolution was read, J. W. Stover, the president, recognized the opponents of the resolution who presented the case for the minority of the convention. They were answered by J. B. Weatherspoon, professor of the Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, who said,

We have over our heads the banner "forward with Jesus Christ." Our only question is, What is the most Christian thing to do? If we withdraw this motion, we will say to the people of the United States count Southern Baptists out in this matter of equal justice for all. I do not believe we want to say that. ²

The resolution before the convention stated that the decision was "in harmony with the constitutional guarantee of equal freedom to all citizens and with the Christian principles of equal justice and love for all men."³ The resolution passed with less than one hundred dissenting votes. The Christian Life Commission, the official group of the Southern Baptist Church to study and make recommendations in the field of race relations, in 1954 urged the leadership of the Baptist church to use positive thought and planning so that the crisis in the problem of segregation would not create new and bitter prejudices.⁴ A. C. Miller, head of the Christian Life Commission stated:

The decision was the inevitable result of social progress based on the Christian teaching that all men are included in the love of God and have dignity and worth in the sight of God . . . The decision will be accepted by the majority of our people in the south.⁵


³Keeman, "Church Leaders on School Segregation," p. 379.

⁴Next Steps in the South (Atlanta, 1956), p. 5.

Meeting in Houston in 1958, this group commended all the ministers and laymen who had taken a stand on the issue of segregation, and referred to the social conflict as a challenge to every citizen. 6

The American Baptist Convention in 1956 adopted a statement in support of the decision. It stated that in recognition of the tremendous strides that had been made in America during the past ten years toward integration, it was but the logical step for the Supreme Court to thus declare that segregated schools were unconstitutional. The resolution stated that the convention fully supported the Supreme Court decision and deplored the resistance to it in the states where integration of public schools had met organized opposition. 7

A group of Baptist leaders signed an appeal for a Christian spirit in race relations in 1956. These leaders, speaking as individuals, appealed to their Baptist brethren, white and Negro, to give careful consideration to the following facts:

1. God created man in his own image. Therefore, every man possesses infinite worth and should be treated with respect as a person.

2. Christ died for all men. Therefore, the Christian view of man, every man, must reflect the spirit of the cross.

3. God is no respecter of persons. Therefore, prejudice against persons or mistreatment of persons on the grounds of race is contrary to the will of God.

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6 Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 33.

4. Christ said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Therefore, Christians are obligated to manifest active good will toward all people and to help them to achieve their fullest potentialities as persons.

5. Christian love, as exemplified by Christ, is the supreme law for all human relations. Therefore, Christians have the assurance that such love, conscientiously practiced, will resolve tensions and bring harmony and good will in race relations.

6. All true Christians are brothers in Christ and children of God. Therefore, they are obligated to cultivate prayerful concern for one another and to show confidence in one another.

7. Every person is accountable to God. Therefore, the right of individual opinion, tested by the teachings of Christ, and of freedom to express it, always in the spirit of Christian love, should be granted to all and respected by all.  

The Baptist Convention of Texas in 1954 urged Texas Baptists to assume the initiative in working out a Christian solution to the race problem, and not allow demagogues or radicals to rob Christians of the moral leadership which God wants them to exert in the problem of segregation. In 1956 Texas Baptists adopted a five-point pledge against racial violence. It urged Baptists:

1. To behave with charity and good will toward all persons in a time of racial crisis;

2. not to engage in, nor to encourage, any action involving or implying violence;

3. not to join with any group in actions which a person would not carry out openly as an individual;

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9 *Texas Churches Speak*, p. 5.
4. to encourage moderation and patience at all times by words and action;

5. to show a friendship and consideration for persons of all races with whom a person is associated. ¹⁰

On the other hand, however, Baptists point out that their literature does not say that one is not a Christian if he opposes the Supreme Court decision or advocates segregation. One leader said:

Our principle service is to encourage our constituents to make systematic studies of Bible teachings on the subject of race, primarily to provide instruction on what the Bible does not teach. One purpose, of course, is to counter the contention that segregation has biblical sanction. But never has Baptist literature carried even an insinuation that one is not Christian who opposes the Supreme Court decision or the official statements of the Southern Convention. ¹¹

Porter Routh, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention said,

I'm sure that the great majority of our ministers, and of our Southern Baptist members in their best moments, believe in the worth, dignity and value of every individual... However, when it comes to particular steps for integration--in schools, church, or elsewhere--strong community feeling in the Deep South makes it risky to advocate such a course from the local pulpit. ¹²

The "risky," no doubt, refers to the fact that a Baptist preacher can be fired as quickly as the congregation can take a vote. For instance,


¹¹Hays, A Southern Moderate Speaks, p. 212.

¹²Louisville Courier-Journal, November 9, 1957.
Henry A. Buchanan of the Shellman Baptist Church in Georgia, said, "The unpleasant truth is that the Supreme Court has rendered a just decision and we must accept it simply because it is right."\textsuperscript{13} It was this statement that led to his resignation at the Friendship and Brooksville Baptist Churches.

Some influential Baptist leaders and groups have spoken against integration. Earl Anderson, minister of the Munger Place Baptist Church in Dallas, gave several reasons why he felt it was not Christian to invite Negroes into white worship services. He stated,

1. Negroes have their own churches.

2. Negroes don't invite whites to join them.

3. Whites should treat Negroes as Christians---in their own churches.

4. Negroes best serve God in their own churches.

5. Negroes who understand God's teaching don't want to mix with whites.

6. Negroes have as much right to a pure race.

7. Negroes believe mixing races is disobedient to the word of God.

8. An aim of Communism is to "mongrelize the human race."\textsuperscript{14}

W. A. Criswell, minister of the First Baptist Church in Dallas, the largest Baptist church in the Southern Convention, also opposed

\textsuperscript{13} Wesberry, "Court Decision Rocks Georgia," p. 988.

\textsuperscript{14} "Muted Trumpets in Dixie," \textit{Time}, LXVII (April 15, 1956), p. 50.
integration in the church. He advocated that religious groups should "stick to their own kind... Negroes in our churches could never excel; they could never grow; they would be miserable, and it is a kindness to them to send them to their own churches."\textsuperscript{15}

In response to the statement of the Christian Life Commission's report that the segregation issue was not principally an economic, political or cultural problem, but basically a moral and religious problem, an eighty-four year old Baptist, W. M. Nevins of Lexington, Kentucky, said the teaching of equal but separate treatment for Negroes was not un-Christian and that he could not "stand by while the report is rammed down our throats without objection."\textsuperscript{16}

One of the state conventions which did reject the higher convention ruling was the Georgia Baptist Convention in 1956. It turned down by a three to one vote the endorsement of the approval of the Supreme Court's decision.\textsuperscript{17} The same convention had stated in a mutual policy statement in November, 1954 that the issue of segregation should be met by Christians on the grounds of spiritual teaching and that every man is embraced in the love of God and has value in the sight of God and is included in the plan of God.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15}"Segregation in the Church," \textit{Newsweek}, LXIV (March 12, 1956), p. 64.
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Richmond News Leader}, December 17, 1954.
\textsuperscript{17}Don Shoemaker, \textit{With All Deliberate Speed} (New York, 1957), p. 25.
\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Augusta Constitution}, November, 1957.
The American Baptist Association, a missionary group, overwhelmingly adopted an anti-integration resolution. Out of three thousand delegates only one opposed the statement which said that God had made the races distinct and scattered them when they attempted to integrate in Old Testament times. Just as God had segregated the animals into herds, flocks and coveys, He had drawn lines of demarcation between the Negro and white races. Seven Baptist churches in Sussex County, Virginia, opposed integration in response to the Baptist General Association of Virginia's endorsement of the Supreme Court's decision. The resolutions of the local churches expressed opposition to integration of the races in the churches and schools.

An incident concerning activities of the Baptist Laymen's League in Alabama was described in the New Republic in early 1959. This organization had as its purpose exposing of integrationists in the churches. A group of ladies was attending what they called the Fellowship of the Concerned. At a meeting in Montgomery where approximately one hundred ladies attended, one lady was present who said she had been invited by one of the leading Baptist churches of the city. Actually, the lady was sent by the Baptist Laymen's League to spy on the activities and she remained all day to take notes on the proceedings. License numbers were taken down and pictures of the ladies were taken. Anonymous

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19Arkansas Gazette, June 28, 1956.

20Arkansas Gazette, June 1, 1957.
telephone calls were made every few minutes, all night long, and this was continued for several weeks. Threats and vile insults were made because of the participants' stand on segregation. 21

Despite such bitter opposition from individuals and churches, there are examples of the actual integrating of the races in some Baptist churches of the South. In November, 1956, an all-Negro Zion Baptist Church of Louisville, Kentucky, admitted thirteen white persons to its congregation. This move was believed to be the first time a Baptist Church in Kentucky had been interracial since slavery days. The minister of the previous 1,522 member Negro church said they "seem to be enjoying themselves." 22

Another example of an integrated church is the University Baptist Church of Austin, Texas. On July 4, 1944, the minister, Blake Smith, preached a sermon on "Christian Faith and the American Dream" and one leading member promptly withdrew. Another said, "I don't like it either, but I think Jesus did." In 1945 the church voted to abandon separate seating and the first Negro member was accepted in 1950. 23

Four families were known to have withdrawn because of the integration,

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but the minister explained that the integration of twenty five or so Negroes in choir, drama, Sunday school and church suppers had worked perfectly because it had been accepted that it was Christian.\textsuperscript{24}

Brooks Hays, who served as lay leader of the Southern Baptist Convention, explained that many Baptists in the deep South would prefer not to have the subject of segregation discussed, but were gradually being sensitized to the problem.\textsuperscript{25} The average member is increasingly willing to allow the leadership to cope with the problem. Weatherford summarized the work of the Baptists by saying they have shown a concern for the religious welfare of the Negro but have not yet measured up to their great possibilities and responsibilities with reference to the Negro.\textsuperscript{26}

Roman Catholic Church

Although the Catholic Church is not as large in the South as in the North, and does not have as many colored members as some Protestant groups, the fact remains that the actions of the Catholic Church in regard to the problem of segregation will have a great impact on the actions of all the peoples in the South. Thus, the position of the Catholic Church stated by Pope Pius in 1945 that "there remains no other way of salvation than

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\textsuperscript{24}Dugger, "Texas Christians Stem the Tide," p. 913.
\textsuperscript{25}Hays, \textit{A Southern Moderate Speaks}, p. 212.
\textsuperscript{26}Weatherford, \textit{American Churches and the Negro}, p. 253.
\end{flushright}
that of repudiating definitely . . . the pride of race and blood has
considerable significance." 27 This was a recognition by the leader of
Catholicism that the problem existed and that he was willing to acknowledge
it.

A survey was made in the early 1940's by John T. Gillard 28 who
found that there were 296,998 colored Catholics. Of this number 189,423
or 63.7 per cent, were members of colored rather than mixed churches.
He did refer to the fact that all Catholic Churches were open to all regard-
less of race or color, but it was agreed that in the South, where there
were large concentrations of Negroes, that the only practical plan was for
Negroes to have their own churches.

The teaching of the Catholic Church recognized the problem of race
and set forth that it was not racist but indeed the antithesis of racism. In
an official publication, The Catholic Church and the Race Question, it was
stated,

she stands for the unity of the human family, yet for a unity which
does not exclude diversities but rather comprehends them, because
it is "catholic," however, the Church recognizes that in the tem-
poral sphere the coexistence of different human groups within a single
society does present difficult problems, not because of any radical
inequality per se between the races which such groups actually or

27 Henry G. Ruark, "Catholics Challenge Segregation," Christian

28 Weatherford, American Churches and the Negro, p. 266.
allegedly represent, but because the groups as constituted are at different cultural and political levels and hence at different "human" levels. 29

The Catholic teaching concerning social justice and charity is to reconstruct the social order according to the mind of Christ, with each individual and group taking every appropriate action to achieve this goal. Social charity aims at making one take an unselfish and helpful attitude toward his fellowman for the sake of his soul. Good will, tolerance and patience help to encourage and unify the work of social justice. 30

The aim of an integrated Catholic Church is illustrated in the events that occurred in Newton Grove, North Carolina, in 1953. Newton Grove had two Roman Catholic churches two hundred yards apart. The Church of the Holy Redeemer had 350 white members and the Church of St. Benedict had 90 Negro members. Bishop Waters issued a decree that would abolish the two separate churches and create one mixed church. 31 On the first Sunday of June it became officially one mixed congregation. For all three Masses that day, only fifty-eight people came and about half of the number were Negroes. The others remained home or drove twenty-five miles to another church. The merger was not Newton Grove's idea and many


parishioners petitioned Waters and threatened to take their worship elsewhere. In a pastoral letter read in all North Carolina Churches, Waters said,

... There is no segregation of races to be tolerated in any Catholic Church in the diocese of Raleigh. The pastors are charged with the carrying out of this teaching and shall tolerate nothing to the contrary. Otherwise, all special churches for Negroes will be abolished immediately. ... Within the church building itself everyone is given the privilege to sit or kneel wherever he desires and to approach the sacraments without any regard to race or nationality. ... I am not unmindful, as a Southerner, of the force of this virus of prejudice among some persons in the South as well as in the North. ... The virus will not die out of itself: it has to be killed by being exposed to the light of faith.  

The unpleasantness at Newton Grove resulted from a new pattern of thinking which was getting its "baptism of fire." The South, now evolving from the prejudices and traditions of the past, received genuine and visible evidence that the Church was ready to do its part in the formation of a new order of things. 33 After describing the Newton Grove incident and the violent protests of white members, the laity were urged to accept integration in these words:

Since the position of the Church that compulsory racial segregation has no place in God's house is growing daily more manifest, the laity can greatly help to ease the situation by studying her teaching and promoting a genuinely Catholic attitude toward persons of other races. 34

In 1949 the Archdiocese of New Orleans issued a decree that Negroes must be permitted to worship in any Catholic Church on a basis of equality. Apparently, this decree was not rigidly enforced. In March, 1953, Joseph Francis Rummel, archbishop of New Orleans, issued a letter which stated that there should be no racial segregation in church life. He noted the progress that had been made in this respect by the removal of offensive signs in the churches and the integration of various colored units in the church and urged its acceptance by all Catholics. Then in October, 1956, Rummel suspended services at a church at Jesuit Bend, Louisiana, because some members had refused to let a Negro priest offer Mass. He threatened to invoke excommunication for those who opposed this policy. The Vatican publicly commended Rummel's actions and branded the act of the parishioners as "sacrilegious." 

In spite of these strong pronouncements, a group of laymen organized a state-chartered Association of Catholic Laymen to fight the integration of the church. They claimed that the Archbishop was compelling them to go against the way they were reared and against the things they believed. 

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37"Muted Trumpets in Dixie," p. 50.
residence. The Catholic Church in Louisiana was virtually split because Rummel threatened to excommunicate any member who agitated for segregation. 38

The Catholic Church was among the many religious groups that approved the Supreme Court's decision regarding segregation in the public schools. In May, 1954, Maurice V. Sheen of Rock Hill, South Carolina, research director of the Catholic Committee of the South said:

We welcome this decision of the United States Supreme Court, which has clarified the legal principle in the matter and at the same time gives time for the proper implementation of the decision. . . It is possible for us to bring the full force of our total Catholic doctrine and discipline on this problem. 39

Educators from all of the Catholic colleges and universities in the South met in Louisville, Kentucky, November 29, 1954, and strongly endorsed the decision and pledged for themselves "firm moral support to an orderly and reasonably prompt realization of this decision." 40 The Catholic Standard on May 21, 1954 said, "The political and sociological atmosphere of the country has been building up to the point where such a verdict was not only possible but inevitable." 41 Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio, banned racial segregation in all the Catholic schools in his


40 Louisville Times, November 30, 1954.

Archdiocese. The reports indicate that Lucey had begun to experiment several years prior to this with Negro and white classes, and the official ban of segregation was taken as an indication that the tests were satisfactory. The Catholic Committee of the South, an organization of Catholic clergy and laymen, with headquarters in Rock Hill, South Carolina, worked to prepare a comprehensive and practical study on segregation in the Catholic Schools. They endeavored to present a clear statement of Catholic policy relative to the whole problem. The Commission of Human Rights of the Catholic Committee of the South branded organized racism. . . "as anti-American, anti-Catholic, anti-Southern and irreligious." This proclamation drew criticism from the Citizens Council who said there were Catholics among their members.

The Catholic Bishops at their annual meeting in Washington in 1958 gave their views concerning segregation in a statement signed by twelve members of the administrative board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. It stated:

Men are unequal in talent and achievement, but discrimination based on the accidental fact of race or color cannot be reconciled

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44 Shoemaker, With All Deliberate Speed, p. 27.
with the truth that God has created all men with equal rights and equal dignity. 45

This proclamation was approved by all the Bishops convening.

Vincent Waters, the archbishop who gave the ruling concerning the Newton Grove merger, gave his attitude toward the Negro in these words:

The church does not propose tolerance which is negative, but love which is positive. If Christ said love your enemies, we certainly can love our friends. These are our friends and members of our own body, the Church. It is our duty, as Christians of the early days, not only to love them but to help them, to serve them, to help them. We need to help them get better educational facilities, better opportunities for culture, better living conditions, better jobs, better pay, better homes and families, better civic representation and better friendliness in the community, and all of this presupposes the right to worship God freely with us in the Church anywhere. 46

This church group has manifested great concern in regard to the problem of segregation. The Catholic Church has one outstanding advantage over Protestant groups in this respect because of its ecclesiastical type of church government. The high officials of the Catholic Church can make pronouncements and they are binding on all the entire organization even down to the local parish. However, the policies and practices of some Dioceses have varied in regard to pronouncements concerning segregation. Thus, white and Negro Catholics attend the same church and send their children to integrated schools in many sections of the South, while in other regions the segregated policy is still practiced.

45 Louisville Times, November 4, 1958.

Congregational Christian Church

The Congregational Christian Church is stronger in the North than in the South, but it does have several congregations in the southern part of the United States. Although its influence is not as great as some of the larger church groups, the Congregational Christian Church, as well as all religious organizations, potentially exerts tremendous influence on the problem of segregation.

This problem was a major concern to the Congregationalists as early as 1946. A program of emphasis on race relations was adopted for the years of 1946-1948 in the following resolution:

A. The General Council of Congregational Christian Churches endorses the resolution of its Executive Committee taken in opening meeting at Cleveland, Ohio, on January 31, 1946, calling for a major emphasis on race relations for the biennium of 1946-1948 and the coordination of the programs of the several Boards and agencies toward that end.

B. This biennial program of emphasis is to be concerned with relationships between all ethnic, religious, national, and cultural groups, combating not only the sins of racial and national pride but also of religious bigotry.

C. The Executive Committee of the General Council is authorized to establish a widely representative committee of lay people and ministers and to select its membership, which committee shall forward this program of emphasis.

D. The Mission Boards and other national agencies of the denomination, the State Conferences, the Association, and the local churches are urged to cooperate fully in this emphasis, using all at our command to reach the conscience of each member of our Fellowship. 47

47Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro, p. 43.
Again in 1953 the Congregational Christian Church pledged to work for a non-segregated church in a non-segregated society.\textsuperscript{48} However, there was no immediate action taken by this church group to implement this resolution.

The General Council of the Congregational Christian Church was among the religious groups that endorsed the Supreme Court ruling concerning segregation in public schools. In 1954, it said,

\begin{quote}
Be it resolved that we call upon all Americans to undertake timely and tolerant implementation of the Supreme Court decision, and that our Department of Race Relations and the Council for Social Action carry forward such activities as will develop public support for the Supreme Court Decision.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

This group was also among the first on record to take action toward financially aiding any local group of its organization if it was imperiled or lost members by admitting Negroes into its membership. The Board of Home Missions, striving for a racially inclusive Church life at the local level, offered financial support to congregations whose treasury was imperiled by steps toward integration. The Board said that there were no strings attached to their offer of compensation for withdrawn support.\textsuperscript{50}

Herman Long, director of the race relations department of the Board of Home Missions estimated that there was a minimum of 160 unsegregated

\textsuperscript{48}Ruark, "Catholics Challenge Segregation," p. 1107.

\textsuperscript{49}Texas Churches Speak on Integration, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{50}Arkansas Gazette, January 6, 1959.
Christian Churches in the South and that there were interracial ministerial associations in some 20 Southern cities. 51

Church of Christ

The Church of Christ is stronger in the south than in other region of the United States, and differs from other church groups in that there is no organization within the church larger than the local congregation. The church of Christ has no Conventions or Conferences where policies of the church are determined. Consequently no official resolutions on racial problems have been made by this church group.

There are however, schools and colleges maintained by members of the Church of Christ, and papers published by members of the church, schools and publications which often have influence on the thinking of the leaders of the various local congregations. This frequently helps determine the policies regarding such a problem as segregation. One such publication in the Christian Chronicle, an editorial in 1954, stated,

Christ, 2000 years ago, opened the door for the Negro into the church along with everyone else. Why cannot we, mere mortals, have the strength to open our classrooms, dormitories and church pews to them? 52

Carl Spain, Bible instructor at Abilene Christian College, advocated the educational approach to the problem at the annual Bible Lectureship conducted at this college maintained by members of the Church of Christ.

Spain, in a lecture, "Modern Challenges to Christian Morals," before approximately 4,000 members of the Church of Christ from all sections of the United States, said,

... we must resort to the educational approach before we attempt legislation. We must preach righteousness and educate in a Christian way before any legislation will prove effective. Education without legislation is usually more effective than legislation without education. But when people insist on using the Bible to support an un-Christian system of ethics, one can expect that social revolution will follow, with its usual attending evils. God forbid that churches of Christ, and schools operated by Christians, shall be the last strongholds of refuge for socially sick people who have Nazi illusions about the Master Race. 53

This lecture was sanctioned by the vast audience present with frequent, although unusual, "Amens" and a standing ovation at the conclusion of the lesson.

A minister of the Church of Christ, Finis Petty, in a tract which was given wide distribution, said that the Church must maintain the right of every man, regardless of color, by welcoming them into the worship services whenever they so desire. He said, "It would be wonderful if the Church of Christ, having taken its stand to restore New Testament Christianity, could take the lead in restoring this truth also." 54

Another minister of the Church of Christ, Roosevelt Word, mailed a pamphlet to hundreds of influential members of the church urging them


to follow the pattern set by the first church of Christ in the New Testament
and open the doors to all people regardless of race, color or language
and demonstrate before the world Christ's standard of Christianity by
being examples of Christ's way of life. He stated in the pamphlet,

I am not saying it is sinful, and wrong for a Church of Christ to
exist in any race, color or language, I am saying it is sinful and
wrong for any church of Christ... to deny any other races, color
or language an opportunity to work out their soul's salvation with
them because he is not of their race. 55

Word said that churches of Christ should show to the world that God is
real and His commandments are not segregated but are given equally to
all. 56

James Willeford, minister of the Highland Church of Christ, Abilene,
Texas, spoke on the subject "Call No Man Common" over the nationally
broadcast radio program, "The Herald of Truth." He concluded the lesson
by saying,

It has been our purpose in this sermon to present the attitude which
should prevail in the hearts of Christians toward the people of other
races... If we will allow the principles of Christianity to adorn
our everyday living, they will overcome our prejudices and solve
our problems. Let us, as Christians, do our part in making this
world a more pleasant place in which to live, and in making the lives
of underprivileged persons more content and livable, for they are, as
we, created in the image of God. 57

An example of a non-segregated church is the one that meets in

Stillwater, Oklahoma. This particular congregation has several members

56Ibid., p. 5.
of the colored race and all take an active part in the public services of the church. The first twelve Negro members were baptized at Stillwater in 1955. 58

Generally, members of the Church of Christ would not make an issue of the problem, but feel that separate churches are the expedient solutions. As one minister said,

I think we should remain unaffected by what the denominations are doing about segregation, and strive to promote and safeguard the interests of both races by maintaining that separateness which is best for all. 59

Much work has been done by whites among the colored people. It is not an uncommon practice for Negroes to be invited to attend special meetings, vacation Bible schools, and the like, of congregations made up entirely of the white race. It is also not uncommon among the Churches of Christ for white and Negro ministers to exchange pulpits, and for all congregations to work together for a common good.

Disciples of Christ

The Disciples of Christ, commonly known as the Christian Church, have made resolutions and taken definite steps toward integration in the church. In 1949 the International Convention of this church group called

58 Loth, Integration North and South, p. 94.

upon the local congregations to move toward the integration of all races in their membership. The official stand of the Disciples of Christ concerning racial segregation was taken at the International Convention in 1954. The following resolution was quoted in the Southside Christian News, San Antonio, Texas, on February 8, 1960:

Whereas, the Gospel of Christ recognizes all men are made in the image of God and created of one blood; and

Whereas, the Disciples of Christ have adopted as their own the statement of the National Council of Churches that "we shall work for a nonsegregated church in a nonsegregated society," and

Whereas, The Supreme Court of the United States declared in a unanimous decision on May 17, 1954, that segregation in the public schools is unconstitutional, and

Whereas, we have a specific Christian responsibility in the transition period between what is now the practice and what the Christian gospel demands because the practice we believe, that the time now demands that the Disciples of Christ fervently and prayerfully seek ways to implement the practice of racial non-segregation in our local, state and national life.

This International Convention approved the Supreme Court's decision and called upon all Christian Churches, agencies and institutions of the church to re-examine themselves in light of the implications of the gospel of Christ. It recommended to the churches that they initiate and encourage voluntary, racially inclusive community groups to plan for full compliance with the decision as well as definite techniques for implementation within their own bodies.

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The Texas Christian Youth Foundation Encampment urged integration among the Christian Churches. In its report they asked that every district of Texas seriously study the relationship that existed between the churches of various races and seek to integrate all churches into a united program that would strengthen the churches of both races. The areas in which integration should be considered were in worship, leadership training, youth activities, church development and improvement, conventions and other fellowship groups. 62

In 1956 a survey was made involving 2,051 of the 7,000 congregations of the Christian Church. The findings of this survey are as follows:

1. Three hundred and sixteen of the mixed congregations have members of two or more races.

2. One hundred and forty-eight have members all of one race but have persons of two or more races attending some phase of the church program.

3. Nine hundred and ninety-seven congregations reported they would welcome a person of another race as a member.

4. One hundred and ninety-one replied they would not welcome persons of other races as members.

5. All eight graduate schools supported by the denomination reported they had regularly enrolled members of more than one race and each school included at least one Negro.

6. Twenty-one congregations in the South reported that at least one Negro was enrolled as a church member. 63


The Virginia State Convention of the Christian Church commended the court decision and admonished its members to "work toward a harmonious solution to the problem that it may work out in a Christian way." Several church leaders did not sanction this action and emphasized the fact that it only related to the public schools. This would give the inference that they were not concerned about the problem of segregation within the church.

Protestant Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church has apparently had less concrete results from the Negroes than many other church groups. According to Episcopalian reports colored Episcopalians have never been clear about their welcome into the Church either in the South or in the North. The Negro Churches have had inadequate supervision, with the Bishops loaded with responsibilities for the white churches. Then too, the membership of the Episcopal Church has been drawn too exclusively from the upper class of the Negro population. For these reasons the influence of the Episcopal Church is perhaps not as great as other groups in coping with the problem of segregation. However, this group has taken definite steps in trying to solve the problem.

At the meeting of the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1954, the Supreme Court ruling was approved as being "just,

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64 Richmond Times-Dispatch, September 23, 1956.
65 Weatherford, American Churches and the Negro, p. 268.
right and necessary." It stated that the ruling was more than a matter of law and order and termed it a matter of religious faith and democratic principles because it had to do with the law of God and the welfare and destiny of human beings. 66 On June 15, 1954, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina adopted a resolution which urged the members of that church to accept the decision in the "Christian spirit of the brotherhood of man." 67 The executive Council urged Episcopalians to work with school authorities, parents and the public to execute an orderly transition to an integrated public school system. 68 The 58th General Convention of the Episcopal Church met in 1955 and a resolution was made which urged all the clergy and members to accept and support the ruling of the Supreme Court. 69 By opening discussions between the races in each diocese and community, the Episcopalians constructively anticipated the local implementation of this ruling as the law of the land.

Edwin A. Penick, Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina, at the annual meeting of the synod of the Episcopal Church, in November, 1954, expressed the hope that any decree relating to integration would not be too detailed in its provisions, or too particular in its demands. He said, "The rule of thumb is almost impossible when applied to people, or it

defeats itself, like the prohibition amendment. It will be, I trust, like an honor code." According to Thomas N. Carruthers, Bishop of South Carolina, the statement of Penick's "honor code system" was carefully worded and seemed to express the feeling of the synod.  

In April, 1956, at the 166th annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, a resolution was adopted by a 94 to 43 vote that declared there was nothing morally wrong in a voluntary recognition of racial differences and that voluntary alignments could be both natural and Christian. Those who opposed this resolution said it should have been defeated for it gave expression to the agony and tension of soul that faced men of good will in many parts of the south. They added, "it is one thing to be gentle and understanding about sin; it is another thing to pass resolutions commending sin on a voluntary basis."  

In a 2,000-word pastoral letter read on October 17, 1958, at the triennial convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Miami, five great truths were set forth as essential to true perspective for action in the racial problem. The five truths set forth were:

1. The meeting of minds and souls.
2. The sacredness of law.

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71 *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, November 18, 1954.
72 Shoemaker, *With All Deliberate Speed*, p. 25.
3. The sinfulness of racial division.

4. The light of reason.

5. The all-embracing love of Jesus Christ as seen in His Church. William Scarlett, Episcopal Bishop, said there was no defense for segregation in the church. He stated,

On religious grounds, there is no defense for segregation within the church. In the presence of God the divisions of races are transcended. The Bible says, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Have we not one Father? Hath not one God created us?" 

Progress has been made within the Episcopal Church in this respect. All dioceses of this church group have eliminated the color bar, at least insofar as it prevents congregations from being represented in diocesan conventions. The last group to remove that color barrier was the 164th convention of the diocese of South Carolina when they voted to admit to representation in the convention of a Negro and two Negro missions.

This was indicative of a new concern on the problem of segregation throughout the Episcopal Church.

Lutheran Church

Segregation has been recognized as a problem by the Lutheran Church for several years. In 1947 the United Lutherans stated that "Christian


75Pittsburg Courier, December 4, 1954.

brotherhood is impeded by practices of enforcing segregation." On October 16, 1948, at the twenty-first biennial convention in Dayton, Ohio, the Lutherans adopted a resolution which urged its members to demonstrate the possibility of integration. In 1951, the Board of Social Missions of the Lutheran Church said,

Since the Church is the body of Christ, it must free itself from those cultural patterns of prejudices and discriminations which persist in our society and must manifest in its own life the principles and attitudes of Jesus. The Church must seek to be true to its own nature as a community of Children of God inclusive of every race, nation, and class who confess Christ as Lord. . . . The Church's agencies and institutions should seek to serve all people fairly without distinction because of racial or cultural background. All its congregations should be centers of action to develop Christian fellowship across human barriers, and to instill the spirit of equality and Christian brotherhood.

In 1954 the American Lutheran Church said that when churches help to foster race or class distinctions between people and support attitudes of superiority or inferiority between persons, groups or classes, that they violate God's pattern. "Christian churches unfailingly, therefore, must condemn segregation . . . as the evil fruit of natural man's pride and his arrogant assumption of superiority over those who appear to be different from him."  

77 Root, Progress Against Prejudice, p. 98.
79 Weatherford, American Churches and the Negro, p. 272.
In spite of these early resolutions which urged members to work for integration, the United Lutheran Church failed to approve the Supreme Court's ruling of 1954 as in harmony with Christian convictions. Southern delegates to the convention, which met in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, October 17, 1956, opposed the report on human relations, urging the convention to approve the decision. A vote to delete the approval was carried by a 340 to 149 count. 81 The reason the Lutherans did not approve the decision seemed to have been because of a combination of conservatives, who considered that the church had no business to judge governmental activities, and southerners who wanted to judge that particular action unfavorably. 82 The convention did condemn enforced segregation but rejected an outright endorsement of the Supreme Court's decision. The statement actually adopted at the convention is as follows:

We believe that Christians have special responsibilities to keep open the channels of communication and understanding among the different groups in this controversy. Our congregations are encouraged to contribute to the solution of the problem by demonstrating in their own cooperate lives the possibility of integration. 83


Despite the lack of official approval individual churches and leaders urged compliance with the objectives of the Court. The Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church, in June, 1956, urged members of this group to use their influence to secure full rights of citizenship for all, and to discourage any activity in their community which would seek to circumvent orderly judicial procedure in the implementation of the Supreme Court decisions of segregation. Lutherans were urged by their leaders to accept integration and work in behalf of it. George Aus, professor at Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, before the assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in 1957, urged integration in local congregations. He added,

"The federation embraces churches of virtually all races ... We are to be the fellowship of reconciliation in which all men are wanted and accepted as brother, whether rich or poor, white or black, learned or unlearned, men or women ... Churches cannot allow themselves to become satisfied with the status quo, or become the instrumentalities for the propagation of a particular culture."

Edgar M. Carlson, president of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, at the third assembly of that Lutheran World Federation said, "there is need for repentance because as Christians we were not far ahead of secular authorities in abolishing the color line within our worshipping communities." Edgar W. Homrighausen of Cullman, Alabama, president of the Synod's Southern District said,

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84 "Protestantism Speaks on Justice," p. 165.
85 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, August 18, 1957.
86 Miami Herald, August 21, 1957.
Genesis ascribes a common ancestry to all men. It is a violation of God's will for any man to treat his fellowman with contempt or to despise any particular race of man. we possess no evidence to prove the alleged superiority or inferiority of any race of people. 87

The Southern District had pushed efforts to work closer with the Negroes and make them advisory (non-voting) members of the Missouri Synod. The Southern District, however, was the only Synod that treated Negroes as a missionary field and supervised them by a synodical conference.

An example of a local integrated Lutheran Church is the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church of Houston, Texas. In 1954, Paul T. Seastrand, minister of the church, realized that it was quite conceivable that some Negroes might request to come into the church. He admitted that if they did, Christian love had no answer but to grant kindly the request. He soon began a persistent campaign to meet the challenge of integration. He preached the Christian view of equality and said it was not his purpose to force on them his convictions, but to endeavor to lead them into the Word of God. He had a parish worker invite two Negro women to the services. When the women came, the minister was criticized, and it was rumored that several members would either endeavor to divide the church or move their membership. After this incident, more and more Negroes came to the services. Eighteen members left the church but twenty-six additional whites became

87 Arkansas Gazette, June 26, 1959.
members of the church. By 1956 this congregation was an active integrated church. 88

In April, 1955, the Board of Social Missions of Lutherans reported that there was a growing tendency for congregations to reach out and accept into their fellowship people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds who lived in their neighborhoods. 89 In this respect, the Lutherans have made most of their progress in combatting the problem of segregation.

Methodist Church

The Methodist Church is conceded to be the largest Protestant church group in the United States. It also has the largest number of Negroes among its membership. If the problem of segregation could adequately be solved within this large influential group, it would aid in the solution of the problem to millions of people.

The Methodist Church had been concerned with the rights of all races for many years, and the Methodist creed stated the rights of racial groups. After a long list of social rights was described—such as the sacredness of marriage, the family relation and the home; labor and employment rights, the creed adds, "We stand for the rights of racial groups and insist that the above social, economic and spiritual principles apply to

88"God and One, Houston's Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church," Time, LXIV (May 28, 1956), p. 76.

89Weatherford, American Churches and the Negro, pp. 273-274.
all races alike."90 While segregation, as such, may not have been recognized as a great problem, discrimination, injustice and the rights of all races, was seen as a problem. For example, in the Methodist Conference of 1944, the word "segregation" was not used but the words "discrimination" and "injustice" were used in the resolutions of this conference. The statement's proposals for action called for a recognition of the rights of Negroes and stated, "We look to the ultimate elimination of racial discrimination within the Methodist Church." It also called for appointment of a commission to consider the relations of all races within the membership of the Methodist Church.91

In 1947 at the annual meeting of the Methodist Board of Missions, held in Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, the Women's Division of Christian Service adopted a resolution which asked the Methodist General Conference to take "such steps as may be necessary to abolish patterns of racial segregation in the Methodist Church."92 Southern women were conspicuous at the Buck Hill Falls meeting.

The official position of the Methodist Church in regard to race in 1952 was adopted at the General Conference that year. It stated:

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90Weatherford, American Churches and the Negro, p. 254.
1. That there be opportunity without discrimination or segregation for full participation in all the activities of the church by the many racial and national groups that make up our Methodist fellowship.

2. That there be equality of accommodations for all races at national and international meetings of the church.

3. That the institutions of the church, local churches, colleges, universities, theological schools, hospitals, and homes restudy their policies and practices as they relate to race, making certain that these policies and practices are Christian.

4. In keeping with the rapid advances being made in the direction of widening employment on democratic principles, that the agencies and the institutions of the Methodist Church employ their staffs on the basis of character and qualifications, without racial discrimination. 93

Again, on January 14, 1955, the Methodists were urged to end segregation. The Board of Social and Economic Relations of the Methodist Church urged all Methodists to "practice as well as preach the precept that racial segregation is unChristian." 94

When the Supreme Court made its decision concerning segregation in the public schools in 1954, there were scattered pronouncements by various Methodist conferences and leaders giving their approval of it, although sometimes not in direct words. William C. Martin, a Texas Methodist Bishop, stated, "the decision gave the churches a chance to give positive expression to the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood


of God."\textsuperscript{95} The Methodist Texas Conference said, concerning the decision:

We are witnessing a far-reaching change in the pattern of world relations. Many of these changes are in line with our Christian convictions and objectives. Therefore, we welcome changes and pray that our people will apply Christian understanding, patience, and forbearance as these new adjustments are made.\textsuperscript{96} The Supreme Court ruling should prove no surprise to any Christian, particularly in America. The ruling offers to churches of the nation a distinctive opportunity to help in working out proper Christian procedures.\textsuperscript{96}

In November, 1954, the North Carolina Methodist Conference commended the steps taken by the Court and almost unanimously adopted a resolution which commended these steps "to put into practice the ideals which we, as Christians and Americans, have long accepted." It went on to state that the Christian Church had played a significant part in the growing awareness of brotherhood which made these advances possible.\textsuperscript{97} The North Georgia Methodist Conference was another conference that approved the Court's decision. It stated,

Our tradition as Methodist people includes an article of religion which makes it our duty to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country.\textsuperscript{98} There is no place in the Methodist Church for racial discrimination or racial segregation. Christians, white or Negro, of leadership and culture should seek to know and understand each other. All problems can be solved by Christian people working with understanding.

\textsuperscript{95}Dugger, "Texas Christians Stem the Tide," p. 912.
\textsuperscript{96}Texas Churches Speak, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{98}Wesberry, "Court Decision Rocks Georgia," p. 987.
A group of fifteen Alabama Methodist college students approved the decision in 1955 and unanimously held that they "should accept the implications set forth by this decision with the poise, calmness and courage of Christian students." The Methodist Council of Bishops in November, 1958, reaffirmed its support of the Supreme Court's ruling and urged all Methodists to accept the ruling in good faith. The Bishops stated:

In these days of extreme tension we commend our people who, while not always sharing the same attitudes on integration, are determined to demonstrate in their own lives the qualities of understanding, tolerance and brotherhood.100

The South Georgia Methodist Council did not give an official pronouncement approving the decision, but it did suggest that Methodists seek the will of God in the whole matter. It did not say what the results of its own seeking had been, but reported that there were wide differences of opinion as to how and in what spirit the problem of segregation should be approached. It confessed,

that we do not have all the answers to the problem and we shall have to widen the answers as we go along. The important thing is that we start out in the right spirit --- in the spirit of quiet --- and that we seek above all things to gauge our actions by the will of God.101

Indicative of continued concern over the matter, Arthur J. Moore, Bishop of South Georgia, appointed an eight man committee to seek an answer for Methodists on the problem.

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99Shoemaker, With All Deliberate Speed, p. 25.
100Arkansas Gazette, November 14, 1958.
On the other hand, other Methodists did not approve the decision and even threatened to leave the church if the Methodist Conference approved the decision. Ben Price, a reporter on tour of the Southern states said, "I was told privately . . . that the Methodists of Clarendon County, South Carolina, planned to pull out if their church conference approved the Supreme Court decision. There probably are others." 102

The general Conference of the Methodist Church, their supreme governing body, in 1956 was an important meeting for the Methodists in regard to the problem of segregation. The Board of Social and Economic Relations of the Methodist Church sent a memorial to this Conference for approval. The items it desired to have affirmed included

1. the Christian teaching of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man;

2. that there is no place in the Methodist Church for racial segregation and discrimination;

3. our full adherence to the Constitution of the United States which accords to all citizens equal rights;

4. unequivocal support of the Supreme Court decision on segregation in the public schools; and

5. that all Methodists should move forward to bring practices into harmony with Christian and democratic principles. 103

The statement "there shall be no place in the Methodist Church for racial discrimination" was modified by the Conference to read "that churches

102 Nashville Tennessean, September 19, 1954.

were urged to eliminate discriminatory practices whether by conference structure or otherwise with all reasonable speed. It also asked the churches to admit members without regard to color. Concerning the Supreme Court decision, the Conference stated:

The decision of the Supreme Court . . . relative to segregation make necessary far-reaching and often difficult readjustments throughout the nation. We call upon our people to effect these adjustments in all good faith, with brotherliness and patience. In doing this all racial groups must be willing to admit their imperfections and seek to correct them. Let these things, however, be done in love lest the cause of Christ suffer at our hands.

In the report "The Methodist Church and Race" given at the Conference, it was emphasized that there could be no room for racial discrimination or enforced segregation within Methodism. The General Conference did not outlaw racial segregation, but it did vote for a compromise between the integrationists of the North and West and the segregationists of the South. A 70 member commission was appointed to study the issue. The compromise plan was to open the door for complete Methodist integration--if the people in the South ever decided they wanted integration. The plan provided for a constitutional amendment of church law that would permit a gradual merger of white

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106 *Chattanooga Times*, May 2, 1956.

and Negro units within the Church and a gradual elimination of the
Central Jurisdiction. It made it possible for Negro churches to transfer
from annual conferences, and Negro annual conferences would be able
to transfer into white jurisdictions. 108 However, a two-thirds vote of
approval by all units involved would be required before the integration
could be made.

The South Georgia Methodist Conference approved the compromise
plan set forth by the General Conference. At the same time, it opposed
any further proposals on race relations that would impair the jurisdictional
structure or force any local congregation or conference into a relationship
which was not approved by a majority. 109 On July 1, 1957 the Mississippi
Methodist Conference voted 271 to 15 to approve the proposed amendment
to the constitution of the Methodist Church permitting white conferences to
accept Negro churches as members. 110

The Negro viewpoint of the compromise plan was primarily one of
doubt and fear. Many spokesmen of Negro Methodists opposed any plan
calling for rapid desegregation. They wanted to be sure that they were
not exchanging one form of segregation for another which might be worse.
The spokesmen said, "What will the plan do for us? If the shifts

108  Dudley Ward, "The Methodist Plan; Local Option on Mixed

109  James Wesberry, "Warn of Danger If Freedom Dies," Christian

110  Charles Hamilton, "Methodists of Mid south Vote," Christian
envisioned are made, Negroes will be a small minority in white divisions."\textsuperscript{111} J. W. E. Bowen, Negro Bishop, stated fears concerning the plan when he said, "some Negro Methodists fear their church leadership might become all-white after a merger. If that should happen many Negroes would leave the Church."\textsuperscript{112}

The Methodists, in September, 1959, still had the Central Jurisdiction. They conducted a conference in Dallas, Texas, on human relations, and Richard C. Raines, keynote speaker at the conference, said, "the Methodist Church must remove any question as to whether we have segregation written into our Discipline."\textsuperscript{113} Most delegates at the meeting agreed with him, but differed on the course of action to take. At the General Conference, conducted in Denver, Colorado, in April, 1960, the issue was discussed again. Atlanta's Theological Center urged the Conference to abolish the Central Jurisdiction when it said, "Racial discrimination, especially as embodied in the Central Jurisdiction, is clearly unChristian and anti-Christian."\textsuperscript{114} A report was given at the Conference on the findings of a four-year, $200,000 study made by the 70 member commission which involved public hearings in twenty-four cities across the country.

\textsuperscript{111} Ward, "The Methodist Plan," p. 56.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 56.

\textsuperscript{113} "Methodists and Races," Newsweek, LIV (September 14, 1959) p. 70.

\textsuperscript{114} San Antonio Light, April 27, 1960.
The recommendation of the commission was for a continuance of a separate jurisdiction for Negroes, but eventually dissolution by gradual, voluntary steps. 115

Much opposition has been manifested over the possibility of integration within the Methodist Church. The Alabama Methodist Conference adopted a resolution in 1954 requesting the General Conference not to pass legislation that would interfere with Methodists' rights to maintain segregated churches, schools and assemblies. In 1954 a group of two hundred lay leaders and ministers in Birmingham, Alabama, organized to combat efforts to break down segregation within the church. Their purposes, unanimously adopted, included:

1. That the group would oppose any statement made by Methodist publications, conferences, etc. who seek to change the present law of the Methodist Church respecting separate jurisdictions for white and Negro membership.

2. To set up a system for informing Methodist people of efforts being made and means being used to promote a policy of full racial integration within the church.

3. To take steps requesting all elected delegates to Methodist Conferences to oppose legislation of movements seeking to liberalize the present racial policy.

4. To request church leaders to present frank and factual statements to the Methodist people on the effects of abolishing the all-Negro Central Jurisdiction. 117

115San Antonio Express, April 29, 1960.

116"Segregation and the Churches," Time, LXV (June 20, 1959) p. 54.

The Methodist Layman's Union was formed to save the Methodist Church from integration. It began its work in Alabama in 1959. At a meeting in the Highlands Methodist Church in Birmingham, filled with well dressed middle-aged and elderly people, the following pronouncement was made:

The union should not only protest against proposed structural changes in the Methodist Church which might lead to integration, but should also proclaim, in the name of Methodism, that segregation was divinely inspired and would be defended within the church at all costs.  

George O. King, minister of the East Point Methodist Church, Georgia, upheld segregation when he said, "if segregation is a sin, God did not know it." He emphasized that segregation of every sort was evident in the world, and properly so. A Methodist couple was reported as saying, "it is not a question of whether we shall have integration, but whether we can stop it. Never in our lifetime or in that of our children will colored people worship in the church that we worship in."  

Forces have also spoken in defense of integration within the Methodist Church. Dow Kilpatrick, Methodist minister at Athens, Georgia, and president of the Ministerial Alliance, said,

It seems clear to me that Christ has come for all men, died for all men alike and intends to build the family of God in love. Patterns of segregation may have historical roots, and in changing them it may be wise to move slowly; but let us not distort God's word to cause it to approve that which we are reluctant to bring into accord with His plan.


120 Wesberry, "Georgia Baptists Hold Convention," p. 54.
A group of Methodist women united in 1958 to fight segregation, under
the authority of the committee of the woman's division of Christian
service of the Methodist Church's Board of Missions. They urged the
removal "of every pattern of enforced segregation from our churches,
communities and nation." They urged Methodist women to join other
like-minded groups for a remedy of the various race problems among
which was the fellowship within the church without racial barriers. 121

An example of an integrated Methodist Church is the McFarlin
Memorial Methodist of Norman, Oklahoma. The church has over 3,000
members. Finis A. Crutchfield, Jr., the minister, explained that the
Board of Stewards on one occasion adopted a resolution explaining that
any child of God could worship and fully participate in the life of the church.
The Negroes were described as belonging, they took up offerings, took
turns in ushering, and participated in the social life. There had not
been any objection and none had left the church or its membership because
of the Negro members. 122

Edwin Jones, Executive Committee Member of the World Methodist
Council, summarized the work of the Methodist Church in regard to the
problem of segregation. He said,

I know that the Methodists have been working at it and will continue
to work at it. We are a long way short of perfection as we will always

121 Nashville Banner, September 28, 1958.
122 Root, Progress Against Prejudice, pp. 85-87.
be, but we are gaining ground all the time. On this question, as on most others, the younger generation is way ahead of us oldsters. We are undoubtedly moving in a direction which one day will result in a solution which I suppose must be called integration. But we can't do it all at once. We don't dare move too fast, and we won't be forced. But the church isn't going to give up its job under present conditions just because it is exceedingly difficult.\textsuperscript{123}

Weatherford's statement of summary of the work of the Methodists was as follows:

\textdots\dots one can say that many of the leaders of the Church have waked up to the tremendous issues at stake and are exerting every effort to lead the Church in a great forward movement. One wonders how long it will take to bring as large a body of church members as this Church has, to realize how tremendous are the issues, and how important that they act promptly, intelligently, and with genuine Christian spirit.\textsuperscript{124}

**Presbyterian Church**

The Presbyterian Church (Southern) has its own General Assembly which makes recommendations and suggestive policies for the Presbyterian Churches of the South. For this reason, this church group should have special bearing on the problem of segregation in the churches of the South.

The problem of segregation within the church was recognized by some Presbyterians early. In 1905 the Wilmington Presbytery, in recognition of this problem, passed the following resolution:

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{123}"A Round Table Has Debate" p. 159.
\textsuperscript{124}Weatherford, American Churches and the Negro, p. 258.
\end{quotation}
when any of our ministers find colored persons desirous of becoming Presbyterians, and the way is not open for them to join any of our white churches, resolved, that said minister acting as an evangelist be authorized to receive such colored persons into the church, and to recommend them for membership through our General Assembly's Agent for Colored Evangelization to any of our colored churches willing to receive them. 125

The Presbyterians appointed an interim committee in 1945 to study Presbyterians' work among the Negroes. In their report to the Assembly of 1946, they said, our churches, pastors, and people have always recognized the claim to Christian equality and brotherhood. 126 The committee recommended maintaining righteousness and justice between the races and combating the major social problems, including the injustices in their treatment of Negroes.

One congregation which recognized the problem in 1945 was the white Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This church said they did not close their doors or discriminate against any person. They said they would receive in "the Spirit of Christian Brotherhood any sincere worshipper who might present himself." 127

The Presbyterian's "Assembly's Committee on Negro Work" was organized in 1946. Their program was to include teaching, establishing of new churches, Christian education and particularly higher education.

[Notes]

125 Ben Lacy Rose, Racial Segregation in the Church (Richmond, 1957), p. 16.

126 Weatherford, American Churches and the Negro, p. 258.

127 Pope, "Caste in the Church," p. 103.
Stillman Institute, a school which had served the Negro for many years, was to be enlarged and a school of religion to be developed. A campaign was undertaken to raise $1,000,000 to develop the Institute into a college.\(^\text{128}\)

In view of what had been done by the Presbyterian Church in reference to the Negro and segregation, it was no surprise that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., approved the Supreme Court's decision of 1954. In 1954 the Assembly made the following recommendation:

The Assembly commends the principle of the decision and urges all members of our churches to consider thoughtfully and prayerfully the complete solution of the problem involved. It also urges all our people to lend their assistance to those charged with the duty of implementing the decision, and to remember that appeals to racial prejudice will not help but hinder the accomplishment of this aim.\(^\text{129}\)

Malcolm Calhoun, member of the Division of Christian Relations, Board of Church Extension, spoke concerning the decision before a group of church women, and said, "Let us be grateful for the privilege of sharing in an undertaking which we believe has been initiated by the Spirit of the Almighty God working within our hearts and minds."\(^\text{130}\)

On June 1, 1954, the 94th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (Southern) was held at Montreat, North Carolina. By a vote of 236 to 169 it affirmed "that enforced segregation of the races is discrimination which is out of harmony with Christian theology and ethics." It called on local

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churches to admit persons to membership and fellowship in the local
congregation on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ without reference to
race. These recommendations were also made at this 94th
Assembly:

1. Open the doors of all its institutions of higher learning to
   all races.

2. Strongly recommend the same action to Synods and
   Presbyteries.

3. Call on local churches to examine their own life, and practice
   no discrimination within or without the church.

The Texas Synod of the Presbyterian Church gave its approval of the
statement of the General Assembly added:

The Division of Christian Relations reiterates its conviction that the
church should lead rather than follow in the eradication of racial
prejudice and discrimination. Instead of supporting statements to
avoid compliance with the rulings of the Supreme Court as regards
the integration of the races in the public schools of Texas, the
church should take the lead in fulfilling the dictates of good citizen-
ship and Christian morality by speaking plainly and frankly in the
Biblical doctrine of the equality of all men before God and the dignity
and value of every man.

At the 95th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S.
(Southern) in 1955, Alton J. Shirley, minister of Cullendale, Arkansas,
asked that the statement adopted at the 94th Assembly, which stated
segregation was un-Christian, be reconsidered and declined. He and

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131 Rose, Racial Segregation in the Church, p. 17.
133 Texas Churches Speak on Integration, p. 3.
six others had signed a minority report that charged that the Assembly of 1954 had erred in requesting the local churches to accept Negroes. When the vote was taken, the 1954 resolution stood by a count of 293 to 109.  

134 (The vote in 1954 was 236 to 169.)

At the 167th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. conducted in 1955, the Presbyterian's "Operation Desegregation" was adopted. The Assembly admitted failure of the church to achieve the true fellowship within its own life. It stated that the action of the Supreme Court with reference to racial segregation in schools pointed up that fact. It added, "We must continue to work earnestly for desegregation with respect to local churches, presbyteries, synods, boards and agencies of the church at all levels."  

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The 97th General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterians met in Birmingham in 1957. At this Assembly they backed up and strengthened earlier statements concerning racial segregation. A strong warning was added with reference to joining such organizations as the Klu Klux Klan. It said,

In this nation, where Christianity and democracy are bywords, it is unthinkable that a Christian should join himself to a Klan or Council whose purpose is to gain its point by intimidation, reprisal and violence, or that he should lift no voice of protest against those who appeal to prejudice or spread fear.  

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135 Chicago Defender, June 18, 1955.

At the Assembly the Presbyterians did not hesitate to affirm that the law of the land was against segregation, although they realized that there was work to be done for an honest and durable adjustment in every community on the local level. There was disagreement among the delegates at the Assembly on the segregation issue, but when a minority report was made suggesting that racial problems be referred to member parishes, it was turned down by the Assembly. 137

At the 99th Assembly of the Southern group, meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1959, the Presbyterians were told to keep the race lines open. "To this end Christians must be dedicated . . . to keeping safe the freedom of the two peoples to meet voluntarily in unhindered assembly and genuine fellowship." The governing bodies of the local congregations were called on to bring together small groups with different racial and cultural background for the purpose of understanding one another and working out a Christian solution to community problems. 138

In 1959 the United Presbyterian Program at a meeting of the Board of National Missions, offered financial aid to congregations who lost members because of their integration policies. The report stated, The church should serve its neighborhood without discrimination, working with the acute racial tensions of inner-city areas and

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meeting the challenge of integration wherever it is posed . . .
This may cause the withdrawal of parishioners, resulting in
financial loss the inner-city church cannot afford. Denominational
resources will be made available to compensate for this loss.\textsuperscript{139}

Considerable opposition arose to the integration position of the
General Assembly. For example, the Mississippi Synod asked the
Assembly to reconsider and decline the "Operation Desegregation" of the
167th Assembly recommendation.\textsuperscript{140} The Mississippi Synod also
challenged the anti-segregationalist resolution of the 94th General
Assembly as a "highly controversial political issue."\textsuperscript{141} The First
Presbyterian Church, a very wealthy congregation in Jackson, Mississippi,
voted to cut off all church extensive funds to the Assembly. It stated,
"freedom of fellowship does not mean an unnatural association of people."\textsuperscript{142}
John R. Wallace, an elder in a Presbyterian Church in Memphis,
Tennessee, opposed the resolution for an integrated church by saying,
"Adoption of the motion will disrupt our Church. When Negroes enter our
church doors, the people will go out the other door."\textsuperscript{143} John R.
Richardson of Westminister Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia,

\textsuperscript{139}{\textit{New York Times}, February 7, 1959.}
\textsuperscript{140}{\textit{Chicago Defender}, June 18, 1955.}
\textsuperscript{141}{"Muted Trumpets in Dixie," p. 50.}
\textsuperscript{142}{\textit{Jackson Daily News}, June 27, 1957.}
\textsuperscript{143}{\textit{Charleston News and Courier}, March 30, 1955.}
said, "Segregation does not constitute a stigma against either the white or black races." He pointed out that segregation was merely a social separation that helped protect the racial integrity of both groups of American citizens.  

A Presbyterian minister of Columbus, Georgia, Robert B. McNeill, was dismissed by the Southern Presbyterian Judicial Commission in 1959 primarily because of his stand on the problem of segregation.  

McNeill, in 1957, had written an article for Look magazine in which he urged "creative contact" between races as a means of solving racial difficulties. McNeill's dismissal was highly criticized by Ernest Trice Thompson, moderator of the Southern Presbyterian Church, when he said,

> If a single Presbytery dismisses a minister from his pulpit on such grounds, or if it appears to have done so . . . and if this action is not challenged and is not corrected by Synod or General Assembly, then God help us.  

Another Presbyterian minister, then of the Second Presbyterian Church of Richmond, Virginia, and president of the Virginia Council of Churches, was highly critical of Virginia's segregationist politicians. In the Spring

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of 1957, he acknowledged that dissention over his racial views had prompted his resignation. He said, "I could stay here and weather the storm, but I wish to do nothing to hurt this church."\textsuperscript{148} He resigned and moved to Kansas City, Missouri.

In an effort to help solve the problem of segregation the Presbyterian Church, U. S. in 1956 merged the white and Negro Synods under the title of Synod of Oklahoma, which also covered Arkansas.\textsuperscript{149} Several churches in the newly merged Synod then sought worshippers without regard to race. One effort to solve the problem locally was made by the fashionable Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. It voted to have a special pew set aside each Sunday morning for Negroes who wished to attend the service.\textsuperscript{150}

Apparently local mores are still principally the controlling factor among Presbyterian Churches. While the church itself would seem to be making an all out frontal attack on segregation in its churches, the membership is moving cautiously toward accepting integration. The decrees of the General Assemblies are not mandatory on local churches, but usually the local churches strive to follow its recommendations.

\textsuperscript{148} Loth, \textit{Integration}, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{149} Shoemaker, \textit{With All Deliberate Speed}, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Charlotte Observer}, April 29, 1959.
CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

Virtually all of the religious groups of the South gave their approval of the Supreme Court's decision of 1954. The statements of these churches demonstrated that Christianity in the South was aware of its obligation to offer to the nation Christian answers to the great problem of segregation. They showed that the churches, working independently, have been led to achieve almost unanimity since the Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, handed down its decision outlawing segregation in the public schools.

Many churches would not resent accepting any who want to visit their worship services and educational organizations, but in all probability, the majority of the churches of the South have never been directly confronted with the problem on the local level. Some do not know what they would do if a Negro sincerely presented himself for membership. It is possible that those churches, if given the opportunity, would respond on the basis of the Christian ideal rather than on the basis of prejudice.\(^1\) Of course, there are many churches where the Negro would not be welcomed and where he would not even be allowed to attend as a visitor.

\(^1\)Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 135.
him. 23 By assuming the role of leadership and by organizing the 
community for racial justice, the minister, his congregation and his 
community may be better prepared to cope with whatever racial tensions 
may arise. Martin Luther King, formerly minister of the Dexter 
Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama, and a leader of the 
Montgomery bus boycott, said,

We have the responsibility of freeing our white brothers from the 
quibblings of unreasonable fears. My profound hope is that the best 
leadership will come from the open-minded moderates of the white 
people of the South --- there are more of these people than we have 
supposed. God grant that they may rise up and assume the leadership. 24

Ministers have often refused this role of leadership because of its fre-
quent involvement in politics. But Charles M. Jones, minister of the 
highly successful integrated Community Church in Chapel Hill, North 
Carolina, said,

If politics involves moral issues, the minister must get into 
politics. I see it as basically immoral for a minister to avoid 
the issue of race just because it becomes a political issue. The 
race question is, first of all, a moral issue. 25

The experiences of ministers in meeting the problem have indicated 
the necessity of proper tact and diplomacy in the function of the minister. 

When the Community of Matoaka, West Virginia was plagued with open

23 Charles McCoy, "Way Toward Integration," Christian Century, 


defiance to efforts to integrate the public schools, Don Spurlock, the Methodist minister, braved a barrage of eggs to plead for a halt to the demonstration which had developed. He called for the Christian principle of love and brotherhood and persuaded a crowd of three hundred adults to break up and to meet later at the church building to discuss the problem. Ralph Bird, the principal of the school, credited Spurlock with averting possible serious disorders.\textsuperscript{26} In Mansfield, Texas, Donald Clark of Timothy Episcopal Church, Fort Worth, denounced to their faces two hundred racists who had assembled to prevent three Negro students from enrolling in the Mansfield high school. Perhaps he did not use the proper approach, for the mob hurled disrespectful words at him and lawmen led him away with the crowd yelling close behind.\textsuperscript{27}

One of the most important roles of the minister is that of teaching and education. He can use his knowledge of the Bible and his experience in human relations to instruct his congregation concerning the principles of love that will aid in the solution of the problem of segregation. Glenn O. Canfield, minister of the integrated First Unitarian Church, Miami, Florida, said,

The minister has a special role --- a splendid opportunity through education and persuasion to build a bridge of understanding between

\textsuperscript{26} Cartwright, "What Can Southern Ministers Do?" p. 1505.

\textsuperscript{27} "Southern Ministers Stand Up to Mobs," \textit{Christian Century}, LXXIII (October 10, 1956), p. 1155.
bitter people. The role is not the picket line, but the creation of a climate in which people can sit down together and talk over problems in a calm manner.\footnote{28} Some preachers have assumed this function of education by proper teaching concerning the brotherhood of man and encouraging their congregations to practice in harmony with their profession. The preacher has often encouraged interracial ministerial associations with white and Negro participants to work out a solution to the racial crisis in the community and the church. This has often caused people to be willing to work for the implementation of the Supreme Court's decision and be ready to accept integration when it comes.\footnote{29}

The Role of the Individual Christian

Churches are composed of individuals who frequently think and act according to their own precepts. It is true that the minister, official pronouncements, fellow associates, social customs and mores and the Word of God often help determine their attitudes. Experience has shown that the correct attitude of these individuals is important in the solution of the problem of segregation in the churches, and especially is this true in the local congregation.

One of the roles of the Christian in coping with this problem is to work, as an individual, for the implementation of the decision of the

\footnote{28}{"South's Churchmen," p. 37.}

\footnote{29}{Martin Luther King, "Church and the Race Crisis," \textit{Christian Century}, LXXV (October 8, 1958), p. 1141; McCoy, "Way Toward Integration," p. 196.}
Supreme Court concerning segregation in the public schools. The Christian has often worked in behalf of this decision because he realized that the ruling was the law of the land, and as an individual Christian and good citizen, he is to obey that law. He has realized that the nation has a great stake in world affairs, the outcome of which will depend partly upon a Christian solution of the problems brought into focus by the Court's ruling.  

In 1956 the Department of Race and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches prepared a list of actions for the individual in regard to race relations. Their recommendations included:

1. Examine in the light of the Gospel their attitudes and behavior regarding race relations and commit themselves to carrying out their Christian responsibilities.

2. Work to eliminate racial segregation from their local churches and from their denomination.

3. Exhibit firm behavior patterns of acceptance when the question of a racially inclusive fellowship is discussed in the church and when the first person of another race visits or is received into the church.

4. Find out what their churches, their denomination and other agencies in the community are doing to improve race relations and then participate in that program.  

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Experience has shown, as one writer has demonstrated, that in the matter of prejudice, the Christian can examine his thinking concerning people of other races and change his attitudes when shown that they have resulted from personal prejudice. The Christian who has cultivated friendship and understanding with people of other races and avoided labeling whole races as inherently bad have aided in the solution of the problem. 32 Another church leader has pointed out that the individual Christian can thus examine his attitude toward segregation and strive to work for a Christian solution to the problem. According to one writer, the attitude of the Christian should not be determined by popularity and social custom. However, if these customs are harmless, then the Christian can yield to them. His attitude should not be determined by political expediency or personal prejudices; however, it is difficult to completely disassociate himself from personal prejudices. Neither should his attitude be determined by Federal decree or Supreme Court rulings. Of course, such rulings must be respected by the Christian, unless it can be shown that the Court ruling violates the Law of God, which cannot be done in the ruling of segregation. This writer says the Christian's attitude is to be determined only by a "Thus saith the Lord."33


An example of one who did examine his attitudes and worked for a solution to the problem was a retired railroad conductor of Lebanon Junction, Kentucky. He stated:

Throughout the first sixty years of my life, I have never questioned but that Peter's confession that "God is no respector of persons" referred exclusively to the differences among white persons. Neither did I question that segregation was Christian and that it referred to the separation of white and Negro people. Three years ago these views were completely transformed. I became convinced that God makes no distinction among people whatever their race and that segregation is exclusively by God in the final judgment. 34

This individual became an ardent supporter of integration. He talked to people in his home, on the streets, and in the various Bible classes he attended. He did this in spite of the chilly silence or polite brushoffs he would receive.

Billy Graham offered some practical possibilities for the individual Christian's contributions to aid in the solution of the problem of segregation. He said:

1. Any man who has a genuine conversion will find his racial attitudes greatly changed. The moment he is definitely, genuinely converted to Christ, the Holy Spirit . . . gives this converted man a supernatural love for his fellowman . . . . Be sure that you have committed your life to Christ.

2. There must be no deadly rationalization or watering down of love. Let us remind ourselves, white and Negro alike, that "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things; believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

34"Muted Trumpets in Dixie," p. 49.
3. Be Christian in your ordinary daily contacts. Make sure that you show courtesy and patience, humility and unselfishness, regardless of how the other fellow behaves.

4. Begin teaching love for the other races in the home. Be careful not to pass on to your children the sins of prejudice.

5. Accept your responsibility. If you are a Christian, you are your brother's keeper. It is easier to conform to the crowd, to act with only your own interests in view, to avoid sticking your neck out; but it is our duty to know, to proclaim and live by the truth.

6. Take a stand in your church for neighbor-love. The minister may be afraid to act because of what he thinks your reaction will be. Take courage, speak up, and help the church move forward in bettering race relations.

7. Be honest with yourself. If you think you have done enough, you are in danger of hypocrisy. The outside of the cup may be clean, but what about the inside?

8. Act soberly and thoughtfully, but act on principle. Never condone a wrong for the sake of expediency. 35

Generally speaking, many individual Christians have failed to reexamine completely their attitudes concerning people of other races and work for an integrated society. This, no doubt, is one of the contributing factors to the paradox of the churches of the South. Consequently, the profession of the church leaders and the pronouncements of the church councils have been relatively ineffective on the local level in the realization of an actual integrated church.

The Role of the Church

The church is not a fraternal organization, a civic club or a business concern, but an institution with a distinctive spiritual function to perform. Integration in the Church requires real brotherhood, and this is sometimes a more difficult undertaking than in secular institutions. Although church relationships are sometimes narrowly social, it is also true that worshipping together is a deeper and more personal relationship than riding a train, attending a school or playing baseball. Interracial worship and fellowship requires, not merely tolerance, but genuine brotherhood which cannot be achieved rapidly after generations of separation. However, the problem, as previously described, has been of great concern to the various church groups, and the problem in perspective and the role the church can assume is of importance to many.

Various functions have been suggested by church leaders and laymen if the church is to measure up to its responsibilities. The problem of segregation in the Church should be discussed in consultation meetings with leaders of the local congregations and the church group. As one writer said,

Desegregation of worship should not be "sprung" suddenly, without consultation. The advisability of consultation does not, however, justify delay in demonstrating the love of Christ.

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36 Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 127.

These churches are thoroughly committed to the continuance of segregation in society and within the church, and contend that segregation is in harmony with the will of God.

In 1957 the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches reported that about ten per cent of the nation's churches were integrated in some form. This figure was five times greater than in 1947. In the main integration has taken place thus far in one or more of the following limited patterns:

1. situations in New England and the upper Midwest where the Negro population is small and of a relatively high cultural order;

2. situations in large cities or academic centers where there is available a sufficient population of intellectual, social, and religious liberals to sustain an interracial church;

3. integration from the top, beginning with official church pronouncements and continuing with the appointment of Negroes to official boards and staff positions but not reaching down to the local church;

4. integration on the fringes, beginning with such church-related organizations as the American Bible Society, the World and National Councils of Churches;

5. integration in communities in transition where the Negro population is growing and the white population is rapidly diminishing and where the interracial church will by all practical definition soon become a Negro church attended by a few remaining whites; and

6. a few churches which were deliberately organized to attract and serve a radically mixed constituency.  

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2 Arkansas Gazette, December 5, 1957.

3 Haselden, The Racial Problem, pp. 32-33.
These patterns are inclusive of the entire nation, therefore, they are not a complete representation of the South. However, they do show some awakening concerning the problem, and no doubt, illustrate to some degree the limited pattern established in the South. Generally speaking, the churches of the South have made little progress in solving the problem on the local level.

The Southern Paradox

The top levels of most all religious groups have declared themselves in support of the Supreme Court's ruling on segregation in the public schools. These groups have made public statements declaring their approval, and also their desire to work for a non-segregated church in a non-segregated community. However, these pronouncements are often ignored at the local level. In Protestant denominations top level resolutions are not always binding on the local congregations or ministers. Since the Supreme Court's decision and the subsequent pronouncements of the top officials of the various church groups, there has been enough localized dissent throughout the South to warrant a modern application of an ancient statement that "The Assembly or Convention proposes---but the congregation disposes." Official profession of policy undoubtedly has had great influence upon the community and the Church, but for the problem of segregation to be adequately solved, examples have shown

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4"Muted Trumpets in Dixie," p. 50.
5Shoemaker, With All Deliberate Speed, p. 25.
that where the practice of the local congregation was not in keeping
with its profession, the pronouncements were of little effect. Important
as the pronouncements are as aids in solving the problem, they have the
inherent limitation in that they are usually made not by the rank and file,
but by a few whom special circumstances have subjected to liberalizing
influences. 6

Where integrated churches have been established, church members
usually react differently than even they themselves had anticipated. 7
However, it is an established fact that many church members act on the
basis of social rather than religious sanctions. 8 The customs of society
are often the important factors that determine their attitudes and practices.
This contrast between what they profess as their Christian duty and what
they actually do points to the fact that often churches have compromised
with local custom. Changes in attitudes come more readily when the
social situation changes. Often the way people act can change before
they say they are willing to change. Thus, members have adjusted to
the idea of attending church services with Negroes when it comes naturally.
This is true although they may have thought beforehand that they would

6 Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro, p. 48.

7 Nancy Lawrance, "Racially Inclusive Churches, "National Council
Outlook, IV (December, 1954), p. 10.

dislike the idea. Therefore, because these social changes have seldom
been made in the South, social custom has had a great influence on church
members not practicing what they teach. 9

Other reasons have been given to explain the differences of belief
and practice on the part of the church members in regard to segregation.
These are as follows:

1. . . . the majority of white Christians in the South do not believe
that enforced segregation is a violation of the ideal. . . . They
are blind to the implications of those Scriptural teachings.

2. . . . the traditional view that this is not essentially a matter
of religion.

3. . . . the fact that the church is a social institution.

4. The church is made up of individuals . . . They are subject
to the pressure of the mores.

5. Expediency . . . There are those in the church who feel that
segregation is un-Christian, but that the church must go slowly
in attacking it.

6. Men come to accept race conflict as inevitable and lose hope of
a peaceful solution.

7. Seek to justify separation on grounds of race by seeking to justify
such exclusion on the grounds of difference in culture.

8. That we are willing to abandon all separations, but must retain
them because so many others are unwilling to abandon them.

9Stanley Rowland, "Jim Crow in Church," Nation, CLXXXII (May 19,
1956), p. 427; Root, Progress Against Prejudice, p. 60.

10Root, Progress Against Prejudice; "A Christian Stands Above
Any Segregation Law," Time, LXIV (September 13, 1954), p. 27.
The thinking of many church members regarding the problem of segregation is shown by the results of a poll taken by a southern Bible class teacher among his one hundred adult members. The class agreed unanimously that segregation was un-Christian and undemocratic, and that integration was inevitable. Yet the large percentage of the class also agreed to oppose integration and hoped it would not come for their children.\textsuperscript{11} As long as this attitude prevails, the problem cannot be completely solved and the South remains with its paradox.

The Role of the Negro Church

An additional problem facing southern churches in the crisis over integration is the role and fate of the Negro church. Of the more than 13,000,000 Negroes in the United States, over half of that number belong to some Christian Church. In the South, most white denominations have organized their Negro membership into separate Negro churches. If the problem of segregation in the churches were solved, would it completely dissolve the distinctive Negro church? Authorities differ but many maintain that the problem can be solved, that there can be exchange of members, and still the separate Negro church would continue in some form.

One writer suggested that if the Negro continues to accept segregation, either the Christian Churches must alter their practices

\textsuperscript{11}Rowland, "Jim Crow in Church," p. 427.
concerning race, or the Negro would discard his church membership altogether. He added that it would be especially easy for the Negro to choose the latter course as they learn that racial segregation has been largely eliminated in the Soviet Union—the nation where religion has been most frowned upon. 12

The claim is also made that the Negro church itself has a stubborn "will to live." That the leaders of the Negro institutions would resist any attempt which would threaten their status. They claim that the satisfactions derived from their forms of worship cannot be duplicated in white churches or in integrated churches dominated by white churchmen. 13 Richard Kendall, a minister of an Oakland, California integrated congregation which is located in a community where 40 per cent of the population is Negro, believed that the Negroes sometimes indicated that they did not want an integrated church. He explained:

What I am getting at is this: Where is the willingness of Negro congregations to add their bit to this business of integration? I know several Negro families who travel six miles each way every Sunday to attend a Negro church, yet they live in our community. We don't expect the Negro churches to give up all their best members as they move into a new neighborhood, but we should expect that they will be willing to do something toward developing a missionary spirit on the part of some of their members to work into formerly all-white fellowships. We could use some mature Negro Christian families in our own church to further our integrating church experience. 14


There are definite differences which distinguish the Negro church. It would be erroneous to assume that religion among Negroes is simply white Protestantism transplanted into another racial group. These distinguishing differences have been described as follows:

1. In the realm of theology, the typical Negro congregation today continues to be much more literalistic in its approach to Scripture than its white counterpart. Biblical criticism has made less impact upon the Negro clergy and laity.

2. The church plays a more salient role among Negroes than among whites. For millions it continues to be the primary source of guidance and comfort, fellowship and a sense of belonging, and opportunities for self-expression and leadership.

3. In the realm of the actual worship service, there is freedom of emotional expression even where the minister is well educated and the members are predominately middle class. The services are longer and more casual than in the typical white church.\(^\text{15}\)

Other divisive factors common to white and Negro churches are described as being denominational tradition, sentiment and pride; the fear of lost identity; administrative complexities; the inherent urge of established organizations to expand, to continue, and to solidify; the vested interests and ambitions of individuals involved in the ecclesiastical structure; the constraint which specified legacies upon present and future activities; and contrasts in types and moods of worship.\(^\text{16}\)

While the differences between the Negro and white churches may not be as great as they appear on the surface, they are, nevertheless,

\(^{15}\text{Lee, "The Negro Church," pp. 1285-1286.}\)

\(^{16}\text{Haselden, The Racial Problem, p. 200.}\)
differences. If the Negro church were to cease to exist as a separate unit, many would stand to lose, especially among the Negro race. The Negro church has been a primary source of self-expression, giving him a sense of belonging and opportunities of leadership for the Negro, which he stands to lose in a completely integrated church. For these reasons many Negro integrationists probably do not want the Negro church completely dissolved, but rather wish to see that Negroes be offered the opportunity of worshipping and fellowship with white congregations if they so desire. The eventual destiny of the Negro church could determine how the problem of segregation is met and solved by both whites and Negroes in the churches of the South.

The Function of the Minister

An encouraging factor in regard to the problem of segregation is the fact that many of the Southern ministers are aware of the magnitude of the problem and are willing to use their influence to aid in the solution of it. It has been predicted that integration in churches will move more rapidly in the future because the ministers are ahead of their congregations on the issue. 17

The function of the minister is of great importance to the solution of the social crisis in the school and church. Kelley Barnett, associate professor of Christian ethics at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of

17 Charlotte Observer, September 12, 1958.
the Southwest, Austin, Texas, considers the minister the key to social
action, and suggests that he should receive special training in this
respect. He said,

It is becoming clear that we must give many ministers in-service
training in community leadership. . . . In many respects the South
is the last stronghold of Protestant Evangelical piety. The Southerner
takes his religion seriously. When he says that Jesus is Lord he
means it. He can be led, but not driven, to see that his ultimate
loyalty is not to Jim Crow but to Jesus Christ. The truth spoken in
Christian love will bear its anticipated fruits. 18

As a rule, however, the minister has moved rather slowly in his
efforts to solve the problem. The question before the minister has been,
is it better to lead slowly or lose one's congregation by leading too fast?
Most have taken the answer to be, "move slowly." One minister in a
southern city viewed his problem by stating,

Suppose I do tell my people our schools should be integrated? I
would get fired immediately. That wouldn't worry me; I could go
to a better church in the North right now. But what would I have
accomplished? My people would still be just as they are. They
would have had a fuss. Their next minister would be someone
they could depend on not to disturb them. 19

Another reason why some preachers have moved slowly or have not
supported desegregation, according to Chester Warren Quimby, of the
Methodist Church in Wickliffe, Kentucky, is the fact that most southern
preachers are steeped in segregation from birth, and thus have accepted


it as a way of life. Thus he said, "The real reasons for preachers' failure to support boldly desegregation are never theological but human." John Paul Jones, minister and consultant to the National Urban League, felt the ministers had moved too slowly and that the main drawback to the solution of the problem was the timid ministers. He said,

If ministers would only speak the gospel, speak out in clear tones, they would find less opposition than they expected, even those who don't agree with them would at least respect their advice.  

M. R. Griffin, secretary of the seventeen-denomination Christian Council of Atlanta, said,

It isn't hypocrisy that makes them evade . . . when the time comes to be counted, there are many who will stand. But out of loyalty to their congregations they can't speak out on the subject and appear in print before they tell their congregations they are going to do so.  

Past experience demonstrates that the minister can aid in the solution of the problem of segregation among the churches of the South by more boldly speaking his convictions and assuming the role of leadership. The time for action by the southern minister is not only in the hour of crisis, but more important work can be done constantly through the innumerable channels of the community which are open to

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22 Nashville Tennessean, September 18, 1954.
The Church must, if the problem is to be adequately solved, remove the color bar from its fellowship. In describing this fact, it was said:

One does not find that the church as a whole is enough concerned about the evil and unjust results of race discrimination and the color bar. . . . One may condemn the evil results, but it is the color bar itself that needs our condemnation. And the best way for the church to condemn the color bar is to show that it has none. 38

To aid in the solution of the problem, the church can assume the role of helping change the attitudes of people. This is a great job for the church as Henry Irving Louttit, Episcopal Bishop of South Florida said,

. . . the problem of race relations . . . will not be solved by force or by law. Like any problem of personal relationships, it will be solved by changing people's attitudes. This is a job for church: by education, by prayer, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to understand the point of view both of the Negro and those white churchmen who may disagree. So that together out of such understanding we can work a better situation. 39

The church can also aid in the solution of the problem by helping to relieve prejudice. In fact, it was the opinion of one spokesman that it was the application of the Christian doctrine of brotherhood and consideration that caused race relations to progress to the point where integration could even be considered. 40 The church must continue to emphasize the individual sinfulness of prejudice and hate, to be corrected

39 "A Round Table Has Debate," p. 159.
by person conversion by the gospel of love. The church can show, as in the words of Martin Luther King, that the "Negro's real aim is to be the white man's brother not his brother-in-law."\(^{41}\) This can aid in relieving prejudice.

Another role the church can take is to implant the principles of Jesus in the lives of individuals. One writer suggested that this is the key to a happy solution of the problem. He explained this by describing the actions of Christ as an example. Christ did not with a single sweeping command abolish slavery, but where the gentle rule of Christ went, slavery fell.\(^{42}\) So it is with the race problem, it will greatly diminish with the application of the principles of love and consideration. Duke McCall, president of the Southern Baptist Seminary, said:

\[\ldots\] the big opportunity of the churches in this difficult situation, made up as they are of ordinary human beings, is to continue to plumb the basic charter of our faith in the Bible; to reaffirm our basic principles; and constantly to reappraise our actions as to whether or not in such matters as the Supreme Court's decision they conform with that we know to be Christian.\(^{43}\)

The church can seek to establish justice and reconciliation among the various races, especially among the Negro and white. To accomplish this, the World Council of Churches gave the following suggestions to its members:

\(^{41}\)Geier, "Church Leaders Relate Theology," p. 628.


\(^{43}\)"A Round Table Has Debate," p. 159.
1. . . . give encouragement and assistance to every good movement outside the churches which is working to better relations among the races.

2. . . . assist the individual church member to see what his Christian duty is in his vocation and in his daily contract with members of other races. 44

Some suggestions as to what churches can do were offered by William Van Til, professor of education at Peabody College, Nashville. These recommendations came as a result of seminars conducted by Van Til at the Southwide Conference on Christian Faith and Human Relations at Nashville, Tennessee, in April, 1954. They included:

1. More exchange preaching arrangements between Negro and white ministers.

2. The formation of interracial Ministerial Associations to deal with common problems facing the community.

3. Church sponsorship of institutes on racial problems, and other means of keeping the lines of communication open between the races.

4. Interracial projects which would involve leaders of both races from the beginning. 45

In the years 1956 and 1957 nationwide concern was manifested over the problem of segregation, which is largely Southern in concept. The Department of Racial and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches made several recommendations to all the churches of the nation, which, of course, would include the churches of the South. There

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also appeared in the *New York Times* an article which offered several concrete suggestions as to what the churches could do. These recommendations included a plea for the churches to re-examine their attitudes and behavior regarding race relations and make membership in the church open to all with such action being made known in the community. Other recommendations were made concerning the fact that churches should hire their staff on the basis of qualifications and not on the basis of the race of the individuals, and that they should repudiate any activities that initiate or perpetuate racial discrimination or tend to incite communities to violence, hatred and lawlessness.46

The local church has not moved forward at a rapid pace in taking such recommendations to solve the problem on the local level. It is true that progress has been made in certain locales and a general awakening of the magnitude of the problem among church leaders has been manifested. However, until there can be a general awakening among the local congregations in Christendom, the paradox among the churches will remain and the problem, which was largely thrust upon the churches by court action in another social area, will not be completely solved among the churches of the South.

Liston Pope, Dean of the Yale Divinity School, said, "The church still is probably the most racially segregated major institution in American life."47

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46 Blake, Christ's Challenge, p. 3; *New York Times*, October, 1957.
47 *Arkansas Gazette*, December 5, 1957.
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