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BAPTISTS AND RACIAL AND ETHNIC
MINORITIES IN TEXAS

DISSERTATION

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Fulfillment of the Requirements

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By

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This study examines the relations of white Baptists with racial and ethnic minorities in Texas from the beginning of organized Baptist work in Texas in the mid-nineteenth century, through the United States Supreme Court decision in the Brown v. Topeka case in 1954. Emphasizing the role of attitudes in forming actions, it examines the ideas of various leaders of the chief Baptist bodies in Texas: the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas and the American Baptist Convention. The minorities included in the work are the Negroes, the Mexican-Americans, non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans, American Indians, Orientals, and Jews.

Several factors tend to justify a study of this subject. First, there is the prominence of race relations in the nation which has aroused interest in the effect which race relations have had upon affairs in Texas. Second, the widespread changes which have taken place in Texas during the last two decades suggest the feasibility

of a study of that phenomenon, and the fact that many consider the race problem to be a moral and religious issue indicates the relevance of the churches' relationships to these changes. As the largest religious denomination in the state, the Baptists offer a viable subject for study. Finally, since to date no study specifically relating to the Baptists of Texas and their role in race relations in the state has been made, it is felt that such a study will contribute to an understanding of the situation.

The scope of this study, in point of time, extends from about 1850 to the early 1960's, in order to consider the reactions of Texas Baptists to the Brown decision of the United States Supreme Court. From the standpoint of subject, the study has been limited to leaders of the Baptist denomination. Their statements on the race issue as well as actions which may or may not have supported their statements have been studied.

The term "Texas Baptists" has been used extensively, and usually refers to persons affiliated with the Baptist General Convention, although the context may indicate a use of the term in a wider sense.

The materials consulted in this study included secondary and general studies in order to provide background and perspective. These included histories, sociological studies, and contemporary studies of the topic, although

a major portion of the work deals with primary materials. Such primary resources include sermons and articles written by the various church leaders, including B. H. Carroll, J. B. Gambrell, George W. Truett, T. B. Maston, W. A. Criswell, and Billy Graham.

The chief problem faced in the study was the lack of materials pertaining to the smaller groups of Baptists in the state. Several appeared to ignore the race question completely in publications produced for their constituencies.

The study follows a chronological-topical plan of organization. The main divisions, except for the first two, are set within rather definite time periods; material is organized topically within each time period.

The study concludes with the observation that although most Texas Baptists have not yet reached the point of liberalization in racial attitudes which would satisfy the integrationist or civil rights advocate of the North, leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas have made advances in recognizing the rights of minorities in matters political, economic, social and religious.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

Race relations, long a dominant concern in American society, have engaged the attention of members of the Baptist denomination in Texas since the early days of the state. Almost from the beginning of their organized existence in the late 1840's, Baptists in Texas have expressed an interest in the topic of race and a concern for members of racial and ethnic minorities. For more than a century, various spokesmen, Baptists and others, in the state and in the nation, have emphasized the importance of the subject of race in American life.¹

Early in the twentieth century, William Hannibal Thomas, a former carpetbagger of racially mixed parentage,

¹Proceedings of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, 1851, p. 14. Note: Designations for this source: Proceedings of the Baptist State Convention of Texas, 1848-1885; Proceedings of the Baptist General Association of Texas, 1868-1885; these merged to form Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1886-1912 and became Annual of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, beginning in 1913. Place of publication, publisher, and date of publication are seldom indicated.

declared: " . . . the negro [sic] question embodies the most momentous problems that have ever engaged the attention of the nation." In the 1940's, Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish sociologist, conducted a study of American race relations and concluded that the racial situation in the United States presented the country with either its greatest opportunity or its saddest tragedy.² A decade after Myrdal's study, William A. Petzoldt, an American Baptist missionary, predicted that world and American affairs would soon be dominated by three "r's", race, religion, and revolution, and warned that Americans would do well to adjust to these prospects.³ A few years later, Russell B. Barbour, a white Protestant minister with no particular denominational affiliation, observed the importance of race relations to all Americans, and especially to the white Christians, which seemed to lend a prophetic authority to Petzoldt's prediction. Barbour saw in the racial scene a revolution

²William Hannibal Thomas, The American Negro (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901), p. xix; Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1944), pp. lxix, lxx, lxxi. Note: Although Thomas' religious affiliation is not known, he expressed ideas which had found wide acceptance among Baptists of that day. Likewise, Myrdal's religious connection is not known, yet his study involved many Baptists, and has posed problems which most Baptists are forced to face.

³William A. Petzoldt, in an address to the Rotary Club, Shoshone, Idaho, 10 March 1954, attended by the author.

in which the white American was being pushed into thinking about the race problem by the cry of racial minorities, especially blacks, Mexican-Americans, and American Indians, at his door-step.⁴

Several factors recommend Texas Baptists and their racial attitudes as the subject of a special study. In the first place, because they comprise the largest evangelical denomination in the state, they have opportunities to exercise a unique leadership in religious affairs in Texas, although indications are that they have not fully availed themselves of their potential as leaders in the area of race relations.⁵ Nonetheless, Baptists have a unique opportunity not only to influence their own people but also to serve as an example for other denominations as well.

In addition to the potential influence within the churches of the state, Baptists of Texas have contributed leadership to the Southern Baptist Convention. A. C. Miller and Foy Valentine, both of whom served as directors of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, went to similar positions with the

⁴Russell B. Barbour, Black and White Together: Plain Talk for White Christians (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1967), p. 11; Barbara Harte and Carolyn Riley, Contemporary Authors, 30 vols. (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1970), 23-24:28.

⁵The Baptist Standard, 24 July 1963, p. 3.

Southern Baptist Convention. The Christian Life Commission is the agency in both the state convention and in the South-wide convention which has the responsibility for race relations. In addition to Miller and Valentine, Thomas Bufford Maston, former ethics professor in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, served as chairman of the Southern Baptist Advisory Council, a committee organized for the purpose of guiding Southern Baptists' work with Negroes.⁶

Besides their potential for leadership in religious affairs, both in the state and beyond, Baptists of Texas are active in civic affairs, serving as officials, ranging from the precinct level to the governor's office. These officials help determine the laws enacted and the manner in which these laws, once passed, are enforced. Their racial attitudes naturally affect their legislative and enforcement policies, especially in such matters as relate to minorities.

Although Baptists maintain autonomous organizations, from local churches to national conventions, and some tend to be religious isolationists, they are members of the social structure. While they often seek to influence society,

⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1949, pp. 144-145; 1950, p. 173; 1954, p. 170; The Baptist Standard, 22 January 1955, p. 5.

the fact remains that non-Baptist and non-Christian elements have affected them, not infrequently leading them to take unchristian stands on public issues, one of the most common of which is race relations.⁷

In order to understand Baptists' attitudes on any question, including race relations and civil rights, it is necessary to ascertain their position in the social organization. Of particular interest is the effect which modern communications have had upon their thinking. One should also have a knowledge of the different shades of thinking on racial matters which characterize the main bodies of Caucasian Baptists maintaining work in Texas.

The largest of these Baptist bodies in Texas is the Baptist General Convention of Texas, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Second in size is the more conservative Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, which maintains an affiliation with the Baptist Missionary Association of America. The smallest of the three main Baptist bodies in the state is the American Baptist Convention. It has no affiliated state convention or association, but is directly associated with the works in which it has an interest: several local churches and Bishop

⁷William B. Henderson, "Man in the Pew--Asset and Liability," in Messages for Men: For Laymen and Ministers, comp. and ed., Henry Clifton Brown, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), p. 63.

College of Dallas, which are dually aligned with the American Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, Incorporated. Bishop College, however, also receives support from the Baptist General Convention of Texas.⁸

In all churches, the role of the pastor is significant in determining the direction of race relations in a local church. Traditionally, pastors have exerted a vital influence upon the beliefs of their members, especially, in the more hierarchical types of churches: Roman Catholic and Episcopalian. The pastor of a congregational-type church has less influence, per se, than his counterpart in the church led by a central authority. The Baptist pastor's influence is based largely upon his power of persuasion; he must convince his congregation that he has solid scriptural authority for that which he preaches and teaches. Convinced that the pastor is doctrinally sound, the people in a Baptist church will follow him; suspecting that he is heretical, they will reject him and seek a church where the preaching is more congenial to their views, or, if they can marshal sufficient support for their misgivings, they may dismiss the pastor. More than in most other denominations, the pastor of a Baptist church is a

⁸Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1954,
p. 49; 1955, p. 49.

man of the people; hence, he often reflects the attitudes of the people as much as he molds or determines them.

The nature of Baptist churches and Baptist polity is such that anyone can use the name "Baptist"; hence, anyone persuasive enough to attract a following can organize a Baptist church. Baptists who disagree with other Baptists may withdraw from a local Baptist church and organize another; they may also form new associations, state conventions or national bodies; thus, it is difficult, if not impossible, for Baptists to speak with one voice on any question, particularly one as emotion-laden as that of race relations.

Race relations is a many-sided problem, touching almost every aspect of the modern American's life, regardless of his racial or ethnic identification. Among other things, the race problem is an economic one. Lack of educational opportunities, due in part to an absence of economic resources, and in part to a lack of sufficient motivation, tends to keep some racial and ethnic minorities confined to low incomes and to low living standards, including poor housing. Modern communications media tend to emphasize the differences between the majority and minority peoples, especially in material possessions and economic advantages. Minority groups' reactions to these differences tend to create tensions and also to destroy their

own sense of satisfaction and threaten the security of the majority as well as the peace of the total community.

The individual caught in the clutches of economic deprivation is not always able to see that affluence demands its price in preparation, industry, thrift, and wise management, characteristics which are often undeveloped in those who have been denied opportunity because of discrimination. Frequently he is able to see only the fact that the affluent (usually white people in the United States) have and he has not. Instead of the preachments of the majority on the virtues of ambition, education, and skill, the deprived person is able to understand only the voice of those who tell him that the rich became rich by exploiting the poor, and that the poor are in their unhappy condition because of the dishonesty of the wealthy. A writer who has focused on economics as the chief factor in racial discrimination is Oliver Cromwell Cox, who wrote from the Marxist viewpoint. He described race prejudice as a tool of capitalism and as an instrument of exploitation.⁹ Kyle Haselden, of the Christian Century, wrote in agreement with those who saw racial antagonisms as a basic rationale for economic and social exploitation of the

⁹Oliver Cromwell Cox, Caste, Class and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1948), pp. 400, 423, 424, 426.

underprivileged.¹⁰

Racial distinctions, and discrimination on the basis of race, are almost as ancient as human history itself. From the earliest times the buying and selling of human flesh have been practiced. Victors in war sold their captives into slavery, while poor parents sold their children in order to provide for the needs of other members of their families. Slavery was widespread in Africa, where it provided victorious chieftains with income and kept a continuous supply of cheap labor for the wealthy men of Asia and Europe. The Negro was the chief, but not the only, victim of chattel slavery.¹¹ Although slavery continued at least into the second decade of the twentieth century, it is but one aspect of the sad story of race relations, for as Naomi Friedman Goldstein has stated: " . . . the history of race ideas is a history of the defense of inequality and exploitation."¹² Not until the period following World War II did significant numbers of whites become involved in the struggle for racial equality, despite the fact that such

¹⁰Kyle Haselden, The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1959), pp. 137-139.

¹¹Thomas, American Negro, pp. 25-26.

¹²Naomi Friedman Goldstein, The Roots of Prejudice Against the Negro in the United States (Boston: Boston University Press, 1948), p. 22.

organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were in existence as early as 1910.¹³

Significant in the raising of the race question to paramount importance in America are the changes which have occurred and are continuing to take place in the attitudes of various racial groups. These changes are due in part to the actions of pressure groups as well as the enactment of civil rights laws by Congress and the various state legislatures. Pressures also arise from those who are conscious of the discriminations which minorities endure and who wish to provide a remedy for these conditions.¹⁴ According to Roger H. Crook, a Baptist minister and author of No South or North, change is inherent in any dynamic society; a society in which no change occurs is a static system, and may well become a decadent one. Interactions of individuals and groups with each other tend to lead to radical changes, he observed, and race relations, like other facets of the American scene, are undergoing such changes.¹⁵

Religion is a significant factor in social change and is involved in changes in race relations as well. As a factor in social change, religion has both its defenders and its critics. One Baptist minister and seminary

¹³Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 819-820.

¹⁴Barbour, Black and White Together, p. 23.

¹⁵Roger H. Crook, No South or North, (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1959), p. 25.

professor has written of religion:

It inspires social reform and affects economic and political trends. It produces prophetic personalities, men and women of ethical insight and good will, who disturb the mores. These persons undertake to relate ethical principles and convictions to the vital issues of contemporary life.¹⁶

Despite their influence for progress, the churches have problems as well, and the presence of such problems is recognized by their leaders and apologists. One problem which the churches face is their hesitancy to take part in social planning and "to develop techniques of social change."¹⁷

If the churches have their defenders in the area of social involvement and civil rights activities, they also have their caustic critics, and among the most severe of these are some of their leaders. Russell B. Barbour believes that the white churches are "in a bind over race." They are coming, he has observed, to the realization that theirs is a tremendous task, especially in the area of race relations. The author of Black and White Together wondered if white Christians have the spiritual maturity or the sociological acumen necessary to deal adequately with the racial problems which they face. Hostility to racial

¹⁶Olin T. Binkley, The Churches and the Social Conscience (Indianapolis: National Foundation Press, 1948), pp. 4, 31, 32.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 31-32.

equality on the part of churchmen, he contended, is a barrier to the solution of racial problems.¹⁸ Another church leader, Will Davis Campbell, has accused the church in general of a lack of interest in the problem of race, noting that "Race is a human category and is not one of the questions the church asks;" although he believes the church should be asking this question.¹⁹

Although discrimination and inequality have long existed in human relations, ethnic and racial distinctions in the church are of relatively recent origin, beginning in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Such divisions began when the white men began to overrun the world and to make distinctions among races, thus giving substance to the accusations of such writers as Oliver C. Cox, who charged that racial discrimination is the instrument of exploitation.²⁰ In more recent years, amid efforts to break down walls of segregation and discrimination, the churches have presented an uneven picture; yet, even in the theologically and socially conservative South, churches and educational

¹⁹Will Davis Campbell, "Race and the Renewal of the Church," in Christian Perspectives on Social Problems, gen. ed. Gayraud S. Wilmore (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 11.

²⁰Liston Pope, "The Christian Mandate on Race Relations," Missions, 158 (February, 1960): 22; Cox, Caste, Class, and Race, p. 400, 476.

institutions are responding affirmatively to desegregation proposals. Harold O. J. Brown, a conservative theologian, has written:

Christian churches and individual Christians have often been accused of otherworldliness. They have been charged with neglecting this world and the practical needs of human beings in order to secure the welfare of their own souls. Being "heavenly minded," they are said to be of no earthly good. This charge is not without foundation . . . in New Testament times, St. James had to warn some heavenly minded disciples against a merely "spiritual" response to a man's problems (James 2:15-16).²¹

Naturally, the uneven achievements in racial desegregation arouse rather negative reactions among those who lack understanding of the nature and problems of the church, as well as a sympathy for its goals and weaknesses. Among those who have expressed dissatisfaction with the church's performance in the area of race relations are black leaders William Edward Burghardt Du Bois and C. Eric Lincoln.²²

Another criticism levelled against the church is that it is unimaginative as well as hesitant in its approaches to racial problems:

²¹Harold O. J. Brown, Christianity and the Class Struggle (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1970), pp. 85, 86-87; Liston Pope, "The Christian Mandate on Race Relations," Missions, 158 (February, 1960): 21-22.

²²For examples of such criticism see William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, "Will the Church Remove the Color Line?", The Christian Century, 9 December 1931, pp. 1554-1556; C. Eric Lincoln, My Face is Black (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 15; Will Davis Campbell, "Race and the Renewal of the Church," in Christian Perspectives on Social Problems, gen. ed. Gayraud S. Wilmore (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 4.

The most unusual approaches to racial questions in America have been political or sociological in nature. This has been true in our churches, whose pronouncements have generally sounded like watered-down sociological documents inspired by some degree of moral concern. And the announced reasons for concern have often been prudential in character. It has been argued that we must give greater equality to minority racial groups to prevent them from becoming disillusioned about Christianity, or to preserve democracy, or to enlist the energies and loyalties of colored peoples in the struggle against communism, or to protect America's reputation in other parts of the world.²³

In other words, the moral and ethical aspects of the question of the church's involvement in race relations, according to Pope, are often ignored.

In the same vein, Will Davis Campbell emphasized the view that the church is farther behind in the area of race relations than it was thirty years ago. He argued further that the government, the military, and sports promoters out-distance the churches in the field of human and racial relations; in only a few instances, he charges, do the churches measure up to the "secular" forces in promoting equality among the races. It was also Campbell's contention that the church today is an "imitator" in the field of social reform, and that such a position for the church is deplorable.²⁴

²³Pope, "Christian Mandate in Race Relations," p. 22.

²⁴Campbell, "Race and the Renewal of the Church," p. 4.

Many contemporary writers have discussed the practice of segregation in and by the churches of America, and most of them strongly condemn it. Six years prior to the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Fred D. Wentzel wrote:

In our churches we have practiced segregation consistently and shamelessly, as if we really believed in two Gods, one superior God for the white man, [and] one inferior God for the colored man.²⁵

Writers have included both Protestants and Catholics in their condemnation of the churches, referring to each group as "the most segregated institution in America." Concerning the traditional attitude of Christianity on the subject of race, Harold Brown noted:

Christianity "has seldom been expressly or strongly anti-racist." Yet all racist movements have shown a strong hostility to the Christian faith. Hitler feared and Black Power extremists still fear the "weakening" effect of the Christian faith on those they are trying to influence.²⁶

The use of terms descriptive of hyphenated Christians has received its share of blame, and the churches have likewise become objects of criticism for engaging in and permitting this sort of practice. Wentzel noted in a critical

²⁵Fred D. Wentzel, Epistle to White Christians (Philadelphia: The Christian Education Press, 1948), p. 18.

²⁶H. O. J. Brown, Christianity and the Class Struggle, p. 18.

tone: "We have spoken without blushing of white Baptists and Negro Baptists, white Methodists and Negro Methodists, white Presbyterians and Negro Presbyterians, white Episcopalians and Negro Episcopalians."²⁷

In instances where integration has begun in the southern churches, the progress has failed to satisfy those who are dedicated heart and soul to immediate integration. Liston Pope, a Methodist minister, expressed the attitude of the ardent integrationist. Disappointment is obvious in his observation that in most cases where Negroes are members of white churches, they number only two or three persons in an overwhelmingly white congregation.²⁸ The dedicated integrationist can hardly find this degree of achievement acceptable or satisfying. George D. Kelsey, writing from the black integrationists's viewpoint, expressed a similar disappointment and dissatisfaction:

The sinful tyranny of racism is not only inherent in the racist faith, but where this faith is well domesticated in Christian civilization, it is also blasphemously sanctified by Christianity. . . . Large numbers of Christians do not understand the nature of the racist structure of existence, even in the present hour of ferment and change, because the sentiments and patterns which constitute this structure have been thoroughly baptized.²⁹

²⁷Wentzel, Epistle to White Christians, p. 18.

²⁸Liston Pope, "Caste in the Church: The Protestant Experience," Survey Graphic, 36(January, 1947):59.

²⁹George D. Kelsey, Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. 147ff.

The current emphasis in the secular and religious presses upon civil rights and equality for minorities has produced internal problems for some of the churches. Part of these problems are related to the theological stances of the churches themselves. Theologically liberal denominations and churches tend to assume liberal positions in regard to social institutions and sociological questions, and this usually means that they advocate racial integration of church memberships, worship services, and ministerial personnel. On the other hand, theologically conservative denominations and churches tend to be conservative in regard to social issues. Such conservatism, when opposed by a more liberal element, can give rise to internal problems and tensions within a church, so far as the race question is concerned.

Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor of Decision magazine, underlined the uncomfortable position of the conservative Christian as he is forced to assume a biblical stance between quietism, obscurantism, and irrelevance on the one hand, while on the other, he must face an activism which violates his conscience by making him appear to approve atheism, communism, state lotteries, "blood donations to the Viet Cong, and the tossing of Molotov cocktails at heads of state." Such activities compete for first place in the conservative Christian's demonology. Wirt continued

by observing that one reason for the conservatives's uneasiness is the fact that he has tended to ignore or reject the social gospel which liberal Christians espoused early in the century. Wirt felt that the conservatives have indulged themselves in a "Rip Van Winkle sleep" in regard to social issues; however, they are at last becoming aware of the importance of social questions.³⁰ Texas Baptists lend weight to Wirt's observation by demonstrating that they are among those who are waking up to the prominence and crucial nature of social problems.

Besides the traditional orthodox interpretation of the Scriptures which tend to concentrate upon individual rather than social salvation, a number of other factors complicate matters for the local evangelical church, especially such a church in the South. Barbour listed a number of situations which, in his view, can create crises in churches:

1. Selma talk--"too much preaching about the Negro."
2. Integration of the local church.
3. Participation of the local pastor in a demonstration.
4. Parental reaction to interracial youth parties.
5. Mixed youth camps.

³⁰Sherwood Eliot Wirt, The Social Conscience of the Evangelical (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 52-53.

6. World-oriented Sunday School curricula.
7. A request for funds for denominational racial work.
8. A pastor with new ideas on the race question.
9. The bringing of a black friend to the church's services.
10. Family reaction to a daughter's marrying a Negro.
11. A congregational vote on open membership.³¹

The racial picture in America is not only economic and religious in nature, it is also political. The political status of the Negro, and more recently, that of the Mexican-American and the American Indian, has long been a subject of interest and controversy. Southern Baptist minister Will D. Campbell has charged that most efforts at reform originate with government agencies rather than with private or religious sources.³²

Harold Brown has presented the negative aspect of the political involvements of members of minority groups and the effects of politics upon their fortunes. He has charged that white officials and white candidates for public office have contributed to racial tension and unrest as definitely as have the outright racists. His view has been that many white politicians, while personally advocating

³²Campbell, "Race and Renewal of the Church," p. 4; H. O. J. Brown, Christianity and the Class Struggle, p. 87.

racial equality, have unnecessarily stirred minorities, especially blacks, to resentment, thus frightening the general public into electing those candidates in the belief that only they can bring order out of the chaos and peace out of violence; such candidates, argued Brown, promise to solve the racial problems which they have helped to aggravate.³³

The black man in America, from the landing of the first Negroes on the coast of Virginia in 1620 until the present time, has frequently been the object of political methods as well as the subject of much political debate. His status in society has varied from that of an indentured servant to a permanent slave to a freedman. Politically, he has been a fraction, a nonentity, franchised, disfranchised, courted, and forsaken.

Not only black militants but also certain whites have contributed to racial unrest and tension, reasoned Brown, and these, too, in his view, deserve censure:

Today we accuse the little demagogues, the petty white racists, and the Black Power people, of being responsible for race hatred. But history will someday recognize that many men in high places, whose personal conduct is characterized by urbanity and tolerance, have in fact done more to produce and to aggravate the racial tensions than the resentful little men.³⁴

³³H. O. J. Brown, Christianity and the Class Struggle, p. 87.

³⁴Ibid.

Militants often use Marxist language, not, Brown argued, because they are Marxists in fact, but for effect, hoping to shock the white community into recognizing their needs and grant their demands. Another purpose, more in keeping with Marxist ideology, is " . . . to arouse Negro bourgeoisie against the white bourgeoisie and the Negro proletariat against the white proletariat," Brown contended.³⁵

While race is a national issue, the South, in recent years, has received most of the attention on the subject, due to the fact that it has maintained legal segregation. The principle of segregation is more obvious in the South than in the North since it involves the use of public accommodations and public transportation, as well as racially segregated schools; in the North, it has taken more subtle forms, chiefly, in housing and employment practices. Civil rights demonstrators have understandably found it easier to attack a law demanding segregation and discrimination than to challenge conditions arising from de facto segregation, in which society in general exploits the tendencies of people of similar ethnic or racial backgrounds and economic levels to congregate in certain areas. Such concentrations may be due to similarity in culture, but in the case

³⁵Ibid.

of the Negro, more than most others, they also tend to find their bases in poverty. His economic condition, due in no small measure to the refusal of society to allow him the opportunity to learn skills which would enable him to earn on a level adequate to permit him to live in better areas, forces him into the ghetto area in the first place. Even though he may desire to arise above the slum conditions in which he lives, the power structure in society is such as to make this all but impossible. The question as to whether the Negro is satisfied in the ghetto, contends Myrdal, "is an academic one, as we have no means of ascertaining what he would do if he were free to choose."³⁶ In addition, while other ethnic groups may leave the slum area when their economic status improves and become assimilated into society as a whole, the Negro, because of his "social visibility," is nearly always trapped in the ghetto.³⁷ Further, the Negro who attains middle class status is frequently unable to leave the slum area because he is unable to purchase property in better neighborhoods; thus, he finds himself dissatisfied and isolated among his own race and unable to find acceptance in the white community which corresponds to his financial success.³⁸

³⁶Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 601, 619, 620-621.

³⁷Ibid., 601, 620.

³⁸Ibid., 644-645.

The problems which the Negro faced in the final decades of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century as well as the problems he poses in the 1970's continue to be both unique and difficult. Unlike other minority groups, the Negro's color militates against him. Bertram Lenox Simpson, a British publicist and diplomat (who used the pseudonym Bertram Lenox Putnam Weale, or B. L. P. Weale), in 1910, noted the uniqueness of the Negro's color and indicated how it was nearly always used against the black:

There is one thing which can never be altered, and that is color. For here is the real root of the racial difficulty throughout the world. There exists a widespread racial antipathy founded on color--an animal like instinct which must remain in existence until the world becomes Utopia. It is the instinct which seems to forbid really frank intercourse and equal treatment.³⁹

Since racial attitudes find their bases primarily, if not entirely, in skin color, it follows that physical features serve as the chief foundations for race relations. While a person may be able to alter his social status somewhat, he cannot change his color. One may choose to reside among members of another race; he may marry a member of another race, but only by birth can he become a member of that particular race. The individual is born into a specific

³⁹Bertram Lenox Simpson [Bertram Lenox Putnam Weale, pseud.] The Conflict of Colour or the Threatened Upheaval Throughout the World (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), p. 110.

racial group and thereby inherits its physical features which are inalienable. Thus, for Oliver C. Cox, "The crucial symbol of race relations is physical identifiability."⁴⁰

The black, however, is endeavoring to escape the disadvantages he faces because of his color by effecting a new relationship with the white community in which the latter will accept the Negro on his own terms. Leslie W. Dunbar argued that these new demands of the Negroes comprise one of the most dynamic and potentially explosive problems facing Americans in race relations today. As yet, however, the black must contend with special disabilities in the South, despite the recent enactment of civil rights laws. He must face the white southerner's dual prejudice against the Negro and the North. The former prejudice has long been an inherent element in the white Southerner's position on race relations. According to Dunbar, agitation in the North for better treatment of Negroes in the South has aroused and intensified white southerners' resentment against both the black and his sponsors from the North.⁴¹

⁴⁰Cox, Caste, Class, and Race, pp. 400, 426; Robert E. Speer, Of One Blood: A Study of the Race Problem (New York: Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1924), p. 132.

⁴¹Leslie W. Dunbar, "The Changing Mind of the South: The Exposed Nerve," in The American South in the 1960's, ed. Avery Leiserson (New York: Frederick A. Prager, Publishers, 1964), p. 11.

Nonetheless, the racial picture appears to be changing, although slowly, for the better in the South and in Texas, and the churches are becoming more aware of their responsibility and opportunity as their brothers' keepers in this area of human relations.

The South has a long-standing reputation for conservatism in social and religious views, and both of these factors affect the southerner's stance on the race question. Wilbur Joseph Cash, a southern historian, saw this conservatism of the South as a link with the romantic past.⁴² Another writer, John Hope Franklin has contended that as the South entered the twentieth century it remained determined to perpetuate its peculiar social system as it had during the 1850's.⁴³ White southerners, including Texas Baptists, have often found themselves on the defensive in relation to the mid-twentieth century struggle for the rights of the minorities. They have discovered a conflict between the law as interpreted by the Supreme Court, their own sense of moral rightness, and the traditions which their fathers cherished and under which they themselves were born and reared. For many, the choice has been a difficult one.

⁴²Wilbur Joseph Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), pp. x-xi.

⁴³John Hope Franklin, in an address to the Southern Historical Association, Houston, Texas, 18 November 1971, attended by author.

The traditional social and economic arrangement between the races in the South is the master-servant relation. Such a relation existed in the antebellum days and persists in many parts of the South a century after emancipation. Also, in small towns, one's parentage is public knowledge, thus strengthening the continuance of the master-servant relationship even for those who might otherwise pass as whites.⁴⁴

In the South, perhaps more than elsewhere, the economy has played an important role in determining the trend of race relations. Defeat of the Confederacy did not diminish the white Southerner's desire for cheap labor; rather, it increased his need for it. It was but natural, therefore, that he should seek a method by which he could assure himself of such a labor supply. The Black Codes enacted by Southern legislatures immediately following the Civil War seemed to promise the perpetuation of an economical labor supply, but in time they were invalidated by Congress when it enacted the Civil Rights law of 1865. Upon the failure of political measures to control the freedmen, white Southerners turned to economic measures and instituted the share-crop system, of which the crop-lien was a facet, especially for the Negro farmer, who was usually a share cropper.

⁴⁴Rupert B. Vance and Nicholas J. Demerath, editors, The Urban South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954), p. 209.

rather than a share tenant. The latter was generally white and furnished his own livestock and tools, giving a portion of the crop as rent. The two systems were similar in that both tended to perpetuate the dependence of the farmer upon the planter and merchant, both of which were often the same man.⁴⁵

During the final third of the twentieth century, however, the old order is changing. The Negro is rapidly coming into his own, nation-wide, and in many instances the leaders of the churches are encouraging him in his efforts to improve his lot. These leaders' efforts are also directed toward their own constituencies in urging upon them the imperative imposed by the law to treat the minority member as a first class citizen and the demand of the Scriptures that they regard all men as the handiwork of God.

⁴⁵Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 224; Vance and Demerath, Urban South, p. 208.

CHAPTER II

BAPTISTS' BELIEFS AND THE RACE PROBLEM

From earliest times, Baptists have regarded themselves as "people of the Book." As such, they have relied upon the Bible primarily, rather than upon Christian creeds or the decrees of church councils, as the basis of their beliefs or doctrines. A favorite dictum among Baptists, especially among those of the South, is the statement: "The New Testament is a sufficient guide to faith and morals." When considering the beliefs of Baptists, however, it is important to realize that while they generally agree on basic principles, Baptists have allowed each other a rather wide latitude of convictions on matters which they do not consider basic. Fundamental principles among Baptists include belief in the deity of Jesus Christ, the competency of the individual in matters of faith and morals, separation of church and state, salvation by divine grace, immersion as the scriptural mode of baptism, regenerate church membership, the complete autonomy of the local church,

and the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.¹

While disclaiming the charges of some that they engage in "bibliolatry", Baptists nonetheless regard the Bible as the authoritative expression of the nature and will of God; consequently, in matters of conscience, or faith and morals, they reject any authority which they deem to be human in origin or nature. At the same time they seek to find a scriptural basis for every tenet of their faith. Many go even further and seek also to justify particular deeds and practices by the Scriptures. Basic beliefs of Baptists, therefore, have figured prominently in their positions on the question of race relations, although the question itself does not usually assume the proportions of a fundamental doctrine.

While Baptists of all conventions, associations, and other affiliations demand an allegiance to the Bible as the inspired word of God, their views of the Bible must be seen in the light of another doctrine: that which relates to Man.² Since Baptists believe in the right and ability of the individual to approach God directly without

¹Emery H. Bancroft, Christian Theology: Systematic and Biblical (Johnson City, New York: Johnson City Publishing Company, 1925), pp. 45, 320, 330-32 passim.

²Albert Henry Newman, A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 1:2; William Richardson White, Baptist Distinctives (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1946), pp. 1-2.

the aid of any human mediator, they also deem each person capable of reading and interpreting the Bible for himself as he sees fit. They insist that the same Holy Spirit who illuminates the preacher likewise illuminates the layman and makes him a competent interpreter of the Bible. As a practical matter, Baptists, like others, have interpreted the Scriptures in such a manner as to justify economic practices and social ideas, and if they have not arrived at the same conclusions as others, such a variation is not due to an absence of biblical interpretation by others, but is due to a contrast in backgrounds and cultures. For example, prior to the Civil War, Baptists in the North used the Bible as a charter of liberty for the enslaved blacks of the South, while Baptists of the South used the same Bible, and often, the same texts, to justify the continued existence of slavery.³

The prevailing interpretation of the Scriptures among Baptists affects their views on race relations as on other subjects. No one can tell a Baptist what the Bible says or teaches, unless he, the individual, chooses to listen. The obvious fact is that a Baptist's willingness to listen

³Newman, History of Baptists, 1:3-2; 2:448-452; Robert Andrew Baker, Relations Between Northern and Southern Baptists (n.p.; n. p., 1948), pp. 81-83; James O. Buswell, III, Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 33, 62.

is frequently affected by his agreement or disagreement with the speaker's sociological views; but since Baptists differ in sociological matters they also hold different positions on the race question and on the Bible's relation to it. Even non-Baptists carry some weight with Baptists when their extra-biblical views coincide.⁴

Some Baptists view the Bible as having no direct bearing upon the modern race problem; yet, they do not fail to see in the Bible principles which one may and should apply to contemporary issues, including race. On this point, Methodist Liston Pope expressed the views of American Baptists and some Southern Baptists on the race issue. Like Pope and Robert E. Speer, also a Methodist, Thomas Bufford Maston, retired professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, has found no clear, direct teaching in the Bible on the subject of race as the term is used today. Maston, Pope, and Speer, all have argued that group distinctions in the biblical accounts derived not from biology but from other factors, such as language, nation, and religion.⁵

⁴Pope, "Christian Mandate on Race Relations," p. 21.

⁵Ibid.; Speer, Of One Blood, p. 26; Thomas Bufford Maston, The Bible and Race (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1959), p. 41.

Others, whose works Texas Baptists read, include Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor of Decision magazine, who has contended that neither the Bible nor science supports a doctrine of inherent superiority. Expressing a similar view, Albert Barnes, an early Northern Baptist, urged that the New Testament holds no brief for human inequality. James O. Buswell, author of Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture, in agreement with Barnes, believed that the Bible always supports the ideal of human equality.⁶ Lee Rutland Scarborough, long-time president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, agreed with these leaders when he wrote approvingly of the international and interracial ministry of Philip, the New Testament deacon and evangelist.⁷

More conservative Baptist leaders and spokesmen, while emphatically rejecting the social principles which racial desegregation and integration imply, nonetheless regard the Bible as a universal book, a book for all men, regardless of race or color or nation. A member of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, which went on record in 1957 as opposed to integration in the nation's schools, wrote:

⁶Wirt, Social Conscience of the Evangelical, p. 81; Albert Barnes, An Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery (Philadelphia: Perry and McMillan 1846), pp. 272ff, 313; Buswell, Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture, p. 62.

⁷Lee Rutland Scarborough, Endued to Win (Nashville, Tennessee: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1922), p. 8; Acts 8:5-40; in citations from the Bible, the authorized version is used except where otherwise noted.

"The Word of God is not geographical but universal. The Book of books is not addressed to class or caste, but to all men everywhere and it is suitable for everyone everywhere." L. H. Raney, of the same Baptist affiliation, however, warned of the dangers of meddling with God's geographical arrangements of the races.⁸

The origin of the Negro race is a question which has occupied the minds of those Baptists who have tended to insist that racial segregation is the order of God, and they, too, base their convictions on the Bible. Those who hold the most conservative position contend that Genesis 9:25, which states the oft-cited "curse of Ham," assigns to Ham's descendants the status of perpetual servitude; they also insist that the Negro is a direct descendant of Noah's second son.⁹ Others have argued that the Genesis reference to Noah and his sons does not pertain to the Negro at all and that those who so interpret the text violate the sense of the Scriptures. Buswell rejected the "curse of Ham" argument, seeing in it no relevance to the modern racial situation in America, since the Negro "was not and is not a descendant of Canaan. . . ." He denied that there is

⁸Baptist Progress, 21 November 1957, p. 5; 3 June 1954, p. 6.

⁹Ibid., 21 November, 1957, p. 5; Pope, "Mandate on Race Relations," p. 21.

any anthropological evidence proving the claims that the Negro is descended from Ham.¹⁰

In their views of God, Baptists agree with almost all other Christian denominations. Some Baptists emphasize God's sovereignty and justice more than do others, and some put more stress on divine love and mercy, but these variations are in emphasis, not in basic doctrines. All, however, agree that God is the Creator of the universe as well as the Creator of all men. The more conservative Baptists tend to believe not only that God performed the creative act which brought men into being but also that he decreed the distinctions among nations and races which they observe and which they assert should be enforced in contemporary society.¹¹

Other Baptists, with a more equalitarian bent, believe that God's creative act places all men on equal footing before him. The fact that God created all races indicates to them that all persons are equal; hence they recognize and acknowledge no distinction as to class, color, race, or nation. Such distinctions as God does recognize among

¹⁰Buswell, Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture, p. 64; Maston, Bible, and Race, pp. 116-117; *idem.*, Segregation and Desegregation: A Christian Approach (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1959), p. 99.

¹¹Baptist Progress, 21 November 1957, p. 5.

men, the more liberal Baptists contend, are based upon spiritual conditions, not upon physical traits nor ethnic identification. Maston believed that the New Testament supported the view that God is impartial so far as races and nations are concerned, citing the Apostle Peter's visit to the home of Cornelius, the Roman army officer. Peter, although a Christian, was also a Jew, and as a Jew, he was a segregationist. He was reluctant to associate with Gentiles, who, according to the Jewish interpretation of the Decalogue, were religiously unclean. Jewish custom forbade Peter to enter a Gentile's home or that he even consider dining at a non-Jewish table, but he received instructions telling him that he should not regard "as common or unclean that which God hath cleansed." Based upon his understanding of the Bible, Maston concluded, as did Peter, that the God whom Christians profess and worship is neither color nor class conscious; that "class and color lines do not belong in the realm of the Spirit," since God created all men as equals.¹²

The conviction that God is the Creator of all men leads some Baptists, especially those of the more liberal views, to embrace the teaching of the universal brotherhood of man and its concomitant tenet: the universal fatherhood of God. The conclusion of these positions is that all men,

¹²Acts 10:1-48; Maston, Bible and Race, pp. 42, 44.

regardless of physical, ethnic, racial, or spiritual factors, are equally the children of God. This position is more likely to appeal to American Baptists, who, more than their brothers in the South, have been influenced by the "social gospel" preachments of men like Walter Rauschenbusch. More conservative Baptists, which includes most Texas Baptists, while regarding all men as creatures of God, are more apt to reserve the filial relationships to those who profess a spiritual union with God through Jesus Christ. The fatherly relationship of God to men is a spiritual one, limited to those who are born into his family by faith. While most Baptists who are segregationists in regard to race hold the limited view of the fatherhood of God, it does not follow that all who hold this view are segregationists. All Baptists, regardless of their view of the fatherhood of God, agree that God is concerned for the welfare of all men, that he desires their good, especially that of those who believe. H. O. J. Brown insisted that "in Him [Christ] and only in Him are we all the children of one Father. . . . "13

Closely allied to Baptists' view of God are their beliefs regarding man. Again, like other Christians, they believe that man is the crowning work of creation, and

¹³Harold Wayland Tribble, Our Doctrines (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1936), pp. 22-23; John 3:16; H. O. J. Brown, Christianity and the Class Struggle, pp. 32, 87.

they accept as authoritative the biblical statement that man is created in the image of God, although that image is marred by the presence and effects of sin.¹⁴ At the same time, however, man is a volitional being, able, within the limits of time and space, to order his own destiny. With man's volition comes moral responsibility. He is accountable to God and will be judged on the basis of his relationship to him. Many American Baptists and some Southern and Texas Baptists hold racism to be a sin for which God will judge men. H. O. J. Brown argued that "to take the reality of Christ seriously means that we must fight racism."¹⁵

Present-day Baptist leaders tend to see a unity in the human race that was often absent from the beliefs of their immediate ecclesiastical elders, and which is still missing from many of the doctrines of the most conservative churchmen. Sherwood Wirt is one who has observed a basic unity beneath the obvious diversities among men. Russell B. Barbour denounced segregation as an invalid theological position, stating: "A theology that includes all men is our theology, not a theology of separation and segregation." H. O. J. Brown wrote in a similar vein when he

¹⁴White, Baptist Distinctives, pp. 1-2; Tribble, Our Doctrines, pp. 30-31; Gen. 1:27, 4:1.

¹⁵H. O. J. Brown, Christianity and the Class Struggle, pp. 32, 87.

called for acceptance of the solidarity of mankind, that is, for a recognition of the equality of all men before God. Henlee Hulix Barnette, professor of ethics at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, whose works are read by many Texas Baptist leaders, has urged that the New Testament prescribes the acceptance of one another by Christians, adding that that acceptance includes the total person: "the color of his skin, the shape of his nose, as well as his soul." Maston reminds Southern Baptists, including his fellow Baptists in Texas, that the Negro is the white man's neighbor, and if the two are Christians, they are brothers.¹⁶

Even those Baptists who refuse to admit the Negro to equal status recognize that he, like the other races, is the result of God's creative work.¹⁷ They, along with Maston, recognize that an important factor in racial affairs is that of individuals' relationships to each other. Maston reminded Texas Baptists that "Jesus plainly taught

¹⁶Ibid., p. 32; Rom. 15:7 (New English Bible); Wirt, Social Conscience of the Evangelical, p. 81; Barbour, Black and White Together, p. 61; Henlee Hulix Barnette, Has God Called You? Stresses the Universal Calling and Responsibility of Christians (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1969), p. 64; Thomas Bufford Maston, The Christian and Race Relations (Nashville, Tennessee: Brotherhood Commission, Southern Baptist Convention, n. d.), p. 60.

¹⁷L. H. Raney, "Association Baptists and Negroes," Baptist Progress, 3 June, 1954, p. 6.

that no man can be right with God and be wrong with his fellow men"; hence it is important that he who would be on speaking terms with God must maintain an amicable relationship with men God has created.¹⁸

Although many of the more prominent leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas are moving toward an equalitarian position on the race question, some persistently hold the old ideas of racial superiority and segregation. Among these segregationists, perhaps the most outstanding is Carey Daniel, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, West. Active in the white citizens' councils of Dallas and throughout Texas, he insisted, as has L. H. Raney, of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, that although God created the various species of creatures, he also separated and segregated them. In Daniel's opinion, man is no exception to the principle of divine segregation; he appears to regard the various races of men as different species, thus concluding that racial segregation is God's plan for the human family.¹⁹

In regard to moral responsibility, Baptists generally believe that man is responsible not only for his relation

¹⁸Carey Daniel, God the Original Segregationist and Seven Other Sermons (Dallas: published by author, 1969), p. 15; Maston, Bible and Race, p. 27.

¹⁹Daniel, God the Original Segregationist, p. 15; Raney, "Association Baptists and Negroes," p. 6.

to God, but that the more advantaged are responsible for the welfare of the less fortunate. Such accountability, they insist, maintains regardless of racial or ethnic identification; yet they reserve to the white race a special responsibility for the present undesirable situation existing between members of the majority and minority groups. They also believe that the white man has the obligation to see that the minority member's lot is improved. The southern segregationist, however, while he usually will agree that the Negro's lot needs improving is not willing to acknowledge equality as a part of the improvement for which he sees the need. Further, while he recognizes a collective culpability on the part of the white race because it brought the black people to this continent, he denies that he, personally, is responsible for the black's presence, or for his unhappy condition.²⁰

Closely related to the Baptists' belief in the obligations of the advantaged to the disadvantaged is the belief that because he is morally responsible, he is guilty before God. All persons of all races, nations, and classes are included in this guilt.²¹ Wirt commented: "Beneath all the diversity [among men] the Bible posits a fundamental

²⁰Proceedings, Baptist General Association, Texas, 1876, p. 14; 1878, pp. 30-31.

²¹Rom. 3:23

unity based not on the similarity of the species but on a more significant element: the fact of human sin. . . ."22 Walter Thomas Conner, for many years regarded as one of the leading Baptist theologians of the Southwest, and long-time professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, contended that sin, the basis of guilt, is both universal and individual; hence all men everywhere are guilty before God, but each man bears his guilt as an individual.²³ American Baptist minister, Kyle Haselden, expressed belief also in collective guilt as well as in its individual aspects. From this viewpoint he took a position similar to that of James Forman and the Black Economic Development Committee as they demanded that the white churches tender reparations to the black community as an act of confession and restitution for the sins of past generations, whose guilt the present generation shares.²⁴

It is perhaps in their view of the church itself that Baptists present the most hope and the most exasperating

²²Wirt, Conscience of the Evangelical, p. 81.

²³Walter Thomas Conner, The Cross in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), pp. 74-75; Rom. 5:12.

²⁴Haselden, Racial Problem in Christian Perspective, p. 100; Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliott Wright, eds., Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism, and Reparations (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), pp. 3ff, 127-132.

frustration in the field of race relations. Along with other congregational-type religious bodies, and unlike those with episcopal or presbyterial forms of church polity, Baptists stress the competency of the individual. The concomitant of individual competency is complete and absolute autonomy of the local church. This means that the local church determines its policies and destinies. Associations, state and national conventions, and conferences may suggest, recommend, or request that the local churches adopt certain policies or take certain actions, but having made its suggestions, recommendations, or requests, the general body can do little more. It can exclude a recalcitrant church from its fellowship, but it cannot force a church to conform to its will.²⁵

In the area of race relations as in other matters, local Baptist churches insist upon making their own policies. They refuse, according to Ewing S. James, former editor of the Baptist Standard, to be coerced by ecclesiastical or civil authorities where their consciences are concerned, and this resistance applies to pressures designed to alter their position on the question of race relations. Unlike many other church bodies, Baptists tend

²⁵Tribble, Our Doctrines, pp. 106, 107-108, 109-111; W. Morgan Patterson, "Landmarkism," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, 2 vols, ed., Clifton Judson Allen and others (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 2:757.

to move church by church toward a chosen goal; they do not generally move as a denomination.²⁶ A movement as emotion-laden as integration may take months, years, or even decades to find acceptance in the majority of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention or the Baptist General Convention of Texas. If at last such a movement does gain wide acceptance, even then, some churches may, and some most likely will, refuse to go along with the majority.

Many Baptists are not disturbed when they are out of step with the majority. In the final analysis, each Baptist speaks for himself and each church acts for itself; collective action is based on cooperation. E. Harold Henderson, Baptist Missionary Association pastor in Lubbock, and editor of a regular feature on "Baptist Distinctives" in the Baptist Progress, asserted that Baptist churches are free to work together voluntarily. At the same time he insisted upon the reverse side of the proposition of cooperation: "Freedom to cooperate means freedom to withdraw from any part or all of any project with which a church does not agree."²⁷

²⁶Ewing S. James, "Desegregation, Yes--By Legislation, No," The Baptist Standard, 24 July 1963, p. 3.

²⁷Ibid.; E. Harold Henderson, "Equal and Independent Churches," Baptist Progress, 6 February 1964, p. 8.

The basic reason for the local church's absolute autonomy is the Baptist principle which contends that the local church is a democracy. This means that each local church regards itself as a pure democracy, "an independent body of which Christ is the head." This is the position of Henry Crow of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, and is comparable to that held by B. H. Carroll, an early leader in the Baptist General Convention of Texas.²⁸

It should be noted, however, that in most churches, the concept of pure democracy is an ideal not readily attained. Only in the smallest congregations can the ideal be even approximated. The percentage of member-participation in a church drops as the congregation grows; nevertheless, each member has the right of participation and expression should he choose to exercise these prerogatives. Carroll contended for the inclusiveness of the pure democratic principle of the local Baptist church as an ideal, when he observed that no one is barred or disfranchised because of race, education, age, wealth or sex. "All members are equal fellow-citizens and the majority decides."²⁹

²⁸Henry Crow, "What Old Fashioned Baptists Believe," Baptist Progress, 26 November, 1953, p. 8; Benajah Harvey Carroll, Baptists and their Doctrines: Sermons on Distinctive Baptist Principles, comp. James Britton Cranfill, (New York: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1913), p. 31.

²⁹Carroll, Baptists and Their Doctrines, p. 31.

Although Carroll did not deal with the reverse side of majority rule, which was its power to exclude, this has in a very practical manner been a characteristic of white churches of all major denominations, including the Baptists, in the nation and, especially, in the South in regard to other races. Such exclusiveness in Baptist churches was not likely to have been the result of an official vote of the congregation, but was more likely to be the result of the prevailing mood of the majority by which members of minorities were made to feel unwelcome in the church. At the same time, however, inherent in the concept of autonomy is the right to reject any person who applies for membership in the local church. In more recent times, however, Baptist churches have rejected the applications of Negroes who have presented themselves for membership.³⁰

It might be noted that Carroll emphasized, as did other Baptists of his day, the mystical unity of all Christians by virtue of their experience in Christ. It was most likely of this unity that he spoke when he referred to the inability of such factors as race, wealth, education, or sex to bar one from fellowship in the church. Certainly he could not have been ignorant of the existence of racially

³⁰"Negro Fails in Membership Bid at First Church, Houston," The Baptist Standard, 19 June, 1963, p. 11; K. Owen White, "Statement by Pastor of Houston Church," The Baptist Standard, 19 June, 1963, p. 11.

separate churches in his day. By distinguishing between the ideal and the practice, and between the spiritual unity of all believers and the membership of a local church, he, and others of his day, could preach the ideal and accept the status quo: positions which seem contradictory to the modern mind.

The rule of the majority in the local Baptist church as described by Carroll and others implies that a Baptist congregation in its exercise of the will of the majority may be susceptible to what Alexis de Tocqueville described as the tyranny of the majority. The member of the spiritual democracy, nevertheless, has an escape which is difficult for the dissident citizen to exercise: he can withdraw; unless and until he does, however, he must be willing to submit to the will of the majority or endure whatever sanctions it may choose to exercise against dissidents.³¹

For many years a debate has raged among Baptists in the United States over the merits of social action as opposed to the preaching of a strictly biblical message,

³¹Carroll, Baptists and Their Doctrines, p. 31; Benjamin Brawley, Negro Builders and Heroes (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1937), pp. 199-200; Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed., Richard D. Heffner (New York: The New American Library, 1956), pp. 114, 115.

and again, local churches vary from each other in regard to the question of social responsibility.³² Olin T. Binkley has found a basis for the reluctance of some Baptists to emphasize social issues in the historical stress they have laid upon the importance of the conversion of the individual and of private religious devotions. He has defended them against charges of quietism by asserting that while they have struggled for individual conversion and the right of the individual's conscience to be protected from violation by ecclesiastical or state authority, they have also battled against the collective ills of mankind and have supported humanitarian enterprises.³³

Proponents of the social gospel view of Christianity have emphasized the necessity for the church to exert a wholesome influence upon society. This influence would, in the views of the preachers of the social gospel, find expression in human uplift. They have thought that the church should become an active participant in slum clearance and the promotion of social justice, including the elimination of the injustices which minorities suffer. A non-Christian man, they argue is not likely to be responsive to the Christian gospel if he is ill-fed, poorly

³²Henlee Hulix Barnette, The New Theology and Morality (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 42.

³³Binkley, The Churches and the Social Conscience, p. 4.

clothed, or made to live in sub-standard housing. In more recent years Southern Baptists have begun to adopt the social theories of their brothers in the North in regard to Christian social service. An illustration of this new trend in Baptists' beliefs in the South appears in Barnette's insistence that "Christianity is an ethical faith, as well as a theological one. It is a way of life undergirded by faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ."³⁴

The insistence among Texas Baptists that the church's mission is primarily spiritual causes some of them to disagree with their more socially minded brothers. They consider direct involvement by the church in social issues an abandonment of its highest mission. These Baptists disagree even further as to the propriety of the church's involvement in economic and political questions. At the same time, however, most of those who view the church as a "spiritual" institution agree that the Bible teaches that the Christian must possess and express a concern for his neighbor, and they include physical and material needs as well as the spiritual. The church, they say, should exert an influence on society, but not as an institution, nor as a pressure group; instead the church should exert its

³⁴Barnette, New Theology and Morality, p. 42.

influence through the efforts of its members whose lives have been changed by its message.³⁵

Another example of the new trend in social consciousness among conservative Christian writers is the critical view of H. O. J. Brown toward those Christians who insist upon remaining aloof from the workaday world. He has charged that the emphasis of the Christian religion upon personal faith, personal responsibility, and eternity has led many Christians to assume a quietistic, passive attitude toward injustices in society. According to Brown, many such Christians, including a number of Baptists, have at times neglected or rejected their responsibilities as members of the society in which they live.³⁶ Maston further described the trend toward social consciousness among Texas Baptists: "To be true to its nature the Christian religion must not be active at geographic extremities but it must also be active at what some consider to be moral and social extremities." It is his conviction that Southern Baptists are moving, even though slowly, to a more active role in regard to social issues, including race relations.³⁷

³⁵Tribble, Our Doctrines, p. 109; White, Baptist Distinctives, pp. 12-13.

³⁶H. O. J. Brown, Christianity and the Class Struggle, p. 83.

³⁷Maston, Bible and Race, p. 87.

A consideration of the beliefs of Baptists regarding the cardinal doctrines of Christianity indicates that these tenets bear a definite relationship to racial issues. These beliefs, while generally similar, vary in some vital respects. Baptist doctrines are based upon the Holy Scriptures, but these beliefs are affected to a large degree by the culture in which the people live, and by the sociological views of their culture. White Baptists living in areas containing few Negroes and no laws requiring segregation show a marked tendency to adopt an equalitarian position and to interpret such scriptures as Acts 17:26 as a divine injunction demanding integration.³⁸ Liston Pope observed the appeal of integrationists to this text, and although he himself has advocated integration, he concluded that integrationists are less than honest when they quote the first part of the text and ignore the latter portion which states: "and hath determined . . . the bounds of their habitation. . . ."³⁹

Something of a paradox appears in the racial composition of southern churches. Baptists, along with Methodists, have led in the segregation of churches in the South. In addition, members of these two denominations

³⁸Acts 17:26

³⁹Pope, "Christian Mandate on Race Relations," p. 21.

have exercised much of the authority which has produced an inferior status for the Negro in the South; yet the vast majority of Negroes who profess Christianity are members of these two faiths. According to unofficial estimates, more than fifty percent of Negro church members are Baptists, and the combined strength of Negro Baptists and Methodists reaches ninety-six percent among black churchmen. Benjamin Brawley also suggested that anything which affects Baptists or Methodists in America is likely to touch about ninety percent of the Negroes.⁴⁰

In the main, the theological beliefs of Baptists from minority groups correspond rather closely with those of their Anglo co-religionists. Such a similarity might be suspected, considering the course of developments among Baptists of minority backgrounds. The Negro's contact with Christianity during slavery was through white men. Since emancipation, white pastors and theologians have continued to serve as mentors for black leaders, even though their churches were racially separate. In Texas, white pastors were urged to visit Negro churches for the purpose of conducting revival meetings and training institutes, and the latter included instruction in doctrines as

⁴⁰Brawley, Negro Builders, pp. 197-198; Robert T. Handy, "The City and the Church," in Will the Church Lose the City?, eds., Kendig Brubaker Cully and F. Niles Harper (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1969), p. 98.

well as in methods of carrying out the church's program. Not only has the local teaching of Negroes been largely in the hands of the whites, but also, such formal education as they received came from the whites. Northern Baptist missionary-teachers provided schools for the freedmen from elementary through college level, gradually phasing out the former and concentrating upon the latter. Seminary training, for the few who could attain it, was also under white administrators and taught largely by white professors, even though the American Baptist Theological Seminary was established as a cooperative effort of Southern Baptists, Northern (American) Baptists, and National Baptists, and served as a training school for ministers only.⁴¹ It could well be said that the Negro church in America was created in the image of the white church.

In the view of Gayraud S. Wilmore, however, blacks are becoming less satisfied with the white image of their churches, and black acceptance of white theology is losing ground. Younger black churchmen tend to reject the other-world concepts of their elders, attaching a present-tense outlook to black religion. They view religion primarily as a tool which they can use in furthering the

⁴¹For example see Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1937, pp. 87-88; Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1927, pp. 485-486.

interests of the black revolution. Negro historian, Edward Franklin Frazier, also sees a move toward presentism among Negro church leaders, including Baptists. The other-worldly emphasis of Negro Baptist leaders began to lose its dominance as they began to focus on the status of Negroes in this world.⁴²

Other ethnic groups in Texas also show the influence of Anglo Baptists upon their doctrines. Especially noteworthy in this regard were the Mexican-Americans, who were predominantly Roman Catholic in religious background. Since those who embraced the Baptist faith were converts of Anglo Baptist missionaries, they naturally espoused, to a large degree the religious beliefs of their spiritual mentors.

Although large numbers of non-Anglo-Saxons adhere to the Baptist faith, white Baptists who live in southern areas of the United States have been prone to insist that segregation is the American way of life and is totally compatible with Christian teaching, interpreting the Bible in the light of their cultural environment. Like the slaveholder before him, the segregationist interprets the Scriptures to support his views and discounts science, or

⁴²Gayraud S. Wilmore, "The Black Church in Search of a New Theology," in Will the Church Lose the City?, p. 136. Edward Franklin Frazier, The Negro Church in America (New York: Schocken Books, 1936), p. 47.

declares that it has no common ground with the Bible. Like his integrationist brothers in the North, he, too, appeals to Acts 17:26 for support of his position. Unlike the Baptists who support desegregation and integration, however, the segregationist cites the latter part of the text.⁴³ Segregation Baptists also exhibit a considerable degree of ambivalence, since they also cite only those Bible texts which appear to support their sociological experiences.

Baptists of Texas and other areas of the South have left themselves open to charges of being behind the times since only after the enactment of federal laws forbidding segregation and discrimination did denominational leaders reflect any view other than that which supported segregation, although they had regularly expressed desire for harmonious relations with minorities a number of years prior to the enactment of federal desegregation laws. Nonetheless, some critics have condemned church members, including Baptists, for waiting until Congress acted before seriously re-examining their sociological views and the Scriptures which relate to them. Meanwhile, many Texas Baptist leaders have gradually come to the conclusion that their former interpretations of the Bible were in error

⁴³Buswell, Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture, p.62; Acts 17:26.

regarding the question of race relations. Although perhaps the majority of the members of the churches will not agree as yet that the walls separating the races should be removed, increasing numbers will agree with the conclusion of Jimmy R. Allen, Texas Baptist pastor and denominational leader, who stated that the walls which have long separated the brothers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds will ultimately tumble.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Jimmy R. Allen, "Tumbling Walls," The Baptist Standard, 10 February 1965, pp. 7-8.

CHAPTER III
BAPTISTS' ATTITUDES AND RACIAL PATTERNS
BEFORE 1900

The emphasis which Baptists have placed on the spiritual aspect of man's being and upon the hope of life after death has led some of their critics to describe them as "quietists," and as "pie-in-the-sky" prophets who have used their hope of the next world to escape involvement in this one. Baptist apologists, however, have denied these charges. Olin T. Binkley calls attention to the involvement of Baptists in public affairs in America since colonial days. Linking Baptist history with the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, he notes: "One of the by-products of the Great Awakening was a new social consciousness and a growing awareness that devotion to Christ must show itself in deeds of kindness and active good will to men." The same revival stirred the residents of the Middle Colonies to a new interest in the spiritual welfare of Indians and Negroes.¹

¹Binkley, Churches and the Social Conscience, pp. 6, 7.

Many southern churchmen, including some Baptists, supported the institution of slavery, both during the colonial era and after the formation of the republic. Numbers of people accepted the argument that the Negro benefited from the civilizing influence of Christianity despite the disadvantages and hardship which he suffered under slavery. Ulrich Bonnell Phillips cited the statement of a planter who believed that "Christianity, humanity and order elevate all [and] injure none. . . ."2

While some Baptists actually owned slaves, others openly opposed the practice. Those in the North often led the antislavery movements during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Albert Barnes, a northern Baptist minister, emphasized the unity of the human race as one brotherhood and insisted that the brotherhood of the race included the Negro. Contending that the New Testament taught equality among men, Barnes charged that those who used the Scriptures to defend slavery had failed to understand their true spirit. Baptists who opposed slavery during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, however, were not limited to those residing in the northern states;

²Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), p. 269.

there were people in the South, particularly among those living outside the Black Belt, who took public stands against the institution of slavery. Such sentiments were most common among the small farmers who generally owned no slaves, or who lived in areas where slave labor was unprofitable. It was in those regions that Baptists took corporate actions in associational and state meetings expressing opposition to slavery. Southern Baptist historian William Wright Barnes wrote of a manumission society in Tennessee during the second decade of the nineteenth century. In 1817 this society presented a memorial opposing slavery to the Tennessee Legislature. Three years later, in 1820, Elihu Embree, a leader of the manumission society began publishing The Emancipator in Jonesborough, Tennessee, the first antislavery paper to appear in the United States, according to Barnes. During the 1820's, Baptists in other southern states, including Virginia and Kentucky, passed resolutions condemning the institution of slavery, and going so far as to recommend the exclusion of slave owners from membership in Baptist churches.³

In the 1830's and later, when abolitionism began to be a force in Baptist life, the antislavery Baptists of the southern and border states, being identified by the

³William Wright Barnes, The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953 (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1954), p. 19.

growing "slavocracy" with abolitionism, began to leave Kentucky and Tennessee for the more comfortable areas beyond the Ohio, where they joined migrants from the northern states. While Barnes concluded that many of these border-state Baptists left their homes to escape slavery, Robert R. Russell, of Western Michigan University, tends to discount this argument, stating that the primary motivation for migration to the regions of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri was economic, rather than ideological.⁴

By 1840, abolitionism had already gained wide acceptance among northern churchmen while antislavery sentiment had almost disappeared in the South. When the rupture in the Baptist ranks occurred in 1845, therefore, it was a simple matter to secure passage of the resolution of separation. In his history of the Southern Baptist Convention, William W. Barnes blamed abolitionism for the division between northern and southern Baptists. A decade later, in 1856, the Committee on the Colored Population of the Baptist State Convention of Texas condemned abolitionism as blind fanaticism and characterized abolitionists as tools

⁴W. W. Barnes, Southern Convention, p. 19; Robert R. Russell, Ante Bellum Studies in Slavery, Politics, and the Railroads (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Western Michigan University, 1960), p. 54; William W. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1942), pp. 317-318; Binkley, Churches and Social Conscience, pp. 6-7.

of the devil who produced discord and disunion.⁵ At the time of the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptists in southern states numbered about 350,000 and they held about 100,000 slaves.⁶

In Texas, the prospects of realizing huge profits from the growing of cotton led planters to expect slavery to flourish in the state. Writing for the Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored People of the Baptist State Convention, Hosea Garrett predicted in 1851 that Texas would become "the Empire slave state of this Union."⁷ These antebellum Texans apparently saw no incompatibility between their practice of slavery and the rights of the Negroes as human beings or as legitimate candidates for Christian grace.

Virtually every annual session of the State Convention, from its organization in 1848, and of the Baptist General Association of Texas, established in 1868, appointed committees to report on the Negroes in their midst. In almost every report there was a recognition of the

⁵Proceedings, Baptist State Convention, Texas, 1856, p. 15.

⁶W. W. Barnes, Southern Convention, pp. 19, 23; Courts Redford, "Southern Baptist Relations to Negroes," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, 1:952.

⁷Proceedings, Baptist State Convention, Texas, 1851, pp. 14-15.

importance of concern for the Negro's spiritual welfare. One committee stressed the importance of the task of "Baptist Pioneers of this State" in providing "the means of salvation" for the population of Texas. A subsequent report expressed the conviction that the instruction of Negroes in religious truths was of paramount importance to Texas Baptists.⁸

When they met in annual session in 1851, Texas Baptists were aware that many slaveholders, probably including some Baptist planters, disagreed with the denomination's leaders regarding the benefits of instructing the slaves. These planters looked with contempt upon the Christians' efforts for evangelization of the blacks. A former slave, San Jacinto (Cinto) Lewis, corroborated the Baptist leaders' views when he recounted that his owner allowed neither church services nor Christian funerals for his slaves.⁹

Despite anticipated ridicule and discouragements, the Baptist leaders urged the messengers to the Baptist State Convention of 1851 to persevere in their attempts to win the blacks to Christ. Such effort was worthwhile, they exhorted, since the Bible taught that there would

⁸Ibid., 1856, p. 15.

⁹Ibid., 1851, p. 15; "Texas Narratives," Parts 3 and 4 of Vol. 5 of The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, 19 vols., gen. ed. George P. Rawick (Westport, Connecticut, 1972), p. 2.

be joy in heaven over even one slave who became a Christian. The Baptist leaders found further encouragement to evangelistic endeavors among the Negroes in the biblical references to the poor; they felt that such texts had particular application to the Negro: he certainly was poor. They also offered a biblical text for the encouragement of benevolence among slaveowners: "blessed is he that considereth the poor."¹⁰

Numerous Baptist leaders saw the working of Providence in the importation of Negroes into America, comparing it with the transporting of Joseph into Egypt after his brothers' sold him to the Ishmaelites. Treading on shaky ground historically, one speaker contended that the original intent of the bringing of Negroes "to the Christian shores of America was to purely Christianize them by removing them far away from the corruption of heathenism and surrounding them with Christian influence. . . ." Surrounding the pagan blacks with Christian influences and protecting them from the corrupting heathenism of their native Africa was the mission of the church as Texas Baptists of the 1850's saw it. For them this was a phase of the process by which American churchmen would lead "sons of Ham to the cross of

¹⁰ Proceedings, Baptist State Convention, Texas, 1851,
p. 15.

Jesus and thus prepare them to become 'obedient to their own masters,' and to become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."¹¹

Nineteenth century Baptists of Texas sought to implement their resolutions of concern for the spiritual development of the Negroes. In 1851, under the auspices of the State Convention, the Reverend Noah Hill began a ministry of evangelism among slaves in the southern portion of Texas. It was his belief that by making salvation available to every slave in the land, Christians would prove themselves the true friend of the African race in America. In his zeal for evangelization of the slaves, he wrote somewhat critically of those who sent missionaries to Africa and neglected the Africans in America: "We are sending the gospel to benighted Africa, but we have the same race in our midst that never hear the gospel, and have not heard the Bible read in twenty years. This ought not to be so."¹²

Leaders of the Baptist State Convention exhorted their brethren in the local churches to implement the recommendations of their yearly reports and resolutions. An early report showed that all "except three or four" Baptist

¹¹Ibid., 1856, p. 15; Kenneth M. Stampp, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 159.

¹²Proceedings, Baptist State Convention, Texas, 1855, p. 15.

preachers in the State Convention gave special attention to the Negroes in their church fields. The committee observed without comment that these meetings for the servants were usually separate from those in which the whites worshipped, indicating that while they wanted the blacks as members they were unwilling to admit that the two races were equal in the sight of God. Taking note of the general practice of Baptist pastors, the committee endeavored to encourage them to continue and intensify their efforts. Each pastor should, the report urged, give a portion of each Sabbath to expounding the doctrines of the Bible to the servants of his parish. The servants must also observe strict order and decorum in their services. While lacking any degree of compulsion, the State Convention, through its Committee on the Religious Condition of the Colored People, suggested areas for instruction of the slaves: duties of masters to servants, duties of servants to masters, and emphasis on the scriptural justification for slavery. The panel further urged Christian slaveholders to provide for frequent reading of the Scriptures to their servants. The committee placed its emphasis on oral instruction of Negro children: "But we do not recommend the plan of teaching them to read under existing circumstances."¹³

¹³Ibid., 1851, p. 14; 1853, p. 10; 1856, p. 15.

Response to the appeals of Baptists and others for evangelistic efforts among the Negroes was apparently gratifying to the leaders of the convention. Noah Hill rejoiced in the evidences that Texas planters, Christian and non-Christian, in the area of his labors in South Texas, were anxious to improve the moral condions of their slaves. Hill's report was in contradiction and contrast to the anticipations which the convention messengers of 1851 were led to entertain. According to Hill, some masters contributed to the support of preachers and missionaries who ministered to the spiritual needs of their Negroes. Some constructed buildings in which the servants might worship. Kenneth M. Stampf noted that there were those slaveowners who encouraged religious instruction and activities among their servants because it made the blacks more docile.¹⁴

Baptist leaders not only were pleased with the response of the white Baptists to their appeals for religious work among the blacks but were gratified at the response which the slaves themselves made, or appeared to make, to the preaching of the gospel. Luther P. Jackson suggested that the responses of many of the slaves were genuine when he observed that the Baptist faith had a special appeal for

¹⁴Ibid., 1851, p. 14; 1852, p. 13; 1856, p. 15; Stampf, Peculiar Institution, pp. 158-159.

the blacks, which was lacking in the other major denominations.¹⁵ The white contemporaries of Texas slaves among the Baptists expressed surprise at the depth of perception which the black Baptists demonstrated in regard to religious matters. Such understanding was especially remarkable in view of the fact that almost none of the slaves was able to read; nearly all of them had only an oral acquaintance with the Scriptures and were limited to those portions of the Bible in which the reader was interested, or which the master considered safe. The 1857 report on Religious Condition of Negroes told the delegates that the slaves' "piety and holy zeal compare favorably with that of our white brethren."¹⁶

In their evangelistic and missionary enterprises, antebellum Baptists of Texas did not limit themselves to the approximately 40,000 Negroes who provided the bulk of the agricultural force in that era. Already, sizeable settlements of non-Anglo-Saxons were springing up in the state. By 1856, an estimated 30,000 German settlers lived in Texas. These folk were not of the Baptist faith, nor were they in sympathy with the Baptist message. They were

¹⁵Luther P. Jackson, "Negro Religious Development in Virginia from 1760-1860," The Journal of Negro History, 16 (1931): 198.

¹⁶Proceedings, Baptist State Convention, Texas, 1851, p. 14; 1857, p. 16.

predominantly of the Roman Catholic or Lutheran persuasions. The Baptists regarded the Catholics as the victims of doctrinal and ecclesiastical error; they acknowledged the basic orthodoxy of the Lutherans, but looked upon them as spiritually cold and formal. Rationalism, as the Baptists believed, had robbed the Lutheran Church of its evangelical purity and evangelistic zeal, and had diminished its impact upon its members' lives.¹⁷

Texas Baptists looked upon these settlers with their strange customs and tongues and alien religious beliefs with mixed emotions. First, they regarded them as spiritually lost and without the truth of Christ. This conviction led the Baptists to a sense of obligation: an obligation to reach these strangers with the gospel as they, the Baptists, understood it. In 1854 and again in 1855, the Baptist State Convention took steps to establish a German book fund for the purpose of supplying their new neighbors with Baptist literature. Although they planted churches among the Germans at a later date, their original plan was that of assimilation. The 1857 Convention urged pastors to invite Germans to attend their services, advising against

¹⁷ Ibid., 1856, p. 15.

encouraging the formation of separate German Baptist churches in Texas.¹⁸

A second reason for Baptists' concern in regard to their European neighbors was perhaps more mundane and social than spiritual; yet, even this reason had its spiritual implications for the future of the Baptist faith. They correctly foresaw that their sons and daughters would intermarry with those of the immigrants. Like the ancient Israelites who married heathen Gentiles and were influenced by the pagan religions, young Baptists might also be affected in a manner averse to the faith of their fathers by the religious ideas of non-Baptist spouses. As a means of preserving the doctrinal purity of their families, therefore, Baptists of Texas felt the need to win the newly-arrived continental Europeans to their faith. A recurring cry was: "We must Christianize the foreigners or they will Romanize and heathenize us!"¹⁹

During the 1850's, Texas Baptists expressed concern for the Indians in the state and on its borders. Tribes which then either occupied portions of Texas or were concentrated on its boundaries included Caddoes, Anadahkoes, Wacoos, Tawaccanoes, and Tonkawas; these were those in

¹⁸Ibid., 1856, pp. 15, 20-21; 1857, p. 10.

¹⁹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1893, p. 85.

which the Baptists of Texas expressed a special interest.²⁰ The 1858 report on Indian Missions told of from six hundred to eight hundred Indian children on the Texas frontier who could learn Christian truths. Having complained of the apparent indisposition of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to act in regard to the needs of the Indian people, the committee for Indian Missions offered a resolution in which it urged that the Baptist State Convention executive board take immediate steps to establish one or more schools for Indian children. The action which the resolution proposed, however, never materialized; the next year's report lamented the removal of the Indians from the northern frontiers of the state to areas beyond the reach of Texas Baptists.²¹

During the Civil War, Texas Baptists apparently retained their pre-war views in regard to minority groups, although the conflict itself demanded much of their attention. In the 1861-1862 report (biennial, probably due to unsettled conditions produced by the war) appeared a statement regarding the upheaval throughout the country. Some of the church leaders appear to have seen a relationship between the country's ills and the race question:

²⁰Proceedings, Baptist State Convention, Texas, 1856, p. 30.

²¹Ibid., 1858, p. 17; 1859, p. 12.

The Bible clearly reveals to us that God has ordained the relations of master and slave, and fixed the relative duties of each. . . . We think it must be clear to every Christian mind that God is angry with us as a people for some great and general sin or sins, and as it cannot be wrong to own slaves, may it not be that much of our present deep affliction is a manifestation of God's displeasure against our neglect to furnish the slaves . . . the means of Gospel grace, by which their souls may be saved?²²

Late in the war the Baptists in convention expressed a sympathy for the Negro. Perhaps somewhat self-righteously, they expected that if the war continued, as it appeared it would, many blacks would die: in battle, from exposure in Federal army camps, and in the dangers faced in camp-following. The sympathy of the convention messengers, however, did not extend to those Negroes who were deprived of their "innocence" by Yankee political strategy and who were induced to join the Union forces. By joining the enemies of the South, the blacks who were members of Federal military units and who fell into confederate hands, the Convention leaders predicted, would be treated as enemies.²³

The 1864 convention urged Baptist pastors to continue to instruct the slaves, teaching the scriptural standards of relations between masters and servants. No doubt in

²²Ibid., 1861-1862, p. 2.

²³Ibid., 1864, p. 6.

an effort to offset the influence of Union propaganda, pastors were urged to inform the Negro that his master, his owner, was the one person who understood him and who sympathized with him. At the same time, the pastor should expose the devices of the Federals and warn the black that he should not allow himself to be beguiled by their attractive promises.²⁴

By 1861 Texas Baptists had begun to regard the Mexicans in the state as objects of missionary endeavor. Recognizing that the vast majority of Mexicans in Texas were Roman Catholic in background and membership, the Baptist leadership also contended that most of these people were but nominal members of the Catholic church. In their view, the only tie between the church and these inhabitants was a baptismal certificate and perhaps a confirmation record. Upon most of the Mexicans' lives, contended the Baptist leaders, the church had little influence, either through its teachings or through their attendance at its masses. As people adrift from their religious moorings, which Baptists regarded as largely erroneous in the first place, these Texans of Mexican descent presented a challenge for the Baptist missionary enterprise. The leaders were convinced that many of the Mexican residents of Texas would

²⁴Ibid.

respond favorably to the Baptist message. They complained, however, that Texas Baptists had been all too slow in establishing missions among the Mexican people.²⁵

There appears to have been no effort to enroll the Mexicans in Anglo churches. Two factors may account for this lack of contact: first, there were few if any Anglo churches in the areas of heavy Mexican concentration; second, there were relatively few Mexicans in areas where Anglo churches were most numerous. The language barrier was undoubtedly a significant factor, both in the reluctance of Anglo Baptists to seek to assimilate Mexicans into their congregations and a similar hesitance on the part of the Mexicans to seek to worship in Anglo churches. Whatever the reasons for the lack of Baptist witness among Mexicans, Texas Baptist leaders felt that the situation should be remedied promptly.²⁶

In 1863 two events occurred which affected the development of relations between Northern Baptists and Southern Baptists and between both groups and the Negro. First, the executive board of the American Baptist Home Mission Society voted to collect money for a Freedmen's Fund, the purpose of which was to support mission work among the freedmen. Second, the same board adopted a resolution

²⁵Ibid., 1861, p. 8.

²⁶Ibid.

urging the Baptists of the South to cooperate with them in evangelization of the black race.²⁷ In general, however, Southern Baptists tended to take a rather dim view of the "invasions" of other general Baptist bodies into their section; the chief "invader" was the American Baptist Home Mission Society in its appointment of missionaries to serve in the southern states. Such reaction undoubtedly doomed to failure the early efforts for cooperation between Baptists of the two sections.²⁸

Because of the political and ecclesiastical antipathy between North and South, and because they deemed their methods to be superior, the Southern Baptists declined the invitation to work with the Baptists of the North. The freedmen furnished the root of the sharpest difference of views between Baptists of North and South. Southern Baptists would have preferred that the American Baptist Home Mission Society work through the Southern Baptist Convention.²⁹ Although as autonomous bodies, local churches of the South could have accepted the invitation of the Home Mission Society, there is no evidence available which indicates that any churches in Texas challenged the Southern Convention's stand.

²⁷Baker, Relations Between Baptists, p. 93.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 97-98, 98-99.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 101-102; Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1867, pp. 49, 51.

Following the defeat of the Confederacy, the Baptist State Convention of Texas, having internal problems of its own, seems to have given little attention to the Negro question. After 1864, it was not until the 1880's that reports on the colored population began to reappear in the State Convention's annual reports. Beginning in 1869, the newly organized Baptist General Association of Texas gave more attention to discussion of the race question. In that year, the Committee on Colored Population, under the leadership of W. G. Lancaster, rendered an ambiguous report to the annual meeting of the General Association. While the committee advocated evangelism among the Negroes, it failed to state clearly the role it felt the General Association should have in this work.³⁰

In 1870, however, the convention's report on the colored population took a more definite and positive stand, stressing the importance of the question of evangelization of the freedmen. That statement further recognized that the black man was a permanent element in American and southern society. A renewal of a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the Negro race appeared in the recommendation that white Baptist ministers instruct freedmen in

³⁰Proceedings, Baptist General Association, Texas, 1870, p. 9.

religious truths which would lead them to Christ. This new sense of responsibility arose, in part, at least, from a concern for the poverty, ignorance, and inexperience of the former slaves. Leaders of the General Association believed that Texas Baptists had a duty to the Negroes and to themselves to aid the blacks in every way possible.³¹

The duty which prompted the Baptist leaders to recommend action had not only its religious but also its civic and patriotic aspects, in light of the recent amendments to the Constitution of the United States. The report observed:

The Thirteenth Amendment made them [the Negroes] free; the Fourteenth Amendment made them citizens; the Fifteenth Amendment made them suffragans or voters.

By these amendments to the constitution this people becomes at once a powerful factor in the government . . . Thus privileged and endowed, they need more than ever the help of every man who loves his country. . . . in proportion to the number of ignorant and vicious elements introduced into the body politic, is the peril of the nation increased. . . . the grandest problem demanding solution of our statesmen is, "What shall we do with our colored population. . . ." The issues cannot be evaded--they must be met. It is not in the power of ignorance, demagoguery and fanaticism to bring about a just and peaceable consummation.³²

In order that the Negro churchmen might be aware of the good will which members of the Baptist General Associa-

³¹Proceedings, Baptist General Association, Texas, 1870, p. 9.

³²Ibid.

tion churches felt toward them, the Association voted to print two thousand copies of the "Report on the Colored Population" and to distribute them among the freedmen.³³ There is in this action the suggestion that in the years since emancipation, the white ministers' acquaintance with conditions among the colored Baptists had lessened. The 1879 session advised the Association to take a collection to be used for purchasing copies of Pendleton's Church Manual for distribution among the blacks. A Negro Baptist preacher or deacon could receive a copy of the manual upon the recommendation of a white minister of the Baptist Association of Texas.³⁴

These efforts at aiding the Negro in the improvement of his religious life continued to be in evidence when the General Association met for its 1883 session. The Committee on Colored Population noted that the former slaves were making rapid progress in education and in religion, "and are struggling to elevate themselves in the common and religious interests."³⁵

Despite the handicaps the Negro faced in achieving acceptance in American society, Baptist spokesmen in Texas

³³Ibid., 1872, pp. 29, 30; 1879, p. 15.

³⁴Ibid., 1872, p. 29; 1876, p. 14; 1879, p. 15.

³⁵Ibid., 1883, p. 29.

thought they saw evidences of significant progress. In addition, they declared their readiness to aid the Negro in making progress, realizing that they, as well as the black, had a stake in his advancement in citizenship. They further believed that the most promising method of assisting the Negro upward was through the development of his religious knowledge and experience. It was their conclusion in 1878 that, considering the condition of servitude from which he had emerged, the Negro had made far more rapid progress than even the most enthusiastic of his advocates had anticipated.³⁶

Leaders of the Baptist General Association saw a hopeful sign in the Negro's willingness to receive instruction and in his anxiety to advance as a free man. Taking these factors into consideration, the Committee on Colored Population for the 1878 session urged the Baptists of the state to become involved in the task of aiding the black race:

Shall Baptists be laggards? Shall we shut our eyes and our ears to their cry "Come over and help us?" Shall we, in our zeal to spread the glad tidings throughout heathen lands, forget that in our land 4,000,000 people are crying to us, "Tell us the story of the Cross," "Tell us how to work," "Teach us how to teach God's glorious truths to our people?" Have not they sent up to us during our present session these very petitions? And shall we turn a deaf ear

³⁶Ibid., 1878, p. 31.

to their appeals? God forbid! This General Association has many grand commissions to perform--none grander than this.³⁷

The urgency of attention to the problems facing the Negro population was further evident in the exhortations of the leaders to the messengers assembled in annual convention in 1879. A statement presented by the Committee on Colored Population expressed the conviction that Texas Baptists must be alert and diligent in executing the task of aiding the black to solve his problems. For them, this issue was not only theoretical but also present and real, affecting the political, judicial, civil, agricultural, educational, and religious interests within the state. The members of the committee felt that the prosperity of Texas was tied up with the future of the Negro within its boundaries.³⁸

Before the Civil War, Negroes began to withdraw from mixed churches in order to form churches and associations of their own, and this movement grew as the conflict came to a close; it continued with increased momentum during Reconstruction. In some instances, the white Baptist leaders encouraged the organization of racial churches and

³⁷Ibid., 1878, p. 31.

³⁸Ibid., 1879, p. 13.

associations.³⁹ Such separation, however, as existed during the nineteenth century, was, at first, on a local basis. The black Baptist churches "used the same polity, the same national agencies as did the white Baptists" of the South. Although later historians tend to discredit his views, Paul H. Buck has argued that the segregation which then existed arose not from racial antagonism but from a southern assumption that a basic instinct would keep the races apart.⁴⁰

Upon withdrawal from the mixed churches, the freedmen generally joined churches affiliated with the American Baptist Home Mission Society. In some instances, affiliation with the northern mission society resulted from membership in associations which were already cooperating with the society, or which subsequently did so.⁴¹ It was natural that the Negroes leaving Southern Baptist churches should affiliate with the northern organization, since the society represented the victorious Union, while the Southern Baptists symbolized the defeated Confederacy and the

³⁹Redford, "Southern Baptist Relations to Negroes," p. 951; Rufus B. Spain, At Ease in Zion: Social History of Southern Baptists, 1865-1900 (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1961), p. 45.

⁴⁰Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900 (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 279.

⁴¹Baker, Relations Between Baptists, p. 104.

Negroes' previous condition of servitude.

While the American Baptist Home Mission Society had begun its mission work in the South during the Civil War, it was not until 1870 that it began to turn its attention toward Texas. At that time, churches of both blacks and whites in other southern states had received aid from the northern-based group for some years. In 1871, the society had two missionaries in Texas, who reported 117 baptisms in that year. Ten years later, fourteen northern Baptist missionaries were in the state, and in 1882, the number had increased to twenty. By the early 1890's, however, the number of these workers had fallen to five.⁴²

An important aspect of the work of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in Texas involved assistance with the construction of church buildings. Although in theory this aid was bi-racial, in actual practice Negro churches received less aid than did white congregations. The society extended its help on a percentage basis which obligated the local congregation to raise a certain portion of its needs in order to receive aid. The Negro congregations, being poorer than the white ones, raised less money, and consequently received less aid. From 1882 through 1894, white Baptist churches in Texas received \$12,995.00 in

⁴²Ibid., pp. 101, 104, 105.

gifts and loans from the American Baptist Home Mission Society for edifice construction. During the same period, Negro churches in the state received only about one-fifth the amount of aid extended to their white brothers; their assistance amounted to \$2,550.00 for the decade.⁴³

Nearly twenty years after the surrender of the Confederate forces at Appomattox, and about six years after the compromise of 1877, which put Rutherford B. Hayes in the White House and led to the removal of the last Federal troops from the South, the Southern Baptist Convention began to turn its energies definitely toward undergirding Baptist work in Texas. In 1883, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board suggested that both of the general Baptist bodies, the Baptist State Convention and the Baptist General Association, then working in Texas, cooperate with the board. On a matching basis, the Southern Baptist Convention would provide up to \$3,000.00 per year to aid Texas Baptists in their mission work. The same proposal recommended that the General Association and the Home Mission Board cooperate in employing a general missionary to labor among the colored people of the state, with each of the white organizations paying half of the worker's salary. W. H. Parks was chosen for the task and sent to the field

⁴³Ibid., pp. 128-131, 135.

"to hold ministers' institutes and otherwise help in the work."⁴⁴

Prior to the arrangement between the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the General Association in Texas, the American Baptist Home Mission Society had reached a similar agreement with the Baptist State Convention, and those two organizations had jointly appointed A. R. Griggs as their general missionary to the Negroes. The Negro Baptist organizations in the state participated in the appointments of both Parks and Griggs. Aid to the Negroes in the South had long been a basic principle with the Baptists of the North. Likewise, the Southern Baptist Convention, from the date of its organization in 1845, had committed itself to religious instruction of the colored race. At that time it had adopted a resolution expressing the denomination's sense of responsibility and instructing the Board of Domestic Missions "to take all prudent measures for the religious instruction of our colored population."⁴⁵

It was late in the nineteenth century that segregation began to take the form that it was to retain for more than fifty years, prompted by customs and attitudes in both the North and the South, and followed by legal sanctions in

⁴⁴Baker, Blossoming Desert, p. 143.

⁴⁵Redford, "Southern Baptist Relations to Negroes," p. 951.

the latter region.⁴⁶ A significant factor in the formalization of segregation nationally, regionally, and locally, was the United States Supreme Court's ruling in the Plessy v. Ferguson case in 1896. Concerning this decision, Kyle Haselden wrote, after its reversal in 1954, that the psychological factors underlying the original ruling were not cancelled when the Court reversed itself on the "separate but equal" decision; rather, the attitudes which motivated the 1896 ruling continued, according to Haselden, to determine the behavior of whites toward Negroes, as it had reflected the attitudes which had existed before its pronouncement.⁴⁷

Texas Baptists of the final third of the nineteenth century confined most of their attention pertaining to interracial and ethnic matters to Negroes, but they also considered the situations involving other minority groups. Another minority group which concerned the Baptists was the Indian tribes on the state's frontiers. Indian agent, A. C. Williams, believed that the Baptists could perform an effective ministry among the Indians, telling the 1878 session of the Baptist General Association: "One faithful

⁴⁶For a good study of this development, see C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 67ff.

⁴⁷Haselden, Race Problem in Christian Perspective, pp. 132-133.

missionary is worth more than a regiment of soldiers in civilizing the wild Indian."⁴⁸ In exhorting Texas Baptists to provide a Christian witness to the native Americans of the Southwest, the Committee on Indian Missions cited the example of Abraham, as he left his home in Chaldea, to dwell among people of strange customs, languages, and religions in the land the Lord showed him. Christian workers, the report stated, who responded to the call to preach to the Indians, likewise labored among strangers numbering some forty thousand on the northern boundaries of the state. Represented in this concentration of Indians were Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and "wild Indians." In these reports, the Baptist leadership in Texas expressed recognition that those tribes deserved, as well as needed, the prayers, sympathies, and financial assistance of concerned Baptists.⁴⁹

In terms of numbers, the Mexicans comprised the third largest ethnic group in nineteenth century Texas. During the two final decades of the century, Baptist General Association sources estimated that some one hundred thousand Mexicans lived in the state, ten thousand of whom lived in San Antonio. Two workers, Miss Mina Everett, an Anglo, and the Reverend Manuel Traveno, a Latin, represented the General

⁴⁸Proceedings, Baptist General Association, Texas, 1879, p. 15.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 23; 1880, p. 17.

Association among the Mexicans of the state. During this period, General Association Baptists reported the existence of two "good" churches among the Mexican Baptists; one of these was in San Antonio, and the other was in Laredo. Those Baptists were reported to be proportionately equal to their Anglo brothers in their giving to their churches. In a day when Anglo-Saxons in Texas, the nation, and the world, claimed an inherent superiority over other races and nations, a member of the State Missions Committee declared that in the area of giving to benevolences, the Mexicans exhibited a superiority in liberality in contrast to Anglo Baptists in Texas.⁵⁰

As the nineteenth century drew to its close, Texas Baptists generally accepted the prevailing views regarding race relations. Their attitudes toward the Negroes received the most attention in their religious pronouncements. Despite declarations of concern for the Negroes' welfare, and assertions of willingness to aid them, those attitudes were decidedly paternalistic. While they acknowledged the Negro as a man, rather than a beast, they nevertheless subscribed to the theory that the Negro was an inferior man, at least, culturally.⁵¹

⁵⁰Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1886, p. 11; 1889, p. 19; 1892, p. 12; 1893, p. 85.

⁵¹Proceedings, Baptist General Association, Texas, 1870, p. 9.

Toward the Indians, the Baptist leaders maintained the position that they deserved better treatment at the hands of the more powerful white man. The Mexicans, plagued with a religion that neither challenged them nor helped them, according to the Baptists, needed and deserved the liberty and assurance which the Baptists believed their faith could offer.

The northern European was seen by the Baptists, in many instances, as being enslaved by Romanism or debilitated by rationalism. He actually presented a more serious threat to the Baptist faith than other racial and ethnic groups because of the influence he might exert upon Baptist membership; hence he provided a dual reason for evangelization: a genuine concern for his eternal well-being, and a desire to conserve the Baptist faith in future generations. As they looked ahead, therefore, to a new century, Baptists of Texas had numerous reasons for being concerned in regard to the racial and ethnic minorities among them.

CHAPTER IV

TEXAS BAPTISTS AND THE "WHITE MAN'S BURDEN"

Texas Baptists entered the twentieth century under leaders who had, for the most part, reached maturity in the wake of the Civil War and during the Reconstruction period. The attitudes of these leaders, therefore, were largely products of the nineteenth century. Benajah Harvey Carroll, at fifty-seven, was generally recognized as the outstanding leader in the Baptist General Convention of Texas. From his position as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco and as a member of the faculty of Baylor University, he commanded a respect from most of the Baptists of the state which no other leader enjoyed. Among the missionary Baptists who had organized the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas in 1900, S. A. Hayden was the acknowledged leader.¹

¹Baker, Blossoming Desert, pp. 162, 181.

Events on the national scene held ramifications for churchmen of all denominations, including the Baptists of Texas. The nation was in the midst of the Republican-dominated Progressive era which was to reach its climax in the first decade of the century during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. The optimism of that period prevailed among white Americans. Comer Vann Woodward, in his Origins of the New South, describes the time as one of "progressivism for whites only," indicating that minority groups in the South, including those in Texas, found very little in their experiences about which to feel optimistic.²

Northern leaders, in the 1870's, had ceased to regard the southern Negro as an effective political ally, and in the late 1890's, national leaders had adopted a philosophy of racial superiority as a rationale for economic expansion into the Caribbean and the Pacific. They were of no help in opposing the movements in southern states, including Texas, which designed the disfranchisement of the black voters, as well as that of many white citizens. Instead, they looked "to Southern racial policy for national guidance in solving the new problems of imperialism resulting

²See Chapter XIV of Comer Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1914 (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1951).

from the Spanish War." Having assumed the "White Man's Burden," members of Congress were unlikely to sponsor measures in the South that could hinder the progress of American expansion outside the United States.³

For the southern Negro, the Progressive period was, in reality, a time of retrogression. Five years before the beginning of the twentieth century, in 1896, the United States Supreme Court, in the Plessy v. Ferguson case, had deprived the blacks of the use of public accommodations on equal terms with white people, while literacy tests and "grandfather" laws succeeded in depriving the Negroes and poor whites of voting rights. Dan T. Carter concluded in his work on the Scottsboro, Alabama trial of nine Negro youths during the 1930's, that "by the turn of the century, the Fourteenth Amendment was a dead letter so far as Negro jurors were concerned," indicating that by 1900, the Negro was barred from both the ballot box and the jury box; the laws under which he lived were passed by white men elected by white men; when accused of a crime, his innocence or guilt was determined by white men, many of whom were disposed to find him guilty regardless of the evidence.⁴

³Ibid., p. 224.

⁴Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U. S. 537 (1896); Dan T. Carter, Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1969), p. 222.

The performance of political liberals during the early years of the century was, from the Negro's viewpoint, disappointing. Historian Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., wrote of the period that while the liberals agreed that the Negro's status was one of the country's most grievous political and social problems, they did little or nothing to promote the black man's interests. Arthur Stanley Link, a student of the Progressive era, agreed that the Negro's political and social status improved only slightly during the first decade of the century.⁵ Negro author Kelly Miller, who wrote during the first ten years of the century, charged that both the North and the South planned the Negro's future without consulting him.⁶

Closely associated with the denial of equality to the Negro during the Progressive period was the basic idea that the Negro race was inferior to the white. Among the avowed white supremacists who blatantly preached the doctrine of Negro inferiority was Bertram Lenox Simpson,

⁵Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., "The Progressive Movement and the Negro," in The Negro in the South Since 1865: Selected Essays in American Negro History, ed. Charles E. Wynes (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965), p. 63; Arthur Stanley Link, American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 225.

⁶Kelly Miller, Race Adjustment: Essays on the Negro in America (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1908), pp. 88-89.

whose denominational affiliation is unknown, but who wrote from a religio-philosophical viewpoint on social issues during the early years of the century. Writing under the name of B. L. P. Weale, Simpson argued that an aversion to the black is justified. In his view, the Negro "has given nothing to the world. He has never made a nation; he belongs to nothing but a subject race. He has no architecture, art, nor history. He has built no monuments except when forced to do so by members of other races."⁷

According to a survey made in 1909, one advocate of white supremacy saw the Anglo-Saxons as "the most pure, proud, noble race that ever walked the earth." In contrast, he described the African as "the most vile, degraded, and filthy race living." It was ridiculous, according to this southerner, that northern politicians should say that two such widely differing races should be equal. The same survey showed that another white supremacist believed that the black man and the mule "were born to go together;" that is, the Negro was meant to be the perpetual servant of the white man.⁸ Even those who spoke and wrote as the Negro's advocate recognized the assumption of superiority

⁷Weale, Conflict of Colour, p. 231.

⁸Carl Holiday, "The Young Southerner and the Negro," The South Atlantic Quarterly, 8 (1909): 118.

by the whites, and some seemed to accept this assumption as valid. The majority of the blacks accommodated themselves to the situation, although they were dissatisfied with their status.

Baptist leaders generally expressed concern for the spiritual welfare of the Negro race and friendship for members of the race as individuals. Fred D. Hale, editor of "The Query Department" of the Baptist Standard, probably spoke for the majority of Baptists in Texas when he expressed attitudes very similar to those of many non-Baptists. He argued that generations of association with a superior race had enabled the Negro to make rapid and remarkable improvements in his character and culture, since, in the providence of God, he had become free in 1865. He further suggested that his racial pride should lead the Negro "to adapt himself to his environment in the midst of a superior race." As to origins, Hale agreed that all races had a common ancestor in Noah; yet he insisted that the white race was superior. Notwithstanding the Negro's inferiority, Hale recognized that the black was capable of becoming a Christian, and therefore could become a brother in Christ with the white. At the same time, Hale called upon influential white men and prominent Negroes of the North to play down the idea of social equality

between the races.⁹

A frequent contributor to the Baptist Standard, W. B. Sansing, who tended to agree with Hale on the question of the inferior status of the Negro in American society, suggested that the white race was largely responsible for the black's condition in the United States. With a somewhat paternalistic attitude, he declared that:

The Negro race is inferior to the white race, and from Christ's standpoint, they are a trust committed to us. "Ye that are strong bear with the weak" is a universal law of right in dealing with man. And we cannot evade it and be justified before God. The Negro is helpless before us and will largely be what we make of him. What he was when the Civil War broke out was the result of training at our hands; and what he is now is largely the result of negligence and abuse on our part.¹⁰

Although white supremacy and the concept of "The White Man's Burden" dominated racial attitudes of Americans during the early decades of the century, there were those writers, both black and white, who challenged the idea. Among the former was Andrew Sledd. While he agreed with Texas Baptist leaders that the Negro may be inferior socially and morally, he contended that the Negro is the spiritual equal of any and all. With a logic which attempted to reconcile two incompatible situations, the religious and

⁹Fred D. Hale, "The Query Department," The Baptist Standard, 2 June 1910, p. 14.

¹⁰W. B. Sansing, "A Southern Problem--Negroes," The Baptist Standard, 14 April 1910, p. 7.

civic leaders of that period desired to see the Negro converted to Christianity, but they were unwilling to accept him as an equal. Sledd contended:

Freedom does not, indeed, imply social, intellectual, or moral equality; but its very essence is the equality of the fundamental rights of human creatures before God and the law. Such freedom is not a human institution; and no man or men have any right inhering in their birth, color, or traditions, to tamper with or curtail such freedom at their arbitrary pleasure, or in accordance with the dictates of their frenzied passions.¹¹

Reporting to the 1906 meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Committee on Colored Population warned the messengers of the dangers involved in granting economic equality to the Negro. In addition, the panel questioned the wisdom of making advanced educational opportunities available to Negro youth. Noting that while advancements of the Negroes in education had some hopeful signs, the committee sounded an alarm:

. . . in other respects and linked with other facts, they are fraught with the greatest danger. With their increase of learning and of earning capacity and or property comes their demand for political recognition; and--however we may depreciate it--comes also their desire for social equality. . . . The Negro wants a hand in the government more than he now has and when he does not gain it is filled with resentment toward the white man. Never before in the history of the race was the Negro more determined on political equality. Never before was the Saxon more determined

¹¹Andrew Sledd, "The Negro: Another View," The Atlantic Monthly, 90 (July, 1902): 72.

to dominate. The Negro has brute force and numbers; the Saxon all the qualities that make kings.¹²

Judging from the attention given the subject in their records, Baptists of Texas apparently were not greatly concerned over interracial marriage or miscegenation during the first decade of the century. Only one reference appeared to the subject in their annuals; none in their state paper, the Baptist Standard. Referring to the constant influx of "mongrel races," the Committee on Colored Population drew a hypothetical illustration: "Two Mexicans come into Texas; one marries a white woman of the lower class and the other marries a Negro. Who knows the effect this had on the local Negro." The racist, Weale, asserted that those who advocated "wholesale cross-breeding as a sensible method of solving racial antagonism" spoke in an area in which they were not qualified.¹³

Although lynching received considerable attention from writers in other parts of the country, Texas Baptist writers appear to have given less attention to this subject from 1900 to 1910 than they did at a later time. Sledd, however, vehemently condemned the practice, charging that seventy percent to eighty percent of such incidents in

¹²Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1906, p. 88.

¹³Weale, Conflict of Colour, p. 231.

1902 took place in the South, and that about seventy-five percent of the victims were black. The lynchings, he said, were largely the work of lower classes of persons. The tradition of lynching represented a conflict for the southerner between his prejudice against the Negro and his traditional respect for law and order, a long-standing dilemma for residents of the South.

Concerning those who took part in lynchings, Sledd had the severest of condemnation:

Wholly ignorant, absolutely without culture, apparently without even the capacity to appreciate the nicer feelings or higher sense, yet conceited on account of the white skin which they continually dishonor, they make up, when aroused, as wild and brutal a mob as ever disgraced the face of the earth. For them, lynching is not "justice," however rude; it is a wild and diabolic carnival of blood.¹⁴

In Texas, Baptist leader, James Britton Cranfill, in a feature article in the Baptist Standard, spoke out against mob action in Georgia. He complained that although with their last breaths, two Negro men and two Negro women pleaded their innocence, they had been hung and shot to death. Cranfill remembered that there had been a time when the rape of a white woman was the only crime for which a Negro would be lynched, but in 1912, any black man, woman, or child accused of any crime might be subject to mob action without the slightest pretense at investigation.

¹⁴Sledd, "Negro: Another View," p. 70.

The writer expressed his views of mobs and mob rule:

This is the foulest blot upon our American civilization. I do not believe that 25 percent of the Negroes who have been murdered by mobs have been guilty of the crimes of which they are accused. If the courts cannot determine their guilt, we can hardly expect ignorant, drunken, hot-headed mobs to mete out justice.¹⁵

At the time of Cranfill's condemnation of mob-action in Georgia, mobs in Texas were lynching an average of more than ten persons a year.¹⁶

If Texas Baptists were spending less time on the problem of lynching in the state, they were much concerned with the question of social equality as it related to the races. They continued to discuss the issue despite the fact that the court decisions of the late nineteenth century had had the effect of assigning the Negro to a second-class status in American society. Even those who had reputations as friends of the Negro agreed that social equality was unnecessary, if not undesirable.¹⁷ Attitudes which prevailed in other parts of the nation held also among the Baptist

¹⁵James Britton Cranfill, "Chronicle and Comment," The Baptist Standard, 8 February 1912, p. 11.

¹⁶From 1889 to 1936, 488 Texans fell victims to lynch mobs, thus giving the state third place in the nation in the number of lynchings. John George Van Deusen, The Black Man in White America (Washington: Associated Publishers, 1938), p. 143; Bill Chambers, "The History of the Texas Negro and His Development Since 1900" (M. A. thesis, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1940), p. 14.

¹⁷Sledd, "Negro: Another View," p. 71.

people of Texas.

One would hardly expect the Baptists of Texas to be more liberal on the race issue than those of the North, since in the early years of the century, the northerners had largely accepted the racial views of the South; thus at the turn of the century, the racial attitudes of Texas Baptist leaders were generally those of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ There seems to be no real evidence that these leaders recognized race as a social or political problem. Most of them had never had any associations with the blacks except in the master-servant relationship, and they saw nothing amiss in the maintenance of the status quo thirty-five years after the close of the Civil War.

Carroll's attitude toward the Negro question may be regarded as representative of the Baptists of Texas of that day. Although he occasionally referred to Negroes in sermons, and always in a favorable light, he appeared to have devoted no sermon to the subject of race relations, nor does he appear to have spoken out regarding the disfranchisement of the Negroes. Segregation was a social pattern which Carroll, like most Texans of his day, accepted without question. Although he accepted and practiced segregation, he regarded the Negro as a legitimate

¹⁸Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 324.

candidate for Christian redemption and as an appropriate object of Baptist mission programs.¹⁹

Another man named Carroll, however, was far less charitable in his racial attitudes than was the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco. Charles Carroll, whose identity is not revealed, set forth his views in a book entitled:

"The Negro a Beast"--or--"In the Image of God": The Reasoner of the Age, the Revelator of the Century! The Bible as It Is! The Negro and His Relation to the Human Family! The Negro a Beast but created with articulate speech and hands that he may be of service to his master--the White man. The Negro not the Son of Ham, Neither can it be proven by the Bible, and the argument of the theologian who would claim such, melts to mist before the thunderous and convincing arguments of this masterful book.²⁰

Although available evidence does not indicate whether or not Charles Carroll was a Baptist, his book was known to Baptists of Texas and some probably found his arguments acceptable. His views, however, ran counter to the public statements of Baptist leaders in Texas, both in the Baptist General Convention of Texas and in the racially more conservative Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. A reader wrote to Fred D. Hale of the Baptist Standard,

19B. H. Carroll, Baptists and Their Doctrines, p. 31.

20Charles Carroll, "The Negro a Beast"--or--"In the Image of God," (St. Louis: The American Book and Bible House, 1900), title page.

asking his opinion of Charles Carroll's book. Hale, in his reply gave the work a very low rating, challenging the author's reasoning processes and denying that his conclusions had any validity whatever. Although Hale accepted the theory of the inferiority of the Negro, he maintained that the black was truly human and that he was capable of responding to God's law and mercy.²¹

One prominent historian has presented a theory to explain white America's attitude toward the blacks during the first decades of the twentieth century. Richard Hofstadter argued that a guilt complex was the basic factor which motivated Protestant interest in reform during the Progressive era; that is, some Protestant leaders saw the inconsistency between pronouncements and practices in the realm of society and politics and felt that the church had failed to do its duty in behalf of the downtrodden.²² This troubling of the conscience appears also to have reached into the ranks of Baptist leadership in Texas during that period, leading them to express a more vital concern for the welfare of the Negroes in their midst.²³

²¹Hale, "Query Department," The Baptist Standard, 2 June 1910, p. 14.

²²Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 203-210.

²³Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1901, p. 72; Sansing, "Southern Problem--Negroes," p. 7.

Messengers to the 1901 session of the Baptist General Convention were apprised of the concern of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board on the question of the welfare of the Negroes. The board's report declared that "The problem of what to do and how to work for the negroes [sic] is the gravest and most difficult of all the problems confronting this Southern Baptist Convention." Having stated the gravity and difficulty of the Negro problem, the spokesman for the board chastized the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptists of Texas for their lack of action. "And yet it is one problem upon which the convention has been sleeping for more than thirty years."²⁴

About the same time as the negative report from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board regarding expressions of concern for the Negro people, leaders of the Baptist General Convention began to criticize the churches for their lack of action in regard to the Negroes. M. T. Andrews, reporting for the convention's Committee on Colored Population, wrote of the need for Baptists to find ways of expressing their interest in the welfare of the colored race. Acknowledging that Southern Baptists and Texas Baptists had neglected their duty toward the blacks, he recalled a number of reasons which had been given in

²⁴Proceedings, of the Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1901, pl 72.

extenuation of their neglect. At the end of the decade, W. B. Sansing blamed the whites' neglect of the Negro as part of the reason for his "gross immorality, his murderous disposition toward his own race, and his shocking crimes upon the white race."²⁵

Writers outside the Texas Baptist fellowship frequently expressed attitudes with which the Texas Baptist leadership agreed. Writing as a Negro, Kelly Miller regarded the conversion of the black man as one of the greatest triumphs of Christianity. In achieving the conversion of the Negro, the church, according to Miller, had met one of his basic needs, a need which he had in common with all men: "a higher, purer, and more effective application of his professed religion to the every day affairs of his life."²⁶

Leaders in various capacities repeatedly urged upon their fellow Baptists the holy obligation of providing assistance for the Negro population in their midst. In 1910, Sansing wrote of some of the problems Texas Baptists could expect to face, one of which was hatred born of race prejudice; he insisted that this problem must be solved: "Otherwise we cannot see as God sees, nor love as He loves."²⁷

²⁵Sansing, "Southern Problem--Negroes," p. 7.

²⁶Miller, Race Adjustment, p. 11.

²⁷Sansing, "Southern Problem--Negroes," p. 7.

According to Sansing, not only did Christians of that day face the problems of general hatred and race prejudice in regard to the black, but they also had to work against the public sentiment in which such prejudice found its base. Suggesting that the Baptists of Texas had allowed the wrong motives to control their attitudes toward minority groups, he insisted that these must be overcome:

We must also overcome public sentiment. Hatred and public sentiment have governed us long enough in our dealings with the Negro, and now we should hear God speak. Primarily we hate the Negro without a cause, and we have let wicked men mould public sentiment in this matter; and now let us respond to the command of our Lord to "go and make disciples of every nation."²⁸

In the 1906 convention, the Committee on Colored Population, under the chairmanship of E. S. P' [sic] Pool, listed several reasons why Texas Baptists should aid the Negroes. Pool cited first the command of Christ to preach the gospel to the entire world. Second was a patriotic motive: to save the country from the danger of a catastrophe posed by the presence of a "pagan race" within its boundaries. Reflecting the philosophy of the white man's burden, the Committee gave as its third reason the fact that "we [the whites] are a superior race, and God has given us superior advantages."²⁹

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1906, p. 89.

Baptists of that period also discussed the relative importance of home and foreign missions, concluding that it made little sense to neglect the former for the sake of the latter. Victor I. Masters, a representative of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, noted the ease with which Christians could become romantic about missions in other parts of the world; but he countered that it was difficult "to take hold of the dirty, troublesome, vexing negro [sic] problem . . . This is a severer test of religion . . . but it is a fair and righteous test."³⁰

M. H. Wolfe, of Dallas, a leading Baptist layman, struck the same note as did Masters, insisting that "it is just as important to save the negro [sic] cook at home as it is to save the negro [sic] in Africa."³¹ Sansing analyzed Texas Baptists during the early decades of the century as having been torn between a feeling of responsibility for the Negro and a fear of what might happen if the Negro were given opportunities equal with the whites. They attempted, he noted, to reconcile these paradoxes by moving cautiously toward assisting the blacks in their efforts of racial improvement.³²

³⁰Victor I. Masters, "The Christianization of the Southern Negro," The Baptist Standard, 10 November 1910, p. 13.

³¹M. H. Wolfe, "Right Kind of Laymen's Movement," The Baptist Standard, 10 March 1910, p. 2.

³²Sansing, "Southern Problem--Negroes," p. 7.

Racial segregation in communities and churches, however, did not prevent the presence of each race as guests at the associational and state meetings of the other. The 1901 report on the colored population of the Baptist General Convention included the names of several Negro Baptist leaders who attended the convention as fraternal messengers. The roster included David Abner, president of Guadalupe Baptist College at Seguin; H. M. Williams, superintendent of the General Baptist Convention of Texas; Prince Jones, pastor of the First Negro Baptist Church of Fort Worth; and W. C. Dickson, superintendent of the Negro orphanage at Gilmer.³³

While Texas Baptists of the early 1900's failed to see any vital significance in the social, political, or even the economic aspects of the racial situation, they readily saw it as a problem of Christian missions. Most would have shouted a hearty "Amen" to an unnamed writer's contention that the solution of the race problem was the preaching of the gospel to the blacks. This same anonymous writer, apparently saw no inconsistency in his belief that the gospel was the answer to the race problem, while denying the Negro the right to vote and hold office.³⁴ The 1903

³³Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1901, p. 72.

³⁴Holiday, "Young Southerner and Negro," p. 119.

Committee on Colored Population reported its belief that ignorant voting, inadequate education, and party politicians had brought the "brother in black" to a nearly hopeless condition "in this Southland where God put him, that Southern Baptists might take him by his dusky hand and lead him to Jesus Christ and Heaven."³⁵

What the leaders of the Baptist General Convention regarded as the natural depravity of the black among them was their chief concern as they met in convention in 1907.

J. D. Allen, chairman of the Committee on Colored Population, read the report:

What we as Baptists are most concerned about is to break the yoke of the unholy, vile, and loathsome passions of their [the Negroes'] nature, elevate them from their low estate and give them the blessings of salvation through the preaching of the gospel.³⁶

The previous committee had commented on the moral characteristics of the black race as they saw them. This panel felt that the Negroes' "low intelligence and high animal propensities" made them the slaves of passion. Their meager religious instruction was very imperfect, and helped to explain to the committee the Negroes' superstition, which, for them, had the authority of religious

³⁵Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1903, pp. 28-29.

³⁶Ibid., 1907, p. 101.

conviction. In their status as servants and members of "a degraded race," they were beset by temptations, said the Texas Baptist spokesman, which even people in better circumstances would have difficulty overcoming. White Baptists believed that because the Negroes were but a few generations removed from the jungle, they had a tendency toward savagery which gave the whites abundant reason for apprehension and caution in dealing with them.³⁷

During that same period, George W. Truett completed his first decade as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, and was gaining recognition as an outstanding leader among the Baptists of the state. Like the majority of Baptist preachers of his day, Truett appeared to accept the status quo in race relations. Notwithstanding this acceptance, however, the Dallas pastor believed that the Negro was due certain considerations. In a Holy Week service at the Palace Theater of Dallas, in 1907, he raised the question of personal relations, attaching significant importance to a query which had implications for race relations: "How shall a man relate himself to his fellowmen?" In the same sermon, Truett emphasized the relationships of all men as neighbors: "Anyone who needs you is your

³⁷ Ibid., 1906, pp. 88-89.

neighbor. He may live next door to you or across your state or nation. . . ."38 Like many others of that period, Truett stressed the universal aspects of Christianity; the need of all men for redemption and the availability of salvation to all men upon the same terms.

Although Texas Baptists' primary motive for seeking improvement in the lot of the Negroes was evangelistic, there were other and more temporal reasons, as well. Besides the desire to see the Negro develop as a good and useful citizen, there were other practical considerations. Hale expressed a recognition of these practical matters when he observed that the colored races had an overwhelming majority in numbers on a world-wide basis. In view of such a colored majority, he concluded: "I am going to be slow in depreciating a negro [sic] man because he has a black skin."39 Masters expressed an attitude much like Hale's when he wrote:

Christian people, quite generally at the South, are coming to recognize that the white race cannot pursue a policy of repression toward the negroes [sic] without depressing and degrading their own race. They are coming to realize that the only way for the whites to live with an inferior race all about them, without being injured by the presence of this different race, is to lift that race up, as opportunity offers, by Christian helpfulness.40

38George W. Truett, "What Think Ye of Christ?" in Fifty Years of Preaching at the Palace, comp. Wallie A. Criswell (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), pp. 28-29.

39Hale, "Query Department," p. 14.

40Masters, "Christianization of Negroes," p. 13.

Hale later argued that if "Christian white men do their duty to the negro [sic] in every sense of the word . . . we need have no fear of their presence in our midst." The "Query" editor asserted that the white men's injustice to the Negro, as well as the whites' failure to give the blacks a "square deal," had embittered many of them against white Baptists, adding that "By doing our part toward the negro [sic] we can teach him some lessons concerning himself and concern for the white man that he needs more fully to learn."⁴¹ The feeling of the leaders of Texas Baptists regarding the Negro's attitude was that he needed help, but was unable to help himself, yet he was both willing to ask for help and to receive it, presumably upon the white man's terms. Leaders of the Baptist General Convention were convinced that the denomination could and should help the Negro, agreeing that "No real Baptist, North or South, has ever denied or doubted that it is our duty to help the Negro."⁴²

A recurring complaint of the committees reporting to the Baptist General Convention was that their recommendations were often ignored and not implemented. The

⁴¹Hale, "Query Department," p. 14.

⁴²Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1902, pp. 55-57.

various groups made their reports and recommendations, the convention adopted them, and the messengers apparently forgot them. Early in the century, the Committee on Negro Population, under the chairmanship of B. R. Womack, proposed:

1. That the Baptists of Texas . . . declare their profound interest in the Negro, that they love him for Christ's sake and that they are willing and anxious to leave nothing of their duty to the Negro undone.
2. That this convention instruct the incoming Board of State Missions to take, at once, any step that their wisdom may suggest, to inaugurate some plan by which we may help the Negro preacher, and through him help the church and through the preacher and the church reach and help the Negro population.⁴³

Besides their other interests in the Negroes of Texas, leaders of the Baptist General Convention demonstrated more than a passing interest in the blacks' educational efforts. In the 1902 convention, James Milton Carroll, brother of B. H. Carroll, proposed the appointment of a committee to visit the Negro school in Waco and report on plans to aid the institution in the liquidation of a \$990.00 debt against its dormitory.⁴⁴

Like Booker T. Washington and others, when the Baptist leaders discussed education for the Negro, except for

⁴³Ibid., pp. 56-57.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 58.

preachers and teachers, they emphasized training for manual skills and for the crafts. Classical learning, they felt, was not appropriate for the black mind. Manual training was, in their views, a "safe" education; they also advocated the training of black teachers to teach black pupils.⁴⁵ The Baptist leaders considered not only the skills appropriate for a "safe" education for Negroes, they also insisted that such education had to be philosophically oriented toward the Christian religion. The Committee on Negro Population warned the 1903 convention: "Let it once be known that education without Christianity is not in itself a moral force, and we shall have gone a long way toward the solution of the Negro problem." The committee under the leadership of R. T. Hanks, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Abilene, further insisted that the Negro problem could not be solved by secular education alone. Education, in the committee's view, whether possessed by an Anglo-Saxon or a Negro, if it lacked morality, was more dangerous than ignorance.⁴⁶

Texas Baptists of the early 1900's, like generations of southerners before them, believed that they understood

⁴⁵Joseph A. Booker, "Open Doors to Southern Baptists," The Baptist Standard, 28 July 1910, p. 10

⁴⁶Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1903, p. 51.

the Negro better and sympathized with him more than anyone else. A report to the Tarrant Baptist Association declared the superiority of the southerner's understanding of the Negro:

The Southern man understands the negro [sic] better, is more patient with him, and is in fact his real and best friend. If the Northern people ever learn this simple fact, there will be a brighter day for the negro [sic].⁴⁷

Some Baptist leaders acknowledged the contribution which the Negro had made to the development of the United States. Gambrell, recalling that before the Civil War, he had been "a slaveholding abolitionist," declared that the Negro had helped the white man develop America: to clean the land and till the soil.⁴⁸

Relations between Northern Baptists and Southern Baptists in Texas and the remainder of the South were a matter of recurring interest in the state. While the the two bodies maintained amicable relations nationally, exchanging fraternal delegates or messengers at national conventions, on local scenes, they reserved the right to criticize each other, and Texas Baptists, on occasion, availed themselves of this privilege. The Tarrant Baptist Association, in

⁴⁷Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1906, p. 6.

⁴⁸J. B. Gambrell, "The Progress of the Negro in America," The Baptist Standard, 30 June 1910, p. 1.

its Home Missions report for 1906, referred to the "ill-guided and ill-advised counsel and help of would-be friends [of the Negro] in the North." In the same year the Baptist General Convention's Committee on Negro Population praised the manner in which the American Home Missions Society had helped the blacks in the South.⁴⁹

J. B. Gambrell wrote sympathetically and appreciatively of the activities of Northern Baptists in Texas, believing that "the Northern Convention has a great work to do in the South with the Negroes and their schools, and . . . the editor hopes every Southern Baptist will lend himself heartily and sympathetically to that work."⁵⁰ On another occasion, however, Gambrell expressed criticism of northern methods of dealing Negro Baptists. In his view, there was too much management of the Negro in the Northern Convention's method, and he claimed to believe in treating the blacks as allies, rather than as wards.⁵¹

In his position, Gambrell appeared to have moved away from the paternalism which most generally characterized relations between most white Baptists and Negroes.

⁴⁹Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1906, p. 6; Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1906, p. 89; Gambrell, "Progress of the Negro," p. 1.

⁵⁰J. B. Gambrell, "Concerning the Main Point," The Baptist Standard, 16 June 1910, p. 9.

⁵¹Gambrell, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 26 May 1910, p. 9.

Believing that the approach of Northern Baptists to their Negro work was too complicated, he argued that the most effective way to help the Negro was to follow the path of simplicity.⁵² Northern Baptist denominational worker, George Sale, however, tended to disagree with Gambrell as to the nature of Northern Baptists' work with Negroes. He asserted that cooperation was replacing paternalism, and that Northern Baptists were doing less for the Negroes and more with them.⁵³

Despite their expressions of concern, sympathy, and even affection for the members of the Negro race, Baptists and Baptist leaders in Texas during the early 1900's presented an ambivalence not uncommon among white Americans in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. Whatever else one may say concerning them, they, first, last, and always, were segregationists. Being "people of the Book," they sought a biblical justification for their position which recognized the blacks as equals spiritually, but insisted upon denying them their civil rights and assigning them to an inferior status in American society. Fred Hale was a typical representative of the Baptist segregationists. Although he could speak of a Negro Baptist as a

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Yearbook of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1909, p. 95.

"a brother in black," and could argue that white and black Christians were brothers in Christ, he felt that the two races should be separate. He lamented the counsel of "unwise friends" of the Negro who taught him to go against the best interests of the Negro race by insisting upon "an association of the two races in public conveyances, hotels, and public gatherings."⁵⁴

⁵⁴Hale, "Query Department," p. 14.

CHAPTER V
TEXAS BAPTISTS AND EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS
DURING THE ERA OF
THE "WHITE MAN'S BURDEN"

Between 1900 and 1915 the United States received its largest number of immigrants. From 1860 to 1900 the newcomers totaled a little less than fourteen million. During the first fifteen years of the century more than fourteen and a half million arrived, almost twenty percent of the national population at the beginning of the period in 1900. Beginning about 1880 the source of immigrants underwent a shift from northern and western Europe to eastern and southern regions of the continent. These new settlers were overwhelmingly non-Protestant in religious affiliation, a fact which aroused alarm in many areas, especially in Texas.¹

The early 1900's was a period of nativism based in part upon racial ideas which regarded the shapes of men's

¹George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958), p.92.

heads as indications of superiority or inferiority. According to these ideas southern Europeans were especially given to "shiftiness, untruthfulness, and crimes of passion, and Jews were inherently sly and crafty, hated physical work and were greedy; Slavs were basically stupid and stoic." This was an age of racial stereotyping, in both scholarly and fictional literature.²

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Texas Baptists continued their interest in non-Baptist residents of European ancestry, although, as in earlier years these immigrants continued to receive less attention in Baptist official records and publications than did the Negroes. The report on "Foreign Population" reminded the Baptists of the state of the large number of immigrants who, assisted by the Immigration Bureau and the railroads, were "pouring into Texas."³

That Texas Baptists were impressed by the numbers of immigrants in the state is evident in their preoccupation with the subject. About midway through the first decade of the century, the number of Swedes in the vicinity of Austin stood at about twenty thousand, while some fifteen thousand Germans settled in the same area during the period.⁴

²Ibid., pp. 89-90.

³Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1905, pp. 11-12.

⁴Ibid., 1906, no pagination.

Six years later, reports to the Baptist General Convention of Texas showed twelve thousand Italians and 125,000 Germans in Texas. With its fifty thousand Bohemians, Texas in 1908 ranked third in the nation in the number of this ethnic group among its citizens. In the same year, according to Eugene Coke Routh, it had more Germans and Italians than any other southern state.⁵

Three years later the committee reporting for the state missions interests of the Baptist General Convention of Texas noted that many Europeans were coming to Texas who in earlier times would have gone to the Pacific Northwest. The committee emphasized the variety of backgrounds from which the immigrants came:

Let no man think we have in Texas today just the white man [Anglo] and the negro [sic], the Mexican and the Indian--for we have: the Germans and the Russians, the Japs [sic] and the Chinese, the Swedes and the Norwegians, the Polanders and the Italians, the Greeks and the Turks, the Jews and the Gentiles from every clime and country.⁶

Of the twenty thousand Swedes that had settled in the Austin area, the majority were Methodists and Lutherans. At that time, Baptists had one preacher and two churches in the vicinity, with a membership of forty-eight. It was also at that time that the Austin Association leaders

⁵Eugene C. Routh, "Our Neighbors from Other Lands," The Baptist Standard, 7 March 1912, pp. 4-5.

⁶Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1906, no pagination.

described the influx of immigrants as one of the most vexing problems facing the United States:

They come with their national tendencies and habits of socialism, anarchy and Sunday desecration, to this country of boasted liberty and freedom, expecting to find absolute immunity in the exercise of their liberty.⁷

The flood of immigrants from the North and their effect upon the fabric of Texas religious, economic, and social structure continued to be a concern to Texas Baptist leaders near the end of the period. E. C. Routh had known of three thousand northern farmers changing trains in Fort Worth in one day on their way to West Texas. He saw this immigration erasing the boundaries between North and South affecting

more than the price of cotton of the Texas farmer or the bank account of a Hill or a Harriman. It [the northern migration to this area] will come nearer breaking the "Solid South" than any other factor. . . . People think in parallel and not in perpendicular lines. Mason Dixon's line, the supposed west extension is crossed by lines of steel and they are more real. The thinking of the Texan will be affected by the man to whom he sells his cotton and from whom he buys his copper.⁸

South Texas, where most of the foreigners had settled, presented problems and difficulties for all phases of

⁷Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1906, no pagination.

⁸The Baptist Standard, 21 January 1909, p. 1.

"Christian" (Baptist) work, complained a Baptist from that area.⁹ Another leader, W. T. Curtis, implied that Baptist families who had moved and sold lands to immigrants had left their churches in South Texas in a weakened condition. Timely action on the part of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, however, had enabled these churches to remain open, and thus to exert an influence for good upon their European-American neighbors by keeping the Baptist message and truth before them.¹⁰

The Foreign Population Committee of 1902, like other committees before it, linked Christianity with Americanism in its attitude and report to messengers of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The report warned that if the older citizens did not "Americanize" these new arrivals, the immigrants would "Europeanize" them. By "Europeanization" these committeemen meant inroads made by European church systems among their own people.¹¹

The Committee on State Missions asked in its report to the 1903 Tarrant Baptist Association:

What shall we do with these people? What can we do is the question that faces the State Mission Board

⁹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1909, p. 5.

¹⁰W. T. Curtis, "What State Mission Work is Doing In South Texas," The Baptist Standard, 24 July 1911, p. 23.

¹¹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1902, p. 62.

twelve months in the year. When you remember that many thousands of these people are German materialists, and many more of them are Catholics steeped in the darkness of a false religion, and yet many more of them are Jews who have been embittered by the cruel treatment of a false Christianity, this question is accentuated many times. To meet this situation our State Mission Board raised last year \$65,000 which amount Tarrant County Association raised less than \$1,500. This year the work is laid out on a much larger plan.¹²

J. B. Cranfill acknowledged a dual motive, both spiritual and patriotic, in urging Texas Baptists to evangelize the foreign-speaking Texans. He saw the European institutions as un-American and largely unchristian.¹³

In the light of the threat of infusion of other beliefs the committee felt it had an obligation to these new settlers in their midst: "We must give them the simple New Testament religion which we teach and try to practice, or they will help to fix on us the religious ideals of continental Europe." They saw in the imposition of European religious attitudes a further threat: "the practical abolition of the Lord's day and the substitution of the forms of religion for its life and power."¹⁴

In addition to inroads which they feared continental religious ideas might make among their constituents, Baptist

¹²Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1903, pp. 6-7.

¹³Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1908, p. 30.

¹⁴Ibid., 1902, p. 62.

leaders complained that the continuation of European languages, customs, and institutions among the immigrants was detrimental to the "Texanizing" and "Americanizing" process. In their view the earliest possible assimilation of the Europeans into American society was to their best interests as well as those of America.¹⁵

As a step in the Americanization of foreigners, the Committee on Foreign Population urged the convention to establish a mission in the port of Galveston to aid incoming immigrants.¹⁶ At the same time the group recognized that it was not love of the Baptists that brought the foreigners to Texas, nor was it the belief that Texans loved them. They were seeking economic betterment and thought Texas was the place to find it.¹⁷

While the Anglo Baptists of Texas did not regard the European settlers with the same eye with which they looked at the Negro, they nonetheless viewed them as lacking in cultural advantages and in religious truth. In an editorial for the Baptist Standard in 1910, J. B. Gambrell expressed this Anglo-Saxon superiority attitude:

Texas today has, perhaps, something more than four million people on an area one fifth larger than the German Empire which has 50 millions. While there

¹⁵Ibid., 1902, p. 62; 1911, p. 83.

¹⁶Ibid., 1902, p. 62.

¹⁷Ibid., 1907, p. 106.

are many strains coming in Texas and many already here, the original type predominates and is likely to predominate for an indefinite time. It is the courageous, intelligent, Bible-bred Anglo-Saxon element, good for all the purposes of this world and the next. Of the four millions and more people in Texas today, not less than five hundred thousand of them are actual Baptists, three hundred thousand of them white Baptists, the other Negroes, but destined to play a tremendous part in the religious history of Texas.¹⁸

The 1912 Committee on Foreign Population made it clear that white Texans welcomed the "worthy," but would rather not have the others:

There are nearly one million foreigners in Texas. We welcome the worthy from other countries, but along with the worthy are coming the pauper and the criminal, who threaten rupture of our social and political fabric. We must meet them with the power of the gospel. Our Lord has commanded us to make disciples of all nations; the work is not progressing rapidly enough. He has told us to take the message of life to the heathen . . . now He is sending the heathen to us.¹⁹

Not all Texas Baptists, however, agreed completely with Gambrell and the 1912 Committee. Also writing in 1910, W. D. Bowen took tactful exception to Gambrell's theory of Anglo-Saxon superiority. Because of their distaste for the term, he never described immigrants as "foreigners," at least, not within their hearing.²⁰ Routh

¹⁸The Baptist Standard, 24 February 1910, p. 1.

¹⁹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1912, p. 131.

²⁰W. D. Bowen, "Some More of the 'Foreigner Problem,'" The Baptist Standard, 7 April 1910, p. 4.

was even more kindly in his view of the immigrants in the state, noting that they were attempting to conform to American customs and ideals. They were looking forward rather than backward, he claimed; they were rapidly becoming "Americanized." Most of the youth were learning to speak English and were thus making Baptists' task both easier and more crucial, from the denominational viewpoint.²¹ He continued, sounding a warning, that Anglo-Saxons did not have exclusive claims to cultural advantages and technological achievements, and that Texas Baptists would do well to be careful in describing folk of different cultures as inferior:

We will never evangelize them so long as we look upon them as inferior beings, with a feeling of mingled pity and contempt. . . . Men who sneer at the "dago" forget that a "dago" discovered a new world; that Galileo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Dante, Petrarch, Savonarola, Garibaldi, Marconi were all "dagos."²²

Routh reported, in addition, an early German impression of Americans, an impression which did not recommend Texas Baptists to them: "If the immigrant has business with the American, he can be sure of losing his last shirt. . . . The chief characteristic of the Americans is their lust for gold."²³

²¹Routh, "Neighbors from Other Lands," p. 4.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

Another matter, both religious and political in nature, aroused the concern of Baptists in Texas: that of the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The Baptists, in theory, if not in universal practice, were total abstainers. Their church covenant, to which a person gave implied consent when he joined a Baptist church, contained a statement by which each member agreed to refrain from the manufacture, sale, or use of alcoholic beverages. Many of the Europeans, on the other hand, believed that church members could use beverage alcohol in moderation. They, like the Baptists, however, condemned drunkenness. This difference of views placed the Baptists and their Lutheran and Roman Catholic neighbors on opposing sides of the prohibition issue. The committee reporting to the 1906 convention on Foreign Population complained bitterly of the vote of fifty to one against prohibition in areas dominated by Germans and Bohemians.²⁴

An example of Baptists' concern regarding the issue of prohibition may be seen in J. B. Gambrell's statements regarding the payment of the poll tax as required by the state after 1902. As editor of the Baptist Standard, he often urged his readers to pay the poll tax in order to be able to vote on such issues as prohibition. He did not, however,

²⁴Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1906, no pagination.

raise the question of who could vote. Disfranchisement of the blacks had been accomplished prior to the adoption of the tax through a constitutional amendment.²⁵

While Texas Baptists of the Progressive Era expressed an interest in other issues regarding their non-Baptist European neighbors, their main interest as churchmen was spiritual. The conclusion of the report of the Foreign Population Panel in 1907 was that "the education and evangelization of our foreign people" was "one of the gravest problems" that Baptists in South Texas faced. Leaders in almost every annual session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas expressed a recognition of Baptist obligation to share their message with the new settlers. In 1904 a committee of the Baptist General Convention of Texas noted the extent of this obligation upon Baptists of the state:

The obligation to give the Gospel to all the world is only enhanced by the coming of these nationalities among us. We have to cross no seas, to emigrate to no new lands, to endure no serious expatriations, to inure ourselves to no new acclimatization to do them service. They are at our doors,²⁶ and in many instances, within our dwelling places.

²⁵James Bruton Gambrell, "Poll Tax Payments," The Baptist Standard, 19 January 1911, p. 13; Woodward, Origins of New South, pp. 335, 343; V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), pp. 533-535.

²⁶Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1904, pp. 73-74.

Three years later, in 1907, the Baptists were again reminded of the special blessing of God upon them, in the unique privilege that was theirs, to share the good news of God's grace with these foreigners. If the Texas Baptists were faithful, God would use them as instruments to bring spiritual prosperity to their neighbors who had come seeking material improvement. The leaders reporting to the convention saw a tremendous opportunity for the Baptists of Texas, especially for those residing in the southern sector of the state.²⁷ Recognition of this opportunity and the responsibility imposed by the opportunity are reflected in the report for 1907:

The coming of these people is no accident; it is the work of God. It is a call for greater expenditures of both money and energy that they may be turned into the channels of service and devotion to our God. Never before did the Baptists of South Texas face such a tremendous opportunity as well as responsibility. If we are wise we will take hold of the situation now, regardless of cost or sacrifice, enter the door the Divine Hand has flung ajar, and win these sons and daughters of toil and progress for the Kingdom of God.²⁸

The same 1907 report contained an implied confession of the weaknesses of their approach to the task of winning the continental Europeans, and also stated the belief that by making their message more attractive, Baptists could overcome the reluctance of the European immigrants to

²⁷Ibid., 1907, pp. 106-107.

²⁸Ibid.

forsake their old-world traditions:

They come thoroughly inoculated with the spirit and customs of the mother country and manifest tremendous loyalty to each other's interests and beliefs. Apparently on first reaching our shores they have no desire to embrace our religion nor to enter into our social customs and manner of life. But by the influence of association they soon become open to the teachings of the gospel, and because of their enthusiastic natures are very easily led into the Kingdom when approached in the right way. Too long have we stood aloof and not extended to them the hand of sympathy and affection which our Lord commands. Ours should first be a neighborly attitude, then a neighborly approach. The call should be that of a friend in tenderness, sympathy, and love, and not that of a committee void of spiritual impressions. . . . How could Christian culture more nobly employ itself than in this out-giving to others?²⁹

B. H. Carroll, among others, insisted that Texas Baptists were under holy obligation to evangelize the immigrants settling in the state.³⁰ The 1903 General Convention also sounded a warning: "Delay [in evangelizing Europeans] is not only dangerous, but it is sinful, and let us see that when Baptists of Texas are called to render an account of their stewardship, it shall not be said to us: 'I was a stranger and ye took me not in.'"³¹

In 1911, E. C. Routh implied that the rank and file Baptists were less concerned than their preachers, missionaries, and denominational executives about making Baptists

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰The Baptist Standard, 24 February 1910, p. 14.

³¹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1903, p. 68.

of the Lutherans and Roman Catholics among the Germans, Scandinavians, Italians, Bohemians, and others who had come to Texas to found new homes:

In some way we must awaken our Christian people to their responsibility before God for the salvation of these alien races. Through our social relations we are to enlist their boys and girls not only in the Sunday Schools, but in our Christian schools. Our pastors can do much by going into their homes and business places, and by evangelizing the regions round about.³²

This sense of responsibility and urgency continued to characterize Baptist leaders as they made their reports from year to year and exhorted each other to greater faithfulness and higher achievements in Christ's service. The 1912 report admonished faithfulness in witnessing to non-Baptists:

Let us remember that God has thrust upon us the great responsibility of leading these people of other tongues to Jesus Christ, our Lord, for salvation and eternal life. May we no longer treat them like foreigners, enemies and strangers, but as our neighbors who come to us from across the waters. We should treat them like Christian people of a Christian land should treat their brothers. It is a fact that we have made many eloquent speeches, and formed many good theories for reaching those speaking other languages, but we have never gotten down to the practical work of saving them for Christ's sake.³³

In his preaching, B. H. Carroll called for removal of the barriers which separate men, especially Christians, from each other:

³²Ibid., 1911, p. 84.

³³Ibid., 1912, p. 125.

Break down that wall of partition! The gospel is for the world! Salvation cannot be confined in narrow boundaries. Let it overflow until it strikes the outer shores of human habitations and brings all men, whom God has made of one blood, life and cleansing and health and refreshment and nourishment and beauty and glory.³⁴

Baptist leaders in Texas not only sought to challenge their members to accept the responsibility of sharing the Baptist message with non-Baptists and non-Christians, but they also discussed the methods and attitudes they deemed most likely to succeed. An early report on Foreign Population urged Baptists to put forth diligent efforts to win the Europeans of Texas to the Baptist faith.³⁵ In 1910, J. J. Oliveira, a Baptist of Mexican descent, informed Anglo Baptist pastors as to how they might successfully minister to the foreigners in their midst:

The pastor ought to let the foreigners of his town understand that in his congregation they are welcome. One pastor did it once, with the result of eight baptisms, all of them MEXICANOS, and this happened in a FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH in Central Texas.³⁶

³⁴The view expressed in this statement applied to Negroes as well as to European immigrants. Benajah Harvey Carroll, Revival Messages: A Compilation of Pungent and Winsome Appeals to Wanderers from God, comp. J. W. Crowder, ed. J. B. Cranfill (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1939), p. 22.

³⁵Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1903, p. 29.

³⁶J. J. Oliveira, "A Foreigner Problem," The Baptist Standard, 10 March 1910, p. 7. [Emphasis in the original.]

He continued, suggesting the attitude which would most likely lead to success in winning non-Anglo Americans to the Baptist faith: "Let it be well understood that we love their souls for Jesus' sake, and the foreigner problem will solve itself."³⁷

W. D. Bowen also offered a formula for reaching immigrants with the Baptist message: "Realize that they are lost men and women, and go about winning them to Jesus Christ . . . the same effort (love, kindness, prayer, importunity) that will win one soul will win another."³⁸

Reporting to the 1911 Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Committee on Foreign Population argued that Texas Baptists would win Europeans only if they refrained from treating these folk as foreigners. Instead, the Anglos should treat the Europeans as neighbors, "loving them in the spirit of Jesus."³⁹

Early in 1912, E. C. Routh wrote of reaching ethnic groups in Texas:

We will never reach them by preaching the gospel through proxies. "What is the best method of reaching them?" I asked one of the most successful workers among them. "Any way that has common sense and Christian love behind it." Don't you think he was

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Bowen, "More of the Foreigner Problem," p. 5.

³⁹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1911, p. 83.

about right? We must come in touch with them in their social life. We must be neighbors to them.⁴⁰

He seemed to include Mexicans as well as Bohemians, Germans, Swedes, Italians, and others in this assertion; in fact, almost everyone except Negroes.

As was true in regard to mission work among Negroes, various leaders among members of the Baptist General Convention of Texas emphasized the importance of ministering to persons of European parentage in the state. Again, the debate between home missions and foreign missions raged, with prominent Baptists casting their influence in favor of the immigrants. Preaching on the feeding of the five thousand by Jesus, George W. Truett compared those who neglected the lost to those who would have sent the multitude away without food, and he spoke critically of those who would thus discharge their responsibility to others.⁴¹ In another article Truett made the point that the gospel is for both the Chinese in China and those in America, for the Germans, Italians, Bohemians, and others in Europe and for those in Texas, and that the church must not attempt

⁴⁰Routh, "Neighbors from Other Lands," p. 12.

⁴¹George W. Truett, "Dealing with the Multitude," The Baptist Standard, 11 February 1909, p. 1; Luke 9:12.

to use its ministry to one group to excuse its neglect of the other.⁴²

Witnessing to immigrants whom Providence had brought to this land was much more economical than sending missionaries to Europe for the purpose of evangelism.⁴³ The report of the Board of Directors for the Baptist General Convention of Texas for 1919 stated:

To win a noble German, or Scandinavian, or Bohemian, or Mexican, or Japanese, is to strengthen ourselves at home and send back over the borders, through letters and visitations, a leavening influence which will make ready for the gospel message in foreign lands.⁴⁴

Victor I. Masters, a representative of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, noted that the Board had one hundred missionaries to non-English-speaking residents of the South; about thirty five of these workers were in Texas.⁴⁵

⁴²George W. Truett, "An Immortal Deed," The Baptist Standard, 21 July 1910, pp. 2-3.

⁴³Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1908, pp. 30, 31.

⁴⁴"Report of the Board of Directors of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to the Annual Convention," The Baptist Standard, 18 November 1909, p. 12.

⁴⁵Masters, "The Christianization of the Southern Negroes," pp. 12-13.

Strictly speaking, the Mexicans of Texas are not European in racial make-up, since many of them are descendants of both European and Indian parentage; however, because of the predominance of Spanish influence in their culture and in their religious beliefs, they were generally classed as "cultural Europeans" and are so considered here.

Like the immigrants coming directly from Europe, the Mexicans, numbering some four hundred thousand in Texas in 1910, presented a multi-faceted barrier to the Anglo Baptists of North and East Texas. Since few Anglos spoke Spanish, and even fewer Mexicans spoke English, a language barrier existed. Because of the difficulty of communication, among other factors, Baptist work among these people proceeded slowly. Another disadvantage faced by Baptists seeking to win converts to their faith among the Mexicans grew out of the language problem; this was the abject poverty of the immigrants. Some Anglos took advantage of the language barrier and of the poverty of the Mexicans to exploit them and to discriminate against them. While Baptists are not specifically charged with involvement in these practices of exploitation and discrimination, the Mexicans made no distinction between Baptists and non-Baptists when they used these conditions to excuse their reluctance to embrace the Baptist faith. Until the Latins could learn English,

or Texas Baptists learned Spanish, there could be little communication between them on matters of religion.⁴⁶

The religious traditions of the Mexicans presented another barrier to missionary-minded evangelists. The Roman Catholic Church, of which the majority of Mexican-Americans were at least nominal members, had thoroughly instilled its dogmas into the minds of the people. In addition, as a social institution, the church had a strong hold on the loyalties of the people, not only the Mexicans, but upon Europeans who were settling in Texas.⁴⁷

An added feature of Mexican-Anglo relations, but absent from those pertaining to new arrivals from Europe, was the fact that the United States had been involved in a war with Mexico. Some residual ill feelings remained from this conflict which no doubt hindered Baptist work among them. Further, a barrier was present in the fact that the dark complexions of many of the Mexicans led Anglos to regard them as "colored" people. In keeping with the national assumption of the white man's burden common to the period, was the tendency to look upon the Mexicans as inferior, an attitude which Baptists did not wholly escape. The assumption of a superior status by Anglo Baptists and its recognition on the part of the

⁴⁶Oliveira, "Foreigner Problem," p. 7.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Mexican-Americans resulted in paternalism to which the Mexican-Americans accommodated themselves. The status quo bolstered the superiority complex of the Anglos and at the same time made a great deal of badly needed assistance available to Mexican Baptist churches.⁴⁸

Baptist General Convention records relating to Mexican-American Baptists began in 1902, when the work of five Spanish-named missionaries under appointment of the convention appeared in the denomination's Annual. The convention supported these men, not out of a sense of equality, but rather because of the Anglo Baptists' conviction that the Mexicans could work more effectively in the situation than could Anglo Baptists. There were exceptions to the principle of sending Mexicans to work with Mexicans, however. One such exception was Miss Dochia Harris, who taught in a Mexican school in Austin in 1909.⁴⁹

By 1910, the number of Baptist workers among Mexicans of the state had grown to twenty, but these were inadequate to serve the estimated four hundred thousand Mexicans in the state. The editor, Mary T. (Mrs. J. B.) Gambrell, of the feature, "Woman's World" in the Baptist Standard, explained that "among so many souls" these twenty missionaries were

⁴⁸Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1902, pp. 83, 84; 1903, p. 29

⁴⁹C. D. Daniel, "Mexican Institute," The Baptist Standard, 15 April 1909, p.15.

"but a handful." Actually, the number was less than twenty, since one was only a part-time summer worker, one had transferred to Ybor City, Florida, as a representative of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and one had died.⁵⁰

Not only the number of Mexican-American residents in Texas but also the number of Baptist churches among them were items of interest to leaders of the General Convention. In 1904 the Austin area contained a total of thirty-two Baptist churches, including two Mexican congregations with a combined membership of forty-nine. The inclusion of Mexican Baptist churches in the roll of the Austin Baptist Association indicated that at an early date that body had received ethnic minority groups into its membership. The Austin Baptist Association supported a Mexican missionary, J. A. Musa, for work among the approximately twelve thousand Mexican residents of the section. The next year the Association employed M. D. Castillo as its missionary.⁵¹ The Methodists appear to have been more successful than the Baptists of that time in reaching Texans of Mexican ancestry; they claimed three hundred Latin Americans as members of their denomination.⁵²

⁵⁰Mary T. Gambrell, "Our Texas Missions and Missionaries" The Baptist Standard, 20 October 1910, p. 19.

⁵¹Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1904, p. 14; 1906, pp. 24-25.

⁵²Ibid., 1906, pp. 24-25.

Baptist interest in the Mexican population was probably most effectively demonstrated in El Paso. The most informative reports of this work concerned the period from 1902 to 1912. Among the early reports was one of sociological import, describing the housing of the Mexican quarter of the city as being largely of old adobe huts. In 1909, six Baptist churches ministered in El Paso. Four were Anglo churches, with one each among the Mexicans and Negroes. Each congregation had its own building, and the Mexican edifice was reported to be one of the most attractive church structures in the city, with an estimated value of thirty-five thousand dollars.⁵³

In 1910 the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board appointed C. D. Daniel as superintendent of Mexican missions for the Southwest, which at that time, meant Texas. The Home Mission Board appointee conducted tent revivals in the Corpus Christi area and assisted in the establishment of Mexican Baptist churches and missions in various parts of the state.⁵⁴ Two years after his appointment, Daniel wrote in regard to the Mexican mission in El Paso:

The Mexican revolution has hit El Paso hard. The most of its tremendous trade with Mexico has been cut

⁵³Jeff D. Ray, "El Paso, the Queen of Our Western Border," The Baptist Standard, 1 July 1909, p. 3.

⁵⁴Victor I. Masters, "Mission Work for People of Foreign Speech," The Baptist Standard, 24 February 1910, p. 14; W. C. Hamil, "To the Churches of Blanco Association," The Baptist Standard, 22 September 1910, p. 7.

off, which depresses almost every line of business. This unemployed [sic] Mexicans and caused them to move elsewhere, depleting "our" schools, churches.
 . . .⁵⁵

The report pointed up some of the problems which Baptists faced in maintaining mission work among the transient laborers from Mexico.

Besides C. D. Daniel, other Anglo workers among the Mexicans of Texas included T. J. Womack, of Shafter, who combined public school teaching and religious work. In a Baptist Standard item, Womack made a plea for a teacher who could speak Spanish, adding that such a person could earn as much as eighty-five dollars per month.⁵⁶ Thornton Payne labored for the Baptist cause in San Benito. In an earlier statement, Victor I. Masters had cited the need for more workers among the Mexican-Americans as well as a need for larger and better church buildings among them.⁵⁷

Anglo interest concerning the religious welfare of Texans of Mexican descent was two-fold: educational and evangelistic. Concerned individuals brought the need for schools to the attention of Baptists of the General Convention across the state; especially urgent were these pleas

⁵⁵C. D. Daniel, "El Paso Mexican Work," The Baptist Standard, 16 May 1912, p. 29.

⁵⁶The Baptist Standard, 13 April 1911, p. 9.

⁵⁷Masters, "Mission Work for People of Foreign Speech," p. 14.

near the end of the first decade and at the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century. Masters included, along with the other needs he cited, the lack of a school for Mexican youth in Texas. In support of his plea, J. B. Gambrell, editor of the Baptist Standard, asked editorially: "Why should not the Home Mission Board enlarge its school work among the Mexicans of Texas, strengthening the base of operations for old Mexico?"⁵⁸

Baptists' educational efforts among the Mexicans usually took one or more of three forms: elementary schools for Mexican children, church schools (Sunday Schools for all ages, but especially for children) and in-service training for Mexican Baptist pastors and church lay-leaders. The school taught by Miss Dochia Harris in Austin had about forty pupils in regular attendance, but the evangelistic results were meager. J. H. W. Williams, corresponding secretary of the Austin Baptist Association, reported in 1909: "There is some promise and hope for this work, though at times permanent results seem small. The hope of the Mexican work is in training the children in Christian principles."⁵⁹ In addition to his work as pastor in San Benito, Thornton Payne also conducted a school for

⁵⁸Ibid.; Gambrell, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 12 May 1910, p. 8.

⁵⁹Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1909, p. 9.

the Mexican children of that community. Other Mexican schools were in El Paso, Kyle, Shafter, San Antonio, Big Spring, Uvalde, and Gonzales.⁶⁰ Sunday schools were part of the programs of churches and missions. While these were open to all ages and both sexes, only women and children usually attended them.⁶¹

The third form of education fostered among Mexican-Americans during the era dominated by the concept of the white man's burden was the "Bible institute," which the leaders had used with some success among the Negroes. Meeting for several days in a centrally located church, the pastors and lay-leaders received instruction in Baptist doctrine, interpretation of the Scriptures, Sunday school promotion, and church organization. C. D. Daniel, Southern Baptist superintendent for Mexican missions in the Southwest, emphasized both the cost and the value of these institutes, one of which was held in San Marcos in 1909, enrolling thirty-five persons, an increase of eighteen from the previous year. "These Mexican Institutes," reported Daniel "cost some money and very much hard work, but they are worth millions of times more than they cost."⁶²

⁶⁰Ibid.; Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1912, p. 109; C. D. Daniel, "Mexican Evangelization," 13 April 1911, p. 13.

⁶¹Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1909, p. 9.

⁶²Daniel, "Mexican Institute," p. 15.

Another educational effort which Anglo Baptists encouraged among local Mexican Baptist churches was the School of Missions, in which a local congregation studied the missionary enterprises of the denomination. A leading spirit of both the institutes and the schools of missions was Mrs. J. B. Gambrell, wife of the editor of the Baptist Standard.⁶³

As to higher education, General Baptists of Texas established no separate colleges for Mexicans such as they advocated for Negroes. Those Mexican-Americans who attained collegiate level attended the colleges related to the Baptist General Convention. One such student was Leonardo Ortiz, a student at Simmons College (now Hardin-Simmons University). While attending the Abilene school, Ortiz served as pastor of the Mexican Baptist Mission in Big Spring.⁶⁴

W. D. Bowen, among others, saw education as one of the secrets of Baptist advancement in the state. He observed that in the 1870's and 1880's, Baptists had been the dominant religious body in southern Texas, but in 1910, they were a religious minority in that area. Bowen cited

⁶³T. S. Hernandez to J. B. Gambrell, The Baptist Standard, 12 May 1910, p. 8; F. B. McConnell, "A Tribute to Mrs. J. B. Gambrell, The Baptist Standard, 26 January 1911, p. 3; Daniel, "Mexican Institute," p. 15.

⁶⁴Daniel, "Mexican Evangelization," p. 13.

the loss of Baptist schools in that part of the state (an example was Baylor University) as a chief cause for the decline. The rise of a large number of Catholic schools, according to Bowen, was a significant factor in the outstanding numerical growth of that denomination. By the same token, he told the Baptist Standard readers, the greatest Baptist progress was being realized in areas where they had established schools. The next year, another writer told of the sacrifices of state Baptists to build academies in their communities.⁶⁵ As Baptists set up their academies across the state, children of foreigners often studied in them. It was discovered that many of the immigrants' children preferred English-speaking associations and that such preferences included schools as well as churches. It was the hope of Baptist leaders that these young people, whether Mexican, or German, or Italian, or whatever, would become converted and Americanized, and would return to their homes as witnesses for the truth as Baptists saw it. In the case of the Mexicans, many of whom would likely return to Mexico after embracing the Baptist faith, it was anticipated that they would become enthusiastic and effective evangelists south of the border.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Bowen, "More Foreigner Problem," p. 5; J. B. Tidwell, "A Pastor, a Church, a Situation," The Baptist Standard, 4 May 1911, p. 5.

⁶⁶Tidwell, "Pastor, Church, Situation," p. 5.

The basic consideration in the attitude of Texas Baptists toward any minority group was that of evangelism. They believed themselves under holy obligation to share their faith and message with all men. If a community or race were "biologically or culturally inferior," such conditions only increased the Baptists' sense of responsibility toward them. Deprived of equality and advantage in this world, an individual must have every opportunity to enjoy the happiness of the next world; hence, in regard to the Mexican-Americans as well as to Negroes and to newcomers from Europe, Texas Baptist leaders of the Progressive era sought in every way to witness to those groups concerning their faith in Christ.

J. J. Oliveira, a Mexican leader in the Baptist General Convention of Texas, deplored the tendency of Baptist churches to send personnel and money to other lands and to ignore representatives of those same peoples in their own midst. The Baptist pastor, according to Oliveira, was the key to winning the Mexican-American to Christ. If the pastor accepted the status quo, most of his members would likely do the same. If he boldly took a stand urging his church to become actively involved in witnessing to its Mexican neighbors, something could be accomplished. Oliveira recognized, however, that if Anglo churches invited Mexicans to share in their worship services, complications

might result:

The inviting of foreigners to worship in our congregations, would doubtless arouse many a board of deacons and hurt the false sense of propriety of many of our church members. The pastor, however, receives his orders from Christ and from Him alone. Shall our churches be clannish because in them are found clannish members? or shall it be known throughout the community that the house of worship is for all nations?⁶⁷

Despite the possibilities of arousing opposition and resentment in churches by witnessing to Mexicans and inviting them into the local fellowship, some followed this course. One such church was the Baptist church at San Marcos. Instead of setting up a Mexican mission, it received Mexican-Americans directly into its membership, and thus was able to exercise a better influence over them. Within a year, however, an indigenous Mexican Baptist church had arisen in San Marcos, and this new church had established a mission at Kyle.⁶⁸

The Baptist church in Big Spring also served as an example of the type of concern which many leaders felt should characterize Baptist attitudes toward the members of minority groups. The congregation invested both time and money in ministry to the Mexican population of that city.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Oliveira, "Foreigner Problem," p. 7.

⁶⁸Tidwell, "Pastor, Church, Situation," p. 5; The Baptist Standard, 30 May 1912, p. 5.

⁶⁹Daniel, "Mexican Evangelization," p. 13.

Both Anglo and Mexican Baptists in Texas expressed dissatisfaction and disappointment in the level of interest and achievement demonstrated by Baptists in their home mission efforts. Oliveira was one who was disappointed with the success, or lack of success, that Baptists were experiencing in reaching foreigners in the state. He was careful, however, to avoid casting aspersions upon the sincerity and industry of those who engaged in mission work among the Mexicans. The difficulty lay, he acknowledged, not in the dedication of the workers, but in the lack of response among the people. The deeply ingrained Catholic suspicion of evangelical views, as well as their fear of exploitation by some professing Protestants, hindered Baptist work among the Latin Americans.⁷⁰

During the Progressive period, the Baptist General Convention of Texas appears to have left the most extensive records on the race question, as compared with other bodies maintaining work in the state. The Baptist Missionary Association of Texas had separated itself from the Baptist General Convention over the issue of church sovereignty and missionary control and support in 1900, the period immediately following the separation was spent largely in perfecting its organization. The Minutes of its annual sessions are

⁷⁰Oliveira, "Foreigner Problem," p. 7.

almost completely silent on the race issue. At that time they do not appear to have discussed the "foreigner problem" as such. Most of the space in their denominational organ, Baptist Progress, was occupied with organizational matters, and notes from local churches regarding attendance records, revival meetings, and such related matters. Comments on matters outside the immediate internal interest of the Association appear to have consisted primarily of attacks upon Roman Catholicism and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.⁷¹

Records for Negro Baptist churches in that period are even more scant than those of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. Such records as are extant refer to race relations only in the most general terms, suggesting that they were accommodating themselves to the status quo.⁷²

During the era when the concept of the white man's burden prevailed in the nation, many new citizens came to Texas: by train from the North and East, by ship from Europe, and by whatever means available from Mexico. In these new citizens, Baptists already in Texas had both a civic and a religious interest. They considered their new neighbors inferior in culture and heretical in religion.

⁷¹See issues of Baptist Progress, 1916, 1917; Baker, Blossoming Dessert, pp. 161-162.

⁷²Proceedings of the Baptist Missionary General Convention of Texas, 1906, p. 20.

The answer to both problems, as they saw it, lay in winning the Germans, Scandinavians, Mexicans, and others to the Baptist faith.

During that era, George W. Truett, as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, was rapidly coming to the forefront as a spokesman for the constituents of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He spoke for some Texas Baptists regarding the race question in a sermon he delivered on the topic of the "Good Samaritan." He declared:

He who would cheapen any race or people is to that degree man's enemy. He who would cheapen any man made in the image of God is man's enemy and likewise God's. He who would cheapen the ignorant African, or the poor Chinese, looking backward thousands of years, would by that much cheapen and degrade all humanity. . . . This man [the Samaritan] was not hindered by prejudice of race or prejudice of religion.⁷³

Baptists' attitudes toward minority groups during the Progressive era remained, however, a mixture of paternalism, superiority-complex, fear, and a genuine evangelistic concern. Unlike their relations with the Negroes, most Baptists of that period were willing to welcome new arrivals from Europe into their church services and membership as well as into their homes; some even invited persons of Mexican ancestry into their fellowship. Whatever the expressions of these Baptists' attitudes toward minorities,

⁷³George W. Truett, "The Good Samaritan," The Baptist Standard, 21 January 1909, p. 3.

the attitudes, themselves, were generally in harmony with the concept of the white man's burden. All told, however, the Progressive era saw little change in Texas Baptists' views of racial and ethnic minorities.

CHAPTER VI

TEXAS BAPTISTS' RACIAL ATTITUDES
DURING THE PERIOD OF
SOUTHERN POLITICAL RESURGENCE

The election of Thomas Woodrow Wilson to the Presidency in 1912 ushered in a change of emphasis in the nation's government. The "New Nationalism" of the Roosevelt-Taft era advocated increased involvement of the federal government in the lives of the citizens, but Wilson's "New Freedom" promised less government interference in the individual affairs of the people.¹

When Woodrow Wilson became President of the United States on March 4, 1913, he was the first southerner to occupy the White house in more than forty years and the first southerner to win election to the Presidency in more than half a century. Although the South had provided the

¹Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1954), pp. 18-19.

President for forty-eight of the first seventy years of the nation's history, it had not seen one of its sons elected to that office since Virginia-born Zachary Taylor's election in 1848. After that time, no southerner had won either party's nomination for the Presidency, and only one Democrat, Grover Cleveland, of New York, had won election. Woodrow Wilson, then, was not only the first southerner to win election to the Presidency in more than fifty years but the first Democrat elected to the office in almost a quarter of a century.²

Woodrow Wilson was a southerner in basic outlook as well as by birth and background. It was but natural that he should follow southern traditions himself and bring into his cabinet men who shared his views. Five of his cabinet members were born south of the Potomac, including Albert S. Burleson, of Texas, whom the President appointed Postmaster General, with the customary control over federal patronage. Prior to his appointment to the Post Office department, Burleson had served ten years in the House of Representatives. Edward M. House, also from Texas, became the President's advisor without an official title.³

²Ibid.; George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1914-1945 (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 1.

³Tindall, Emergence of New South, pp. 2-3.

The South returned to power in Washington with the election of Wilson, and southern racial views, which had long been accepted unofficially and informally by the nation at large, took on a new expression in the capital. Since Reconstruction days, the federal government had offered Negroes public offices and jobs, but with "the South in the Saddle," and with Wilson "holding the reins," segregation and "black disfranchisement" in the federal government advanced apace.⁴

The new President appeared somewhat ambivalent in his attitudes toward Negroes in the federal government. While he appeared willing to keep some Negroes on the federal payroll, he also seemed to have been overruled by his southern advisors. George Brown Tindall noted that he challenged these southerners but twice. His secretary of the Treasury, William Gibbs McAdoo, proposed making the Treasury Registry Division an all-black unit, but vociferous protests from southern congressmen led to abandonment of the idea. On the other occasion when Wilson challenged the southerners on the race issue, he fared better in that he succeeded in securing the reappointment of Robert H. Terrell as a municipal judge in Washington, D. C. Wilson's

⁴Ibid., pp. 3, 8, 144; A. Maurice Low, "The South in the Saddle," Harper's Weekly, 57 (8 February 1913): 20.

"New Freedom" indicated immediately that it held no new birth of freedom for the American Negro. The Democratic President's progressivism, like that of the previous decade, was a "progressivism for whites only."⁵

Wilson's benign utterances regarding race relations and Negroes' rights lost some of their value when he accepted the advice of the southerners in his official family and advanced policies which resulted in a reduction in the number of Negroes on the federal payroll. His policies encouraged southern conservatives everywhere. Southern members of Congress began to propose bills designed to negate earlier laws favorable to the Negroes. John Sharp Williams, Senator from Mississippi, attempted to tie a rider to the amendment giving women the vote which would have restricted such vote to white women. Ellison D. "Cotton Ed" Smith, of South Carolina, introduced a resolution calling for repeal of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.⁶

World War I wrought drastic changes in the racial patterns of the United States. These changes in the racial situation were more akin to by-products, however, than the result of a program designed for that purpose. The war crusade, itself, and racial patterns were not directly

⁵Tindall, Emergence of New South, pp. 144, 324; Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 373.

⁶Tindall, Emergence of New South, p. 145; Link, Wilson and Progressive Era, pp. 64-65.

connected, yet a relationship developed as economic factors changed. Nonetheless, these developments had racial overtones that ought not to be ignored in studying the era. With the war came two factors which eventually affected the racial patterns in the South: first, the war industries needed workers. Second, the hostilities in Europe had greatly reduced the number of workers formerly provided by immigration from that hemisphere. In need of workers, industrialists turned to the South, where many were willing to forsake the hard-scrabble farms and crop-lien systems for the promised high wages in the war plants of the North. Besides the hordes of blacks who migrated to the cities of the North during World War I, thousands of Negroes entered military service, many serving in France, where there was no color line.⁷

The Negro, occupying the lowest place in the economic system, was understandably anxious to move to an area where his color would not be an economic disadvantage, as it had been in the South. Therefore, hundreds of thousands left their homes for the strange cities of the North.⁸ Those who left their southern homes for the better jobs and wages

⁷Arthur I. Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, 1919 and the 1960's: A Study in the Connections Between Conflict and Violence (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), p. 183; Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 563.

⁸Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 293.

of the North, however, found the fulfillments to be considerably less than the promises had indicated. In their new-found homes in northern cities the blacks found themselves the victims of discrimination hardly less vicious than that which they had suffered in the South. They were forced to take lodging in the most wretched of housing facilities and faced the hostility of white workers who feared their competition for jobs.⁹ Such experiences reflected the conditions which President Wilson and his administration had inherited, but which they seemed little disposed to remedy.¹⁰

By no means did all the Negroes leave the South during World War I. Edward Franklin Frazier reported that until the end of the war, about ninety percent of the American Negroes remained in the South.¹¹ Here, as in the North, tensions arose, due in part to fears that Negro veterans, having experienced a degree of equality in the military service would demand like treatment upon their return to civilian life.¹² Some white Americans no doubt feared that the black veterans would attempt to exercise

⁹Ibid., p. 292.

¹⁰Link, Wilson and Progressive Era, pp. 64-65.

¹¹Frazier, Negro Church in America, p. 47.

¹²Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, p. 183; Link, American Epoch, p. 245.

the same social privileges at home as they had enjoyed in Europe. These fears and resentments often erupted into violence.

Another factor in the rise of racial tensions during the war period was the revival of the Ku Klux Klan in 1919. It attained a membership of more than one hundred thousand during that year in the South and Southwest, which included Texas.¹³ In addition to the revival of the Klan, and the mood of white supremacy which dominated racial attitudes during the second decade of the century, the "Red Scare" of January, 1920, led by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, created woes for the Negro population.¹⁴

Writing of the war and postwar periods, Arthur I. Waskow listed several reasons for the disturbances of 1919. Besides fears of the demands of Negro veterans, of the Ku Klux Klan, and the "Red Scare," he mentioned the propaganda statements of educated Negroes as a factor, in that they helped to increase the resentment of whites against the black race. Further, activities of unscrupulous whites added to the troubles of the Negro people.¹⁵

Accompanying racial tensions in many areas were race

¹³Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, p. 187.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 183-191.

riots. Two incidents occurred in Texas during this time which attracted national attention. The first took place in Port Arthur, but Waskow referred to it as only of "minor racial importance."¹⁶ The second racial incident in Texas in 1919 was of far more serious import than the Port Arthur disturbance. Taking place in the East Texas city of Longview, in July, 1919, this event proved to be the beginning of a series of the worst riots in American history, spreading from Texas to Washington, Chicago, and elsewhere, killing or wounding hundreds of persons and destroying millions of dollars' worth of property.¹⁷

With the increased racial tension and race riots came a new upsurge in the number of lynchings, especially, in the South. The Twenty-Ninth Annual Report from the Tuskegee Negro Conference told of eighty-two lynchings in the United States in 1919; seventy-seven of these were in the South. Seventy-five of the lynch victims were Negroes. Georgia led the nation with twenty-one lynching incidents; in Texas, four persons lost their lives through illegal executions during the troubled year of 1919. The four lynchings in Texas, however, represented a drop of more than fifty percent in three years; nine persons had fallen

¹⁶Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁷Link, American Epoch, p. 245.

victims to "mob justice" in 1916.¹⁸

The debate of earlier decades on the subject of the origin of the Negro and the comparative intelligence of the various races continued into the second decade of the century, although it appears to have had less vehemence than earlier. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, northern Negro critic of Booker Taliaferro Washington, challenged the then prevalent interpretation of the biblical account of the Noachic curse upon Ham. Du Bois took the similarity between the Hebrew word "ham" and the Egyptian word "khem" and suggested that the former was a derivative of the latter, and that Ham was the progenitor of the Egyptians rather than of the Canaanitish tribe which Bible scholars have frequently associated with him. In addition, Du Bois rejected the idea that Ham was Noah's third son, asserting that Canaan actually occupied that undesirable position, since it was he upon whom Noah placed the curse of perpetual servitude. Finally, he preferred to believe in a progressive evolvement of mankind, rather than in a special creation. In his view, the white man is a hybrid: a blending of the black and brown, or of the black and yellow races.¹⁹

¹⁸The Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Tuskegee Negro Conference, p. 174; The Baptist Standard, 16 August 1917, p. 27.

¹⁹William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, The Negro (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), pp. 20-21.

Events in the Texas statehouse during the Progressive Era were both hopeful and discouraging for Negroes. By 1913, the Texas Legislature had abolished the brutal and degrading convict lease system which had enabled industrialists and planters to lease convicts from the state for use as labor gangs. The system had had the effect of returning many blacks to slavery, since it was used most extensively against them. It was an encouraging sign for the Negroes of Texas when the state abandoned the practice.²⁰ This hopeful trend turned about-face, however, when two years later, the legislature took action requiring mine operators to provide separate clean-up facilities for white and Negro workers.²¹

During these troubled days, Southern Baptists in Texas regularly demonstrated an interest in statistics regarding the Negro population and Negro churchmen in the South and in the state. Early in 1911, the Baptist Standard published a statement of John Roach Straton, then pastor of the Seventh Street Baptist Church, of Baltimore, Maryland, which dealt with the distribution of the population in the South, giving special attention to concentrations of minorities:

²⁰Charles S. Johnson, Patterns of Negro Segregation (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1915), pp. 20-21.

²¹Ibid.

The latest reliable statistics give to the thirteen Southern States a total of 30,000,000 people. Twelve million represent "as high an order of intelligence and conscience as human society affords." Eighteen million are described as "backward people." Five million are the "poor whites"--non-property owners, illiterate. Three million [are] Negroes who constitute our "greatest menace and our greatest responsibility and opportunity."²²

About a year later, Victor I. Masters, a representative of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, commented on the church membership of the Roman Catholics and their efforts to gain converts among the Negroes of the South. His report indicated that of the 3,685,000 Negro church members in America, 2,354,000 were Baptists. "Practically none of the Negroes are reported as Catholic, the entire number being 38,000, but the Papacy is now taking steps to try to win the Negro."²³ Texas Baptist leader Eugene Coke Routh cited the 1910 United States census which reported 690,000 Negroes in Texas, as compared with 3,204,896 whites. During the first decade of the century, Negroes had increased by 69,298, or twenty-seven percent; the white population during the same period had grown by 778,227, a net increase of thirty-nine percent.²⁴

²²John Roach Straton, "The Two-Fold View of Home Missions," The Baptist Standard, 19 January 1911, p. 27.

²³Victor I. Masters, "The Negro Churches," The Baptist Standard, 18 January 1912, p. 11.

²⁴Eugene C. Routh, "Negroes in Texas," The Baptist Standard, 18 January 1912, p. 11.

Routh's report, moreover showed the Negroes to have been unevenly distributed in the state:

In many counties, there are no negroes [sic], while in several counties there are more negroes [sic] than whites. . . . In Texas, the negroes [sic] constitute 17.7 per cent [sic] of the population, while 17 per cent [sic] of the farmers are negroes [sic].²⁵

The Negro Baptist membership in Texas at that time stood at about two hundred thousand among the Negro Missionary Baptists. The Negro Primitive Baptists numbered about ten thousand.²⁶

Politics was one of the interests of Texas Baptists, and a perennial political issue with moral and social implications was that of prohibition. Under an editorial title, "The Negroes and Prohibition," Gambrell hailed the formation of a prohibition organization among the Negroes and lauded the appeal the group had made for the support of prohibition among their fellows. In his editorial, Gambrell commended the blacks' "good sense," singling out J. W. Bailey, corresponding secretary of the Negro Baptist Convention and praising him for his role in the prohibition controversy, and referring to him as "one of the strongest and best men of his race. He is well-informed, reliable, aggressive for the best things in Texas, and is

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

always in harmony with the best white people. . . ."27

Gambrell supported the formation of separate organizations of Negro prohibitionists on the same basis that he favored separate churches for them. Separateness, he argued, would make for greater freedom and efficiency. Such a separate effort, he continued, would enhance the Negro's "natural and worthy race feeling and pride." Carrying his argument further, he praised the nobility, wisdom, and ability of Negro men and women who possessed "a deep sense of race responsibility." The Baptist leader blamed the barroom for a recent lynching in Dallas in which a mob hung an accused Negro "in open daylight at a public street crossing."²⁸

In his comments on political issues, Gambrell made no secret of his desire to influence the votes of Negro Baptists, and he believed that white Baptists should make similar use of their influences. At the same time, he held in utter contempt the white man who would use the Negro in what he saw as the evil cause of prohibition, declaring that even the lowest of the Negro race was not as low as the white man who would make such use of the

²⁷J. B. Gambrell, "A Negro Preacher's View," The Baptist Standard, 15 August 1912, p. 24.

²⁸J. B. Gambrell, "The Negro and Prohibition," The Baptist Standard, 5 January 1911, p. 8.

black man.²⁹

Another Texas Baptist who manifested a genuine interest in the Negro race was Robert Cooke Buckner, Kentuckian turned Texan, who arrived in the state in 1859. He soon became pastor of the struggling Baptist church at Paris, then known as "the calico bonnet church."³⁰ Migrating to the Dallas area in the 1870's, Buckner continued his religious activities. In 1879, he established an orphanage, which in time came to be known as the Buckner Children's Home.³¹

Buckner's interests also assumed an interracial aspect when he encouraged the Negro Baptists of Dallas and East Texas to engage in activities for the betterment of their race. At his prompting, the blacks of Dallas established a high school, the first such Negro institution to appear in North Texas. The most noted Negro accomplishment in which Buckner had a part, however, was the founding of a Negro orphanage at Gilmer in 1899. A Negro leader, W. L.

²⁹Gambrell, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 19 January 1911, pp. 12-13; idem., "Editorial Notes," The Baptist Standard, 27 July 1911, p. 9.

³⁰Benjamin Franklin Riley, History of the Baptists of Texas, from the Earliest Occupation of the Territory to the Close of the Year 1906 (Dallas: Published for the Author, 1907), p. 212.

³¹G. G. Dickey, "Robert Cooke Buckner," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, 1:205.

Dickson, who was born a slave, became superintendent of the children's home, and in time it became known as the Dickson Colored Orphanage. Buckner served on the Negro home's board of directors, and as president of the board, for some five years.³²

The state, at the time of the founding of the Dickson Orphanage, did not operate such an institution for Negro children as it did for white orphans; hence, the home at Gilmer was the only effort made by any one in Texas to meet the requirements of needy Negro children. Besides offering a home to orphaned children, the home provided training in industrial crafts, farming, truck gardening, mechanics, carpentry, and housekeeping, tasks for which the white leaders deemed the blacks best suited, and in which Booker T. Washington encouraged his people to gain skills.³³

Negro education continued to receive attention from leaders of the Baptist General Convention, although the records suggest that more was said than was done regarding the matter. Resolutions expressing concern and sympathy were more frequent than concrete actions to advance the

³²The Baptist Standard, 12 January 1911, pp. 20-21; 13 April 1911, p. 5.

³³Ibid., 12 January 1911, pp. 20-21; 25 January 1912, p. 13.

cause of Negro schools. Except for the high school and orphanage which R. C. Buckner helped to found, no other educational projects for Negroes appear to have had the sponsorship of the Baptist General Convention of Texas at that time. Indeed, the 1911 session of the convention expressed regrets for the necessity of declining a request from the Negro Baptist Missionary General Convention of Texas for aid in its educational work.³⁴

By the next year, however, the situation in regard to the possibility of extending aid to Negro Baptist educational efforts in the state apparently had improved. The Board of Directors of the Baptist General Convention appropriated five hundred dollars for the employment of a teacher of Bible institutes among the Negroes. The Bible institute operated for a period of a week or ten days, and was conducted by white pastors or denominational leaders for Negro pastors and lay leaders. These in-service training sessions were usually community-wide or associational in scope. Emphasis was placed on Bible survey, Baptist doctrine, church and Sunday School organization, and evangelism. The Baptist Standard carried the story of a successful institute conducted in Dallas in the spring of 1912. The state board of the Baptist General Convention and the

³⁴Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1911, p. 22.

local pastors, including George W. Truett, cooperated in the venture. At least six Negro churches participated, enrolling seventy-five persons. Evening revival services took place in each of the six Negro Baptist churches involved in the institute.³⁵

Reporting to the 1915 session of the Baptist General Convention, the Committee on Negro Population commented on the educational efforts among the Negro Baptists of the state. An estimated three hundred thousand Negro Baptists in Texas owned and operated, with Texas Baptist and Northern Baptist assistance, nine institutions of learning. These schools had an enrollment of fifteen hundred or more. The committee exhorted the messengers: "They are struggling to educate their youth and their preachers, and we should lend them every possible encouragement and help them whenever we find an opportunity."³⁶

As an educator and Christian statesman, Booker T. Washington had long epitomized the ideal Negro, so far as many white southerners were concerned. When he died in 1915, leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas joined in offering eulogies regarding his life and his

³⁵"Folks and Facts," The Baptist Standard, 30 May 1912, p. 17.

³⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1915, p. 126.

contributions to the betterment of race relations. The 1915 session of the convention adopted, on the motion of J. B. Gambrell, a resolution extolling the virtues of Washington as "our greatly honored brother," whose death was a loss to the nation. The Texas Baptist resolution eulogized the Alabama Negro as

. . . the highest product of the Negro race, a citizen worthy of the honor given him by all classes in all sections of his native land and around the world, wherever intelligence, civic worth, and Christian character are respected.³⁷

Gambrell saw in Washington's life a "shining example" for both the black and white races, and prayed that God would "raise up others like him to lead his race to a worthy destiny."³⁸

As the Wilson era began, George W. Truett was in the midst of his second decade as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, and he and his church were gaining that degree of influence among the Baptists of Texas which gave him an ear throughout the convention when he spoke on almost any subject. The Baptist Standard regularly ran stenographic resumes of the sermons he preached from his Dallas pulpit. In one of these sermons he spoke critically, almost harshly, of those who would dispose of their responsibility

³⁷Ibid., p. 21.

²⁸Ibid.

to others by sending them away, a tactic which the whites often employed in their relations with the Negroes. He observed:

That is the method proposed by some of our clever men, regarding the vexing race question, that ever and anon sends out its warning to the races of the South. Now and then, some man who imagines that his vision is far- and his mind astute, rises and says, "Send them away!" It is the same cry, in essence, and in spirit, as that when the disciples of Jesus, despairing over their relation to the needy thousands, proposed to hide their heads like ostriches, and leave the thousands to famish and die. It is not God's plan. The race that is stronger must care for the race that is weaker. To disregard this principle is to invite the most calamitous consequences. . . . The race question with all its complications and embarrassments will be settled only by the application of the teachings and spirit of Jesus Christ. . . .³⁹

A few months following America's entry into the First World War, E. C. Routh, associate editor of the Baptist Standard, commented on Truett's twentieth anniversary as pastor of Dallas' First Baptist Church: "Pastor George Truett has taught our . . . citizenry, our women and our children without distinction of creed, class, or color, the meaning of unselfish service."⁴⁰

By 1917, evidence suggests that cooperation was entering into the relations between white and black Baptists in Texas. The day had not yet arrived, however, when this

³⁹George W. Truett, "Dealing with the Multitude," The Baptist Standard, 11 February 1909, pp. 1, 5.

⁴⁰E. C. Routh, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 13 September 1917, p. 6.

spirit would replace the paternalism of the Reconstruction era, the Gilded Age, and the Progressive period. Neither had the assumption of superiority, which lay at the base of the concept of the white man's burden, faded away. Nonetheless, there appeared suggestions that a new era was dawning in race relations in Texas.

W. J. McGlothlin, a denominational worker in the Baptist General Convention of Texas, indicated that he saw changes developing in the South which he felt would eventually sound the death knell of "old prejudices, social divisions, and economic crystallizations." Without going into detail as to the reasons for his predictions, he believed that he saw "a new social order in the making"; however, part of the reason for his optimism may have been the advances which the Negroes appeared to be making due to war-time conditions which had led many of them to migrate to the centers of war production.⁴¹

In Texas, leaders of the Baptist General Convention appeared to give some substance to McGlothlin's views when they characterized their convention as being desirous of promoting unity and cooperation between the black and white

⁴¹W. J. McGlothlin, "Christianizing the South," The Baptist Standard, 14 June 1917, p. 5; Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 293.

Baptists of the state, but especially, they encouraged cooperation between the Negro conventions, which had had a history of strife, rivalry, and contention.⁴² While the white Baptists were not yet ready to cooperate with the blacks as equals, they nonetheless expressed an increased concern for their spiritual welfare and urged white Baptist pastors and white Baptist Young Peoples' Union workers to encourage youth work among the Negroes in their communities. The Committee on Colored Population, reporting to the 1912 convention, expressed its gratification at the progress the Negro Baptist youth were making under the tutelage of white Baptist leaders.⁴³

About the same time, the First Baptist Church of Waco, under the leadership of its pastor, F. M. McConnell, opened its doors to Negro Baptists of the area for a special service. McConnell preached to the assembled congregation. Of this service, a reporter for the Baptist Standard observed rather quaintly: "Blood is thicker than water and the blood of the cross is thickest of all."⁴⁴ During the same month, a similar service concluded a Bible institute in Dallas, when the First Baptist Church welcomed Negroes

⁴²Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1912, p. 123.

⁴³Ibid., p. 122.

⁴⁴The Baptist Standard, 16 May 1912, p. 9.

into its auditorium for a rally. As in Waco, the host pastor, in this case, George W. Truett, preached. This service, however, included a feature not mentioned in connection with the Waco rally: it was interracial in that it included both white and Negro pastors of the city.⁴⁵

There was no indication as to whether white laymen participated in the bi-racial service conducted in Dallas. This rally, as well as that which took place in Waco, appears to have been an isolated incident; both rallies were likely held in the First Baptist churches' buildings because no other Baptist churches in Dallas or Waco could accommodate the numbers of people involved. There appears to be no indication on the part of either race that such services should be regular and normal events. Most of the Baptist leaders agreed with the associate editor of the Baptist Standard, E. C. Routh, who allowed no connection whatever between evangelistic efforts among other races and the advocacy of social equality between the races. According to Routh's argument, Christians have an obligation to evangelize the Negroes, but no Christian is required to accept Negroes as equals.⁴⁶

⁴⁵"Folks and Facts," The Baptist Standard, 30 May 1912, p. 17.

⁴⁶E. C. Routh, "Give It a Chance," The Baptist Standard, 28 March 1912, p. 9.

Five years later, however, as editor of the Standard, Routh editorialized that Texas Baptists' actions in regard to Negroes were the acid test of the sincerity of their Christianity. Listing reasons for the support of home missions among minority groups, he wrote:

Reason Number 7: Because 9,000,000 Negroes at our doors are an immense challenge to our religion and will prove whether it is genuine enough to permeate the South with an earnest purpose to save people of other races. ⁴⁷

Unlike Southern Baptists and members of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Northern Baptists, who had organized a national convention in 1907, worked closely with the Negro Baptists of the South, including those of Texas. The American Baptist Home Mission Society, having maintained missionary evangelists and teachers in the South since Reconstruction days, had, in later years, concentrated its efforts in training teachers for Negro elementary and secondary schools and preachers for Negro Baptist churches in the region. The work of education, more than that of evangelism, encouraged the acceptance of Negroes into white social circles, and vice versa, while the winning of converts, whether by black or white preachers, left the new Christians in their racially separate churches, with their own leaders, since Negro Baptist churches were racially

⁴⁷Routh, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 12 April 1917, p. 13.

autonomous as well as congregationally independent. Educational contacts, however, brought more intimate associations between the white teacher from the North and the black scholar of the South, and such contacts resulted in an acceptance between the two races not found where these conditions were absent. By 1915, blacks were serving with whites on the boards of Negro colleges in the South.⁴⁸

If the records published by Texas Baptists during the Wilson era reflected the hint of a coming liberalization in their attitudes toward the Negroes in contrast with the trend set in Washington, such suggestion of change is even more evident in expressions of their feelings toward non-Baptist immigrants from Europe. Although committees continued to refer to their work as "reports on the Foreign Population," there were occasional indications that Baptists were coming to the conclusion that they should not think of non-Anglo-Saxon, non-evangelical Europeans in the state as "foreigners," but as "neighbors." In this manner, they were told, they would have a better opportunity to win the immigrants to the Baptist faith: "by loving them in the spirit of Jesus."⁴⁹

⁴⁸Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1915, p. 638.

⁴⁹Proceedings, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1911, p. 83.

This neighborly approach seems to have had satisfactory results for the Baptists. Routh noted in 1912 that there were more Europeans in Anglo Baptist congregations than in the language churches. To illustrate his point, Routh related an incident which demonstrated a practical application of the Baptists' doctrine of love and neighborliness. The ladies of a Baptist church in North Texas visited and ministered to a Syrian woman in an illness. When she recovered, she and her family united with that church.⁵⁰

Despite complaints charging them with neglect and inactivity, it appears that the Baptist churches and their leaders attempted to put into practice the ideals they expressed and the resolutions they adopted in their annual associational and state meetings. In keeping with their announced principle of ministering to the immigrants through workers who could communicate with them in their own languages, the convention supported European-speaking missionaries. The work of language missions, however, was a cooperative effort between the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. By 1912, the two agencies had established an Italian Baptist church in Galveston. Also, in that year, the Broadway Baptist Church of that city asked for the ordination of E. N. Luxando.

⁵⁰E. C. Routh, "Neighbors from Other Lands," p. 12.

Reared as a Roman Catholic in Italy, Luxando had been converted to "real Christianity" (the Baptist faith) "about 1905 or 1906."⁵¹

By 1912, German Baptists had set up the German Baptist Conference in cooperation with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. In that year, they reported five full-time missionaries and two who served part-time, in addition to a colporter (an itinerant literature distributor). These German Baptists opened several new Baptist missions among the German immigrants, besides reviving some which had languished due to a lack of workers. J. P. Brenner, of Kyle, Texas, reported a membership of 912 among the German Baptists. F. Siever, who had charge of the German Baptist missionary work in the state, complained of a lack of religious literature, including the Baptist Standard, among his people, although there seemed to be, he observed, plenty of secular books and papers.⁵²

Even though more non-Anglo-Saxon European Baptists (excluding Mexicans) were in Anglo-Baptist churches than were in their language churches, Baptist General Convention leaders continued to be concerned about Americanization of the immigrants. In 1912, the convention leaders :

⁵¹The Baptist Standard, 7 March 1912, pp. 25, 31.

⁵²Ibid., 5 September 1912, p. 27.

reported twelve thousand Italians, fifty thousand Bohemians, and one hundred twenty-five thousand Germans in the state. Routh remarked that these numbers gave Texas third place among the states for Bohemians within its boundaries. It had more Germans than any other southern state, and among the states of the South, only Louisiana had more Italians than did Texas. About three-fourths of Texas' citizens of "foreign" birth or ancestry lived in the southern part of the state.⁵³

To minister to the immigrants as they arrived from Europe, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board maintained three missionaries in the port of Galveston and assisted the Baptist General Convention of Texas in the support of 372 cooperative missionaries.⁵⁴ Besides their efforts to reach these new Americans with the Baptist message, the Baptist workers in Galveston and throughout the state aided in the assimilation of the immigrants into American society. Mary Hill Davis, president of the Texas Women's Missionary Union from 1906 to 1931 was one of those who were concerned about the assimilation of the new Texans into American life. As a step in this direction, she urged the 1913 session of the Baptist General Convention to give the immigrants

⁵³Routh, "Neighbors from Other Lands," pp. 4-5.

⁵⁴E. C. Routh, "The Southern Baptist Convention," The Baptist Standard, 23 May 1912, p. 5.

the Bible in their native languages.⁵⁵

In another article, Routh noted that most foreigners were attempting to achieve Americanization even before Mary Hill Davis expressed her desire in their behalf. In his view, the immigrants and their families were looking forward, rather than backward to Europe. Most of the youth, he noted, spoke English. The editor made specific reference to the Germans and Bohemians, maintaining that they were rapidly becoming assimilated into American society.⁵⁶

The outbreak of hostilities in Europe failed to dampen the interest of the constituents of the Baptist General Convention in the recent arrivals from the Continent. The Committee on Foreign Population reported in 1914:

Work has been carried on among the Italians, Germans, Swedes, and Bohemians. . . . The universal testimony of workers among foreigners is that they greatly appreciate the kind, fraternal treatment by the Americans. It is of utmost importance that the right spirit be maintained toward them in this State, that national prejudice shall be reduced to the minimum, and that their minds and hearts be kept open to every wholesome influence.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1913, p. 120.
John Adolph Held, European Missions in Texas: Some Missionary Possibilities Set Forth, Some Missionary Problems Described, and Some Work and Missionary Achievements Set Out; Special Attention is Called to the Missionary Challenge in Texas (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1937), p. 116.

⁵⁶Routh, "Neighbors from Other Lands," p. 4.

⁵⁷Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1914, p. 108.

The next year the Committee on Foreign Population, under the chairmanship of Wallace Bassett, pastor of the Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas, again urged messengers to the Baptist General Convention to work for the conversion of their non-Anglo-Saxon European neighbors:

So, for the sake of the people who are lost, for the sake of the Christ who gave us the commission, for the sake of the souls of the friends and relatives of the ones we can save who will be influenced for good; for the sake of ourselves, for the sake of our obligation to carry the gospel to all, which obligation we took when we bowed the knee at Calvary; for the sake of the cause of Christ, which will be enriched by the addition of these people, from whom have come great men in the past, we recommend the assuming of the attitude of Christians toward the foreigner in our midst, and an earnest effort to lead him to Christ.⁵⁸

Despite intimations of nativism from time to time, the Baptist General Convention, as a body, never formally espoused nativist views. In fact, the committee reporting to the 1915 convention voiced its disapproval of the nativist approach to the solution of the "foreigner problem":

To keep foreigners from coming to our country is as un-American and impractical as it is unchristian. That will never solve our present problem. We should not pray for smaller fields, but for greater ability and consecration to occupy larger fields. Nor can we look to any other help in doing this work, save evangelical religion.⁵⁹

In 1917, Millard Alford Jenkins, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Abilene, chaired the Committee on Foreign

⁵⁸Ibid., 1915, p. 42.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 41.

Population. This committee returned a report containing ideas similar to those of the Bassett committee of 1915. Noting that evangelical adherents had often fled before the tide of predominantly Roman Catholic immigrants, the panel urged Baptists to stand and "fight" with the gospel of love and thus win the immigrants to the evangelical faith.⁶⁰

Although the presence of large numbers of foreign-born persons aroused the concern of Baptists in Texas, this alarm arose from religious beliefs and social customs, not from economic nor even political considerations. The "foreignization" which they feared lay in the possibility that their children would intermarry with those of the immigrants and adopt their social customs, some of which the Baptists disapproved, as well as their religious beliefs (chiefly Lutheran or Catholic) which Baptists believed to be in error.

Now these must be Christianized and Americanized, or we shall see much of our life paganized and foreignized. To have them here without Christ is a decided disadvantage; but to have them here with Christ is a positive advantage over not having them here at all. Our own religious life will be much enriched and ennobled by having them if they can be saved. . . . The foreigner is saved by our religion as he is helped by our government, for which our religion is largely responsible.⁶¹

⁶⁰Ibid., 1917, p. 138.

⁶¹Ibid., 1915, pp. 41-42.

At no time, however, did the Baptists advocate persecution or expulsion of the non-evangelical believers. Rather, they interpreted the presence of these people as a providence of God, as opportunities for missionary service which God had placed at their doors.⁶²

The declaration of war between the United States and Germany in 1917 no doubt served to heighten the feeling of alarm among Texas Baptists, as among other Americans, in regard to the presence of foreigners in their midst. The Committee on Foreign Population for 1917 stated in more strident terms than in recent years the conviction that the Baptists of Texas faced the alternatives of evangelizing and Americanizing the alien settlers or being unduly influenced by their strange customs and erroneous religion. In terms reminiscent of the 1800's, the Jenkins committee declared:

We must Americanize and Christianize the foreigner, or he will foreignize and heathenize us. The foreigner is among us. He is here to stay, and his only hope is evangelical religion; every instinct, therefore, of patriotism, love of humanity, religious devotion and loyalty to Jesus Christ prompts us to noble and heroic action.⁶³

Adding to the committee's alarm was what it termed the "deterioration" in the quality of immigrants coming to

⁶²Ibid., p. 42.

⁶³Ibid., 1917, p. 138.

America. The panel insisted that the immigrants of the past, even as late as the 1890's, were "quite different both in culture and religion, from those who have come in recent years." The more recent settlers from southern and southwestern Europe were from the lowest strata of society and represented but "the most elemental stages of civilization who are foreign indeed to Christian America in habit, thought, mode of life, and moral standards," the committee claimed. The report charged that it had become a business with "these European states to unload their undesirables on us."⁶⁴

As "missionary Baptists" Texas Baptists believe that they are divinely commissioned to share the gospel as they understand it with the entire non-Christian world.⁶⁵ Believing thus, the Texas Baptists of the period of southern political resurgence in Washington further believed that God had brought the European immigrants to Texas in order that the Baptists might win them to Christ and to their faith. Nevertheless, they continued to attach a patriotic significance to their commitment to evangelism.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 137-138.

⁶⁵Almost all general Baptists describe themselves as "missionary Baptists," whether or not they include the term "missionary" in their official or corporate titles.

⁶⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1916, p. 169.

As seen by Texas Baptist historian Robert A. Baker, 1916 was a typical year so far as Baptist work with minority groups was concerned. Baker has shown that the number of Baptist-supported missionaries working among minority groups, despite their declarations of concern, was comparatively small. Out of a total of 339 missionaries working in the state, 309 were assigned to Anglo communities. Of the thirty persons assigned to non-Anglo-Saxons, five labored with Germans, one with Bohemians, two with Italians, and twenty-two with Mexicans. The following year showed small decreases in the numbers of missionaries working with these ethnic groups.⁶⁷

An unidentified Baptist writer from East Texas expressed both concern over the influx of foreigners into that area and a commitment to what later became known as the "White Anglo-Saxon Protestant" (WASP) view of minority groups, a view which might have impressed a member of a minority group more as an expression of Anglo-Saxon arrogance than of Christian concern. In an item in the Baptist Standard, he stated his views:

The present citizenship [of East Texas] is of the stalwart Anglo-Saxon type, with little mixture of the foreign element. But that day of seclusion will soon be past. Americanization of the foreigner is one of intense importance to every section of our

⁶⁷Baker, Blossoming Desert, o. 193; The Baptist Standard, 13 September 1917, p. 5.

great country. The one successful way for it to be handled is to begin the work as soon as the foreigner arrives. . . . Baptists have a great opportunity by being on the ground floor in the Americanizing and Christianizing of the foreigner as he sets foot on East Texas soil.⁶⁸

During the Wilson era, Texas Baptists, as in earlier periods, seemed to regard the Mexican-Americans as a sort of "third estate" in social and religious interests. In some respects, the Baptists regarded the Mexicans as separate from the Anglo-Saxons, Europeans, and Negroes, and yet, in other respects, related them to all three of the other ethnic and racial groupings. The Mexicans of this period, as before, were separated by language and basic racial stock from other population groups in the state; yet, they intermarried with all of them. Religiously, they were related to many of the new arrivals from Europe in that both were predominantly Roman Catholic.⁶⁹

Anglos tended to view Mexicans with less condescension than they did the blacks. Some Baptist churches welcomed Mexicans into their memberships, while few, if any, Negroes were so welcomed.⁷⁰ Despite wartime conditions, Baptist mission work among the Mexicans continued in 1916 and 1917. In the former year, Judge R. R. Owen and the Baptist Young People's Union of Corsicana began a Mexican mission in that

⁶⁸The Baptist Standard, 22 February 1917, pp. 23, 30.

⁶⁹Baker, Blossoming Desert, p. 21.

⁷⁰The Baptist Standard, 13 September 1917, p. 5.

city, which early in 1917 was organized into a church with fifteen charter members.⁷¹

A discouraging factor in carrying on evangelical mission work among Mexican-Americans was the migrant conditions of many of them. Missionary S. C. Bailey, of Laredo, wrote that he never spoke to the same congregation twice. Even though the pastor was committed in the name of Christ to these people and labored in love among them, he and the Mexican-American Baptists were discouraged by the fact that so many of their attendants came once, confessed faith in Christ, and were never seen again. Despite this discouragement, however, Bailey expressed the views of many Texas Baptists when he reiterated the responsibility of Baptists for sharing the gospel with those considered lost. C. D. Daniel, of El Paso, reported the same discouragement in regard to Baptist work among the Mexican-Americans in that city.⁷²

At the end of the decade, Anglo Baptists had begun to cooperate with the Mexican Baptists in educational efforts in the state. In El Paso, this work centered in an Anglo-Mexican Institute which the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board maintained. A Home Mission Board representative who

⁷¹The Baptist Standard, 22 February 1917, p. 5.

⁷²Routh, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 8 March 1917, p. 6.

visited the school in 1920 came away with only praise for the institute and its workers. The staff was racially or ethnically integrated, in a sense, as was commonly true in such ventures involving Anglos and Mexican-Americans. Probably in accord with the attitude of paternalism which, despite steps toward cooperation, continued to prevail during the period, the Home Mission Board had placed C. D. Daniel, an Anglo, in charge of the work; a "Brother Velez" was his assistant. Velez was described as an educated Mexican who spoke fluent English as well as Spanish.⁷³

By the end of the Wilson era, a number of leaders of the Baptist General Convention were speaking out in behalf of Baptist mission work among the Mexican-Americans. These included Mary T. (Mrs. J. B.) Gambrell, wife of the executive secretary of the Baptist Convention of Texas, F. M. McConnell, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco, and C. D. Daniel, superintendent of Mexican missions for the Baptist General Convention.⁷⁴

Victor Masters observed what he deemed to be the Mexicans' attitude toward the Baptists:

The Mexican seems to like the Baptists. Perhaps in part because we are just about as far from the Roman Catholics as anybody can go in Christianity, and

⁷³The Baptist Standard, 1 March 1917, pp. 26, 30.

⁷⁴Ibid., 4 March 1920, p. 16.

practically everyone of these Mexicans is at least nominally a Roman Catholic.⁷⁵

Also, in Masters' view, race relations in Texas, even considering the Longview riot of the previous year, had begun to improve: "Under wise leadership and the power of the Spirit of God, race antagonism began to wane beautifully and is still waning."⁷⁶

So far as records are concerned, the Baptist General Convention of Texas was the most active Baptist body in the area of race relations in the state during the Wilson era. The chief Anglo body other than the Baptist General Convention was the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas. During the period of prevailing southern influence in the national capital, as during the decade dominated by the concept of the white man's burden, the Association Baptists seem to have had little to say about minority groups; however, they maintained a mission among the Mexicans, under the direction of J. L. Killen, of Kirbyville.⁷⁷ During the same period, the Association seemed to have some success in witnessing to Jews. M. L. Schmeer, a Jew, had embraced Christianity, presumably under the influence of

⁷⁵Victor I. Masters, "Our El Paso Mexican Mission School," The Baptist Standard, 8 January 1920, p. 7.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Baptist Progress, 8 November 1917, p. 7.

preaching by an Association Baptist. In the Association's official organ, Baptist Progress, Schmeerer urged members of Association churches to support Christian missions among the Jewish people.⁷⁸

Association Baptists appear to have had no organized work among the Negroes of the state during the World War I period. Neither do they appear to have had any significant contacts with the Negro churches of Texas. In like manner, the alarm which characterized Baptist General Convention leaders concerning unevangelized Germans, Bohemians, Italians, and others, appears to have been absent among the leaders of the Baptist Missionary Association.

All in all, despite racial disturbances in the state in the latter part of the era of southern prominence, the lot of minority groups seem to have improved slightly, although less improvement is seen in the status of the Negroes than in that of others. In the most favored position were the northern Europeans: Germans, Bohemians, and Scandinavians. The fact that their physical characteristics were most similar to those of the dominant Anglo-Saxon group most likely accounts for their more rapid assimilation. The minority group status of the Negro remained essentially unchanged, due largely to his social visibility.

⁷⁸Ibid., 24 January 1918, p. 8.

Baptists' attitudes toward Mexicans during the teens were mixed and somewhat ambivalent. Those Mexicans who learned English appear to have been accepted into Anglo Baptist churches, as were the continental Europeans who learned English. Since the Mexicans, as a group, were property-less laborers, they were often exploited, and at times Baptists no doubt had a part in this treatment. While Anglo Baptists maintained their paternalistic views of minorities and insisted in their belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority, they seem to have moved slightly away from the attitudes which prevailed twenty years earlier toward those which hinted at a better day for minorities in Texas.

CHAPTER VII
THE PERIOD OF CONTROVERSY:
THE TWENTIES

The Republican Party, traditionally the party of the American business man, returned to power in 1921, displacing the Democrats, who had dominated Washington for eight years, when the South was "in the saddle" in regard to race relations as well as in other areas of interest.¹ During the 1920's, the Republicans placed three of their men in the White House, and each of them represented a stage in the development of the relation of the government to business.²

As the decade opened, business in America was enjoying a wave of prosperity based on the wartime economy

¹Tindall, Emergence of New South, p. 144; Low, "South in Saddle," p. 20.

²William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-32 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 89-90, 94-95, 251-252.

and the postwar boom, which continued into the twenties. The casual observer of the economy during the early 1920's might have assumed that the prosperity in business and industry would continue indefinitely, instead of the few precarious years that it endured.³

During the early twenties, the country was in the midst of a period of transition, and the South, especially, was feeling the stress of change. Wilbur Joseph Cash concluded that the southern region of the nation continued to adhere to "the savage ideal" which it had adopted during the Reconstruction era.⁴ George B. Tindall also observed that the postwar period in the South was one of change, a time when the South "surged into a strange new world of urban booms and farm distress . . . in which there lurked a thousand threats to the older orthodoxies."⁵ During the war the South had fallen victim to a war psychosis. Of this state of public mind, Howard W. Odum commented that "There was little freedom of feeling and little freedom of speech in matters relating to religion, race, industry or several other social and moral sanctions." Also, the lingering trace of the ideas of nativism and Anglo-Saxon

³Ibid., p. 9.

⁴Cash, Mind of South, pp. 134-135.

⁵Tindall, Emergence of New South, p. 184.

racism which had developed during the past half-century gained strength during the war and continued into the twenties.⁶

It was in 1920 that Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act, sponsored by Representative Albert Johnson, of Washington; the act underwent a slight revision in 1921. During its first year of operation, the law was credited with reducing immigration by about sixty-two percent. In 1924, Congress passed the National Origins Act, which Johnson had also introduced. In keeping with their purpose, these immigration laws reduced the numbers of foreigners coming to Texas as well as to other states.⁷

Tindall credited the immigration restriction acts to the psychosis which accompanied and followed the war. Gaining reinforcement from a militant Protestantism, these laws manifested a relevance to the status of predominantly Catholic minority groups in Texas as well as elsewhere.⁸ To bolster the resurgence of nativism, the Ku Klux Klan, after its revival in 1919, grew rapidly in

⁶ Howard W. Odum, An American Epoch: Southern Portraiture in the National Picture (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930), p. 321.

⁷ Tindall, Emergence of New South, pp. 184-185; Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 92, 1190 (note); Leuchtenburg, Perils of Prosperity, p. 127.

⁸ Tindall, Emergence of New South, pp. 184-185.

many parts of the land, becoming especially strong in the South and the Southwest and winning temporary dominance in such Texas cities as Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston. In 1922, the Klan was strong enough to determine elections throughout the state.⁹

About mid-way through the decade, however, the Klan, under attacks from the southern press, the object of intimations of immorality among its leaders, torn by internal dissension, weakened by public alarm at its excesses, and abandoned by politicians, began to decline in strength and membership. In the 1924 gubernatorial race in Texas, James Ferguson promoted the candidacy of his wife, who defeated the Klan-supported candidate, thus breaking the organization's hold upon the state.¹⁰

Throughout the period of Ku Klux Klan activity and control in the state, Texas Baptists appear to have been strangely silent. Official records of the various conventions and associations appear to ignore the existence of the Klan in the state; no resolutions appear in the actions of these bodies during the 1920's which relate to attitudes toward the Klan. One can but be amazed at this strange silence and speculate as to the reasons why it

⁹Ibid., p. 194.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 186-189, 191, 193, 194, 195.

existed. There is the possibility that the Baptist leaders and messengers in associations and conventions gave tacit approval to the principles, if not the excesses of the Klan, and hence hesitated to condemn it publicly.

Another possible reason for the Baptists' silence on the subject of the Klan is that they were troubled by the question, but that they felt that they lacked the wisdom to advance an answer. A more likely reason for their failure to speak out on the question may be that in keeping with their emphasis on individual salvation and the importance of personal religious experience, they apparently saw no vital religious significance in the Klan's existence and activities. Since the Klan, as they saw it, concentrated on social and political issues and attempted no interference with the exercise of their religion, they would have no quarrel with it.

Perhaps the chief reason for the "eloquent silence" of Baptists on this question may have been the knowledge that many Baptists were members of the Klan; such seems to be a reasonable assumption since the Baptists comprised the largest denomination in the state and the Klan determined the outcome of elections in Texas in 1922.¹¹ Although these considerations may serve to explain the silence of the Baptists regarding the Ku Klux Klan in the

¹¹Ibid., p. 194.

1920's, they can hardly justify such silence in the eyes of some of the new generation of Baptists in Texas.

The decline of the optimism which had characterized the decade immediately preceding World War I and the resurgence of Protestantism after the war resulted in discouragement for political liberalism and the "social gospel" creed among churchmen during the 1920's.¹² Kelly Miller, Negro writer, said of this era:

The World War has exacted an unparalleled toll of human life and material values; but, alas, the world impatiently awaits a clear indication of moral contribution. President Wilson's loudly declared doctrine of bigger and better definition of democracy is now repeated only with a sneer or a smile. The League of Nations designed for the composure of the world is frustrated by the age-old jealousies, greed, and ambition. . . . Race animosities have been aroused and stimulated. The weaker breeds of men have developed an assertive and defiant self-consciousness. Japan smarts keenly under the stigma of race inferiority. The darker breeds of men in all lands resent the assumption of the whiter ones of everlasting lordship and dominion. In our own land human beings are lynched, tortured, and burned alive at the exactions of race prejudice. The land of liberty is in danger of becoming the land of lynchers. The Ku Klux Klan proclaims the revival of an invisible empire based upon the principles of darkness and evil . . .¹³

The twenties were troubled times for religious interests as well as for matters political and social. Unlike the North where many were not of an evangelical persuasion,

¹²Carter, Scottsboro: Tragedy of South, pp. 17, 66.

¹³Kelly Miller, The Everlasting Stain (Washington, D. C.: The Associated Publishers, 1924), pp. 271-272.

and where many Protestants accepted the "social gospel" and Modernism, the South, for the most part, adhered to an individualistic gospel and doctrinal orthodoxy. Unbelief and rationalism, however, crept into the South in spite of the orthodoxy of the masses. Baptist churches and schools remained relatively free from these innovations, but their colleges were unable to escape charges of fostering the teaching of evolution and encouraging infidelity. The famous Scopes trial in Tennessee attracted the attention of Texas Baptists as well as that of others throughout the South. In Texas, John Franklyn (J. Frank) Norris, who became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth in 1909, and whom Tindall rates as a lesser light among the Fundamentalists, appointed himself purifier of Baptist colleges in the state. In this assumed role, he brought the leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas some anxious and embarrassing moments and succeeded in securing the dismissal of a number of university professors.¹⁴

While Texas Baptist leaders supported the Tennessee law

¹⁴Tindall, Emergence of New South, pp. 199-202; A scholarly study of this era in Texas Baptist history is to be found in Patsy Ruth Ledbetter, "Defense of the Faith: Fundamentalist Controversy in Texas, 1920-1929," M. A. thesis, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1970, pp. 40-67.

forbidding the teaching of the theory of evolution in public schools and backed the candidacy of William Jennings Bryan for the presidency earlier in the century, they, in a similar manner defended their professors against Norris' charges that they taught evolution in Baptist colleges. Their records, however, contain no certain evidence that the Modernist-Fundamentalist, nor the creation versus evolution issues, reached any significant proportions, other than the charges that J. Frank Norris brought against the Baylor University professors.¹⁵

Neither is there any definite evidence that these issues significantly affected Texas Baptists' attitudes toward persons of non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. As in earlier periods, they continued to regard all men of all races and nations as creatures of God; they also held that the Anglo-Saxon race possessed a superiority over other ethnic and racial groups, an attitude which on a national scale no doubt led William E. Leuchtenburg to refer to that period as a time of persecution of minorities.¹⁶ So far as the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy was concerned, leaders of the Baptist General Convention rejected both extremes as unacceptable positions. Frank S. Groner,

¹⁵Ledbetter, "Defense of the Faith," pp. 43-44.

¹⁶Leuchtenburg, Perils of Prosperity, p. 10; Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 454, 586.

executive secretary of the Convention, wrote that both Modernism and Fundamentalism were alien to Baptist faith and practice.¹⁷

The fact that Texas Baptists' attitudes toward the theory of evolution had no determining effect upon their racial attitudes did not imply that they lacked concern for the race problem. A report to the 1930 convention indicated the seriousness with which the Baptist General Convention spokesmen viewed the matter of race relations:

One of the most disturbing issues that now faces the world is what is known as the race question. Race consciousness has developed at a rapid rate since the world war [sic]. The right of the white race to the place of leadership which it has held for centuries is now being questioned. Unless sane leadership is found, wise guidance given, and Christian principles applied in the solution of this pressing and perplexing question, dire consequences may result. Christian people and organized religious bodies cannot be true to Him whom they profess to follow, who created us to be brothers, if they neglect to give earnest and intelligent study to this question, and seek prayerfully, and open-mindedly a just solution of this pressing problem.¹⁸

In this statement, the convention leadership agreed with an earlier one on the same subject by Kelly Miller: "Race prejudice is the one dominant obstacle in the world

¹⁷Frank S. Groner, "Fundamental Modernism Equals Modernized Fundamentalism," The Baptist Standard, 2 July 1925, p. 11; idem., "False Sponsors of Orthodoxy," The Baptist Standard, 16 July 1925, p. 11.

¹⁸The Baptist Standard, 9 July 1925, p. 11; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1930, p. 138.

today which stands squarely athwart the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven which Jesus sought to set up on earth."¹⁹ Miller further charged that the church as a whole had the wrong approach to the race problem. He insisted that Christianity demands that one ethical system apply to all persons, regardless of one's race or color. Reflecting upon the efforts of some Christians to justify a racial caste system, he contended that they were laboring toward an impossible goal, one which was unjustifiable by Christian teaching and unacceptable to the black race:

The Christian church today is vainly deluding itself with a frantic effort to reconcile Christian duty with racial caste. But the chasm between the races cannot be bridged by a structure resting upon such an insecure foundation.²⁰

Thomas Bufford Maston, professor of Christian Ethics in the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, writing during that decade, observed America's lack of fairness in dealing with the race problem. "America has not showed that she possesses much of a technique for handling colored or partly colored races. They must be subordinated," he observed, "or live in isolated groups."²¹

¹⁹Miller, Everlasting Stain, p. 272.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Thomas Bufford Maston, "Mexican Immigration (A Study in Attitudes)," Seminar paper presented in Graduate School, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 1929, p. 32.

George W. Truett, speaking during the same period on the visit of the New Testament deacon, Philip, to Samaria, told his audience that race and color were unknown in the apostolic days of the church and implied that such conditions should not exist in the church today:

There in Samaria this deacon was preaching the Word. No line was drawn about races or classes or country. In the beginning the early church thought that salvation was for the few. It took a miracle to open their eyes to the fact that salvation was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. . . . Christ wants us to preach Him to all men; men of all colors and of all races and of all conditions of life. . . .²²

In another sermon, Truett emphasized the responsibilities of the Christian to all men:

"Am I my brother's keeper?" It is the question of the slacker and the defaulter. If I can help him in Nashville, or in Dallas, or in South America, or in China, in Africa, or anywhere else in all the world, then I am my brother's keeper.²³

Texas Baptists who served as civil and educational leaders during the 1920's apparently accepted the status quo in regard to race relations. Two men, Samuel Palmer Brooks and Pat Morris Neff, stand out during the period; both were associated with Baylor University, where each served as president of the institution. Statements of

²²George W. Truett, The Salt of the Earth, ed. Powhatan W. James (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Company, 1949), pp. 134-135.

²³George W. Truett, Follow Thou Me (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 137.

these men bear little relevance to the race problem. Writing of Brooks, Joseph Martin Dawson, long-time pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco, offered an explanation of the educator's enthusiasm for learning and made an indirect and rather weak reference to the Baylor president's racial attitudes: "It was . . . his philosophy as to the infinite worth of every human life without regard to race or creed that fired Dr. Brooks with such zeal for Christian education." During his terminal illness, Brooks sent a message to the university's graduating class declaring his love for all men "regardless of station or creed, or race or religion."²⁴

Pat M. Neff, a graduate of Baylor University, was active in Texas politics for many years. He was a member of the state House of Representatives from 1900 until 1902, during which time he advocated requiring the presentation of a poll tax receipt as a prerequisite for voting in Texas. Neff was governor of Texas from 1921 until 1925, and while chief executive of the state, he led in the appropriation of \$5,500,000 for rural schools.²⁵ In neither of these

²⁴Joseph Martin Dawson, "Samuel Palmer Brooks, President of Baylor," in Ten Men from Baylor, ed. John M. Price (Kansas City, Kansas: Central Seminary Press, 1945), p. 32.

²⁵Joseph Martin Dawson, "Pat Morris Neff," in Ten Men from Baylor, pp. 134, 136.

instances did Neff manifest a vital interest in minority groups in the state, either as a statesman or as a churchman. Actually, the requirement of the poll tax receipt which Neff advocated was one of the methods which southern politicians used to prevent Negroes and poor whites from voting. The school appropriation was used to support the dual school system in which Negro schools were always inferior.

During the troubled decade of the twenties, Texas Baptists apparently found racial matters but little more important than the controversy between the Modernists and the Fundamentalists. William Bell Riley, a leading Fundamentalist from Minneapolis, Minnesota, made several visits to Texas and helped to keep the theological debate alive during the period. Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis and president of the Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School, Riley's preaching included a three-pronged attack on theological, political, and educational evils: Modernism, Communism, and evolution. Apart from his ideas on Modernism and Communism, which found a wide acceptance among Texas Baptists, the Minnesotan's preaching had an evangelistic fervor and emphasis which endeared him to the Baptists of the state.²⁶

²⁶Marie Acomb Riley, The Dynamic of a Dream: The Life Story of Dr. William B. Riley (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1938), pp. 121, 188, 189.

The relation between Fundamentalism and racial attitudes appears to be somewhat unsettled among writers who have dealt with the subject of Fundamentalism. Norman F. Furniss, in his work, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931, seemed to pass over the relationship between the religious view and racial attitudes per se; nonetheless, he listed the Ku Klux Klan, which was definitely anti-minority in its attitude, as a "fundamentalist organization."²⁷

In like manner, the various writers in Willard B. Gatewood's Controversy in the Twenties appear to ignore the subject of the relationship between an adherence to Fundamentalism and racial attitudes, although Gatewood, in his "Introduction," suggested that the World's Christian Fundamentals Association followed the examples of exclusivist organizations of the period in regard to minorities; he seemed to view the Fundamentalist association as no more nor no less racist than the civic and fraternal organizations with which he identified it.²⁸

Finding more definite connection between Fundamentalism and racial attitudes was Gunnar Myrdal in his American

²⁷Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 63.

²⁸Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), p. 18.

Dilemma. Here the Swedish sociologist contended that the fundamentalist and hyper-emotional religious views, which many in the South held, served to create a mental attitude which facilitated popular approval of lynching. Myrdal further charged that few, if any, preachers or local religious leaders, most of whom he described as Fundamentalists, took stands against lynching.²⁹

Although the theological debates of the decade detracted somewhat from Baptists' attention to the race question in comparison to pre-occupation with it in earlier times, the diversion was not complete. The Baptist General Convention's Home Missions report to the 1923 session indicated that the four-fold interest of the body in Negroes, foreigners, Mexicans, and Indians continued.³⁰

By the early twenties, George W. Truett was recognized as an outstanding leader of Baptists in Texas, the nation, and throughout the world. His custom does not appear to have been that of devoting sermons to the subject of minorities; to him, as to other leaders of the Baptist denomination in Texas, the subject of race seems to have been relatively unimportant as a sermon topic. Indeed, like other leaders among the Baptists, Truett appears to have

²⁹Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 563.

³⁰Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1923, p. 150.

accepted the status quo in race relations. While professing and demonstrating the kindest personal feelings toward individuals of other races, he and his contemporaries in positions of Baptist leadership made little discernible effort to improve the lot of the minority races in American society. Nonetheless, while Truett devoted no sermons specifically to the subject of racial minorities, he frequently referred to them while addressing his congregation on other subjects. In his "The Salt of the Earth" sermon, the pastor of Dallas' First Baptist Church commended deacons and others of his church who were willing to teach Negroes the Scriptures:

Some from this church are going out and holding classes in Negro churches for their Sunday School teachers. That is good news! That is glorious news! I fancy a cavalcade of angels hovered around them and hurried back to tell the hosts of heaven: "The kingdom is coming because the deacons in that missionary church are out among their colored brothers and sisters trying to help them." It is God's way; God's plan.³¹

The 1920's saw Northern Baptists giving a great deal of attention to their work in Texas. In May, 1922, Constance Jackson, a feature editor for Missions magazine, a Northern Baptist periodical, noted the wealth which American Negroes possessed: homes, insurance companies, business establishments, farms, and churches. She found

³¹Truett, Salt of Earth, p. 134.

these accomplishments of the Negroes "almost astounding," adding further that she believed that these material possessions showed the possibilities of the black race in America.³² The editor of Missions, Howard B. Grose, emphasized the importance of personal efforts in solving race problems, noting that while resolutions and pronouncements are needed, these must be implemented by individuals in local communities if they are to be effective.³³

George E. Haynes, a Northern Baptist denominational worker, wrote in 1922 of two changes in the racial situation in the South. He felt that he saw a change in the minds of both blacks and whites toward racial matters, and he noted the migration of Negroes to urban areas. These changes, Haynes thought, resulted in a new race consciousness on the parts of the Negroes:

. . . race consciousness is expressing itself in two ways: First, a new sense of their own worth and their own dignity as a people. . . they are coming to have a pride and satisfaction in belonging to the Negro race. . . . Second, there is a change in attitude toward white people. I shall try to speak . . . of what . . . is going on in the minds of Negroes of all grades of intelligence in all parts of the country. They are coming more and more to ask for more and to feel that they are not going to take the word or the appearance of things regarding the attitude of white

³²Constance Jackson, "Tidings," Missions, 13 (1922): 301.

³³Howard B. Grose, "The Personal Factor in the Race Problem," Missions, 13 (1922): 340.

people toward them. In other words, there is more of a tendency to be suspicious of white people and demand proof that individuals among them are different from the ordinary individuals with whom Negroes come in contact from time to time.³⁴

Another reporter, George R. Hovey, secretary of education for the American Baptist Home Mission Society, gave much credit to the work of the society and the schools that it had established in the South. He estimated that these northern-founded and northern-supported colleges had graduated about ten thousand Negro Christian teachers, three hundred professors for Negro colleges, about five thousand well-trained Negro preachers, and about forty black missionaries. Among the schools which Hovey described was Bishop College, then in Marshall, Texas. With the Reverend C. H. Maxson as president, the Marshall college had a total enrollment of 475 students, ninety of whom were in the college division, and forty of whom were ministerial candidates.³⁵

The educational secretary continued, stating that the aims of the Negro schools were to give their students quality education and mentioning some of the problems they faced in attaining that goal:

³⁴George E. Haynes, "The Negro Challenge to the White Churches," Missions, 13 (1922): 342-343.

³⁵George R. Hovey, "Our Home Mission Schools for Negroes," Missions, 13 (1922): 354, 355.

. . . home mission schools aim to give the colored students an education equal to that given to white students. Many colored schools in the South do not do this. But we feel that Negroes have as difficult problems in medicine, in education, in preaching, in race leadership as white men have.³⁶

In Hovey's plea for quality education for Negro students, he contended that their abilities, given proper opportunities to develop were equal to those of white students. He declared:

Many of these students have the ability and the ambition to profit by the highest training. They ought to have the same chance we would want for our own children to make the most of the abilities God has given them. This is perhaps the most unquestionable right of any human being.³⁷

Two years later, in 1924, Hovey urged Northern Baptists to extend due attention to the leadership of Negro Baptist churches, citing two reasons for his concern. In the first place, he was alarmed at the inroads of non-Christian influences among them which used white discrimination against them as excuses for fomenting ill-will and distrust among the blacks. One organization which attempted to exploit the unfavorable plight of the Negroes was the Communist Party; but it failed, in part, because of the blacks' overwhelming allegiance to respectable party politics, a status which the Marxist organization lacked.³⁸

³⁶Ibid., p. 354.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸George R. Hovey, "Present Situation in Negro Education," Missions 15 (1924): 302. Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 508-510.

A second reason for Hovey's concern was the unquestioning susceptibility of ignorant churchmen and churches to fantastic teachings.³⁹

One purpose of the Northern Baptist promotion of education in the South was their concern over lynchings in the region, in which the victims were almost always Negroes. Evidently their campaign had some success, since the number of lynchings reported for 1924 was the lowest in a generation.⁴⁰

General Baptists in Texas, if they demonstrated less preoccupation with the Negro problem during the 1920's than previously, and less than the Northern Baptists exhibited during the same decade, nonetheless, continued their interest in the foreigners in the state. Although the laws restricting immigration had greatly reduced the number of new settlers, an estimate placed the total of foreign-born persons, or those with foreign parentage, at about five million in the United States. The Baptist leaders in Texas, as at other times, during that decade expressed alarm because of the Roman Catholicism of many of the non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans in Texas, deeming this religious establishment a threat to the Baptist faith. Although the Baptists

³⁹Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1925, p. 226.

⁴⁰Ibid., 1929, p. 305.

had a traditional apprehension concerning the nature of Catholicism, this alarm may well have been intensified by the anti-Catholic activities of the reactivated Ku Klux Klan during the decade of the twenties.⁴¹

Baptist leaders of the twenties also saw evangelism among the foreigners not only as a religious duty, but also as a social, political, and patriotic imperative as well. In this respect, they shared the fears of earlier generations of Baptists in Texas that if they failed to convert the newcomers to their faith, these strangers would "foreignize" and "Romanize" their young. In their fears that the foreigners might "contaminate" their young people, the Baptists probably betrayed a lack of confidence, and perhaps an inherent weakness in their indoctrination of their members.⁴² In addition, the Baptists knew all too well the tenacity with which the Lutherans and Roman Catholics held to their churches, even though such attachment might be in name only.⁴³

The Baptists, on the other hand, were at a disadvantage in relation to membership rolls and attendance as well as loyalty to their faith in that they have always

⁴¹Leuchtenburg, Perils of Prosperity, p. 10.

⁴²For an example, see Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1925, p. 146.

⁴³Masters, "El Paso Mexican School," p. 7.

taught as a part of the Baptist doctrine that salvation is a personal and spiritual matter, and not dependent upon membership in any church, but dependent entirely upon one's relation to Jesus Christ. The attitude of the Baptists toward the church, in combination with the Roman Catholic practice of requiring a non-Catholic partner in a marriage contract to sign a statement agreeing to rear their children as Catholics, tended to give substance to Baptists' fears of "Romanization."

When the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas reported to the convention in 1926, it was forced to reveal a drastic cut in the State Missions budget and a resulting reduction in the convention's missionary staff by about one hundred. This reduction in personnel no doubt reflected economic conditions in the nation and in the state, but it inevitably meant fewer Baptist workers among the immigrants, whom the board estimated to number about eight hundred thousand. Declaring their opinion that the cut in the State Missions program had been an error, the board urged that the reductions be restored the following year.⁴⁴

As if to add emphasis to the board's 1926 views and recommendations, the executive secretary, Frank S. Groner,

⁴⁴Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1926,
p. 65.

informed the 1927 convention that in many South Texas towns, foreign elements outnumbered Anglo-Saxons. Again, the messengers heard the urgent plea for evangelization of the non-Anglo-Saxon, non-Baptist residents of the state, lest their Anglo-Saxon descendants become converts to "the European religious system."⁴⁵

At a seemingly late date, the Baptist General Convention of Texas organized a department of European missions to minister to persons of European descent in the state. John Adolph Held, who became head of the European Missions Department, estimated the number of non-English-speaking residents of Texas in 1930 to stand at about seven hundred thousand. Besides the one million Mexican-Americans in the state, many of whom spoke English, were some two hundred thousand Germans, fifty thousand Jews, and sprinklings of Chinese, Japanese, Swedes, Russians, Bohemians, and others. Two years earlier, in 1928, the Baptist Standard had reported the presence of a Russian Baptist church in Fort Worth; it had sent six messengers to the Tarrant Baptist Association, which met that year in the North Fort Worth Baptist Church.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid., 1927, p. 104.

⁴⁶Held, European Missions in Texas, p. 122; The Baptist Standard, 6 March 1930, p. 3; Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1928, pp. 13-14.

Leaders of the Baptist General Convention indicated an increasing interest in the Mexican population of the state, also. This upsurge of interest had two probable causes: the decrease in arrivals from continental Europe due to World War I, and the restrictive immigration laws in the postwar period, which lessened the need for Baptist preoccupation with the European ethnic minorities. In addition, there was the steady increase of Mexicans coming into the state. The Report on Home Missions for the 1927 session of the Baptist General Convention informed the messengers:

In Texas . . . the Mexican population is fast on the increase. Reinforcements will be needed to meet this situation within the next few years. We already have a large responsibility to discharge in caring for . . . their spiritual needs. . . .⁴⁷

An example of the results of the Baptist General Convention's work among the Mexican-Americans in Texas appeared in the report of C. D. Daniel in 1927. B. W. Vining, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Corsicana, well out of the area of the concentration of Mexican residents, led in the organization of a Mexican Baptist church in that city. The Latin congregation called a Mexican Baptist, W. A. Maye, as its pastor. Maye also served as an example of the Baptist General Convention's educational policy

⁴⁷Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1927,
p. 164.

in regard to Mexicans and Europeans during the 1920's. He had graduated from the Baptist Academy at San Marcos and was a student at Baylor University when called to the Corsicana church. Upon graduation from the university, he expected to continue his studies at Baylor Medical College in Dallas.⁴⁸

It was during the 1920's that a young man destined to become the foremost Southern Baptist spokesman and authority on race relations in the South began to express his ideas. Thomas Bufford Maston had been an instructor in the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth for some seven years when, in 1929, he enrolled in the graduate school of the University of Chicago.⁴⁹ While a student in Chicago, Maston wrote a seminar paper on Mexican immigration into the United States. In that paper, he proposed that the Mexican, like the Negro, was the object of race discrimination and prejudice and that these disadvantages severely limited the Mexican's chances of successful assimilation into American society. Part of the reason, according to Maston, for the bleak prospect of assimilation for the Mexican was that most of the white (Anglo) inhabitants of the Southwest, particularly, in

⁴⁸The Baptist Standard, 26 April 1927, p. 20.

⁴⁹Bulletin of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Student Handbook, 60 (October, 1967): 34.

Texas, came from the Old South, and had, for generations, been taught prejudice toward the Negro. It was, therefore, a simple matter, reasoned Maston, for the Anglo-American to extend his prejudice against the black to the brown-hued Mexican; thus, in Texas, the Mexican-American suffered the handicaps which the whites had traditionally imposed upon those of another color.⁵⁰

Maston rose to the defense of the Mexican against those who sought to charge him with shiftlessness; he challenged the claims of those who asserted that "the Mexican is inferior in his capacity for Nordic civilization, that he is indifferent to progress, lacks thrift and ambition and . . . is not willing to pay the price of success."⁵¹ Maston further noted that there were differences in attitudes regarding Mexicans and Negroes. In regard to the former, the most liberal attitudes prevailed where the Mexicans were most numerous. The most liberal attitudes toward the Negroes existed where they were fewest, he indicated.⁵² According to Maston's observation, the strongest prejudice against both the Mexican and the Negro came from the same area of the state; the same persons practiced discrimination in both cases. He noted that support

⁵⁰Maston, "Mexican Immigration," p. 32.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 34.

⁵²Ibid., p. 25.

for restrictive legal measures in regard to the Mexicans came from East Texas, where there were many Negroes and few Mexicans.⁵³

The reports of the Baptist General Convention in Texas during the twenties indicate a continuing interest in minorities, but these records frequently have an uncertain tone, due perhaps to the fact that different committees had differing interests and emphases, as well as to the probable effects of the wide spread influence of the Ku Klux Klan during that era. In its 1920 report, the Austin Baptist Association revealed the existence of two Mexican Baptist churches and one Mexican school in the area served by the Association. In 1927, a similar committee reported some one million persons in the Austin area, about evenly distributed among Anglos, Mexicans, Germans, Swedes, and Negroes, and small clusters of other ethnic groups. Only one church served the Mexican-American Baptists of the area in 1927.⁵⁴

The decline in the number of Mexican Baptist churches in the Austin Association is unexplained, but the reason may have been a merger of the two churches existing in

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1920, p. 19; 1927, p. 28.

1920; such a conclusion, however, is uncertain on the basis of the records. The committee reporting to the 1930 Baptist General Convention advised that there were five hundred thousand unevangelized (non-evangelical believers or those claiming no religion) inhabitants in Texas.⁵⁵

During the troubled decade, various Texas Baptists demonstrated concern for other minority groups. Robert Cooke Buckner, in addition to his interest in Negro education and the care of Negro orphans, manifested a lively interest in American Indians. Halfway through the decade, he provided the total support for a missionary to the Choctaws for a period of two years. Later, he contributed to the support of missionaries to the Creeks and the "Wild Tribes." In the same year, 1925, he persuaded the Baptist General Convention to adopt Indian Missions as a department of the organization.⁵⁶

Also, in 1925, churches of the Convention demonstrated a concern for Chinese residents of the state. Encouraged by the state organization, the Chinese Christians of San Antonio had formed a Baptist church in 1923. By 1925, the church had grown to thirty members and ministered to about five hundred constituents. This, the Baptist Standard

⁵⁵Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1930, p. 88.

⁵⁶The Baptist Standard, 18 January 1925, p. 8.

reported, was the only Chinese Baptist Church in the United States. At that time, the same source reported, Chinese Baptist preachers in America numbered less than ten.⁵⁷

During the decade of the twenties, Texas Baptists' attention was more occupied with theological matters than with racial problems. While they did not totally ignore the race question, as their records indicate definite concern with minorities, their day-to-day interest was centered upon the Modernist-Fundamentalist debates which caused the period to be labeled an era of controversy. The vast majority of Baptists in the state, as did J. Frank Norris, rejected the views of the evolutionists as contradictory to the Holy Scriptures.

Race relations in Texas remained much the same as in previous years. While Baptists, as well as other Texans, were disposed to treat kindly the Negroes who remained "in their places" and were anxious to share the gospel with them, they were as yet unwilling to regard them as social equals.

Older leaders, including B. H. Carroll, had passed from the scene and new leaders who mingled new ideas with the old were making their ways to positions of prominence. Most outstanding among these new leaders were George W.

⁵⁷Ibid., 12 March 1925, p. 9.

Truett and Lee R. Scarborough. These men, however, promoted little change in the racial patterns in Texas. As seen through the eyes of Texas Baptists, minorities were either threats to the Baptist faith and the American way of life, or were prospects for membership in Baptist churches. Some Texas Baptists saw some members of minorities as both challenges and prospects.

As in earlier periods, the Baptist General Convention provided the most nearly complete records on the subject of race relations. Other Baptist bodies, chief among which was the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, apparently saw no reason to challenge the status quo, nor to talk of their responsibilities or concern for members of minority groups in the state.

CHAPTER VIII

"DEPRESSION AND HOPE"

The decade of the twenties, beginning with a bustle of business prosperity and a presidential plea for a "return to normalcy," soon emerged as a time of trouble in economics, scandal in politics, and controversy in religion. In Texas, the turmoil in religion centered on the controversial charges of J. Frank Norris that Baptist colleges in the state, especially Baylor University, were "soft on evolution."¹ The decade of the thirties, on the other hand, was concerned with economic depression to such an extent that economic historian Broadus Mitchell has described it as a period "crowded with emotion and event." It was a period, Mitchell observed, which " . . . registered the crash from 1929 superconfidence and the descent into the depression--at first dismaying, then disheartening, then desperate. Came hope in a New Deal, with new men

¹Tindall, Emergence of New South, pp. 143-144.

and new measures."² The economic difficulties which followed the 1929 crash proved to have implications for race relations and the fortunes of minorities in Texas and throughout the country, as members of these groups complained that they were denied a fair share of relief supplies and employment opportunities.³

The period also had its racial tensions as well as political scandals and economic difficulties; indeed, Myrdal suggests a strong connection between the depression and racial tensions, with the result that there was a rather inauspicious atmosphere for any hope of relaxing racial tensions in the nation. Lynchings and mob activity increased throughout the nation, especially in the South, to such a degree that they led F.M. McConnell, editor of the Baptist Standard, to admonish:

The increase of mob violence is not a good indication and is to be deplored. It is a problem that every good citizen, regardless of race or color should try to solve. The Baptist Standard contends that every act which magnifies the law no matter by whom, ought to be commended by good men and women everywhere and mobs ought to be punished for their murders.⁴

²Broadus Mitchell, Depression Decade: From New Era Through New Deal, 1929-1941, Vol. IX of The Economic History of the United States, 10 vols., ed. Henry David (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1947), p. xvii.

³Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 197, 289, 463.

⁴F. M. McConnell, "Increase of Mobs," (editorial), The Baptist Standard, 15 January 1931, p. 4.

Despite McConnell's complaint, the 1930's were years of continued racial separation within southern churches, made more obvious by the fact that various denominations, divided since the period of the Civil War, were becoming national in scope. Members of denominations which remained sectional in nature traveled with increasing frequency to other parts of America, taking the images of their churches with them. For example, in 1932, a Southern Baptist leader attending a banquet in Rochester, New York, declined to sit at a table where a Negro presided as chairman. Paul A. Carter observes that during that decade the Methodist Church in the South became more "lily-white" than it had been before the War between the States, while the Methodist Church in the North was moving slowly, although steadily, toward racial integration.⁵

Early in the decade of the thirties, Texas Baptists began to pay more attention to racial and ethnic problems than they had during the previous ten years. In the Baptist Standard and in the recorded proceedings of their annual meetings, they began anew to discuss this subject. With less than half of the residents of Texas indicating affiliation with any religious organization, Baptists of

⁵Paul A. Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel: Social and Political Liberalism in American Protestant Churches (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), pp. 148, 191, 197.

the state had plenty of work before them in reaching the unchurched, many of whom were members of Texas minority groups. Because of their strength, public favor, message, and mission, Baptists felt that they had a great and unique responsibility to the unchurched people of the area.⁶

Four years later, in 1936, leaders again reminded their constituency of their mission to the minorities in Texas. John Adolph Held, spokesman for the Committee on Foreign Population, noted that the white (including non-Anglo-Saxons) population of the state totaled about "about 73.5 percent." Mexicans, not included as white, constituted 11.7 percent, and the Negroes made up 14.7 percent of the state's population. Held reminded his hearers of the responsibility of the convention churches and members for the evangelism of the lost.⁷

At the end of the decade, the white population of Texas numbered 4,177,049. Members of churches affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas totaled 730,769. Taking into account their strength in numbers in the state as well as their proportionate strength when compared with other denominations of Texas, the convention leaders felt

⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1932, p. 86.

⁷Ibid, 1932, p. 86; 1936, p. 96.

a peculiar responsibility for about 1,250,000 persons.⁸

A young man rising to prominence in the Baptist General Convention during the 1930's was William Richardson (W. R.) White. His career included being pastor of several prominent churches and the president of Hardin-Simmons University and Baylor University. In 1931, as executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, White delivered a radio address in which he expressed his interest in the race question and its solution. Like many others of that time, and since, he saw the race issue as a religious problem, and, also like others, he believed that its solution would have a spiritual basis. "Love enough would bring peace among all races, classes, and nations. Love would produce a great brotherhood without the root of bitterness."⁹

George W. Truett, the most prominent Baptist in the state, agreed that Baptists had a responsibility for the unchurched, especially for those of other races and nations. He did not, however, believe that it was the church's primary duty to agitate for social reform:

We are not primarily to be social agitators or reformers. . . . We have much preaching of ethics and social service in these times. This is well only as it is the corollary and application of the crucified and

⁸Ibid., 1939, p. 117; 1940, p. 129.

⁹William Richardson White, "Radio Address," The Baptist Standard, 15 January 1931, p. 1.

risen Christ. Doctrine without duty is indeed a tree without fruits. But it is also true that a tree without doctrine is a tree without roots.¹⁰

Lee Rutland Scarborough, by 1930, was one of the "elder statesmen" of the Baptist denomination in Texas. Having graduated from Baylor University in 1892, he had served as pastor of various churches in Texas before assuming the position of professor of evangelism in the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1908. He succeeded to the seminary's presidency upon the death of its founder, Benajah Harvey Carroll, in 1914.¹¹ Growing up in West Texas where Negroes were few, Scarborough probably held more liberal views on the race question than most of his peers in the eastern part of the state where most Texas Negroes lived.¹²

Scarborough's personal views, however, must remain a matter of conjecture, since, like most Baptist leaders of his day, he appears to have devoted no sermons nor writings to the race issue. On the other hand, he made frequent indirect references to the subject in his preaching. Writing of the debts of the Christian, Scarborough contended that an obligation rests upon all saved men everywhere. This

¹⁰Truett, Follow Thou Me, p. 64.

¹¹Franklin M. Segler, "Lee Rutland Scarborough," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, 2:1186-1187; H. E. Dana, Lee Rutland Scarborough (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1942) p. 45.

¹²Maston, "Mexican Immigration,"

debt, argued Scarborough, "crosses all lines, racial, geographical, national, political, social, religious. . . . Color lines and castes are obliterated and social distinctions are disregarded."¹³

This erasure of demarcation lines for which the Southwestern Seminary president made his plea applied only to religious circumstances. Available materials fail to indicate that he extended his "universalism" beyond church associations; yet, he continued to press for a breadth in the Christian's evangelism which included all men. The Christian's debt, he observed, can never be fully paid: "If we pay it to the Anglo-Saxon we still owe it to the Mongolian and to all other men."¹⁴ Although Scarborough's preachments indicated a universal gospel that included the whole of mankind, his actual missionary activities appear to have been directed primarily toward Southern Baptist denominational causes and toward the establishment of Southern Baptist churches in Texas, which were predominantly Anglo.¹⁵

Walter Thomas Conner, during the 1930's, was at the

¹³Lee R. Scarborough, Ten Spiritual Ships: The Heaviest Responsibilities of Christ's People (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1927), p. 48.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Dana, Lee R. Scarborough, pp. 72-79.

height of his career as professor of New Testament in the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. While his books reveal no chapters nor discourses on race relations, per se, he nonetheless emphasized a universality of guilt for all men and a redemption which applied to all who placed their personal faith in Jesus Christ. In a commentary on the revelation of divine truth, he stated: "Man universally falls short of the standard set for him by a righteous God."¹⁶

Another leader among members of the Baptist General Convention of Texas during the decade of depression was J. B. Tidwell. He was professor of Bible at Baylor for some thirty years, and during that time he served as president of the Baptist General Convention for about three years, beginning in 1935. His biographer, Robert A. Baker, comments concerning his emphasis on evangelism, indicating that the Baylor professor called for a social application of the gospel of Christ to all avenues of life.¹⁷ While Tidwell pointed up the need for attention to the social implications of the gospel, and appears to have had satisfactory relations with persons of other races and cultures,

¹⁶Walter Thomas Conner, Revelation and God: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1936, pp. 250, 251.

¹⁷Robert Andrew Baker, J. B. Tidwell Plus God (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1946), p. 95.

there seem to be no statements indicating that he challenged the status quo in the actual practice of race relations and racial policies.

John A. Held, director of European Missions for the Baptist General Convention expressed both the responsibility of Texas Baptists for minority groups and also lauded the "renaissance" of interest among them regarding non-Anglo-Saxons:

At our doors the races are passing daily. They are calling for the Word of Life unconsciously. We see them and hear their call, which grows out of their needs. Here human hearts are opening to us with unconscious sorrow for sin. . . . Here the races of the world meet and wait for the Christly Christian to throw¹⁸ out the net and bring in souls for God and Christ.

During that period, as in earlier times, Baptists were particularly strong among the Negroes. J. Howard Williams reported on Negro church membership in Texas in 1940:

Negroes are naturally Baptist in belief and practice. . . . A survey of Negro church life in Texas gives these interesting and hopeful figures:

- (1) 51 percent of all Negroes in Texas belong to some church.
- (2) 73 percent of all church members belong to Missionary Baptist churches.
- (3) 66 percent of the Negro churches in Texas of all faiths are Missionary Baptist churches.¹⁹

¹⁸Held, European Missions in Texas, pp. 115-116.

¹⁹Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1940, p. 69.

Accompanying the renewed consciousness of the race issue in American life were expressions of more sympathy and understanding of minority groups, suggesting agreement with an article appearing in the Christian Century which stated:

There is a wide difference between a sentimental gesture of recognition toward a supposedly inferior race and an attitude of genuine understanding and good will as there is between a romantic appreciation of the "picturesqueness" of poverty and an effort to reconstruct the social order in the interest of the unfortunate.²⁰

The same article described the disabilities of the Negro in the nation as a whole but with special emphasis upon the South. Many of these conditions applied in Texas as well as in other portions of the South, and to other minorities, as well as to Negroes.²¹

In Texas, meanwhile, the editor of the Baptist Standard had taken up the cause of fairness to the Negroes, contending that they were not the only persons engaged in criminal activities. Citing eight cases in Atoka, Oklahoma, in which white men were accused of rape, McConnell charged that if these men had been Negroes, there would have been much trouble in that county. Further, he implied that the same conditions would have prevailed in Texas under like

²⁰"The Spirituals and Race Relations," The Christian Century, 18 February 1931, p. 230.

²¹Ibid., p. 231.

circumstances, and declared: "There should be . . . the most determined efforts to enforce the law in this country against all criminals, regardless of race."²²

The convention leaders continued to keep before their people the need for supporting missions among the Negroes in Texas. In the 1934 annual convention, the executive board urged the organization to appoint a worker to give full time to the Negroes in the state. The primary duties of this person would involve the promotion of training institutes for Negro preachers. In 1940, the board reported that twenty-one hundred dollars had been appropriated for the support of such a worker.²³

Beginning in 1936, Charles T. Alexander directed the work of the Baptist General Convention of Texas with minority groups. He seems to have been the first denominational worker in the Baptist General Convention to take positive action toward improving relations between white and black Baptists, as well as the first to initiate cooperation as a replacement for the traditional paternalism which had theretofore characterized relations between Baptists of the

²²"Folks and Facts," The Baptist Standard, 12 February 1931, p. 7.

²³Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1934, p. 92; 1940, p. 81.

two races. Indeed, Alexander's approach to race relations among Baptists may well have marked a turning point in regard to this problem. Reporting to the 1940 session of the Baptist General Convention, Alexander noted the need for the black and white races to maintain meaningful communications with each other, having previously pointed out the accomplishments they might realize if they worked together.²⁴

Chief among the reasons which Alexander gave for maintaining communications with the Negro Baptists was the thousands of Negro youths completing high school and college each year:

When 25,000 young Negroes are pouring out of standardized Senior High Schools by the year, and fully 2,000 are coming from the greatest Universities of America by the year . . . when more than 100,000 professional men and women . . . are leading the race, and have no contacts with white people in their professional service . . . we are thus out of touch with them. . . . it is time that we were studying the "race problem" as it now is, and putting forth our best effort to help the Negro Baptists in every way, that they may continue to hold the leadership of the race in America.

Here is the greatest racial cause before us as Americans; and it is the easiest or most difficult problem of solution, all depending upon our objectives and manner of approach for cooperation with the leadership of our Negro Baptists in Texas, in the South, and in America.²⁵

Alexander further suggested that such cooperation as he proposed between the white and Negro Baptists could well

²⁴Ibid., 1936, p. 101.

²⁵Ibid., 1940, p. 89.

be in obedience to the will of God.²⁶ To support his contention, he recounted that the white Baptist pastors of the state were unanimous in agreement with his views that the Baptist General Convention should adopt a program of co-operation with the Negro Baptists. The benefits for both races were the topic of a statement he made to the 1936 convention:

The enlightening of our own white people concerning the present status of the Negro in America, and at our own door, and the character of cooperative service we can render with them is one of our heaviest tasks of the present hour. The two races and our two Baptist groups, do not know each other today as they should. Our future with them must be built on a new and better understanding.²⁷

A few years later, at the close of the decade, Alexander again urged his fellow Baptists to learn more about the Negro:

We must learn the "psychology" of the Negro as a race. He is not a Caucasian with a dark skin. He has his own traits, and his own gifts. It is rankst folly to talk "race inferiority" about any race. We do not know the inherent powers of this race of Negro Americans. . . . We must learn to value them by their highest products. . . . These men and women we should learn, and come to know them as they actually are.²⁸

In his pleas for better understanding between the races, Alexander avowed that neither the blacks nor the whites knew

²⁶Ibid., 1936, p. 101.

²⁷Ibid., p. 100.

²⁸Ibid., 1940, p. 89.

as much about each other in 1937 as they had know fifteen years earlier. In this particular assertion, Alexander found agreement with the Baptists of the North. A committee reporting to the Northern Baptist Convention in 1938 also indicated an inadequate acquaintance between black and white Baptists:

. . . we as Christians are far from having a proper appreciation of our obligation as servants of Jesus Christ in our attitude toward our treatment of those of other races, and particularly is this true of the Negro race. We feel that this is a committee on Race Relations which should be continued that we of the white race may become more Christian in our treatment of our brethren of other races.²⁹

In his movement toward cooperative efforts with the blacks, Alexander reminded his fellow white Baptists that the paternalism of the past no longer had any place among Baptists. The Negro Baptists, like Baptists of the white race, he contended, " . . . are a free people, and white Baptists must respect that freedom." As for the prospects of advancements in human relations, the director of the work with minorities felt that the Negro presented the largest and most important opportunity of racial service in the South and in Texas.³⁰

The Baptist leaders' new interest in the race question encountered obstacles as well as encouragements. The chief

²⁹Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1938,
pp. 248-249.

³⁰Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1937,
pp. 85, 86-87.

goal of improving organization in the Negro Baptist churches of Texas was more than realized; in fact, it became a hindrance to the achieving of other improvements. A. C. Miller reported for the Interracial Cooperation Department of the Baptist General Convention in 1940 that one of the greatest obstacles to working with Negro Baptist churches was the fact that they were over-organized.³¹

Another frustration facing white Baptists as they endeavored to aid their "brothers in black" was the fact that many of the black leaders as well as most of the lay members of black Baptist churches were illiterate, ignorant, and poverty-stricken. Likewise, the unfavorable views of some whites, who believed in the unworthiness of the Negro as a human being, posed a hindrance to the Baptist General Convention in its work among the black people. In addition, the director of the department seemed to imply in his report that the rank and file members of white Baptist churches in the state declined to accept the denominational executive's enthusiasm and forward-looking attitudes regarding race relations.³²

A further obstacle, so far as Southerners and Texans were concerned, was that the white person who worked among

³¹Ibid., 1940, p. 86.

³²Ibid., p. 87

the Negroes as a minister or missionary was apt to "lose status" in the eyes of some whites who looked upon the Negro as inferior. These whites were ready to ridicule and ostracize, perhaps persecute, the individual who felt that God had led him to work among the blacks. The unsympathetic whites frequently characterized the missionary to the blacks as a "nigger-lover."³³

Miller, like Alexander, however, stated in 1940 that the Baptist General Convention leaders were in full sympathy with the efforts of the Interracial Cooperation Department to aid the cause of uplift for Negroes.³⁴ In their efforts to improve race relations, the convention leaders were moving in accord with a resolution the Southern Baptist Convention had adopted in its 1940 session:

Resolved: That we strive to cultivate and perpetuate this growing interracial good will and shall strive to the end that our friends and neighbors of the Negro race shall have, in all instances, equal and impartial justice before the courts; better and more equitable opportunities in industrial, business, and professional engagements; and a more equitable share in public funds and more adequate opportunities in the field of education.³⁵

³³Ibid.; Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 646; Maston, Of One, p. 52.

³⁴Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1937, p. 87

³⁵Annual, Southern Baptist Convention, 1940, p. 95.

The thought of attempting to improve the economic status of the minorities and thus strengthen their churches financially does not seem to have occurred to the white Baptists of Texas during the decade of depression. In defense of the white Baptists at this point, however, it must be remembered that the whites, too, were feeling the effects of depression, and funds were limited for them as well as for the blacks, although, not to such an extent. Nonetheless, what was true of Baptists' attitudes toward minorities in the time of depression had also been true in more prosperous times. The narrow scope of Baptists' activities among minorities arose from the fact that they believed that their responsibility to the Negro was to aid him in church organization, evangelism, and spiritual and moral uplift. This limited view found its basis in part in the Southern Baptists' rejection of the social gospel which many Baptists of the North preached.

Despite the narrow view of their responsibility for the Negro population, Baptists of Texas, during the depression years, came to be conscious of the breezes of racial goodwill and understanding which were beginning to find their way across the Baptist General Convention during the 1930's. Nevertheless, the chill wind of white supremacy, like a late winter's storm, continued to exercise a decisive influence in the area. This idea had not yet expired, even

among the denominational workers. John A. Held, director of the European Missions Department of the Baptist General Convention, wrote the type of statement which led some modern critics to refer sneeringly to the "White Anglo-Saxon Protestant" element of American society:

Here in Texas we have the sturdy Anglo-Saxon race, with whom there is the spirit of growth and progress. There is in them also the fundamental civilizing spirit of permanency in building a commonwealth and homes for their families. They carry with them the religious life and outlook wherever they go. They have the finer elements of the human race.³⁶

During the decade of depression, J. Frank Norris and the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth were still nominally in both the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention. In available material, however, Norris seems to have devoted no sermons to the subject of race relations, but, like other Texas Baptist leaders, he made remarks and drew illustrations from time to time which gave some hints as to his racial attitudes. Norris, like Truett, Scarborough, Cranfill, and others of that day grew to manhood in an age when the "white supremacy" view prevailed. In addition, Norris, during his formative years was a resident of central Texas, a part of the state's black belt.

³⁶ Held, European Missions, p. 115

Norris appears to have unquestionably remained a white supramacist, although he indicated a kindly personal regard for individuals of other races. In his history of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, the pastor related an anecdote involving a Negro preacher. Telling the story in Negro dialect, Norris pointed to the native wit and wisdom of the Negro. On another occasion, Norris implied acceptance of the status quo when he told of a call from the chairman of his church's board of deacons. "He called me up as if I had been a negro [sic] janitor and talked to me with less respect than I would speak with the janitor. . . ." ³⁷

Probably due to the heavy migration of Negroes to the North during the teens and twenties, Northern (American) Baptists had begun concentrating their Negro work in that area. An additional factor in the reduced concern by Northern Baptists for work among southern blacks may have been the enlargement of Southern Baptist efforts in ministering to Negroes in the South. By the decade of the thirties, the primary representation of Northern Baptist presence in Texas was Bishop College in Marshall. In 1934, Bishop had an

³⁷J. Frank Norris, "Inside History of the First Baptist Church," The Searchlight, 16 June 1922, p. 2; idem, Inside History of First Baptist Church, Fort Worth and Temple Baptist Church, Detroit (n. p.; n. d.), p. 42.

enrollment of 277, and an endowment fund of \$274,850; its income the previous year had been \$74,821. President of the institution in 1934 was J. J. Rhoads.³⁸

During the 1930's, according to Kyle Haselden, the Northern Baptists, who also maintained work in Texas, held unquestioned leadership among the Baptists of America, so far as the promotion of racial integration was concerned. Only the Congregationalists, observed Haselden, among the major denominations, outdid the Northern Baptists in condemning all forms of racial segregation.³⁹

The 1933 annual session of the Northern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution condemning the current practice of racial and ethnic discrimination throughout the world, in Europe, as well as in America:

We deplore the outbreaks of race hatred and discrimination as seen in our own country and in the persecution of Jews in Germany, and call upon all followers of the Son of man to show forth his Spirit of justice and good will for all.⁴⁰

The 1939 convention's Committee on Race Relations noted an increase of race problems occasioned by the influx of Negroes

³⁸Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1934, p. 221.

³⁹Haselden, Race Problem in Christian Perspective, p. 31.

⁴⁰Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1933, pp. 238-239.

into the North. Referring to a tendency among Northerners to criticize the unbrotherly attitudes of others, in 1939, the panel acknowledged that residents of the North themselves were also guilty at this point.⁴¹

Northern Baptist leaders also demonstrated some inconsistency on the matter of advocating and promoting integration. In 1933, the governing board of the American Baptist Home Mission Society issued a statement which seemed to support racial segregation in the church, when it emphasized the importance of the church in the black society and the influence of segregation upon its development:

The Negro church is the most characteristic social group in the Negro's life. It is characteristic because it is largely a product of his own hand and thought. . . . The separate church for the Negro has been pleasing to a large number of Negroes, and white people have encouraged them to use their [own] buildings.⁴²

Among the national issues relating to the races, probably lynching drew the strongest opposition and the bitterest denunciation from Northern Baptist leaders. More inclined than their fellow churchmen in the South to take definite stands on social and political issues, Northern Baptists frequently spoke out on these matters in their state and national gatherings. In 1934, after 1933 had

⁴¹Ibid., 1939, p. 181.

⁴²Ibid., 1933, p. 621.

recorded the highest incidence of lynching in seven years, and after the number had dropped to a ten-year low in 1932, William Lipphard, editor of Missions magazine, concluded: "America cannot claim to be Christian or even civilized until this crime is eradicated from her life." A month later, the same editor called for a federal law to eliminate lynching.⁴³

In 1935, the Northern Convention urged its constituents to become involved in public issues having to do with racial matters. Equality in economic opportunities, housing facilities, and the use of public accommodations were among the issues the national body suggested for action by local churches.⁴⁴

For many years, Northern Baptists had done very little evangelistic work in the South, leaving that activity almost entirely to the Southern Baptists and the Negro Baptists. Besides the schools which they supported, in 1933, representatives of the American Baptist Home Mission Society conducted in-service training institutes for Negro pastors in nine states of the South, including Texas. The society's report estimated that eighty-five to ninety percent of the Negro Baptist pastors were undertrained for their positions.

⁴³William B. Lipphard, "Editorial," Missions, 25 (1934): 74.

⁴⁴Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1937, p. 103.

Fifty-five percent of the seven hundred enrolled in the 1933 institutes had had less than an eighth-grade education; four percent had attended college, while fifty percent had had no training whatever for the ministry. Of the seven hundred, ninety-six percent had had only limited schooling, which, in terms of the Home Mission Society's report, meant that they had had no college experience.⁴⁵

Northern Baptists were acutely sensitive to the effect that race relations in the United States had on the denomination's missionary enterprises abroad. The Committee on Race Relations for 1937 expressed its concern thus:

There is little doubt that our Christian message to those in other lands is being discounted today and often utterly nullified by the unchristian [sic] treatment accorded those of other races in the homeland. We cannot consistently champion the cause of oppressed minorities elsewhere until we first set our own house in order. We in America have been guilty of practices so flagrantly unchristian [sic] as to bring us under severe condemnation.⁴⁶

William B. Lippard was often quite caustic in his views of persons with whom he disagreed and of practices of which he disapproved. He had ample opportunity to vent his indignation on both counts when Negro scientist George Washington Carver received the Theodore Roosevelt award in 1940. Acknowledging that Carver well deserved the award, the Missions editor deplored the fact that despite the scientist's

⁴⁵Missions, 25 (1934): 23.

⁴⁶Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1937, p. 103.

achievement's in chemistry, he had had to travel in Jim Crow cars and was barred from dining in reputable restaurants in both the North and in the South.⁴⁷

A question of interest is that which relates to how the Negro, himself, felt about the declarations of the conventions and the editorials and reports of committees on the subject of the Negro in Texas, in the South, and in the nation. So far as the expressions of white Baptists were concerned, most of such statements appear to have been written for the white constituency and were delivered to almost wholly white audiences. It is unlikely that the masses of the Negroes ever heard of the statements of white Baptist conventions and associations; even fewer were likely to read them. Somehow, the Negroes' adherence to the Baptist faith was not conditioned upon the social and racial views of white Baptists. Blacks had learned to accommodate themselves to circumstances as they found them.⁴⁸

Most of the information available on the Negroes' response to the attitudes of white Baptists comes from the white Baptists themselves a fact which may lend some question as to their validity. Commenting on Negro response to Baptist General Convention overtures toward them in the

⁴⁷Lipphard, "Editorial," Missions, 31 (1940): 16.

⁴⁸Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1936, p. 100.

1930's, Charles T. Alexander told of both appreciation and apprehension on the part of the black Baptists:

As a rule the Negroes have been responsive and appreciative. Yet their whole-hearted response has been a matter of hesitation. They must first be convinced that we are sincerely wanting to help and to cooperate with them, and not [to]dictate [to] or try to rule them.⁴⁹

Whatever the weaknesses in their approach to the race problem as it related to the Negro, Baptist General Convention leaders never allowed their constituencies to forget that the non-Christian Negro should be won to Christ and to the Baptist cause. It mattered little to them whether the Negro was won by a black or a white witness. They insisted that the black man was an object of divine love in Texas as much as in Africa where the churches were sending missionaries. Since the Negro was the object of God's love, the Christian church, and especially, the Baptist denomination must make him the object of its concern.⁵⁰

Due to restrictive immigration laws enacted soon after the close of World War I and the rapid assimilation of the European-Americans in their midst, Texas Baptists' attention to the foreign population in the state decreased. At the same time, however, the proportion of Texas's population which was of continental European stock remained substantial.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., 1938, p. 156.

John A. Held estimated in 1936 that continental Europeans or their descendents comprised 16.9 percent of the state's residents. Observing that more than one of every ten Texas citizens was a continental European, Held commented:

It does not matter whether it be a German, a Scandinavian, a Frenchman, or Bohemian. That calls for earnest work and serious prayer, as well as sincere endeavor, to win them for our blessed Savior. But this is the thing our people have never fully realized, and only here and there, have we some serious-minded Baptists who fully appreciate the greatness of the task. These people are in great need of salvation for they are dying without a full faith in the blessed Redeemer.⁵¹

Held observed that while the majority of Texans had come from other states, more had come from foreign countries than from any one of the southern states.⁵²

J. Howard Williams, executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, reported in 1940 that Texas Baptists were responsible for winning to their faith about two million foreign-speaking residents of the state, about half of whom were members of continental language groups.⁵³

Perry F. Evans, reporting for the association Committee on Home Missions, reminded the Tarrant Baptist Association in 1936 that the presence of foreigners in the area placed a holy obligation upon local Baptists and presented them with

⁵¹Ibid., 1936, p. 96.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 1940, p. 69.

a challenge and an opportunity for evangelistic efforts. The foreigner, argued Evans, presented Texas Baptists with their greatest problem and one of their most challenging tasks.⁵⁴ It was during that decade that the first Czechoslovak Baptist church was organized in Texas. This congregation, located in Bell County, organized itself into a church on April 11, 1937. Interest in the Texans of continental European descent manifested itself in the choice of a study topic in the Women's Missionary Union of the state in May, 1937; this study centered upon "The Slav."⁵⁵

Despite the obvious progress in assimilation of the foreign-speaking citizens of the state, Baptist spokesmen continued to sound the alarm, describing these groups as a potential danger to democracy and to the evangelical faith in Texas. Texas Baptists had to evangelize these people, declared Baptist leaders, or face the danger that the foreigners would mongrelize them ethnically and Romanize them religiously.⁵⁶ It is evident, however, that so far as the continentals were involved, Baptists' attitudes were founded more on religion than on culture. They seemed to have no

⁵⁴Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1936, p. 18.

⁵⁵The Baptist Standard, 29 April, 1937, p. 5; 13 May 1937, p. 8.

⁵⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1940, p. 24.

insurmountable objection to intermarriage with Europeans, if the prospective bride or groom accepted the Baptist faith; indeed, earlier expressions indicate that they expected intermarriage to occur. In their zeal to win the Europeans the leaders urged their fellow Baptists to regard evangelistic efforts among the non-Anglo-Saxons as an outstanding home missions project. God, they repeated, loved the European in Texas as surely and as much as he loved representatives of the same ethnic groups in Europe.⁵⁷

In 1930, the Federal Census Bureau began counting Mexican-Americans as whites, but due to language differences, Texas Baptists continued to deal with Mexicans as a separate entity.⁵⁸ Actually, the Anglo-Saxon Baptists had never viewed the Mexicans in quite the same light as they viewed the Negro, probably because of the latter's previous status as a slave, and the widely differing physical features of whites and Negroes. Early in the decade, the Baptist Standard editor, F. M. McConnell, in his "Folks and Facts" column, noted a trend which may have indicated a new development in the attitudes of Baptists toward the Mexican minority in the state.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., 1938, p. 156.

⁵⁸United States Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States Population, 6 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), 3(Part IV):1.

⁵⁹The Baptist Standard, 12 March 1931, p. 7.

The editor reported a revival of interest in Mexican missions in the Big Spring Baptist Association of West Texas. This interest had taken a more mundane turn than that of many Baptist mission projects involving minority groups. The Reverend Scott Cotton, pastor of the Mexican Baptist Church in the city of Big Spring, headed a relief program for the two hundred Mexicans residing in the area. The State Missions Committee of the Austin Baptist Association reported in 1937 that Mexicans in Texas numbered 675,000. The Tarrant Baptist Association noted the existence of one hundred Mexican Baptist churches in the state, with about seven thousand members, indicating that the Baptists had met with limited success in efforts to reach Mexican-Americans with their message. Three years later, some forty-four mission workers were ministering to some four hundred thousand Latin Americans, among whom were approximately four thousand Baptists. During that same year, the executive secretary declared that the Baptist General Convention was responsible for reaching about one million Mexican Americans.⁶⁰

As was true of other Baptists in other days, the keynote of Baptists in Texas during the thirties continued to

⁶⁰The Baptist Standard, 12 March 1931, p. 7; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1940, p. 69; Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1934, p. 7; 1935, p. 11; The Baptist Standard, 7 October 1937, p. 2; Minutes, Austin Baptist Association, 1937, p. 16.

be evangelism, as they endeavored to discharge their responsibility, as they saw it, to the minorities of the area.

Perry F. Evans reminded Tarrant County Baptists that evangelical Christians were barred from Mexico. The committee for which Evans was spokesman expressed the belief that God had sent the Mexicans to the United States, especially to Texas, in order that Southern Baptists might preach to them north of the Rio Grande.⁶¹

At the close of the decade, Baptist General Convention leaders continued to express the feeling that more needed to be done for the minorities in the state. Executive Secretary J. Howard Williams spoke especially to the needs of Mexican Baptist missions in Texas, emphasizing the limitations of the work:

Texas Baptists are but touching the edges of the work that should be done among the Mexican people of our state. Progress is being made, but the work we are doing is so little, our program so inadequate for a field that is so needy, and so ripe unto harvest. At the present rate, we are winning the Mexicans of Texas, it will take us at least 500 years to evangelize this people. This is enough to make our hearts grow sick and dim our eyes with tears. Our responsibility to the Mexicans demands a larger program.⁶²

In the mid-thirties, Texas Baptists, as well as the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, expressed their concern for Mexicans in the state by providing schools for Mexican

⁶¹Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1936, p. 18.

⁶²Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1940, p. 69.

youth. Such schools were located at El Paso, Bastrop, and San Antonio. The first two were projects of the Home Mission Board, while the San Antonio institution was a joint effort of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the National Baptist Convention of Mexico. While Scott Cotton was an Anglo ministering to persons of Mexican background and culture, the convention appeared to hold generally to the policy adopted by earlier leaders; where possible, they encouraged Baptists of Mexican background to perform the work. In 1937, forty-four missionaries, the majority of whom were Mexican-Americans, ministered among the Latin Americans in the state.⁶³

Besides the Negroes, Germans, Italians, Scandinavians, Bohemians, and Mexicans, other minority peoples resided in Texas. Near the end of the decade of the thirties, the Baptist General Convention's Committee on Foreign Population noted the presence of some twenty-nine nationalities in the "homeland" of Texas. In addition to the larger minorities they were classified American Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Jews, and others.⁶⁴

Most of the Indian missions in which Texas Baptists

⁶³The Baptist Standard, 7 October 1937, p. 2; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1936, p. 93; "Folks and Facts," The Baptist Standard, 21 January 1937, p. 7.

⁶⁴Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1938, pp. 156-157.

were interested in the 1930's involved those in Oklahoma. Statements relating to that work were rather brief and infrequent in comparison to the space given to Negroes, continental Europeans, and Mexicans, but such references as appeared were enthusiastic in their expressions of admiration for the Indian people, whom the Home Missions Committee of the Tarrant Baptist Association reported as numbering 102,000 in the area of concern to Texas Baptists.⁶⁵

In regard to the American Indians, as to other minority groups, Texas Baptists' chief interest was religious and evangelistic. The 1931 Tarrant Association Home Missions committee, composed of H. T. Brannon and J. C. Sorenson, urged area Baptists to respond to the "Macedonian call" coming from American Indians and others, "by giving ourselves, our money, and our prayers to our God-given task . . . with the zeal of Paul, the sacrifice of the Philipian church, and the love of Jesus."⁶⁶ Near the close of the period, the Baptist Standard reported the criterion by which Baptists almost always measure their progress: that is, by baptisms. According to that standard, they had made some progress among the Indians living near Ardmore,

⁶⁵Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1931, p. 11.

⁶⁶Ibid.

Oklahoma, where mission workers had baptized sixteen Indian students.⁶⁷

References to the Jews are rather scarce in Texas Baptist records. On infrequent occasions, writers singled them out as a group of "foreigners" with whom Texas Baptists should share the gospel. The 1938 Baptist General Convention was reminded:

The Jew here in the homeland, as well as the Jew in Palestine, must be made to realize that the Messiah has already come and suffered and died for the Jew and the Gentile. We must bear in mind that the friend of the Jew is the true Christian who remembers that faithful Jews were the first Christians, the first missionaries.⁶⁸

The Baptists' attitudes toward the Jewish people were generally sympathetic, partly on account of the fact that Jesus Christ was a Jew. The sufferings which the Jews endured and were enduring in the late 1930's served to arouse the sympathies of Christians everywhere, including those of Texas Baptists. Religiously, the Jews' relation to the Baptists was that of any non-Christian group. While there could be no "Christian communion" between them, it was not uncommon for amiable personal relations to exist between members of the two religions. Such a personal friendship

⁶⁷Ibid.; The Baptist Standard, 6 May 1937, p. 2.

⁶⁸Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1938, pp. 156-157.

existed even between J. Frank Norris and the Jewish owner of a Fort Worth theater.⁶⁹

A Jew who accepted the Christian faith was welcomed into most Baptist churches on the same basis as any other Christian. An example of this acceptance is seen in the fact that Hyman Appleman, a Christian Jew, was for a time, during the 1930's, pastor of the Vickery Baptist Church in Dallas. Later, Appleman became an evangelist on the staff of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.⁷⁰

The Chinese were few in Texas during that period, due, in a large measure, to the effects of the Oriental Exclusion Act of the previous decade. Texas Baptist work among those people was limited to the Mexican border areas, such as El Paso. Probably due to ignorance concerning the Chinese, the Baptist masses appear to have been largely indifferent to them. The editor of the Baptist Standard observed in 1937 that the state convention was supporting a Chinese mission in El Paso, and in 1940, the Baptist Standard reported an upsurge of interest in the El Paso center. In an earlier report, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board had indicated

⁶⁹Norris, Inside History, First Baptist Church, pp. 72-73.

⁷⁰The Baptist Standard, 2 July 1931, p. 4; "Folks and Facts," The Baptist Standard, 7 October 1937, p. 7.

the maintenance of two centers for Chinese missions; one of these was in San Antonio.⁷¹

Baptist interest in Orientals, like that in other minority groups, was again evangelistic. In his brief biography of George W. Truett, Joe W. Burton noted the Dallas pastor's acquaintance with the traits of the Japanese and Chinese. Truett saw the Orientals as he saw all other men: in utter ruin apart from the saving gospel of Christ.⁷²

An assessment of Baptists' attitudes on racial questions during the 1930's must depend almost entirely upon records left by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Other Baptist bodies declined to discuss the racial question. Among members of the Baptist General Convention there appeared a mixture of the old and the new attitudes. The older men, such as Truett, Cranfill, Scarborough, and M. A. Jenkins tended to cling to the paternalism and white supremacy ideas which they had learned from their elders in the early years of the century. Younger men, like Charles T. Alexander, A. C. Miller, J. Howard Williams, and Thomas B. Maston tended to espouse more equalitarian views of minorities. In

⁷¹The Baptist Standard, 13 May 1937, p. 8; 18 July 1940, p. 2; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1938, p. 157.

⁷²Joe W. Burton, Prince of the Pulpit: A Pen Picture of George W. Truett (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1946), pp. 63-64.

their views, cooperation and counsel should replace paternalism and prescription.

The changes suggested by these younger men, however, did not materialize overnight; many of their goals have not yet been realized. However, in those years of economic distress, there seemed to be a ray of hope that the ethics of human relations might some day catch up with the technological advances in business and industry. It was during the thirties that members of minority groups began to believe that the better life was within reach, and refused to be satisfied any longer with the inferior status to which the white dominated society had assigned them. Meanwhile, forward-looking leaders of Texas Baptists began to raise their voices in behalf of better relations with minority peoples in the state.

CHAPTER IX

WAR AND CONTINUING CONFLICT, 1940-1954

The decade of the forties saw a continuation of the struggle among the European nations which had begun in the late thirties. For the second time within a generation, those nations had become involved in war, and by the end of 1941 the conflict had become global in scope when the United States and Japan entered as antagonists. Although World War II was not a racial war per se, it involved all major racial groups, and the war had important racial overtones as well, according to Gunnar Myrdal in his study of American racial affairs.¹

For the United States, the war had racial implications perhaps more extensive than any other event of the twentieth century. Japanese residents of America's West Coast were suspect because of their racial and ethnic identity; hence the war years were times of uprooting and relocation for

¹Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 517, 915, 1006.

them.² At the same time, the United States condemned the racial policies of Adolph Hitler and his Japanese allies.

The Japanese, however, were not the only minority in America for whom the Second World War had far-reaching effects. To a far greater extent than during the First World War, southern Negroes as well as whites migrated to urban defense areas. Myrdal noted, however, that in lesser numbers than during World War I, Negroes moved to the North. At the same time, noted George B. Tindall and Francis B. Simkins, the total population movement during the Second World War was the greatest in history, indicating that many of those who moved to defense centers remained in the South. Both black and white workers sought the benefits of wartime wages. Competition between blacks and whites, observed Myrdal, was reduced by the policies of labor unions, then much stronger than during the First World War; most of the jobs, he contended, went to white workers. In the South, there was more competition, although, as might be expected, white workers received the better jobs. As in World War I, the Negro faced discrimination; in the North, as a result of union policy, and in the South, in keeping with the tradition of racial

²Albert Russell Buchanan, The United States and World War II, 2 vols., (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), 2:326.

discrimination.³

The unsettled conditions brought on by wartime demands quite naturally led to racial strife and race riots, but they also pointed the way to the attainment of a greater degree of equality for the black minority in the United States.⁴ According to Arthur S. Link, Negroes emerged from World War II with a greater measure of economic and political security than they had ever had before. It was in the postwar period, writes Avery Leiserson, that the Negro began to exert a positive influence upon the course of events in America.⁵ James Baldwin, in his work, Notes of a Native Son, analyzes the period as one in which the Negro situation was not static but was in a state of flux. Referring to changes of the recent past, and in what appeared to be a burst of optimism, Baldwin predicted that those changes which had characterized the period since the close of World War II would continue for the blacks' .

³Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 410, 567-568; Tindall, Emergence of New South, pp. 694, 715-716; Francis B. Simkins, A History of the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), pp. 567-568.

⁴Myrdal, American Dilemma, p. 419.

⁵Link, American Epoch, pp. 528-529; Avery Leiserson, ed. The American South in the 1960's (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1964), p. vi.

advantage in the future.⁶

Several developments caused racial problems to attract the attention of government leaders early in the decade. Negroes gained unprecedented opportunities in industry, despite the discriminatory policies of northern unions. They entered the military service, where they had traditionally enjoyed the most nearly equal treatment afforded them in American society, in larger numbers than ever before. In June, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had established a Fair Employment Practices Commission, whose duty it was to prevent racial discrimination in national defense plants.⁷

In the South, as in previous decades, the Negro continued to suffer numerous forms of discrimination, but it was perhaps in the area of education that he felt most keenly the sting of this practice during the 1940's. Especially in that field had the leaders of the South interpreted in their own way the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896.⁸ "Separate but equal," for the most part, simply meant "separate," with little effort made to provide equality.

⁶James Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949), p. 73.

⁷Tindall, Emergence of New South, p. 713.

⁸Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U. S. (1896).

In the late forties, however, according to Roger Crook, southern leaders began frantically to try to improve Negro schools under their jurisdiction. These efforts, argued Crook, were motivated chiefly by a desire to forestall a forced integration of the schools which the southern leaders foresaw a number of years before the Brown v. Topeka decision in 1954. Apparently these "new converts" to improvement in Negro education in the South expected their efforts to maintain segregation. A southern liberal noted in 1960:

Had the mass of Southerners in 1950 been told that by 1960 there would be considerable token desegregation in the schools of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Texas and even more desegregation on city bus lines, and that segregation at lunch counters and eating places would here and there be giving way in the South they would have refused flatly to believe it.⁹

Meanwhile, the church continued to earn its reputation as the most racially segregated institution in America. Sociologist Frank Loescher cited a survey of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America regarding racial composition of American churches. Less than one percent of American white congregations had Negroes on their rolls. Among Negro Protestants, the scene was even worse from the council's viewpoint; less than one half percent of those

⁹William G. Carleton, "Negro Rights in the South: Making Haste Slowly," Teachers' College Record, 62 (October, 1960): 19; Kilpatrick, Case for School Segregation, p. 94.

Protestants were in white congregations. In 1946, the Federal Council committed itself to working for a non-segregated society in America and urged its members to study their own practices in the matter of racial segregation.¹⁰

Among Texas Baptists in the 1940's, there was a new consciousness of the racial problem. Convention leaders noted that of the estimated 6,734,000 persons in Texas in 1947, some two million, or about one third, were members of minority groups: Negroes, Mexicans, Orientals, foreign-born Europeans, and Jews.¹¹ The few rather muted pleas for justice for the Negro which had characterized the earlier decades of the century were more pronounced in the 1930's, but in the forties they became even more persistent. First of all, leaders of the Baptists of the state, except for the most conservative groups, began to recognize that a genuine race problem existed.

In the past, while they had acknowledged that the Negro was entitled to aid in his churches, they seemed unaware that the status quo in other areas was unsatisfactory and also made real improvement in church affairs most difficult, if not impossible. Commenting on the need for Texas

¹⁰Frank S. Loescher, The Protestant Church and the Negro: A Pattern of Segregation (New York: Associated Press, 1948), p. 64.

¹¹Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1947, pp. 57, 143-144.

Baptists to be concerned, A. C. Miller, director of the Baptist General Convention's work with minorities, told the convention in 1948:

We can no longer remain secure in our complacency that the racial issues within our nation will bide their time for a solution. The racial trends of yesterday have become the racial movements of today. The situation demands clear-sighted and courageous action. To meet this situation the Christian must play a decisive part. He must re-examine the political, economic, and civic patterns of behavior he follows in his relation to people of other races. . . . He must remember that Christ never made a chattel of any people or sought to use them to his own advantage. Shall the Christians and churches of our day dare to follow Him?¹²

In Miller's view, the racial question was social as well as religious and had a relation to other social issues such as lax law enforcement, favoritism in the courts, public transportation, and health. Besides the religious and social aspects, the race question also had its economic implications, according to Miller. The denominational worker further stated that for its highest development, the nation needed to use all of its labor potential, including the blacks. Racial prejudice in economic affairs decimated the country's labor resources, he declared. In his capacity as secretary of the Ministry with Minorities Department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Miller called attention to the constitutional guarantee of "certain

¹²Ibid., 1948, p. 184.

rights to all citizens." Nevertheless, he argued, in some areas, those rights had been abridged or even denied to some minority groups.¹³

Although Miller went further than his predecessors in urging the elimination of discrimination from employment practices, he stopped short of approval of President Harry S. Truman's Fair Employment Practices plan. To him the President's idea seemed too close to the concept of a police state. Without suggesting an alternative, Miller insisted that there must be a better way of handling discrimination in hiring than that proposed by the presidential plan. At the same time, however, Miller expressed criticism of those elements in the South who had opposed, and who continued to oppose, the Civil Rights Act of 1946.¹⁴

During the 1940's, Texas Baptist leaders were beginning to demonstrate an awareness of the political aspects of the race question, as well as its religious and social facets. One event which brought these implications forcefully to bear upon all Texans, including the Baptists of the state, occurred in 1944, when the United States Supreme Court declared the Texas Primary law unconstitutional by a

¹³Ibid., 1950, p. 174.

¹⁴Ibid.

vote of eight to one. In a different political vein, and somewhat more subtly connecting his remarks with the race issue, David M. Gardner, editor of the Baptist Standard, early in 1949 urged his readers, as good citizens, to pay their poll tax in order to be able to vote and thus help to restrain evil; however, he made no reference to the fact that the poll tax was an effective means for disfranchising Negroes and other minorities, as well as poor whites.¹⁵

The decade of the forties marked a new departure in the affairs of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. It was during that period that they evidenced a new willingness to discuss racial questions among themselves. In their debates of that issue, Baptist spokesmen recognized three forms of segregation: voluntary, social custom, and legal.¹⁶ The first type, they felt, the minorities did not find objectionable; they noted that some within the minority groups took the initiative in establishing this type of segregation. What they apparently did not recognize, however, was the fact there is a sort of compulsion to that

¹⁵Thomas Bufford Maston, "Of One": A Study of Christian Principles and Race Relations (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 1946), p. 75; David M. Gardner, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 27 January 1949, p. 4.

¹⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1950, p. 173.

form of segregation or separation which they termed "voluntary." Those who indicated a preference for a "voluntary" segregation most likely did so in order to escape the hostility and discrimination which they faced outside their own group.

The second type of segregation the leaders believed to be un-Christian and deemed it undesirable from the Christian's viewpoint, although most Texas Baptists, they noted, accepted it as a tradition received from their fathers. Legal segregation, however, was not only undesirable in that it rendered "voluntary" separation all but impossible, it was also undesirable from the Christian view, and highly unacceptable as a social pattern, according to those leaders. As the 1940's drew to a close, leaders of Texas Baptists initiated attempts to nudge their constituencies toward abandonment of legal segregation.

Another facet of the race question which Miller discussed with his fellow Baptists was the subject of housing. To this, he added a new dimension, so far as Texas Baptists were concerned:

Another social issue involved in race relations is that of housing. This problem has been increased by the migration of non-whites into industrial areas and by the increase in the financial income of minority peoples throughout the country. Housing needs have been accentuated also by the slum clearance movement in our cities. It is our Christian duty to work with the city planners to provide adequate housing

for minority peoples. We must not forget that inadequate housing is one of the social evils that breed riots.¹⁷

This new openness may have arisen from uneasy consciences as well as from a fear of the consequences if the fury of the minorities were unleashed upon the white communities.

In these discussions and statements Baptist leaders expressed their general philosophical and theological views on the race question. Such views varied from person to person and from section to section. Although not a Texas Baptist, Ethel J. Alpenfels advanced some ideas which were beginning to find acceptance among them: "Progress in the science of human relations waits on at least two things: knowledge and motivation. We cannot build a cooperative world on ignorance and error," Alpenfels warned, adding that knowledge alone is not enough; "We must be willing to act in the light of that knowledge, even when it means that we must subordinate personal interest to the common good." She contended that the old concept of racial blood characteristics has no validity, since all racial groups have the same four different blood types.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ethel J. Alpenfels, Sense and Nonsense About Race (New York: Friendship Press, 1946), p. 4.

Despite Alpenfels' observation of the similarities of the races, however, Baptist leaders in Texas were not entirely convinced. At the end of the decade, Miller warned against attempting to ignore the existence of racial differences, reasoning that "God has endowed the people of each racial group with distinctive and unique gifts for the enrichment of mankind." He went on to denounce the use of racial gifts as a means of forcing one group's will upon another; instead they were to be used for the blessing and uplift of mankind. Implying that whites might be superior to blacks, he argued further that if there should be any such thing as racial superiority, the possession of such a trait only increased the responsibility of the superior race for the welfare of the weaker.¹⁹

Thomas B. Mason, by the mid-forties, was rapidly becoming the most outstanding Texas Baptist and Southern Baptist spokesman on the race question. Himself a southerner, he was professor of Christian Ethics in the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. One of his basic premises, and one with which many Baptists in Texas and the South agreed, was that the Christian vocabulary has no place for a "we-you" mind-set. About mid-way

¹⁹Annual, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1949, p. 40.

through the decade he wrote:

Regardless of how serious the present race situation may be or may become, the "we-you" psychology does not belong in the Christian vocabulary. Communism may talk about a classless society; Christianity alone has the power potential to produce a society free from class consciousness. The only divisions among men in a Christian society would be those based on spiritual conditions and conduct. All men would be actual or potential members of the family of God. As such, each individual would be treated as a human being, a divine creation, and as a possible brother beloved.²⁰

Maston expressed the view that since God is no respecter of persons, Christians should not be, either. He again emphasized that such distinctions as are made among men should be based on individual, not on racial, characteristics. In support of his conviction, he called the church to witness that "the Bible clearly implies the equality of all races. . . ." Referring to the racial inclusivism of the Apostle Paul, Maston stated: "If Paul were writing to a southern church, he would doubtless say: 'There can be neither Jew nor Gentile, American nor Mexican, white nor Negro. . . .'"²¹

The Fort Worth ethics professor took a stand which would become more significant in relation to the militant movements of a later decade. He early identified himself

²⁰Maston, Of One, pp. 22-23.

²¹Ibid., pp. 60ff, 78, 84, 108; Acts 10:34.

as an opponent of violence, even in behalf of a worthy cause. The Christian method of social change, he avowed, is education, not revolution. Two years later, the Baptist General Convention's executive secretary, J. Howard Williams, along with A. C. Miller, expressed views similar to those of Maston in relation to violence as an instrument of social change. "Better relations cannot be developed in a vacuum, nor improved by force," they declared.²²

While Maston ruled out violence as a tactic not in harmony with Christian views, he recognized the presence of radical and revolutionary elements in the content of the Christian faith and in Christian education. Continuing his argument, he observed that while a few Christians may be too radical, the real danger is that most Christians will be entirely too conservative in applying the truth of the gospel to everyday life.²³

Such conservatism, Miller charged, caused many Texas Baptists to fail to recognize their responsibilities and opportunities for improving race relations through evangelization of "the minority groups within our own territory."²⁴

²²Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1948, pp. 69, 182.

²³Maston, Of One, pp. 107, 111.

²⁴Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1946, p. 174.

Maston's opposition to violence as a legitimate method of improving race relations led to a corollary position: that of gradualism in bringing about changes in those relations. Convention executives concurred in the gradualism Maston advocated when they declared in 1949:

Certain phases of this work with minorities cannot be rushed . . . the matter of race relationship requires the greatest diplomacy and the soundest sense. The development of a wholesome Christian attitude in this field is one of the primary opportunities in this phase of the work.²⁵

As in previous decades, the basic consideration in molding the attitudes of Texas Baptists toward minority groups was evangelism. The Interracial Committee of the Tarrant Baptist Association for 1949 urged upon the body the need for helping unfortunates, including minorities, in the name of Christ.²⁶ It was also during that period that the state denominational workers began to proclaim their belief that racism on the part of white Baptists hindered the program of Baptist evangelism among minorities. Such an attitude, they told their fellow Baptists, was inconsistent with the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ. In the statement of the Interracial Committee also appeared the idea that Christian teaching and preaching must find practical expression in attitudes and

²⁵Ibid., 1949, p. 57.

²⁶Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1949, p. 41.

actions toward those whom the teachers and preachers sought to win. In 1950 Miller exhorted the messengers of the Baptist General Convention: "In this great day the mighty arm of God, to save people of all nations must not be shortened by the racial exclusiveness of his disciples."²⁷

At mid-century, Texas Baptists were adding a social consciousness to their spiritual emphasis of the gospel. While this new sense of social responsibility would not likely supplant the spiritual message among Texas Baptists, it served to remind them that the gospel has social implications. In 1951 the Tarrant Baptist Association's Committee on Religious Education emphasized the need for Christians to be aware of the physical needs of those to whom they ministered.²⁸

Another important change in the attitudes of Baptist leaders toward minorities at mid-century appeared in their expressions regarding racial superiority and inferiority. Northern writers such as Ethel Alpenfels had led the way in challenging the widely-held views in both the North and the South that Negroes' I. Q.'s were inherently lower than those of whites. She further contended that superiority

²⁷Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1949, p. 145; 1950, pp. 143, 173.

²⁸Ibid., 1949, p. 145; Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1951, pp. 25-26.

is an individual and cultural matter, not a racial characteristic.²⁹ By the end of the 1940's, Texas Baptist leaders themselves were denouncing the old doctrine of racial superiority as inconsistent with Christian teaching and inimical to the interests of Christian enterprises. Secretary Miller spoke on this subject again in 1950 when he reported to the Baptist General Convention. "Such an assumption [of racial superiority] is an affront to every person of another race who cares enough for his personal worth and dignity to challenge it."³⁰

Although the attitudes of Baptist leaders in the white convention as they related to minorities, and especially, toward blacks, were showing signs of change in the early 1940's, this did not mean that the rank and file memberships of the local churches were yet ready to follow the lead of their denominational spokesmen; not even all of the local pastors were ready to accept all of the pronouncements issuing from the annual conventions, as indicated in 1963 by E. R. Stiles, a Texas Baptist minister, when he expressed a belief in the traditional view of the white man toward the Negro.³¹

²⁹Alpenfels, Sense and Nonsense, pp. 38-39, 46.

= ³⁰Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1950, p. 173.

³¹E. R. Stiles, A sermon delivered in Marystown Baptist Church, Joshua, Texas, 13 May 1963, attended by author.

The condition of the Negro in Texas changed even more slowly than did the Baptists' statements concerning him. One of the many instances of continued segregation and discrimination was observed in 1943 by Charles S. Johnson, Negro author, in relation to a Houston zoo. Park authorities, Johnson reported, admitted Negroes to only one city park, and blacks could visit that park only on certain days. A tacit understanding barred them from other park facilities.³² Although this was a municipal matter, rather than a religious one, and did not involve Baptists per se, it must be assumed that they, as one of the largest religious denominations in the city, could have acted unofficially, at least, to open the facilities to minorities had they been sufficiently concerned. Writing in the late forties, T. B. Maston criticized those whites who demonstrated dispositions for perpetuating the Negro's inferior position in American society:

. . . unfortunately many whites defend the present secondary status of Negroes as permanently wise and valid. They like the Negro "in his place." But his place is down by the railroad tracks, in the alleys, in the cotton patch, over the wash tub, doing the dirty work for the aristocratic whites.³³

³²Charles S. Johnson, Patterns of Negro Segregation (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1943), p. 29.

³³Maston, Of One, p. 21.

An outstanding development in the white-black Baptist relations during the World War II period and continued into the postwar years was the establishment, in 1943, of seminary extension classes for Negro Baptist preachers and laymen. Those extension classes replaced the earlier Bible institutes which white Baptist pastors had conducted, and were taught by men who met the educational standards of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Baptist General Convention's Department of Interracial Cooperation. The Christian Life Commission, as successor to the Department of Interracial Cooperation, assumed support of the seminary extension classes in 1953.³⁴ Held at various points throughout the state, those classes enrolled some ninety-five Negro Baptist ministers in their first year of operation. Executive Secretary J. Howard Williams offered an evaluation of the classes in an item he prepared for the Baptist Standard: "If we can make any contribution to the life and preaching ability of Negro preachers, we will have reached the churches and rendered a much more far-reaching ministry than is possible in any other way."³⁵

³⁴Foy Valentine, "Classes for Negroes," The Baptist Standard, 22 October 1953, p. 3.

³⁵The Baptist Standard, 16 May 1946, p. 3.

Not only did Baptists of the Baptist General Convention support the cause of Negro Baptist seminary education, they also expressed an interest in Negro higher education in general within the state. Around 1945, the state convention and the Women's Missionary Union of Texas gave \$25,000 to Bishop College, and also \$1,000 to Butler College in Tyler.³⁶

Texas Baptists fostered three types of interracial cooperation during the period of the 1940's, all of them related to education. Besides the seminary extension classes for preachers, the convention sponsored vacation Bible schools for Negro children in Negro churches. The third activity involved interracial Bible conferences which also considered social problems pertaining to relations between the two races. Such a conference met for a week in 1948 in the University Baptist Church of Austin. Leaders of that session included Hugh Brimm, executive secretary of the Social Service Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention; George Kelsey, of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia; T. B. Maston, of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary of Fort Worth; and Edwin Elliott, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board. The stated purposes of that and similar conferences were

³⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1946,
p. 175.

"to crystallize Christian attitudes on human rights," and "to devise a Christian plan to make the rights of every man a reality." More than six thousand persons had attended such interracial convocations at various points in the state by 1949, thus suggesting an increased interest, if not a total commitment to the improvement to interracial relations.³⁷

During the 1940's, Baptist associations, especially those in metropolitan areas, established good will centers as forms of ministry to minorities. Patterned after the settlement houses and neighborhood centers which Northern Baptists had operated for decades, those centers attempted to provide social, recreational, and religious activities for persons living in the poorer sections of the cities. While the centers ministered to all races, their reports indicate that they worked primarily with Negroes and Anglo-Americans, although Mexican-Americans used the facilities to some extent. In addition to the cultural and religious activities, the good will centers usually provided a store area where individuals could purchase used merchandise at token prices.

Support for the good will centers generally came from churches in the area. In addition, Baptists of middle

³⁷Ibid., 1948, p. 183; 1949, p. 57.

class and upper class economic status frequently provided used articles at no cost to the centers. Besides bringing a profit to the centers, these donations proved to be a means of providing relief for families facing emergencies. The success of the work of the good will centers may be illustrated by the report of the Tarrant Baptist Good Will Center for 1949. That association's center in Fort Worth reported one hundred professions of faith during the previous year. Fifty-five of these new converts were Negroes; twenty-eight were Anglo-Americans, while seventeen Mexican Americans also confessed Christ and embraced the Baptist faith.³⁸

Of increasing concern to Texas Baptists during the World War II decade was the effect that racial policies in the United States might have in regard to the non-white nations in which Southern Baptists maintained missions. The growing nationalistic attitudes among the former colonial peoples and the rise of race consciousness in America made such considerations imperative. Modern methods of communication added further urgency to the need for improving race relations at home. Wide distribution of radio receivers among formerly isolated peoples beamed news of racial exploitation and unrest in America to the

³⁸Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1949, p. 26.

far corners of the globe, and often contradicted the message of Christian missionaries in the field. Especially damaging were such tidings when they originated in the South, perhaps in the home communities of the very persons who were attempting to win the heathen to the Christian faith. Theron Rankin, a Southern Baptist foreign missions executive, noted: "More and more the sincerity of our interest in the colored peoples within their native lands will be judged by our treatment of the people of these lands who live in our country."³⁹

In 1947 the Southern Baptist Convention, assembled in the border city of Saint Louis, adopted a resolution which, in time, proved to be the background of further pronouncements on the subject of race relations among Baptists in Texas. In that statement, entitled: "Race Relations: A Charter of Principles," the Southern Convention urged its members throughout the South to abandon the old, outmoded ideas of race relations based on the concept of the white man's burden, paternalism, and white superiority, and to treat the members of minority groups, especially the blacks, as equals. While this statement did not go so far as the United States Supreme Court decision in the Brown case some seven years later, it marked a realization that

³⁹Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1950,
p. 153.

the old ways were due to change.⁴⁰

Some leaders among Texas Baptists in the early 1950's endeavored to find practical expression for their more liberal attitudes on the race question. There were those who supported the efforts of minority groups to improve their lots. In Tarrant County, there was support for court actions which Negroes brought to secure for themselves and for their children the minimal rights of citizenship. Those leaders noted the fears of Christian blacks that Christian whites would fail to take sufficient initiative in promoting improvement in the civil status of Negroes. The association's Committee on Race Relations deplored the fact that much of the progress the underprivileged had achieved had originated in the minorities' protests rather than in the actions of concerned Christians, that the fears of the black Christians regarding the support of white Christians had some justification in fact. Another confession of inactivity among white Christians concerning the problems of race relations lay in the committee's complaint that radical elements often seized worthwhile causes, such as racial equality, and supported such efforts from ulterior motives and for selfish ends. The Race Relations panel, composed of S. A. Newman, Carroll Wheelless, Horace Taylor,

⁴⁰Annual, Southern Baptist Convention, 1947, Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 22.

and Julio Diaz, argued further that "the hands of unholy demagogues defile high and holy causes and bring them into disrepute."⁴¹

The Baptist denomination's leaders were not at once ready to go the full length of their forward-looking positions by opening their church services and memberships to black Christians. As Maston observed, it is much easier for one who is far removed from a problem to advocate a radical ideal. Citing an example, he declared that a southern white Christian is generally more ready to apply the principles of human equality to problems confronting nations such as India than to the race question in the American South. He noted that Christians in northern states have advocated more radical applications of Christian ideals than those of the southern states. Maston continued: "It is fairly easy to be radical when one does not have to face the real problem or the results of his radicalism."⁴²

Because they lived so close to the problem of race relations regarding the Negroes, leaders and members of the Baptist denomination in Texas, as in other states of the South, were reluctant to entertain ideas as radical as those held by their fellow Baptists of the North. Maston,

⁴¹Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1951, pp. 25-26.

⁴²Maston, Of One, p. 109.

however, was more optimistic regarding Negro applications for membership in white churches. In 1946, he predicted that acceptance of Negroes as equals would not result in a flood of requests from blacks asking for membership in white churches. On the other hand, he contended, it is wrong for either race to officially close the doors of its churches to members of the other race. His position at that time was essentially, "Don't seek them, nor even invite them, but if they come, don't turn them away."⁴³

During that same decade, a Northern Baptist pastor, Hilyer H. Straton, expressed essentially the same position as did Maston regarding Negro membership in white churches. While Straton condemned "Jim Crow religion," he did not think it mandatory for white churches to seek black members. He felt that such a practice would deprive the Negro of leadership opportunities which he would enjoy in a Negro church, but not in a white congregation. Nonetheless, he insisted, white churches should keep their memberships open to all races as a protest against Jim Crowism.⁴⁴

David M. Gardner, editor of the Baptist Standard during the decade of the forties, also opposed the seeking of black members for white churches. The stated grounds for his

⁴³Ibid., pp. 78-79.

⁴⁴Hilyer H. Straton, "When I Was Ashamed of My White Skin," Missions, 34 (1943): 449.

position were similar to those advanced by Maston and Stratton: Negroes, as members of white churches, would hardly have the same opportunities to develop their potential which they would have in black churches. Gardner, however, added another point when he criticized a proposal made by Methodist Bishop John Wesley Lord calling for the assignment of black ministers to white churches. Apparently assuming that white ministers would be unwilling to serve black churches in such an arrangement, Gardner noted that those congregations would suffer leadership losses under Lord's plan.⁴⁵

Texas Baptists had their own solutions for the race problems, especially as they related to the Negro. During the 1940's and the early 1950's, numerous statements came from A. C. Miller, who directed the interracial work of the Baptist General Convention during that period.⁴⁶ While he was more liberal than were most rank-and-file Baptists of Texas, he was markedly more conservative than most of his fellow Baptists of the North.

In his position as secretary of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention, Miller urged members of the denomination to alter their attitudes toward racial and ethnic minority groups:

We urge all our people to revise their attitudes and practices toward people of other racial and national

⁴⁶Baker, Blossoming Desert, p. 227.

⁴⁵Ibid.

groups. To this end we make the following suggestions:

1. That we seek to be possessed by Christ and motivated by His Spirit.
2. That we accept His view of mankind: Unity of mankind in origin, nature, salvation, mission; Dignity and worth of every individual; Equal opportunity for the development of his gifts and the exercise of his mission.
3. That we avoid offense to the least of these.
4. That we exemplify in attitudes and conduct God's love for all.
5. Some suggestions as to how one may develop these Christian attitudes and practices:
 - (1) He should examine himself: In the light of God's Word: As a follower of Christ in human relationships; as a citizen of his country in world affairs.
 - (2) He should stop taking people for granted and recognize them as individuals.
 - (3) He should follow reason instead of rumor, fact and not fancies.
 - (4) He should develop an awareness of the gifts, endowments, and achievements of any and every person.
 - (5) He should strive for physical, spiritual, and civic betterment of every man and seek to enlist others in this enterprise.⁴⁷

In the early 1950's a new voice calling for improvements in race relations began to be heard among Texas Baptists and Southern Baptists. Billy Graham, the rising

⁴⁷ Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1947,
p. 201.

evangelist, placed his membership in the First Baptist Church of Dallas in 1954, thus becoming, in the technical sense, a Texas Baptist. While his ministry has extended far beyond the boundaries of the state, his crusades in the major cities of Texas and his published works have given him a hearing probably exceeding that enjoyed by any other Baptist in the state. Early in his evangelistic ministry, Graham faced the race issue and determined that he would encourage desegregation in his meetings. "In March, 1953, he insisted that Negroes be allowed to sit anywhere they chose in the civic auditorium in Chattanooga, Tennessee."⁴⁸

Graham, like Miller, Williams, and Maston, offered a solution for the race problem, not only in Texas, but also, he indicated, in the nation and throughout the world. Like the older Baptist leaders, he, too, was pessimistic regarding the effectiveness of discussions alone, in solving the problems of race. Also like those earlier leaders, Graham deplored the use of violence as a cure for the ills of minorities. The answer to the race question, he contended, lay in men's hearts, both black and white. "There must be genuine love to replace prejudice and hate." This love can

⁴⁸ David Lockard, The Unheard Billy Graham (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1971), p. 118; Cort R. Flint, ed. The Quotable Billy Graham (Anderson, South Carolina: Droke House, 1966), p. 243.

be supplied by Christ and only by Christ," he declared. The new element in Graham's approach to the race problem lay not in semantics; he continued to preach an individualistic gospel insisting upon personal experience in religion. The new element was in his insistence that the gospel has social implications as well as its personal aspects. His insistence upon desegregated meetings as early as 1953 is one indication of his contention that personal religion imposes social responsibilities.⁴⁹

Northern Baptists of Texas, during the 1940's, as earlier, found expression in publications originating outside the state, and in works usually written by non-Texans. Northern Baptists, during the early forties, in their pronouncements on racial issues, expressed a patriotism commonly popular in wartime, and somewhat reminiscent in tone of that patriotism which Texas Baptists had expressed in earlier times. Texas Baptists, however, differed from those of the North in the use of patriotism as a basis for their concern for minorities. Stressing the external menace, Texans emphasized the patriotic aspects of winning the black to the Baptist faith, thus enabling the convert to win members of his own race to the same persuasion. Under the clouds of war, and, sensing a threat to American democracy,

⁴⁹Curtis Mitchell, Billy Graham: The Making of a Crusader (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1966), p. 18.

Northern Baptists did not ignore the external menace upon which Texas Baptists had concentrated, but they were more concerned about the internal danger which racial inequality posed to American democracy:

In our rightful concern over the suppression of democracy abroad and its threat to democracy here, let us not forget that the foundations of American democracy are in danger of being destroyed by our undemocratic and un-Christian treatment of people whose ancestry or the color of whose skin happens to differ from our own.⁵⁰

Northern Baptists further criticized the racial situation, when in 1942, at the height of German fortunes in Europe, the Northern Convention, in annual session, condemned not only the Nazi theory of racial superiority but also evidences of the same view which they witnessed in the United States.⁵¹

As a rule, Northern Baptist leaders called for more active participation by the church, especially in the North, in efforts to eliminate racial discrimination and to promote understanding between the races. At the close of the decade, an editorial in Missions magazine declared that Christians have a duty to help those who are less fortunate. It is the duty of Christians, the editorialist

⁵⁰"The Menace of Race Prejudice to American Democracy," Missions 32(1941):99.

⁵¹Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1941, p. 156.

declared, to promote progress and to recognize colored people on their merits because that was what Christ did, since "He knew no color line." Another writer contended that the church should be in the vanguard of efforts to promote racial justice.⁵²

Whereas Texas Baptists tended to balk at support of federal legislation relating to civil rights, Northern Baptists openly and enthusiastically endorsed it. While wartime records of the Baptist General Convention of Texas remained largely silent on the Negro's political and economic plight, Northern Baptists referred frequently to it. The 1947 convention indicated a continuing interest among Baptists of the North regarding the Negro's plight when it protested that millions of persons were being denied basic human and civil rights. As a means of combating those violations of Negro rights, the Northern Convention adopted a resolution calling for civil rights legislation and state Fair Employment Practices laws. In 1948, the convention adopted a resolution urging the denomination to consider discrimination a moral problem and to support legislation to assure equal opportunity and equal pay for

⁵²William B. Lippard, "Editorial," Missions, 148 (February, 1950):73; Donald B. Cloward, "The Vanishing Color Line in American Life," Missions, 148 (February, 1950):84.

all workers.⁵³

Intermarriage and miscegenation received comparatively little attention during the World War II and postwar periods. Texas Baptists seemed to ignore the subject. Hil-
 yer H. Straton, mentioning the topic briefly in a wartime article in Missions, argued that each race has its own distinctive contribution to make to human progress. Widespread miscegenation, in his view, diluted racial strains, and the effects of such cohabitation were detrimental to both races, he asserted. He concluded that the black race, as well as the white, had a definite contribution to make to human advancement, but that such contribution was weakened by widespread mixing with other races; hence, Straton differed from many southern anti-miscegenationists when he argued that the consequences of intermarriage were bad for both races. Of more importance perhaps was the fact that Straton, a Northern Baptist pastor, contended that God disapproves of racially mixed marriages. In support of his position on interracial marriage, Straton cited conditions in South America, where miscegenation is widespread.⁵⁴

Due to their rapid progress in assimilation and Americanization, the European-born Texans, by the beginning of

⁵³Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1946, p. 174; 1947, p. 186; 1948, p. 124.

⁵⁴Straton, "Ashamed of White Skin," p. 449.

World War II, had ceased to attract the attention they had received earlier from Texas Baptists. The reduction in the number of immigrants coming into the state also contributed to the lack of notice by the leaders of the Baptist General Convention.

As in other days, however, the chief interest of Texas Baptists in non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans in the state continued to be evangelistic, although the old cry, "We must evangelize them or they will Romanize and heathenize us" seems to have lost much of its former force. Texas Baptists, however, remained conscious of the tenacity with which continental Europeans held to their traditional beliefs. In his report to the 1945 session of the Baptist General Convention, Executive Secretary M. E. Melton observed that the old-world prejudices toward other faiths hindered the progress of Baptist work among the European-born Texans. This prejudice, reported Melton, sometimes made it difficult for Baptists to obtain building sites in a European community.⁵⁵

A. C. Miller, however, demonstrated an advance in Baptist thinking regarding European-born Texans. He insisted that the time had come when Anglo-Saxon Texans

⁵⁵Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1945, p. 86.

should no longer look at continental Europeans as a distinct group, but as neighbors. The Baptists continued their missionary interest in these groups, and by 1950, reported that they were making slow but significant progress in evangelizing the non-English-speaking Texans.⁵⁶ German settlers appear to have held the particular interest of Baptist General Convention leaders at that time. In 1952, the Baptist Standard ran a report on the Germans in the United States and in Texas, indicating that they had 270 churches and 42,561 members; of these, ten churches and 1,082 members were in Texas.⁵⁷

It was during World War II that Texas Baptists began to express a new interest in the Jewish people. This revived interest was no doubt due, in a large measure, to the indignities and atrocities the Jews were then undergoing in Nazi Europe. In 1943, David M. Gardner commented favorably regarding a proposal to welcome displaced European Jews to the United States. In the same editorial, he praised the Jews' contributions to history, giving special attention to Moses and Jesus. Two years after the war, A. C. Miller observed that fifty thousand Jews were in Texas. As if to say that Texas Baptists had no valid excuse for failing

⁵⁶Ibid., 1947, p. 200; 1950, p. 72.

⁵⁷The Baptist Standard, 10 April 1952, p. 2.

to reach those people with the gospel, he pointed out that, in the main, the Jews of Texas lived in areas served by the best-equipped and best-led Baptist churches in the state. Tarrant County Baptist leaders urged churches to include Jews in the regular programs of their churches.⁵⁸

In the decade of the 1940's, Texas Baptists continued their interest of former days in the Mexican population of the state, which Executive Secretary Melton estimated to be about one million in 1945.⁵⁹ The spirit of paternalism which had dominated relations between Anglo and Mexican Baptists from the earliest times continued to assert itself. In a manner reminiscent of the attitudes of half a century earlier, E. S. Hutcherson, chairman of the Committee on Interracial Cooperation, referred to the Baptist General Convention of Texas as "the Big Brother" to Mexican Baptists of the state.⁶⁰ Without comment, the El Paso Baptist Association, at its annual meeting in 1943, noted the representation of the First Mexican Baptist Church of El Paso, which was the first time since 1916 that that church had been represented at an annual association meeting.

⁵⁸Ibid., 4 October 1943, p. 3; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1947, p. 200; Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1947, p. 16.

⁵⁹Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1945, p. 84.

⁶⁰Ibid., 1943, p. 68.

No reason was given for the twenty-seven-year interruption in representation of the Mexicans in the El Paso Association.⁶¹ Perhaps the persistent paternalism was one reason for the lack of attendance of Mexicans at the association's meetings.

Despite the outright paternalism expressed at the state convention, association meetings across the state regularly included Spanish-named messengers. The Ministers' Directory for the El Paso Association listed several ministers with Spanish names, while in North Central Texas, the Tarrant Baptist Association voted to accept the application of the Goodwill Mexican Baptist Church of Fort Worth for membership in the association.⁶² A logical result of the membership of Mexican Baptist churches in Anglo associations was the inclusion of messengers from these churches on associational committees. Appropriately, a member of the Goodwill Mexican Baptist Church, Julio Diaz, served on the Tarrant Association's Committee on Race Relations in 1951.⁶³

Baptists have continued to maintain an active mission

⁶¹Minutes of the El Paso Baptist Association, 1943, p. 4.

⁶²Ibid., 1944, p. 11; Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1946, p. 21.

⁶³Minutes, Tarrant Baptist Association, 1951, p. 26.

work among the Mexican people. The basis of this work has been the belief that while the majority of them were Roman Catholic, many of them were open-minded in regard to the evangelical message.⁶⁴

The war period saw a precipitous rise in Texas Baptists' interest in Orientals. A few Chinese had lived in the Mexican border areas of the state for decades, and Texas Baptists and Southern Baptists had maintained some mission work among them. Their presence apparently attracted little attention statewide, judging by the infrequency with which they were mentioned in Baptist publications in Texas.

As with the Chinese, the numbers of Japanese in the state had been negligible, but with the attack on Pearl Harbor and America's entrance into the Sino-Japanese war, they assumed a new and unprecedented prominence in the interest of all Americans, including the Baptists of Texas. The fact that Japanese relocation centers were set up in Arkansas, in the center of Southern Baptist territory, served further to arouse the interest of Southern Baptist and Baptist General Convention leaders. Subsequently, they laid before their constituents the obligations and opportunities of Southern Baptists to minister

⁶⁴Ibid., 1947, p. 15; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1947, p. 197; 1950, p. 71.

to those evacuees in the name of Christ.⁶⁵

During the late forties, the Baptist General Convention of Texas engaged in programs of religious ministry among the Japanese of the state, indicating, on the whole, a friendly disposition toward them on the part of the convention leaders. By the early 1950's, the leaders thought that they were realizing some success in Baptist work among the Japanese residents of the state.⁶⁶

Northern Baptists during the decade of the forties spoke out often in defense of the rights of Orientals in the United States. Even during the war itself, they took up the cause of the Japanese relocation evacuees, when it would have been more popular to have remained silent.⁶⁷ The Baptists of the Northern Convention, however, appear to have maintained no specific interest in the Orientals in Texas during those years, since their work in the state was confined to the Negro population.

The World War II and postwar period was a time of change in the racial attitudes of many of the leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. While some of the old ideas of paternalism, white superiority, and

⁶⁵The Baptist Standard, 6 January 1944, p. 2.

⁶⁶Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1949, p. 144; 1950, p. 72; 1953, pp. 77, 196.

⁶⁷Yearbook, Northern Baptist Convention, 1944, pp. 275-276.

nativism persisted, differing and sometimes conflicting ideas were receiving the support of younger leaders. Cooperation and a greater degree of equalitarianism began to replace the older views, and affected relations between the various racial and ethnic groups. While it should be noted that these new leaders did not yet represent the thinking of the Baptist General Convention as a whole, it is also true that in their positions of leadership and influence, they had the opportunity to plant new ideas among the people. Reports of the Baptist General Convention indicate that they advanced their ideas, even though these younger leaders perhaps did not go as far in advocating equality as civil rights promoters in other sections of the country would have recommended. Undoubtedly the comparatively more liberal ideas which found expression among Texas Baptists during the 1940's and early 1950's helped to prepare Baptists of the state for the far-reaching changes which the Supreme Court decisions and Congressional actions of the next few years would require.

CHAPTER X

TEXAS BAPTISTS' REACTION TO THE BROWN DECISION

May 17, 1954 was a high point in the advancement of the rights of minorities in Texas and in the nation. On that date the United States Supreme Court reversed its own position of half a century earlier and declared that the decision made in the Plessy v. Ferguson case in 1896 had been in error. Although the decision affected a number of similar pending cases, the Court chose that of Brown v. the Topeka (Kansas) Board of Education as the one upon which to base its pronouncement.¹

The 1954 decision, which has affected most events in the civil rights field since that date, had been in the making for as long as twenty years. Negro leader Roy Wilkins placed the first significant event in the trend

¹Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U. S. 537 (1896); Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas, 98 F. Supp. 797 (1954).

toward the Brown v. Topeka ruling in 1935 as being when the state Supreme Court ordered the University of Maryland to admit Negro applicant Donald Gaines Murray into its Law School. Historian David A. Shannon, however, thinks that the trend toward the decision began in 1938 when the United States Supreme Court ruled that Missouri had to provide legal education for Negroes as well as whites.²

Another event which helped set the trend toward the reversal of the 1896 decision occurred in Texas when in the Sweatt v. Painter case, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the state had to admit Negro Heman Sweatt to the University of Texas Law School. The contention of the Court was that the law school which the State of Texas had recently established for Negroes was not equal to that which it had provided for white students.³

Some writers have tied the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court to the climax of a social revolution which had been in the making for many years. As early as 1943,

²Roy Wilkins, "Integration Must Move," The Atlantic Monthly, 201(March, 1958):64; Maston, "Integration," p. 8; University of Maryland v. Murray, 169 Maryland 478 (1936); David A. Shannon, Twentieth Century America: The United States Since the 1890's (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1963), p. 590; Missouri ex rel Gaines v. Canada, 305 U. S. 337 (1938).

³Sweatt v. Painter, 210 SW 2nd 442 (1950).

Howard W. Odum had observed that the outcome of the new social and racial revolution is that a New Negro faces an old white man; that is, the typical white man in America, and especially in the South, does not understand nor appreciate the changes which have occurred in the Negro's view of himself and of the white society. White reaction to the 1954 decision lends support to Odum's assertion. Writing in 1964, James O. Buswell, III, saw the 1954 decision in the Brown case as the climax of a social revolution similar to that which reached its apex in the Civil War.⁴

While other civil rights acts passed Congress in 1957 and again in 1960, they were anti-climactic in comparison to the significance of the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision of 1954. According to Shannon's view, they were so sterile and so diluted that they were of little effect except as instruments of propaganda, and both northern and southern politicians used them for that purpose. Of the nine justices who participated in the Brown decision, seven were Democrats and three were from the South, including Tom Clark of Texas. David M. Gardner,

⁴Howard W. Odum, Race and Rumors of Race (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1943), p. 171; Buswell, Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture, p. 5; Maston, Of One, p. 46.

editor of the Baptist Standard, noted that although the decision of the Court was announced during a Republican administration, all the justices except one had been appointed to the bench by Democratic Presidents.⁵

A few weeks following the Court's order, the Southern Baptist Convention issued a statement approving the decision, which no doubt had a quieting effect on many Baptists of the South and in Texas:

We recognize the fact that this Supreme Court decision is 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. We urge our people and all Christians to conduct themselves in this period of adjustment in the spirit of Christ; we pray that God may guide our thinking and our attitudes to the end that we may help and not hinder the progress of justice and brotherly love; let us exercise patience and good will in the discussions that must take place, and give a good testimony to the meaning of Christian faith and discipleship.⁶

The Southern Baptist Convention had provided a background for its 1954 statement some seven years earlier in its 1957 meeting when it issued a statement on "Race Relations:

⁵Shannon, Twentieth Century America, pp. 593-594; Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, pp. 5-6; David M. Gardner, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 10 June 1954, p. 2; Missions, 163 (February, 1955):15; Yearbook, American Baptist Convention, 1956, p. 85; Powless Lanier, Will Desegregation Desegregate the South? A Frank Discussion of a Very Present Problem (New York: Exposition Press, 1957), p. 15; Swim, "Church and Segregation Crisis," p. iv.

⁶Henlee H. Barnette, Introducing Christian Ethics (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961), pp. 139-140

A Charter of Principles."⁷

Not all the reactions of Texans were as mild as that which the Southern Baptist Convention had urged. Gardner implied that some Texas Baptists were somewhat less than "saintly" in their responses to the Court's decision. Also, he noted that some were uncomplimentary in their descriptions of the justices who rendered the decision. The editor denounced name-calling, evasion, and the questioning of the motives of the justices, and declared it to be the obligation of both blacks and whites "to cooperate in calm, clear thinking, and courageous action in the interest of saving our free public school system." Almost a year later, Gardner exhorted his readers to remain aware of their responsibilities as Christians. "It is not Christian," he insisted, "to bemean some other person because he holds an opinion that is different."⁸

Despite the negative reactions on the part of some Texans, the denominational leaders as well as the Baptist Standard editor appealed to Baptists to maintain Christian attitudes in regard to the order of the Court. Foy Valentine, director of the Christian Life Commission

⁷Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 22.

⁸Gardner, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 10 June 1954; E. S. James, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 16 April 1954, p. 2.

of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, discussed the effects of the ruling with the messengers to the 1955 meeting of the convention:

The problem of race relations has become especially acute within the bounds of this Convention during the past year. In view of the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling that segregation in the public schools on the basis of race is unconstitutional, and in view of the fact that this development is currently a divisive public issue, we recommend that our churches, people, and pastors, seek earnestly to be true to Christ in their attitudes and conduct toward those of other races and toward those of their own race with whom they disagree, avoiding participation in movements or organizations which tend to violate Christian principles and to show disrespect for constituted authority and which intensify rather than abolish tension between the races; and we further recommend, during the present crisis, the constant exercising of patience, tolerance, fairness, and Christian consideration toward the opinions, rights, and interests of others.⁹

Gardner reminded his readers that they had no legal choice but to comply with the Court's decision; it is the law of the land "whether we like the decision or not." As if to allay excitement and tempers as well as stubborn resistance, the editor advanced the opinion that the order would probably not affect the South more than other areas of the country. He then urged the people to adjust to the decision "as good citizens and loyal Americans."¹⁰

⁹Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1955, p. 167.

¹⁰Gardner, "Editorial," The Baptist Standard, 10 June 1954, p. 2.

In addition to the exhortations to accept the Court's decision, some leaders began to point out the real economic, social, educational, and political disabilities imposed by segregation. W. R. Grigg, for example, a denominational worker with the Louisiana Baptist Convention, contributed an article to the Baptist Standard in which he attacked the "separate but equal" doctrine as having been impossible to implement in any significant manner.¹¹

Due in no small measure to the Brown v. Topeka ruling by the nation's highest court, the country's attention to minority matters during the decade which began with the decision concentrated largely upon white-black relations. Discussion and debates concerning the relative intelligence of the Negro and concepts of racial superiority, which had been deemphasized during the past few years, revived. It was also about that time that, because of southerners' opposition to the decision, the South gained a new and dubious prominence in national affairs.

John William Corrington and Miller Williams, in their work on southern literature, wrote of the South and its dilemma in regard to its attitude toward race. They noted the existence of some paradoxes which they argued characterized the relations between blacks and whites in the

¹¹W. R. Grigg, "Segregation--What's Wrong?" The Baptist Standard, 14 January 1956, p. 6.

South. They found one such contradiction in the average southerner's sense of responsibility: a combination of Calvinism and satisfaction with the status quo in race relations.¹²

Attempting to express the conservative southerner's viewpoint and also to defend segregation as practical within the region, James Jackson Kilpatrick, editor of the Richmond, Virginia News Leader, insisted that the reputation of the South had fared worse than conditions warranted. Like many in the South, he accused "the pot of calling the kettle black," in his response to criticisms from the North. He insisted further that:

. . . the South itself has been wronged, cruelly and maliciously wronged, by men in high places whose hypocrisy is exceeded only by their ignorance, men whose trade is to damn the bigotry of the segregated South by day and to sleep in lily-white Westchester County by night.¹³

Commenting on the guilt of the South in the racial crisis, Kilpatrick observed "no sharp sense of sin" on the part of the South because of the Negroes' status, declaring that "the guilt hypothesis is vastly overdrawn." Powless Lanier, also writing from the conservative point

¹²John William Corrington and Miller Williams, eds. Southern Writing in the Sixties: Fiction, 2 vols. (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1966), 1: xviii, xxi.

¹³James Jackson Kilpatrick, The Southern Case for School Segregation (New York: The Crowell-Collier Press, 1962), p. 21.

of view, noted the relative small chance for integration in the South. Equating integration with intermarriage, he contended that the class of southern whites who would be willing to integrate socially, or intermarry with Negroes would hardly find acceptance with the better classes of Negroes.¹⁴

As the South had its ardent defenders in the 1950's, mostly in the South, it also had its caustic critics, and the latter were most often residents of the North. One American Baptist could find no excuse and little charity for segregation as it existed in the South: Cuthbert Rutenber, professor in Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, maintained a strongly critical view of the South:

It is a shameful thing to be reminded that racial discrimination is more extensive and more completely established in the "Bible Belt" of the United States and in the Union of South Africa than anywhere else in the world--and these two places are where Christians run the show.¹⁵

"Segregation," "desegregation," and "integration" are terms which have dominated race relations in the nation as well as in Texas since 1954. Ethics professor Thomas B. Maston saw segregation as a legal, political, social,

¹⁴Ibid.; Lanier, Will Desegregation Desegregate?, p. 59.

¹⁵Cuthbert Rutenber, "The Integrated Church--NOW!" Missions 156(February, 1958):21.

and religious issue. In his description of the practice of segregation, however, he drew a distinction between segregation and separation. The first, he argued, is forced and illegal, and implies superiority and/or inferiority. Separation, on the other hand, is voluntary, and may be maintained by a minority, and it results in no sense of a loss of equality. He continued by noting that the Negro's separation in America is largely enforced, and endures from life to death. As he saw a difference between segregation and separation, Maston also distinguished between desegregation and integration. Again, the difference is that of force as opposed to volition, of law in contrast to tradition and personal choice. Integration, he reasoned, is much slower than desegregation.¹⁶

In regard to the distinctions which Maston drew between the various terms relating to race relations, he found that Brooks Hays, southern moderate on racial matters and president of the Southern Baptist Convention in the mid-fifties, agreed with him. Seemingly overlooking the compulsory nature of segregation in the South, the former Arkansas congressman saw no inconsistency in what he and others referred to as "voluntary separation" of white and Negro

¹⁶Thomas Bufford Maston, "Integration," (Nashville: The Christian-Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1956), p. 3; idem., Segregation and Desegregation, pp. 41, 42, 62, 63.

congregations.¹⁷

The northern church press, having fought segregation and discrimination for a century, continued its struggle following the Supreme Court school desegregation decision of May 17, 1954. The American Baptist Convention's¹⁸ resolutions committee reemphasized its condemnation of segregation in the 1955 session of that body:

Believing that racial segregation in all forms is basically contrary to the Gospel and its teaching concerning . . . man and the church, we urge our churches to examine themselves in this matter and to work for the elimination of any discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.¹⁹

Among Southern Baptists who condemned segregation was Henlee H. Barnette, professor of Christian Ethics at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Barnette was especially critical of segregated worship services. "Racial segregation in the house of God is sinful because it is the objectification of a feeling of superiority to others due to the color of their skin."²⁰

Another leader who contributed to the Baptist thinking

¹⁷Brooks Hays, "The President's Address," The Baptist Standard, 3 June 1959, p. 5.

¹⁸The Northern Baptist Convention changed its name to "American Baptist Convention," in 1951.

¹⁹Yearbook, American Baptist Convention, 1955, p. 116.

²⁰Barnette, Has God Called You?, p. 63.

on the race question was W. R. Grigg. The Louisiana Baptist leader wrote in the Baptist Standard:

When the word "segregation," is thought, seen, or heard in the United States, perhaps in many other sections of the world, it means a kind of separation based on the color of human beings. It means white citizens are in the majority and in full control. It really means, consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, shutting out the Negro people from free and full participation on an equal basis with white people.²¹

Listing several reasons why he believed segregation was wrong, Grigg continued:

It is based on the false assumption that some people, by nature are inherently inferior, while others are inherently superior;

It heaps humiliation upon suppressed and exploited people which contributes to the loss of self-respect;

It denies opportunities to millions of people solely on the the basis of color;

It violates the democratic principle that all men have equal privilege and opportunity before the law; . . .

It denies the truth inherent in the character and nature of God since man was created by God in His image. All men, regardless of the color of their skin, possess the infinite worth and value that God gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him might have eternal life. . . .²²

Grigg also condemned the "separate but equal" doctrine as one which usually means that whites are on top, separated

²¹Grigg, "Segregation--What's Wrong?," p. 9.

²²Ibid.

from the Negroes beneath them.²³

= Maston scored an indirect attack on segregation and on the fears of those who supported it, and at the same time revealed the illogical position of those who used the argument that the Negro preferred the status quo:

. . . If Negroes naturally prefer to be by themselves, why should anyone fear or oppose segregation? If they would voluntarily maintain separation, what would any community or state lose if it repealed its segregation laws? Voluntary segregation would be a more logical argument for desegregation than for segregation.²⁴

Perhaps the most outstanding opponent of segregation among Texas Baptists during the 1950's was Billy Graham. Although he probably lacked Maston's depth of study of the question, he had a much wider hearing than did the older man, and by virtue of his fame, wielded considerable influence upon any question on which he expressed his views. Prior to the Brown decision, he had encouraged desegregation in his crusades in southern cities. In a crusade in Chattanooga in 1953, he made his first definite stand against segregated services. Graham declared that

. . . back in 1953, we began insisting that our meetings be purposely mixed. I took this stand before the Supreme Court school decision of 1954. I had never heard of the word "integration." We just

²³Ibid., 14 January 1956, p. 6.

²⁴Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 40.

felt it was the Christian thing to do and that is why the decision was made.²⁵

In the spring of 1956, Graham began to work for desegregation in the South, contacting individual leaders, urging them to exert their influence in behalf of compliance with the Supreme Court's decision. He declared his personal revulsion at instances of racial discrimination, and he contended that racial prejudice and disharmony were the greatest social evils of the day.²⁶

While some Baptists lagged behind their leaders in accepting desegregation as the law of the land, others were with them, or even ahead of them, expressing impatience at the slowness with which Southern Baptists and Texas Baptists acted on the racial issue. Mrs. Bonita Lindsay of Houston wrote to the editor of the Baptist Standard expressing her conviction that Baptists should be moving faster in this field. "I'm ashamed of Southern Baptists," she wrote. "We not only failed to take a lead in helping to break down prejudice and segregation, but we don't show many signs of gracefully bring up the rear."²⁷

²⁵Flint, Quotable Billy Graham, pp. 160-161; John Pollock, Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), pp. 99, 223.

²⁶Billy Graham, The Secret of Happiness (Kingswood, England: The World's Week, 1956), p. 41.

²⁷Mrs. Tonita Lindsay to E. S. James, in The Baptist Standard, 24 July 1963, p. 3.

Also, in 1963, E. J. Tarbox, a Baptist Student Union leader on the campus of North Texas State University at Denton testified to the racial attitudes in that community. Although the university system had been integrated for several years, such had not been true of the community at large. It was only then beginning to come to grips with the race problem.²⁸

While there were those among Texas Baptists who opposed segregation as un-Christian and un-American, there were others who supported it and criticized those who would "mix the races." Among the more vocal defenders of segregation and therefore, opposed to desegregation, was Carey Daniel, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, West. During the years following the Brown decision, Daniel was active in the White Citizens' Council of America and was president of the Dallas church chapter of the organization in 1959.²⁹

In the mid-fifties, W. A. Criswell, successor to George W. Truett as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, went on record as an opponent of desegregation in the church. He argued that religious groups should remain

²⁸E. J. Tarbox to E. S. James in The Baptist Standard, 24 July 1963, p. 3.

²⁹Carl F. H. Henry, "Editorial," Christianity Today, 19 January 1959, p. 21.

with their own kind, racially and ethnically. In his view, Negroes could never excel in white churches, neither could they grow in such strange surroundings. Taking into account the misery they would feel in a white church, Criswell concluded that it would be a kindness to leave them in their own churches.³⁰ In his position as pastor of the largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention, Criswell doubtlessly encouraged others to take stands similar to that which he expressed; some would take even more reactionary stands than did the Dallas pastor.

That some apparently did take heart from the anti-desegregation stands of leaders such as Criswell and Daniel, is seen in some of the letters written to the editor of the Baptist Standard. L. A. Markham of Ennis wrote reiterating the argument of those who interpret Acts 17:26 in such a way as to enlist the text in support of segregation.³¹ Another complained that the rights of those who had voted against integration were being trampled.³²

Many Baptist leaders, in the first years following

³⁰"Segregation in the Churches," Newsweek, 12 March 1956, p. 64; Swim, "Church and Segregation Crisis," pp. 41-42.

³¹L. A. Markham to E. S. James, in The Baptist Standard, 16 August 1961, p. 3.

³²Jerry Fanning to E. S. James, in The Baptist Standard, 21 December 1960, p. 3.

1954, demonstrated a desire to embrace the way of caution. One of those was W. R. White. Writing in 1956, he took the position that legal segregation had not solved America's race problems. In his view, legally enforced desegregation would also prove ineffectual in solving the nation's racial difficulties.³³

Baptist laymen across the state began searching their souls in the wake of the desegregation movement. Having been taught from childhood that the Bible has the answers to life's questions, they frequently brought their questions concerning the Bible's teachings regarding race relations to their preachers. As a Baptist minister, E. S. James, editor of the Baptist Standard beginning in 1954, fielded numerous questions regarding the teachings of the Scriptures. An example of this type of question came from Mrs. L. W. Jones, of Andrews, Texas. She indicated that she was perplexed by the current situation. Acknowledging the basic equality of all men before God and the law, she yet found it difficult to believe that Negroes would hate their race enough to desire to lose their identity through integration.³⁴ In her statement, Mrs. Jones expressed the

³³W. R. White, "Crisis," The Baptist Standard, 10 November 1956, p. 5.

³⁴Mrs. L. W. Jones to E. S. James, in The Baptist Standard, 25 January 1958, p. 3.

dilemma in which many white southerners have found themselves in regard to the race issue. Recognizing that the Bible teaches human equality, they were tied emotionally and psychologically to the traditions of segregation and thus had difficulty in adjusting to the changes demanded by civil rights legislation. Another letter writer agreed with the ideals embodied in the concept of integration but confessed that she had some prejudice in the matter.³⁵

The question of the origin of the Negro still held the attention of some during the years following the Supreme Court's decision of May, 1954. Perhaps the most prominent Texas adherent to this theory during the 1950's was Carey Daniel. In a letter to the editor of the Baptist Standard, Daniel repeated the age-old arguments of a divine consignment of the Negro to a status of perpetual servitude.³⁶ As in refutation of the "curse" theory, however, Maston insisted that the Bible teaches a common family origin in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The family unity concept of the Bible is further emphasized in the basic unity of the human race, and this unity is spiritual, a unity in Christ, on the basis of redemption

³⁵Mrs. A. C. Pratt to E. S. James, in The Baptist Standard, 1 February 1961, p. 3.

³⁶Carey Daniel to E. S. James, in The Baptist Standard, 5 January 1957, p. 3.

through his blood, he argued.³⁷

Franklin M. Segler, professor of pastoral ministry in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, added his authority to that of Maston's in emphasizing the spiritual unity of all men. All men are sinful, and all are redeemed through faith in Christ, he contended. Sin, declared Segler, affects all classes of society. By the same token, God's love in Christ abounds to all, without regard to race or moral or economic conditions.³⁸ Henlee Barnette reminded Baptists and others through the pages of Christianity Today, that the Negro is a person, made in the image of God. The Black, declared the Louisville professor, reacts to injustice with the same emotions as does a white man faced with similar conditions.³⁹

There is one point on which all parties concerned with the race question since the mid-fifties have agreed: the church should be the leader in finding a solution to the race problem in America. Not all agree as to the extent of the church's responsibility for the current crisis in race relations, but there has been virtually no

³⁷Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 87.

³⁸Franklin M. Segler, "Grace Abounding," in Messages for Men: For Laymen and Ministers, pp. 179-183.

³⁹Henlee H. Barnette, "What Can Southern Baptists Do?," Christianity Today, 24 June 1957, p. 14.

disagreement regarding the premise that the church has both an opportunity and a responsibility in the crisis. In his report to the 1954 session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Foy Valentine argued:

In the realm of Race Relations the world is watching what Baptists in the South are doing and are about to do. And what is far more important, God is watching. We cannot afford, under God, to sit around and whine about what the Supreme Court has done and to wait timorously and fearfully to see what they are going to do. . . . In a peculiar way the Christian principles of justice and love ought to be exercised just . . . now with general reference to the Negro people in our midst and with particular reference to the issue of segregation in our public schools, lest we add to the problem instead of becoming a part of the solution. . . .⁴⁰

Carl Henry, writing for a southern as well as for a northern constituency, considered it obvious that the church should play a leading role in promoting Christian attitudes among the races. He took notice of the fact that some leaders felt the church was inexcusably slow in assuming leadership in attacking racial discrimination and injustice. For his own part, he expressed the view that there were times when the church displayed more enthusiasm than good judgment, and more zeal than understanding in its search for a solution to the race problem. Probably attempting to assume the position of a moderate on the race question, Henry made a plea for what he

⁴⁰Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1954, p. 170.

thought was a balance between idealism and realism in regard to the race question.⁴¹

Maston also implied that the church was neglecting its duty in race relations. Taking note of the assertions of some of the church's critics, he seemed to agree with them in their contention that in the middle of the twentieth century, athletic directors have done more for the advancement of the Negro than have leaders of the church. The Southwestern Seminary professor further suggested that some Baptists had attempted to evade their responsibility for others by seeking to divorce religion and race, assuming that there is no connection between a person's being a Christian and his relationship to Negroes.⁴²

Maston continued to press his point regarding the Christian's obligations in regard to the race question. The Christian's ultimate responsibility, he reasoned, was neither to culture nor to custom, but to God. In discharging one's obligations to members of minority groups, each individual must be aware of the imperative demand for love in human relations, Maston avowed: "Regardless of class or color every child of God is a brother, and

⁴¹Henry, "Editorial," Christianity Today, 30 September 1957, p. 23.

⁴²Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, pp. 41, 85.

should be a brother beloved." Commenting further on the duties of brotherhood, Maston stated: "Brothers should love one another. This should be true regardless of who these brothers are, where they live, what they have, or the race to which they belong."⁴³

Beginning in the early 1960's, certain Baptist laymen began to speak out more publicly on social issues. One such layman was William B. Henderson, who contributed a chapter to Messages for Men, a work edited by Henry Clifton Brown, Jr. In his article, Henderson spoke of the Christian's attitudes on social and political issues as "a blind spot." This blindness, he continued, is likely to be a result of the fact that the Christian in the South is more apt to share the racial attitude of a non-Christian southerner with a social and cultural background similar to his own than he is to share the social ideals of a Christian in the North. In addition, the Baptist layman's economic and geographic backgrounds are more apt to influence the formation of his racial attitudes than his Christian experience and doctrines, Henderson concluded.⁴⁴ Touching upon the same theme as did Henderson, Francis Du Bose, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Breckenridge, Texas,

⁴³Ibid., p. 51.

⁴⁴Henderson, "Man in the Pew," p. 63.

called on Texas Baptists to make a choice between their culture and the interests of the Kingdom of God: "Sooner or later, we must decide whether it will be our culture or His Kingdom!"⁴⁵

Baptist leaders in Texas took steps to implement the reports of the convention's departments and the resolutions which its committees offered. One such action was that of cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention in the organization of a Southern Baptist advisory council to exercise oversight of the convention's work with Negroes throughout the South. Established on January 13, 1955, the panel named Texas Baptist T. B. Maston as chairman. Dr. L. S. Sedberry, of the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, was named vice-chairman of Maston's committee. Significantly, Sedberry was one of the first Negroes to serve on a convention-wide Southern Baptist committee. The advisory council's function, besides general oversight of the convention's work with Negroes, was to discuss and correlate plans, to share advice and procedures, and to extend the total plan of Southern Baptists among Negroes.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Francis Du Bose, "What Price Prejudice?," The Baptist Standard, 30 October 1963, p. 7.

⁴⁶"Maston Heads New Group on Negro Work," The Baptist Standard, 22 January 1955, p. 5.

Meanwhile, in Texas, black and white Baptists put forth joint efforts designed to achieve better understanding and improved relations between the two races. Foy Valentine told of the activities of the interracial Beaumont Fellowship Bible Conference. Leaders in the Beaumont area had set up the conference following wartime disturbances in the Houston-Beaumont area. Valentine asserted that the organization had been effective in "easing tensions and developing a better spirit between the races in Southeast Texas."⁴⁷

During the decade following the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision in 1954, leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas demonstrated a new concern for education of minorities, especially Negroes, in the state. This interest applied particularly to adult training and higher education for minority youths. In 1954, the Negro Work Subcommittee recommended to the Dallas Baptist Association that the body shift its educational emphasis from children's work to the training of adult leadership for Negro Baptist churches.⁴⁸

It was during the 1950's that Baptist leaders began to give special attention to the importance of the role of

⁴⁷The Baptist Standard, 22 January 1955, p. 5.

⁴⁸Ibid., 18 February 1954, pp. 7-8; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1955, p. 165.

the minister in racial affairs. While some pastors, such as Ralph M. Smith and Joseph Martin Dawson, both of Austin, spoke out in favor of desegregation, others, like W. A. Criswell and Carey Daniel, opposed it, to varying degrees.⁴⁹

Henlee Barnette, educator of preachers, gave a number of instructions for ministers as they faced the race question in their churches and communities. According to his suggestion, the Baptist minister should know the Negro and his community. He should learn where and how the black lives and what his grievances are. Also, the minister needs to know what was being done and what could be done in his vicinity to improve the Negro's lot. Barnette likewise warned the preacher of the pitfalls of paternalism in dealing with people of other races; the modern approach to good racial relations is cooperation, not condescension, he asserted. Barnette cautioned the Baptist pastor who sought to be at his best in relations with minority groups, to match his practices with his moral preachments on the subject of race. Finally, the ethics professor encouraged the Baptist minister to emphasize

⁴⁹Joseph Martin Dawson, "I Belong to a Southern Baptist Integrated Church," The Christian Century, 75(1958): 1304; "Segregation in the Church," p. 64; Daniel to James, p. 3.

biblical principles rather than specific codes of conduct when dealing with racial issues in the pulpit.⁵⁰

Closely related to the role of the minister in dealing with the race problem was the question of whether or not to welcome members of minorities into worship services, Sunday School classes, and church membership. As early as 1955, the Austin Baptist Association welcomed two Negro Baptist churches into its membership; these became the first Negro Baptist churches in Texas since Civil War days to join a Southern Baptist Association. As reported in the Baptist Standard, the meeting which received these churches into the association went smoothly, if not unanimously. The vote was ninety-nine to twenty-five in favor of receiving them.⁵¹ An Austin church, University Baptist, had already become one of the first Baptist churches in Texas in modern times to receive Negro members. In 1945, the church had voted to abandon separate seating requirements for Negroes, and in 1950, it had received its first Negro member.⁵²

"Miscegenation," "amalgamation," "interracial marriage," "mongrelization," are terms which have continued to stir

⁵⁰Barnette, "What Can Southern Baptists Do?," pp. 14-15.

⁵¹The Baptist Standard, 22 October, 1955, p. 13.

⁵²Dawson, "Southern Baptist Integrated Church," p. 1304; Swim, "Church and Segregation Crisis," pp. 44-45.

emotions in the South, and the possibility of such a development has always been one of the most widespread and one of the most effective arguments of the defenders of a segregated society. Those who have expressed such fears usually have ignored or minimized the fact that a great deal of miscegenation has taken place in the South despite laws forbidding interracial marriage. Psychologist John Dollard has contended that one reason for the Southerner's vigorous defense of legal segregation was the fact that integration might open his home to black men in the same way that he has maintained access outside the law to the Negro's home and to the black man's women. In other words, stated Dollard, the white man has insisted that the black man share his women with the white man, who in return, has refused to share his women with the Negro.⁵³

Maston, writing from the standpoint of a Christian leader, also noted the widespread fears that wholesale interracial marriage would result from desegregation. He also acknowledged that the professed fears of amalgamation were the devices of some who wished to evade desegregation. Like Roger Crook, however, Maston tended to discount the danger of intermarriage, basing his conclusion on various

⁵³John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1937), pp. 145ff.

authorities who had studied the subject, among whom were Gunnar Myrdal and Robert R. Moton.⁵⁴ Maston further noted that it was inconsistent to place all the blame in an interracial marriage on one party; after all, he observed, it "takes two to make a match." While he insisted that the Bible was not a legitimate source for arguments against interracial marriage, he also conceded that in the present American culture, it was not wise for blacks and whites to marry each other. He contended, however, that objections to intermarriage should not imply that the Negro was inherently inferior. Maston encouraged any person contemplating an interracial marriage to consider the effect that such a step would have on society.⁵⁵

By the mid-fifties, American Baptists' activity in Texas had decreased to their support of Bishop College and to a few dually aligned Negro Baptist churches in the larger cities of the state. During that period, the chief mode of expression for American Baptists was Missions magazine. Generally, on current interest subjects American Baptist leaders spoke for the denomination, although, from

⁵⁴Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, pp. 74-75; Myrdal, American Dilemma, pp. 64-65; Robert R. Moton, What the Negro Thinks (New York: Doubleday and Doran, 1929), p. 241; Crook, No South or North, p. 29.

⁵⁵Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, pp. 78-80; idem., The Bible and Race, pp. 29-30.

time to time, there was disagreement with denominational policy. Such expressions of dissent, however, were usually confined to the "Letters-to-the-Editor" page.⁵⁶

Being of a more liberal bent than their Baptist counterparts in the South, American Baptists were prone to be more outspoken on public issues. A few months after the Supreme Court's 1954 school decision, an unidentified writer in Missions announced that "The age of white supremacy is gone forever. All America must learn that lesson. We should have learned it long ago."⁵⁷ The Missions editor, in 1960, praised the role of white and black ministers in San Antonio in persuading variety store operators to desegregate their lunch counters before the staging of any demonstrations on their premises.⁵⁸

As a separate interest among Texas Baptists, concern for the foreign-born European had all but disappeared by the 1950's, primarily because few of those people lived in the state. Baptists' attention, therefore, was directed toward other minority groups, especially the Mexicans, who remained the largest non-Anglo-Saxon European-related minority in the state. Their status as a foreign missions

⁵⁶John C. Slemp, "Editorial," Missions 162(November, 1964):23.

⁵⁷Missions 152(November, 1954):15.

⁵⁸Ibid. 158(May, 1960):14.

group ended in 1961, however, when the Mexican Baptist Convention merged with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.⁵⁹

Even though the Anglo and Mexican Baptists worked together in one convention following the merger in 1961, the constant influx of Mexican nationals into the United States necessitated, for Texas Baptists, the continuance of language missions and bilingual churches. L. D. Wood, who directed the work of Mexican missions during the early fifties, promoted cooperation between the Anglo and Mexican Baptist churches. An example of this closer cooperation was found at Romas, in the Rio Grande Valley, where the two ethnic groups used the same church building. In Dallas, the Dallas Baptist Association assisted in the support of the Mexican Goodwill Center of that city.⁶⁰

With the forming of closer ties between the Anglo and Mexican Baptists of the state came an exchange of personnel. A few Anglo-Baptists had long served as missionaries among the Latin Americans, but in 1955, the Baptist General Convention of Texas appointed

⁵⁹Baker, Blossoming Desert, p. 246.

⁶⁰The Baptist Standard, 21 January 1954, p. 16; 25 February 1954, p. 16; Minutes, Dallas Baptist Association, 1954, pp. 107, 166.

Rudy Hernandez to its staff of evangelists, although he worked primarily among Mexican Americans. He had the distinction of being the first full-time evangelist to work among the Mexican Baptist churches of Texas.⁶¹ In 1956, pursuant to a grant which the state Women's Missionary Union made to the Department of Direct Missions and Stewardship Promotion, the Baptist General Convention provided scholarships for Mexican-American college students. Twenty-two students received aid the first year, twenty-one of whom enrolled in Baptist colleges.⁶²

Noting the difficulties of Mexican-Americans, torn between their ancestral religion and culture and that of the Anglo majority, Wood expressed a sentiment less openly stated by Texas Baptists in the fifties than in earlier times when he proclaimed: "Texas Baptists must either bring these fellow citizens to a knowledge of Christ, or they will paganize the entire society."⁶³

Among other minorities in Texas during the 1950's and early 1960's, only the Jews received special attention in Baptist General Convention annals. The fact that that

⁶¹The Baptist Standard, 19 March 1955, p. 15.

⁶²Ibid., 1 October 1955, p. 11; Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1956, p. 42.

⁶³Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1958, pp. 94-95.

group maintained a voluntary social and religious separation from the Gentile community removed them from the kind of concern which characterized Baptists' attitudes toward Negroes. Baptists observed that the Jew withdrew at the close of business activities into his own family circle.⁶⁴

Texas Baptists' interests in the Jews, as in the cases of other minorities, was primarily evangelistic. For the Jews, however, there continued to be a special interest on the part of the Baptists, as well as other Christians, because of the Jews' ethnic kinship with Jesus Christ. In 1954, the executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Forrest C. Feezor, noted that two ministers, William Mitchell, of Houston, and John Meiers, of Fort Worth, were involved in special ministry to the Jews. Feezor indicated that the Baptist approach to Jewish missions was to regard the Jew as "a normal lost individual in need of the personal redemption of Christ."⁶⁵

The Tarrant Baptist Association's Committee on Interracial Work insisted that the Jews were lost because they

⁶⁴Maston, Segregation and Desegregation, p. 42.

⁶⁵Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1954, pp. 94-95.

were without Christ, thus emphasizing the statement which Feezor had made in 1954. The committee continued to express its concern for the Jewish people by suggesting that churches adopt programs designed especially for reaching Jews and winning them to membership in Southern Baptist churches.⁶⁶ Ralph L. Smith, professor of Old Testament in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote of the biblical basis for evangelistic efforts among the Jews: "The Christian church began by throwing down the middle wall of partition which separated the Jew and the Gentile. We must never allow new walls to be erected in the place of this old wall."⁶⁷

American Baptists maintained an interest in the Jewish people, although they had no active ministry among the Jews in Texas. Missions editor John C. Slemp saw no difference between anti-Semitism and discrimination against the Negroes. Commenting on the 1960 wave of anti-Semitism in West Germany and the United States, he characterized it as

. . . an outward symbol of deep-seated frustration that knows no geographical boundaries. . . . It is an expression of race hatred and race conflict that has its source in the caves and jungles of prehistoric man. It is man's age-long, stubborn resistance to becoming civilized.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Ralph L. Smith, "A City Without Walls," in Southwestern Sermons, ed. and comp. H. C. Brown, Jr., (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), p. 187.

⁶⁸Missions 158(March, 1960):13.

The Baptist Missionary Association of Texas had begun its existence about 1900 when a number of churches, acting under the leadership of S. A. Hayden, withdrew from the Baptist General Convention of Texas in protest over the convention's methods of missionary support and its means of determining representation of churches in associational and state affairs. For more than half a century, the association's publications dealt with matters relating chiefly to internal affairs. Such external subjects as were discussed centered largely on the "errors" of the Baptist General Convention and the Roman Catholic Church. The organization remained largely silent in regard to minority groups during those early years.⁶⁹

Shortly after the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision, Baptist Missionary Association writers began to take more interest in ethnic and racial minorities; especially was this true in regard to the Negroes. In June of that year, L. H. Raney, missions secretary for the association, observed that he knew of no Baptist Missionary Association church among the Negroes, adding that the association should have churches among the blacks. The Negroes, he argued, needed the message of God's word as preached by association Baptists. He further observed

⁶⁹For examples of this silence, see issues of Baptist Progress prior to 1954.

that association Baptists had a debt to the Negro that no one else could pay. In the same article, however, he appeared to condone violence against blacks, indicating that there were some circumstances in which he might be able to approve of mob action when it resulted from hideous crimes committed by Negroes.⁷⁰ Another denominational executive, however, D. Dewey Morgan, was less rigid than Raney. Although he, like Raney, was a segregationist, he denounced violence, hatred, and bloodshed as false answers to race problems, allowing for no situations in which he would approve of violence or mob action.

Expressing the views of a segregationist, Raney indicated strong disapproval of any Negro who "stepped out of line" in regard to racial caste, and his condemnation of a white who violated the racial "mores" as Raney understood them was even stronger. He advanced the view, not uncommon in parts of the Deep South, that the progress of the Negro during the past eighty-five years was due to the fact that the black had "stayed in his place." Referring indirectly to the Court's ruling, he argued: "The Negro

⁷⁰Raney, "Association Baptists and Negroes," p. 6; T. C. Melton, "Editorial," Baptist Progress, 20 February 1964, p. 2.

⁷¹Baptist Progress, 17 October 1957, p. 7.

who has been taught to occupy his place and taught it in a Christian spirit, will not want to go to school with the White."⁷² Thus Raney assumed the same attitude on the part of the Negroes that some leaders of the Baptist General Convention had assumed, but from a more rigid segregationist position.

Notwithstanding his insistence that the Negro should "stay in his place," Raney urged association Baptists to exert evangelistic efforts among the Negroes of Texas. In his exhortation to evangelism, he revealed that part of his motive was that of keeping blacks out of white churches:

Let's win them, then teach them. . . . When we do, we can teach them where their place is socially speaking, and help prevent some of the things which we can hardly bear to experience, and some things which are contrary to God's work.⁷³

By establishing Baptist Missionary Association churches among the Negroes, Raney hoped to encourage blacks "to stay in their own section and among their own people. . . ." The race problem, he contended, would be solved "among Negroes who have been led to Christ and have been taught His principles and His standard of living." Blaming the political motives of certain whites for much of the racial unrest of the period, he hoped that "we who know Christ

⁷²Raney, "Association Baptists and Negroes," p. 6.

⁷³Ibid.

will conduct ourselves in a Christian way and say the Christian thing. . . ."74

Three years following the publication of Raney's article, Curtis Carroll, editor of the Baptist Missionary Association's state paper, the Baptist Progress, expressed in his editorials much the same views as had Raney. In one column, he praised those in other Christian groups who had expressed convictions opposed to integration, despite pressure from denominational leaders. He contended that the leaders who advocated integration were out of step with the majority of the rank-and-file members of their churches. Like Raney, Carroll urged readers of the Baptist Progress to remember that God wanted them to be Christian in obeying the laws of the land, even if they did not like them, and even if they believed them to be unconstitutional.⁷⁵ While Carroll did not, as did Raney, openly state that he could, under certain circumstances, approve of violence, he was certainly no less a segregationist than the missions secretary. Like others, he was torn between his devotion to law and order and the new law demanding desegregation, which violated his cultural

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Curtis Carroll, "Editorial," Baptist Progress, 1 August 1957, p. 2.

tradition.⁷⁶

In keeping with the views of Raney and Carroll, Baptist Missionary Association leaders went on record officially opposing integration in the public schools. On September 10, 1957, the association's State Missions Board voted unanimous disapproval of the mixing of the white and colored races in the schools.⁷⁷ When the state association convened several weeks later for its annual meeting, it unanimously accepted the Board's recommendation and its proposed resolution condemning desegregation as demanded by the Brown decision.⁷⁸

In regard to other minorities, the Baptist Missionary Association appeared to have little comment. Such silence may have been due to the fact that those Baptists seem to have had little contact with members of minority groups. While the organization maintained Robert Isaacs as a worker among Latin Americans in West Texas, their success appears to have been meager. D. Dewey Morgan, in a 1957 report to the association, expressed concern for this phase of the association's activity, describing it as

⁷⁶Ibid.; See also, Mrs. L. W. Jones to E. S. James in The Baptist Standard, 25 January 1958, p. 3.

⁷⁷Baptist Progress, 19 September 1957, p. 3.

⁷⁸Ibid., 24 October 1957, p. 11; 21 November 1957, p. 5.

"The hardest and perhaps the slowest work of Baptist Missionary Association missions. . . ." In a later comment, Morgan charged that association Baptists had neglected the Mexicans in their mission work.⁷⁹

Among the three major groups of white Baptists active in Texas appeared three different positions in regard to the race question. American Baptists have traditionally represented the most liberal views on the question. The moderate Baptists in relation to the race issue were usually found among the Southern Baptists, represented by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The Baptist Missionary Association of America, through its state organization, the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, represented the most conservative view. None of these views, however, commanded the total allegiance of the group which it guided. Persons holding all three views were found in all three of these Baptist organizations. In Texas, however, it seems safe to conclude that the Baptist General Convention of Texas, as the largest Baptist body in the state, represented the racial attitudes of the majority of Baptists within its boundaries.

⁷⁹Baptist Progress, 28 May 1964, p. 9; 26 September 1957, p. 3; 10 January 1957, p. 4.

EPILOGUE

As Texas Baptists move into the 1970's, the changes in racial attitudes and practices in race relations which the leaders began to advocate some thirty-five years earlier continue to gain acceptance. More and more are coming to acknowledge the ideas of men like Maston, Alexander, Miller, Valentine, and Graham as valid. As late as 1946, an unidentified writer, quoted by Larry R. Jerden, criticized Maston's views by saying that "Any man who says a black man is as good as a white man shouldn't be allowed to write for Southern Baptists."¹ But in the 1970's, his idea seems less typical than it did in the 1940's.

Nevertheless, even though many Texas Baptist leaders indicate a more liberal attitude toward race relations than their predecessors, it should not be assumed that all Baptist leaders in the state share these views. By no means have these ideas become the accepted pattern in

¹Larry R. Jerden, "Maston Pauses for Anniversaries," The Baptist Standard, 2 June 1971, p. 11.

Baptist churches across the state; yet some churches have chosen to remain in their original communities and minister to changing constituencies rather than flee to the suburbs as others have done. One church which has chosen to remain in its original location and minister to all persons, regardless of racial or ethnic identification, is the Eastland Street Baptist Church, located in the east section of Fort Worth.²

Churches in other sections of the state have also ministered to all persons who desire to attend. According to an article appearing in the Baptist Standard, Temple Baptist Church of Austin has received black and Mexican-American members for a number of years. The Allandale church in the same city has also exercised a multi-racial ministry.³

The Baptist Standard also reported that since 1965, several of the larger churches of Dallas, including the First Baptist Church, have integrated their memberships. Besides the First Baptist Church of Dallas, the Fruitdale Baptist Church, the First Baptist Church of Oak Cliff, and the Gaston Avenue Baptist Church have received Negroes

²Robert O'Brien, "Texas Churches Quietly Integrating," The Baptist Standard, 18 November 1970, p. 5.

³Ibid.

into their memberships. The Oak Cliff church has sought to be a "regional" church, and makes a special effort to minister to all persons without regard to race, according to its pastor, James Cooper.

Soon after the church received thirteen black members, Cooper commented: "We hope to be a regional church for all of Oak Cliff with a ministry to all persons, black, white, or Mexican-American."⁴ The Oak Cliff pastor noted that differences in culture and form of worship may limit the average Southern Baptist church in its ministry to minority group members, adding:

But I believe that all our white churches should have the commitment to Jesus Christ to minister to all who can feel comfortable with our form of worship. . . . It would be difficult for me to serve as pastor of a church . . . which by the policy of segregation would in effect hang a sign on the door which said, "This is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, No Negroes allowed."⁵

Cooper continued by expressing the belief that Texas Baptists deserve no special accolade for opening their church doors to black Baptists: "Patting yourself on the back for accepting Negroes as equals is sort of like patting yourself on the back for not robbing a bank."⁶

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

Not only are some white Baptist churches in Texas accepting blacks and Mexicans into their memberships, some are also naming minority group members to positions of responsibility and leadership in the local congregations. In 1970, the Calvary Baptist Church of Waco called Herman Martinez, a graduate of Wayland Baptist College, as associate pastor, in an effort to minister to the Mexican-Americans residing in its neighborhood. The pastor, Bill Austin, denied that the concentration of Martinez's work among Mexican-Americans meant segregation. According to his explanation, the presence of Martinez as a member of the church's staff simply meant that the Latin people had a choice of attending English-language or Spanish-language worship services.⁷

Mexican-Americans quite frequently unite with Anglo Baptist churches in Texas, and are even elected to positions of leadership within the local congregation. It is rare for Negro members of white Baptist churches to be named to positions of leadership, yet the First Baptist Church of Del Rio has named a black to its board of deacons. When it elected George Abernathy, a staff sergeant at Laughlin Air Force Base, to the office of deacon, it probably became the first Southern Baptist church in Texas to name a black to such high office in the local church.

⁷"Church Calls Latin as Associate Pastor," The Baptist Standard, 13 May 1970, p. 19.

Abernathy was one of about twenty Negroes who held membership in the Del Rio church.⁸

Concerning Abernathy's election to the church's second highest office, the pastor, Fred Wiesen commented that the Negro's election as a deacon was even more significant in the improvement of race relations than the admittance of blacks to the church's membership.⁹ Except for the Del Rio church, most of the reported instances of blacks joining white Baptist churches have been in metropolitan areas such as Austin, Fort Worth, and Dallas. So far as is known, no white Baptist churches in East Texas have received Negroes as members, suggesting that the spirit of liberalization of racial attitudes among Texas Baptists has not yet taken place to any significant degree, if at all, in areas where Negroes are most numerous.

Baptist associations as well as local churches in Texas have assumed interracial characteristics, as more of them have received Negro Baptist churches into their memberships. At least one such group in East Texas, where no blacks are known to have joined white Baptist churches, has received a Negro church into its membership. In 1970, the Union

⁸"First Negro Deacon," The Baptist Standard, 4 November 1970, p. 19.

⁹O'Brien, "Texas Churches Integrating," p. 5.

Baptist Association accepted letters of application from the Fourth Missionary Baptist Church and the New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church; these two congregations appear to be rural churches.¹⁰ The Union Association action represented a reversal in the associational leadership's attitude since 1851, when it rejected the application of a Negro Baptist church in Anderson. The nineteenth century associational leaders felt that the existence of an independent Negro church was "inconsistent with the blacks' status as servants and their masters' interests."¹¹ Other associations receiving Negro Baptist churches into their memberships include the Blanco and Corpus Christi associations in South Texas.¹²

An important aspect of Baptists' relations with minority groups in the Dallas area has been the Dallas Interracial Institute, a joint venture of Bishop College and the Southern Baptist Extension Department. The ministry provides in-service training for Negro church

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Paul Wayne Stripling, "The Negro Excision from Baptist Churches in Texas, 1861-1870," Th. D. Dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, 1967, p. 80.

¹²O'Brien, "Texas Churches Integrating," p. 5.

leaders.¹³

While Baptist churches and associations are taking cautious steps toward racial equality, individual leaders are taking more definite stands advocating equality of the races in church relations. It appears that Will D. Campbell's charges of indifference and inactivity are being taken seriously by some of them, and that they are assuming that the churches should not be less Christian than the school, business establishments, and sports associations.¹⁴ Perhaps the most outstanding indication of a change of attitude toward minority groups is found in the statement of W. A. Criswell regarding integration in Baptist churches. In a reversal of his former position in which he contended that Negroes could not be happy in white churches and that it was a kindness to leave them in their own churches, he stated in 1971 that segregation in the church is "manifest hypocrisy."¹⁵

In describing his change of attitude, Criswell remarked:

I used to not be happy about colored people thinking about joining our churches. I was ignorant, unchris-

¹³"Interracial Institute Honors Eleven," The Baptist Standard, 26 May 1971, p. 12.

¹⁴Campbell, "Race and Renewal of Church," p. 11.

¹⁵"Criswell Brands Segregation in Church 'Manifest Hypocrisy,'" The Baptist Standard, 27 January 1971, p. 5.

tian [sic]. I needed to learn about the Lord. I needed to grow in grace. . . . You are not living the word of God when you say to a (black) [sic] fellow, "Now God loves you and God died for you, and we want you to be saved, but I don't want you in my church, my congregation, my fellowship," . . . That is manifest hypocrisy.¹⁶

Most of the changes in attitudes toward minorities are observed in churches affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention. An examination of recently published materials of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas suggests no change in their previous patterns of opposition to desegregation in the public schools, and they have continued to reject integration within their churches.¹⁷ At the same time, however, the Baptist Missionary Association has admitted Negroes to its college at Jacksonville, Texas, and receives black publications such as Ebony magazine in its library.¹⁸

The differences between attitudes toward minorities observed in the members and leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in comparison with those of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas may be explained by the fact that some leaders of the Baptist General Conven-

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷See issues of Baptist Progress, 1965-1971; Minutes of the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, 1965-1971.

¹⁸Observed by author while visiting Jacksonville College, Jacksonville, Texas, 23 February 1972.

tion have urged recognition of the Negro as a spiritual equal for more than a quarter of a century. Beginning in the late thirties, Charles T. Alexander called upon leaders and members of the Baptist General Convention churches to replace attitudes of paternalism and superiority with those of cooperation and equality.¹⁹ Maston and others have continued to promote Alexander's goals. In contrast to the Baptist General Convention's leaders, those of the Baptist Missionary Association have continued to support segregation and the attitudes of paternalism and white superiority in their relations with minorities, thus reflecting the views of their constituency rather than attempting to lead their people to assume new positions and attitudes.²⁰

In their approaches to solutions of the race problems, Baptists of all affiliations, as well as many other Christians, appear to possess a certain weakness. While many view the racial picture from a cultural perspective and see little or no relation between their Christian faith and racial justice, others have sought to view the situation from a definitely Christian view, and have recommended

¹⁹Annual, Baptist General Convention, Texas, 1936, p. 101.

²⁰For an example, see Baptist Progress, 3 June 1957, p. 6.

solutions based primarily upon Christian premises. The weakness of the churchmen's position is an apparent assumption that all concerned with the problems will react in accord with Christian principles. They seemingly have failed to recognize that non-Christian elements such as the Black Muslims, the Black Panthers, and other militant minority groups have their solutions which they enthusiastically advance, but which are not necessarily based on the Christian ethic. Neither do they feel compelled to accept the Christians' ideals of racial justice. A way needs to be found to meet these groups on common ground which can make an effective solution to the race problems possible.

The cause of Baptists and other Christians is weakened further when members of their own denominations fail to act according to generally accepted Christian norms. Such failures help to condemn those Christians both in the eyes of other Christians as well as non-Christians, and their conduct in race relations has furnished militants with excuses for violence or the threat of violence.

Southern Baptists and Texas Baptists had begun to speak of racial justice and equality before the Brown v. Topeka decision of the Supreme Court. In 1947 the Southern Baptist Convention had issued its "Charter of Principles" statement urging the promotion of racial justice by Southern Baptist agencies and churches. In 1953, almost

at the beginning of his career as an international evangelist, Billy Graham had begun to urge upon his audiences the social implications of the gospel and to encourage desegregation in his crusades. In his Chattanooga crusade of that year, he insisted upon desegregation of the services.²¹

Although Southern Baptists began discussing the race question as early as 1947, and Texas Baptists long before that date, it was not until after the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision that as a denomination, they began urging positive action on the issue. The non-Baptist may raise the question as to why the Baptist leaders waited so long to press their convictions upon their fellows. Part of the explanation may lie in the tendency of most groups, especially those of an autonomous nature, to talk long before they act. One can only speculate as to whether the Baptists of Texas would have moved toward new positions without the compulsion offered by government action. That they did not lends some doubt as to the rapidity with which they would have advanced toward racial equality, if, indeed, they would have, at all. Certainly, such actions would have been much longer in coming but for

²¹Pollack, Billy Graham, p.223 ; Annual, Southern Baptist Convention, 1947, p.

such events as the Brown decision.

That Baptists moved effectively in the field of race relations only after the school desegregation order raises some question as to the sincerity of action under such compulsive circumstances, and such question would be even more damaging had it not been for urgings of men such as Maston, Alexander, and Miller in the years preceding the decision. Expressions among members and leaders of the Baptist General Convention, however, seem to indicate that the Supreme Court ruling forced them to examine their own records and to look again at the Scriptures which had guided them in church matters. Some were obviously ashamed of the record which they saw and attempted to rectify conditions. At the same time, as they re-examined the Scriptures, they concluded that former generations had been mistaken in the interpretations which they had placed upon certain biblical passages in regard to race relations.

By the 1930's, Baptists in Texas and other parts of the South were coming under the influence of ideas from other sections of the nation. The news media broadcast conditions in the South to the rest of the nation, as well as to the far corners of the earth, and brought reactions of condemnation both from other areas of the United States and from foreign countries. Such reactions, combined with

other factors, such as government action and re-examination of biblical interpretation, no doubt had their effect in helping Texas Baptists to move toward attitudes recognizing the equality of the races. In addition, population shifts may well have had their effect. Texans have traveled to other sections of the country where different ideas prevail. Americans from other areas have visited Texas, some becoming permanent residents of the state. These, too, no doubt, have made a contribution to the changing racial climate of the state.

Much remains for Baptists of Texas to accomplish in the area of race relations. The paternalism of former times appears to be giving way to cooperation; the superiority complex of other generations is crumbling before a new spirit of equality. The old suspicions are being overcome with new depths of trust and understanding. Nevertheless, remnants of the old ways remain. Many are torn between their understanding that the Bible teaches human equality, and the old cultural traditions which decreed forced separation of the races. Many have not yet been able to bridge the gap between culture and law, between culture and the Bible. These will move hesitantly and haltingly toward a practical acceptance of the premise that all men are equal before God and the law.

As yet, the new attitudes affect only a minority in the Baptist denomination, but suggestions of change are occurring in unexpected areas, such as East Texas, traditionally the most conservative section of the state in regard to race relations.²² Indications are that Baptists are moving, although slowly, toward recognition of the full rights of all human beings regardless of color or ethnic origin. Although the full transition has not been completed, they have moved far from the paternalistic, white supremacist views of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century.

²²O'Brien, "Texas Churches Integrating," p. 5.

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