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THE ROLE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES
IN A SEGREGATED SOCIETY

By

SARA BARRY

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INTRODUCTION

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THE ROLE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U.S. IN
A SEGREGATED SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

A. Subject Stated

This thesis proposes to be a study of the effect of the race problem in the South on the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and an evaluation of the historic mission and witness of this Church to the Negro in the South.

B. Subject Delimited and Justified

There is a definite divergence of opinion and conviction on the part of leaders in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. as to just what the role of the Church in a segregated society should be. Twenty years ago Holmes Rolston, who is now the general editor of all official Presbyterian, U.S. publications wrote in the Presbyterian of the South these words:

We live in a world which is cursed with deep race hatreds. . . The future holds within it at least the possibility of race wars on a world scale. If the fellowship of the Church could break down the barriers of race today as it did in the New Testament, she might then become the medium of God's Word to us in the midst of our race hatreds. Again the tragedy of the situation is that, wherever the race

feeling is acute, the Protestant world has tended to be content to build up race Churches, that in no way create a fellowship that annihilates the prejudice of race. . . We can be quite sure that (the deep-seated barriers. . . of race) will never be abolished within the pagan world, until they are first abolished within the Christian Church. And this situation constitutes for the Church today both its challenge and its despair.¹

The attitude about segregation which stands at the opposite pole from the attitude expressed above is characterized in a statement made by a prominent Presbyterian minister and educator before an official Presbyterian body in November, 1954. Dr. G. T. Gillespie, past President of Belhaven College, delivered a carefully prepared statement entitled "A Defense of the Principle of Segregation" before the Synod of Mississippi. This statement received wide acclaim throughout the Deep South. The following quotation is an excerpt from his address:

Here therefore is the crux of this whole problem of race relations, whether we face it in America or in the world at large; It is essentially a choice between the Anglo-Saxon ideal of racial integrity maintained by a consistent application of the principle of segregation, and the Communist goal of amalgamation implemented by the wiping out of all distinctions and the fostering of the most intimate contact between the races in all the relations of life.²

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1. Holmes Rolston: "The Word of God and the New Social Order, III - Its Application", Presbyterian of the South, January 16, 1935, p. 5.
2. G. T. Gillespie: "Defense of the Principle of Racial Segregation", The Clarion Ledger--Jackson Daily News, November 7, 1954, p. 1, 10.

Although these statements were made twenty years apart, they express, as it will be seen in this thesis, parallel (and non-converging) attitudes which run through the entire history of the Presbyterian Church. The viewpoint expressed by Dr. Gillespie, which defends segregation as a policy that is entirely in keeping with a Christian social outlook, will be referred to in this thesis as the "Traditional View". The reason for this is that this viewpoint rationalizes the Southern and Southern Presbyterian status quo. The viewpoint expressed in Dr. Rolston's statement, which advocates a change in the status quo in the direction of a non-segregated Church, will be referred to as the "Break with Tradition" or the "Liberal" view.

Though these points of view differ basically, both recognize the fact that the problem of race relations has world implications. It is more than just a Southern problem. The rise of nationalistic feelings which have resulted in the dissolution of colonial empires has roots in the dark peoples' rebellion against the white man's feeling and practice of his superiority.¹ In South Africa, too, racial tensions which are similar to, though more intense than those in the Southern United States have caused a situation similar to that of a volcano ready to erupt.² An analysis of the world implications of the race

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1. Cf. J. H. Oldham: Christianity and the Race Problem, Chapter VIII and pp. 163-164.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 165-168.

problem will not be included in the scope of this paper. It is well, however, to keep in mind that this is not an isolated problem, although its manifestations in the South are peculiar in many respects to that area. It is possible that the direction in which the South might move toward a solution to her problem would be an indication of the direction in which the nations of the world might move toward a solution to the problem of its racial tensions. This could be a subject for further study.

It will be beyond the scope of this thesis even to examine the manifestations of the race problem in the South as a whole with any degree of thoroughness. Such a study was made by the Swedish social economist, Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation. The results of his study were published in 1944 in a weighty volume called The American Dilemma.

C. Method of Procedure

The method of procedure will be to examine on an historical basis the past and present role of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. in a segregated society. An attempt will be made to examine the Scriptural and practical roots which lead to both the liberal and traditional points of view. An examination will be made of the various ways which these convictions and attitudes have manifested themselves in the life of the Church throughout its history. The study will center

around two aspects of this issue in the Church's history. The first, which is directly involved with the early history of the Church is the slavery question. The second, which the South is painfully facing now, is the question of segregation. Although the basic issues involved in the race problem will be stated as they relate to the early history of the Church and the slavery question, they will not be dealt with fully until the second chapter. The second chapter will, in more detail, go into the scriptural and practical reasons for keeping the races separate, as well as the scriptural and practical reasons for integrating the races.

D. Sources of Information

There is such an abundance of material available on this subject that the problem of sources is one of selecting and eliminating material rather than one of finding sufficient material. This writer will draw information chiefly from books, periodicals and pamphlets published by official Presbyterian, U.S. agencies, and from magazines representing particular points of view within the Church, which, though not official, are published by Southern Presbyterians for Southern Presbyterians. The two major publications in the latter category are The Southern Presbyterian Journal which represents the "traditional" point of view and the Presbyterian Outlook,

which represents the "break with tradition." The secondary sources mentioned in the bibliography are used to shed objective light on the real issues involved in the race problem.

CHAPTER I

EARLY HISTORY AND WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

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EARLY HISTORY AND WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

A. Introduction

The truth of the Scriptural adage "whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" has never been more clearly illustrated than in the great turmoil of 1861. War, pillage, economic and political disruption and racial antipathy--the strife which is with us still--came as a consequence of slavery, the national sin of greed and inhumanity.¹

In 1619, only twelve years after the first permanent English settlement in America, the first major influx of Negro slaves to this country began. By 1700 there were only a few slaves here, but as new lands opened up for cultivation the institution grew. The need for slaves as farm laborers, coupled with the profit in slave trade, resulted in the presence of around five hundred thousand Negro slaves in the colonies at the time of the Revolution. By 1861 there were four million slaves taking part in the life of this country. In 1790 a revolution of agricultural economy in the South made slave labor there a source of

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1. J. McDowell Richards: "Our Responsibility for Negro Work in the South", an address made to the 1948 General Assembly and quoted by Alex. R. Batchelor in Jacob's Ladder, p. 28. Cf. Post, p. 3, footnote 1.

great financial gain, whereas in the North, slavery proved unprofitable. Thus, by the early part of the nineteenth century slavery was well on its way to extinction north of the Mason-Dixon line.¹ In the light of this historical setting, this chapter will first deal with the major issues involved in the slavery question and with how these issues affected the solidarity of the Presbyterian Church. In spite of the fact that the controversy and division in the church and in the nation was bitter, many Southern Presbyterians felt, to some extent, some missionary obligation to the slaves (and after the war, to the freed Negroes) in the South. The latter part of this chapter will be an examination of this early witness to the Negro, the philosophy which lay behind it and the practices which resulted from that philosophy.

B. Early History and the Negro

1. The Slavery Issue

Within the organically undivided Presbyterian Church as within the nation the viewpoints on slavery roughly divided into three areas--the extreme abolitionists,

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1. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

Cf. Morrison and Commager: The Growth of the American Republic, vol. 1, pp. 129, 531-536.

W. W. Sweet: Religion on the American Frontier, the Presbyterians, vol. 2, p. 113.

the extreme pro-slavery men and the conservatives, who usually favored abolition of slavery in theory but did not advocate its immediate abolition.¹

The basis for the pro-slavery position is seen in the letters of the Reverend George Armstrong to the editor of the Presbyterian Magazine, Dr. C. Van Rensselaer in 1858. The occasion for the letter was a review by Dr. Van Rensselaer of a paper written by Dr. Armstrong called the "Christian Doctrine of Slavery." The following excerpts from the letter state the position of pro-slavery Presbyterians and a rationale of the position:

- I. Slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God and is not to be accounted an offence by his Church...
1. Slaveholding does not appear in any catalogue of sins or offences given us by inspired men...
2. Apostles received Slaveholders into the Christian Church...without any intimation...that slaveholding was a sin...
3. Paul sent back a fugitive slave to his own master again...
4. The apostles frequently enjoin the relative duties of master and slave and enforce their injunctions upon both alike...
5. Paul treated the distinctions which slavery creates as matters of very little importance...etc.²

Dr. Armstrong states elsewhere in this same letter:

Since Christ and his apostles did not make slaveholding a bar to communion, we as a court of Christ have no authority to do so; since they did not attempt to remove it from the Church by legislation, we have no authority to legislate on the subject.³

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1. George Armstrong: "Three Letters to a Conservative," Presbyterian Magazine, vol. VIII, p. 8.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 9.

Practical reasons were given by the pro-slavery side which also sought to justify the existence of the institution. Many Southern Presbyterians felt that slavery was used by God to bring many Africans to America for the purpose of making them Christian. They also believed that the Negro was inherently inferior and needed, for his own good, a wise and just master. Looking back on slavery times with a touch of nostalgia, Dr. S. L. Morris, writing in the Home Mission study book for 1917 has this to say in justification of slavery:

Slavery was not especially repulsive to the Negro. It relieved him of all responsibility and care for food and raiment and guaranteed medical attention in sickness and protection from want in his declining years... Contact with the white man gave him his one chance... The difference between the Afro-American and the African is a sufficient vindication of slavery... Statistics show that it (slavery) was the most successful missionary agency ever owned and blessed of God..¹

Even if the rosy picture painted here of slavery were true throughout the whole South without exception (which Dr. Morris does not claim), some modern Southern Presbyterian Church leaders would take issue with his basic reasoning. Dr. Alex R. Batchelor writes in the 1954 Home Mission study book:

The tragedy of slavery did not lie in the fact that the slave worked long hours, that he had too little of food and clothing, that he was often flogged, or even that he was sometimes sold away from his family. The tragedy lay in the fact that from infancy he was so

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1. S. L. Morris: The Task that Challenges, pp. 86-87.

conditioned and trained by precept and the collective expectation of his world that he often came to believe in his own inferiority and to accept his servile status as a matter of course.¹

Historians and contemporary observers give more objective practical reasons for the pro-slavery position, however. These reasons are economic, social, and geographic rather than Scriptural and humanitarian; economic in that Southern cotton economy was built on slave labor and much of the wealth of the Southern planter was invested in slaves, social in that the abolition of slavery would (and, as will be seen, did) create a tremendous Negro problem due to the numbers of Negroes in proportion to white people in the South, and geographical in that the concentration of pro-slavery forces was in the South, the area most concerned.²

The conservative viewpoint was stated in Dr. Van Rensselaer's reply to Dr. Armstrong. His stand is:

"Slaveholding is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful."³ He calls upon the "Assembly's testimonies of 1818...as Scriptural, harmonious and...sufficient, occupying...a true position between two extremes."⁴ Although Dr. Van Rensselaer's stand appears to be weak, the Assembly statement on which he bases his view is the strongest

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1. Alex. R. Batchelor: Jacob's Ladder, p. 44.
2. C. Van Rensselaer: "Three Conservative Replies," Presbyterian Magazine, vol. 3, p. 25.
Cf. Morrison and Commager, p. 131.
3. Van Rensselaer, op. cit., p. 15.
4. Ibid., p. 14, 15.

pronouncement of the Presbyterian Church against slavery.

Here is the General Assembly pronouncement of 1818:

We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbors as ourselves; and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ... It is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout christendom, and if possible throughout the world.¹

Van Rensselaer says of ultra abolitionism, however, "The only efficacious mode of encountering this fanaticism is to show from the Bible, that it rests upon a false foundation."² He sums up his conservative stand--after answering, point by point, the Scriptural citations of Dr. Armstrong--in these words:

Ultra pro slavery is as much to be deprecated as ultra anti-slavery. The idea that slave holding is a divine ordinance, and that it may be lawfully perpetuated to the end of time, is a monstrous doctrine derogatory to the spirit and principles of Scripture, to the reason and conscience of mankind, to the Universal sway of Providence, and to the glory of Christian civilization.³

The abolitionist position, as stated by Dr. Van Rensselaer (and apparently opposed by him⁴) is that

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1. Sweet, op. cit., p. 112; quoted from the Minutes of the General Assembly of 1818, p. 28.
2. Van Rensselaer, op. cit., p. 25.
3. Loc. cit.
4. The statement "apparently opposed" is used here because, according to Dr. Van Rensselaer's own statement, he is in full accord with the Assembly pronouncement of 1818. Cf. Ante, p. 6.

"Slaveholding is in itself sinful."¹ The rational basis of this position was very close to the conservative position. The major difference in the anti-slavery position and the conservative position was the extreme policies and practices advocated with fanatical zeal by those who held the former position. This radical doctrine of abolition was not merely a passive, negative philosophy. Its leaders advocated immediate and uncompensated emancipation of the slaves and spent much time and money promulgating propaganda to that effect.²

2. The Birth of the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

The roots of the division of 1861 go far back into the history of the church. It is possible that the actual, physical break in the Presbyterian Church at the time of the Civil War would not have occurred had the nation remained one; however, this is highly improbable in the light of the following circumstances.

There was anti-slavery feeling throughout the United States from the beginning of the revolution until approximately 1830. This sentiment was expressed in many anti-slavery societies (the majority of which were in the South) and seen in the very strong anti-slavery legislation of the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. The

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1. Van Rensselaer, loc. cit.
2. Sweet, op. cit., p. 113.

resolutions¹ passed by the 1818 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church were the strongest of all Presbyterian declarations.² After 1830 a new and violent wave of anti-slavery propaganda began. It was localized in the New England states, due to the increase of the importance of and use of slave labor in the South.³ Among the leaders of this movement were some prominent Presbyterian laymen, who in turn instituted an abolitionist movement in Lane Theological Seminary. The fire and intensity of these new converts to abolitionism seen in their actions and heard in their preaching resulted, eventually, in a split in the seminary, and open action and reaction within the church.⁴ Although many other issues⁵ influenced and are given as reasons for the division of the church into New School and Old School in 1837, the slavery issue was one of the determining factors in the split.⁶

The New School Church in 1856 and again in 1857 in their General Assembly adopted anti-slavery resolutions. As a result of this, several Southern presbyteries withdrew from the New School Church and formed what later became the

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1. Ante, p. 7.
2. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 111-112.
Cf. Charles Thompson: The Story of the Churches, The Presbyterians, pp. 190-192.
3. Ibid., p. 113.
4. Ibid., pp. 114-117.
5. Ibid., pp. 111, 118-119.
6. Loc. cit.

United Synod of the South,¹ and after the split between North and South, joined the Southern Presbyterian Assembly. The Old School Assembly backed down somewhat from the General Assembly position of 1818² but in 1845 they took action condemning slave laws of some states and in 1849 their Assembly "refused to countenance the 'traffic in slaves for the sake of gain.'"³ Many Southern church courts flatly contradicted the 1818 General Assembly ruling, among them, the presbytery of Harmony, South Carolina which in 1836 resolved "That the existence of slavery is not opposed to the Will of God" and the Synod of Virginia, which ruled that "The General Assembly had no right to declare that relation sinful which Christ and his apostles teach to be consistent with the most unquestionable piety."⁴

The war began in 1861 and the two General Assemblies, Old School and New School, met in May of that year. The New School Assembly adopted the report of a "Special Committee on the State of the Country" which condemned secession from the Union as an act of treason against civil magistrates which "God hath ordained," reaffirmed their previous stand on slavery, calling on "our people to pray more fervently than ever for the removal of this evil.."

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1. Robert Kerr: The People's History of Presbyterianism, p. 198.
2. Ante, p. 7.
3. Thompson, op. cit., p. 201.
4. Ibid., p. 199.

and called on the church to give prayer support and physical support to the cause of union and to the Union army.¹ The Old School Assembly, which was more divided over the slavery issue, met in May 1861 in Philadelphia with only sixteen commissioners from the South present. Dr. Gardiner Spring of New York (a conservative) proposed resolutions which, after severe debate, were adopted. The major force of the resolution was that the Presbyterian Church "in the spirit of Christian patriotism which the scriptures enjoin...acknowledge and declare our obligation to promote and perpetuate the integrity of these United States."² Although this was not a direct ruling concerning slavery, it is apparent from the preceding controversy that the slavery issue lay at the root of the whole conflict.³ As a result of these actions the Southern presbyteries withdrew from the Northern Church and on December 4, 1861, formed the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America.⁴

At its first meeting in Augusta, Georgia, this

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1. Kerr, op. cit., pp. 198-201. These pages contain a direct quotation, unfootnoted, apparently from the resolution referred to.
2. Ibid., pp. 202-205.
3. Cf. Morrison and Commager, op. cit., p. 534. This refers to the national division, but the similarity of issues in the nation and the church has already been pointed out.
4. Kerr, op. cit., p. 206. After the war the name of the church became the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

General Assembly adopted an "Address to all Christian Churches Throughout the World" which gave the history of and the resources for its formation as a separate Assembly. The following words taken from that address point out the acknowledged influence of the slavery question on the disruption of the Presbyterian Church, and thus on the birth of the Presbyterian Church, U. S.:

The antagonism of the Northern and Southern sentiment on the subject of slavery lies at the root of all the difficulties which have resulted in the dismemberment of the Federal Union, and involved us in the horrors of an unnatural war. The Presbyterian Church in the United States has been enabled by the divine grace to pursue, for the most part, an eminently conservative, because a thoroughly scriptural, policy in relation to this delicate question. It has planted itself upon the Word of God, and utterly refused to make slaveholding a sin, or non-slaveholding a term of communion. But though both sections are agreed as to this general principle, it is not to be disguised that the North exercises a deep and settled antipathy to slavery itself, while the South is equally zealous in its defence. Recent events can have no other effect than to confirm the antipathy on the one hand, and to strengthen the attachment on the other.¹

C. Early Witness to the Negro

1. Philosophy

The Presbyterian Church, U. S., from its earliest beginnings affirmed its responsibility for the souls of the black men, its obligation to preach the gospel to the

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1. Ibid., p. 211. Extensive quotations from the report of this committee (of which Dr. Thornevell was chairman) to the 1861 General Assembly are made by Dr. Kerr.

Negroes of the South. Yet, at the same time, it accepted no responsibility for trying to relieve the physical bondage of the slave. On the contrary, it fully supported the institution of slavery. In the "Address to the Churches of the World" already referred to¹ is found a clear statement of the policy of the Southern Presbyterian Church with regard to the slavery question and to the church's responsibility for the Negro. Here are further excerpts from that resolution:

...And here we may venture to lay before the Christian world our views as a church upon the subject of slavery. We beg a candid hearing.

In the first place...in our ecclesiastical capacity, we are neither the friends nor the foes of slavery;... The policy of its existence or non-existence is a question which exclusively belongs to the state. We have no right, as a church, to enjoin it as a duty, or to condemn it as sin. Our business is with the duties that spring from the relation: the duties of the masters on the one hand, and of their slaves on the other. These duties we are to proclaim and to enforce with spiritual sanctions... This position is impregnable, unless it can be shown that slavery is a sin.

Now we venture to assert, that if men had drawn their conclusions upon this subject only from the Bible, it would no more have entered into any human head to denounce slavery as a sin than to denounce monarchy, aristocracy, or poverty.

We feel that the souls of our slaves are a solemn trust, and we shall strive to present them faultless and complete before the presence of God.

Indeed, as we contemplate their condition in the Southern States, and contrast it with that of their fathers before them, and that of their brethren in the present day in their native land, we cannot but accept it as a gracious providence that they have been brought

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1. Ante, p. 12. See quotation and footnote 1.

in such numbers to our shores and redeemed from the bondage of barbarism and sin. Slavery to them has certainly been overruled for the greatest good.¹

The long period of debate and the war itself served to solidify the South and the Southern Presbyterian Church's stand as to its role in a slavery society. In 1864 the Southern Assembly made this pronouncement:

The long continued agitations of our adversaries have wrought within us a deeper conviction of the divine appointment of domestic servitude and have led to a clearer comprehension of the duty we owe to the African race. We hesitate not to affirm that it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery and to make it a blessing to both master and slave.²

In the minutes of the General Assembly of 1865, the first meeting following the close of the war, this statement reaffirming the Church's responsibility to the Negro people of the South is found:

1. Whereas, the colored people never stood in any other relation to the Church than that of human beings lost with us in the fall of Adam; and redeemed with us by the infinitely meritorious death and sacrifice of Christ, and are participants with us in all the benefits and blessings of the Gospel; and whereas, our churches, pastors and people have always recognized this claim to Christian equality and brotherhood, and have rejoiced to have them associated in Christian union and communion in public services and precious sacraments of the sanctuary: Resolved, 1st., That the abolition of slavery by the civil and military powers has not altered the relations as above defined, in which our Church stands to the colored people, nor in any degree lessened the debt of love and service which we owe to them, or the interest with which we would still desire to be associated with

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1. Kerr, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

2. Thompson, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

them in all the privileges of our common Christianity.¹ Thus it is seen that the philosophy of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in the earliest part of its history was one which affirmed the responsibility of the church for saving the souls of the Negro, affirmed the Christian obligation of masters to treat their slaves in a humane way, but looked upon slavery itself as an institution not opposed in any way to the teachings of the Christian faith.

2. Practice

Before the abolition of slavery the matter of reaching Negro slaves with the gospel was largely left to individual slave owners. Many masters and mistresses taught the slaves themselves, others had their own pastors preach to the slaves and teach them. Arrangements were made for them to attend the churches of their masters on Sunday, sitting, of course, in a different section of the church. One can still see the slave galleries in many old churches in the South.² Large numbers of slaves attended preaching services though in most cases the attendance was voluntary. Those who made professions of faith were enrolled on the

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1. Batchelor, op. cit., p. 5. Quoted from the General Assembly Minutes, 1865.
2. Presbyterian Church, Port Gibson, Mississippi has slave galleries.
Cf. Maud Brown: History of the First Presbyterian Church of Oxford, Mississippi, p. 12.

regular church roll with white members. Many times the church would have more Negro members than white members.¹ Although at first white ministers did most of the preaching to the Negro slaves, there were also Negro preachers, and as the number of Negro Christians grew, separate Negro churches.² This development of a Negro ministry and thus separate, independent Negro churches was not true of the Presbyterian Church, which requires a man to be educated before being ordained. This probably accounts for the fact that there developed no separate Negro Presbyterian denomination after the war--as was the case in the Baptist and Methodist Churches.³ After the war, many local churches continued to feel some degree of responsibility for Negroes; some white ministers did evangelistic work among the local Negroes of their communities; Negroes were still carried as members of the white churches and still attended many of those churches.⁴ The Northern Church, through its freed-men's Board, did much missionary work among Southern Negroes. As a result, although there were about fourteen thousand Negro Presbyterians at the close of the war, most of them left the Southern

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1. "Our Obligation to the Negro," Presbyterian of the South and Presbyterian Standard, Oct. 24, 1934, p. 20.
Cf. W. S. Golden: Presbyterian of the South and Presbyterian Standard, Nov. 28, 1934, p. 11.
2. Ibid., Myrdal, op. cit., pp. 860-861.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Maud Brown, loc. cit.

Presbyterian Church to go into the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., or into purely Negro churches of other denominations.¹

The early witness of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., was marked by the outstanding efforts of a few individual ministers who felt keenly their responsibility to God to preach the Gospel to the Negro. Charles Colcock Jones (1804-1863) left the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church of Savannah, Georgia, to give full time to the education and evangelization of the Negro. He was a prominent leader in the church before the war. He served two terms as a professor of Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, and from 1850-1857 he served as secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions in Philadelphia. He did not allow the heated slavery controversy to prevent his laboring among and for the Negro people. His book, The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States, advocated a program² that was quite daring for the day in which he lived. At the first Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church in 1861 he pled for an hour and a half for the spiritual interests of the Negro race. As a result of his plea, the Assembly adopted a resolution to the effect that the Assembly

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1. Golden, loc. cit.

Cf. Batchelor, op. cit., p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 55. He quotes from the Religious Instruction of Negroes in the United States by Charles C. Jones.

recognize and accept its missionary obligation to the colored population of the South.¹ Dr. John B. Adger (1810-1879) overcame a tremendous wall of race prejudice--caused by white feeling toward an attempted Negro insurrection in the 1820's in the city to organize a separate Negro church in Charleston, South Carolina. He began his ministry to Negroes in the basement of Second Presbyterian Church of Charleston in 1847 and later raised money from the white people of Charleston to build Zion Church.² Dr. Adger was succeeded by Dr. John L. Girardeau (1825-1898). During the course of his ministry he turned down calls to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Atlanta, among others, to work among the Negro slaves of South Carolina. Due to his influence, Zion Church, which had been considered a mission of Second Presbyterian Church, was organized into a separate church. Starting with only thirty-six members in 1854, under the ministry of Dr. Girardeau, it grew to a membership of over six hundred. Interestingly enough, Zion Church became an interracial church during his ministry. A group of white citizens of Charleston joined the church, with the full understanding that it was a Negro church, designed to meet the needs of slaves.³ In 1876 Stillman

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1. Batchelor, op. cit., pp. 32 and 54.

2. Ibid., pp. 33-34; 56-59.

3. Ibid., pp. 59-63. He quotes the Life Work of John L. Girardeau by George A. Blackburn.

Institute was founded by Dr. Charles A. Stillman (of Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, South Carolina) for the purpose of training Negro ministers. Negro education was not popular at that time, for the bitterness of the reconstruction period was still the chief taste in the mouth of the South. Even before the war many Southerners felt that the education of the Negro only led to his insubordination. As a result, several states passed laws making it illegal to educate a Negro.¹ The following statement was made concerning the difficulty which Dr. Stillman encountered in his work toward the establishment of Tuscaloosa (later Stillman) Institute:

It required a man of no ordinary courage and wisdom to undertake such a work at that time. There was much hard feeling toward the Negro, growing out of the reconstruction. In the Church at large there was indifference and hostility to the work, and it was not regarded with special favor by his own congregation. But with characteristic faithfulness to duty he entered on the work.²

An interesting and revealing side note is that before the war, Dr. Stillman was one of those who advocated that presbytery purchase a Negro slave to be trained and sent to Liberia as a missionary.³ In spite of the diligence which the Presbyterian Church professed in its concern for the conversion of the Negro--and which some Southern

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1. Cf. Batchelor, op. cit., pp. 133, 137.
2. Ibid., pp. 130. Quoted from E. T. Thompson: Presbyterian Missions in the Southern United States.
3. Ibid., p. 132.

Presbyterians exhibited; in spite of the eulogies heaped upon the institution of slavery as a great missionary agency, at the time of Negro emancipation, according to Gunnar Myrdal,¹ there were probably only a minority of Negroes who were even nominal Christians and of the Negroes who were Presbyterians, the majority left the Southern Presbyterian Church.

D. Summary

This chapter has examined, in the light of its historical setting, the major issues involved in the Negro slavery question as these issues emerged at the time of the Civil War in the Presbyterian Church. It has further considered the divisive influence of this question in the Presbyterian Church since colonial days--influence which finally led to the great disruption in both the church and the nation in 1861. Thus, it was seen that slavery and the debates which arose around it had direct bearing on the birth of the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

The witness of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., rested, in its early history, on a philosophy which affirmed the church's responsibility for the souls of the Negro, while denying its responsibility for their physical and mental bondage. This philosophy worked itself out logically as

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1. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 860. He quotes W. E. Du Bois as saying, "...only one adult in six was a nominal Christian."

the church ministered to the Negro. The result of this philosophy and practice cannot be dogmatically determined, since the ultimate results of any ministry are impossible to determine; but an indication of failure at some point in the church is seen in the small number of Negro converts in the South and in the almost complete loss of Negro membership on the part of the Southern Presbyterian Church.

CHAPTER II

LATER HISTORY AND WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

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A. Introduction

This chapter will endeavor to show the historic and ideological roots of the contrasting views within the Presbyterian Church in the United States on segregation, as well as the expression of these views in the respective general policies advocated. The first part of the chapter will examine the evidence of pre-Civil War slavery concepts¹ which find expression in the Southern philosophy of segregation as it is seen in society and in the church. The second section of the chapter will show the rationale made by Southern Presbyterians of this traditional view of segregation, both on Biblical and on practical grounds. The last portion of the chapter will show the Scriptural and practical roots of the liberal view, i.e., those in the church who break with tradition and desire a change in the status quo.

The divergence of opinion within the church as to the role of the church in a segregated society was pointed out in the introduction.² This difference of philosophy

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1. Ante, chapter 1.
2. Ante, Introduction, p. v.

was sharpened and the varying points of view were crystallized first in Southern society and then in the Presbyterian Church by two significant events. First was the Supreme Court action on May 17, 1954, in which that body declared that:

...in the field of public education the doctrine of "Separate but equal" has no place, that racially segregated education by the several states is violative of the Equal Protective clause of the fourteenth amendment and that similar action by the Federal Government is violative of "due process of law" as guaranteed by the fifth amendment.¹

Second, the Ninety-fourth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U . S., meeting May 28 to June 1, 1954, accepted a report calling on churches to end segregation in our churches and church schools, and commending the Supreme Court upon its recent decision. (This resolution was handed down as advice, not as an authoritative command to the local presbyteries and churches.)² The strength of this Assembly's stand is seen in these words from the Moderator's address:

Racial segregation is certain to pass away before long in our Southland, as slavery passed nearly a century ago. Both are unjust, undemocratic, and unchristian..³

These two events brought forth in the South and in the church, respectively, a storm of written and spoken reaction. Also,

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1. Alvin W. Rose: "The Impending Crisis of Desegregation," Christianity and Society, Special issue, 1954.
2. William Thompson: "94th General Assembly," Presbyterian Survey, August 1954, p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 9.

much written and spoken study setting forth the liberal view preceded and came out of the strong stand taken by the General Assembly. Crystalization within the church of the traditional view on segregation is one of the results of this controversy. Promulgation of the liberal view is one of the causes of the controversy. Therefore, much material for the latter part of this chapter will be the writings and speeches of various Southern Presbyterians whose expressions of their convictions are directly connected with these events.

B. Slavery Concepts Continue

1. Evidence of Slavery Concepts in Society

The Southern philosophy and practice of segregation has its historic roots in the institution of slavery. Although the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 legally abolished this institution, it did not convince Southerners of the moral wrong of slavery, nor did it abolish those concepts of and convictions about the Negro which formed the whole rationale for the existence of slavery as an institution. Dr. Myrdal states:

In the field of personal and social relations--as in other fields of the Negro problem--what we are studying is in reality the survival in modern American society of the slavery institution. The white Southerner is right when, in discussing every single phase of the Negro problem, he constantly falls back in his arguments

on the history of the region.¹

Inherent in the philosophy of the slavery society was the view that the slave is inferior as a human being.² Thus, for his own good and for the good of society, he must be controlled and disciplined by those who are his superiors. Henry W. Grady, an Atlanta editor of a generation ago, writes, expressing not only this Southern viewpoint but also the emotional tone of present day as well as past day views:

But the Supremacy of the white race of the South must be maintained forever, and the domination of the negro race resisted at all points and at all hazards, because the white race is the superior race. This is the declaration of no new truth; it has abided forever in the marrow of our bones and shall run forever with the blood that feeds Anglo-Saxon hearts.³

Here lies in part the basis for the white man's fear of political control by Negroes--control which is a conceivable possibility because large numbers of Negroes in proportion to whites live in the South. This fear of political control by an inferior race is substantiated by the remembrance of the horror of reconstruction days--when Negroes coupled with Northern abolitionists took control of the state governments. An expression of this fear is the one-party political system⁴ of the solid South. Hodding Carter,

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1. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 577.
2. Cf. ibid., p. 577-578.
3. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 1354.
4. Cf. ibid., p. 453.

a Mississippi newspaper editor and Pulitzer prize winner, points out in the Reader's Digest the complications arising from the combination of slavery concepts coupled with numbers:

If the ratio of Negroes to whites were no greater in the South than in the nation at large...the problem of integration would be relatively simple to solve... Against the 300 year background of master-slave and superior-inferior folk concepts...the issue of numbers is paramount.¹

In the conviction of white Southerners that the Negro is biologically inferior to the white man is found the root of the fear of amalgamation of the races. And it is this fear--the fear of racial intermarriage--that causes white Southerners to build a stone wall--legally, Scripturally, by means of Klu Klux firey crosses and by any other means possible--around the institution of social segregation.²

In writing about the South's reaction to the Supreme Court decision of May 1954, Carter points out the intensity of this fear of intermarriage.

As strong as it is statistically unreasoning is the white South's fear that abandonment of a dual public school system will in time lead to social--by which is meant sexual--integration.³

The current fear of intermarriage, based on a conviction that the Negro is inferior, and resulting in the defense of

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1. Hodding Carter: "The Court Decision and the South," Reader's Digest, September 1954, p. 53.
2. Cf. Myrdal, op. cit., chapter 4 and chapter 28.
3. Carter, loc. cit.

the present pattern of segregation is analyzed and epitomized by Dr. Myrdal:

The basic racial inferiority doctrine is being undermined by research and education... Sex and race fears are, however, even today the main defense for segregation and, in fact for the whole caste order. The question shot at the interviewer touching any point of this order is still: "Would you like to have your daughter (sister) marry a Negro?"¹

Jim Crow laws, which are the legal expression of the white supremacy doctrine, grew up after the Supreme Court decision of 1883 which declared the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 unconstitutional.

The whole paternalistic attitude of white men toward Negroes is another evidence of the survival of slavery society. This attitude is expressed in the sympathy and love for the "old time Negro"--the Negro who stays in his place; it is seen in the Southerner's friendliness toward the individual Negro, his willingness to give him money at the back door, to contribute to his churches, to get him out of jail, to feed him in the kitchen.²

The plantation system of farming in the rural South, in which large farms, owned and operated by white farmers, are farmed by tenants or day laborers who are mostly Negro is another tangible rudiment of the society and the economic system that existed in slavery days.³

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1. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 592.
Cf. Batchelor, op. cit., p. 71.
2. Cf. Myrdal, loc. cit.
3. Cf. Myrdal, op. cit., chapter 11. (on Southern plantation economy)

Some of the same factors seem to be involved in reasons for the development and continuation of a segregated society as were involved in the reasons for the defense of slavery before the Civil War.¹ These are economic and social reasons: economic, because Southern economy is still largely dependent on farming and the bulk of Southern farming is done on the plantation system; social, because of the numbers of Negroes living in the South and the fear of the white Southerner of both political control by the Negro and achievement of social equality which would lead to the amalgamation of the races. Both of these social fears are based on the old slavery concept of the biological inferiority of the Negro.

Another evidence of malingering slavery concepts is seen in the attitude of many Negroes toward themselves and toward the white man. In most contacts between the races, "...the Whites' attitudes are primary and decisive; the Negroes' are in the nature of accomodation or protest."² Such expressions as "The Negro doesn't want social equality--he's happier where he is" reflect a certain degree of truth in so far as many Southern Negroes are concerned. Many Negroes consciously or unconsciously accept the doctrine of their own inferiority and as a result, do not desire a non-

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1. Ante, p. 6.

2. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 57.

Cf. ibid., chapter 34.

segregated society, which would thrust them into competition with white people. For example, some Negroes feel that integration of the public schools would lower the teaching-job opportunities for Negro teachers. Booker T. Washington, a Negro leader whose influence among his people was far-reaching, expressed this view in an address in 1895 before the Atlanta Exposition. He said:

In all things that are purely social we can be separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.¹

James Weldon Johnson recognizes the strong tendency to seek retreat in segregation and reveals the tremendous psychological pressure that tempts a race or a man that is struggling to rise to give up:

There is in us all a stronger tendency toward isolation than we may be aware of. There come times when the most persistent integrationist becomes an isolationist, when he curses the white world and consigns it to hell. This tendency toward isolation is strong because it springs from a deep-seated, natural desire--a desire for respite from the unrelenting, gruelling struggle; for a place in which refuge might be taken. We are again and again confronted by this question. It is ever present, though often dormant.

2. Evidence of Slavery Concepts in the Church

The preceding section pointed out some of the reflections of slavery concepts in society. This section will point to evidences in the publications of the Pres-

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1. Gillespie, loc. cit.

2. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 808. (quoted from James Weldon Johnson: Negro Americans, What Now?, p. 13.)

byterian Church, U. S., which reflect these attitudes.

Dr. S. L. Morris, Executive Secretary of Home Missions in the Presbyterian Church, U. S., wrote the Home Mission textbook for the year 1917. In the section of this book which deals with the responsibility of the church for the Negro people of the South he expresses the feeling and conviction of most southern white men. He reflects concepts and convictions about the Negro which clearly have their roots in a slavery society.

a) He justifies the institution of slavery, even though at the time of his writing over half a century had elapsed since it existed (legally) in the South. He does this by citing Scripture and by pointing out the ultimate values of slavery in lifting the moral and cultural status of the Negro slave.¹ b) He reflects the view of the inferiority of the Negro race and shows the relation of this concept to both the rationale for slavery and for present patterns of society:

In the providence of God it (the institution of Slavery) has served its purpose in disciplining and developing an inferior race.²

Our sympathetic attitude towards a dependent and inferior race...should not permit the sacrifice of truth (of Negro inferiority) in the interests of charity and sentiment. (which he feels motivates those who would thoughtlessly abandon segregation)³

1. Cf. Morris, op. cit., pp. 84, 85.

Ante, p. 5.

2. Morris, op. cit., p. 87.

3. Ibid., p. 90.

c) He generalizes about the Negro to support his belief that the Negro is inferior and is most suited to slave life:

As a race they are notoriously improvident for the future and wasteful without regard to consequences.¹

The Negro is naturally lazy and will do only just sufficient work to supply present bodily needs. They must be driven by necessity or compelled by a master. They are capable of enduring hard work and are patient under heavy burdens; but their malingering method of handling their task will wear threadbare the patience of their employers.²

To these sad defects of character might be added a long list of racial faults, dishonesty, cruelty, fighting and superstition; but to his credit..he has many redeeming qualities. He is generous to a fault... His church dues will frequently supersede the needs of his family..³

Undoubtedly, many of Dr. Morris' observations on Negro life are true. The question is, are these characteristics the expression of distinct racial traits or are they the result of the mind-set created by slavery and continued in the thinking and living of both the Negro and the white man in the present segregated social pattern? Are they the result of an economic and social system which "keeps the Negro in his place," of a lack of education--both secular and Christian? Dr. Myrdal describes this relationship between Negro culture and patterns of segregation in the South as a vicious circle.

...We shall assume a general interdependence between all the factors in the Negro problem. White prejudice

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 90.
3. Loc. cit.

and discrimination keep the Negro low in standards of living, health, education, manners and morals. This, in turn, gives support to white prejudice. White prejudice and Negro standards thus mutually cause each other.¹

d) Dr. Morris also reflects the southern paternalistic view of the Negro, which is another expression of the Negro inferiority theory and a hold-over of the old master-slave relationship. This feeling of paternalism toward the Negro is seen especially in the Southerners' defence against and reaction to Northern interference, for paternalism is considered a virtue which the Yankee lacks. Dr. Morris sums up his own and the majority of the South's view of the white Southerners' relationship to the Negro in the following "favorite illustration" of the South:

The North preaches social equality and miscegenation to the South, and loves the Negro at long range. The following story will illustrate the different attitudes of North and South toward the Negro: A colored man in Boston, out of work and in distress, begged from door to door, only to receive the same answer, "Sorry, Mister, but we can't help you." At last, knocking at a door and asking for food, a man exclaimed, "You black rascal, what do you mean by coming to the front door? Go to the back door and tell the cook to feed you." Falling on his knees, he cried, "Thank God, I've found my own folks at last; dey scolds me at the front, but dey feeds me in de kitchen."²

This illustration expresses the Southerner's view that the Negro is inferior, reflects his determination to keep the Negro in his place, defends his position before those who would attack it and rationalizes his philosophy to bring

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1. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 75.

2. Morris, op. cit., p. 95.

it into harmony with his Christian conscience, and thus reveals the shadow cast across the thinking of a great portion of the church by the institution of slavery.

C. The Traditional Feeling in the Church on Segregation

1. Rationale

The word "rationale" rather than the word "roots" is used here because the position here described is one which seeks to preserve the status quo; therefore, by its nature, it must be a defensive position.¹ The segregated society did not spring from these carefully thought out reasonings based on Scripture and practical expediency-- rather, the reasonings sprang from the fact that the pattern of society exists and has been challenged and those who desire that it not be disrupted must defend it, and must satisfy their own Christian consciences.

a. Practical Justification

In order to see one motivation factor in the defence of segregation by Southern white people one needs but to look around the South land. The majority of Negroes living in the South are poor, uneducated, unhealthy, immoral

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1. Ante, Introduction, p. vi. Note the title of Dr. Gillespie's address, "Defence of the Principle of Racial Segregation".

Cf. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 44.

and live by a low ethical standard. Generally, their religion is over-emotional, contains much superstition, and is divorced from both intellect and ethics. The importance of this difference in the cultural patterns of the two races is intensified by the large ratio of Negroes in proportion to whites in the total population.¹ This is not the total answer to the why of segregation, however--for there is a large class of Southern whites who fit this description also. Segregation, thus, is not legally enforced on the grounds of culture or morals, but on the ground of race.²

The assumption appealed to in almost all attempts to rationalize the segregated pattern of society is that racial intermarriage is wrong.³ It is further assumed that the removal of the barrier of segregation will, ipso facto, lead to amalgamation of the races. Dr. Gillespie reveals this assumption in the following words from his address before the Synod of Mississippi:

Laying aside all sophistries concerning so-called "civil rights," "Human Brotherhood" or "Social Equality" and the purely academic question as to Racial

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1. Ibid., pp. 582-583.
Cf. Ante, p. 32-33. Note Dr. Morris's interpretation of these points and Dr. Myrdal's "vicious circle theory."
Post, p. 39. Note reflection of the intensifying effect of numbers.
Ante, p. 27.
2. Cf. Myrdal, op. cit., pp. 582-583.
3. Cf. Ante, p. 28.

Superiority or Inferiority,¹ let us...face (the issue) frankly,... If we believe that the welfare of both the white and Negro races would be promoted by preserving the integrity of each race, then we must maintain some effective and equitable form of segregation; if we believe that the welfare and happiness of both races would be promoted by intermarriage and the development of a hybrid race, then all we need to do is to let down the bars of segregation in the homes, the schools, the churches and in all areas of community life, and let nature take its course.²

From this assumption stem the practical arguments from history and biology and the arguments from the Bible which are designed to justify and support the conviction that intermingling the races is wrong. Thus, segregation becomes a necessary means to an end that is in accord with both the will of God and the best interests of the human race.³

According to Dr. Gillespie, segregation is one of nature's laws. All animals associate with and mate with those of their own kind. The fact that human beings since the beginning of time have tended to separate into families, tribes, nations, etc. shows that they live according to this law.⁴ He points to the principle of selection in breeding livestock for the purpose of improving the strain

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1. Cf. John Marion: "Segregation Sells America Short," Presbyterian Outlook, March 14, 1955, p. 17. Dr. Marion, in an answer to Dr. Gillespie's article points out that though Dr. Gillespie may deny that the "cult" of white supremacy" has weighted the scales in favor of white people, it is none-the-less true.
2. Gillespie, loc. cit.
Cf. Eloise Jones: "Letters to the Editor," Presbyterian Outlook, March 6, 1950, p. 7.
3. Cf. William H. Frazer: "The Social Segregation of the Races," Southern Presbyterian Journal, July 15, 1950, pp. 6-7. The March 14, 1955 Presbyterian Outlook takes issue with Dr. Gillespie on the validity of these assumptions in a comprehensive discussion of "Segregation and the Will of God."
4. Gillespie, loc. cit.

as a principle to be applied to the human race, if the highest type of human being is to be developed.¹ One detects in this expression a shadow of the old slavery assumption that the white race is superior.

He calls history to witness to the truth of the principle that the intermingling of races results in a low-grade hybrid race. He points to the Hebrews, the Greeks and the British who remained separate from other races either because of religion or geography or race pride. Because of their racial purity, they made the most significant intellectual, moral and economic contributions to mankind.² Whether or not the maintaining of racial integrity was a causative factor in these cases is debatable.³

Among those who hold the widely varying points of view on segregation within the church, there is general agreement on the fact that discrimination--unfair treatment, inequality of opportunity for Christian growth in the church--is unchristian. It is the further conviction of both liberals and traditionalists that where such inequality exists, it should be corrected.⁴ Thus, the battle cry of the

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Cf. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 747.

4. Cf. "Letters to the Editor," Presbyterian Outlook, March 6, 1950, p. 7.

L. N. Bell: "It is not a Question of Christianity but Expedience," Southern Presbyterian Journal, February 15, 1950, p. 6.

Gillespie, loc. cit.

Frazer, loc. cit.

Morris, op. cit., pp. 103-111.

segregationist becomes "Separate but equal." To be consistent with this position one must prove that segregation is not discrimination and is not, therefore, unchristian. Dr. Gillespie says:

Whenever two individuals or groups of widely different physical characteristics are brought into close contact it is...inevitable that some discrimination should occur, especially where the situations are competitive; but such discrimination is a spontaneous human reaction and cannot be charged against the principle of segregation.¹

He assumes that because both races desire or should desire to maintain racial integrity that both should cheerfully accept segregation as "the only effective means of achieving that end where the two races live side by side in large numbers."² He further states that:

There would seem to be no insuperable difficulty in working out plans which would provide "separate but equal" opportunities and facilities for both races, which would avoid any suggestion of discrimination and would promote the largest possible harmony and co-operation between the races.³

The validity of these assumptions, i.e., that separate but equal opportunities can exist in a segregated society will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter.⁴ A Southern Presbyterian in a letter to the editor of the Presbyterian Outlook expresses rather clearly the line of practical reasoning generally⁵ followed by those holding

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1. Gillespie, loc. cit.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Post, p. 46-47.

5. Cf. Bell, loc. cit.

Gillespie, loc. cit.

Morris, op. cit., pp. 84-111.

the traditional viewpoint. She is opposed to the abuses of segregation but feels that segregation itself is necessary as a solution to the problem of preventing amalgamation of the races. Here is a portion of the letter:

I have always understood the purpose back of segregation to be "to preserve racial integrity" rather than to maintain White Supremacy. Some measures toward this end have seemed necessary, due to the fact that the two races must live together in a ratio of approximately 60-40, and in a comparatively small geographical area. Segregation has been our attempt to find an answer for both groups. Its basis is, therefore, primarily biological rather than religious.¹

The writer of the letter thus points out the practical purpose of segregation, i.e., it is a means to maintain racial integrity. The particular sectional factors, i.e., the large numbers of Negroes living in the South, intensify the problem. The problem of numbers coupled with the low moral and cultural pattern of life of most Southern Negroes, in the mind of the white South removes the problem from the realm of academic or theological solutions to a realm where practical expediency tends to become the governing principle. While expediency sometimes may be a necessary consideration, the church itself cannot govern its own life on that basis. The church cannot escape the predicament, for whether or not it enters the struggle in society, it must decide whether or not there will be racial barriers within its own fellowship. The traditional view looks out at society, says,

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1. Eloise Jones, loc. cit.

"yes, this barrier must exist in the church," and then must justify its stand.

b. Scriptural Justification

In his address, Dr. Gillespie states most of the Scriptural defenses which this writer has been able to discover. He goes from Genesis to Revelation pointing out Scriptural teachings from which he draws the doctrine of racial purity.¹ His approach to the Scriptures is, however, deductive rather than inductive--since a study which is designed to prove a particular point of view is, by nature, deductive.² It is noted that the basic proposition which he seeks to prove is the fact that amalgamation of the races is against the will of God and that segregation is a Scripturally valid means of preventing this evil.

(1) Old Testament

a) In Genesis 4:11-26 Cain was separated (segregated) from the rest of the human race by having a mark placed on him. Dr. Gillespie failed to note here that Cain's segregation was the direct result of his own sin in murdering his brother. It was punishment for an act for

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1. Cf. Frazer, loc. cit.
2. Donald G. Miller: "Shall We Hear the Word of God and Do It?", Presbyterian Outlook, March 14, 1955, pp. 10-14. In evaluating Dr. Gillespie's method of Biblical interpretation, Dr. Miller says, "If this is the way to interpret the (Bible)...in determining the will of God for our time, then we might as well seek guidance in Alice in Wonderland!"

which he was responsible. b) When the sons of God (who apparently are the descendants of Seth) promiscuously inter-marry the daughters of men (who presumably are the descendants of Cain) the result is ungodliness and wickedness on the earth. Dr. Gillespie infers from this that:

...a possible, though not necessary inference from this tragic story is that this inter-marriage of dissimilar groups, whether the differences be moral, cultural or physical is not conducive to the preservation of wholesome family life, or to morality and therefore is contrary to the purpose and will of God.¹

c) Perhaps one of the most widely used Scriptural reasons given for the position of servitude of the Negro is the curse placed on Ham's son for the sin of Ham against Noah.² The curse is not mentioned in this particular address. The view that the sons of Noah became the fathers, respectively of three distinct racial groups, with Shem's descendants occupying Asia (yellow race), Japhet's children inhabiting Europe (white race) and Ham's progeny migrating southward to populate Africa (black race) is here set forth. If it is true, according to Dr. Gillespie, it affirms the unity of the races, but it also clearly implies that "an all-wise providence has 'determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation.'"³ Therefore, God, who saw

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1. Gillespie, loc. cit.
Cf. Genesis 6:1-7.
2. Genesis 9:20-27.
Cf. Post, p. 57.
3. Gillespie, loc. cit.

fit to make these distinctions, perhaps by using climatic or geographical implementation, is responsible for the distinctive racial groups and for those distinctive characteristics of race which are the cause of segregation. d) Linguistic differences which separated and scattered the human race came about not by accident but as an act of God. This is shown in the Babel incident recorded in Genesis 11:19. e) Abraham in Genesis 12-25 was called to live a separated life. He and his family were to live in the land of Canaan without intermarrying or mingling socially with the inhabitants; the covenant, sealed by circumcision was designed to make his descendants separate from all other people; his son by the Egyptian bond-woman was not allowed to inherit the covenant promise; he was careful to secure a wife for Isaac from among his own people. f) In Leviticus 19:19 Moses forbade the intermingling of diverse elements in animals and plant life. The principle illustrated here should apply, according to Dr. Gillespie, to human relations as well. g) In Deuteronomy 7:3 Moses warned the Israelites specifically against intermarriage with other people. h) Perhaps the most zealous proponent of racial purity and integrity was Ezra. (See Ezra 9-10.) He took drastic steps to purge foreigners from the households of Israel.

It must be pointed out here that the basis for Moses' ruling as well as that of Ezra was religious difference rather than racial difference. Purity of faith

and worship cannot be maintained by God's people if they marry those who worship idols. There is no apparent segregation of proselytes who embrace the Hebrew faith.¹

(2) New Testament

a) The fact that Christ emphasized the love of God and that this emphasis was a rebuke to Jewish exclusiveness is clear in the Gospels. The supreme worth of the human soul and the command to disciple all nations

...make it abundantly clear that the redeeming love of Christ knows no limitations of class...or race, but like a mighty river sweeps across every barrier to bring the water of life to thirsty souls of men.²

This admission is the preface to Dr. Gillespie's arguments from the New Testament. He goes on to point out, however, that Christ did not advocate a revolutionary change in social order. In fact, he emphasized the difference of status in Jew and Gentile. He sent his disciples to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel";³ and in his dealings with the Syrophoenician woman he emphasize the fact that she was not a Jew.⁴ b) The apostles did not teach that all linguistic, national or racial differences are to be wiped out by the gospel. Dr. Gillespie states that Paul affirmed in Acts 17:24-26 the unity of the race and he affirmed in Colossians 3:11 the unity of all believers in Christ,

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1. Cf. Ruth.

2. Gillespie, loc. cit.

3. Cf. Matthew 10:5-6.

4. Cf. Mark 7:25-30.

regardless of racial differences. However, Dr. Gillespie asserts that this unity is a spiritual relationship which results in the believers' relationship to Christ. He points out that Paul recognized the master-slave relationship¹ which prevailed in Roman and Greek society as well as the status assigned to women by social custom.² c) The picture of the church triumphant in the Book of Revelation is examined for final Scriptural support of the view that God approves of national and racial differences. Around the throne of God are seen the redeemed of every nation, kindred, race and language

blended into a beautiful and harmonious unity, and yet each preserving its own distinctive genius and virtues the better to show forth the infinite riches and diversity of the Divine Glory and Grace throughout the ages to come.³

Dr. Donald Miller points out the weakness of Dr. Gillespie's approach to the Scriptures in these words:

The whole argument here is questionable inference based on questionable inference, then the addition of elements which in no way enter the passage, and finally an application to a contemporary situation about which the passage has nothing to say.⁴

2. Policies

In view of the conviction that segregation is the best and in fact, the only solution to the race problem in

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1. Cf. Philemon, I Timothy 6:1-2.
2. Cf. I Timothy 2.
3. Gillespie, loc. cit.
4. Miller, op. cit., p. 10.

the South, those adhering to the traditional point of view consider it a Christian duty to utilize every means available to preserve the segregated pattern of society.¹ Generally, those holding this view favor the evangelization and Christian education of the Negro but many times their fear that white work with Negroes is really a subversive effort to undermine the wall of segregation causes them to oppose even evangelistic and educational work.² Even when evangelistic and educational work is done among the Negro people, such aims and methods must be devised which assure the preservation of the status quo--the segregated society. The "separate but equal" doctrine is both the justification and the goal of Southern Presbyterian Traditionalists.

D. The Liberal View in the Church on Segregation

While those who seek to preserve the status quo in society and in the church must assume a defensive position, so those who challenge the status quo must not only show the need for a change, i.e., the inadequacy of the present pattern of society, but must also point to a more Christian way of facing the problem. The attack on the

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1. Bell: "Montreat and Desegregation," Southern Presbyterian Journal, September 15, 1954, p. 3.
2. Cf. William Iverson: "It Can Happen Anywhere," Presbyterian Survey, June 1953, pp. 24-25. Note his references to opposition which he encountered in organizing a Negro Sunday School.

status quo generally is not directed at the end for which segregation is the practical means, i.e., the preservation of racial integrity--although implicit in the liberal view is the conviction that amalgamation of the races is not a supreme evil. Rather, the attack is leveled on the practice of segregation itself.

1. Its Roots

a. Practical Roots

It is the view of those who regard segregation as unchristian that the "separate but equal" theory which pervades every phase of southern social, church, economic and educational life is falacious; that segregation cannot exist without discrimination. The Council on Christian Relations of the Board of Church Extension of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., in its report to the Ninety-fourth General Assembly observed that "...segregation is not merely the separation of two peoples, but the subordination of one people to another."¹ This same report included a recommendation "...that the General Assembly affirm that enforced segregation of the races is discrimination which is out of harmony with Christian theology and ethics."²

This view is supported by other students of race relations who have observed the actual practice of segregation

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1. The Council on Christian Relations: Two Main Issues, p. 10.
2. Ibid., p. 11.

both in this country and in other parts of the world.

J. H. Oldham, in his classic volume, Christianity and the Race Problem, states that while segregation may, at a particular time in human development be the most practical arrangement, it is ultimately impossible for two communities to live side by side, to be economically dependent on one another and to participate in a common political life without one or the other having an almost complete monopoly of power. For the race in power to act justly where its own interests are involved requires greater virtue than average human nature can muster.¹ The practice of segregation in the South has shown that, at least in so far as the past is concerned, the "separate but equal" theory is a farce, for though the races are legally separated, equal opportunities for the two races do not exist.² It is not valid, however, to assume from this that legal integration of the races will insure, per se, equal opportunities, for legal action cannot remove lingering slavery concepts from the minds of either white men or Negroes.³

Those who break with tradition hold that the justification of segregation is based on a false view of the Negro. The Synod of Alabama, meeting in the fall of 1950, adopted the report of the Synod's Christian Relations

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1. J. H. Oldham: Christianity and the Race Problem, p. 10.
2. Cf. Myrdal, *op. cit.*, p. 581.
3. Ante, pp. 25-30.

Committee after a long and heated battle. Included in the report was a strong statement concerning this false analysis of the Negro:

The Negro is not the Person we used to know. We can no longer lay claim to an intimate knowledge of the workings of his mind. The stereotyped, minstrel-like, character is a rarity. He is replaced by a new generation that we do not understand. The new one may seem like the old one but he is putting on an act because we expect it of him, and to gain favors; but secretly he is laughing at the white man and cursing him too for making a clown out of him. The young Negro is ambitious, smart in the tricks of the world, less religious and far less superstitious, determined to move out of his sordidness, bitter toward the White man who suppresses him.

The new Negro will not accept our paternalism. What love we say we express toward him, if devoid of justice, is sentimentality... The old system of every white man "looking out for his niggers" cannot be relied upon as a present solution.¹

According to this view, the church can no longer look at the Negro as a different order of humanity, an inferior being, one whose racial characteristics make it necessary that he be treated as a child or a slave.² He must be viewed as a human being--not as a different order of humanity who may be understood by pigeonholing him into the slave concept. Two factors in our society have called into question the whole doctrine of the natural inferiority of the Negro, according to "A Statement to Southern Christians"

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1. Robert B. McNeill, Chairman, Synod's Committee on Christian Relations: "Communism, Roman Catholicism and the Negro People," Presbyterian Outlook, October 16, 1950, pp. 5-6.
2. Ante, pp. 32-33.

which was issued by the Ninety-fourth General Assembly as a supplement to the report of the Council on Christian Relations which was circulated for study and use throughout the church. These two factors are first the testimony of present-day scientists and recognized anthropologists that:

The common contention that one particular branch (of the human family) is inherently superior to others is not supported by facts. As one American Anthropologist puts it, "There are only superior individuals, and they are members of all races."¹

The second factor is the record of progress which the Negro people themselves have made. According to the 1949 report to the General Assembly of the Council on Christian Relations:

A host of able and cultured Negroes remain unseen and unknown by white people, yet this rapidly growing group--teachers, editors, artists, poets, scholars and statesmen--today enrich our common life with...a multitude of personal and social achievements.... If as a race they give us any cause for wonder, it is not that so many of them...still remain backward. The wonder is that so many others, against enormous odds, have gone so far and accomplished so much.²

Thus on the basis of these observations from society, coupled with a Biblical concept of man,³ "The old dogma of Negro inferiority must be laid aside and...Negroes must be judged, like children of God, on the basis of their character and ability as individual men and women."⁴

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1. Council on Christian Relations: Two Major Issues, p. 14.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Post, p. 54.
4. Council on Christian Relations: Two Major Issues, p. 16.

It must be recognized, however, that the life pattern and the mind-set of the Negro has been tremendously influenced by his background and still is influenced by his present environment. It is, in fact, on these grounds that those who see the Negro as a man whose natural abilities are not determined by race see segregation as in and of itself, unchristian. Dr. John Marion, writing as director of the Division of Christian Relations of the Board of Church Extension, states that segregation is unchristian on the basis of what it does to both white and Negro personality.

For what, by its very nature does compulsory segregation do? Basically it sets up a caste system with a viciously unspiritual scale of values--a system that...makes skin and flesh, not mind and spirit and character, the test of a man's worth and the fashioner of his destiny... It inflicts on countless Negroes a deep and terrible psychological hurt: a shaming and cramping sense of inferiority that often cripples the mind, breaks the spirit, and turns able and first-rate human beings into second-rate and fifth-rate menials--victims of a giant despair... It has forced upon them, against their consent and increasingly over their protest, a system that sets rigid limits to both the fields in which they can move and the heights to which they can rise.¹

Dr. Marion not only points out the harm which is done to Negro personality by segregation, but also puts his finger on the moral and spiritual damage which living in the top half of a segregated society tends to do to the white man.

...segregation inevitably creates in many white people, from childhood on, the often demoralizing illusion that

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1. John H. Marion: "Let's Face the Basic Issue," Presbyterian Outlook, January 16, 1950, p. 5.

whiteness of itself confers superiority. It makes the white man say to the Negro (by his laws if not by his words): "I am better than you are."...

A few of the moral and spiritual effects alone... would seem tragic enough: arrogance, prejudice, misunderstanding, snobbery and contempt among...(the white) set of victims;..¹

On the basis, therefore, of the intrinsic harm done both white and Negro personality by a pattern of life that makes race the basis of a man's worth, Dr. Marion concludes that segregation, ~~per se~~, is unchristian. This attack is leveled at the whole pattern of a segregated society, not merely segregation in the church.

Another attack on segregation is at the point of the damage that such a barrier existing in the Christian Church does to the missionary enterprise of the church.

Dr. Marion says:

It is the refusal of so great a part of the white Christian world to renounce segregation that stands today as the greatest single obstacle to saving millions among the colored races from paganism, Mohammedanism and Communism. Its retarding and blighting effects on our world Christian missions are beyond calculation.²

Not only is segregation attacked on intellectual and moral grounds, i.e., as being based on a false view of the Negro, and as being detrimental to both Negro and white personality, and as hampering the witness of the Christian

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1. Ibid., p. 6.

2. Loc. cit.

Cf. Council on Christian Relations Report to the 1953 General Assembly: The Christian Conscience and Social Action in the South, p. 5.

church--it is attacked at the point of its practicality. Is social segregation a real and necessary means to its own end, i.e., the preservation of racial integrity? The answer of the liberal is, "No." Dr. Marion points out that throughout American history, Negroes have been kept separated to a position of subordination. Yet today vast numbers of Negroes have more "white" blood in their veins than African. He contends that the only way to have real racial integrity is to develop personal integrity in members of both races. A society which makes color a badge of shame certainly does not foster integrity and self-esteem.¹ It must be pointed out here, however, that there is undoubtedly less present-day racial intermingling in the South than during slavery days,² apparently due to some extent, anyway, to segregation. Not only is segregation not a real means to its own end, the liberal argues, but it is not necessary. The assumption that Negroes will rush over the color line to intermarry with the white race as soon as segregation is abolished has no adequate support. In fact there are good reasons for concluding that there will be very little interracial intermarriage as a result of the abolition of segregation. The Council on Christian

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1. John Marion: "Segregation Sells America Short," Presbyterian Outlook, March 14, 1955, p. 16.
Cf. Myrdal, op. cit., p. 133.
2. Myrdal, loc. cit.

Relation's Report to the 1954 General Assembly mentions these reasons: a) Interracial intermarriage creates many practical social difficulties and problems, since both races frown on it. b) In places where non-segregation is in effect, there is very little intermarriage. (Of course, there are generally fewer Negroes in proportion to whites in these places.) c) People naturally tend to marry people with similar cultural backgrounds. While there are marriages which defy racial, cultural, national, social and/or religious differences in background, few people are willing to run the risk of all the marital hazards involved in marrying a person of a drastically different background. d) Negroes do not basically want intermarriage; they want first class citizenship and with it equality of opportunity.¹

The line of reasoning which pleads for the abolition of segregation on the grounds of its failure to accomplish its purpose and which suggests that non-segregation is a better way of accomplishing this same purpose begs the question. It invites the white Southerner to maintain the status quo on a voluntary basis. He can choose his own friends, just as he does now. He need not fear that the pattern of his society will really be disrupted. He need not alter his basic view of the Negro. Those who reason in this way apparently hold that the chief role of a church

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1. Cf. Council on Christian Relations: Two Major Issues, p. 17.

which sees segregation as evil is to persuade its people to abandon legal segregation. At the same time people are invited to maintain an attitude of mind which clings to beliefs which are responsible for segregation and which will result in the continued personal practice of segregation. This reasoning also fails to take into account the numbers of Negroes living in the South as compared to other integrated parts of American society. It does not consider the fact that integration of schools and churches in particular, would increase social contact between Negro and white young people. Thus, while this practical argument is partially true, it is weak because it rests on a less-than-Christian basis and it does not take into consideration all of the facts and fears of the South.

b. Scriptural Roots

A "Statement to Southern Christians" circulated in the church at the request of the 1954 General Assembly, says that the crux of the segregation question lies at the point of theology, i.e., many white Southerners doubt the Christian doctrine of man.¹ It has been pointed out in this thesis² that the basic concept on which the case for segregation is built is the theory held by the majority of the South, namely, though the Negro is a member of the

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1. Ibid., p. 14.

2. Ante, p. 26.

human family, he is an inferior member for he belongs to a race that is innately inferior. The "Statement" questions the validity of the doctrine of Negro inferiority on the basis of its non-Christian origin, i.e., in the slavery tradition, and on the basis of its lack of valid support.¹

A positive statement of Scriptural teachings which show segregation and particularly segregation within the Christian fellowship to be in conflict with Biblical theology is found in the remarks made before the Ninety-fourth General Assembly by Dr. Donald Miller, Professor of New Testament at Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. He calls the church to "...reject the contemporary tradition that takes the place of the Bible.." and to face the question "...in terms of Holy Scripture."² This call proved to be a key one, for the General Assembly made its historic pronouncement recommending the abolition of segregation in Presbyterians churches and institutions.³

Dr. Miller points out the essential unity of all men seen in the Creation account in Genesis. This unity was disrupted as the consequence of human sin at Babel. Abraham and his descendants were called to begin a movement of faith which would undo the tragedy of Babel. God's final

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1. Council on Christian Relations: Two Major Issues, p. 15.
2. William Thompson, "94th General Assembly," Presbyterian Survey, August 1954, p. 10.
3. Ante, p.24.

answer to disunity is achieved in Revelation, when people of every tribe and tongue and nation are seen together around the throne of God.¹ He goes on to say that:

...the only division Scripture knows between men is between saint and sinner, believer and unbeliever... and in the Old Testament though it was historically necessary for God to call a people that was historically conditioned by certain national ties, a man of any race or color or nation, when he accepted God as the Lord and entered the fellowship of faith, was under no handicap whatsoever. The same was true in the New Testament..²

A particularly relevant passage of Scripture is the account in Acts 10-11 of Peter's visit to Cornelius. Peter was not criticized for eating with an uncircumcised man. Dr. Miller says of this incident: "For Peter to do that was surely more revolutionary than for whites and Negroes to worship together in our time."³ Later, when Peter weakened his stand on this same point, Paul "opposed him to his face because he stood condemned."⁴

In examining Paul's view of slavery, those who break with the traditional view in the church would agree with Dr. Millar that:

There was a dynamic in Paul's gospel which...would go far beyond anything he could do to attack the insti-

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1. Thompson, loc. cit.

2. Ibid.

3. D. G. Miller: "Shall We Hear the Word of God and Do It?", Presbyterian Outlook, March 14, 1955, p. 13.

4. Cf. ibid., pp. 13-14.
Galatians 2:11-13.

tution of slavery directly in his day. He would build a fellowship of faith which would end in a unity where slavery was irrelevant and impossible.¹

Many liberals quote Dr. E. T. Thompson's interpretation of the Curse of Ham (which is used by many traditionalists to prove that the black man is supposed to occupy a servile position in society):

- (1) the curse is pronounced by Noah, not by God..
- (2) the curse is pronounced on Canaan, and not on Ham; and
- (3) the descendants of Canaan are the Canaanites (see Gen. 10:15-19), white tribes every one of them.²

The Moderator of the Ninety-fourth General Assembly made clear in his address the most basic Biblical principle on which those who are opposed to segregation in the church stand:

The fundamental unity of mankind has been broken and marred by pride and prejudice, by selfishness and sin. But it is restored in principle and in promise by the cross of Jesus Christ who died to break down all walls of hostility between man and man as well as between man and God...³

The Biblical view held by the liberal here outlined is one which aims primarily at breaking down racial barriers within the fellowship of the church. These convictions hinge primarily on a Biblical view of the nature of the Negro, i.e., he is as much a human being as any other human being

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1. Miller, op. cit., l. 14.
2. E. T. Thompson: "The Curse Was Not on Ham," Presbyterian Outlook, March 14, 1955, p. 7.
3. William Thompson, op. cit., p. 9. (quoting the Address of Dr. Wade Boggs)

and on the Biblical view of the nature of the Church. There is also an underlying conviction that God's purpose for society is the restoration of unity.

2. Its Policy

There are two possible expressions of the liberal view in terms of policy. The first policy stems from an emphasis on the conviction that segregation and discrimination are synonymous, therefore both are unchristian. The policy stemming from this emphasis is to directly attack segregation itself by any available means--including the promotion of legal and legislative pressure,¹ as well as by the publication of articles and pamphlets which directly attack segregation.

The second expression of liberal policy does not make segregation a major issue. It neither seeks to preserve the status quo, nor does it primarily seek to change it. Rather, the major policy emphasis resulting from this view is the focus on evangelizing and educating the Negro. All the concessions which traditionalists allow and all of the freedom which desegregationists secure are used if these things contribute to the major aim.² This view rests

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1. Cf. Division of Christian Relations, Presbyterian, U. S., Board of Church Extension, Presbyterian Outlook, February 2, 1953, cover.
2. Cf. Batchlor: Jacob's Ladder, p. 15. Post, p.74. An example of this is seen in Dr. Batchelor's views on the dissolution of Snedecor Synod.

on the conviction that Christ died for the black man as well as the white and that all Christians are brothers in Christ.¹ This view stems from an emphasis on the Biblical roots rather than the practical roots. The middle-of-the-road policy is apparently weak in that it does not maintain a strong stand on the segregation issue itself, thus it leans in the direction of compromise. There is a question as to whether or not the status quo of society would ever be changed if all liberals followed the latter policy.

E. Summary

This chapter has pointed out some of the historical and ideological connections between the pre-Civil War slavery society and the present segregated pattern of society existing in the South. It has pointed out that these same historic and ideological factors determine the traditional position of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., on the matter of segregation. The factors pointed out are: an underlying belief that the Negro is inherently inferior to the white man; and linked with this, the belief that intrinsic in the Negro's make-up is a suitability to the controls of a slavery society; that moral responsibility on the part of the white man to the Negro is, therefore,

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1. Batchelor: Jacob's Ladder, p. 75.
Cf. Post, p. 57-58.

best expressed in terms of paternalism.

It was further observed that the major economic and social structure of society is a historic carry-over from slavery days. This structure is accepted and defended by those holding the traditional view in the church.

The practical reasons which cause the South to cling to its present social pattern were also pointed out, i.e., the relatively low moral and cultural standards of the majority of Southern Negroes and the large numbers of Negroes in proportion to whites who live in the South.

The traditional view in the church on segregation was seen as that view which seeks to defend and preserve the status quo. Its practical justification of the status quo begins with the ideological concepts and ideas pointed out above. Thus segregation is defended as a necessary means to a necessary end. The real reasoning and the actual basis for the traditional stand on segregation was seen to lie not in the realm of Christian principle but in the realm of practical expediency. A deductive approach to the Scriptures in an attempt to justify the status quo and to satisfy the Christian conscience was seen to substantiate this fact.

The general policies as to the role of the church in a segregated society based on or resulting from the traditional view are: the church can best serve God and society by defending the segregated pattern of society;

its responsibility to the Negro and to society is best expressed in the "separate but equal" doctrine.

This chapter also dealt with the roots and resulting general policies of the liberal view. It was shown that the liberals challenged the practice of segregation on the basis that segregation in itself contradicts Christian principles. Segregation was equated with discrimination. Although the liberal view did not adequately answer the fears of social disruption of the traditionalist, the liberal attack showed that the rationale for a segregated society was based on a false view of the modern Negro, that its practice in society is detrimental to the personalities of both the Southern white man and the Negro, that its practice in the church harms the world-wide witness of the church, that it denies the Christian doctrine of man as well as the Biblical doctrine of the nature of the church.

Two general viewpoints as to general policy which should be followed by the church in the light of these convictions arise. The first is a strong positive stand which opposes segregation as such in the church and in society. Such a stand was taken by the Ninety-fourth General Assembly.

The second general policy is one which avoids the issue of segregation as such and recommends the evangelization and Christian education of Negroes as the primary emphasis of the church.

These policies will be more fully developed and examined in terms of their fruits in the third chapter.

CHAPTER III

PRESENT HISTORY AND WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

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PRESENT HISTORY AND WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

A. Introduction

This chapter will point out some of the fruits of the liberal and traditional policy (included in Chapter 2) in the church's present history and its witness in a segregated society. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to survey thoroughly all that the church has done or has failed to do in these areas.

Major historical and organizational trends will be summarized in terms of the effect of the views and policies on these trends. The purpose of the historical summary is to provide an estimate of the value of the various views in the church in terms of their results. The organizational summary in itself reflects the influence of the policies and views set forth in chapter two. The background and value-estimate is necessary if one is to understand the church's view of its own present responsibility in a segregated society.

The next section of the chapter will point out some of the issues which have come to a head in recent years which reveal the influences of the liberal and traditional views and the resulting policies in Negro work, on segregation in the church and on the church as a whole.

Some evidence of progress in actually reaching Negroes and in educating white church members will be pointed out in the fourth section of the chapter.

B. Historical and Organizational Fruits

1. Historical Summary

It was seen in Chapter One that during actual slavery times many outstanding individuals in the Presbyterian Church took seriously the church's responsibility to evangelize the Negro, with the result that at the beginning of the Civil War there were some fourteen thousand Negro Presbyterians, almost all of whom were in the South.¹

The Southern view of the Negro which was an underlying rationale of slavery was not changed by the Negro emancipation, however. Chapter Two pointed out that this view of Negro inferiority was accepted without question both by society and by the church in the period following the Reconstruction until recent times. The traditional justification of segregation, however, was not formulated until the institution was attacked. Because of the Negro's tendency to accept the white man's view of him and to continue to live in conformity, this view was substantiated.² The Southern white man's conviction that he "knew the Negro"³

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1. Ante, p. 16.

2. Ante, pp. 29-30.

3. Ante, p. 32. Dr. Morris characterized this Southern "knowledge" of the Negro.

went more or less unchallenged. The church accepted the general Southern view that every Southern Negro was deeply religious,¹ therefore, did not need to be evangelized. As a result Southern Presbyterian work among the Negroes has been very unfruitful. In 1914 the total number of Negro communicants was two thousand seven hundred. There were thirty-three ministers and seventy churches.² Snedecor Memorial Synod was hopefully erected in 1916 as a solution to the failure of the Presbyterian Church to reach the Negro. In April 1947 there were only two thousand three hundred ninety-nine Negro communicants, thirty-seven ministers and forty-eight churches in Snedecor Memorial Synod. At this same time there were approximately five and a half million unchurched Negroes living within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church, U. S.³ The major excuse given for this failure of the church to reach the Negro was that the message of the Presbyterian Church could not appeal to the Negro.⁴ Dr. Walter Lingle, President Emeritus of Davidson College, states that the main reason for this failure is that "We have not been tremendously concerned about it." He goes on to suggest that the church

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1. B. Hoyt Evans: "Small but Important," Southern Presbyterian Journal, October 20, 1954, p. 16.
2. Morris, op. cit., p. 103.
3. "Negro Work in Our Church," Presbyterian Survey, June 1948, (no page).
4. Alex R. Batchelor, in answer to "The Inquiring Reporter Asks," Presbyterian Outlook, April 17, 1950, p. 4.

has approached the work with a mistaken attitude. He says:

For the most part, we have approached this work with an attitude of superiority. In our work we have kept the Negroes reminded by word and by deed that we consider ourselves their superiors. This may work after a fashion in some departments of life but not in religion. It would be better if we were to leave the question of Superiority to the Lord who is a better judge than we. His estimate might surprise us.¹

It was shown in chapter two that within the church a strong challenge to the traditional viewpoint had arisen. Some Southern Presbyterians began to take another look at the society in which they lived, and at the Negro whom they had assumed that they knew.

2. Organizational Advance

a. Division of Negro Work

A forward step was taken by the church in 1946. In response to the report of the Ad Interim Committee on Negro Work² (appointed in response to a recommendation made by the Assembly's Home Mission Council in 1945) the Eighty-sixth General Assembly named an Assembly's Committee on Negro Work. The Ad Interim Committee report placed responsibility for past failure on the entire church and called on the whole church to accept the task of the evangelization and Christian education of the Negro people of the South.

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1. Walter L. Lingle: "Dr. Lingle Urges Abolition of Separate Synod for Negro Work," Presbyterian Outlook, April 10, 1950, pp 3-4, (quoted from the Christian Observer).
2. See Appendix.

The action of the Assembly removed Assembly's Negro Work from the jurisdiction of the Home Mission Committee and made it an independent agency in the church. This served to focus the attention of the church on its responsibility to the Negro. In 1949, when the church agencies were reorganized, the Committee on Negro Work became a division of the Board of Church Extension.¹

This Committee (later, Division) has had the support of both liberal and traditional viewpoints in the church.² The reason for this is that it announced no policy regarding race relations.³ The service policy, i.e., evangelism, church building, program and equipment and Christian education for Negroes, involved no apparent break with traditional social policy, for it was designed to extend the church's work within the pattern of a segregated society. This philosophy developed in the Department through the leadership, primarily, of Dr. Alex R. Batchelor.

Since Dr. Batchelor was the first Secretary of the Assembly's Committee on Negro Work and has continued since the reorganization in 1949 as the Secretary of the

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1. Cf. "The Reorganization," Presbyterian Outlook, March 20, 1950, p. 8.
Deedie M. Austin: "The Eighty-sixth Session of the General Assembly," Presbyterian Survey, August 1946, p. 330.
2. Batchelor, op. cit., p. 27. (L. N. Bell, proponent of the traditional viewpoint, supports the chairman of the Committee of Negro Work at the 1948 General Assembly.
3. Batchelor, op. cit., p. 15.

Division of Negro Work, he, more than any other man, has influenced Negro Work in the Presbyterian Church, U. S. He was truly God's man for the hour in Southern Presbyterian Negro Work. He saw the Negro not as an inferior, but as a man--a man for whom Christ died.¹ The basis for his relationship with Negro leaders was not the traditional master-slave relation, rather, he worked with Negro leaders as Christian friends and colleagues.² He refused to allow policies of the Christian Church to be dictated by fear of amalgamation.³ This liberal personal view of the Negro stemmed from such a sincere and deep commitment to Christ and was supplemented by such a loving understanding of the brethren who disagreed with him, that his leadership in Negro work was accepted by the whole church. Thus, in spite of wide divergence of conviction, the church could move forward in Negro work.

b. Division of Christian Relations

At the same 1946 General Assembly, another action was taken which was significant. The General Assembly discharged the Assembly's Committee on Moral and Social Welfare which for ten years had operated without any

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1. Ibid., p. 71, 75.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. Loc. cit. (Dr. Batchelor quotes Dr. Wallace Alston: "I believe we make a mistake in trying to think this thing through to the very end. We should do the thing we see for today in the Spirit of Christ. Tomorrow and other tomorrows will be cared for as they come." This became the basis for his service policy.)

full-time staff, and formed the Assembly's Permanent Committee on Christian Relations. In 1949 this Committee became the Division of Christian Relations under the Board of Church Extension.

The purpose of this Committee (later, Division) is to call the church's attention to areas where the Gospel must be applied in the broader relationships of life. One particular area of its concern is race relations and it has endeavored to face this controversial issue frankly and honestly.¹ This Division has become the organ for expressing and promoting a clear stand in the church against segregation both in the church and in society.

In 1949 the report of the Committee to the General Assembly was an explosive document called States Rights and Human Rights. This report, however, proposed no definite action or change within the church; it was not even presented to the Assembly for adoption; it was submitted with the recommendation that it be received and commended to the churches for study. The Assembly, after a mild flurry of opposition voted one hundred sixty-five to seventy-nine to commend the report for study.² Some of

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1. Post, p. 70 ff. Note quotations from the Council on Christian Relations (the connecting link between the Division and the Board of Church Extension)
2. Cf. "Christian Relations," Presbyterian Outlook, June 13, 1949, pp. 11-12.
"States Rights and Human Rights," Presbyterian Outlook, May 2, 1949, p. 5.

the items that mark the tone of this document are:

The South's insistence on "States' Rights" in opposition to federally enforced civil rights, has deep and tenacious roots in Southern history and Southern feelings..

The present day claims of our American minorities to full Civil rights have a sound moral and historical basis..

Discrimination that denies or nullifies these rights is as doomed as human slavery.

A church that tries to be neutral by keeping silent, or a church that resorts to compromise to save itself will to that extent forfeit its redemptive power and influence among men.¹

In 1953 the Council on Christian Relations submitted to the General Assembly a report which included a survey of the progress toward non-segregation and toward improving the lot of the Negro made in recent years in the South. The recommendations made by the committee on the basis of its study and adopted by the Assembly were mild. The major force of the recommendations was "That the Church practice no discrimination in ministering to the needs of people."² This left room for the "separate but equal" theory and could be construed as an approval of the present basic pattern of society, since "practice no discrimination" was left undefined. There was, however, a motion from the floor of the Assembly to make the resolution stronger. An amendment was proposed to the effect that the General

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1. Ibid., pp. 5-7.

2. Council on Christian Relations: The Christian Conscience and Social Action, p. 10.

Assembly do away with segregation in institutions of higher education and urge abolition of segregation in the local churches. This recommendation was referred to the Council on Christian Relations for further study.¹

It was this study, and the resulting report of the Council to the Ninety-fourth General Assembly, plus the stand taken by the Supreme Court which committed the Federal Government to a policy of non-segregation, that led the Assembly in 1954 to **urge strongly** the abolition of segregation in the entire church.²

The three reports³ were printed by the Division of Christian Relations and circulated widely throughout the church. Several of the church papers have also printed condensations of the reports. Together they represent a strong and forthright statement opposing on moral, spiritual and practical grounds segregation in the church and in society.

c. Relation of the Two Divisions

The wisdom of this dual approach of the church in attempting to meet the challenge of a segregated society is apparent. It has kept a difference in basic social philosophy from preventing all forward movement in the

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1. "Ewart Amendment," Presbyterian Outlook, June 29, 1953, p. 10.
2. Ante, pp. 23-24.
3. States' Rights and Human Rights, 1949; The Christian Conscience and Social Action in the South, 1953; and Two Major Issues, 1954.

church. This approach allowed the church to move beyond debates to face repentantly both its past failure and its future task in reaching the Negroes of the South for Christ. This approach also set in motion sound and thoughtful study which sought to discover the will of God for the church in a segregated society. This is not, however, a final answer; for, inevitably some policy on segregation must emerge as the church seeks to evangelize and educate Negro people. How will Negro converts be related to the church? The direction of this emerging policy is indicated by the fact that the Division of Christian Relations and the Division of Negro Work are both Divisions of the Board of Church Extension. This means that more and more the study and policy of the one will have bearing on the practice and work of the other.¹

C. The Clash of Different Views on Specific Issues

Within this historical and organizational framework, other problems have arisen which indicate weakness in this dual approach and which clearly reveal the influence of the views examined in chapter two.

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1. Cf. "The Reorganization," Presbyterian Outlook, March 13, 1950, pp. 12-13.

1. Snedecor Memorial Synod

Following the Civil War, the Southern Church attempted to wash its hands of Negroes within the church by promoting an Independent Afro-American Presbyterian Church. This plan failed because of lack of competent Negro leadership, and because Negro ministers and churches were too isolated from one another.¹ In 1916 the Colored Synod was organized as a part of the General Assembly. The motivation behind its establishment was: avoidance of race tensions--by segregating Negro members and Negro organizations from the white membership; development of Negro leadership--with an underlying aim of eventually establishing a separate church; soothing the conscience of white Presbyterians by their paternalistic financing and guidance of the Negro Synod; elevation of the ideals of Negro leadership through their meeting on an equal ecclesiastical footing in General Assembly (only).²

It is apparent that the purpose in establishing a Negro Synod reflects the traditional view of the Negro and is aimed toward fitting the church into the pattern of a segregated society.

The differences in policy which has its source in the traditional view and policy which is rooted in the

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1. Morris, op. cit., p. 103.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

liberal view of race relations became clear as the church began to rethink its Negro work program. Those viewing segregation as a good and necessary institution felt that the program should be designed to develop eventually a separate Negro church.¹ Those equating segregation with discrimination and seeing no place for racial divisions in the church felt that the trend should be toward total integration of the Negro Synod, its presbyteries and its churches with the white synods, presbyteries and churches, according to geographical proximity.²

This difference in policy began to come to a head at the 1950 General Assembly when four overtures dealing with the dissolution of Snedecor Synod were presented to General Assembly. Dr. Alex Batchelor, then Secretary of the Division of Negro Work, in discussing the pros and cons of this move, reflects the fact that the major concern of the Division of Negro Work is the evangelism and Christian education of the Negro--and not the promotion, per se, of either the traditional or liberal view of race relations. He expresses the need for interracial fellowship on the leadership level. Yet he says, "...our concern need not be directed toward total elimination of all

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1. Cf. loc. cit.

John F. Frierson: "Letters to the Editor," Presbyterian Outlook, June 25, 1951.

2. "The Reorganization," Presbyterian Outlook, March 20, 1950, p. 8.

segregation."¹ Furthermore, he is hesitant about the move to dissolve Snedecor because it would mean that Negroes would be engulfed in white presbyteries and would thus lose opportunities for exercising leadership in the church.²

This is the same fear seen in chapter two³ which causes some Negroes to cling to the isolation and protection offered by the present system of segregation. It represents a failure to realize that in the long view of the race problem, the Negro must ultimately enter competitive white society on a non-protected basis. As long as he thinks and votes and operates his business as a Negro for Negroes, he cannot hope to abolish the color line and be accepted as a man--rather than as a Negro. As long as he is kept separate in the church, his concerns will be narrow ones, his contribution to the whole church will be small, and his opportunities for Christian growth will be limited. Only when he is willing to take the risk of being "lost in the crowd" will he have the opportunity to rise to leadership on his own merits as a man and as a Christian among his fellow men and fellow Christians.

Dr. Batchelor perhaps does the wisest thing in

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1. Alex R. Batchelor: "Shall Snedecor Synod and Presbyteries Be Dissolved?", Presbyterian Outlook, November 27, 1950, p. 6.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
3. Ante, pp. 29-30.

the long run--for he advocates liberal policy, i.e., the dissolution of Snedecor Synod, on the basis of traditional reasoning, i.e., development of Negro leadership.¹ The climax of the divergence in liberal and traditional policy was seen in the 1951 General Assembly. The Board of Church Extension recommended that the separate Negro Synod be dissolved but that the three Negro presbyteries be retained and be received into other Synods (a compromise solution). In addition, the Board recommended that white leadership be used to speed up the program of Negro evangelism. This recommendation was passed by the Assembly. However, it was not passed without opposition. The main drive of opposition called for an alternate plan, i.e., to dismiss the entire Negro Work from the church and promote the formation of a separate Negro church.² Col. Francis P. Miller focused the issue in his statement before the Assembly concerning this alternate plan:

The question we ought to face is, What do you mean by the church... Is it a race thing? Is it a national thing? Is it a class thing? God forbid! The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is a community of all believers. ...we are striving to demonstrate in a world like this that the Church of Jesus Christ includes all the sons of God. I suggest that the recommendation that the Standing Committee on Church Extension

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1. Post, p. . For discussion of leadership philosophy. Cf. Batchelor, Response to "Inquiring Reporter Asks," Presbyterian Outlook, May 1, 1950, p. 4.
2. "Church Extension," Presbyterian Outlook, June 25, 1951, pp. 11, 12, 15. (report on General Assembly proceedings)

brought before us is a small and feeble step in the right direction..¹

Thus, the General Assembly affirmed by a majority vote an action which moved the church a step closer to the abolition of racial barriers in the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

2. "Reaching the Leaders" Philosophy

One of the major fruits of traditional view and policy in the church is the emphasis on and purpose behind leadership training in the church. Although leadership training is an important and necessary part of the total program of every church, in Negro work many of the deeper roots of such an emphasis lie in the traditional desire to promote the establishment of a separate Negro church. When this motivation is the cause for emphasis on reaching and training the leaders, there is danger that the Negro and white membership of the church will neglect their joint responsibility for reaching the masses of Negroes.² Dr. Batchelor expresses his own growing awareness of this danger in Jacob's Ladder:

When I came to the work it was with the conviction that Negro Work was for the Negroes. There is a sense in which that is true. We must provide Negro Leadership to cope with the need of this hour. ...I had to be

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1. Ibid., p. 12. (quoting Col. Miller's statement)
2. The writer saw the danger of this over-emphasis on reaching the leaders while observing the difficulties of a Negro pastor laboring in a rural hill community of Mississippi. He felt very keenly the lack of interest of the Department of Negro work in his rural ministry.

shown that the day of white leadership in Negro Work is not past. My eyes were opened at a Conference... by the message of Dr. James Robinson, a Negro Presbyterian Minister of New York City. ...he quoted from the record of the Roman Church... The Roman Church claims 300,000 Negroes in America. Giving time to this work are 582 priests and 1600 sisters and brothers, a total of 2,182 full-time workers with Negroes. They have only 17 Negro priests. The way is open for Negroes to enter the priesthood but they have not lowered its standard. Until Negroes are trained they use white leadership. What they are doing with white leadership is a natural for the Presbyterian Church. We can organize churches with Negro elders and deacons and (until a Negro minister is available) a white minister.¹

3. Montreat and Segregation

The 1950 General Assembly which met in Massanetta, Virginia, was the first non-segregated Assembly. That same year Montreat, the official Assembly grounds of the church, revised its former policies on segregation to make it possible for future Assembly meetings there, and future adult conferences, as well, to meet on a non-segregated basis.²

Dr. Walter Lingle writes his observations of the treatment of Negro Commissioners at General Assembly before the new Montreat ruling:

Officially, they (the Negro commissioners) have all the rights and privileges that white commissioners have. Nevertheless for years we kept them segregated rather far back on one side of the auditorium. They had no part...in the proceedings of the Assembly. At a meeting of the Assembly at Montreat...a good many years ago, Negro commissioners were housed in the damp rooms under the porch of Geneva Hall and had their

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1. Batchelor: Jacob's Ladder, pp. 75-76.
2. "No Segregation," Presbyterian Outlook, June 26, 1950, pp. 10-11.

meals in the kitchen of the old Alba Hotel. ...Now (they)...are allowed to take their meals in the same room with the white commissioners, but at a separate table at the far end of the room. They are also expected to enter the dining room from a rear door.¹

Today, there is no difference in the privileges or accommodations of Negro and white commissioners.

The new ruling in Montreat was, however, a compromise solution which, though it is a step forward, reveals the racial barriers that still exist in and find strong expression from those who adhere to the traditional view of segregation in the church.²

Although the new policy opened Montreat to adult groups on a non-segregated basis, Negro youth were barred from young people's conferences. Before the Montreat Board of Directors made a ruling on segregation, the young people's conferences were non-segregated, while the adult conferences were segregated. So the actual purpose of the ruling was the prohibition of non-segregated youth conferences. Dr. Nelson Bell, writing to a "traditional" friend who apparently interpreted the Board of Directors' action as one designed to break down the wall of segregation in the church, makes it very clear that the action had the opposite intent:

...As to the effect on conservatives in our church:...
While entertainment is offered Negroes on a non-

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1. Lingle, loc. cit.

2. Stuart R. Oglesby: "Montreat and the New Policy," Presbyterian Outlook, July 10, 1950, p. 6.

segregated basis, the place and manner of entertainment is clearly defined and stipulated. ...at the same time, we have been the first in our church to officially hold up a hand and say "Stop," to our young people, and we mean it.¹

He continues his letter, pointing out the real reasons for the Montreat Board's action:

(The "new factor" which caused this action) has been the ever-present danger of tragedy with our young people. It was this which brought about our action and...the slight change made in...entertainment for the few (six to eight) adults who come here is a minor matter...as compared with the positive action which we took with reference to our young people.²

This ruling reflects the fact that many young people of the church are ready to accept Negro youth as Christian brothers and as equals--and it reflects the fear of racial intermarriage which traditionalists feel most keenly when young people are involved.

4. Church Union

There is little direct indication in Presbyterian, U. S., pro and con literature concerning church union that segregation was an issue. The proposed union of the Presbyterian, U. S., Presbyterian U. S. A. and United Presbyterian Churches was approved by the 1954 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., and was defeated by the vote of individual presbyteries of the church in 1955.

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1. I. W. Bell: "Race Relations and Montreat," Southern Presbyterian Journal, July 15, 1950, p. 5.

2. Loc. cit.

This was the same General Assembly which endorsed the Supreme Court decision on segregation. A connection between the two Assembly actions is revealed by the fact that the minority vote on each action was the same.¹ The Presbyterian Life (Presbyterian, U.S.A.) expresses the view that "race and regional pride" were factors in the defeat of church union.² The Christian Century blames the defeat of the proposed union on the racial agitation of the Supreme Court decision on segregation and the Southern desire to maintain status quo in society.³

5. Ninety-Fourth General Assembly

The significance of this action has already been indicated.⁴ The Division of Christian Relations reports in the February 1955 Survey that six synods have given formal approval to the Council's report on segregation and the subsequent Assembly approval of that report. One synod has deferred action, eight synods have set up study programs prior to final action and one synod has asked General Assembly to reconsider its action.⁵ This report

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1. William Thompson, op. cit., p. 3. The vote stood: 283 for the Plan of Union, 169 against it; 236 for acceptance of the action on segregation, 169 against it.
2. "World Scene," Presbyterian Life, February 19, 1955, p. 21.
3. "Presbyterians Disunited," Christian Century, February 2, 1955, p. 135.
4. Ante, p. 24.
5. "Survey Reviews," Presbyterian Survey, February 1955, p. 4.

does not, however, consider the reactions of various local congregations and presbyteries. Indications that there is much opposition to the General Assembly action are seen in several resolutions published in the Southern Presbyterian Journal.¹

D. Evidences of Progress in Education
and Evangelism

1. Education of White Youth

Actions such as those seen in the "Montreat and Segregation" issue indicate that many people in the church are not bound by fear to cling to tradition. Actions such as the Montreat ruling actually serve to convince young people that the issues involved in segregation need to be settled by faith and not by fear, for as a result of this action Negro youth were denied the opportunity of attending the Assembly's Young People's Leadership School.²

The program materials published by the Department of Youth Work reflect the fact that the church is attempting to educate its youth along lines of the liberal view of

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1. Cf. "Still They Come," Southern Presbyterian Journal, December 8, 1954, p. 14.
"Presbytery of Meridian Against Union," Southern Presbyterian Journal, November 3, 1954, p. 18.
2. The vice-moderator of Assembly's Youth Council for 1953-54 was Ronnie Thomas, a Negro youth. Though not available for this study, A.Y.C. minutes for 1950 and 1951 substantiate this reaction on the part of young people.

segregation.¹

2. Women's Work

In many respects, the women of the church have been far ahead of the church as a whole in their efforts to evangelize and educate Negro women. In 1916 the Women's Auxiliary held a conference for Negro women at Stillman Institute, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, which was the first conference of its kind ever held by any denomination for Negro women.² Since that time this conference program for Negro women has grown and spread in many directions. In 1921 the program expanded to include conferences in other synods than just Alabama. Presbyterian or district one-day conferences became a part of the program in 1927. This meant that cost, travel, distance and time reductions would allow more Negro women to participate. The year 1944 marked the first Auxiliary Training School for Presbyterian Negro Women. This training school was on an Assembly-wide basis. In 1948 Snedecor Memorial Synodical was organized.³

Although these conferences were for Negro women, they were designed and directed by white women who had a

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1. Cf. "The Church and Human Rights," Presbyterian Youth, October-November, 1952, p. 26.
"Roots of Prejudice," Presbyterian Youth, July-September, 1953, pp. 24-27. (Program material for senior high fellowship groups)
2. Batchelor: Jacob's Ladder, pp. 104-105.
3. Cf. loc. cit.

vision of every woman enlisted for Christ.¹ Since Presbyterian Negro women were almost non-existent, the conferences were largely interdenominational. Miss Annie Tait Jenkins, director of the Christian Relations Department of the Committee on Women's Work, in 1945 summarized the purpose and result of the conferences:

Slowly but surely there has been growing a better understanding between Negro and white women who are members of the church. There has been a mutual sharing of the best the white Christians and the Negro Christians have; mutual respect, esteem, affection has come about through sharing Jesus Christ and His good gifts. ...It is the earnest purpose of the women of our church that this strong influence for better inter-group (interdenominational, interracial) relations shall continue. At the same time there must be a strengthening of our own denominational work with Negroes in the South who are out of the church, out of touch with Jesus Christ, and lost without a Savior.²

This estimate of the value of the Negro Women's Conferences reflects a realistic view of the Negro as a person--it contains no note of belief in innate Negro inferiority and counts experiences which lead to better understanding between the races as valuable. These conferences, however, were (and are) weak in one respect. Although Negro women are removed from their respective environments and given a shot of Christian nurture, they must return home to a community in which there is often no real Christian

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1. Cf. loc. cit.

2. Annie Tait Jenkins: "Some Notable Work in Christian Conferences of Negro Women, 1945," Presbyterian Survey, November 1945, p. 389.

fellowship and thus no support and encouragement to continue in the things learned in conference. Conferences are valuable, but they are not enough. They should be supplementary to a regular program of Christian education.

3. Work with Negro Youth

Negro youth conferences sponsored by Assembly's Men's Council and by synod's Men's Councils have been held in Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas in the last few years. These conferences have had interracial faculties and young people of all denominations are invited.¹

The church's first Negro student worker began work at Florida A. and M. College in the fall of 1953. She is attempting to organize a Westminster Fellowship and she is receiving training in student work under the supervision of the Presbyterian Director of Student Work at Florida State University.²

The significance of these efforts lies in the fact that the church is becoming aware of the tremendous needs that lie in these areas and is beginning to work in them. The actual work that has been done with Negro youth and students is apparently minimal.

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1. Batchelor, op. cit., pp. 122-125.

2. Loc. cit.

education leaves the church with no excuse for maintaining segregated colleges. In addition to this, the General Assembly ruling recommending that segregation be abolished in seminaries and in Assembly institutions means that Negro ministerial students can obtain their training at the regular seminaries of the church and that Stillman itself, being an Assembly institution, is officially desegregated. Whether or not the church will use its colleges as the last stronghold of segregated education in the South is a question which cannot be answered at this point.

5 . Individual Work

Perhaps the most permanent work among Negroes is that work which is done on the local level by Christians whose eyes are open to see the need around them for reaching Negro people who are without Christ. Much work of this sort is unpublished but it is nevertheless going on.¹ Two examples which were published in a church periodical illustrate the nature of this work and some of the difficulties involved.

In 1948 the Westminster Student Fellowship of the University of Texas realized that the two Negro colleges

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1. Students and faculty at the University of Mississippi have taught in a Negro Vacation Church School for two summers; the writer knows of at least two other examples of local church work among Negro people.

in Austin, Texas, had no church or religious organization for the Negro students. They worked through the synod's Negro work committee, the administration of Tillotson College (one Negro college) and the Negro students themselves to organize a Negro Westminster Fellowship. In its first four months, the new Fellowship grew from sixty to one hundred ten members and the Negro students set for themselves a budget of five hundred dollars. The University of Texas group moved beyond the question of segregation or non-segregation to reach agreement on the fact that "Every Christian group has an obligation to extend its evangelical message to all people." A concomitant result of this venture was the coming together of white and Negro students in a Christian fellowship--which is the beginning point of dissolving the race barrier in the church.¹

On January 18, 1953, a new Negro Presbyterian Church was born because a Presbyterian minister in a small Georgia town saw the spiritual neglect in a Negro community. William Iverson, pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church in Elberton, Georgia, worked against criticism and initial opposition with a few elders from his church to organize a Negro Sunday School. In the summer they had a Vacation Bible School and finally the church came into being with

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1. Claudia Poff: "Texas University Students Organize Tillotson Westminster Fellowship," Presbyterian Survey, February 1947, pp. 74-75.

thirty-one members. Mr. Iverson says: "Negro Presbyterian Churches can spring up all over the South, anywhere, and anytime," because the Negro is spiritually starved; he will come gratefully to the hand that will feed him and the Presbyterian hand, which holds the Bible, can satisfy that need.¹

The difficulties of such local and individual work with Negroes are increasing in many areas of the South because the school segregation issue is openly the sorest boil in the South.² It is to be noted that even an effort, such as William Iverson's, to work within the pattern of a segregated society brought forth criticism.

E. Summary

It was shown in this chapter that Presbyterian, U. S., work among the Negro population living within the bounds of the church was rather fruitless from the end of the Reconstruction until 1946. This fruitlessness was shown to be due to a lack of concern for the Negro stemming from the traditional view of the Negro and of society. This chapter also pointed out the awakened concern in the

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1. William T. Iverson: "It Can Happen Anywhere," Presbyterian Survey, June 1953, pp. 24-26.
2. The writer overheard a Presbyterian Elder in a Mississippi Presbyterian Church criticize his minister and members of his church for assisting a struggling local Negro Presbyterian Church. (August 1954)

church for reaching the Negro which began in 1946. This concern was seen to express itself in evangelistic and educational work among the Negroes and in a direct attack on segregation in the church and in society. The climax of the attack on segregation in the church was the action of the Ninety-fourth General Assembly which approved the Supreme Court decision on desegregation of education and abolished segregation in the church on the Assembly level.

In the issue over Snedecor Synod, which involved the question of whether or not Negro Presbyterians would be eventually organized into a separate Negro church, liberal policy partially prevailed. The "Reach the Leaders" philosophy which stems from the traditional view, is apparently shifting in its emphasis to leave room for a policy of joint Negro-white cooperation to reach the masses of Negroes together. Montreat has been partially desegregated--the solution reached on this issue was definitely a compromise solution, however. The Ninety-fourth General Assembly's stand, which opposed segregation, was a step forward; it revealed, however, the real opposition within the church from those holding the traditional viewpoint of segregation. The defeat of proposed church union by the presbyteries, while basically caused by other issues, reveals the subtle influence of Southern traditionalism. This could also indicate the strength of traditionalism on the local level in the church. The apparent strength

of liberal views among the young people of the church indicates the possible direction toward which the church may move in the future.

It was discovered that this halting progress in the area of race relations has been matched by a renewed interest in the evangelistic and educational responsibility of the church to the Negro. It was seen that there were weaknesses in this approach, as well as values. The conference program of the women has little local follow-up and reaches only a few leaders among Negro women. Youth work is in its embryo stage. The future position of Stillman as a Negro college is questionable. Traditional fear and defensiveness both within and without the church hinders local evangelistic efforts. When the white church members accept the challenge to work among the Negro people, to evangelize and educate them, one concomitant result of the face to face contact is better race relations.

Both of these forward movements apparently sprang from a more liberal view of the Negro and of society and from the two policy emphases stemming from that view.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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This thesis has studied the effect of the race problem in the South on the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the historic mission and witness of this church to the Negro. An evaluation of the role which the church has played and is playing in the segregated society was suggested through an examination of the roots and fruits of the differing points of view within the church toward segregation.

A. Summary

Chapter One examined, in the light of its historical setting, the major issues involved in the Negro slavery question as these issues emerged in the Presbyterian Church at the time of the Civil War. It was seen that two differing viewpoints which contained three lines of policy emerged in the controversy--the pro-slavery position, which viewed the Negro race as inferior and sought to preserve the status quo of society; the conservative position, which viewed slavery as a necessary evil; and the abolitionist position, which looked upon slavery as sinful and which sought with zeal its abolition. The major difference between the two latter positions was a

policy difference. It was seen that the slavery conflict had direct bearing on the birth of the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

The early witness of the church to the Negro rested on a philosophy which affirmed the church's responsibility for the souls of the Negroes while denying its responsibility for their physical and mental bondage. This view was justified in Southern thinking by the conviction that the Negro, who was racially inferior, needed a master for his own good. Appeals were also made to the Scriptures for justification. The fruits of this witness were difficult to determine, but the small number of Negro converts in the South and the tremendous loss of Negro membership at the close of the war indicate weakness at some point in the ministry of the church to Southern Negroes.

It was seen in Chapter Two that the roots of the present segregated society are found in the slavery society and slavery concepts. Furthermore, it was observed that two opposing viewpoints containing three lines of policy also emerged from the conflict over segregation in the church. The traditional view was seen to advocate preservation of the status quo in society. The primary bases for this view were found to be rooted in a slavery concept of the Negro and of society. The major reasons for defending the status quo were seen to be practical

ones, i.e., a fear of the social and moral and political disruption of society if segregation were to be abandoned.

The Scriptural defense of this view involved an unsound, deductive approach to the Scriptures for the purpose of rationalizing the status quo and satisfying the Christian conscience. Thus, according to this view, the church can best fulfil its role in a segregated society by bending its efforts to defend and preserve that society. Its obligation to the Negro is seen to be paternalism, expressed through the "separate but equal" doctrine.

It was shown that the liberals challenge the practice of segregation on the basis that segregation in itself contradicts Christian principles. Although this view does not adequately answer the fears of the traditionalists, it does show that the rationale for the segregated society is based on a false view of the Negro and that the practice of segregation is detrimental to both Negro and white personality; furthermore, when it exists in the church, it harms the witness of the church. The Biblical support for this view pointed out that racial barriers in the church were contrary to the Gospel, to the Christian doctrine of the essential unity of mankind and to the nature of the church.

It was seen that two points of view as to general policy arise from the liberal view. The first was a positive stand against segregation in the church and in

society. The second avoids the issue of segregation and recommends that the church evangelize and educate the Negro within the existing pattern of society.

The third Chapter pointed out some of the fruits in the church resulting from these viewpoints and policies. It was seen that no progress in Negro education and evangelization was made by the church during the time in which it was dominated by the traditional view. Furthermore, it was seen that those holding this view, though advocating evangelism of the Negro and betterment of his social condition in word, determine their actual practice on a basis of a fear of change and an attitude of defensiveness. Thus, the church is held back in its present witness to the Negro. The tension between the basic liberal and traditional philosophies in the church was evident in the specific issues examined in Chapter Three. The solution to most of these tensions resulted in compromise positions. Tension was also discovered in the evangelistic and educational approach to the Negro which attempts to avoid the segregation issue. It was discovered that the segregation issue cannot ultimately be avoided, for the liberal view of the Negro and the conviction that the role of the church is not to preserve the status quo of society influence working policy.

B. Conclusion

Certain principles for approaching this problem in the church as well as certain trends indicating the future role of the church in a segregated society have been revealed by this study:

1) The life and direction of the church must be rooted in the Word of God rather than in the tradition of men. This means that there must be an open-minded search for God's will--a search controlled neither by a desire to cling to the past nor a desire to rebel against it. Faith in the God and Father of Jesus Christ, not fear of men must be the foundation upon which the church rests.

2) The church after so many years of ignoring the race problem, is facing the society in which it is called to minister honestly and realistically. This is an indication of hope for a more fruitful witness to the Negroes of the South in the future.

3) However, the fact that the traditional view of the Negro and the traditional desire to preserve the status quo are strong within the church as well as within society means that progress will be slow and that much love for the brethren who disagree will be needed.

4) The best procedure for progress toward a fruitful witness would seem to be: a continued strong stand against segregation in the fellowship of the church;

provision for more real interracial contacts wherever they can be had within the church; a strong local effort on the part of individual churches to evangelize and educate Negroes on whatever basis this can be done in the areas to which the churches minister.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE GENERAL STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AD INTERIM COMMITTEE OF 1946

THE NEED FOR A GREAT FORWARD MOVEMENT

In the light of the facts which have been mentioned, it becomes abundantly clear that our Church has not even begun to meet its responsibility for the evangelization of the Negro race and for Christian Education among that people. As we face these facts and as we remember the words of our Lord, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required," we stand self-condemned as a denomination for the littleness of our service. Having received so much by way of material wealth and of spiritual blessing, we have left largely to other churches the responsibility for ministering to our underprivileged brethren of another race. We believe that the existing situation in this matter calls for genuine penitence on the part of our Church as a whole, and for a determined effort to remedy some of the mistakes which we have made in the past.

Before making the recommendations which follow, we wish to make it clear that we do not intend any reflection upon the Executive Committee of Home Missions, which has

been the agency charged by our General Assembly with the responsibility for our Negro Work. That Committee has never received from the Church an amount which could for a moment, be considered adequate for the task, and has often been in the position of having to make "bricks without straw." It has striven earnestly for the welfare of the Negro people and has been responsible for the principal part of what has been accomplished in our Negro Work. Had we provided adequate financial support for that Committee, the picture which confronts us today would undoubtedly be different. We would record here our deep appreciation of the sacrificial service which has been rendered in this department of our Church's life by many individuals through the years, and would recognize particularly the large contribution of time and of thought which has been made by the Board of Trustees of Stillman Institute.

We are convinced, however, that the magnitude of the task to be accomplished in the field of our Negro Work demands that it be placed upon an entirely new and independent basis and given the dignity which is worthy of its real purpose.

In making our study, we have tried to be thoroughly objective. We feel that our report is only an approach to an area of great need which calls for heroic action. Our failures in the past have been failures of virtually our entire Church, and the remedy must now be

provided by our Assembly as a whole. No half-way measures can suffice. Only a movement which can lift the imagination and challenge the loyalty of our entire membership can hope to succeed.

Certainly, the material prosperity of our people in these days is such as to make possible the financial support necessary for a real program of advance in our Negro Work--if only we can catch a vision of the spiritual need and opportunity which exist today.

For these reasons, your Committee would submit the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Control and Support

1. That work among the Negroes in the Presbyterian Church, U. S., be made the responsibility of a Committee appointed for this purpose by the General Assembly.

2. That this Committee bear the official title: "The Assembly's Committee on Negro Work," and begin to function as a formal agency of the Church April 1, 1947.

(a) That our Negro constituency be given adequate representation in the membership of this Committee.

3. That the Assembly provide a minimum of \$100,000.00 each year for the financial support of its program.

II. Evangelism

1. That synods, presbyteries, and local churches both White and Negro, throughout the Assembly, be urged to organize outpost Sunday Schools for Negroes wherever the way seems to be clear.

2. That these mission points be organized into churches at the earliest possible moment under Negro leadership and incorporated into Snedecor Memorial Synod.

3. That the Church, by every means possible, seek to secure a better trained Negro ministry. This will require a substantial increase in the meager salaries now paid to our Negro preachers.

(a) To this end, it is hoped that churches and presbyteries will discover Negro youth who show promise as prospective candidates for the ministry and provide assistance for them during the period of preparation for this high office.

4. That the Assembly's Committee on Negro Work start a Church and Manse Erection Fund for Negroes.

5. That the Institutional Missions supported by our Church intensify their evangelistic endeavors in order that future Negro Presbyterian Churches may be developed from their impact upon the life of this group.

III. Christian Education

1. That the Assembly's Committee on Negro Work co-

operate with the Executive Committee of Religious Education and Publication in maintaining a Director of Religious Education for Snedecor Memorial Synod.

2. That educational scholarships be provided by churches, organizations and individuals for worthy Negro Youth in cooperation with the Assembly's Committee on Christian Education and Ministerial Relief.

3. That continuous and challenging publicity be given to our Negro Work through the channels of the Church's publications.

IV. Higher Education

1. That Stillman Institute be thoroughly reorganized and developed into an A-grade four year college.

2. That control of the college be vested in a Board of Trustees chosen by the General Assembly with a charter properly defining its powers.

(a) That our Negro constituency be given adequate representation in the membership of this Board.

3. That a strong school of religion be developed at Stillman for the training of Bible teachers, lay leaders, religious education workers and ministers. For the present this school should offer the degree of B.R.E. for two years of study after two years of college work; and the degree of B.Th. for three years of study after two years of college work.

At the earliest practicable date, this school should also offer the B.D. degree for an approved theological course of three years after the earning of a four year college degree.

4. That the General Assembly, in order to move toward the above objectives, approve a campaign of \$1,000,000.00 for the improvement and endowment of Stillman Institute.

V. Prayer

That the membership of the entire Church be earnestly requested to pray for this great cause and to support it liberally with their means.