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Sex, Segregation, and the Sacred after *Brown*

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Asked to explain the victories of the civil rights movement, activists have often replied, "God was on our side." Martin Luther King Jr., for example, portrayed himself and his cause as divinely sanctioned, positioning segregationists clearly across the fence. "We have the strange feeling down in Montgomery that in our struggle we have cosmic companionship," King revealed during the bus boycott in 1956. "We feel that the universe is on the side of right and righteousness. That is what keeps us going." King did not simply consider segregation unconstitutional; he considered it a sin, and its Christian champions, heretics. Speaking of the boycott in another context, King portrayed segregationists as wayward Christians who, like the Prodigal Son, "have strayed away to some far country of sin and evil."¹

Many white supporters of black civil rights felt the same way. The director of religious life at the University of Mississippi and Methodist minister Will Campbell believed that racism was a "heresy"

infesting white southern Protestantism. Integrationist Christians, referring time and again to the Apostle Paul's notion of the church as the body of Christ (Ephesians 4), denounced their segregationist brethren for poisoning and polluting that body. "The Church is first of all the body of Christ, and in that Body we are one, not races or clans," declared another white Mississippi Methodist minister. King agreed: The "church is the Body of Christ. So when the church is true to its nature it knows neither division nor disunity. I am disturbed about what you [segregationists] are doing to the Body of Christ." The "beloved community," as King explained on another occasion, had to be integrated because "segregation is a blatant denial of the unity which we all have in Jesus Christ."² Segregation, in other words, was a theological as well as a social and political fallacy.

On the whole, American historians have subscribed to King's version of the sacred history of the civil rights movement. Most books written about the struggle for racial equality emphasize the central role that religion played in articulating the challenge that the civil rights movement offered to the existing order of segregation. There are good reasons for this: as Aldon D. Morris noted in *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, black churches were the "institutional center" of the African American freedom struggle. Historians have noted respectfully the deep religious faith of many civil rights leaders and supporters and the influence of religious language and ideals on the movement. Although more recent scholarship has broadened both the organizational and ideological genealogy of the civil rights movement, even those historians who qualify the influence of the black church on the movement recognize the importance of the

religiosity of black and white southerners in structuring their views in favor of civil rights.³

The religiosity of anti-integrationists has not fared so well in the scholarly literature. Some of the historians most engaged with the religious beliefs of civil rights activists have, almost in the same breath, denigrated the religious faith of segregationists. For example, David Chappell, who sees black Christian faith in the prophetic tradition as the key to the success of the civil rights movement, downplays the theological beliefs of white southerners and considers religious segregationists dupes at best. While in recent years a number of scholars have written sensitively about what Paul Harvey calls the "theology of segregationism" and Bill Leonard has dubbed "a theology for racism," few have treated segregationist ideas about religion with the care that has been devoted to proslavery ideology and thinkers. Harvey, Leonard, Charles Marsh, Wayne Flynt, and Andrew Michael Manis are among the few historians who have reckoned seriously with the substance of segregationists' religious beliefs.⁴

In their response to the arguments of King and others, Christian segregationists entered an argument as old as the Church itself: In what ways could and should the world of the flesh be made like the world of the spirit? Taking the tack that normative Christians have taken since the second century, anti-integrationists pitted the pastoral Paul, providing guidelines for the day-to-day administration of Christian communities, against the eschatological Paul, proclaiming the impending end of time and the irrelevance of life in the flesh. There are distinctions on earth (different languages, races, sexes), segregationists argued; these distinctions are created by God; and, although humans can all become one in spirit through conversion to Jesus, and although once the Messiah comes all earthly distinctions will pass away, in this world and in this flesh earthly distinctions are real—and Christians should not rebel against them. In his May 30, 1954, sermon, "Integration or Segregation?"—which was reprinted widely in newspapers and circulated in pamphlet form—Rev. James F. Burks of Bayview Baptist Church in Norfolk, Virginia, rebutted the efforts of integrationists to cloak themselves in Christian righteousness. "The spiritual 'oneness' of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ actually and ethically has nothing to do" with the issue of segregation, Burks explained. Spiritual kinship differs from physical kinship, just as the spiritual and secular worlds differ. "If integration of races is based upon the contention that men are all 'one in Christ,' then the foundation is not secure. The idea of 'Universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man' is MAN'S concoction and contradicts the Word of God," Burks charged. "Those who are 'one in Christ' are such through a spiritual union and certainly not physical." Citing Deuteronomy 32:8 and Paul in Acts 17:26 on the division of peoples, Burks insisted that, from a theological perspective,

We are interested—finally and absolutely—in what the Word of God teaches about the races of men.... The Word of God is the surest and only infallible source of our facts of Ethnology, and when man sets aside the plain teachings of this Blessed Book and disregards the boundary lines God Himself has drawn, man assumes a prerogative that belongs to God alone.

Citing Paul's pastoral letters once again, Burks warned, "The Anti-Christ will consummate this [rebellious] attitude by opposing and exalting Himself above God."⁵

This article explores how religion served as a vessel for one particular language crucial to racial segregation in the South: the language of miscegenation. It was through sex that racial segregation in the South moved from being a local social practice to a part of the divine plan for the world. It was thus through sex that segregation assumed, for the believing Christian, cosmological significance. Focusing on the theological arguments wielded by segregation's champions reveals how deeply interwoven Christian theology was in the segregationist ideology that supported the discriminatory world of Jim Crow. It also demonstrates that religion played a central role in articulating not only the challenge that the civil rights movement offered Jim Crow but the *resistance* to that challenge.

Placed in context, white southern reactions to the civil rights movement—in particular, to the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954—represented a religious conflict over orthodoxy between two strongly held Christian traditions. For the historian (as opposed to the believer), orthodoxy is the product, not of revelation, but of conflict, in which the victory of one interpretation over another is historically produced rather than divinely ordained. Historians of the civil rights era tend to pass over this conflict and, ignoring or condemning the testimony of the many who believed that segregation was "the commandment and law of God," award the palm of orthodoxy to the color-blind, universalist theology of Martin Luther King's beloved community.⁶ 7

When we do this we participate in what was perhaps the most lasting triumph of the civil rights movement: its successful appropriation of Christian dogma. At the same time, we miss the titanic struggle waged by participants on both sides of the conflict to harness the immense power of the divine to their cause. Viewing the civil rights movement as in part an argument about competing claims to Christian orthodoxy will help us better understand the arguments made by both sides of this struggle and the strategic actions they took. 8

The Theology of Segregation

We will begin where segregationist Christians began: with the Bible. When civil rights supporters quoted the Apostle Paul's argument in Acts 17:26 that "From one single stock [God] ... created the whole human race so that they could occupy the entire earth," segregationists responded by reciting the second half of the verse, in which the God who created all men "decreed how long each nation should flourish and what the boundaries of its territory should be." Reliance on this particular Bible verse freed segregationists from the discredited separate creations theory (polygenesis) cited by proslavery advocates a century earlier. It also meant that the Biblical defense of segregation could exist side-by-side with contemporary anthropology cited by Christian supporters of integration.⁷ 9

But segregation did not stand on Paul alone. Turning to their Bibles, anti-integrationists found many narratives to support a segregated world. White ministers and laymen across the South offered a biblically based history of the world that accounted for all of the significant tragedies of human history, from the Fall and the Flood through the Holocaust, in terms of race relations. Binding the narrative together and linking the catastrophes of the past with the integrated apocalypse to come was the chief sin in the service of the anti-Christ: miscegenation. The notion that the sin committed in the Garden of Eden was sexual in nature stretches back centuries. By the Middle Ages, rabbinical readings of the Fall commonly considered the serpent a male, since it lusted after Eve. Proslavery apologists in the nineteenth century favored a variant of this theory in which Eve was tempted, not by a snake, but by a pre-Adamite black man (even, in an 1843 version, a "Negro gardener"). Needless to say, more than an apple was on offer. Most southern Christians rejected as heretical the notion that Negroes were created before Adam (and were, therefore, soulless beasts incapable of salvation), but several influential postemancipation writers persisted in arguing precisely this point. Buckner H. Payne, a Nashville publisher and clergyman who wrote under the pseudonym Ariel, insisted in 1867 that the tempter in the garden was a talking beast—a black man—and his interactions with Eve the first cause of the Fall. Writing at the height of Radical Reconstruction, Ariel concluded his argument by reminding his readers that "a man can not commit so great an offense against his race, against his country, against his God, in any other way, as to give his daughter in marriage to a negro—a beast—or to take one of their females for his wife." Should America fail to heed his warning, 10

Ariel predicted disaster: "The states or people that favor this equality and amalgamation of the white and black races, *God will exterminate.*"⁸

Although rebutted at the time and later, Ariel's argument remained current through the middle of the twentieth century, buttressed along the way by such widely read books as Charles Carroll's *The Negro a Beast* (1900) and *The Tempter of Eve* (1902), both of which considered miscegenation the greatest of sins. Denounced for its acceptance of separate creations, *The Negro a Beast* was nonetheless enormously influential. Recalling the door-to-door sales campaign that brought the book to the notice of whites across the South, a historian of religion lamented in 1909 that "during the opening years of the twentieth century it has become the Scripture of tens of thousands of poor whites, and its doctrine is maintained with an appalling stubbornness and persistence." In this tradition, miscegenation—or, more commonly, amalgamation or mongrelization—was the original sin, the root of all corruption in humankind.⁹ 11

The expulsion from Paradise did not solve the problem of miscegenation. By the time of Noah race mixing was so prevalent that, in the words of one civil rights-era pamphleteer, "God destroyed 'all flesh' in that part of the world for that one sin. Only Noah was 'perfect in his generation' ... so God saved him and his family to rebuild the Adamic Race." That perfection did not last long, however; according to some traditions, the cursed son of Ham, already doomed to a life of servitude, mixed his blood with "pre-Adamite negroes" in the Land of Nod. Again and again God's wrath is aroused by the sin of miscegenation, and the people feel the awful weight of his punishment: Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for this sin, as was the Tower of Babel, where, in a failed effort to protect racial purity, God dispersed the peoples across the globe. King Solomon, "reputed to be the wisest of men, with a kingdom of matchless splendor and wealth was ruined as a direct result of his marrying women of many different races," and the "physical mixing of races" that occurred between the Israelites and the Egyptians who accompanied Moses into the wilderness "resulted in social and spiritual weakness," leading God to sentence the Exodus generation to die before reaching the Promised Land. For evidence that the God of Noah remained as adamantly opposed to racial mixing as ever, white southern believers could look back a mere fifteen years to the Holocaust. The liquidation of six million people was caused, D. B. Red explained in his pamphlet *Race Mixing a Religious Fraud* (c. 1959), by the sexual "mingling" of the Jews, who suffered what Red represents as God's final solution to the miscegenation problem: "Totally destroy the people involved." Here, surely, was proof that segregation was "divine law, enacted for the defense of society and civilization."¹⁰ 12

Narratives such as these had two key pedagogical aims: to make the case for segregation as divine law, and to warn that transgression of this law would inevitably be followed by divine punishment. In the 1950s and 1960s this punishment was imagined to be directed at the nation (in the form of the Communist partisans of the anti-Christ) and at local communities and congregations. Referring to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, Carey Daniel, pastor of the First Baptist Church of West Dallas, Texas (and active in his region's White Citizens' Council), explained, "Anyone familiar with the Biblical history of those cities during that period can readily understand why we here in the South are determined to maintain segregation." Rev. James F. Burks of Norfolk was more explicit. As he lectured shortly after the *Brown* decision was announced, 13

Spurning and rejecting the plain Truth of the Word of God has always resulted in the Judgment of God. Man, in overstepping the boundary lines God has drawn, has taken another step in the direction of inviting the Judgment of Almighty God. This step of racial integration is but another stepping stone toward the gross immorality and lawlessness that will be characteristic of the last days, just preceding the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If this happened, it would be the fault of no one but white southern Christians themselves, for did not the

Bible make clear, as Mississippi senator Theodore G. Bilbo warned, that "miscegenation and amalgamation are sins of man in direct defiance with the will of God?"¹¹

Racial extremists such as Bilbo were not the only people who believed this. The 1955 opinion of Henry Louttit, Episcopal bishop of South Florida, that only a few "sincere but deluded folk" would use scripture to back up their belief in segregation turned out to be optimistic. The argument that God was against sexual integration was articulated across a broad spectrum of education and respectability, by senators and Ku Klux Klansmen, by housewives, sorority sisters, and Rotarians, and, not least of all, by mainstream Protestant clergymen. Dr. W. M. Caskey, a professor at Mississippi College (the state's leading Baptist institution), explained in 1960, "We ... believe with Governor [Ross] Barnett, that our Southern segregation way is the Christian way.... [W]e believe that this Bible teaches that Thou wast the original segregationist." Segregationist ministers who believed that the Bible "gave clear guidance on the integration-segregation issue" were prominent in the crowds surrounding Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. Editorialists and congregations elsewhere spoke out as well. "In integrating the races in schools, we foster miscegenation, thereby changing God's plan and destroying His handiwork," resolved the Cameron Baptist Church in Cameron, South Carolina. David M. Gardner, writing in the *Baptist Standard*, agreed: "God created and established the color line in the races, and evidently meant for it to remain. Therefore, we have no right to try and eradicate it."¹²

As absurd as the argument for divine segregation may appear to today's readers, it had great power in its day. Evidence of the political and social power of these ideas is everywhere—in legal decisions, in personal correspondence, in sermons and pamphlets and speeches and newspapers. Organizations acted on these assumptions; in 1958 the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) denounced interracial marriage and resolved that "racial integrity" was a "fundamental Christian principle." Judges even incorporated these theological positions into legal decisions. Upholding segregation in a 1955 ruling, the Florida Supreme Court preferred its own reading of the Bible to that of the bishop of South Florida. "When God created man," the Florida justices explained, "He allotted each race to his own continent according to color, Europe to the white man, Asia to the yellow man, Africa to the black man, and America to the red man." A decade later in Virginia, federal circuit court judge Leon A. Bazile also appealed to divine sanction, in the case that would soon form the basis for the Supreme Court's 1967 ruling in *Loving v. Virginia* that antimiscegenation laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment. According to Bazile,

Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.¹³

More than most sources, Bazile's ruling in *Loving v. Commonwealth* provides a clear example of the importance of the sexual and theological nexus in the civil rights struggle. That nexus—visible to anyone who looked beneath the surface of southern race relations—burst into the open in May 1954.

The *Brown* Decision

Like the chief executives of the other southern states, Virginia governor Thomas B. Stanley spent the spring of 1954 wrestling with the issue of state compliance with the *Brown* decision. Eager to communicate with their governor on this topic, hundreds of Virginians wrote to express their opinions about the Supreme Court ruling. Most who wrote objected to integration. The most common argument of the dissenters was theological: integration encouraged miscegenation, which contradicted divine Word.¹⁴

On the face of things, this response seems surprising: the *Brown* decision, limited as it was to desegregation of public schools, looked to be about anything but sex and marriage. This impression was the result of a deliberate strategy on the part of *Brown*'s architects, both within the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and on the Supreme Court, which went to considerable trouble to limit the decision's language to public education alone. Nor did the decision claim that statutory considerations of race or color were impermissible in arenas other than public education. In addition, the justices who backed *Brown* explicitly refused to rule on the constitutionality of antimiscegenation laws. The Court ducked a chance to evaluate restrictive marriage laws in 1955, a decision that was widely derided. A decade later, Felix Frankfurter's law clerk Alexander Bickel justified the Court's reluctance to rule on another interracial marriage case by insisting that the issue was "hardly of central importance in the civil rights struggle." But the justices knew better: they avoided ruling on miscegenation not because it was unimportant, but because it was too hot to handle. As Justice John Marshall Harlan II put the matter in a 1955 note to his colleagues during the controversy over *Brown*, "One bombshell at a time is enough."¹⁵

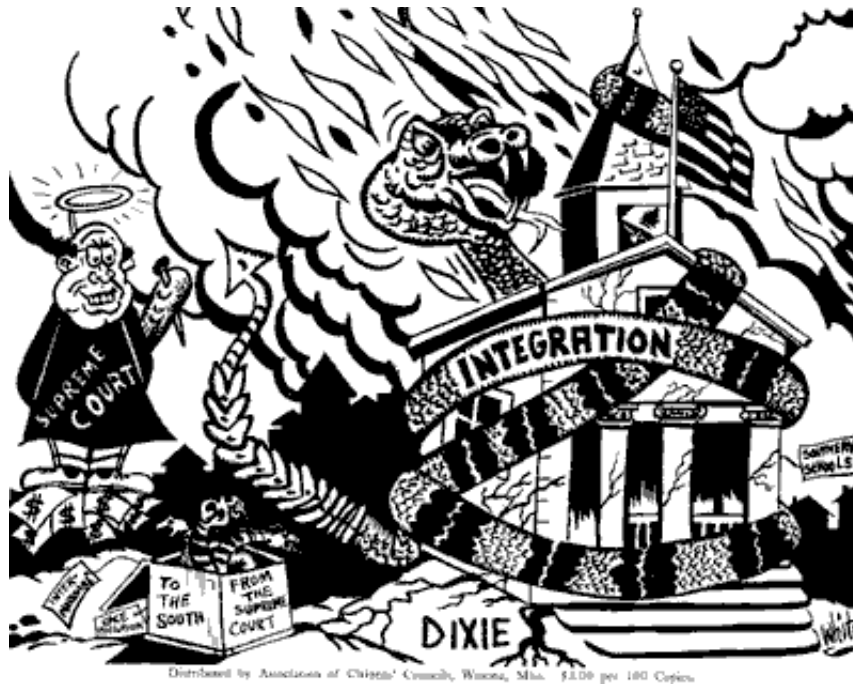
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In avoiding the issue of miscegenation, the Warren court was following the NAACP strategy of attacking segregation first from its extremities. Certainly both the Court and the NAACP recognized that restrictions on sex and marriage lay at the heart of Jim Crow. When the *Brown* decision was announced in May 1954, sex and marriage between those defined at law as white and those defined as nonwhite were prohibited in twenty-seven states—and had been, with a few brief exceptions during Reconstruction, for the previous three hundred years. State antimiscegenation laws underpinned the edifice of racial segregation and discrimination in America, a fact advertised by students of southern social relations since the 1920s. Gunnar Myrdal canonized this position in 1944 when he announced in *An American Dilemma* that sex was "the principle around which the whole structure of segregation of the Negroes ... [was] organized."¹⁶

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Black southerners did not need Gunnar Myrdal to explain that sexual control was central to both the ideology and the practice of white supremacy. Early black rights organizations, including the NAACP, set their sights on restrictive marriage laws. As a practical issue, however, the risks of addressing the sexual question outpaced the advantages. By 1940 the NAACP's new Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDEF) had crafted a strategy of attacking Jim Crow from the outside in, through lawsuits focused on higher education and discriminatory voting practices such as the white primary. Sex was the last thing the association wanted to talk about. But it was a topic that simply would not go away. Whether they fought for integrated public education at the graduate or primary level, civil rights groups opened themselves to the charge that they favored interracial sex and marriage. When he recalled the NAACP's successful campaign to get George W. McLaurin admitted to the graduate school of the University of Oklahoma in 1948, Thurgood Marshall (then heading the LDEF) noted that his strategy revolved in good measure around defusing whites' fears of racial mixing. "We had eight people who had applied and who were eligible to be plaintiffs, but we deliberately picked Professor McLaurin," Marshall explained, "because he was sixty-eight years old and we didn't think he was going to marry or intermarry.... They could not bring that one up on us, anyhow."¹⁷

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This flyer, printed by the Association of Citizens' Councils, Winona, Mississippi, portrays school integration as a viper that will strangle southern schools. The gift of a corrupt Supreme Court, the intermarriage and race pollution that will follow integration of the schools will destroy Dixie. Courtesy Special Collections, University of Mississippi.

Everyone connected with the school cases that became known collectively as *Brown v. Board of Education* understood how vital it was that they not be linked with sex. Despite the precautions of both the NAACP and the Warren court, however, the *Brown* decision was interpreted by a large and vocal segment of white southerners in explicitly sexual terms. "The first reaction to the Supreme Court's decision was almost psychotic," Mark Ethridge, editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, recalled. In a typical editorial comment, the *Jackson Daily News* in Mississippi denounced the school decision as "the first step, or an opening wedge, toward mixed marriages, miscegenation, and the mongrelization of the human race." Walter C. Givhan, an Alabama state senator, interpreted the *Brown* decision the same way. "What is the real purpose of this? To open the bedroom doors of our white women to Negro men." Numerous letters sent to southern governors struck the same theme. In a letter to Georgia governor Herman E. Talmadge (who was on record arguing that "God himself segregated the races" and who would continue to assert that "segregation is not inconsistent with Christianity"), William A. Robinson Jr. worried about the future. "Of course, we may abolish the public schools," Robinson wrote, "but when the NAACP procures from an obliging Court, as seems quite likely in the near future, a ruling adverse to our marriage restrictions, we cannot meet that issue by abolishing marriage." Georgia's state attorney general, Eugene Cook, agreed with this line of reasoning and took it a step further, predicting "an amalgamation stampede" should the Court rule against state antimiscegenation laws. *Racial Facts*, a popular pamphlet, made the same point in a way any southern gardener could understand, warning of "Negroid blood like the jungle, steadily and completely swallowing up everything."¹⁸

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It was within this highly charged sexual context that the battle for divine sanction between supporters and opponents of desegregation took place. While white southern opponents of *Brown* were making dire predictions of syphilis in the schools, southern moderates and reformers leapt to take the moral high ground. With southern newspapers and politicians almost unanimously opposed to the Supreme Court decision, *Brown*'s supporters turned to the white churches. The relative silence of white ministers on the race issue through 1954 may have encouraged moderates to try to co-opt the church. Mississippi's Hodding Carter—who had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1946 for a series of antilynching editorials—made a claim for religious authority and linked Christianity to democracy when he wrote in the *Delta Democrat-Times* that "the Court could not have made a different decision in the light of democratic and Christian principles and against the background of today." A group of thirty-seven college students and counselors attending the Southeastern Regional Methodist Student Conference in Virginia made the same rhetorical move in a letter to Gov. Thomas Stanley. The *Brown* decision, the students and counselors explained, was "in keeping with the spirit of democracy and Christianity and should not be side-stepped in any way." Methodist youth in North Carolina took a similar tack when they resolved in August 1954 at the annual Methodist Youth Fellowship that "segregation is un-Christian" and voted to present resolutions urging support of the *Brown* decision. Black southerners also tried to tie the *Brown* decision to Christian ideals. The National Baptist Convention (the leading forum of black Baptists) announced that on May 17, 1954, "the Social Gospel of Jesus received its endorsement by the Highest Court of the nation." Other African Americans reacted less reverently. The boxer Joe Louis, who had wandered into the office of *Ebony* magazine as editors there heard the news, smiled broadly and said, "Tell me, did Herman Talmadge drop dead?"¹⁹ 21

Civil rights supporters understood immediately the importance of having God—and his spokesmen—on their side. "If the ministers speak out bravely, quietly, persuasively they can give direction to the feelings of millions of white southerners who don't know what to do or where to turn," wrote the liberal author Lillian Smith from her home in Georgia. Although Smith was hardly representative of either southern Protestantism or white southern thought more generally, her hopes were not entirely unfounded: there is evidence that white Christian consciences were strained by many aspects of segregation. Certainly many southern religious leaders, especially those connected with seminaries or foreign mission work, questioned segregation long before 1954. In June 1954—just two weeks after the announcement of the *Brown* decision—the ten thousand messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) endorsed the Supreme Court's decision, proclaiming it "in harmony with the constitutional guarantee of equal freedom to all citizens, and with the Christian principles of equal justice and love for all men." The governing boards of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC), the World Council of Churches, and the Synagogue Council of America all passed resolutions praising the decision. The Catholics, Methodists, and Presbyterians also followed suit, although not without first addressing the trump argument: the Southern Presbyterian General Assembly accompanied its support for school integration with the assurance that interracial marriage would not follow.²⁰ 22

The proclamations of the national church organizations were useful to supporters of black civil rights. George E. Nabb Jr., a Virginia minister, lectured his governor that in trying to circumvent the *Brown* decision Virginia was ignoring "the expressed wishes of the four, largest religious bodies in our State." But these organizations—especially the SBC's progressive Christian Life Commission, which authored the denomination's official response to *Brown*—were not necessarily representative of the masses of white Christian Protestants or of the clergy. (As one white southerner remarked of the messengers to Robert Penn Warren, "They were just a little bit exalted. When they got back with the home folks a lot of 'em 23

wondered how they did it.") For every Protestant minister who declared that the *Brown* decision "showed the hand of God in it," there were others who saw the diabolical machinations of the Kremlin instead and who denounced "pinkos in the pulpit" for their support of integration. Douglas Hudgins, pastor of the enormously powerful First Baptist Church of Jackson, Mississippi, was one of the few messengers to object to the report recommending support of the *Brown* decision. But he was surely not the only Baptist minister to preach the Sunday after the convention on the local autonomy of churches. Pastor of a congregation studded with state leaders, Hudgins almost never preached on contemporary events. Now he took the opportunity to remind his flock of the congregational autonomy at the heart of Baptist associational life. Decisions taken by the Southern Baptist Convention had no binding authority on local churches, he insisted. Furthermore, he explained, the Supreme Court decision was "a purely civic matter" and thus an inappropriate topic for the Christian Life Commission in the first place. In this Hudgins echoed SBC president J. W. Storer, who endorsed the *Brown* decision on civic rather than theological grounds. Repudiating the religious arguments of his organization's Christian Life Commission, Storer argued that Baptists should obey the Supreme Court decision because "We 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'"²¹

Public schools belonged to Caesar. Racial purity belonged to God. In *Brown*'s wake, many white southern Christian leaders tried to find a way to obey both the law of man and that of God and at the same time chart a middle course between massive resistance and capitulation to the theology of the emerging civil rights movement. Worried about the sexual and theological implications of the *Brown* decision and anxious about schism, in 1956 the Episcopal Church's National Council backtracked on its belief, expressed just a year earlier, that desegregation was "the will of God." Replacing this explicitly theological justification for desegregation with a civic concern for justice, the Episcopalians substituted "free access to institutions" for the goal of "integration"—a loaded term that suggested intermarriage, from which "the majority of church leaders still shrank." In 1957 an interdenominational group of Atlanta clergymen published a statement that disavowed support for racial amalgamation but declared that "as Americans and Christians we have an obligation to obey the law." The *Alabama Baptist*'s Leon Macon went further, arguing that "When we violate a law we hurt man and grieve God." Liberal clergymen in Little Rock during the integration crisis there in September 1957 took the same tack, insisting that good Christians could disagree about segregation but not about upholding the law.²²

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A CORRUPT TREE BRINGETH FORTH EVIL FRUIT



A Plea for RACIAL SEGREGATION Based on Scripture, History
and World Conditions

You have done a masterful job in marshalling both Biblical and
Secular arguments

—James O. Eastland, U. S. S.

Quoting Matthew 7:17, the cover of D. B. Red's pamphlet *A Corrupt Tree Bringeth Forth Evil Fruit* makes the common argument that Communists were behind school integration in the United States and that the Communists' larger plot was "race mixing." Carrying an endorsement by Mississippi senator James O. Eastland, the cover suggests that school integration will destroy racial purity. *Courtesy Special Collections, University of Mississippi.*

But what were good Christians to do when the law of the land contradicted God's holy word? The more recent historiography of the *Brown* decision has noted the way that white southerners framed their anger at school integration in terms of sexual danger. What has slipped under the radar is the theological articulation of that worry. The *Brown* decision raised practical moral and theological issues for many southern white Christians. While liberal Presbyterians worried that "the courts have shown more sympathy toward the Negro than has the church" and admonished it to "strive to keep apace of its Master or

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become bereft of his spirit," segregationist Christians suspected that the state was following not the Master, but his principal challenger. Like Norfolk's Rev. James F. Burks, who argued that "modern-day Christianity has substituted a social Gospel for the Blood-purchased Gospel of Christ," many white southerners considered the *Brown* decision at direct odds with God's moral codes. Angry about the desegregation decision and the support liberal clergy had given it, W. L. Trotten Sr. of North Carolina complained that "we the people ... are being forced to disobey the laws of our GOD who created us." Insisting that "God is the author of segregation," Elmer M. Ramsey of Miami charged the Supreme Court with "exceed[ing] its authority" by interfering with divine law.²³

This argument, it is important to note, was not about school integration per se; it was about its consequences, which segregationists considered to be interracial sex and marriage, leading to race corruption. The most common line of argument among the hundreds of letters that Virginia governor Thomas B. Stanley received in the weeks following the *Brown* decision insisted that school integration led inevitably to intermarriage, which violated God's plans for the universe. Written largely by women, the letters to Governor Stanley parallel the correspondence received by other southern governors in the weeks following the school decision. Mrs. Jesse L. West confessed that she had "never felt so strongly about anything before" and thus was compelled to write her governor even though she could not "phrase fancy statements." Mrs. West supported equal education for black Virginians ("they should have good, clean schools, buses to ride there, etc."), but she drew the line at integration, which she believed was a sin.

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Having attended my beloved little county church from infancy I believe I know the fundamentals of the teachings of God's Holy Word.... [N]owhere can I find anything to convince me that God intended us living together as one big family in schools, churches and other public places.

Mrs. G. P. Smith agreed. "My strong religious conviction tells me that God does not require this of us. He made us different and put us separate on His good earth." Should schools be integrated, she warned, "In less than ten years we will face the problem of intermarriage." Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Layne stated straightforwardly that "integrated schools will lead to interracial marriage" and signed off with a benediction: "May the Lord direct you and others in doing what we believe to be right."²⁴

Divine gubernatorial guidance was essential, these correspondents believed, because in integrating its public schools the nation was teetering on the brink of damnation. Fretting that "God's word is being made away with and people is believing in their selves and forgetting God," Mrs. R. E. Martin warned Governor Stanley that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the Nations that forget God." Mrs. Henry Winter Davis was more explicit on the link between integration and hell.

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We consider this non segregation business comes directly from Satan, that old deceiver, the devil, to destroy *all* peace in America forevermore!... That is his business—to destroy all good. He whispered to that California man in [the] Supreme Court that it would be an advantage to abolish segregation—while one of our own statesmen would have known the danger, which is worse than any menace ever to threaten America ... as it is in our very *midst*, an every day menace.²⁵

As the civil rights movement left the courts and entered the streets, the struggle for cultural legitimacy became fiercer. Ministers often found themselves in the cross hairs on the segregation question, as congregants attempted to counteract the influence of clergymen in civic affairs and to capture the power of Christian righteousness for segregation. "It seems to me that there is a feeling among the clergy that you cannot be a Christian and oppose the integration of the negro and white races in our public schools," wrote R. D. Cook to Governor Stanley in June 1954. "I am sorry that I cannot see it their way." Pitting his

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own expertise against his pastor's, Cook continued, "Although I may not be as good a Christian as I should be, I have belonged to the Board of Deacons in my church for a number of years and am now superintendent of the Sunday school." Then he got to the point:

I believe that the integration of the races in our public schools will result in intermarriage of the negro and white races, and I am sure that the NAACP will next try to have the law repealed prohibiting intermarriage of the two races. I believe that the Lord would have made us all one color if he had intended that we be one race.

Cook's neighbor J. D. Jones wrote a similar letter:

I know you have seen a lot about what the preachers have had to say about it [the *Brown* decision], but I do not believe that they are representing their congregations at all.... I have been a Baptist for forty years and have been a Deacon in my church for thirty odd years, and I know that our congregation is very much opposed to doing away with segregation in the public schools.

Local feeling on ministerial misrepresentation could run high. "The ministers of our country have been among the foremost advocates of this movement [to comply with *Brown*] and have falsely misrepresented their churches as being of the same opinion," wrote Mrs. James Irving Beale. "They have passed resolutions at conventions where the delegates probably feel they would be most unchristlike to disagree and yet I do not know of a single instance where the minister has asked a vote in his individual church. He knows full well it would not support his opinion."²⁶

Generalizations across denominational boundaries are treacherous, but on the whole ministers seem to have been more likely to support desegregation than their congregations were. Ministers who challenged their congregations on the segregation issue often found themselves without a pulpit. Thomas Thrasher, rector of the Church of the Ascension in Montgomery, was forced out for talking too much about human brotherhood. As an Episcopalian and thus answerable to a bishop and not simply to a local congregation, Thrasher perhaps thought he had greater freedom of speech. He found no ally in Rt. Rev. Charles Carpenter of Selma, however, who failed to use his episcopal authority to come to Thrasher's aid. Often presented in anticlerical terms as a clash between "pulpit and pew," the theological struggle over the rightness of desegregation spilled over into the sacristy, as Thrasher's case indicates. As one representative of the progressive Southern Regional Council—which kept statistics on integrationist ministers run out of their churches—noted wryly, "In the South we have a new class of DPs—displaced parsons." Given these internal dynamics, is it any wonder that, as one civil rights worker complained, trying to fire up the white church was like "trying to strike a match on a wet windowpane"?²⁷

Parishioners were not the only critics of the clergy. In April 1956 the *Citizens' Council* complained that

many ministers of the Gospel and laymen are telling us that integration is the word of God.... Many others, equally devout and, one is to assume, equally prayerful in their search for Divine guidance, have received no word from the Throne of Grace that public school integration is God's wish.

Admitting that there was ample biblical justification to support notions of the brotherhood of man and the equality of all men in God's sight, the official publication of the White Citizens' Council maintained, nonetheless, that "It does not follow that God intended the different races of men to intermarry." It was this prospect of miscegenation that accounted for "the strong opposition of thousands of devout Christians to public school integration." Civil rights supporters, meanwhile, attacked the root argument and interpreted the more extreme manifestations of this strong opposition of whites to integration as evidence of their irreligion. Referring to the bombing of four churches associated with the Montgomery bus boycott, Martin Luther King painted die-hard white supremacists as heathens and tried to narrow the ground Christian segregationists could occupy: "What manner of men are these, men whose pagan impulses drive them to

bomb ministers and desecrate the House of the Lord?"²⁸



Race mongrelism is contempt for the Creator. Race is the basis of history. Race mixers are degenerates. Contemptible white politicians are destroying the Negro's racial pride. The personal character of President Eisenhower, his alien advisers, and the 9 members of the Supreme Court as race-destroyers and race-mongrelizers fills all true White men everywhere with disgust. Destroy the reds. FIGHT RACE HATERS. Join your White Citizens Council!

This obviously doctored photo (note the two right hands on the waist of the woman at the left) was published in the *Virginian*, a Citizens' Council publication, in April 1956. Entitled "Virginians on Guard!" the photo purports to document integrated social events at Fort McClellan, Alabama. Courtesy *Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*.

It is not uncommon for accusations of heresy to strengthen resolve. After *Brown*, Christian laymen and many ministers clashed with their denominational bodies and with each other and articulated what Paul 31

Harvey calls "a newly self-conscious theology of segregationism." Here again worries about sexuality—specifically, intermarriage—blended with theological concerns. Informed that their position was unChristian by their denominational leaders and in many instances by the coming generation in the form of youth conference declarations, segregationists fought back. In North Carolina, the Quarterly Conference of the Newton Grove Methodist Charge wrote a resolution that upheld segregation as God's law and criticized the "impractical idealists within our churches" who dared to speak for the whole church. Integration, Newton Grove warned, could but lead to "the intermarrying of the races, which we believe to be contrary to the very ordinance of God." Asked to implement his church's official policy to desegregate denominational schools, the response of a Baltimore attorney (an alumnus of two denominational schools and a trustee of three) reveals the theological, and not just social and political, stakes involved in desegregation:

When the Church steps forward as the champion of evil causes—as has happened in the long course of history—there is nothing left to Christians but to cry out at whatever peril to themselves, as their Lord cried out against the hierarchy of his day, which crucified him.... Where in particular do Christian churchmen get the idea that there is anything sinful in segregation?

Other churches criticized their national bodies implicitly through the publication of church resolutions that stressed the biblical defense of segregation. Quoting the Apostle Paul's proclamation in Acts 17:26, South Carolina's Summerton Baptist Church resolved in October 1957 that integration was wrong because

(1). God made men of different races and ordained the basic difference between races; (2). Race has a purpose in the Divine plan, each race having a unique purpose and a distinctive mission in God's plan; (3). God meant for people of different races to maintain their race purity and racial identity and seek the highest development of their racial group. God has determined "the bounds of their habitation."²⁹

The desire to have God on their side also motivated secular organizations dedicated to the maintenance of segregation. The minutes for the Jackson, Mississippi, chapter of Americans for the Preservation of the White Race reveal an absorbing preoccupation with determining God's will on segregation. In between voting to inscribe "If God be for us who can be against us" on their organizational letterhead and erecting highway billboards denouncing Martin Luther King as a Communist, this all-male association listened to an astonishing number of guest lectures dedicated to "The Bible and Segregation" and "The Scripture and How It Applies to Present Problems." Far from "sens[ing] the limitations of the Bible," as the historian David Chappell has charged, religious segregationists grounded their defense of segregation firmly in their reading of that holy text and pitted their own interpretations of it against their more liberal co-religionists.³⁰

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After *Brown*: The Ministers' March

Surveying the *Brown* decision through the combined optic of sex and religion helps bring into focus both the political and the sacred world views of many white southern Christians on the eve of the modern civil rights movement. Over the course of the next decade, while some southern whites tried to find a middle way, to obey the new desegregation laws without betraying their faith, others put theology to use either to push for black rights or forcefully to resist them. A particularly salient example of how sexualized theology shaped the nature of the struggle between segregationists and desegregationists is the March 21–25, 1965, Selma-to-Montgomery march. Viewing the Selma march through this intersection of sex and religion helps make sense of the strategy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the specific shape the march took, and the ways in which opponents of the march articulated their claims.

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Rising from the northern banks of the Alabama River in the heart of the black belt, the small town of Selma seemed an unlikely site for the climax of the civil rights movement. Although described by Martin Luther King in early 1965 as the "symbol of bitter-end resistance to the civil rights movement in the Deep South," Selma was at that point already deep in political transition. The city had been the site of voting rights demonstrations since 1962, organized by the local Dallas County Voters League (founded in the mid-1920s) with the aid of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The 1964 mayoral race—Selma's first truly competitive municipal election since 1932—ended with the defeat of the local machine. The new mayor, an enterprising small business man named Joe Smitherman, was elected with the support of the black community, which also posted the first black candidates for municipal office since Reconstruction.³¹ 34

Drawn by this vital local movement, in late 1964 SCLC focused its own voter registration efforts on Dallas County and its abusive sheriff James G. Clark Jr.—who could be relied on, SCLC thought, to respond to the voter drive with an explosion that would catch the nation's attention in the way Bull Connor's water hoses and police dogs had in Birmingham the previous year. This reading of Clark was all too accurate: on February 18, 1965, four hundred activists in Marion, an outlying town, were attacked during a night march by a gang made up of Jim Clark's posse, state troopers, local police, and assorted hooligans. A twenty-six-year-old black man, Jimmie Lee Jackson—the youngest deacon in his small Baptist church—was shot while protecting his mother and eighty-two-year-old grandfather from state troopers. He died eight days later.³² 35

Conceived in response to Jackson's death as a protest against the violence of the state, the first Selma-to-Montgomery march on March 7 became the most famous example of that violence when Sheriff Clark's mounted posse and Alabama state troopers met the marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge and gassed, clubbed, and trampled them. Caught on film, the grainy images of gas-masked, blue-helmeted state troopers and whip-wielding mounted police bludgeoning Negroes who moments before had been kneeling in prayer transfixed the nation. What was immediately dubbed "bloody Sunday" ignited sympathy demonstrations across the country during the days that followed. The participation of religious leaders in these demonstrations was striking and noted at the time. Two hundred nuns marched alongside fifteen thousand other people in Harlem; 150 clergymen joined SCLC's Walter Fauntroy and Episcopal bishop Paul Moore in a denunciation of President Lyndon B. Johnson's passivity.³³ 36

SCLC was determined to march again. But this time it would be more than a march: it would be a procession, and, like all proper processions, it would be led by holy men. Shrewdly building on the reaction of religious leaders outside the South, Martin Luther King issued a national call to clergymen to join him in Alabama. 37

This call represented a significant rhetorical shift. Prior to bloody Sunday, SCLC presented the Selma voting rights campaign in terms of citizenship and equal justice. A nine-by-sixteen-inch advertisement published in the *New York Times* on February 5, titled "A Letter from MARTIN LUTHER KING from a Selma, Alabama Jail," called for help from "all decent Americans" to support equal rights and "to advance dignity in the United States." What had been a secular campaign for civil rights became transformed into a holy crusade to redeem the blood spilt in Selma. On the evening of Sunday, March 7, King sent telegrams to clergy around the country. Insisting that "no American is without responsibility" for what happened at Selma, King continued, "The people of Selma will struggle on for the soul of the nation, but it is fitting that all Americans help to bear the burden. I call therefore, on clergy of all faiths ... to join me in Selma for a ministers march to Montgomery on Tuesday morning, March ninth."³⁴ 38

The response was overwhelming: by March 9 more than 450 white ministers, priests, rabbis, and religious women (including a contingent of nuns) had gathered in Selma, with more on the way. Contemporaries remarked on the sense of pilgrimage shared by those who traveled to Selma that March. Arriving from New York, the NAACP lawyer and longtime King adviser Stanley Levison was "struck by the unfamiliarity of the participants. They were not long-committed white liberals and Negroes. They were new forces from all faiths and classes." As an article in *Newsweek* described it, "Like the lame to Lourdes they came—bishops, rabbis, ministers, priests, and nuns—several thousands in all, sensing somehow that God was stirring the waters in Selma, Ala." Believers who did not themselves journey to Selma could still participate vicariously in the march: denominational leaders in New York and Washington urged that the coming weekend's sermons be on Selma. And that Sunday (March 14), upwards of fifteen thousand people gathered across the street from the White House in Lafayette Park to take part in an ecumenical protest sponsored by the National Council of Churches.³⁵

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There are many ways to read this march, but one way to read it is as a contest over Christian orthodoxy—as a collision of religious communities presenting themselves as defenders of conflicting theological views. As its very name implies, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was always aware that men of the cloth lent the movement moral and social power. As we have seen already, King and other SCLC preacher-politicians encouraged the conflation of black protest and Christian righteousness throughout the civil rights era; King used it to particularly good effect, as when he chose to be arrested in Birmingham on Good Friday 1963. But religious leaders were equally important for their theological imprimatur. Calling the Selma march a pilgrimage, as did the black press and leading rights workers (including King in his end-of-the-march speech at the Alabama capitol), invested it with religious, not just political, significance. So did SCLC's decision to call those who would be allowed to walk the entire fifty-mile distance the chosen few. The ranks of marching clergy represented a concrete witness to the rightness of integration, a walking testimony to an ecumenical belief in racial equality rooted in a common Judeo-Christian heritage. This, at least, is how *Ebony* saw it. Rev. Martin Luther King, the magazine declared, had "accomplished the virtually impossible: he had converted leaders of the so-called white church" to civil rights. Here we may see as part of a single strategy both the participation of the "pure-faced nuns" and "the clerics with high collars" in the march and SCLC's long-standing campaign to portray desegregation and black equality as right Christian doctrine: to assault at its root the most powerful language supporting segregation, a language that was thoroughly Christian.³⁶

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Understanding the march in religious terms helps explain both SCLC's tactics and the segregationists' response to those tactics, which was to emphasize the alleged sexual sins of the clergy and the desecration of holy spaces. Surely good Christians—Christians whose behavior found favor in the sight of the Lord—could not behave the way these supposedly religious supporters of civil rights were reported to have done in Alabama. In a speech before the U.S. Congress on March 30, Alabama representative William Dickinson denounced the morals of SCLC's supporters and declared that "Negro and white freedom marchers invaded a Negro church in Montgomery and engaged in an all-night session of debauchery within the church itself." "I saw numerous instances of boys and girls of both races hugging, kissing and fondling one another openly in the church," another source reported. "On one occasion I saw a Negro boy and a white girl engaged in sexual intercourse on the floor of the church." As the marchers reached Montgomery, Alabama governor George Wallace sent all female state employees home.³⁷

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Worse yet was what the clergy were meant to have been up to. Publications ranging from the Ku Klux Klan's *Fiery Cross* to the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* described the march as a week-long interracial orgy, with men of the cloth leading the way. These stories were picked up by the mainstream press; during the

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first half of May, *News-week*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report* all carried features with such titles as "Kiss and Tell?" and "Orgies on the Rights March." Riffing on Martin Luther King's appeal for clergy to come to Selma, white supremacists charged that marchers were offered "\$15 a day, 3 meals a day, and all the sex [they] could handle." In a letter to the Episcopal bishop of Alabama that made its way into the *New York Times*, Frances H. Hamilton complained about the behavior of Jon Daniels and other priests during the march and claimed that a white girl had died of exhaustion after providing "sexual comfort to the visiting clergy." As Representative Dickinson summed things up on April 27 in another speech before Congress, "Mr. Speaker, our modern Canterbury Tales make Chaucer's pilgrims look like veritable paragons of virtue and piety."³⁸

Dickinson's version of events was widely available. More than fifteen thousand copies of his April 27 speech were mailed to Alabamans. The speech was also sold at newsstands. As one colleague of the immensely gratified Dickinson reported to *Time*, there were three best sellers in Alabama that spring—"Nugget, Playboy, and the Congressional Record!" Yet, however widely disseminated, this testimony should not be read as descriptive of actual clerical behavior on the march. Indeed, Representative Dickinson's allegations regarding sexual activity during the march were refuted at the time. Hearing the rumors during the march, Bob Craig, a South Carolina editor, worked hard to substantiate the stories but came up empty. "I spent the entire night trying to find an orgy in a church and checked a lot of churches and found no such thing," he reported. Nuns, seminarians, and clergymen who had participated in the march insisted in telegrams to the press and in affidavits that they had observed no sexual misconduct. (Or sexual conduct of any sort: as one SNCC official noted wryly, "Baby, everyone was too tired from all that marching.") When McBee Martin of Bristol, Virginia, complained that the *Presbyterian Survey* had failed to cover the sexual angle of the story, the *Survey's* editor replied soberly, "We seldom report rumors of sex orgies in connection with religious events."³⁹

The ease with which the *Presbyterian Survey* referred to the Selma-to-Montgomery march as a religious event reveals the victory of Martin Luther King's vision of Christianity as firmly allied with the civil rights movement. Yet this victory should not obscure the conflict behind it. However inaccurate, representations of clerical sex orgies should be taken seriously as efforts to demonize civil rights activists in religious terms that would resonate with southern Christians—just as SCLC's use of the term pilgrims was an attempt to sanctify them in the same language. In casting the clergy in Selma and Montgomery as miscegenators, as sexual sinners, white opponents of integration were able to represent them as apostles of the anti-Christ. This was William Dickinson's position: "I feel very deeply that when the genuine devout men and women devoted to God's work participate in activities as I have described and lend their dignity and prestige they are doing themselves and those whom they represent"—including, presumably, Jesus—"a very grave disservice."⁴⁰

Recognizing the religious dynamics of the conflict between segregationists and integrationists not as ungodly versus godly, but as a yet-undecided struggle for the crown of orthodoxy helps us understand the reaction to the *Brown* decision, the Selma march, and much of the shape that the civil rights movement took—in terms both of the strategic decisions of its leaders and of the strategies of resistance adopted by its opponents. It also helps contextualize more recent history. As anticipated in many reactions to *Brown*, sexualized Christian theology remains a way of championing segregation. At the congregational level, the debate has raged over the issue of integrated churches—a question that was raised only after the mid-1950s, when many white Protestant churches adopted closed-door policies in response to the civil rights movement. This problem gained national attention in 1976 when the deacons of Plains Baptist Church, the

home church of Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter of Georgia, enforced its closed-door policy against Rev. Clennon King and three other African Americans. The specter haunting Baptists wrangling over integrated churches was a familiar one: miscegenation. In 1971, the Baptist Sunday School Board revised 140,000 copies of *Becoming*, its quarterly magazine for teenagers, because an article supporting open churches was accompanied by a photograph of an African American boy talking to two white girls.⁴¹

More important than the way Christian theology continues to buttress segregationist views within the church has been the effort to use the constitutional protection of religion to expand the social sphere in which segregation could remain. The main battleground here has been private religious schools. In 1979 (against the counsel of the Christian Life Commission, still sounding from the wilderness), the Southern Baptist Convention adopted by an overwhelming margin a resolution that opposed a federal proposal to deny tax-exempt status to private schools that discriminated on the basis of race. While the SBC resolved, the federal government sued. Its target was well chosen: Bob Jones University in South Carolina, which until the spring of 2000 prohibited interracial dating among its students. Founded in 1927, Bob Jones excluded black students until 1971. Revealing a deep concern about interracial marriage, from 1971 to 1975 the university accepted a small number of black students who were already married to other African Americans. In 1975 the university began to accept unmarried black students but prohibited interracial dating and marriage, insisting that "God has separated people for His own purpose."⁴²

Because of this policy, in 1976 the Internal Revenue Service stripped the university of its tax-exempt status, arguing that federally supported institutions could not advocate views "contrary to established public policy" even if those views were grounded in religious belief. In 1983 the Supreme Court upheld this decision in *Bob Jones University v. United States*. In this important ruling, the Court failed to grant constitutional protection to the expansion of religious privacy into other associational areas. At the same time, however, the Court recognized that some Americans might "engage in racial discrimination on the basis of sincerely-held religious beliefs." White supremacists and other defenders of segregation have not been shy about embracing such beliefs, especially if such a move gains them the protection of the religion clause of the First Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment's "zone of privacy." In 1984, Mississippi senator Trent Lott insisted that the main issue in the Bob Jones case was "not a racial question, but a religious question. And yet the Internal Revenue Service is going in, making a determination of that school's tax-deductible status, based on a religious belief."⁴³

If religion has been and continues to be so important to those arguing in favor of segregation as well as to those resisting it, why have modern historians preferred to study scientific racism or white supremacist politics and ignored this more widespread and deeply held set of beliefs? Perhaps the answer lies in a scholarly inclination to take the historical teleology of secularization so seriously as to distort our own idea of what is important. Religion ends up being seen as an archaic vestige, at most a rhetorical plaything of ideologues in the modern age (as indeed it sometimes is), and not as a coherent cosmology capable of providing modern people with an all-encompassing model of social relations. Such an outlook overlooks the "suppleness" of American religion and underplays its importance in modern America.⁴⁴

An equally important reason for continued scholarly indifference to the religious roots of white resistance to black civil rights has to do with what can only be seen as the victory of the theology of the beloved community. For many scholars otherwise uninterested in seeing religion as a meaningful part of public life in post-World War II America, "true" Christianity has become synonymous with the vision of Martin Luther King and other Christian integrationists. In a recent issue of the *New Yorker*, Louis Menand

argued,

It was King's genius to see that in the matter of racial equality the teachings of the Christian Bible are on all fours with the promise of the Constitution and its amendments. With one brilliant stroke, he transformed what had been a legal struggle into a spiritual one, and lost nothing in the bargain.⁴⁵

King certainly lost nothing in this bargain. But those scholars who treat uncritically King's Christianity as "orthodox" or "true" not only lose a great deal of historical and theological complexity, they also miss most of the real drama in the monumental conflict between the integrationist Christian theology of liberation and its venerable counterpart, the theology of segregation.

Notes

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¹ David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill, 2004), 4. Clayborne Carson, ed., *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr.* (4 vols., Berkeley, 1992–), III, 306. King on the Prodigal Son quoted in Ralph E. Luker, "Kingdom of God and Beloved Community in the Thought of Martin Luther King Jr.," in *The Role of Ideas in the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Ted Ownby (Jackson, 2002), 44.

² Will Campbell quoted in *New York Times*, July 14, 1958. "Body of Christ" quotation from sermon reprinted in *Student Voice* (Tougaloo College Student Movement paper), April 1964, folder 3, box 3, Ed King Collection (Special Collections, J. D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi, Oxford). King quoted in Charles Marsh, "The Civil Rights Movement as Theological Drama," in *Role of Ideas in the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Ownby, 30.

³ Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York, 1984), 4. For a nuanced argument of the importance of religion to the movement, see Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, 1995), 257; for a qualification of its influence, see Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King Jr.* (Athens, Ga., 1987), 9. For the importance of distinguishing between church people and churches as institutions, see Randy J. Sparks, *Religion in Mississippi* (Jackson, 2001), 221. For connections between the civil rights movement and other progressive struggles (including organized labor, the New Deal, and explicitly black rights-oriented organizations before the 1950s), see Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill, 1996); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill, 1999); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill, 2003); and Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill, 2003).

⁴ Chappell refers to the "strained arguments segregationists used to justify segregation on religious grounds" in Chappell, *Stone of Hope*, 3; see also *ibid.*, 8; and David L. Chappell, "Religious Ideas of the Segregationists," *Journal of American Studies*, 32 (no. 2, 1998), 253. Paul Harvey, "Religion, Race, and the Right in the Baptist South, 1945–1990" (manuscript in Jane Dailey's possession), 5; Bill J. Leonard, "A Theology for Racism: Southern Fundamentalists and the Civil Rights Movement," in *Southern Landscapes*, ed. Tony Badger, Walter Edgar, and Jan Nordby Gretlunds (Tübingen, 1996), 165–81. Wayne Flynt also refers to "segregationist theology": Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa, 1998), 458. Harvey refers alternately to the "theology of segregationism" and to the "folk theology of segregation": Harvey, "Religion, Race, and the Right in the Baptist South," 8, 9. While there was a broad and growing split on the race question between national denominational leaders and seminaries, on the one hand, and

southern laypersons and many clergy, on the other, to denote segregationist theology as "folk" theology is to miss the crucial point that, as Flynt writes with regard to the Baptists (by far the largest southern Protestant denomination), "lay people charted the course on race relations. Laymen shaped the Baptist response to race from the Brown decision forward": Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 465. Andrew Michael Manis presents the civil rights movement in the South as an internal dispute among Baptists in which each side fought for sacred legitimacy; see Andrew Michael Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict: Black and White Baptists and Civil Rights, 1954–1957* (Athens, Ga., 1987). Leonard argues a similar point, writing that "Southern fundamentalists ... responded to the civil rights movement not merely as a national social crisis, but as a challenge to certain unchanging truths taught in Holy Scripture and required of all true Christians. Those who contradicted such teaching were not merely social deviants, they were also biblical apostates": Leonard, "Theology for Racism," 166–67. This article builds on the insights of these historians, particularly their attention to the theological concerns of white segregationists.

⁵ Rev. James F. Burks, "Integration or Segregation?," May 30, 1954, typescript, folder 1, box 100, General Correspondence, Executive Papers, Gov. Thomas B. Stanley (1954–1958) (Library of Virginia, Richmond). Deuteronomy 32:8: "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided the sons of men, he fixed their bounds," Jerusalem Bible (1966); Acts 17:26: "From one single stock he not only created the whole human race so that they could occupy the entire earth, but he decreed how long each nation should flourish and what the boundaries of its territory should be," *ibid.* Burks's warning referred to II Thessalonians 2:3–4.

⁶ Pastor of Highland Baptist Church of Montgomery quoted in Neil R. McMillan, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954–64* (Urbana, 1971), 174.

⁷ Some Christian apologists for segregation used the curse of Ham argument; see, for example, G. T. Gillespie Sr., *A Christian View of Segregation* (Greenwood, Miss., 1954). My evidence suggests, however, that most Christian segregationists referred more easily to the bounds of habitation argument. On the curse of Ham, see Sparks, *Religion in Mississippi*, 229. The integrationist T. B. Maston cites the anthropological work of Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish, *The Races of Mankind* (New York, 1943), on the unity of the peoples of the earth in T. B. Maston, *Integration* (Nashville, 1956), 8.

⁸ The biblical narrative is Genesis 3:1–7. Henry Ansgar Kelly, "The Metamorphosis of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Viator*, 2 (1971), 301–28. The "Negro gardener" argument is from Samuel A. Cartwright, quoted in George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, 1987), 87–88. Ariel [Buckner H. Payne], *The Negro: What Is His Ethnological Status?* (1867), in John David Smith, *The "Ariel" Controversy: Religion and "The Negro Problem"* (New York, 1993), 45, 48. On the role of religious arguments in the broader proslavery argument, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840–1860* (Philadelphia, 1986), 112–31; Stephanie McCurry, "The Two Faces of Republicanism: Gender and Proslavery Politics in Antebellum South Carolina," *Journal of American History*, 78 (March 1992), 1245–64; and John B. Boles, ed., *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740–1870* (Lexington, Ky., 1988). See also John David Smith, *An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865–1918* (Westport, 1985), 43; and Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, 188–89.

⁹ Charles Carroll, *The Negro a Beast* (St. Louis, 1900); Charles Carroll, *The Tempter of Eve* (St. Louis, 1902). On these books, see Mason Stokes, *The Color of Sex: Whiteness, Heterosexuality, and the Fictions of White Supremacy* (Durham, 2001), 5, 95–98; and Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, 277. H. Paul Douglass, *Christian Reconstruction in the South* (Boston, 1909), 114. On the longevity of proslavery arguments, including religious arguments, and their applicability in the Jim Crow era, see Smith, *Old Creed for the New South*, 286.

¹⁰ Early Van Deventer, *Perfection of the Races* [1954] (pamphlet), folder 1, box 100, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers; Burks, "Integration or Segregation?"; D. B. Red, *Race Mixing a Religious Fraud* [c. 1959], box 2, Wm. D. McCain Papers (McCain Archives and Special Collections, Cook Library, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg). Laurel [Miss.] Leader Call quoted in Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, 1997), 93. The biblical narratives being discussed are in Genesis 6–9, 18, 11; 1 Kings 11; Exodus.

¹¹ Numerous pamphlets and private letters consider integration and miscegenation a Communist plot—which, by virtue of Communism's official atheism, was seen as synonymous with heresy. For example, in 1958, the Daughters of the Confederacy denounced miscegenation as a "Communist objective," quoted in the monthly Citizens Councils of Louisiana publication, *Councilor Newsletter*, May 1958, p. 3, folder 1, Miscellaneous Papers—Race Relations #517–381 (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill). Carey Daniel, "God the Original Segregationist," quoted in McMillan, *Citizens' Council*, 175. Burks, "Integration or Segregation?" Theodore G. Bilbo, *Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization* (Poplarville, Miss., 1947), 109.

¹² Henry Louttit quoted in Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington, 2000), 68; W. M. Caskey quoted in Sparks, *Religion in Mississippi*, 231. Ministers at Little Rock in Ernest Q. Campbell and Thomas F. Pettigrew, *Christians in Racial Crisis: A Study of Little Rock's Ministry* (Washington, 1959), 51. Cameron Baptist Church quoted in Mark Newman, *Getting Right with God: Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945–1995* (Tuscaloosa, 2001), 51; David M. Gardner quoted *ibid.*, 50.

¹³ Daughters of the American Revolution quoted in flyer "Racial Integrity," p. 2 n. 15, #3551, E. A. Holt Papers (Southern Historical Collection). *Florida ex rel. Hawkins v. Board of Control*, 1 RRLR 89 at 95 (1955), quoted in David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore, 1994), 91. *Loving v. Commonwealth* (1965) (Record No. 6163), 15.

¹⁴ For the letters to Gov. Thomas B. Stanley, see boxes 100 and 101, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers.

¹⁵ On the reluctance of the Court to tackle the miscegenation issue while *Brown II* was pending, see interview of Philip Elman by Norman Silber, "The Solicitor General's Office, Justice Frankfurter, and Civil Rights Litigation, 1946–1960: An Oral History," *Harvard Law Review*, 100 (Feb. 1987), 846. On reaction to the 1955 antimiscegenation case (*Naim v. Naim*, 350 U.S. 891), see Gerald Gunther, "The Subtle Vices of the 'Passive Virtues'—A Comment on the Principle and Expediency in Judicial Review," *Columbia Law Review*, 1 (1964), 11. Alexander M. Bickel, "Integrated Cohabitation," *New Republic*, May 30, 1964, p. 4; Bickel was referring to *McLaughlin v. Florida*, 379 U.S. 184 (1964). Memorandum from Justice John Marshall Harlan II quoted in Rachel F. Moran, *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance* (Chicago, 2001), 91.

¹⁶ On the history of antimiscegenation laws in America, see Peter Wallenstein, *Tell the Court I Love My Wife: Race, Marriage, and Law—An American History* (New York, 2002); Moran, *Interracial Intimacy*; Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America," *Journal of American History*, 83 (June 1996), 44–69; and Walter Wadlington, "The Loving Case: Virginia's Anti-Miscegenation Statute in Historical Perspective," *Virginia Law Review*, 52 (1966), 1189–1223. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, 1944), 587.

¹⁷ For the NAACP position on intermarriage, see the correspondence between Walter White, Alfred Lewis (secretary of the Boston branch), and Florence H. Luscomb, June 1–6, 1938, folder 247, box 11, Florence Hope Luscomb Papers (Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, Mass.). Thurgood Marshall quoted in Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York, 1975), 266. On the NAACP's attempts to avoid cases involving sex offenses, see Jack Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Courts: How a Dedicated Band of Lawyers Fought for the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York, 1994), 102.

¹⁸ Mark Ethridge, "A Call to the South," *Nieman Reports*, 13 (April 1959), 9. *Jackson Daily News* quoted in Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (Baltimore, 1988), 9. Walter C. Givhan quoted in Melissa Fay Green, *The Temple Bombing* (Reading, Mass., 1996), 148. Herman E. Talmadge quoted in Stephen G. N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940–1980* (Athens, Ga., 2001), 77; Talmadge quoted in *Ebony*, 12 (April 1957), 78; William A. Robinson Jr. to Talmadge, May 25, 1954 (copied to Thomas B. Stanley), in folder 2, box 100, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers. Eugene Cook quoted in Green, *Temple Bombing*, 149. *Racial Facts* (1964) quoted in Marsh, *God's Long Summer*, 84.

¹⁹ Of the thirty largest daily newspapers in the South, all were hostile to the *Brown* decision except for a dozen in the border states; see David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson, 2001), 9. Keith Miller's survey of homiletic collections reveals few sermons concerned with race issues prior to the Montgomery bus boycott; see Keith Miller, *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King Jr. and Its Sources* (New York, 1992), 53. Hodding Carter quoted in Tony Badger, "The Crisis of Southern Liberalism, 1946–65," in *The Making of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Brian Ward and Tony Badger (New York, 1996), 69. Southeastern Regional Methodist Student Conference (37 signatures) to Stanley, June 11, 1954, folder 1, box 100, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers. For the North Carolina Methodist conference, see *Raleigh News and Observer*, Aug. 21, 1954, p. 1. National Baptist Convention announcement quoted in Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict*, 61. Joe Louis quoted in "Backstage," *Ebony*, 9 (Aug. 1954), 14.

²⁰ Lillian Smith quoted in Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill, 2000), 182. A complaint representative of the concerns of those funding foreign missions was that "the practice of legal segregation on the basis of race weakens our Christian witness at home and abroad and lays a roadblock across the path of our missionaries": Editor's Page, *Alabama Baptist*, Nov. 4, 1954. On the governing boards, see Michael B. Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice like a Trumpet: White Clergy and the Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements, 1954–1973* (Chapel Hill, 1998), 18–19. Joel L. Alvis Jr., *Religion and Race: Southern Presbyterians, 1946–1983* (Tuscaloosa, 1994), 57–58.

²¹ Rev. George E. Naff Jr., Coeburn Methodist Church, to Stanley, July 1, 1954, folder 1, box 101, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers. Robert Penn Warren, *Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South* (New York, 1956), 57. Friedland and Shattuck agree that regular churchgoers tended to be more socially conservative than their clergy; see Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice like a Trumpet*, 7; and Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 68, 83. "Hand of God" quoted in Daniel, *Lost Revolutions*, 184; "Pinkos in the Pulpit," *Citizens' Council*, Dec. 1956, quoted in David L. Chappell, "A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Faith, Liberalism, and the Death of Jim Crow," *Journal of the Historical Society*, 3 (March 2003), 152. Douglas Hudgins quoted in Marsh, *God's Long Summer*, 100–101. J. W. Storer quoted in Newman, *Getting Right with God*, 23. This was the view as well of Leon Macon, editor of the *Alabama Baptist*, who advised distinguishing between "being a Christian and performing a duty. Those who do right under the compulsion of law are performing a duty": Editor's Page,

Alabama Baptist, Nov. 4, 1954. King objected to this interpretation; he insisted that Christians must embrace the civil rights movement on theological and moral grounds as well as civic ones. See Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" (1963), in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King Jr.*, ed. James Melvin Washington (San Francisco, 1986), 289–302.

²² Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 79–80. Statement of Atlanta clergymen quoted in Newman, *Getting Right with God*, 45. Editor's Page, *Alabama Baptist*, Feb. 10, 1955. Campbell and Pettigrew, *Christians in Racial Crisis*, 100.

²³ The most recent synthesis of Brown scholarship reflects this historiographical consensus on the sexualization of school desegregation; see James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York, 2001), 86–117. Special issue, "The Church and Segregation," *Presbyterian Outlook*, May 3, 1954, folder 1, box 100, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers. Burks, "Integration or Segregation?" W. L. Trotten Sr. to Stanley, June 8, 1954, folder 1, box 100, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers; Elmer M. Ramsey to Stanley, June 7, 1954, *ibid.*

²⁴ Mrs. Jesse L. West to Stanley, June 3, 1954, folder 1, box 100, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers; Mrs. G. P. Smith to Stanley, June 8, 1954, *ibid.*; Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Layne to Stanley, June 8, 1954, *ibid.* For comparable arguments in North Carolina, see the examples in Elizabeth McRae, "Why White Women Want White Supremacy: Female Segregationists Respond to Brown," paper delivered at the 2003 Southern Association of Women Historians Conference, Athens, Ga. (in Dailey's possession), 4–5.

²⁵ Mrs. R. E. Martin to Stanley, May 27, 1954, folder 1, box 100, General Correspondence, Stanley Executive Papers; Mrs. Henry Winter Davis to Stanley, June 10, 1954, *ibid.*

²⁶ R. D. Cook to Stanley, June 3, 1954, folder 2, *ibid.*; J. D. Jones to Stanley, May 28, 1954, folder 1, *ibid.*; Mrs. James Irving Beale to Stanley, June 8, 1954, *ibid.*

²⁷ On Thrasher and more broadly on the Episcopal Church and desegregation, see Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 77. "Pulpit and Pew," chapter title in Chappell, *Stone of Hope*. Regional council official quoted in Reed Sarratt, *The Ordeal of Desegregation: The First Decade* (New York, 1966), 276. Marshall Frady, "God and Man in the South," *Atlantic Monthly*, 219 (Jan. 1967), 38.

²⁸ *Citizens' Council*, 1 (April 1956), in folder 19, box 1, Ed King Collection. King in *Ebony*, 12 (April 1957), 120. Further evidence that miscegenation was at the root of much white southern resistance to school integration lies in the efforts by southern states to segregate their schools by gender. For examples from Georgia, see Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta*, 203; for South Carolina, see a letter advocating separating schools by gender, Mrs. Katherine H. Shane to Gov. Donald S. Russell, Sept. 6, 1963, quoted in Maxie Myron Cox Jr., "1963—The Year of Decision: Desegregation in South Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, Columbia, 1996), 182–83. Denominational camps and conferences went the same sex-segregated route: for examples from the Episcopal Church, see David W. Coffee, "Episcopalians and the Civil Rights Movement in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1954–1964" (unpublished paper, 1996, in Dailey's possession), 30.

²⁹ Harvey, "Religion, Race, and the Right in the Baptist South," 5. For youth conference delegations, see, for example, Resolution of Methodist Youth from Eastern North Carolina, as reported in *Raleigh News and Observer*, Aug. 21, 1954. "Resolution Adopted on December 12 by the Quarterly Conference of the Newton Grove Charge and Wesley Circuit," Dec. 12, 1954, 1953–54 file, Nell Battle Lewis Collection, PS 255.40 (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh). Lawyer quoted in Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Our Caste-Ridden Protestant Campuses," *Christianity and Crisis: Race in America*, 21 (May 29, 1961), 88–91, in folder 3, box 3, Ed King Collection. The denomination was probably the Episcopalians. Summerton Baptist Church resolution quoted in Newman, *Getting Right with God*, 53. On Episcopalians see Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 68; on southern Baptists see Newman, *Getting Right with God*, 41; overall, see Chappell, "Stone of Hope," 151.

³⁰ Minutes, 1964–1966, box 1, Americans for the Preservation of the White Race Collection (J. D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi, Oxford). Chappell, "Religious Ideas of the Segregationists," 249.

³¹ King quoted in David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1955–1968* (New York, 1986), 372. Selma's population of 28,000 in 1960 was evenly divided between whites and blacks; see J. Mills Thornton III, *Dividing Lines: Municipal Politics and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma* (Tuscaloosa, 2002), 382, 433.

³² On SCLC's desire to provoke a confrontation, see Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 360; on the ease of arousing a firm reaction in Selma by Jim Clark, see Thornton, *Dividing Lines*, 476. The extremist Clark was not necessarily representative of Selma whites, however: Selma's police chief, Wilson Baker, opposed Clark's violence, even to the point of protecting civil rights supporters; see David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven, 1978), 46, 72.

³³ *U.S. News and World Report*, March 22, 1965, pp. 32–33; Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America*, 247. The *Washington Post* (following theUPI) noted the "praying Negroes" in its story on the Selma march; see Garrow, *Protest at Selma*, 73–80.

³⁴ King letter from Selma quoted in Garrow, *Protest at Selma*, 52; King telegram quoted *ibid.*, 78; see also Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 399–400.

³⁵ See Sister Thomas Marguerite Flanigan, C.S.J., "Nuns at Selma," *America*, April 3, 1965, pp. 454–56. Stanley Levison quoted in Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America*, 250. "Selma, Civil Rights, and the Church Militant," *Newsweek*, March 29, 1965, pp. 75–76. See also Garrow, *Protest at Selma*, 103.

³⁶ See the many references to pilgrimage in Simeon Booker, "50,000 March on Montgomery," *Ebony*, 20 (May 1965), 46–62, 75–86. Clergymen and nuns figure prominently in the many pictures that accompany this long article on the march. For King see *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 3, 1965, p. 2; and Washington, ed., *Testament of Hope*, 228. Booker, "50,000 March on Montgomery," 53, 55.

³⁷ *Congressional Record*, 89 Cong., 1 sess., March 30, 1965, p. 6333; sworn affidavit of anonymous black man, April 12, 1965, read into *Congressional Record*, 89 Cong., 1 sess., April 27, 1965, p. 8597. On Wallace and women workers in the capitol, see Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge, 2000), 256.

³⁸ "Protest on Route 80," *Time*, April 2, 1965, pp. 21–22. Cecil H. Atkinson affidavit, Nov. 17, 1965, quoted in *Fiery Cross* [Winter 1965–1966], 1; \$15 a day from anonymous affidavit of April 12 in *Congressional Record*, quoted *ibid.*; clipping, *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, March 21, 1965. See "Kiss and Tell?," *Newsweek*, May 10, 1965, p. 40; "Love on the Lawn?," *Time*, May 7, 1965, p. 27; and "What Really Happened on Alabama March?," *U.S. News and World Report*, May 10, 1965, p. 17. Frances H. Hamilton letter to bishop in *New York Times*, March 30, 1965; see also Charles W. Eagles, *Outside Agitator: Jon Daniels and the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama* (Chapel Hill, 1993), 48; and Mary Stanton, *From Selma to Sorrow: The Life and Death of Viola Liuzzo* (Athens, 1998), 137. *Congressional Record*, 89 Cong., 1 sess., April 27, 1965, p. 8593. One paper described the marchers as having "'left every campsite between Selma and Montgomery littered with whiskey bottles, beer cans and used contraceptives':" *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, March 21, 1965. Stories of clerical (and secular) sexual impropriety were gathered and published in Robert M. Mikell, *Selma* (Charlotte, 1965), esp. 8–19.

³⁹ On the mass mailing, see Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 260. "Mud in the House," *Time*, May 7, 1965, p. 27; see also "Kiss and Tell?"; and "What Really Happened on Alabama March?" Bob Craig quoted in *Jackson Daily News*, April 27, 1965. Clergymen and women who participated in the march denied Dickinson's charges; see *New York Times*, April 29, 1965, p. 16. *Presbyterian Survey* in Alvis, *Religion and Race*, 113.

⁴⁰ *Congressional Record*, 89 Cong., 1 sess., April 27, 1965, p. 8596.

⁴¹ On *Becoming*, see Newman, *Getting Right with God*, 33. Considerable scholarly work on the integration of southern churches will have to be undertaken before it becomes possible to make more than speculative assertions about this debate. But it is clear at least that both sides recognized sacred space as a crucial frontier in the desegregation battle, and both sides made theological arguments in favor of their conflicting positions. Some denominational histories (for example, Sparks, *Religion in Mississippi*; Newman, *Getting Right with God*) engage the issue, and there is an excellent account of the struggle at the largest Methodist church in Jackson, Mississippi, written by the minister at the time; see W. J. Cunningham, *Agony at Galloway: One Church's Struggle with Social Change* (Jackson, 1980). Eagles addresses the issue for Alabama in Eagles, *Outside Agitator*. Otherwise, Charles Marsh's chapter on Rev. Ed King's "kneel-in" campaign is the most extensive treatment; see Marsh, *God's Long Summer*, 116–51.

⁴² A recent analysis of federal data on private school enrollments by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University found that private religious schools are more racially segregated than public ones: "Study Finds Parochial Schools Segregated along Racial Lines," *New York Times*, Aug. 30, 2002, p. A18. Admissions Office of Bob Jones University to James Landrith, Aug. 31, 1998, in *The Multiracial Activist* <http://www.multiracial.com/letters/bobjonesuniversity.html> > (Dec. 11, 2003); see also Lynn Darlin, "Keeping to the Straight and Narrow When the Way Is Filled with Doubters," *New York Times*, May 10, 1982, p. C1.

⁴³ *Bob Jones University v. United States*, 461 U.S. 574, 602 (1983). Trent Lott interview in *Southern Partisan* (Fall 1984), 47.

⁴⁴ Jon Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History," *Journal of American History*, 90 (March 2004), 1357–78, esp. 1359.

⁴⁵ Louis Menand, "Moses in Alabama," *New Yorker*, Sept. 8, 2003, p. 31.

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