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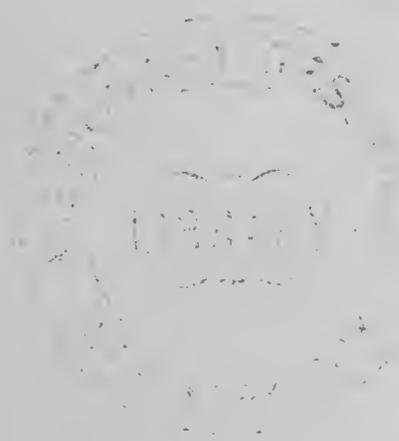
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THE CHRISTIAN IN RACE RELATIONS

by
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One of The Henry Wright Lectures given at
The Yale University Divinity School
with an introduction by Jerome Davis



Price 15 cents

INTRODUCTION

To continue to drift without a moral compass is to risk impending doom. Not to use the rudder of the Christian faith amidst the dangers of the atom and the hydrogen bomb is to court annihilation.

President Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse College, the author of this brilliant lecture at Yale University proves the possibilities of achievement no matter what the obstacles. His father was actually a slave in South Carolina and at the time of Emancipation was ten years old. When Benjamin had finished the eighth grade his father naturally wanted him to stop school and go to work. Mays had to leave home and earn his own way thru school and college. In spite of all the difficulties he rose to become one of the outstanding educational leaders in all America.

Dr. Mays points out some of the measures which must be taken if we are to avoid destruction. One of the strongest weapons against the spread of Communism is complete racial equality. Yet, because the flow of ideas, even in our own country, is channelled thru stereotyped cultural patterns, we tend to rely on military power. It is always far easier to wage war than it is to wage peace. America is spending colossal sums on military defenses. What we need is to raise our moral defenses. Let us not trust in the righteousness of power, but in the power of righteousness. The author points one way out of the dilemma which confronts us. We are now drifting, using a power diplomacy which has long since been discredited. It is later than we think.

The author makes clear in his first lecture that he rests his whole program and action on a Christian belief in a God who is back of the universe and who should be guiding our lives and our nation. He warns, "If we are spending approximately sixty billion dollars a year for defense, it can hardly be said that we accept any authority beyond that of our industrial might." He challenges us with the concept that today our nation, indeed all nations, are following after other gods than the one portrayed in the Christian faith. Without a re-birth of a living faith in God, the author maintains, the chances are twenty-five to one that our Western civilization will go down. Sin and injustice are the cancers that are even now weakening us from within. The individual can never be redeemed unless he submits his egocentricity to the will of God. Society cannot be transformed unless it also begins to practice the justice of God.

Nowhere does President Mays challenge our thinking and practice more than in the treatment of "The Christian in race relations." Would that this admirable presentation could be part of the intellectual equipment of every college student in America. We are here printing only this one lecture. Subsequently at Yale President Mays made trenchant criticisms both of communism and capitalism. If we are free and intelligent, we need to know the weaknesses of both. "The Christian of our day is a slave to his environment and he is obligated to do God's will in the area of improving the economic life of all the people."

In his final address at Yale he challenged us with a section on the Christian in politics and world affairs. If war is ever to be averted, we must begin to apply the preventative of Christian action. To continue the old insane jealousies, mutual hatreds and armament rat races, can end only in mass suicide.

In conclusion, I cannot forebear to say a few words about the writer of this leaflet. He is one of the most challenging religious thinkers in America. A quarter of a century ago he directed for the Institute of Religious and Social Research, a study of the Negro churches in America. Without attempting to recount this remarkable career, it perhaps should be said that he represented the United States at the Oxford Conference on The Church, Community and State as far back as 1937. He has represented the Y. M. C. A. at a number of World Conferences. He was a delegate to the first assembly of the World Council of Churches and was on the National Committee of the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth. In 1949 he was named "Alumnus of the Year" by the University of Chicago Divinity School and in 1950 he received the annual award at the Texas State Fair for his outstanding work in the field of Human Relations. Besides all this and much more, he is the author or compiler of a series of outstanding books in the field of religion and race relations. No one can read this one address without having his mind alerted and his conscience stirred.

Jerome Davis

THE CHRISTIAN IN RACE RELATIONS ¹

We assume that one who takes his religion seriously cannot sit at ease and live complacently while the liquor traffic flourishes, armament races increase in volume, political corruption thrives, and economic and racial injustice flourish. We shall assume that there is an element of "living dangerously" in every Christian and that he knows from experience what Paul meant when he said: "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." Certainly Jesus and his disciples sought no easy chair. As a recent editorial in the Christian Century puts it: "No one from A. D. 30 to A. D. 313 thought of Christianity as a comfortable religion. It was a creed for heroes."

We shall assume further that there is no conflict between what we believe and what we do. Beliefs are not theoretical things divorced from action. Beliefs always find expression in action. It is psychologically impossible for one to believe something and to act constantly contrary to that belief. It may be possible to have a temporary conflict between what we believe and what we do, but the conflict will eventually disappear. Our actual beliefs will soon be found to coincide with what we do.

Good educators never divorce theory from practice. Facts learned in physics and chemistry text books are tested in the laboratory. The study of mathematics and social sciences is supplemented by practical application and field work.

Knowledge is never ours until we have acted on it. It might be said that we know only that which we have experienced, and our beliefs are confirmed only by actions. Beliefs are more than intellectual assents. They involve convictions, and convictions involve action. We believe what we do, and we are what we do.

If we believe in democracy but deny it to Jews, Mexicans, Japanese, Catholics, labor, Negroes, or others, we do not really believe in democracy.

If we say that we believe in justice for all people, irrespective of race, but proceed to segregate, deny the ballot to, deny jobs to, and discriminate educationally against certain population groups on the grounds of race, we do not really believe in justice for all people.

It matters not how unyielding the social pattern, how unbending the law, how terrible the possible social ostracism, the Christian who really believes in God and man will do something about his beliefs. He will recognize what so few persons seem to see -- that there is an area in every man's life, however small, over which he has complete control. In that area, the Christian will act on his convictions.

For example: if one is prejudiced against Jews, Gentiles, or Negroes, he may blame his surroundings; but it is still within his power to overcome his prejudice. The Christian is not a slave to his environment. There are moments when every individual is responsible only to God. Man stands always under the judgement of God and his ultimate allegiance is to God.

The ambulance driver in South Carolina who refused to carry an injured woman to a hospital solely because she was a Negro, stood then and there in the presence of God and was responsible only to God. It did not

¹ The second address in the Henry B. Wright Lecture Series, Yale University Divinity School, April 16, 1952

matter what the current practices were. A human being had been struck by a car and was suffering. A higher loyalty than that to his company called that driver to duty. If he had been a real Christian, he would have responded to the will of God which in this case was to respond helpfully and sympathetically to the needs of the injured woman. It was wholly within his power to help this dying woman. If the driver and his associate had believed that saving the life of a Negro woman was as important as saving the life of a white woman, they could not have left the Negro there to die when their ministrations might have saved her life. In a case like that, the Christian would never debate the question, "What will happen to my job?" The Christian would obey God and trust Him for results. And his response to God's will would be automatic.

Let us see how Christian convictions would affect our behavior in the area of race, in the Church or in religious worship. I begin here because the Church in America is a "unique" institution. No other institution in America makes the claim for itself that the Church makes. Practically every church of whatever denomination, would deny the assumption that it is merely an earthly institution, created solely by man. It would deny the allegation that its ultimate and final allegiance is to man. The Church in America does not accept even the State as being an object worthy of supreme devotion. If one's ultimate allegiance is to God and if the Church is ordained of God, in the very nature of its existence it cannot wholly conform to the ways of the world. There must be tension between it and the world. Customs, traditions, habits and the mores that are common practices in secular institutions are to be set aside in the House of God. What then is an adequate religion for the Christian or the Church as a corporate body in the area of race? What must the individual Christian stand for? What must the Church do?

As a worshipping institution no church can justify on the basis of race the exclusion from its worship of any one who has a sincere desire to worship God. Language or liturgy or ritual may make one voluntarily separate himself from a particular church or creed but this action should be a choice on the part of the worshipper and not a restriction imposed upon him by the group. A church has a right to set up its own creed or profession or faith; but whoever accepts that formulation of faith should never be denied admission. There can be no denial of worship or membership to any baptist, methodist, congregationalist, presbyterian, episcopalian or catholic who holds the respective faith of this or that denomination. Churches exist on the basis of a common profession of faith.

Segregation based on race, therefore, is without Christian foundation and is the greatest scandal within the Church. It is a scandal that the churches could eliminate if the leadership of the churches so desired and if it accepted wholeheartedly the Christian view of man and God. In the area of worship and membership the criteria of admission to the Christian Church can never be based on race. This is not a matter of coercion or pressure. It is simply a matter of every Church making it clear to the world that this is God's house, not man's, and that whoever wishes to worship here, in sincerity and truth, is free to do so. But this assertion is not enough. The basis of membership should be applicable to all peoples. One should be accepted on his profession of faith as prescribed by any particular church. Race or national origin should play no role.

The consequences of such declarations and practice by the Churches

should be left wholly in the hands of God. That one group may crowd out the other should give the Christian no major concern. If an open policy of this kind means that congregations are heavily mixed with members of various races it should make no difference. If the open door policy means that the racial churches move along pretty much in the same old way, that will be all right too. The main point is that every Christian would know that he is free to worship and free to join any church he so desired.

I have talked with ministers of many faiths in several sections of the country on this subject of membership across race lines. I have been particularly concerned with the statements of ministers who live outside the South where there is no segregation by law. To my surprise and amazement, all too many of them express the view that if a Negro family or Negroes offered themselves for membership in their churches, it would present a crucial problem. One minister with the agreement of other ministers said that in their community 98% of the members would object to their accepting Negro members, and he expressed the belief that 70% of the membership would walk out if Negroes were accepted as members. In another outstanding American city one minister told me that he was sure that all the pastors in that city would welcome Negroes in their fellowship but the memberships would not stand for it. This minister was convinced that 60% of his members would leave the Church if a Negro family were admitted. I know on good authority that one of the most enlightened and intellectual churches in the United States was almost split in twain because two Negroes sought membership.

Somehow, I am inclined to believe that fewer members would leave than the pastors think. If these ministers are correct, it simply shows how far most of our churches are from being truly Christian churches. Be that as it may, what is a Christian minister to do in a situation of this kind? Certainly I am not in a position to tell any pastor what his course of action should be. It is his job and the decision is between him and his God. But I am convinced of one thing -- the ministers should not take this situation lying down. They should begin at once a process of Christian education and prayer looking forward to the time in the not too distant future when the membership would experience a change of heart. I understand that this is what the Church just referred to did. Although the Church was almost torn asunder, after a year or more, the two Negroes were admitted to membership without any one's having left. But it is a shame before God that the two Negroes had to wait a year before being admitted. It is the minister's duty to teach his members from the New Testament what being a Christian means in race relations.

To those of little faith and of great fears, I predict that there would be little change in the membership of most congregations if racial restrictions were completely removed. Certainly some Negroes would join white churches and some white people would join Negro churches. But by and large people would stick to the churches of their parents, of their childhood, of their friends and churches that they habitually attend. Certainly for a long time this would be the case. People choose the churches that satisfy them socially, intellectually and spiritually. Race would not be the main criterion. As time passed, ministers would be chosen in any congregation irrespective of race. Over a relatively long period the racially designated church would disappear, and Christians would cease to think in terms of race or culture.

It is only in world gatherings that the churches have completely removed the color bar from their worship and membership. The World Council of Churches practices Christian fellowship and condemns segregation in local and national bodies. Amsterdam said in 1948 in Section III of its report: "Even when there are no differences in theology, language, or liturgy, there exist churches segregated by race or color, a scandal within the body of Christ . . . The Church knows that it must call society away from prejudice based upon race or color, and from the practices of discrimination and segregation as denials of justice and human dignity, but it cannot say a convincing word to society unless it takes steps to eliminate these practices from the Christian community because they contradict all that it believes about God's love for all His children." The color bar has been almost removed on the national church scene in the United States. The Federal Council speaking on this subject in 1943 had this to say: "The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America hereby renounces the pattern of segregation in race relations as unnecessary and undesirable and a violation of the gospel of love and human brotherhood. Having taken this action, the Federal Council requests its constituent communions to do likewise. As proof of their sincerity in this renunciation they will work for a non-segregated church and a non-segregated society." Some national denominational bodies take the same position. And yet when three Methodist bodies merged a few years ago to form the Great Methodist Church they followed the pattern of segregation and set up a Central Jurisdiction for Negroes. It is unfortunate that where the church embraces both the North and the South, the national body would not be able to assemble in some cities without meeting this monster, segregation.

There are a few churches in the North where the color bar does not exist. But it is mostly in the local church both North and South where the barriers of race are largely in operation. It is here that social custom makes cowards of most Christians and I fear of the majority of ministers. It might be argued that the religion is adequate that satisfies the majority of the people or that worship, even though organized wholly along racial lines, is adequate if it satisfies the people. This argument would be valid if the measuring rod were custom, tradition or the mores. No religion is adequate that is not inclusive of all people of the same faith, and no worship is adequate that makes race a qualification for worship. I certainly do not want to give the impression that the blame is all on the side of white churches. Although convinced that Negro congregations on the whole would be more willing to accept white members than white congregations would be to accept Negro members, I also know that many Negroes would oppose the complete integration of the churches. Many fear that their leadership would be threatened if the racial church were abolished. Whatever the motive, the Negro church may be just as un-Christian at this point as the white church.

The exclusively racial church is not only inadequate judged by Christian standards but it is inadequate if the church is to assume any responsibility for transforming society. It can hardly give prophetic or even pragmatic leadership on any subject if it is no better in this particular than the secular society it seeks to condemn. If the church discriminates in its employment and segregates on the basis of race or color, church people cannot speak with effectiveness against racial discrimination and racial exploitation in industry. If the church does not set the proper example in its worship and membership, it is hypocritical when it criticizes the Government

for its segregation. If the church condones segregation in its worship and membership, it has no right to cry out against such behavior when it is found in the political parties.

If the Church practices segregation, it is more blameworthy than a business which operates a segregated street car, bus, train, hotel, restaurant or a department store; more blameworthy than recreational centers such as dance halls, golf clubs, swimming pools, theatres, and motion picture houses. It is difficult to refute the argument that the Church is one of the most highly segregated institutions in the United States. It is often more rigidly segregated than professional baseball, professional boxing, certain labor unions, organized gambling, the organized illegal liquor traffic and perhaps more highly segregated than the communist groups in the United States.

In 1946 Frank Loescher wrote a manuscript on racial policies and practices of major protestant denominations. He pointed out "There are approximately 6,500,000 Protestant (church members among) Negroes"; "6,000,000 are in separate Negro denominations;" "from the local church through the regional organization to the national assemblies over 90% of the Negroes are without association in work and worship with Christians of other races except in interdenominational organizations which involve a few of their leaders"; and "the remaining 500,000 Negro Protestants, about 10%, are in denominations predominantly white." He states further that "95%, judging from the surveys of six denominations are in segregated congregations and are in association with their white denominational brothers only in national assemblies, and, in some denominations, in regional, state or more local jurisdictional meetings; that "the remaining 5% of the 10% in white denominations are members of local churches which are predominantly white;" and that "only one half of one per cent of the Negro Protestant Christians in the United States worship regularly in churches with fellow Christians of another race." Loescher concludes:

"Negro membership is confined to less than one per cent of the white churches, usually churches in villages and small towns where but a few Negroes live and have already experienced a high degree of integration by other community institutions, and one might add, communities where it is unsound to establish a Negro church since Negroes are in such small numbers."

It was previously stated that segregation is the great scandal within the Christian church. This is true not only because of what the Church stands for in its pronouncements about its origin, but also because the Christian faith places supreme worth upon the individual. Unlike Fascism, Nazism, or Communism, Christianity and Democracy are built upon the doctrine of the supremacy of the individual soul. Any practice, therefore, which sets an individual apart as being unfit and unworthy of free movement within a society of free men is to impose upon that person a curse or stigma which denies him both the status of being a first rate human being and also the status of being a child of God. Segregation is the greatest curse that can be imposed upon any one because it not only denies him status as a first class human being and a child of God, but it handicaps him everywhere he turns. It restricts him in employment, circumscribes him in politics and government, reduces his educational opportunities, curbs his cultural advancement, and cuts the nerve of ambition.

Segregation leads to brutality, all kinds of brutality: injustices

in the courts, police brutality, bombing and lynching and it is the origin of prejudice in the child. It is taken for granted that the people segregated are different and since they are different, they are inferior and can be trod upon without any pang of conscience or fear of punishment. After all, this thing that is segregated is not quite up to our level. This is the conscious or unconscious thinking that goes on in the mind of many who believe in segregation and who work to perpetuate the system.

Segregation on the basis of color or race is a wicked thing because it penalizes a person for being what God has made him and for conditions over which he has no control. If one were segregated because of ignorance, he could learn and change the situation. If one were segregated because of poverty, he could work and improve his economic status. If he were segregated because of uncleanness, he could bathe and become acceptable. But if one is segregated and stigmatized because of his race, he is penalized for something which he cannot change. And to do this is tantamount to saying to God you made a mistake in making a man like this. Of all the sins, this is the greatest.

If this analysis of segregation is correct, the truly Christian believer and the truly Christian church can have no part in deliberately seeking to perpetuate this pernicious system. The individual Christian cannot rest satisfied with a segregated church. It is his Christian duty to insist that his organized body set itself apart from the secular society and open its doors of worship and membership to all peoples of similar faiths and beliefs. If the members, Negro and white, are not ready for a non-segregated church, the ministers, Negro and white, should assume responsibility, through study, prayer, and action to get them ready. Time doesn't solve problems. The people under proper leadership solve problems.

The challenge to the Christian and to the Church in the area of Negro-White relations is stinging put by H. Laurence McNeil of Dayton, Ohio. Although he was speaking specifically of the Florida bombing at Christmas of 1951, his words are relevant.

"It is really self-righteousness to condemn Florida and let the world go free. Jesus was crucified not only on Golgotha and in Groveland, but each day violence in every community with minorities wounds him afresh. This we do not see and we are irritated whenever anybody speaks out against it. We penalize our brothers who seek to bring a new day to pass.

"We have never overcome the persuasion that some of God's children may be somehow different. Residential segregation, employment discrimination, bi-racial school departments, separate toilet facilities, segregated wards in hospitals, limitation upon qualified medical practitioners, denial in food services and in use of hotels are hangovers. And they are in Florida and everywhere else that human differences based upon race are made the basis of inequality.

"The second omission is even greater. It is the behavior of the Church when violence breaks out. Except in rare instances the leading preachers become as silent as the Sphinx. They go underground . . . You can do anything to a child of God if he belongs to a minority, without fear.

"And racism goes on and on because it has the sanction of the Christian Church. If the Christian Church would withdraw its ethical support, racism would die. Absence of moral courage here disqualifies the church from any service as the conscience of society . . . And this is a great pity, for a sinful society needs regeneration and remains unredeemed be-

cause the one agent of redemption commissioned by One who died for His faith will not obey its Lord.

"Primitive Christians were moved by the empowerment of the Spirit. Until they were anointed they lacked boldness to witness. Once they were quickened by the experience of the presence of God they lost their fear of men. Discount their rashness as improper rootage in the expectancy of the early return of Jesus, it is still historical to say that they were transformed from cowards by the guarantee of their faith. And this is what the Church needs. It needs to be set on fire once again. A cold church cannot stop a cold war. Nor can it stop a hot one in Florida or anywhere else.

"We are driven back once more to our Lord. A World Council of Churches will not do it. It is a good thing but minor. Refinements in religious education will not do it. World missions will not do it. All these desirable goods require absolute and intimate communion with God. Without Him we can do nothing."²

An adequate religion in a democracy must express the religious faith which in the Declaration of Independence the founding fathers recognized as basic. Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues were clear in their thinking when they made a religious concept the foundation stone of our democracy. Theirs were not idle words. Listen to them once again: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Both in our democracy and in our religion, the emphasis is on the individual. "All men are created equal."

Of course men are not created equal in health, mentality, wealth, etc. But men are created equal in their helplessness, in their finiteness and in that all are human and traveling the same path - youth, old age, death. The course of life is pretty much fixed for every individual. We are "equal" in the sense that we bring nothing into this world and we take nothing out; "equal" in the sense that every man is equal before God, and "no man is to be denied a chance to strive to become the best self that he can become."

Men are not only created equal but "they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." In a democracy such as ours, the founding fathers recognized the fact that God gives life, God not men and not the State. It is the function of the State to protect life and aid it in its growth and development. God gives freedom and liberty, not men and not the State. It is the function of the State to protect liberty. God gives man the right to seek Happiness. The function of the State is to protect man in his pursuit of happiness. "To secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed"

Our democracy is built upon the Christian concept that the right of the individual is to be respected and that the State has no right to enact laws that place a hardship upon the individual in his search for life, liberty, and happiness.

It is amazing the extent to which a Christian nation and a democratic country have gone to enact laws that are both un-Christian and un-democratic. These laws could not have been enacted without the legislator's deliberate disregard for the Federal Constitution and for the Christian re-

ligion when interpreted in the light of the best there is in the Christian tradition. In stating what the States have done in the area, I am relying wholly upon "States' Laws on Race and Color" compiled by Miss Pauli Murray,³ a book sponsored by The Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church, published in 1951.

Segregation in Education

Segregation by law in public schools is very extensive. Twenty-one jurisdictions and the District of Columbia permit or require separate schools for Negro and white pupils. They are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming. Three of these -- Delaware, Mississippi and North Carolina -- provide separate schools for Indians. In Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Tennessee, the Statutes expressly apply to private as well as to public schools. Twelve states separate deaf pupils; three require that dumb pupils be segregated; and eleven states provide segregation of Negro and white blind students. Eighteen states provide for the separation of the races in juvenile delinquent and reform schools. Fourteen states require segregation in agricultural and trade schools. Seventeen states require segregation of Negroes and whites in colleges and teacher training schools: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia. And in practically every case, segregated education means inferior education.

Segregation in Transportation

Segregation is almost equally extensive in transportation. Fourteen states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia) have segregation by law on the railroads. Eleven states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia) require segregation of Negro and white passengers on buses. Eleven states enforce segregation on street cars and street railways: Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia. "Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia make provision for segregation on steamboats and ferries." Nine states provide separate waiting rooms, while Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas require separate sleeping compartments. In thirteen states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) the laws of segregation do not apply if a sheriff is conducting a Negro prisoner, or if a Negro nurse or servant is in charge of white children or white invalids. In eight states there is no segregation in either freight car or caboose (Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia).

Amusements

The Southern States have not legislated extensively with reference to segregation in amusements, but achieve it through local ordinances or through custom which is often just as binding as law. South Carolina and Georgia laws prohibit the issuing of licenses to "any person of one race to operate a billiard hall or pool room for persons of the opposite race."

³ Murray, Pauli, "States' Laws on Race and Color", copyrighted 1951 by the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church (pp. 14-18) Literature Headquarters: 420 Plum Street, Cincinnati 2, Ohio.

Missouri requires the Board of Education to set up separate public parks and playgrounds for Negroes and whites. Oklahoma law prescribes segregation in fishing, boating and bathing. South Carolina makes mandatory the separation of the races in the use of parks, amusement centers and bathing beaches. Arkansas law says the races must be segregated at all race tracks. Louisiana and South Carolina laws require that Negroes and whites be separated at circuses and tent shows.

Hospitals and Penal Institutions

Miss Murray also points out that it seems that only Mississippi and South Carolina require segregation generally in public hospitals; but in thirteen states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia, there must be segregation of mental patients. Seven states (Alabama, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia) make it mandatory that Negro and white tubercular patients be segregated. In Alabama it is against the law for a white female nurse to do nursing in a hospital ward where there are Negro male patients. Mississippi and South Carolina require by law that Negro nurses attend Negro patients. Ten states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia) segregate white and colored prisoners in penal institutions. In six of these states, Negro and white convicts cannot be chained together (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina). Even criminals cannot fraternize.

Miscellaneous Restrictions

In some states, houses for paupers, the aged, and orphan homes must be segregated. Even where there is no law, segregation is practiced in the South in virtually every area of employment. Thirty states (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming) forbid marriages between white persons and Negroes or mulattoes. Fifteen states prohibit the marriage of white persons and persons of Mongolian or Oriental extraction (Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Wyoming). Five states prohibit marriage between whites and American Indians (Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Virginia). Eight states make it illegal for there to be cohabitation between persons of different races (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, Tennessee, Virginia). In Georgia a Negro minister cannot even marry a white couple. It is against the law.

Taxes

In Arkansas, the tax lists must be segregated, one for whites and one for Negroes. There must also be alternate use of voting booths by the two races. Alabama, Arkansas and Virginia require separate poll tax lists. In Georgia, Indiana and Nebraska the laws provide separate voting lists for Negro and white electors.⁴

I have with considered forethought set down this extensive account of how segregation cuts deep into every nerve of American life; of how relatively good men, relatively Christian men, in a so-called Christian

nation, democratic in origin have planned, schemed and deliberately put into law, wicked measures aimed at circumventing the Federal Constitution; designed to brand certain people as inherently inferior, unfit to function as normal human beings; and intended further to stigmatize them as being less than children of God. By any standard of justice, the laws of segregation are undemocratic since they are imposed by the strong upon the weak without the latter's participation in their making; and un-Christian in that they violate the Christian principle of love and brotherhood. There can be no justice in a segregated economy. The people who believe in segregation make the laws of segregation and administer them. They collect the tax money and all other money, distributing it according to the segregated pattern. The people who make the laws of segregation wield the power. The segregated never participate in making the laws, never wield the power, never distribute the money. Under such a system, justice is impossible. Human nature is not good enough to administer justice to those who have no part in the administration of it.

What is the duty of the Christian in the face of State laws of segregation and in the sight of his God? Is he to obey the laws of his state or city when Christian conscience tells him plainly that they are unfair? Is he to obey them when they are definitely a violation of democracy, as defined in the Federal Constitution? Is the Christian to obey the customs and the mores of his community when they are contrary to reason and to what he claims to believe about God and the dignity of man? Is the Christian to persist in his segregated state when atheistic communism with emphasis upon a non-segregated society is making its bid for the minds of all peoples everywhere? In other words, can true religion and undefiled be expressed in a segregated society?

These are not academic questions. They are questions that must be answered if Christianity is to produce a way of life superior to that of those who are atheists in the Russian sense or thorough-going naturalists or secularists in the way many Americans are. What can the Christian really do about these laws? He wants to be socially acceptable and economically and politically secure like everybody else. But there is something he can do and must do if he accepts as valid certain basic convictions about God, Jesus and man.

The least a Christian can do is to be intellectually honest. The system of segregation can be defended on no ground. It does not square with the best in Christian tradition and it does not square with the best in our democracy. There is, it seems to me an obligation placed upon every Christian: to admit that the segregated system is wrong and make no defense for it. Even if he is afraid to do anything definite to change the system, he can witness by words, spoken and written, to the best that he knows. He cannot live with an easy conscience in a segregated society. Every true believer in the Christian religion is a citizen of two worlds -- the world that now is and the world that ought to be. And between these two worlds there is constant tension. The Christian cannot extricate himself from the world that is, but neither can he accept it as being all that it should be. Even if he maintains that the better order cannot be ushered in by man -- only by God -- he cannot escape his obligation to strive for the world that ought to be, believing that he can assist in creating a more favorable climate for God to establish the order that is to be. The Christian has an obligation to God as well as to man. And his ultimate allegiance is to God and not man.

But to proclaim and witness by mouth or the written word is not enough. Wicked laws must be changed. It is within the power of every Christian to work to get wicked, unjust laws expunged from statute books. It is silly to argue that segregation cannot be abolished by legislation. Segregation was established by legislation; it can be abolished by legislation. If men can legislate evil they can and they should legislate good. The Christian must choose the weapons that he will use to advance the Kingdom of God. The ends and the means should harmonize as far as possible. In the spirit of justice and Christian love, the Christian should study ways and means of getting erased from the statute books of the State and National measures inconsistent with our religion and our democracy. Doing so will involve a program and a strategy. It will engulf the Christian in a program of education and politics. He should constantly reveal to the unthinking or uncaring public the hardships and handicaps that laws of segregation put not only upon the segregated, but also upon the people who are responsible for segregation. The educational program should go on through the church, the schools and the press. The public should be educated and prepared to accept repeal of laws of segregation and to insist that oppressive laws be abolished.

The program of education must be supplemented by political action. Candidates who are concerned with the repeal of all undemocratic laws based on race must be groomed and supported. The people will have to be organized to support good candidates and to defeat candidates who want to turn back the clock of Christian progress. It is just as much the duty of the Christian to work to improve the practice of democracy and Christianity as it is his duty to work to defeat atheistic Communism. Educational and political action must also be supplemented by action of the Federal Courts, particularly the Supreme Court. It is the Christian's duty to support with his finances good movements designed to achieve Christian ends by non-violent means. It will mean supporting organizations like the N. A. A. C. P. which for decades has used the machinery of the law and the American Constitution to achieve rights and privileges which should not need to be fought for in a Christian nation and under a democratic government.

It is much easier to get wicked laws put on the books than it is to get them removed. Before this evil of segregation is completely abolished it may become necessary for Christian people to openly violate laws that are obviously wicked, undemocratic and un-Christian. It should be no more startling than what Jesus did when he healed the sick and did deeds of mercy on the Sabbath. I am convinced that it is not un-Christian to disregard unjust laws after every effort has been put forth to get those laws changed.

For good or for ill, we can no longer live in isolation. Whether we like it or not, what happens in one corner of the earth resounds around the world. In attitudes and ideas, we may be thousands of miles apart; but in time and space we are very near. The press, the radio, the airplane, and sheer economic necessity now make isolation impossible.

This is true even in the area of race relations. What one nation does has its effect upon other nations. There is no doubt in my mind that Hitler's attitude toward the Jews had its repercussions for ill in other parts of the globe. During the early stages of the Jewish persecution in Germany, I happened to be on the campus of a western university. I dis-

agreed with a student who advanced the thought that the brutal treatment of the Jew in Germany would make the rest of the world more sympathetic toward and less prejudiced against the Jews. I argued, to the contrary, that what Hitler was doing to the Jews in Germany would tend to make it harder for Jews everywhere.

I still believe that, on the whole, my position was sound. I believe there were thousands of people throughout the earth who disliked the Jews and who though they themselves would not have had the Jews slaughtered; were silently glad when Hitler slaughtered them. If this is stated too strongly, let me soften it and state it this way. Although there were many people who deplored what Hitler did to the Jews, silently or openly they admitted that they "could understand" why he did it. I heard as much here and in Germany. An American who had lived in Germany twenty years and who condemned what Hitler was doing to the Jews, nevertheless condoned him in the same breath by saying that the Jews in Germany did own too much wealth. The man who hated Jews found justification for and support of his prejudice in the Hitler program.

And strangely enough no country offered the Jews a haven during the whole period in which 6,000,000 Jews were being killed and starved. Canada, Australia and the United States could have opened their doors generously, thus relieving the pressure on Palestine. But they did not. The evil that emanated from Germany under Hitler did not ease prejudice against the Jew. I believe it increased it. As a Christian nation we should have done more than we did to provide homes for the persecuted Jews of Germany. And certainly it is the duty of every Christian to eliminate from his own heart all prejudice against the Jew and strive to abolish all discrimination against the Jew in education, employment and business. Because of our prejudice against him any effort to evangelize the Jew will meet cold indifference.

Likewise I believe that America's attitude toward the Negro has had harmful repercussions upon peoples everywhere. The way American Christians treat Negroes hurts them the world over. I have experienced it first hand in England and in Cuba; and I have felt it and heard it in conversations in other parts of the world. The denial of hotel accommodations in London in 1937, after reservations were made and confirmed, and the refusal of the American Express Company in London to book me and my family on a tour of the continent were directly traceable to American influence. The Express Company's agent said frankly that he could not book us with white people because the American whites would object. He offered us separate accommodations at a much higher price. We refused. In Havana in 1941 an attempt to deny us hotel accommodations though the confirmed reservations were in our hands could be explained in the same way. On this point, the experience of Negro soldiers on foreign soil would be eloquent testimony. Even persons who have no prejudice as such entertain distorted notions of the Negro. A few summers ago, a Belgian woman on the S. S. New Amsterdam wanted to talk about Negro-white relations in the United States. She could not understand our segregation. In an unguarded moment, she exclaimed: "I understand that Negroes are wild; but it seems that this could be overcome with education and training."

Foreign students who study in this country, even colored students from Asia, almost invariably avoid too much mingling with Negroes. Practically none study in colleges and universities for Negroes. And it is quite

understandable. The Negro is segregated and "Jim crowed" in America. Discrimination meets him almost everywhere. There are not many places in America where no discrimination at all is practiced against the Negro. So the Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Filipino students move in so-called white circles and tend to treat Negroes as the American whites treat him. The respect for the Negro's person will increase everywhere in proportion as respect for it increases in the United States.

I have no love for Communism. I hate its atheism and I deplore its denial of freedom. I hate all forms of totalitarianism in which the individual exists for the state. But there is one element in the communist program which I call good, and that is its attitude toward and its treatment of different racial groups. I have not been in Russia; but foes and friends alike who know Russia first hand admit that Russia's racial policy is probably better than our own and that of most other countries. It is so unfortunate that in the area of race a country with Russia's philosophy has to take the leadership over the democratic and the Christian nations. It may account, in part, for communist success in several areas of the earth. At Amsterdam the World Council of Churches admitted as much; for in its report of Section III it declared:

"Christians should ask why communism in its modern totalitarian form makes so strong an appeal to great masses of people in many parts of the world. They should recognize the hand of God in the revolt of multitudes against injustice that gives communism much of its strength . . . Christians should realize that for many, especially for many young men and women, communism seems to stand for a vision of human equality and universal brotherhood for which they were prepared by Christian influences All should understand that the proclamation of racial equality by communists and their support of the cause of colonial peoples make a strong appeal to the population of Asia and Africa and to racial minorities elsewhere." And certainly what we did to loyal Japanese Americans on the West Coast during World War II did not help the cause of Christianity in Asia and no doubt aided communism. Many were forced to sell their businesses and homes at great financial loss and were placed in concentration camps. If it was felt that these people had to be uprooted the Church should have insisted that our government make at least adequate financial amends. On this point the Church and Christian people generally were almost conspicuously silent.

In this area as in others, the Christian cannot rely wholly upon evangelism. The individual certainly needs to be evangelized. He needs to be changed. But as Walter Rauschenbush pointed out years ago, sin and evil are organized into economic and political systems and laws and the individual has his connections with these systems and laws even after he has become a new creature in Christ Jesus. We cannot escape the use of pressure or coercion of some kind as we fight against principalities and powers and wickedness in high places.

But even here the Christian must not be naive. It will make no difference how peaceful are the means used to create a more Christian society, there will be stiff opposition. There will be pressure from the other side; there will be social ostracism; and in some instances there may be political and economic defeat. At this point the Christian can only persist in doing what he conceives to be the will of God and leave the consequences to God.

If we say that the Christian people cannot do these things, we should

keep in mind the fact that in less than a generation Hitler changed the minds of German youths and made them Nazi. In less than a generation Lenin and others made the Russians Communists. In less than a generation Mussolini made Italians Fascists. Between 1870 and 1910 practically all the laws of segregation and discrimination were enacted in this country. If we can do evil quickly we can do good quickly. I believe that this country can become increasingly more democratic and increasingly more Christian if it is our will.

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