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Earl D. C. Brewer

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## SOME SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOUTH

(By Earl D. C. Brewer, Professor of Sociology and Religion, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia 30322. For use in the Southeastern Regional Consultation of the General Board of Education, November 4-8, 1964, Atlanta, Georgia.)

It is a privilege to speak on this theme in this conference. Especially so, since you are concerned with the nurture and mission of the Christian faith and its implications for modern life. Only the arrogant or the ignorant would assume the time or talent to do more than trace in a tentative outline some of the important aspects of the topic. Most of this sketch will be familiar background to most of you. Yet this very familiarity soothes our sensitivity, solidifies our stereotypes, smooths out the sharpness of contrasts, and makes sameness out of strangeness. Paradoxically, we tend to know both most and least about the things closest to us. Let us try to stand back from our Southland and review a general picture painted with a few broad strokes.

The Southland is a regional part of the nation. A region stresses its own uniqueness within the unity of the nation. Sometimes the South has acted like a section, stressing its individuality against the national unity. We are celebrating during this decade the centennial of a terrible war resulting from these sectionalistic tendencies breaking apart our federal union. Certainly our so-called "southern way of life" roots its past in the plantation system, in ruralism, in a segregated bi-racial pattern, states' rights, and fundamentalistic Protestantism. Each of these traditional elements is being challenged by national trends. Plantation-type agriculture is giving way to mechanized farming, industrialism is overcoming ruralism, integration of the races is biting into the old doctrine of segregation, states' rights political views are constantly being bombarded by centralized federal government, and an uneasy conscience is appearing in Protestant religious circles. The South is, indeed, a region in ferment.

To outsiders, the region may seem to be the "Solid South," and many insiders are lulled into this same monolithic view. But to students of the South it is a land of contrasts, a region of subregions, a mosaic of vivid differences. There is the old plantation area running from the ocean coastline or the river delta to the hill country. This is the usual stereotype of the "glory that was the Old South." Next is the piedmont or hilly area, running in several states back to the mountains. This is the area that industrialized first and now tends to approximate the national norms more closely than any other part of the South. The mountain sections of several southern states constitute another subregion recently emerging from the isolation and individualism, the poverty and puritanism characteristic of American frontiers. Within these three broad subregions there are others. Perhaps the most important subregionalization of the South today is that of metropolitan subregions and nonmetropolitan or rural subregions. There are many souths, not one. Let us hold this caution sign over any broad sweeping generalizations about the South, including our own.

Basically, the South is a region of traditionalism in transition. Some point with pride to the achievements of our forefathers. Others worship the "southern way of life" as a religion. Some view with alarm changes in the old patterns. Many are sovereign southerners before they are Americans--Americans before they are Christians. Yet everywhere traditionalism is in transition.



In this process metropolitan and urban centers tend to press for change while rural counties are likely to resist the pressure. The old ways are giving way to new ways. The question is not whether to change or not to change, because change is inevitable--the only constant. The question, rather, is what changes to encourage and embrace, what to accept in acquiescence, what to resist and reject. Every southerner will find himself confronting such questions. His posture will reflect his attachment to our southern heritage, his comprehension of our national ideals, and his commitment to the Christian faith. Yes, the South is changing, but from what to what and for what?

It is the purpose of this paper to review a few characteristics, conditions, and changes in southern society and to indicate some of the challenges with which they confront the Christian Church. Special attention will be given to the traditional values of southern culture, the changes in the churches, population characteristics, economic conditions, the racial situation, politics, and areas of disorganization resulting from rapid social changes. In conclusion, a few implications for the work of the church will be suggested.

In an excellent book titled Southern Tradition and Regional Progress, Dr. Nicholls identifies "those elements of Southern tradition which may be appropriately associated with southern poverty and whose abandonment may be a prerequisite if the South is finally to put an end to its poverty."

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William H. Nicholls, Southern Tradition and Regional Progress, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1960.

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He goes on to state,

"...it is my principal thesis here that the South's serious lag in per capita incomes is largely attributable to its insufficient rate of industrial-urban development and that the South's lag in industrial development is in substantial part the result of its stubborn adherence to a set of values inconsistent with a high rate of industrialization. So much said, I now turn to the heart of my analysis. What are the key elements in the distinctively Southern tradition, way of life, and state of mind which have hampered regional economic progress? The list is long but can be classified for convenience into five principal categories: (1) the persistence of agrarian values, (2) the rigidity of the social structure, (3) the undemocratic nature of the political structure, (4) the weakness of social responsibility, and (5) conformity of thought and behavior."

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Nicholls, pp. 14-15.

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Near the conclusion of his work, Dr. Nicholls, an economist, states his view of the place of religion in the southern traditional value complex.



"In my initial prospectus of this book, I also intended to include as another element in the Southern tradition its 'other-worldly religion.' However, upon further reflection, I decided to omit this important matter. Even so, I should perhaps make explicit the extent to which, quite apart from the lessons of social science, my own maturing interpretation and application of Christian teachings have influenced my attitudes toward race relations. I have been forced to conclude that, quite apart from their economic and social aspects, traditional Southern racial attitudes inescapably have a moral aspect as well. That so few of my co-religionists in the South seem to see this moral issue never ceases to discourage and amaze me. It is a paradox that the South, which by every objective standard is the most religious region in America, could be so blind to the practical implications of Christianity. Somehow the Southern religious tradition has never progressed from the Old Testament's God of Wrath to the New Testament's God of Love and Brotherhood, nor from an ethereal concern for the other world to a concrete moral concern for social injustice in the here and now. In my view, Southern religious attitudes have been hopelessly schizophrenic and outrageously self-righteous."

Nicholls, p. 163.

The place of religion in the traditionalism of the South is far more intimate and involved than might appear at just a glance. A brief historical sketch will be necessary to set this in perspective.

It is a fairly common historical generalization that the modern world, or the past three or four hundred years, resulted from the convergence of Protestantism as a religious system, democracy as a political system, science and technology as a system of research and development, and capitalism as a system of economics. These major value and organizational themes emerged from the womb of medievalism unevenly and in somewhat different birth orders. Yet the kinship between them and the mutual reinforcement one of another have provided much of the dynamic and core value orientation of the modern western world. This has become something of a modern western world synthesis replacing the medieval synthesis.

A classic study of the relationship between religion and economic life in modern culture is that of Max Weber. Centrally it was his thesis that the

Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, translated by Talcott Parsons, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

emergence of Protestantism provided the ethos within which capitalism was endowed with divine support as a way of life. This occurred, according to Weber, with the throwing off of the traditional religious orientations of medieval Catholicism through the radical Protestant doctrines of predestination, salvation, and calling. This puritan ethic was developed with varying doctrinal emphases by Calvin and his followers, the Baptists, and Wesley and his Methodists. It was not Weber's contention that any of these men or movements set out with the manifest purpose to develop the foundations for an economic system or even a rationalizing principle



undergirding it. They were devoted to the reformation of the central religious tasks of the worship of God and the salvation of souls. Nevertheless, these protesting religious movements, along with associated and, often, conflicting forces did rob medieval man of his spiritual security within the Catholic Church and of his traditional modes of economic and political behavior. Early Protestants had to work out the assurance of their salvation in the world around them. The discipline and rationalism of the monastery as a holy calling were, in effect, thrust into the open community and into the economic and political spheres. The making of money, the expansion of capitalistic enterprises, and the eruption of the Industrial Revolution, as well, parenthetically, as the expansion of knowledge and the spread of democracy, became principal fields in which men worked out their spiritual destinies. This constituted breaks, often radical and revolutionary, with medieval traditionalism. Traces of the historical effects of these processes can still be observed in Europe in that the more Protestant parts, in general, have pushed ahead further in the fields of economics, democracy, and science than the more Catholic portions.

The United States has probably been the major critical testing ground of this modern societal development. In the early days it was predominantly settled by Protestant colonizers. They came seeking religious freedom and economic opportunity. Those who settled in the northern part of the country seemed to stress religious freedom most and to develop economically fastest. Those settling in the South seemed primarily concerned with economic exploitation and less with the Protestant ethic. Due to a variety of factors, the southern settlers developed a traditional economic pattern of agriculture, substituting the plantation system with its cash crop and slavery for the manorial system of England with its relative self-sufficiency and serfdom. In the early days Protestantism dominated the religious composition of the United States, North and South. In the North, it flourished, largely led by left-wing Protestants, along with the beginnings of an industrial economy, while in the South it formed an alliance under the dominance of the Church of England, the right-wing of the Reformation, with the aristocracy of the planter class. With the rise of the industrial economy of the North, the Puritans became captains of industry and the call for workers brought thousands and millions of Catholics from agrarian Europe to industrial America. Thus, by the end of the First World War the Protestants, whose ethic was historically associated with the Industrial Revolution in Europe, found themselves dominant in the agrarian traditionalism of the plantation South, while the Catholics, associated with peasant agriculture in Europe, pushed toward the top in the industrial cities of the North.

Religiously the South has been as Protestant as it has been Democratic in politics. Again, it is a peculiar southern brand of Protestantism. This is best illustrated by the dominance of the Southern Baptist Church in every state in the Southeast. It is the sect-type form of Protestantism which, stripped of its denominational peculiarities, was dominant in the rest of the country fifty to one hundred years ago. One has only to attend a General Conference of The Methodist Church to note that Methodists in the South tend to view Christianity through glasses tinted by the "southern way of life." This applies also to Roman Catholics, according to a recent study of a parish in New Orleans.



Sect-type Protestantism stresses individualism in religious experience with little attention to social theory or ethics. Traditionally, concern is with personal morality rather than social problems, with surface cures rather than basic causes, with salvation by enthusiasm rather than evangelism. In spite of outstanding exceptions, southern Protestantism has tended to endow the "southern way of life" with divinity, defending it against all comers. The fact that prophetic voices in pulpit and pew are today increasingly vocal in criticism of what was formerly defended is obviously disconcerting and confusing to many traditional Protestants.

Although Protestant denominations have been in competition and rivalry with each other, this has been more in the nature of the various factions of state Democratic parties, largely all of one piece, rather than serious challenges growing out of fundamentally different interpretations of religion. The results have been a relatively low percentage of the population in religious membership in comparison to the nation, a surplus of substandard churches too small in membership and too limited in program, and a general low level of professional training for the clergy.

Although this southern brand of Protestantism places excessive stress on the Bible, giving the South the religious nickname "The Bible Belt," knowledge of the Bible, in spite of educational efforts, is extremely low. In a test given at a southern state university, out of one hundred possible correct answers, one half of the test group of over five hundred students scored fewer than seventeen correct responses. In a test in the open community in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, the most Protestant of the Protestant South, the average score was 55.7 (out of one hundred) with a New Testament score of 69.7 and an Old Testament score of 45.6. A local church knowledge test in the same area yielded an average score of 30.3. Almost twice as much was known about the Bible as the church. The individualistic, nonsocial responsibility view of religion is seen in a community participation score only around one-fourth as high as the church participation score. Religious attitudes were found to be fundamentalistic and sect-type in character.

For several years religious membership has been growing more rapidly than the population. From 1926 to 1952 the population increased by 33.7 percent while selected religious bodies increased 57.9 percent in the United States. In the Southeast, the population grew more rapidly by 37.0 percent, but religious membership increased even more rapidly by 68.4 percent. The Pentecostal and Holiness denominations increased during this period by 532 percent in the nation and 1,000 percent in the South. Church of God bodies increased 260 percent in the nation and 659 percent in the Southeast. Various Lutheran bodies (those with membership listed in the 1926 Census of Religious Bodies and the 1952 Church Distribution Studies of the National Council) ranked fourth in size and grew by 132 percent in the nation and 98 percent in the South. The Seventh Day Adventists increased 128 percent in the nation and 229 percent in the South. The American and Southern Baptists combined increased 100 percent in the nation and 106 percent in the South. The Evangelical and Reformed Church increased 60 percent in the nation and 22 percent in the South. The Roman Catholic Church increased 59 percent in the nation and 77 percent in the South. The Brethren bodies, Methodist, Presbyterians, Congregational Christians, Disciples of Christ, Protestant Episcopal, and Jewish bodies all increased at rates lower than the average for the



country as a whole and in the Southeast. Some of these groups increased less rapidly than the population. It is apparent from this analysis that the so-called "third force" in Christendom, the lower-class sect-type "people's churches" of today, are the most rapidly growing groups in the nation and even more so in the South. Yet, churches with established and liturgical traditions (Roman Catholics and Lutherans) are also growing more rapidly in the nation and in the South than the average. The Protestant Episcopal Church is growing much faster in the South than in the nation as a whole and Jewish bodies are growing more than twice as rapidly in the South as in the nation.

We need only project these trends to find a picture of much greater pluralism with a bi-modal growth pattern composed of Holiness and sect-type groups, on the one hand, and liturgical and established traditions, on the other hand. The in-between denominational types (Methodists, Disciples of Christ, etc.) have relatively low growth rates, both in the nation and in the South. Thus, the religious ferment in the South seems largely fired by the revival outburst of lower-class sectism and the missionary outreach of the great liturgical churches. That this trend is continuing to the present time may be seen by comparing the growth rates of various churches from 1950 to 1962 in the United States and the Southeast. In the United States, the Catholics increased 45.3 percent and in the Southeast 104.3 percent; the Southern Baptists 44.0 percent and in the Southeast 36.4 percent; the Methodists 14.5 percent and in the Southeast 15.3 percent; and the Presbyterians U.S. 31.6 percent and in the Southeast 31.5 percent. The Presbyterians were growing more rapidly than the Methodists in every state in the Southeast. The Catholics were increasing faster than the Presbyterians in every state except Kentucky and more rapidly than the Southern Baptists in all states of the Southeast. The Southern Baptists were growing more rapidly than the Presbyterians in all states of the Southeast except Alabama, Georgia, and Kentucky. The Methodists were the slowest growing of all these denominations in all these states.

The Church today in this region is challenged by its traditional identification with the so-called "southern way of life." Historically, the Southerner was rooted in the plantation system, in a segregated bi-racial pattern, in states' rights, and in fundamentalistic Protestantism. This southern synthesis has been as much sanctioned and endowed with divinity by Protestantism as ever was the medieval synthesis by Catholicism. Indeed, it survived the Revolutionary War, the development of American democracy, and was shaken only by the defeat in the Civil War. Today the movement of the sectional South into the mainstream of American life, ideologically and economically, is hampered by the inability of large segments of the southern brand of Protestantism to disassociate themselves from traditional ruralism and agrarianism, segregation, the one-party system, states' rights, anti-intellectualism, anti-trade unionism, and traditional puritanical behavior proscriptions.

Just as the monolithic might of medieval Catholicism over the values, motivations, and practices of men had to be broken before the developments of the modern world complex of capitalism, democracy, and science were possible, so the dominance of traditionalistic Protestantism, in its peculiar southern form, must loosen its hold on the mind of the South before the region can enter fully into the pluralistic mainstream of American economic, social, political, and religious life. Although breaking, the traditional southern synthesis is by no means broken, especially in rural areas.



This situation poses unique intellectual and moral problems for the churches in the South. They find themselves in the peculiar position of bringing judgment to bear upon what they formerly sanctioned, and both in the name of the same gospel. Yet the churches whose earliest biblical traditions include a custom-breaking Christ and Christians who turned things upside down must learn again to be a saving and living leaven in the traditional lump, a source of stability and direction in the ceaseless and often disoriented changes taking place in the South, in the nation, and in the world.

The decennial census of the population by the U. S. Bureau of Census provides, of course, the basic source of data for a study of demographic characteristics and changes. In 1960 the United States reported 179.3 million population, an increase of 18.5 percent since 1950. Slightly under a third of this population (54.9 million) was in the Census South, an increase of 16.5 percent during the decade. Thus, the United States as a whole was growing more rapidly than the South, largely due to the very rapid growth in the West. The white population, on the other hand, was growing slightly more rapidly in the South (18.0 percent) than in the United States (17.5 percent). The nonwhite population, mostly Negro, was growing more than twice as rapidly in the United States (26.7 percent) as in the South (11.1 percent). In 1960, Negroes made up 10.3 percent of the U. S. population and 20.6 percent in the South. The Negro population increased 25.2 percent in the U. S. and only 10.3 percent in the South.

In 1960, 69.9 percent of the U. S. population was returned as urban, with the 30.1 percent rural population divided unequally between rural-farm (only 7.5 percent) and rural nonfarm (22.6 percent). The increase in the urban population in the United States during the past decade was 29.3 percent. In the South it was at a much faster rate of growth (40.1 percent). The rural nonfarm population (mostly suburban and built-up population around towns and cities) increased slightly more rapidly in the United States (30.2 percent) and slightly less rapidly in the South (37.6 percent) than the urban population itself. However, the rural farm population declined (-)41.7 percent in the United States and (-)50.2 percent in the South. This decline was so great that, in spite of the rapidly growing rural nonfarm population, the total rural population in the country lost (-)0.3 percent and in the South (-)5.9 percent. During the past decade, the South moved from 43.6 percent to 58.5 percent of its population urban. Thus, for the first time, more than half the population in the South was urban in 1960. In 1950, 25.2 percent of the South's population was rural-farm, and this dropped to 10.3 percent by 1960.

In 1950, there were 169 metropolitan areas in the United States, and this increased to 212 in 1960. The comparable figures for the South were 59 metropolitan areas in 1950 and 76 in 1960. The total metropolitan population increased 33.0 percent in the United States and 52.7 percent in the South. The growth inside the central cities was 16.3 percent in the U. S. and 37.7 percent in the South. Actually, the greatest areas of growth were suburban, with 55.9 percent increase in metropolitan population outside the central cities in the United States and 78.5 percent increase in the South. Small cities, under 50,000 population, are much more important in the South than in the nation as a whole. This may be seen in the fact that the metropolitan population made up 90.1 percent of the total urban population in the United States but only 35.4 percent in the South.



The age and sex structure of the population provides important clues to the productive-dependency situation and to churches attempting to minister to the spiritual needs of all the people. In the United States as a whole, 32.2 percent of males and 30.2 percent of females were under 15 years of age, while those 65 years and older made up 8.5 percent of the males and 10.0 percent of females. For nonwhites, those under 15 comprised 38.7 percent of males and 36.6 percent of females, while those 65 and over were 6.0 percent for males and 6.3 percent for females. This meant that 59.5 percent of total males were in the productive age groups between 15 and 65, as well as 59.9 percent of females. This was 55.3 percent for nonwhite males and 57.2 percent for nonwhite females. Thus, it is obvious that the productive workers among nonwhites must support a larger proportion of nonworkers than is true for whites.

In the total South, 33.7 percent of males and 31.7 percent of females were under 15 years of age, while 7.7 percent of males and 9.0 percent of females were 65 and over. In the total population in the South, a smaller proportion of persons in the productive age groups must support a larger proportion of young and old dependents. This picture, however, is accentuated by the large proportion of nonwhites in the South. This may be seen in the fact that 31.8 percent of white males and 30.0 percent of white females were under 15 years of age, compared to 40.7 percent of nonwhite males and 38.1 percent of nonwhite females. It is the case that, due to better medical facilities, more whites than nonwhites are in the 65 and over age groups in the South. This was 8.0 percent for white males, 9.5 percent for white females, in contrast to 6.6 percent for nonwhite males and 7.1 percent for nonwhite females. Yet overall, the dependency ratio is higher for the South than the United States and highest of all for nonwhites in the South. The burden falls upon those segments of the population with a surplus of low-income and a deficit of high-income jobs.

In 1960, 68.8 percent of males and 65.8 percent of females 14 years of age and over were reported married, 25.5 percent of males and 19.2 percent of females were single, 3.6 percent of males and 12.2 percent of females were widowed, and 2.1 percent of males and 2.3 percent of females were divorced. The whites had a slight tendency to be more married while the nonwhites had more single, widowed, and divorced persons. The white population in the South was the most married and the nonwhite population the least. However, there was less divorce among the nonwhites of the South than of the nation.

Traditionally, the natural increase rate has been higher in the South than in the nation as a whole. Around 1910, for example, the gross reproduction was 44 to 59 percent higher in the South than in other regions, due largely to the dominance of the farm population. Since World War II the gap between the fertility in the South and in the nation has been growing smaller. For example, in 1960, the average number of children under five per 1,000 women 15 to 49 years old in the nation was only about 4 percent below the average of the rates in the southern states, whereas in 1950 it was about 12 percent lower. The slowness in the growth rates of the southern population, then, has been due largely to net outmigration. This outmigration became heavy for Negroes and whites following World War I. This was the period during which immigration quotas reduced the migration of population from outside the country. Much of this migration has been from farms to cities. More than a third of the South's farm population was lost through net migration from 1940 to 1950 (5.5 million). Every state in the South, excepting



Florida, Virginia, and Texas, lost population by net outmigration from 1950 to 1960. Only Florida showed any appreciable gain through migration (58.3 percent). The greatest losses were recorded by Arkansas (-22.7 percent), Mississippi (-19.9 percent), and Kentucky (-13.2 percent). Four states gained through net migration of whites. Three of these gained very small amounts: Virginia, Louisiana, Texas. Florida gained 70 percent (1.5 million) or enough to cause the southern states to receive 52,000 more whites than migrated out. The net number of nonwhites migrating out during the decade totalled 1.4 million. Only Florida and Louisiana had a net gain of nonwhites through migration, with the remaining southern states losing in a range from (-)2.7 percent for Texas to (-)35.0 percent for Arkansas. Other states having large proportions of nonwhites lost through migration were Mississippi (-32.7 percent), South Carolina (-26.5 percent), and Alabama (-22.8 percent).

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Allan P. Sindler, editor, Change in the Contemporary South, Durham, N. C., Duke University Press, 1963, p. 31.

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In 1960, 32.5 percent of the nonwhite population of the United States was not living in the state in which they were born, and this was 29.2 percent for the white population. For those still in the South in 1960, a larger percentage was living in the state of birth (83.0 percent for nonwhites and 71.1 percent for whites). The higher rate of mobility for nonwhites for the United States may be further seen in the fact that 52.1 percent had changed residences from 1955 to 1960, and this was 49.8 percent for whites. Again, nonwhites remaining in the South were less mobile (47.3 percent). However, 53.7 percent of the whites had changed residences from 1955 to 1960. Even so, this meant that 52.4 percent of the population five years and older in 1960 had changed residences during the past five years in the South. If this process were equally spread over a decade, no one would be living in the same house as when the previous census was taken. While mobility could not be extended in a straight line this way, obviously, many people move more than once in a five-year period. This is a picture of very great movement of population and it has important consequences for the Church.

Generally speaking, persons with less than five years of schooling are considered functional illiterates. In 1950, for the U. S. as a whole, 11.1 percent of the population 25 years of age and over were illiterates, and this was 18.4 percent in the South. There were considerable improvements so that illiteracy had dropped by 1960 to 8.4 percent in the nation and 14.0 percent in the South. For whites, this was 6.7 percent in the nation and 10.0 percent in the South; for nonwhites 23.4 percent for the nation and 31.7 percent for the South. In 1950, the median school years completed for the nation was 9.3 and in the South 8.6, a difference of 0.7 years. In 1960, the nation reached 10.6 and the South 9.6, a difference of 1.0. Thus, for the total population, there had been improvements in the South and in the nation, but the lag between the South and the nation had increased in terms of median years of school completed. For the white population 25 years of age and over, the median years of school completed for the nation was 10.9 and for the South 10.4, a difference of 0.5. For the nonwhites in the U. S. the median was 8.2 and in the South 7.1, a difference of 1.1 years. In the complex occupational structure of the modern technological order, less than high school graduation makes it difficult for persons to absorb the technical training



necessary for skilled jobs. With unskilled jobs decreasing and unemployment rates increasing among those without high school graduation, education through high school and beyond becomes extremely important. Yet in 1960, 59.0 percent of the total U. S. population 25 years of age and over had 11 or fewer years of school completed and this was 64.6 percent in the South. The comparable figures for the whites were 56.9 percent for the U. S. and 60.2 percent for the South, while there were 73.3 percent for the U. S. and 85.0 percent for the South among nonwhites. These were, in every case, the percentage of the adult population with less than high school graduation. It is obvious that educational forces in the nation, and especially in the South, have much unfinished business in the years ahead.

It is anticipated that the South will hold, perhaps with very slight losses, its present proportion of the national population. The estimated population in 1963 was 188.8 million for the United States and 58.2 million for the South, 30.8 percent of the total. By 1970 the U. S. population is projected at 211.4 million and the South 65.1 million. The present guess for 1980 is 252.0 million in the United States and 77.6 million in the South.

From "Economic Problem Number One" to "Economic Opportunity Number One" since the Great Depression, the South has moved more rapidly than the nation as a whole along several economic indices. It is clearly departing from its old agrarian status as a supplier of raw materials for northern manufacture and moving toward increasing industrialization.

Southern agriculture itself is changing with less hand labor and more mechanization, with larger commercially profitable farms, better trained farmers, fewer subsistence and substandard farms, and a great reduction in sharecropping and tenancy. The income of farmers is far below that of other segments of the labor force. The average income for the nonfarm population in 1959 was \$2,202 and for the farm population \$960. What is true of the nation as a whole is exaggerated in the South. For example, the level of living index for 1956 was 145 for U. S. farmers and 119 for farmers in the South. These trends have been accompanied by a decrease in the number of gainful workers employed in agriculture. One hundred years ago, 60 percent of all gainful workers were employed in agriculture, with 40 percent in nonagricultural pursuits. Today it is around 10 percent in agriculture with 90 percent in nonagricultural jobs. From 1950 to 1960, in the South, the number of persons 14 years of age and older engaged in agriculture dropped from 3.2 million to 1.7 million (-46.6 percent), with the Negro loss only 1.6 percent greater than the white. In 1960, there were 1.2 million white and 0.5 million Negro workers in agriculture in the South. This dramatic decline in the number of workers in agriculture has been accompanied by a phenomenal increase in the productivity of the farms and over-provision for food and fiber for the nation. Around the turn of the century, every farmer produced enough for himself and seven others, while today he supports himself plus 23 others. Much of this increase in efficiency has been achieved since the last war. Indeed, agricultural output has been increasing more rapidly than our population, even during the so-called population explosion. Using the years from 1910-1914 as 100, the index number for population growth in 1953 was 183 and for farm output 197. The farm output was 22 percent higher in 1953 than in 1948. This has been accompanied by a decrease of the farm and rural population with the usual impact upon rural institutions, especially country churches. Agricultural ghost towns



and villages are appearing. How to keep religion alive and hopeful in the midst of decline and decay is a sobering problem confronting hundreds of village and country churches today. Can the church become a "well of living water" in the "institutional deserts" of declining population areas?

The great shift has been in the growth of manufacturing. It is well known that the proportion of the labor force in manufacturing is a good indicator of the economic well-being of the people. In the South, in 1958 this was 21.4 percent, compared to 33.4 percent in the Northeast. Furthermore, much of the employment was of the type making use of relatively cheap, unskilled labor, abundant water supply, and raw materials. Exceptions were the rapid manufacturing growth areas in the Gulf Crescent and in a few other subregions throughout the South. New plants tend to settle largely in or near metropolitan areas, but it is a poor

Sindler, p. 44.

town in the South today that does not have or is not searching for a factory of some sort.

The South increased the number of persons employed in nonagricultural establishments by 26 percent from 1950 to 1963, while this was 25 percent for the nation as a whole. The value of foreign commerce in the South increased 11.2 percent to 3.4 percent for the United States from 1962 to 1963, with greater improvements in exports than in imports. Bank deposits increased 103.7 percent from 1950 to 1963 in the South and 37.3 percent in the nation.

The South's share of the gross national product has been growing during and since the war. New construction now is increasing at about the same rate in the South as in the nation and should reach 17.2 billion in 1965. Retail sales are expected to increase by 34 percent for the United States and by 38 percent for the South. The registration of motor vehicles is projected to grow by 36 percent for the country and 44 percent for the South from 1955 to 1965. These are indicators of the dramatic economic changes taking place in the South.

Summarized from John L. Fulmer, "Southern Economic Development, 1955 to 1965: A Look Ahead," Southern Economic Journal 23, April, 1957, 411-420.

The median income per family moved from \$3,073 to \$5,560 in the U. S. from 1950 to 1960. In the South, the gain was from \$2,248 to \$4,465. While the changes in the purchasing value of the dollar would make these gains look less impressive, the gap between the median incomes of families between the South and the United States actually widened during the decade. The poverty population is being defined as families of four with under \$3,000 income. Family income here is not provided by size of family, but 21.4 percent of the families in the United States reported under \$3,000 income and this was 33.0 percent in the South. The improvements from 1950 may be seen in the fact that at that time 46.0 percent of the United States families reported under \$3,000 and 60.9 percent in the South.



It is well known that low income families tend to be larger than high income families, especially in the South. This means that a much larger proportion of the poverty population is concentrated in the South than in the nation as a whole. A closer look will indicate some of the reasons for this. Using the median income in 1959 of persons with income, rather than of family incomes, this was \$4,103 for males in the United States and \$3,044 in the South. In the U. S. urban population, this was \$4,532, \$3,701 in the South; rural nonfarm population, \$3,297 in the U. S., \$2,427 in the South; rural farm population, \$2,098 in the U. S. and \$1,467 in the South. The white males in the United States had a median income of \$4,319 and in the South \$3,473 compared to the nonwhite male in the United States of \$2,273 and in the South \$1,615. Since the South has a larger than average proportion of its population rural and nonwhite, these facts depress the median income of persons in the labor force. These differentials between the United States and the South hold for professional, managerial, and technical people (\$6,640 for U. S. males and \$5,984 for southern males), farm managers (\$2,136 for U. S. and \$1,381 for South), craftsmen, foremen, and so on (\$5,240 for U. S. and \$4,314 for South), operatives and other factory workers (\$4,282 for U. S. and \$3,196 for South), farm laborers and farm foremen (\$1,107 for U. S. and \$865 for South), and other laborers (\$2,940 for U. S. and \$2,039 for South).

Obviously, the relative income position of the South has improved since 1929. In 1929, for example, the range by states in the percentage of the per capita personal income of the national figure was from South Carolina (38 percent) to Florida (74 percent). In 1960, the range was from Mississippi (53 percent) to Florida (89 percent). Virginia increased from 62 percent of the national level in 1929 to 83 percent in 1960, North Carolina from 48 percent to 71 percent, South Carolina from 38 percent to 63 percent, Georgia from 50 percent to 72 percent, Florida from 74 percent to 89 percent, Tennessee from 54 percent to 70 percent, Alabama from 46 percent to 66 percent, Mississippi from 41 percent to 53 percent, Arkansas from 43 percent to 60 percent, Louisiana from 59 percent to 72 percent, Texas from 68 percent to 87 percent, and Kentucky 56 percent to 69 percent.

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Sindler, p. 34.

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The per capita income in 1950 was \$1,660 for the United States and \$1,195 for the South. In 1963, the United States had moved to \$2,443 and the South to \$1,956. Thus, while improvements were seen in the South and the United States, the gap was somewhat larger in 1963 than in 1950. The long-term relative improvements seem to be slowing down.

A study of the occupational structure indicates that there are proportionately more people engaged in low income occupations in the South than in the country as a whole. For example, there are fewer male professional and technical workers in the South (8.7 percent) than in the United States (10.3 percent), more farmers (7.2 percent in the South and 5.5 percent in the U. S.) and laborers (8.3 percent in the South and 6.9 percent in the nation). In the South, the contrast is due, to a large extent, to the differences between the white and the nonwhite populations. For example, in the South, among employed whites, 9.9 percent were professional and technical workers, contrasted to 2.9 percent for nonwhites; managers,



officials, and proprietors (12.6 percent for whites and 1.5 percent for nonwhites), craftsmen (20.5 percent for whites and 8.6 percent for nonwhites), farm laborers (3.0 percent for whites and 11.4 percent for nonwhites), and other laborers (5.2 percent for whites and 22.9 percent for nonwhites). Thus, the similarities between the whites in the United States and in the South are much greater than the total male workers in the United States and in the South or the white and nonwhite male workers in the South. Nevertheless, the South has a surplus of low-wage earners and a deficit of high-income people in the occupational structure.

Another aspect of the economic picture has been the growth of trade unionism. From 1939 to 1953, total union membership increased 143.8 percent for the United States and 187.5 percent for the South. South Carolina had 307.4 percent growth during this period, and several southern states increased by over 200 percent in union membership. Continued unionization of workers may be expected in the future. The South has already been the battleground for much labor-management strife, and this, too, may be expected to continue.

In spite of these astounding changes in the economic position of the South, poverty is still a dominant characteristic for great segments of the population. There are not in the nation two greater depressed groups than rural farm Negroes, especially in the Old Plantation South, and the white subsistence farmers and ex-miners in the mountains. Fortunately, outmigration is heavy among both these groups, but human problems of training, re-training, welfare, medical care, and common deficiencies are great. These are becoming national problems involving the receiving cities of the North and West as well as the depopulating sending areas of the South.

Politically, the South is a victim of the one-party system. The Democratic Party has controlled the state governments of all except the border states for over half a century. In spite of the growing urban centers, political power remains in the courthouse gangs of rural and declining counties. Only occasionally have state officials emerged from their "states' rights" cocoons to view realistically the national, to say nothing of the international, scene. The internationalism of the southern senators and representatives a decade or so ago seems to have given way to a new isolationism. The South may be replacing the Middle West as the locale of isolationism in a world where the doctrine is more out of date than ever. The one-party rule in the South has not faced critical political competition or debate for so long that a curious type of Southern Democratic Party has emerged. This southern brand of democracy, with the blessings of the southern brand of religion, waited for the Supreme Court to outlaw the white primary and the county unit system in Georgia, and to order reapportionment and the desegregation of public schools. It is more often at odds with the national Democrats than with the Republicans. It is not only conservative but reactionary in many of its aspects. It is little wonder that election machinery disfranchises not only Negroes but, also, thousands of liberals through a lack of adequate political machinery whereby any viable choice is possible. An illustration of this dilemma was the situation in many southern states which made it impossible for Democrats to vote for the national Democratic ticket for the presidency in November, 1960. The effort in the 1964 election to win the most reactionary and conservative elements of the Democratic Party over to the Goldwater brand of Republicanism is another aspect of this picture. A continuing result of this



situation is a lower percentage of eligible citizens registered and voting in the South than in the rest of the nation. In the 1956 presidential election, for instance, several states in the Middle West and Northeast had three-fourths of their citizens of voting age actually voting, while this did not reach 50 percent for any southern state and dropped to 22.1 percent in one state. This is due partly to lethargy among whites but more largely to the failure of Negro voters to register and vote. There are counties in southern states with from 50 to 80 percent of the population Negro and no registered Negro voters at all.

One of the most visible characteristics of the South is the bi-racial nature of its population. There are relatively few foreign-born whites but around one-fifth of the population is Negro, twice the national average.

In 1850, about all the Negroes lived in the South where they composed 37.3 percent of the population. Since then there has been a steady decline of Negro percentage of the population in the South, and it stands today at roughly one-half the proportion of one hundred years ago. From 1800 to 1950 the white population grew more rapidly than the Negro, but the latter seems to have stabilized at around 10 percent of the national population. There has been a great increase in the Negro population outside the South. Sometime between now and 1970 there will actually be more Negroes living outside than inside the South, and for the first time since 1800 there should be fewer Negroes in the South in 1970 than in 1960. Thus, the program of Negro-white relations is rapidly becoming a national, instead of a distinctively Southern, problem and must be dealt with in the light of national rather than regional ideals and purposes.

It is against this type of background that the present push for equality of opportunity and access to public facilities on the part of Negroes needs to be understood. The 1954 Supreme Court decision in the public school field was only the most important of a whole series of such decisions implementing the American ideals of freedom and equality. In 1954, seventeen states and the District of Columbia required racial separation in their schools. In 1962, eight years later, only 7.3 percent of the Negro pupils were in integrated schools, and this was 0.4 percent in the Resistant states and 51.1 percent in the Compliant states (Delaware, D. C., Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia).

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J. Kenneth Morland, Token Desegregation and Beyond, Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Georgia, p. 4.

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When the white primary was declared unconstitutional in 1944, only around 5 percent of voting-age Negroes were registered to vote. This increased sharply to 25 percent by 1956 and stood at 23 percent in 1960 with variations by states. In 1940, less than 0.5 percent of the Negroes were registered in Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, and Louisiana. Registration ranged from 2 percent in Georgia to 16 percent in Texas. In 1960, only 6 percent were registered in Mississippi, 14 percent in Alabama, 23 percent in Virginia, and no data for South Carolina or Georgia. Other states ranged from 30 percent in Texas to 48 percent in Tennessee. There was the widest variation in Negro registrations by counties within states, from 89 percent of the counties in Mississippi having less than 10 percent



registered to Tennessee with 29 percent of the counties showing 90 percent or more registered. These voter registrations for Negroes were most highly associated or correlated with such factors as the percentage of nonwhite labor force in white-collar occupations (+.23), nonwhite median school years completed (+.22), nonwhite median income (+.19), and percentage of total church membership Roman Catholic (+.15). Registrations were negatively correlated with the percentage of population Negro, 1950 (-.46), percentage of population Negro in 1900 (-.41), percentage of farms operated by tenants (-.32), white median school years completed (-.26), percentage of labor force in agriculture (-.20), percentage of population belonging to a church (-.17), percentage of total church membership Baptist (-.10).

Sindler, pp. 124-128.

Under the impetus of the various voter registration efforts, a report from the Southern Regional Council indicates that 598,345 nonwhites were registered from April, 1962 through May, 1964 in the South. At present the registered nonwhites make up 12.2 percent of the total registration and 34.9 percent of the nonwhites of voting age population. The whites constitute 37.7 percent of the total registration and 62.8 percent of the white voting age population.

It is almost inconceivable that much of the southern brand of Protestantism has and still does approve of these conditions and does little to champion the cause of voter registration for whites, much less Negroes. This is simply another evidence of the southern churches raising white supremacy to the level of the Godhead.

With the very recent passage and signing into law of the Civil Rights Bill, a dramatic climax has been reached in the post-World War activity in the field of race relations. These activities have involved courts, legislatures, executive branches of government, voluntary groups, business groups, and the churches. Writing in the summer of 1952, John B. Frank stated the following:

"The twenty-five years just past have seen an amazing re-establishment of moral opposition to racial discrimination in the United States. Indeed, though it would be impossible to prove, I suspect that in the past fifteen years the proportion of the whole population which has shared a sense of deep objection, on moral grounds, to mistreatment of Negroes, is quantitatively greater than the proportion of the population which felt that objection in 1866. Once again, the courts have both gone along with and promoted this moral objection, and a series of judicial decisions have substantially brought the modern meaning of equal protection of the laws."

Sindler, p. 67.



Yet the road ahead is long and hard. Frank points to

"... at least three hard consequences of the three hundred years which desegregation, by itself, will not affect: (a) poverty, with all its consequences. (b) a depressed and defensive outlook on life, with all this may mean in terms of meeting community responsibilities. That Negroes may gain the right to vote does not, for example, mean that they will necessarily exercise it for a long time to come. The child who turns a classroom, segregated or unsegregated, into a blackboard jungle is the child who entered from a street that was an armed camp, and desegregation may not affect his motivations at all. (c) learning limitations. These are the products today both of generations and of a personal lifetime of undernourishment and unintellectual environment. No amount of desegregation will make equal and educational opportunities for these two pupils: one born illegitimately to an eighteen-year-old mother, not knowing his father, having no home but a crowded room, no balanced and adequate nourishment, no touch of intellectual stimulus or even interest in the world beyond his street; the other born to a fairly routine middle-class background, adequately fed and housed, moderately traveled, his school progress an object of close attention by both parents. Meaningful educational opportunities for Number One requires considerably more than putting him into the same classroom as Number Two."

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Sindler, p. 85.

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Dr. Edgar Thompson of Duke University speaks of the present day South and the Second Emancipation.

"If emancipation involves freedom to move it also involves freedom to appear. As slaves Negroes were hidden away on the private estates of the planters and as migrants to the cities they were concealed behind the walls of the ghetto slums. Slavery consists not only in being deprived of freedom to move but also in being denied a public and visible existence. The changes we now are witnessing describe a process of Negroes rising into public sight from their previous obscurity in city ghettos. They are putting in an appearance in the theaters, on the streets, on the highways, on the trains and buses, in the voting booths, and in the schools and colleges. They are everywhere, in places where before they rarely ventured. They are conspicuous, they are out in the public, they are being noticed. They are, in short, being emancipated a second time.

"We are living in an age of worldwide emancipations. All sorts and conditions of people--women, children, teen-agers, sectarians, workers, natives, colonials, peasants--are being emancipated from real or fancied states of oppression all over the world. Again we hear much talk of the 'natural' rights of man, a kind of talk which tells more about situations of change than it does about what natural rights are, but all these people seeking more freedom agree on at least one natural and inalienable right in common and that is, the right to complain about their lack of rights. They



are complaining so effectively that the holders of traditional status powers are recognizing rights of some sort on the part of those surging up from below and demanding them.

"The second emancipation of the Negro, the American phase of this world-wide status struggle, is more fundamental and, for the future, far more important than the first one. Its present manifestations--such as freedom rides, restaurant picketing, school and university desegregation, and other events which command the headlines--may be mere surface manifestations of a more profound change taking place in the ethos of the Negro and an earnest of changes taking place or about to take place in the basic structure of Southern society. The first emancipation gave Negroes freedom to move around and to choose their own employers, but it widened racial distances and made Southern institutions much more racially exclusive. Legal slavery disappeared with the first emancipation, but the idea of race, which in part originated as a rationalization of slavery, became an end-value in itself and went even deeper into the structure of Southern society than before."

Sindler, pp. 111-112.

The efforts of Negroes to attend white churches on a nonsegregated basis, the so-called "kneel-ins," must cause sensitive churches to hang their heads in shame. Negroes have been seated on a nonsegregated basis by some congregations and refused admission by others. The picture of Christians, perhaps of the very same denomination, being refused admission to services of worship because of color presents a problem of great urgency to church leaders. As a church we can say little that is more than double talk about schools, voting, and economic opportunities until we see that all people have equal opportunities for worship and religious education.

These are evidences of an enduring tradition of racial separation in travail and transition.

These and other trends point to a society in transition. Rapid social changes always involve disorganization and disorder. Social problems are likely to be produced on the back side, so to say, by a region in social crises, even in cases where the changes themselves may be deemed desirable. Social problems arise from conflicts in values, from loosening of traditional ties, from differential rates of change, and from unexpected social emergents. An example is the rending of personal and social moral ties in rapid vertical or horizontal mobility. The disorganization occurring in persons and families in moves from the rural delta or mountains to the urban west or north is measured in rising rates of juvenile and adult crimes against person and property, broken homes and the homeless aged, unemployment and welfare problems, mental and emotional difficulties. The need for prison reform and the rehabilitation of prisoners is great indeed in the South. In recent work in this field, it was discovered as a working hypothesis of many prison and parole officials that religion contributed little to the rehabilitation of prisoners upon release into the open community. Inter-



generational ties become tenuous in the face of family dispersion. Schools, clubs, churches, and mass communications are poor substitutes for parents, grandparents, and other relations in the socialization of the young into a strong and stable moral structure. For example, the almost exclusive dependence on age-graded peer groupings in social, recreational, and educational affairs, in the absence of firm intergenerational ties in the background, however necessary and useful, tends to produce truncated socialization, emotional myopia, and excessive "nowness" in value orientations. Adolescent turbulence is only the most disruptive of the uneasy winds that blow through our age-graded superstructure when the intergenerational familistic foundations have been weakened. In the long run, cultural crisis and social problems exist nowhere except in the minds of human beings. Social problems are important only because they produce problem persons and are problems to people. The Church is in the business of socializing the young and re-training the old in the best of the past to meet the changing present and to prepare for an uncertain future. The Christian faith has an unusual stake in this process because at its best it concerns the core values of the past, is realistic about the fleeting frailties of the present, and is hopeful about the ultimate outcome of the future under God.