

**“The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man”: The Social Gospel
Interracialism of the Southern Sociological Congress**

by

James Joseph Boshears, Jr.

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Auburn University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Auburn, Alabama
May 7, 2012

Keywords: U.S. South, Progressive Era, social gospel, race, religion

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Approved by

J. Wayne Flynt, Chair, Professor Emeritus of History
David C. Carter, Associate Professor of History
Charles A. Israel, Associate Professor of History

Abstract

Scholars have long debated the nature and extent of the social gospel movement's influence on southern religion. The Southern Sociological Congress' (SSC) rhetoric and actions demonstrated the blending of southern pietistic evangelicalism's emphasis on spirituality with liberal theology's accent on ecumenism, social service, and community. Adding credence to claims of a social gospel movement in the South, the SSC's adaptive theology also challenged the notion of a static and definitive social gospel fitting prescribed parameters. SSC delegates adjusted the movement's tenets to their ethical reality, a move that challenges commonly held notions about the SSC and contributes to a more inclusive understanding of the social gospel. As they reshaped social gospel beliefs to address regional social ills, SSC delegates melded southern evangelical spirituality with liberal theology's insistence on social action, focusing most intently on racial ills. Emphasizing the interconnectedness of African Americans and southern whites, SSC delegates embraced a southern social gospel interracialism that battled the most egregious injustices of the segregated system.

Acknowledgements

Accomplishment requires collaboration. I am especially grateful to the many librarians, archivists, and scholars who made this project possible: Kathy Smith and Teresa Gray at Vanderbilt University's Special Collections and University Archives; Beth Madison House and Jesse Carnie Smith at Fisk University's Special Collections; Diane Black, Theresa Gordon, Marilyn Hughes, and Tom Cannon at the Tennessee State Archives; Nick Wyman at the University of Tennessee's Special Collections; Tony Jones, Stacy S. Jones, and Andrea Jackson at Atlanta University Center's Archives and Special Collections; Tom Dillard at the University of Arkansas' Special Collections; Naomi Nelson at Emory University's Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library; Laurie Carr at Tulane University's Amistad Research Center; Rachel Canada at the University of North Carolina's Special Collections; Lisa Persinger at Wake Forest University's Archives; Elizabeth Wells and staff at Samford University's Special Collections; Nicole Bouche and Ellen Welch at the University of Virginia's Special Collections; and Tim Dodge and Nancy Noe at Auburn University's Ralph B. Draughon Library. Auburn University's History Department also provided generous summer travel grants that eased my growing financial burden.

I am overwhelmed by the generosity and grace of my mentors and colleagues at Auburn University. David Carter and Donna Bohanan offered open doors and sound

advice. Dr. David Edwin Harrell, Jr. introduced me to unique perspectives on the southern religious experience. My major professor, Wayne Flynt, provided a keen editorial eye, scholarly guidance, a gracious and generous spirit, and a social witness rarely seen in academia. Scott Billingsley, Jeff Frederick, Tim Pitts, Dave Murdock, Delane Tew, and Rebecca Woodham were excellent mentors and true confidants.

Above all, I am indebted to my friends and family. I will never be able to reciprocate Patti Morrow's invaluable editing that rescued this project. Moreover, I could not have survived this whole endeavor without the love and support of Sam and Amy Persons Parkes, Scott Dunn and Jill Richards, and Pat and Steve Dunn. I especially thank my mother and father, Joe and Charlotte Boshears, for encouraging me to pursue and finish my doctorate and providing the means to do so. I reserve my deepest gratitude for my wife, Jeni. This accomplishment would never have happened without her, and I will never expose her to such torture again. My young son, Tilson, has no idea why his father spent so much time in front of the computer. I've promised him countless hours of baseball and swimming and will immediately begin making up for lost time.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking before a capacity crowd at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium in May of 1912, YMCA student secretary Willis D. Weatherford boldly conditioned the Southern Sociological Congress' success on its ability to view African Americans as human beings "whom God has put here to be developed, ennobled, made worthy and useful." For Weatherford, the Southern Sociological Congress (SSC) was meaningless unless it imbued all personality with sacredness and value: the bad and the good, the defective and the efficient, the diseased and the physically sound, and "more than all of these . . . the black as well as the white." Coopting the concept of "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" (a metaphor for a kingdom of God based on the intrinsic worth of every individual and guarded by God revealed in Christ) from Albrecht Ritschl, the influential nineteenth-century German liberal theologian, interracialists like Weatherford applied it to the southern biracial context. Like most SSC orators, this young Methodist minister espoused a social gospel theology informed by unique southern contingencies, primarily the belief that uplifting African Americans would hasten Christ's kingdom on earth.¹

¹Willis D. Weatherford "The Negro and the New South," in *The Call of the New South*, ed. James E. McCulloch (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1912), 220-225; "Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night," *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 1, 14; William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 240-267;

The Southern Sociological Congress (SSC) clearly trumpeted its religious and racial proclivities at its inaugural 1912 meeting in Nashville. The organization's "Challenge" issued to individuals and institutions called the church "to prove her right to social mastery by a universal and unselfish social ministry." Although it reflected Progressivism's panoply, the SSC's social ministry agenda primarily emphasized interracial cooperation as a means to ameliorate African American social ills. Unlike previous organizations formed to address southern racial problems, the SSC offered more than just paternalistic words of support in the name of the "Negro" and chose instead to work in conjunction with African Americans. Historians, however, have only slowly recognized the SSC's theological roots.

Lyda Gordon Shivers' 1935 dissertation, "The Social Welfare Movement in the South: A Study in Regional Culture and Social Organization," designated the Southern Sociological Congress (SSC) as the primary southern social conference of the twentieth century's second decade. Despite the organization's name, Shivers recognized that religion, not sociology, set "the social aims of the South" and dictated the SSC's emphases and interests. Of the Congress' seven divisions or "departmental conferences," the church and social service department routinely attracted the most interest and attention and was unique among social welfare conferences. Although the National Conference of Charities and Corrections had a section on "church and social work" in

Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), xix-xxii, 246-261, 374-385; J. Philip Wogaman, *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 174-175.

1911, it lasted only a year. The SSC's department was permanent, espoused a socially minded theology, and promoted an interracial agenda.

Shivers also noted the influence of the race relations departmental conference. At the SSC's Atlanta gathering in 1913, the conference garnered the largest crowds, welcomed black delegates, diffused racial tensions, hosted African American speakers, and encouraged interracial dialogue. Meeting jointly with the National Conference of Charities and Correction at Memphis in 1914, the SSC dealt solely with racial and ecclesial issues while its sister organization oversaw all other discussions.

Although she examined the SSC through the twin lenses of religion and race, Shivers' treatment was superficial. She failed to comprehend participants' racial views, theories informing such views, recommended ameliorative actions, the nature and influence of various theological streams, and the relationship between religious and racial forces. Her dissertation advisor, Howard W. Odum, fared no better.²

In his 1936 opus, *Southern Regions of the United States*, Odum echoed his graduate student's findings when he recognized the SSC as one of the most significant south-wide organizations formed in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Like Shivers, he discerned the SSC's "religious and revival motivation" and noted the SSC's northern influences and overall desire for higher civic and social welfare standards.

Odum also observed that post-Progressive Era state conferences of social work merely recapitulated SSC proposals when they sought to ameliorate or eradicate abuses of the

²Lyda Gordon Shivers, "The Social Welfare Movement in the South: A Study in Regional Culture and Social Organization," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1935), 50-62.

chain gang, county jail, and lynch mob. Such praise notwithstanding, Odum overlooked the social gospel's influence on the SSC.³

In *Origins of the New South*, C. Vann Woodward observed that three social gospel tendencies at work in late nineteenth and early twentieth century American Christianity – increased instances of church unity, a liberalized theology, and greater emphasis on socialized religion – were largely absent from southern Christendom. The esteemed historian excepted the SSC from his critique, calling it a “ministerial affair” that adopted a social program and hosted social gospelers like Walter Rauschenbusch and Samuel Zane Batten. Like most historians of his generation, Woodward limited the social gospel to a set of prescribed tenets encapsulated by Shailer Mathews’ definition of the movement as “the application of the teaching of Jesus Christ and the total message of the Christian salvation to society, the economic life, and social institutions . . . as well as to individuals.” For the most part, Woodward also accepted the concomitant consensus view that notable white churchmen – rooted in the “new” or “liberal” theology of the day – developed social Christianity as a reaction to certain northern and mid-western social problems associated with the rise of industry and increased urbanization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As opposed to other historians, Woodward discerned the social gospel's influence on the SSC. His perspective unintentionally invited historians to challenge accepted interpretations of the social gospel, southern

³Howard W. Odum, *Southern Regions of the United States* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1936), 137, 139.

religion, and the SSC.⁴

Earl Charles Chatfield's 1958 thesis, "The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920: The Development and Rationale of a Twentieth-Century Crusade," is the most significant study of the SSC to date. While acknowledging the presence of social gospel clergymen who emphasized transcending individual concerns and the earthly establishment of the community of God, Chatfield maintained that the most important element of the SSC was its perception of society as organic and interdependent. SSC delegates also maintained that rationally derived conditions primarily shaped society. Chatfield listed the social gospel as one of many influences contributing to such a mind set, but he discounted the extent of its impact.⁵

Despite Chatfield's findings, George Brown Tindall, in *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945*, accepted the religiosity of the SSC and recognized its social service orientation, but ventured no further. Jack Temple Kirby's *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South*, paid even less attention to the SSC

⁴ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 450, 452; Shailer Mathews, "Social Gospel," in *A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, ed. Shailer Mathews and Gerald Birney Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 416-417; Christopher H. Evans, "Historical Integrity and Theological Recovery: A Reintroduction to the Social Gospel," in *The Social Gospel Today*, ed. Christopher H. Evans (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 1-2; Christopher H. Evans, "Defining the Target: Perspectives on the Social Gospel," in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel: Papers From the Inaugural Social Gospel Conference at Colgate Rochester Divinity School*, ed. Christopher H. Evans (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 1999), xv-xviii.

⁵ Charles Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920: The Development and Rationale of a Twentieth-Century Crusade" (M.A. thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1958), iv-ix, 107-151.

and added no new analysis. More recent scholarship, like Morton Sosna's *In Search of the Silent South: Southern Liberals and the Race Issue*, basically restated Tindall's synopsis. John Joel Culley's dissertation, "Muted Trumpets: Four Efforts to Better Southern Race Relations, 1900-1919" analyzed the SSC's racial policies but ignored the social gospel's contribution altogether.⁶

John Lee Eighmy's *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists*, Dewey Grantham's *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, and Ronald C. White, Jr.'s and C. Howard Hopkins' *The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America* and *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel* popularized Chatfield's observations. Grantham, however, only emphasized Chatfield's perspective on the Congress' rationale. Eighmy, White, and Hopkins focused only on Chatfield's assertions concerning the social gospel and said very little about the SSC itself. More recently, Carol Crawford Holcomb and John McDowell have mentioned the contributions, respectively, of Baptist and Methodist women to the SSC. Their explorations, however, were tied to specific organizations (the Women's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Church) or crusades (the Home Mission Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South) and were hardly comprehensive. In short, our understanding of the SSC

⁶George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South: 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 7-8, 175-178, 198; Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Company, 1972), 51-52; Morton Sosna, *In Search of the Silent South: Southern Liberals and the Race Issue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 17-18; John Joel Culley, "Muted Trumpets: Four Efforts to Better Southern Race Relations, 1900-1919" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1967), 114-168.

still rests largely on the work done by Earl Charles Chatfield fifty years ago.⁷

Scholars have acknowledged the SSC's importance for eight decades, but most overlooked the SSC's social gospel orientation. Such neglect is understandable. Because they long denied the existence of a southern social Christianity, historians also ignored or mis-categorized the SSC's social gospel inspired interracialism. Surveying the social gospel's historiography reveals a consensus view that swayed scholars for four decades. While some eventually challenged the dominant view, others altogether revised it. Full comprehension of the SSC's relationship to southern religion, southern race relations, and social Christianity requires an examination of the social gospel's historiography.

Arthur Schlesinger's 1932 examination, "A Critical Period In American Religion, 1875-1900," first portrayed the social gospel as a regional reaction. Tired of treating mere symptoms of urban and industrial crises, Schlesinger's northern religious leaders developed the social gospel as an ethical antidote for societal disease. Without exception, these socialized clergymen rooted their ethical constructs in the regionally

⁷John Lee Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1972), 65-68; Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 376; Ronald C. White, Jr. and Hopkins, C. Howard, *The Social Gospel* (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1976), 86; Ronald C. White, Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel, 1877-1925* (San Francisco, 1990), x; Carol Crawford Holcomb, "The Kingdom at Hand: The Social Gospel and the Personal Service Department of Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention," *Baptist History and Heritage* 35/2 (Spring 2000): 49-66; John Patrick McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South: The Woman's Home Mission Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1886-1939* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1982), 87.

dominant liberal theology. Schlesinger's examination forever married the social gospel to liberal theology and limited the movement's influence to the industrial North. His assertions and analyses influenced a generation of historians.⁸

In the first comprehensive examination of the social gospel movement, *The Rise of The Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915*, historian Charles Howard Hopkins called the social gospel movement America's most distinctive contribution to Christianity. Elaborating on Schlesinger's thesis, Hopkins deemed the social gospel a Protestant reaction – stimulated by socialism – to the ethics and practices of modern industrial capitalism. Although primarily a theological response to societal stimuli, the social gospel had deep historical roots. The early republic's egalitarianism blended with the ever present millennial “kingdom hope” to expand the social gospel's influence. Following emancipation, religious reformers influenced by Unitarianism, the new science of sociology, Frederick Denison Maurice's and Charles Kingsley's Christian socialism, the temperance movement, women's rights, and peace movements, the antislavery crusade, and Horace Bushnell's liberal “new theology” all concentrated on the social ills associated with increased industrialization and urbanization. This social gospel believed an immanent God, working through interdependent humanity's inevitable progress, was building an evolutionary kingdom that would ultimately reconfigure capitalism to reflect Jesus' social principles. Historical context aside,

⁸Arthur Meier Schlesinger, “A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900,” *Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings* 64 (1932): 538-543; Ralph E. Luker, “Interpreting the Social Gospel: Reflections on Two Generations of Historiography,” in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, 1-2.

Hopkins' social gospel left Schlesinger's thesis intact and potent. The social gospel was still seen as northern, liberal, and reactive.⁹

Several examinations of the social gospel were produced over the next few decades. None, however, contributed substantially to the findings of either Schlesinger or Hopkins. Aaron I. Abell, Schlesinger's capable student, comprehensively restated his advisor's thesis in *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism*. Liberal Protestant clergymen developed social Christianity as a response to accelerated urban growth and accompanying industrial conflict.¹⁰

In *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*, Henry F. May found the social ethics of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Baptist, Congregationalist, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian leaders lacking. These denominational agents, adhering to "biblically based" classical economic tenets, largely defended the social status quo. Protestant reactions to societal crises originated outside denominational institutions. May divided the Protestant response into three distinct camps. Conservative social Christians repudiated socialism and generally accepted existing social structures. They advocated minor changes, such as an above-minimum fair wage, that would infuse laissez-faire capitalism with compassion but leave it fundamentally intact. Radicals desired gradually exchanging an inherently broken capitalism with a Socialist structure.

⁹Charles Howard Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 3-4, 5, 122, 318-321.

¹⁰Abell, Aaron I., *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1943), p. 57.

May located the moderates – social gospel advocates who desired fundamental socioeconomic changes well short of Marxism – between these two poles. Although distinctive in his approach and analysis, May left the Schlesinger/Hopkins thesis intact and unchallenged. May wholly accepted their assertions and focused intently on the ministries of urban white male clergy, linked the social gospel to a regional liberal theology, accepted the crises/response nature of the movement, and thereby limited the reach of the movement to the industrial North and Midwest.¹¹

In 1955, a Schlesinger student penned the first monograph to modify the social gospel consensus. Timothy L. Smith's *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid 19th Century America* questioned the prevailing origins of the social gospel. Contrary to accepted historiography, Smith discovered that revivalist thought and perfectionist tendencies grew between 1840 and 1865 in all major denominations, stressing interdenominational fellowship, the primacy of ethical action over dogma, and amelioration of social ills. The revivalists attacked slavery, sins connected with poverty and greed, and helped prepare society for the coming social gospel. Although Smith's analysis challenged the origins of the Schlesinger/Hopkins thesis, it upheld its core assertions. Smith limited his study to northeastern cities and considered the social gospel a reaction, albeit informed by socially minded revivalism, to regional industrial crises.¹²

¹¹Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 3-265.

¹²Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), 7-10; Luker, "Interpreting the Social Gospel," in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, 1-2.

Mainly recapitulating the work of Schlesinger, Hopkins, Abell and May, Robert T. Handy's *The Social Gospel in America, 1870-1920* differed on two accounts. Focusing on the biographies of three social gospel prophets – Washington Gladden, a Congregational clergyman from Columbus, Ohio; Walter Rauschenbusch, a German Baptist pastor and Rochester Theological Seminary church historian who ministered in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of New York City; and economist Richard Ely – Handy agreed with Timothy L. Smith's discoveries. He considered the social gospel a reaction to urban and industrial ills, but one rooted in nineteenth century revivalism, abolitionism and temperance advocacy. Handy also acknowledged an emerging consensus among southern religious historians.¹³

Careful to avoid situating the social gospel in Dixie, several works still found social reform forces or reform-minded charities laced throughout the southern religious tapestry. In *At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists, 1865-1900*, Rufus B. Spain acknowledged a southern social consciousness among regional Baptists but dismissed its link to the social gospel. Although some Southern Baptist leaders altered their denominational programs in order to “accommodate in many practical ways the new emphasis on socialized religion,” on the whole, the social gospel attracted few southern adherents for several reasons. Urban/industrial social upheaval that spawned the social gospel was somewhat moderated in the mostly rural South. Southern Baptist ministers were also suspicious of the new northern ethos and its accompanying liberal

¹³Robert T. Handy, *The Social Gospel in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford, 1966), 4, 6, 12; Stephen R. Prescott “The Social Gospel and the American South: An Historical Appraisal,” in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, 35-36.

theology. They were more concerned with individual conversion and ethical movements, such as temperance, that they believed hastened social salvation. Southern Baptist ethics, theology, and culture coincided with the prevailing attitudes of Southerners in general. Other scholars covering the same historical ground as Spain, however, discovered a nascent southern social gospel that ultimately failed to take root.¹⁴

In *Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century*, Kenneth Bailey cited instances of Southern Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations eventually rendering pronouncements on social issues similar to those made by northern Protestant groups. At the turn of the century these three southern denominations were absorbed in evangelism and paid scant attention to social issues other than blue laws and prohibition. Over the next fifteen years, they emerged as social justice advocates, “proclaiming the Christian obligation to fashion Christ’s kingdom on earth.” Bailey contended, however, that only select denominational administrators, not the common folk in the pews, acted on any socialized sermonizing beyond prohibition. The subject of personal salvation still dominated southern sermons throughout the period, and a social gospel perspective temporarily fashionable among denominational elites never swayed the souls of the masses. Regardless, Bailey shifted the historiographical discussion. He acknowledged that reform movements sounding and acting like the social gospel existed South of the Mason-Dixon line. In the light shed by Bailey’s work, historians mainly focused on the

¹⁴Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion: A History of Southern Baptists, 1865-1900* (Kingsport: Vanderbilt University Press, 1961), 210-214; Stephen R. Prescott “The Social Gospel and the American South: An Historical Appraisal,” in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, 39.

extent of the southern social gospel's influence¹⁵

In *Southern Churches in Crisis*, Samuel S. Hill supported Bailey's core argument. Hill proposed that southern evangelicalism's preoccupation with individual redemption and otherworldliness precluded ecclesial participation in social gospel and racial justice movements. He conceded the presence of charitable impulse but denied any existence of social Christianity. Although he recognized "the relation between the Christian faith and a number of social currents and responsibilities," Hill argued that the southern church had never sought to redeem social structures and warranted "no identification with the 'social gospel' tradition."¹⁶

Although his earlier writings emphasized the social gospel's absence in the South, Hill later acknowledged the movement's limited influence in the region. Reviewing John Patrick McDowell's *The Social Gospel in the South*, Hill admitted that the social gospel had been "felt in the South . . . in only a few minor and occasional forms, and never dominant." He noted parenthetically that "a few of us in the past, it is true, have neglected to note its presence." In *Southern Churches in Crisis Revisited*, Hill concluded that several of his earlier observations were hastily made. In retrospect, he saw a less religiously cohesive South whose ethical failures were not linked to evangelicalism

¹⁵Kenneth K. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism in The Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 42, 164; Stephen R. Prescott "The Social Gospel and the American South: An Historical Appraisal," in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, 38-42.

¹⁶Samuel S. Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 170. John Boles largely embraced Hill's position. John B. Boles, "The Discovery of Southern Religious History," in *Interpreting Southern History*, ed. by John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1987) 540-541.

alone. Moreover, individuals sometimes reconfigured and transcended aspects of the dominant theology to conduct social gospel-inspired actions. Hill, like Bailey before him, eventually acknowledged the social gospel's southern reach.¹⁷

By the late 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, a new group of southern Church historians witnessed a more influential southern social gospel and challenged the findings of Bailey, Hill, and Spain. Examining Alabama's Southern Baptists, J. Wayne Flynt rejected liberal theology as a required component of the social gospel. In "Dissent in Zion: Alabama Baptists and Social Issues, 1900-1914" and in *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie*, he presented fundamentalist Baptists intensely concerned with societal problems. Some Alabama Baptist reformers were theological liberals, but most sustained their social gospel views and actions with literal interpretations of scripture. Possessing non-systematic and flexible modes of theological reflection, such crusaders held social Christian and fundamentalist views without tension in denominational and congregational settings. They "entered the economic and social arena more for practical reasons than from carefully reasoned theological principles." Largely rejecting modernist theology and ecumenism, many Southern Baptists, shaken by

¹⁷Samuel S. Hill, review of *The Social Gospel in the South: The Woman's Home Missionary Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1886-1939* by John Patrick McDowell, *The Journal of Southern History* 50 (February 1984): 139-140; Samuel S. Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis Revisited* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), xiv-xvi; John B. Boles, "The Discovery of Southern Religious History," in *Interpreting Southern History*, ed. by John Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1987), 540-541.

firsthand experience of poverty and injustice, accepted pragmatic social gospel tenets.¹⁸

Flynt made similar discoveries among the “theocratic, nationalistic, conservative, rationalistic, and . . . dogmatic” denomination that purportedly hosted the nation’s most hostile environment to the social gospel – the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Among this fold, he found adherents pushing child labor laws; attending Southern Sociological Congress and Men and Religion Forward Movement meetings; penning scholarly tomes on the Kingdom of God; operating mission schools for blacks, immigrants, Indians, and mountain children; organizing rural church conferences; teaching social service; developing institutional churches; advocating greater ecumenical involvement; founding settlement houses, and cautiously seeking interracial cooperation. Southern Presbyterians sought reform in the city and countryside across sub-regional and socioeconomic barriers. Flynt’s examination revealed a distinctively rural South harboring a social gospel shaped by unique social ills. His work also depicted a southern religious landscape hardly dominated by one theological view. In both North and South the social gospel failed to command religious and societal consensus. Both regions also produced social gospelers motivated by various means to achieve assorted, and often disconnected, ends. The social gospel’s sundry regional manifestations lacked unity in

¹⁸J. Wayne Flynt, “Dissent in Zion: Alabama Baptists and Social Issues, 1900-1914,” *Journal of Southern History* 35 (Winter 1969): 527, 542; J. Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa & London: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 268; J. Wayne Flynt, ““Not an Island Unto Itself”: Southern Baptists and the New Theological Trends (Liberalism, Ecumenism, and the Social Gospel), 1890-1940,” *American Baptist Historical Quarterly* 22 (April 2003): 155-179.

thought or action. Other historians reached similar conclusions.¹⁹

In *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists*, John Lee Eighmy concurred with much of Spain's overall depiction but insisted that the northern social gospel movement influenced Southerners, and Southern Baptists, more than previously thought. Eighmy maintained that the "liberal" theology which questioned the literal accuracy of the Bible, rejected the evangelical preoccupation with individual salvation and the depravity of humankind, and reinterpreted sin "in terms of social environment; salvation in terms of social reform" formed the backbone of the social gospel movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century evangelical South. Infused with liberal theology, southern social gospel leaders reacted to social problems recently created by increased industrialization and the chronic ills of farm tenancy, illiteracy, convict leasing, and racial injustice. Over time, however, the social gospel failed to take root because of southern churches' "cultural captivity". Southern Baptists, indeed all southern denominations, were held so captive by their conservative values and folkways that a workable social Christianity proved an impossibility.²⁰

James J. Thompson, in *Tried as by Fire: Southern Baptists and the Religious Controversies of the 1920s*, concurred with Eighmy's findings. Southern Baptist professors such as Walter T. Conner of Southwestern Seminary and A. T. Robertson of

¹⁹J. Wayne Flynt, "Feeding the Hungry and Ministering to the Broken Hearted: The Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Social Gospel, 1900-1920," in *Religion in the South*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1985), 83-137.

²⁰Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity*, 59-71.

Southern Seminary praised Walter Rauschenbusch's attempts at "national regeneration." L. L. Gwaltney, editor of the *Alabama Baptist*, reminded readers of the one true gospel that called Christians to reform society *and* lead the lost sinner to Christ. P. I. Lipsey, editor of Mississippi's conservative *Baptist Record*, encouraged readers to seek anything that enabled them to understand the gospel's application to modern society. William L. Poteat, president of Wake Forest College, demanded a religion that erected a "Christian standard in the marketplace." Such examples aside, Thompson insisted that social Christianity's influence among Southern Baptists must not be overstated. Most Southern Baptists, indeed most southerners, were suspect of the social gospel's association with northern liberalism, distrusted the movement's goals, and questioned its positive view of humanity in the wake of World War I. Thompson, like Eighmy, recognized a southern social gospel but limited its size and scope.²¹

In *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980*, John W. Storey tracked social Christianity's influence among Texas Baptist leaders. Challenging Eighmy's thesis, Storey decoupled the northern social gospel from its southern counterpart. Socially aware Texas Baptists were unquestionably influenced by the northern social gospel, but Eighmy overstated the role played by these outside forces. The northern social gospel's ethical emphases hardly determined Baptist support of orphanages, hospitals, asylums, schools, and prohibition. Indeed, southern clergy's support of such institutions often pre-dated the social gospel movement. Echoing Flynt's

²¹James J. Thompson, Jr., *Tried as by Fire: Southern Baptist and the Religious Controversies of the 1920s* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1982), 29-42.

findings, Storey saw Texas Baptists eschewing the liberal theological outlook accompanying the northern social gospel. Inspired by local issues, they instead constructed a southern social Christianity that stressed individual redemption as the crux of conservative theology. Diverging from Flynt's work, Storey drew a distinction between a northern social gospel bolstered by liberal theology and a southern social, or applied, Christianity rooted in a conservative or even fundamentalist hermeneutic.

Storey's designations re-oriented the historiographical landscape. Prior to his observations, historians of religion defined "social gospel" as the moderately progressive wing of Christian social theory developed from the teachings of Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch. Scholars considered "social Christianity" the broad category of "all attempts to find Christian solutions to social problems, from conservative to radical." When Storey redefined social Christianity as the conservative reaction to social problems, he broke with seventy-five years of historical scholarship.²²

Keith Harper, in *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890-1920*, coopted Storey's term "social Christianity" to describe Baptist social concerns, social actions, and social ministries. Baptists built an extensive network of orphanages and mountain mission schools. Seeking "racial uplift" they also constructed black churches and schools.²³

²²John W. Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 3-6; Stephen R. Prescott "The Social Gospel and the American South: An Historical Appraisal," in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, 43; May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*, 170.

²³Paul Harvey, like Storey and Harper, also distinguished social Christianity from the social gospel. Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Radical*

Harper located two perspectives that defined and motivated Southern Baptist action. Informed by their “placeness,” Baptists sought to assist all peoples’ search for their proper role in society. This sense of societal location especially motivated socially concerned Baptists in their paternalistic quest for racial uplift. African Americans, once converted and in their proper subservient role, would support social order and racial harmony. At the same time, Baptists identified with Populism’s “movement culture” which emphasized democracy, egalitarianism, and mutual self-help. The Populist *Zeitgeist* resonated with Baptist beliefs that stressed local church autonomy and democratic church membership. Both perspectives ensured widespread social action among the Southern Baptist faithful. Like Flynt and Storey, Harper located a thriving, albeit paternalistic, social Christianity woven throughout Southern Baptist life.²⁴

Histories of southern women also unveiled a vibrant social gospel in Dixie. Jacqueline Dowd Hall, John Patrick McDowell, and Carol Holcomb expanded the social gospel beyond its white male practitioners. In *The Revolt Against Chivalry*, Jacqueline Dowd Hall examined the life of Jesse Daniel Ames, her guidance of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, and the social gospel’s role in the fight to abolish lynching. John Patrick McDowell, in *The Social Gospel in the South*, examined the home mission movement conducted by women active in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Maintaining that southern Christians’ history included “a

Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1997) 197-198.

²⁴Keith Harper, *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890-1920*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996) 7-14.

concern for social reform” clearly connected to the social gospel, McDowell forced such well-known social gospel leaders as Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, Josiah Strong, Shailer Mathews, Charles Stetzle, and Richard Ely to share center stage with Belle Bennett, Mary DeBardeleben, Lily Hammond, Estelle Haskin, and Mary Helm. Researching the Woman’s Missionary Union’s (WMU) Personal Service program, Carol Crawford Holcomb asserted that the social gospel heavily influenced WMU leaders who often communicated with northern social Christian and settlement house leaders.²⁵

Historians of African American religion have further refined the southern social gospel. As Robert Moats Miller observed, consensus historians Hopkins and May devoted only a few sentences to Protestantism’s struggle against racial injustice. Beyond that, they considered the issue closed. Race historians like David M. Reimers concluded that social gospelers’ increased attention towards urban and industrial problems diminished their concern for African Americans. Thomas F. Gossett noted that social gospel ministers spoke prophetically about other societal injustices but “said nothing with real meaning about racial injustices.” George M. Frederickson stated flatly that northern proponents of social Christianity altogether ignored African Americans.²⁶

²⁵McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 1-5; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jesse Daniel Ames and the Women’s Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), xv-xxxvii; Carol Crawford Holcomb, “Mothering the South: The Influence of Gender and the Social Gospel on the Social Views of the Leadership of Woman’s Missionary Union, Auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention, 1888-1930” (Ph.D. dissertation, Baylor University, 1999), 179.

²⁶Robert Moats Miller, *American Protestantism and Social Issues, 1919-1939* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1958), 9; David M. Reimers, *White Protestantism and the Negro* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965) 53; Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 197; George M.

In *Liberty and Justice for All*, Ron C. White countered such claims. Admitting that many social gospellers were “as insensitive to the deterioration in race relations as were many other progressives,” they located large numbers of adherents who were motivated by Christianity’s social message to challenge caste. Several of White’s champions operated south of the Mason-Dixon. Myopically focusing on the urban North, previous scholars missed a social gospel that prompted significant interracial activism. In a section of the United States where 89 percent of the nation’s African Americans resided, White found organizations like the SSC and Commission of Interracial Cooperation modifying the social gospel to address southern racial reality.²⁷

In *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885-1912*, Ralph E. Luker emphasized the continuity of nineteenth-century religious reform and located the origins of the social gospel in the antebellum home missions movement--a movement that desired to redeem society. Countering Arthur Schlesinger and echoing Timothy L. Smith, Luker discovered a social gospel attempting to re-articulate an older and venerated paradigm of social and theological values in the face of a radical and destructive economic system. He defined the social gospel as essentially a conservative movement, reasserting a social values system that existed long before the late nineteenth century’s industrial crises. The agendas of the American Missionary Association, Afro-American League, National Right’s Association, Southern Education Board, YMCA,

Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on African American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 302.

²⁷White Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All*, xiii, x, 233-244.

Afro-American Council, National Urban League, institutional churches, and settlement houses embodied the ideals of this conservative social Christianity.

Although a culturally conservative social gospel would seemingly eschew racial concern, the opposite was true. Confronting the issue of lynching, social gospelers focused upon “the elemental insights that black people were persons, that the right to life was natural, and that the right to trial by one’s peers was essential to American democracy.” Such seemingly liberal beliefs were, in fact, representative of an earlier, conservative, democratic system of values. The same racial values informing the antebellum home missionary movement embodied a social gospel that fortified institutional churches, African colonization efforts, and settlement houses. Despite such theological connections, Luker acknowledged the lack of a cohesive social gospel movement. The word “movement” implied reaction, change, or discontinuity – the social gospel was none of these. Later historians perceived a fragmented social gospel not easily defined.²⁸

Historians have recently started to deconstruct the social gospel by questioning its prescribed theological and historical limits. In many ways, such scholarship is hardly new. Recognizing the “vast difference” between the social gospels of Francis Peabody and Walter Rauschenbusch or those of Henry Ward and Shailer Mathews, H. Richard Neibuhr deemed Social Christianity a “multifarious thing” that was difficult to analyze. In *The Search for Social Salvation: Social Christianity and America, 1880-1925*, Gary

²⁸Ralph E. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885-1912* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1991), 1-6.

Scott Smith – much like J. Wayne Flynt four decades earlier – decoupled the social gospel from liberal theology. He expanded its parameters to include denominations not readily identified with the movement, individuals employed outside of the church, and those possessing “different demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, or geographical location.”²⁹

Susan Hill Lindley also challenged historians and theologians to push the parameters of the social gospel. In “Deciding Who Counts: Toward a Revised Definition of the Social Gospel,” Lindley stressed the need for historical integrity and the inclusion of previously unheard voices. She observed that attempts to integrate overlooked “outsiders” into a well-defined social gospel movement were often exclusionary exercises. All definitions, to date, implied that the social gospel was “stable and definitive” and only included those who fit prescribed parameters. Lindley insisted that “any definitions of any movement which, *by definition*, implicitly excludes previously neglected voices is both inadequate and misleading.” Social gospelers professed “as theologically central” a belief in “the brotherhood man.” Although lacking vision, they never by definition excluded certain groups or individuals from the movement. Lindley noted the supreme irony of later historians creating such a definition. The roster of “who counted” should expand beyond those identified with specific historical concerns such as urban labor, Christianizing economic structures, and/or theological liberalism. As the list of social gospel adherents lengthened, so too would the roster of issues addressed

²⁹Gary Scott Smith, *The Search for Social Salvation: Social Christianity and America, 1880-1925* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 1-13;

because “some social gospelers held as central what others saw as peripheral in terms of structural change.” Eventually, Lindley observed, newly recovered social gospel perspectives would have to be integrated into the traditional account so that it became “a new story for all, not simply the old story with a few more footnotes.” In this way, the social gospel, like “evangelicals,” would become a multivalent term in American religious history – a term requiring qualification when used in a variety of contexts.

Hesitant to label the social gospel definitively, Lindley proposed a working definition that incorporated outsider voices and decoupled the movement from any particular response to urban or industrial ills. Positing that social gospelers moved beyond traditional Christian charity by recognizing societal interdependency, social salvation, and faith in the Kingdom of God as a present reality and future goal, she explicated commonly cited conceptions of social Christianity. Like Flynt, Storey, and Harper, she also recognized social gospelers’ connections to evangelicalism and their emphases on individual *and* structural salvation.³⁰

Decades of scholarship toppled the Schlesinger/Hopkins thesis. The denominational studies of J. Wayne Flynt, John W. Storey, and Keith Harper and para-church analyses by Jacqueline Dowd Hall, John Patrick McDowell, Catherine Allen, Ralph Luker, and Ron C. White have redefined the social gospel’s depth and breadth. Even C. Howard Hopkins, writing with Ron C. White in *The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America*, acknowledged the need to “enlarge the definition of the

³⁰Susan Hill Lindley “Deciding Who Counts: Toward a Revised Definition of the Social Gospel,” in *The Social Gospel Today*, ed. Christopher H. Evans (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 17-26.

social gospel even as its geographical, religious, and social boundaries are redrawn and expanded.” White, Hopkins, and others accurately perceived the social gospel as both an historical movement that ended with the Progressive Era and a social consciousness renewed by successive generations.³¹

In that spirit I submit an updated examination of the Southern Sociological Congress. Revised insights on race relations, southern religion, the social gospel, and southern progressivism warrant a reexamination of the SSC. Diverging from Earl Charles Chatfield’s thesis, this study will examine the formative, not peripheral, role played by social gospel theology in determining the focus and program of the SSC. Reminiscent of Flynt’s *Alabama Baptists* and Storey’s *Texas Baptists*, SSC delegates’ rhetoric and actions revealed a home-grown social gospel informed by southern exigencies and evangelicalism. They emphasized the spiritual dimensions of Christianity, the pietistic component of the Christian life, and the need for spiritual salvation. Like Eighmy’s and Thompson’s *Baptists*, delegates also accepted the liberal theology of the seminary. Members accentuated ecumenical and interfaith unity, the temporal responsibilities of Christianity, the imperative that was social service, the primacy of the community over the individual, and the eventual establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Unlike many of Flynt’s and Storey’s subjects, most delegates felt deeply connected to their northern brethren, often embraced the theology of Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf Harnack, and listened attentively when Walter Rauschenbusch, Samuel Zane Batten, and Graham Taylor spoke from the SSC’s rostrum. As they reshaped social

³¹White and Hopkins, *The Social Gospel*, xi.

gospel tenets to address regional social ills, SSC delegates became more concerned especially with “race problems.”

This study will specifically analyze the social gospel’s role in shaping the SSC’s interracial vision and agenda. Most SSC delegates were racial liberals convinced that African Americans could achieve higher social status by emulating the better qualities of a supposedly superior white civilization. Paternalistic in nature, they also called for the “better elements of the white race” to assist in elevating blacks above their current lowly station in society. Their opinions were shaped by paternalistic masters Christianizing their slaves and, like Ralph Luker’s neo-abolitionist interracialists, African Americans advancing socially under the direction of Reconstruction era missionaries. SSC racial liberals – unlike their slave holding forebears and Yankee proselytizers – were less concerned with social control. Instead, they desired to eliminate social conditions under which blacks suffered.³²

Although the SSC was driven by a social gospel-infused interracialist vision, the organization’s agenda was hardly static. Like the social gospel itself, the SSC’s focus shifted over time. The initial conference in 1912 emerged primarily from the political

³² Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 4-7, 85-88, 484-486; William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 240-267; Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), xix-xxii, 246-261, 374-385.

impetus for prohibition.³³

On the racial front, the “Negro Problems” departmental conference helped initiate the Commission of Southern Universities on the Race Question, an intellectual clearinghouse where intellectuals would present, study, discuss, and formulate racial policy. Like the SSC, the Commission desired to consult black and white leaders and stay abreast of existing relations between both ethnic groups. As African American delegates met on an “equal plane” with whites, lecturers of both races produced an ethereal racial vision and concrete agenda stressing sundry social gospel tenets. They made comprehensive calls for social justice and love, discussed the Kingdom as the millennial reign of God, and expressed salvation as both social and individual regeneration. Speakers also emphasized interracial cooperation. Hoping to yield greater – albeit limited – equality for blacks, they called for coordination between “socialized” churches and society, requested greater educational opportunities for African Americans, and demanded higher standards of living and improvements in health services for all “brothers in black.” Their most prevalent theme was the social gospel-infused doctrine of “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man,” the belief that an interconnected humanity acted under the agency of the God made flesh.

By 1915, the SSC had developed a new preoccupation with public health and sanitation which precipitated a reorganization of the Congress, complete with a new constitution and new conferences, and a reordering of priorities. The health initiative

³³William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 31-32.

focused on traveling health crusades and culminated with the “Health Congress” at New Orleans the following spring. Though retooled as a health organization, SSC delegates still emphasized the social gospel. Motivated by their belief in an interconnected society and perceiving the work of science as the work of Christ’s kingdom, delegates sought to eradicate disease and improve sanitation

Seeking more national influence, SSC leaders moved the organization’s headquarters from Nashville to Washington, D.C. in 1916. Over time, the move distanced the SSC geographically and ideologically from its southern constituency. Delegates attending the “Win-the War” meeting at Knoxville in 1919 experienced an organization almost solely focused on wartime concerns and far removed from its traditional southern social welfare focus.

Shortly after the Knoxville gathering, the Southern Sociological Congress tried to reestablish itself regionally as the American Sociological Congress and later as the Southern Cooperative League for Education and Social Service. By then, the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC), an organization co-founded by the SSC’s Willis D. Weatherford – an International YMCA student secretary – occupied the void opened by the Congress’ national turn. Several SSC members joined the CIC’s ranks and continued to seek regional change. When the newly formed Southern Cooperative League met at Washington, D.C. in 1920, few people attended from outside the district.

By challenging commonly held perceptions of the social gospel, this re-examination of the SSC seeks to facilitate fuller understanding of a movement that is still theologically relevant. A decade ago, theologian Max Stackhouse of Princeton

Theological Seminary, stated that the social gospel was not dead. He found it in the preoccupations of philosophers, preachers, and policy wonks. In lieu of embracing the social gospel as a set of historical doctrines, Stackhouse considered it the expression of an enduring recognition that biblically-grounded faith required engagement with the social and political issues of the age. Periodically, Christ's people recovered this social and theological consciousness and reclaimed it for a new generation. Declared naive and irrelevant by most scholars, the social gospel survived post-war disillusionment and Christian realism's winnowing fire and reasserted itself in the theologies of Martin Luther King, Gustavo Guitierrez, Oscar Romero, Millard Fuller, Jim Wallis, and others. The social gospel speaks anew to those who listen. A fuller historical and theological understanding of the social gospel movement must also attend to previously unheard voices. The story of the Southern Sociological Congress, is one of those voices.³⁴

³⁴Max L. Stackhouse, "A Preface," in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel: Papers From the Inaugural Social Gospel Conference at Colgate Rochester Divinity School*, ed. Christopher H. Evans (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 1999), xi-xiii; Max L. Stackhouse, "The Fifth Social Gospel and the Social Mission of the Church," in *The Social Gospel Today*, ed. Christopher H. Evans (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 146; Susan Hill Lindley "Deciding Who Counts: Toward a Revised Definition of the Social Gospel," in *The Social Gospel Today*, ed. Christopher H. Evans (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 26.

CHAPTER ONE
OF CARMACK AND CHRIST: THE GENESIS OF THE SOUTHERN SOCIOLOGICAL
CONGRESS

In September 1907, prohibitionist Edward Ward Carmack, a newspaper editor who had served as a Congressman and U.S. Senator from Tennessee, announced his intention to challenge Governor Malcolm Patterson for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. Over the course of his first term, Patterson had thwarted efforts to close saloons in urban centers and had blocked legislative efforts to restrict the shipment of liquor. He and the anti-prohibitionist, or “wet,” forces contended that a statewide liquor ban was unmanageable and unwarranted. In the name of home rule, they were also hesitant to foist prohibition on counties or municipalities unless those entities had voted to do so (also known as the “local option”). As the political debate became more heated, Tennessee’s faith communities added volume to the voices calling for statewide prohibition.¹

The Southern Sociological Congress (SSC) was born in the stormy politics of social control and social justice that erupted in late nineteenth and early twentieth

¹Paul E. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics: Turbulent Decades in Tennessee, 1885-1920* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1965), 106-108, 111, 119, 121-127; Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 80-82.

century Tennessee. The prohibition issue heightened the moral sensibilities of most Christian congregations and Christian-inspired organizations, creating a moralistic ethos that would contribute significantly to the composition and agenda of a new reform coalition. Responding to the half-hearted measures of the Pattersonites, the prohibitionist camp, led by the Tennessee Anti-Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), marshaled their forces and called for statewide prohibition. At their 1907 and 1908 conventions, Southern Baptists in Tennessee affirmed prohibition. In 1908, the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, insisted that prohibition was a litmus test for elected officials. The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in union with the Cumberland Presbyterians, affirmed their doctrine of the spirituality of the church, claiming that the church as a spiritual entity should not involve itself in secular politics. Still, in 1907 and 1908, the Synod of Tennessee encouraged its ministers and congregants to work for the cause in the name of morality. Clearly, the forces of morality had lined up behind their chosen Saint Carmack.²

Edward Ward Carmack claimed that the regulation policies of Patterson had run their course and the saloon "had sinned away its day of grace in Tennessee." The saloon, declared Carmack, "will not be reformed and therefore must be destroyed." Despite the support of churches, temperance forces, former Populists, and several party regulars,

²Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 111, 119, 121-127, 131-134; J. Wayne Flynt, "Feeding the Hungry and Ministering to the Broken Hearted": The Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Social Gospel, 1900-1920" in *Religion in the South*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 89-90.

Carmack lost the June 1908 primary by a slim margin. The campaign had been especially contentious, the candidates nearly exchanging blows at a debate in Fayetteville.

Undeterred by defeat, Carmack declared he would demand passage of a prohibition plank in the party platform at the July state convention. Flabbergasted Pattersonites scrambled and stopped the move before the delegates met.

Assuming an editorship at the Nashville *Tennessean* in August of 1908, Carmack caustically and consistently used the post to castigate the Patterson machine while advising his readers to maintain their allegiance to the dominant Democracy. Although Patterson defeated the disorganized Republicans and won the governorship, prohibitionists won control of the General Assembly. Carmack continued with his relentless haranguing of the Patterson administration and was particularly critical of Colonel Duncan B. Cooper, a former friend who had become Patterson's advisor. On the afternoon of November 9, 1908, Carmack encountered Cooper and his son, Robin, on Seventh Avenue in downtown Nashville. Using two utility poles as cover, Carmack produced a Smith and Wesson .38 revolver and fired two shots across the street at the Coopers. One bullet lodged in Robin Cooper's right shoulder. The other grazed his left coat sleeve. The wounded man drew his pocketed Colt automatic, maneuvered for a clear shot, and fired thrice. Two of Cooper's bullets pierced Carmack's heart while the third entered the back of his neck and exited his mouth through his teeth. Edward Ward Carmack was killed almost instantly. Although Robin Cooper had pulled the trigger,

both he and his father were charged with first degree murder.³

While conspiratorial “drys” of all ilks claimed the killing was a political assassination and mourned for their martyr, their newspapers used the incident to accelerate their campaign for statewide prohibition, the direct primary, and an end to machine politics. In January 1909, prohibition Democrats joined with Republicans in both houses of the General Assembly to pass a slew of statewide prohibition and election laws over Patterson’s vetoes. The prohibitionists on the floor of the Assembly were encouraged by an entourage of WCTU members, Anti-Saloon League leaders, ministers, and Vanderbilt theological students who crowded into the galleries, nooks, and halls of the Capitol, preventing anti-prohibitionists from entering. The multitude harassed liquor legislators, praised prohibitionist lawmakers, and sang the *Doxology* when the General Assembly passed a bill outlawing the sale of intoxicating brews within four miles of any schoolhouse statewide. The following April 1910, the fate of the Democracy was sealed when Patterson pardoned the convicted Colonel Duncan Cooper. The party split into two factions: pro-Patterson – or Regular – Democrats and those calling themselves Independent Democrats. The impending party conventions would either solidify or split the anticipated Independent-Republican coalition. The political season would also birth

³Four days after Carmack’s death, the grand jury indicted both Coopers for murder. Robin Cooper was charged with murder, and Duncan Cooper was arrested for being an accomplice to murder and carrying a pistol. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 137-140, 150, 154-158; James Summerville, *The Carmack-Cooper Shooting: Tennessee Politics Turns Violent, November 9, 1908* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1994), 16-18, 22, 91.

a new political star in the form of Ben Walter Hooper.⁴

Born to a poor single mother and sent to St. John's Orphanage in Knoxville at age five, Ben Walter Hooper's rise to the heights of Tennessee politics was uncommon and unforeseen. Hooper's life improved considerably when he was welcomed into the Newport, Tennessee home of his absentee father at age nine. In one fell swoop, the young Hooper's status changed from that of orphan to small town physician's son. Hooper was raised a Southern Baptist, eventually attended Carson-Newman College, a Southern Baptist school in East Tennessee, and was admitted to the bar in 1891. His successful bid for state representative in 1893 marked his entry into state politics. Hooper was reelected to the legislature in 1895, served as a captain (an appellation he utilized throughout his political career) in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War, and practiced law after the war until being appointed assistant district attorney of the United States in 1906. He was serving in this office when he attended the state Republican convention in Nashville during the summer of 1910.⁵

Upon arriving at the GOP convention in August of 1910, Captain Ben Hooper soon discovered that, in the words of one commentator, he was "nobody's first choice and everybody's second choice" for governor. Within hours of the convention opening,

⁴Paul E. Isaac, "The Problem of a Republican Governor in a Southern State: Ben Hooper of Tennessee, 1910-1914," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 27 (Fall 1968): 229-230; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 158-169, 185-188; On March 8, 1909, the Coopers had been convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to twenty years in prison. Summerville, *The Carmack-Cooper Shooting*, 108.

⁵Russell L. Stockard, "The Election and First Administration of Ben W. Hooper as Governor of Tennessee," *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications*, 26 (1954): 39.

that one of the more experienced contenders would be nominated by the caucus participants seemed certain. By midnight of the first day, the situation had changed. Most delegates knew that ultimate victory for the Republican candidate in the general election depended on the blessing of the *Chattanooga Times* – an influential organ of the Independent Democrats – and support from the prohibitionist faction of the Republican party headed by H. Clay Evans and Newell Sanders. A native Pennsylvanian whose main source of income was the iron and railway-car business, Evans was elected mayor of Chattanooga on three occasions and served as consul at London from 1902 to 1905. Born and raised in Indiana, Newell Sanders was a plow manufacturer, director of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Company, chairman of the Republican state committee, and future U.S. senator. The Evans-Sanders coterie dominated the convention organizations, most importantly the state executive committee. When the *Times* declared that it would not support a Sanders candidacy, this group shifted their allegiance to Hooper. Despite the nomination of former gubernatorial candidate Alf A. Taylor from the floor of the convention, Hooper's victory was assured. He won on the first ballot, anointed leader of a movement possessing, as one historian described it, characteristics more reminiscent of a religious crusade than a political party.⁶

Supporters of prohibition flocked to the Hooper campaign. As expected, Hooper received the endorsement of the WCTU and the Anti-Saloon League. Certain he would lose to the Republican-Independent fusionists, Patterson dropped out of the race on

⁶Stockard, "The Election and First Administration of Ben W. Hooper as Governor of Tennessee," 38-45; Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 113; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 81.

September 11, 1910. The extent of the prohibitionist coalition was demonstrated four days later when the Independent Democrats nominated the Republican Ben W. Hooper as their gubernatorial candidate. Hooper faced the highly regarded Robert L. Taylor in the general election. A U.S. senator, former governor, brother of Hooper's Republican primary opponent, and respected by all factions of the dominant Democracy, Taylor set out to reconcile the Independents with the party faithful. Although some of the Independents were drawn back into the Democratic fold, most remained loyal to the prohibition cause.⁷

Despite Taylor's preacher-like discourses on heaven and hell and the state of Christian ministry, Hooper captured the governor's chair, and the Republican-Independent (fusionist) ticket won the state House of Representatives. Still, the victory was hardly a sweep, with the Regular Democrats securing the state Senate. Governor Hooper now faced a cabal of Independents trying to reconcile with the Regulars, an uneasy coalition in the Tennessee House, and a decidedly hostile Senate. Though the Democratic factions failed formally to make peace, in April the fusionists lost control of the House when a small contingent crossed over to pass an elections bill that would favor Democrats. No longer in control of either house of the General Assembly and convinced that prohibition was endangered, thirty-four fusionists left for Alabama in order to prevent a quorum in the House on April 12. With no quorum, Governor Hooper's veto of the elections bill would stand. The fusionists returned two months later only after the details of the elections law were settled.

⁷Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 190, 192-193, 195.

Between June 24 and July 8, 1911 and in cooperation with the assembly, Hooper launched a municipal bond issue for state normal schools, granted municipalities the right to purchase property for tuberculosis hospitals, added further protections to the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1907, and passed a child labor law making it illegal to hire a child less than fourteen years of age if such employment interrupted school attendance. More importantly, Hooper held off any further challenges to statewide prohibition. Still, he hardly had his way in the abbreviated legislative session. The filibuster had thwarted much of his reform legislation. He was unable to enact laws that would have increased education funds, and his veto of the General Assessment Bill, which raised all state taxes, was overturned by the assembly. With few political victories to cite in what would undoubtedly be a close reelection bid, Hooper would be left to emphasize his reform credentials in general and his prohibition platform in particular.

The Tennessee governor received some assistance for his campaign, in the form of publicity from the most unlikely of sources: Kate Barnard, the Democratic commissioner of charities and correction from the state of Oklahoma. Barnard, a renowned social reformer in her own state, wrote Hooper: "I am asking you to call a Southern Conference for the study and discussion of social problems. I am making this request of you first, because I believe that the time is now ripe for the south to settle her distinctive problems in her own way, and second, because I believe if the Conference was called to meet at Nashville, it would be convenient for delegates from all over the southland." Lacking the standard greeting, salutations, and courteous chattiness normally accompanying the correspondence of the era, the letter seems to be written by a

desperate soul possessed or pursued by some inescapable force. Yet, Barnard's message was clear and concise: the South controls her own fate; she can change her ways, but time is of the essence.⁸

Unlike the thirty-six-year-old National Conference of Charities and Corrections "dominated by northern people" and therefore focused on the North, Barnard was confident this new southern conference would consist of southern delegates who were charged to address uniquely southern social ills. The lack of a southern conference colloquizing or commenting upon southern social issues had been detrimental to the region. For too long, insisted Barnard, pressing social issues had been discussed "from northern stand-points" and southern delegates had continually deferred to their northern counterparts with the qualified understanding that conditions in the South often required distinct solutions. The South owed her people, particularly those considered the "unfortunate classes" a native organization consisting of southerners who would deal with uniquely southern social problems in a progressive manner.

To her credit, Barnard refused to place all of the blame at the feet of the northern progressive hegemony. She opined that southern leaders were also complicit: ". . . we have clung to old traditions and have made little headway toward improving our penal, corrective, and eleemosynary institutions, and are consequently very backward, judging from modern stand-points." Barnard observed that southern institutions at the state and local levels were lagging behind those same institutions in the "progressive states of the

⁸Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 193-196; Stockard, "The Election and First Administration of Ben W. Hooper as Governor of Tennessee," 53, 55-59.

north.” Southern prisons and mental health facilities were “particularly anchored to old ideas, ”and “attempts to protect the children by proper juvenile court laws and child labor laws have, in most instances, proven abortive.” Such abuse of the “unfortunate classes” must be halted, laws must be enacted, a sea change must occur and forces must be marshaled.

Barnard’s appeal to Hooper for a southern conference included specifics. Going so far as to suggest categories of delegates to be invited, Barnard insisted that delegates “be made up of representatives of our universities, colleges, and schools, representatives of all penal, corrective, and eleemosynary institutions, representatives of the State and County Bar Associations, representatives from the State and County Medical Associations, and representatives of State and Local Women’s Clubs; representatives of all societies, Lodges and Associations, which extend relief to members, and representatives of the Southern Pulpit and Press.” Barnard even had in mind how many attendees could be expected. If the National Conference of Charities and Correction drew an average of fifteen hundred to two thousand delegates, surely “by broadening the list to all the classes named” the organizers could expect “at least twenty-five hundred truly representative southern people” to gather in Nashville. Only then, Barnard emphasized, could southerners discuss southern problems like “the ways and means of having advanced laws enacted, governing our public and private institutions of all classes, our educational system and especially the laws pertaining to women and children” in a uniquely southern way. She trusted Governor Hooper to assist her with

such an endeavor.⁹

Barnard probably sympathized with the governor of Tennessee. She had no doubt heard of Hooper spending two nights behind bars so he could understand prison conditions, of his efforts to create a juvenile court, build a reformatory, and establish educational facilities and curriculum in the state prison. She was disheartened by the Tennessee judiciary's decision declaring Hooper's juvenile court law unconstitutional only a few days prior to her letter and predicted the ruling would throw "the dependent, neglected and delinquent children back to where they were a hundred years ago, and the same is true of other states." Barnard had lost a similar battle during Oklahoma's first legislative session in 1907 when her juvenile court, reformatory, and adult probation bills all suffered defeat. More recently, the Oklahoma Legislature and the Oklahoma Democratic Party had been less responsive to reform measures. Undoubtedly, the intensely partisan Democrat Barnard identified with the Republican Hooper because they were both interested in prohibition, child labor reform, and penal reform. As importantly, they had both met legislative defeat at the hands of anti-reform factions. Whether or not he felt similarly toward her, Hooper acted swiftly on Barnard's suggestion.¹⁰

⁹Kate Barnard to Ben W. Hooper, 9 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers, 1911-1936, The Special Collections Library of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

¹⁰Lynn Musslewhite and Suzanne Jones Crawford, *One Woman's Political Journey: Kate Barnard and Social Reform, 1875-1930* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 51-65, 139, 155; Kate Barnard to Ben W. Hooper, 9 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers; "Sixteen States in Southern Conference," *The Survey* 27 (March 23, 1912): 1947.

Hooper answered Barnard's December 9, 1911, letter ten days later. The governor, like most southerners, was familiar with Kate Barnard's credentials. She was the first woman elected to major statewide office in the United States. By 1912, she had gained a national audience because of her social justice stance as Oklahoma's state commissioner of charities and correction. Between Oklahoma's founding in 1907 and 1910, Barnard successfully lobbied the legislature for child labor restrictions, mandatory compulsory school attendance, a juvenile justice and court system, and institutions for the physically and mentally disabled.¹¹ Moreover, Barnard had built professional relationships with nationally recognized social reformers. Her circle of advisors included America's most progressive reformers: Charles Zueblin, a pioneer in American sociology who started the Northwestern University settlement house two years after Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established Hull House in 1888; Graham Taylor, professor of applied Christianity and proponent of the social gospel, who taught at the Chicago Theological Seminary and in 1894 founded the settlement house known as Chicago Commons; Charles R. Henderson, minister and head of the sociology department at the University of Chicago; and Alexander McKelway, Presbyterian minister and chief southern agent of the National Child Labor Committee. Well-established in the social welfare community of Oklahoma and well-received in national progressive and social gospel circles, Barnard turned her attention to uniting reform-minded southerners.¹²

Barnard had experience with the formation of local and regional social welfare

¹¹Musslewhite and Crawford, *One Woman's Political Journey*, 184-185.

¹²*Ibid.*, 17, 26, 56-7.

organizations. Prior to assuming her elected role, she had revitalized the United Provident Association (UPA) in Oklahoma City, an interdenominational organization charged with investigating charity cases in order to determine the amount of aid granted. Realizing the limitations of charity work as she began to grasp the systemic nature of poverty, Barnard became convinced low wages were the primary cause of family poverty, and labor organizations provided a way to improve the status quo. She then helped launch a local chapter of the Woman's International Union Label League, a women's auxiliary affiliated with the American Federation of Labor encouraging consumption of union-made products. Having experienced the limitations of union activity – unions, like charities, stopped short of addressing the root causes of poverty – Barnard then focused her attention on large scale social justice ventures.¹³ In 1907, Barnard successfully ran for commissioner of charities and correction for Oklahoma. Recognizing that pursuing a social welfare agenda required building a political base, enamored with the strategy and composition of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, and anticipating a battle in the 1908 legislative session, Barnard issued a call for a convention to “discuss modern and improved systems of dealing with public wards and topics of kindred interests.” Inviting political leaders, charity workers, ministers, members of women's clubs, businessmen, and anyone else who could educate and inspire the general public, Barnard convened an April meeting that spawned the State Conference of Charities and Correction, a permanent organization she hoped would muster support for social welfare.

Barnard's organizational effort no doubt contributed to the successful ensuing

¹³Ibid., 21-23.

legislative session which produced child labor and compulsory attendance laws that significantly increased school enrollment.¹⁴ With legislation signed into law following the 1908 legislative session, Barnard traveled to the inaugural meeting of the Southern Convention of Uniform Child Labor Laws being held in New Orleans. The conference sought to abolish child labor by authoring model uniform child labor laws southern state legislatures could adapt to their respective political contexts. Specifically, the conference advocated the minimum working age be raised to fourteen and the work week limited to six nine-hour days. Barnard was elected vice-president of the organization and confronted social ills as regional, south-wide issues that demanded regional, south-wide solutions. But Barnard also thought more comprehensively. Why stop with a conference of 800 souls in New Orleans convening to address child labor? She envisioned a southern conference that would address, and seek solutions to, the panoply of southern social ills. On a visit to Nashville sometime in 1911, Barnard mentioned her idea to the state's governor, Ben W. Hooper.¹⁵

The day he received Kate Barnard's letter, Hooper found himself in a precarious political position. He presided over an uneasy fusionist coalition in danger of collapse, and Luke Lea, the fusionist U.S. senator and owner of the Nashville *Tennessean and American*, was again attempting to unify the two Democratic factions and produce a consensus gubernatorial candidate who would undoubtedly oust Hooper. Hooper also

¹⁴Ibid., 93-97.

¹⁵Alexander J. McKelway, "The Southern Sociological Congress," *The Survey* 28 (June 1, 1912: 359; Musslewhite and Crawford, *One Woman's Political Journey*, 97-98; Kate Barnard to Ben W. Hooper, 9 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers.

faced a challenge from another flank. The anti-Newell Sanders faction of the Tennessee Republican party exploited the political rivalry between President Taft and Teddy Roosevelt and planned to run a non-reformist Republican gubernatorial candidate cloaked in the banner of the Progressive party. Meanwhile, to maintain his governing majority in the General Assembly, Hooper was required to ally with Mayor E. H. Crump of Memphis, the very type of anti-prohibitionist machine politician the governor detested. Still, Hooper's prohibitionist and moral reform allies were energized and eager to act.¹⁶

On December 19, 1911, the same day he informed Barnard that he would "communicate with her further" after consulting with certain individuals in Nashville, Hooper wrote the Industrial Bureau of Nashville outlining Barnard's requests for a "Southern Conference." He insisted there was "no question but that such a Conference would result in great benefit to the South, as the consideration of social problems from a strongly Southern stand-point has been somewhat neglected, and the Southern States, almost without exception, are not abreast of the times in the matter of corrections and charities." Hooper appealed to the Industrial Bureau with the understanding that it was responsible for "induc[ing] the holding of conventions" in Nashville. Hooper asked the Bureau for "practical advice as to the calling of such a conference, and to learn in what way [the] Bureau would feel disposed to co-operate in meeting the preliminary expenses

¹⁶Isaac, "The Problem of a Republican Governor in a Southern State, 229-230; Isaac, *Prohibition And Politics*, 197-203; Stockard, "The Election and First Administration of Ben W. Hooper as Governor of Tennessee," 51-57.

of same”¹⁷

Whitefoord R. Cole – President of the Napier Iron Works, member of the Industrial Bureau, Vanderbilt University trustee, and future president of L&N Railroad -- soon responded to Governor Hooper’s inquiry with a list of ten individuals interested in attending “the proposed Sociological Convention.” Cole’s list reflected the religious predisposition of the Industrial Board in general, Cole in particular, and the social welfare community in Nashville overall. The religiosity of the list also foreshadowed the eventual social gospel leanings of the sociological convention in its final form as the Southern Sociological Congress. Four of the ten individuals recommended were ministers with an interest in social welfare causes.

A number of nominees were affiliated with either the Methodist Training School or American Interchurch College or both. These schools, created to train “Christian Workers” for domestic urban and foreign mission fields, were well represented within the ranks of SSC leadership. Cole selected Mr. E. E. Craig, professor of sociology at the Methodist Training School for Christian Workers; Reverend James E. McCulloch, superintendent of the Methodist Training School and secretary of the American Interchurch College; Reverend Arch M. Trawick, professor of sociology and religious pedagogy at the Methodist Training School; and John H. Dewitt, secretary for both the Methodist Training School executive board and American Interchurch College executive board. In addition to the title of “reverend” or “rabbi,” many of the ministers listed were

¹⁷Ben W. Hooper to Industrial Bureau, 9 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers; Kate Barnard to Ben W. Hooper, 9 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers.

also active in various charities and social welfare agencies: Rabbi I. Lewinthal was a member of the board of state charities; Arch M. Trawick was a student secretary for the YMCA; and Reverend Mercer P. Logan of Saint Ann's Episcopal was an advocate for the juvenile courts system.¹⁸ Beyond clergy representatives, the remaining persons on the list represented an array of interests: Mr. J. D. Strain served as secretary of the Anti-Tuberculosis League; Mr. W. C. Kilvington worked as superintendent of the Tennessee Industrial School; Mr. John H. DeWitt administered the Tennessee State Reformatory, was active in the Anti-Saloon movement, and eventually chaired the Davidson County Charities Commission; Professor G. W. Dyer taught political economy and sociology at Vanderbilt University and served as a leader of the Independent Democrats. Cole also recommended two women: Fannie Battle, Secretary of United Charities in Nashville, and Mrs. S. S. Crockett, secretary of the social service committee for the Federation of Women's Clubs. The list proved important to Hooper and the future SSC and also demonstrated the influence of Whitefoord R. Cole in the initial stages of the organization. DeWitt, Logan, Dyer, McCulloch, Strain, and Crockett would comprise

¹⁸Whitefoord R. Cole to Ben W. Hooper, 27 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 15 January 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch, *The Methodist Training School for Christian Workers: Session, September 10, 1908 to June 9, 1909* (Nashville: The Methodist Training School, 1909), 5, 7-16; Pamphlet, *The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers*, 3, Chancellor's Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Special Collections and University Archives, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University; Vanderbilt Directory, Whitefoord R. Cole Alumni File, Special Collections and University Archives, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University; Obituary, "Vanderbilt Pays Tribute to Cole," Whitefoord Cole Alumni File, Vanderbilt.

fifty percent of the SSC's "Preliminary Executive Committee" while Rabbi Dr. I. Lewinthal and Fannie Battle would serve on the organization's advisory committee. Cole also eventually served on the preliminary executive committee.¹⁹ With list in hand, Governor Hooper began making phone calls. By January 12, 1912, he had conferred with Cole's appointees and began assembling the preliminary executive and advisory committees. By the end of January the preliminary executive committee had appointed committees on finance, publicity, entertainment, transportation, and general arrangements and elected officers. John H. DeWitt would serve as chairman, Gus W. Dyer would fill the vice-chairman position, Whitefoord R. Cole would administer finances as treasurer, and Governor Ben W. Hooper would serve as president. In the capacity of executive secretary, James E. McCulloch would oversee the daily operations of the newly named Southern Sociological Congress. He would make an indelible mark in this role.²⁰

¹⁹James E. McCulloch, ed., *The Call of the New South: Addresses Delivered at the Southern Sociological Congress, Nashville, Tennessee, May 7 to 10, 1912* (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1912), 358. Though Hooper's correspondence refers to the "executive committee" of the SSC, I have inserted McCulloch's term, "preliminary executive committee," in order to avoid confusion with the permanent executive committee established at the Nashville gathering in May, 1912.

²⁰Ben W. Hooper to Mrs. John Hill, 12 January 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Bishop Byrns, 12 January 1912, Hooper Papers; Hooper to John A. Pitts, 13 December 1911, Hooper Papers; John H. DeWitt and J. E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 30 January 1912, Hooper Papers; SSC Executive Committee Minutes, 22 January 1912, Southern Sociological Congress File, Hooper Papers; McCulloch, *The Call of the New South*, 358; Pamphlet, *The American Interchurch College*, 4-6, Chancellor's Office Records, McCulloch, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt; Pamphlet, *The American Interchurch College: A Historic Statement*, 1-3, Chancellor's Office Records, McCulloch, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt.

While serving as secretary of the initial executive committee of the SSC, Reverend James Edward McCulloch influenced the eventual composition and character of the organization more than any other individual. A churchman who cut his teeth in the pastorate before demonstrating his passion for home missions, McCulloch was born in Virginia in 1873, attended Allegheny Institute at Roanoke, was licensed to preach in 1891, and graduated “as class orator” from Randolph-Macon College in 1898. The same year, he was ordained into the Virginia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He served a series of circuits for three years in Virginia before accepting employment from the General Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as young peoples’ secretary. This job necessitated his transfer to Nashville where he entered Vanderbilt Divinity School and received his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1901. Shortly after graduation, he accepted the position of secretary for the Student Volunteer Movement, a post he held until 1903. In 1905, just prior to his inaugural year as president of the Methodist Training School, James E. McCulloch published his first theological work, *The Open Church for the Unchurched*. More than any biographical brief or subsequent publications, McCulloch’s book revealed how the social gospel informed his concern for the “least of these” in general and his support for the settlement house movement in particular.²¹

²¹Thomas Ivey, ed., “James Edward McCulloch” in *Southern Methodist Handbook for 1912*, (Nashville: M.E. Church, South Publishing, 1912), 52-54 ; Vanderbilt Directory, James E. McCulloch Alumni File, Vanderbilt.

James E. McCulloch's tome clearly outlined his brand of social gospel theology.²² It examined the Wesleyan Forward Movement's urban evangelization of London in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in general and focused on the workings of four missions spawned by the movement – the West London Mission, the East London Mission, the South London Mission, and the Leysian Christian Settlement – in particular. Suggesting ways in which the British movement could be applied to the American socio-religious context, McCulloch challenged American congregations to transform into open churches, “to become the centre and source of all beneficent and philanthropic effort, and to take the leading part in every movement which has for its end the alleviation of human suffering, the elevation of man, and the betterment of the world.” The mission of the church “is not simply to ‘save souls,’” asserted McCulloch, “but to save men, women, and children – body, intellect and soul. The first aim of the church should not be to prepare ‘souls for heaven,’ but to prepare people for citizenship in the kingdom of God here on earth.” McCulloch's evangelical soteriology involved more than just individual salvation: “Not only must the church save the individual, but also society and all of society for all of time . . . The only way to save society is to save the individuals that make up society. The only power that can save the individual is the life of Christ formed

²²James E. McCulloch, *The Mastery of Love: A Narrative of Settlement Life* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), 5-6; McCulloch's second work was a “narrative” that examined the development of the “Community House” settlement in Hell's Acre, a Nashville slum. The work was essentially a conversion narrative that also served as a study of societal conditions in the urban South. Fairly general in its treatment of religious themes, McCulloch did reveal some of his basic theological underpinnings as he attempted to gain sympathy for the unfortunate classes while asserting “the power and quality of one's ruling love.” Still, McCulloch's more revelatory and relevant theological contribution was *The Open Church for the Unchurched*.

within.”

In true social gospel fashion, McCulloch insisted the salvation of society hinged upon the salvation of the cities: “The Christ intends to make this world over into the kingdom of God He has been lifted to the martyr’s cross and to the throne in the heavens and that is the signal for every disciple to do his utmost to establish His kingdom of brotherhood in the world. The most strategic points in the world’s conquest now are the cities—the American cities.” More specifically, McCulloch was concerned with the salvation of the slum: “In America, especially in the South, the most important work for the church is not to redeem the slum, but to prevent it.” Like many of his contemporaries, McCulloch identified three “growing streams” or “tendencies” that contributed to proliferation of slums: rural to urban migration, “alien” immigration, and “segregation of the classes in the city.” Cities were becoming overcrowded with country dwellers unfamiliar with and subject to urban temptations; foreigners who were “miserably poor, utterly illiterate . . . and stealthy and determined anarchists.” In southern cities, moreover, where slums were beginning to appear, the “negro slum . . . a peril to the country and a fetid leprosy that threatens the physical, moral, and spiritual health of the nation,” was becoming the dominant form. McCulloch offered ways to address the dire situation.

Referring to the examples provided by Washington Gladden, Graham Taylor, and Dr. Ira Landrith of Nashville, McCulloch reminded church leaders that truly loving the working classes meant living and working with them in closer physical and spiritual proximity, “rebuk[ing] wickedness in high places,” and backing reforms that workers

support. “Rich churches” should encourage some of their wealthier members to build their homes among the poor. Furthermore, existing city missions should “be lifted out of their present discredited position and made first class institutions in every respect.”

Assigning the most qualified, well-trained church leaders as superintendents over city missions would go a long way toward placing those missions on solid footing and would simultaneously foster respect for such institutions. Moreover, any missionary associated with city missions should receive specialized training. With a tinge of nativism in his writing, McCulloch insisted the church should equip herself “to assimilate and Christianize this growing stream of immigration.” Failure to do so would “simply daze and paralyze the church, for which she will not recover for a century.” McCulloch also found hope in his own Wesleyan tradition where lay persons, especially women, were fully utilized. He was sure they could direct social and educational work. Lay persons were more practical and understood the real needs of people better than clergy.

McCulloch’s kingdom-focused theology and his emphasis on lay leadership became the basis of the work conducted by the Methodist Training School and the American Interchurch College.²³

In 1903, McCulloch became Young Peoples Missionary Secretary of a nascent training school for “Christian Workers” named the Methodist Training School, an institution under the auspices of the General Board of Missions of the Methodist

²³James E. McCulloch, *The Open Church For the Unchurched: or How to Reach the Masses*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company: 1905), 170, 174, 178-179, 185-191, 194-200, 206.

Episcopal Church, South. In 1906, McCulloch assumed the presidency of the Methodist Training School, and by 1911 he was general secretary of the American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers. The American Interchurch College's Board included: James H. Kirkland, chancellor of Vanderbilt University; Ira Landrith, president of Ward Belmont College in Nashville; and Josiah Strong, famous churchman and author of *Our Country*. Little wonder that the interfaith institution was well represented within the administrative ranks of the SSC with such a list of distinguished members.²⁴

Originally a "Midwinter Institute" for home and foreign missionaries, the Methodist Training School was granted permanent status as a connectional institution at the 1906 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The training school under the authority of the Board of Missions was also affiliated with the Biblical Department of Vanderbilt University. The school existed to train mission workers for both the home and foreign fields. The "scope" of the Methodist Training School was threefold: "To conduct a Training School for Christian Workers of both sexes; To hold a Midwinter Bible and Missionary Institute for the benefit of preachers and missionary workers who are actively engaged in Christian service . . . ; To carry on a Bureau of Missions for the purpose of collecting and disseminating information on school and religious subjects." More specifically, the Methodist Training School's course of study was designed to train foreign missionaries, city missionaries, deaconesses, pastors' assistants, Bible teachers, Sunday school leaders, and evangelistic workers. In hope of

²⁴Ivey, ed., "James Edward McCulloch" in *Southern Methodist Handbook*, 52-54 ; Vanderbilt Directory, James E. McCulloch Alumni File, Vanderbilt.

achieving such ends, the school offered courses on “The English Bible,” “Sociology and Church Methods,” “Church History and Missions,” “Christian Doctrine,” “Applied Methods in City Missions and Social Service,” “Religious Pedagogy,” “Psychology,” “Language Study,” “Vocal Expression,” “Music,” “Nurse Training,” “Manual Training,” and “Household Economics.” The training school was successful in its endeavors but never fully realized the social gospel theology and ecumenism embodied in McCulloch’s writings. Still, the experience helped him identify a much needed ministry where both could be fully expressed. Unlike the Methodist Training School, this new American Interchurch College would address the “Negro question.” The presence of a social gospel theology infused with ecumenical vision and concern for racial amelioration is significant considering the influence that institution had over the SSC.²⁵

On November 7, 1909, James E. McCulloch invited Chancellor James H. Kirkland of Vanderbilt University, Dr. Allen G. Hall (Dean of Vanderbilt University Law School), Dr. J. D. Blanton and President Ira Landrith, both of Belmont College, and

²⁵McCulloch resigned his position at the Methodist Training School in 1911. By then the school occupied seven buildings, had graduated 62 of 314 students enrolled during its existence, had published 115,000 booklets, and was still sponsoring a Midwinter Bible Missionary Conference every year. McCulloch left the school financially sound with total assets of \$150,250 and liabilities of only \$32,247. Vanderbilt University planned to affiliate with the Training School in 1914. That same year, however, Vanderbilt broke ties with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Training School was discontinued after the split in 1915; James E. McCulloch, *The Methodist Training School for Christian Workers: Session, September 10, 1908 to June 9, 1909* (Nashville: The Methodist Training School, 1909), 7-16; “For Religious and Social Work,” *Christian Advocate*, Nashville, 7 April 1911, p. 423; “The Methodist Training School,” *Christian Advocate*, Nashville, 9 June 1911, p. 708; “The Methodist Training School,” *Christian Advocate*, Nashville, 23 June 1911, p. 797; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 10.

John H. DeWitt of the Methodist Training School's executive board to meet with the intention of considering a "Plan for Establishing an Interchurch School for Christian Workers." McCulloch observed that the peculiar social ills of the South, the unique character of the population, the need for trained workers and suitable schools to educate them, and simultaneous denominational efforts to establish training schools justified the initiation of an ecumenical effort culminating in "a great interchurch institution, sufficiently broad in its scope to serve all denominations."

McCulloch viewed the South as being in the midst of a crisis "industrially, educationally, morally, and religiously," and believed American denominations had failed to embrace the growing social service movement that was a response to the societal crisis. As a result, para-church organizations had taken the lead; the movement for social service had grown more rapidly out of the church than in it. The YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, and Social Settlement movements were beginning to transform the ideals of religious service while, at the same time, fifty-eight leading theological schools had reported a drop in attendance of 18 percent over the past twelve years, a period during which the twenty-six leading Protestant denominations in the U.S. had increased membership by twenty-five percent. Possibly, McCulloch's "Interchurch School" would fill the growing void with trained social and religious workers drawn mostly from lay ranks. Trained Christian leaders were necessary to reinforce the Protestant ministry. The American Interchurch College would serve as the ecumenical center, physically and intellectually, coordinating the activities and training efforts of the

various denominational schools in Nashville and throughout the South.²⁶

McCulloch, in the tradition of the ecumenical church union movement, wanted to consolidate similar training efforts undertaken by Southern Baptists, Southern Presbyterians, and Southern Methodists under the auspices of one umbrella institution, thereby eliminating redundancy. The school would employ professors of biblical literature and interpretation, religious education, sociology, psychology, missions, comparative religion, languages, music, “manual arts,” as well as teachers of “household economics.” The College would train men as Bible teachers, foreign missionaries, Institutional Church leaders, directors of social settlements, of reformatories, and of charity organizations, secretaries of the Young Men’s Christian Association, evangelists, and others. It would also prepare women as Bible teachers, foreign missionaries, deaconesses, settlement workers, pastors’ assistants, kindergarten teachers, Church musicians, trained nurses, secretaries of the Young Women’s Christian Association, and directors of institutional life in orphanages, prisons, hospitals, and schools.²⁷

²⁶With “Unity for Efficiency” as their mantra, the supporters of the American Interchurch College envisioned a campus where the College proper would provide a physical plant that would consist of a library, administration buildings, classrooms, auditorium, gymnasium, and an educational museum. The various outlying denominational buildings would offer specific courses in denominational doctrine and polity and would house the students. Both schools were to be closely affiliated with Vanderbilt University and George Peabody College for Teachers. Pamphlet, The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers, 4-6, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt; Pamphlet, The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers: A Historic Statement, 1-3, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt.

²⁷ Pamphlet, The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers: A Historic Statement, 1, 6-7, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E.

McCulloch's college would be an ecumenical effort undergirded by a social, kingdom-focused, theology. Coordination of denominational efforts and a comprehensive curriculum would make the college "a pioneer in socializing and federating the churches." The pioneering ecumenism would naturally result in improving the methods of religious and social workers. Of course, all the College's efforts would strengthen the kingdom on earth while hastening Christ's millennial kingdom yet to come. McCulloch insisted the College would consequently "promote the spirit of fraternity among all Protestant workers by such a sympathetic fellowship and united effort that Christianity may through the denominations deliver itself on the world with the least waste of energy from friction and rivalry and be enabled to render the largest service to the nation and to the kingdom of God." Moreover, the College, serving as a concrete object lesson of federation, would reveal the true nature of the kingdom when it ultimately assisted in bringing all Christians "to realize their essential oneness in the kingdom of God."²⁸

Although he envisioned an ecumenical vanguard of trained social service workers steeped in the social gospel and prepared to conquer the peculiar conditions besetting the South, McCulloch's marching orders often revealed his paternalistic, even nativistic,

McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt; Pamphlet, The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers, 4-5, Chancellor's Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt;

²⁸Pamphlet, The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers: A Historic Statement, 6-8, Chancellor's Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt.

views. He imagined students engaging in home mission tasks such as the “moral training” of the Appalachian mountaineers who had recently emigrated to Nashville and interacting with and protecting African Americans and working children exploited because of inadequate labor laws and in need of compulsory education legislation. Moreover, observed the paternalistic McCulloch, an increasing number of illiterate country folk were flocking to industrial urban centers which, in close proximity to other ethnic groups, made these rural transplants an “extremely inflammable element.” McCulloch’s views also undergirded his response to such perceived ills. He proposed training the large and homogeneous Anglo-Saxon population of the South, which he considered inherently religious, to become “the nation’s most valuable asset in the moral development of America.” McCulloch, wished to mobilize “a vast army of sane, sympathetic and efficient religious workers” who would become “the vitalizing and energizing blood of the church organism” toward the goal of purifying and assimilating “all elements of society into helpful and loyal American citizenship.” The proposed American Interchurch College would function as the core training component of McCulloch’s ecumenical social movement.²⁹

An interesting component of the American Interchurch School plan was the “Colored Training School”(later called the “Nashville Institute for the Training of Negro Christian Workers”). Envisioned as existing in close proximity to the campus of the American Interchurch College, the Colored Training School was charged to “train both

²⁹Pamphlet, The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers: A Historic Statement, 4-5, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt.

men and women as specialists in moral, social, and religious leadership among the colored people.” McCulloch insisted that the lack of such leadership made it “practically impossible now to conduct social service institutions among the colored people of the South,” and a training school for African-American Christian workers was essential and urgent. The work done by seminaries for black ministers needed to be augmented and such training should be conducted in the South where students could be “more sympathetically and efficiently trained in their own Southern environment,” be in daily contact with other blacks, and prepared to tackle needs peculiar to Southern conditions.³⁰

Although his paternalism was again apparent in his discussions of the Colored Training School, McCulloch went to great lengths to justify his concerns, even linking the existence of African Americans to the endurance of whites and the Christian Church. He insisted that southern white people were responsible for training African Americans. McCulloch perceived the situation as a matter of life and death. He pointed out that the death rate among African Americans at the time was an average of 266,400 deaths for every nine million African Americans compared to a death rate of 160,200 for every nine million white Americans. He criticized the South for the lack of funding that no doubt disabled the black churches from saving themselves. White churches must join with black churches to solve the problem: “If the Christian religion cannot establish and maintain the laws of righteousness and justice between the two races in America, it

³⁰Pamphlet, National Life Insurance: Or Why the Nashville Institute for the Training of Negro Christian Workers in Necessary, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt.

certainly can never hope to build up to a universal brotherhood of peace and good will among the nations of the earth. SAVE THE NEGRO TO SAVE THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA.”

McCulloch’s social gospel-inspired ecumenism placed the social ills associated with African Americans at the heart of his reform effort. Indeed, the justification for a Christian Church hinged on whether the various white denominations could come together to save their black brothers. Unlike the Methodist Training School, the American Interchurch College would be an ecumenical effort, paternalistic yet punctuated by a social gospel ethos, with the goal of bringing white racial liberals and black accommodationists together in order to address the social ills that beset the African American community.³¹

McCulloch’s desire to “establish and maintain the laws of righteousness and justice between the two races in America” was further embodied in the impressive assemblage of white and black social welfare progressives who comprised the executive board of the Colored Training School. Most of these white members were noted racial liberals who optimistically thought blacks could learn and absorb the best qualities of a supposedly superior white civilization and consequently reach a relatively high place in society.³² Paternalistic, racial liberals called for the “better elements of the white race”

³¹Ibid.

³²Among their ranks were John D. Blanton, President of the College Board of Directors for the Interchurch College, who served as President of the Colored Training School Executive Board; the aforementioned John H. Dewitt, who functioned as recording secretary for both the College and Training School; the ubiquitous James E. McCulloch; George A Gates, President of Fisk University in Nashville; Wilbur Thirkield,

to assist in elevating the Negro above their current lowly station. Such opinions were not only rooted in a romanticized, paternalistic view of mid-nineteenth century slavery as a positive force enabling the “civilizing and Christianizing” of African Americans, they also stemmed from an equally high regard for Reconstruction because of the rapid social advancements made by African Americans under the direction of northern missionaries.³³

Yet, unlike their slave holding forebears and many of the southbound Yankee

President of Howard University in Washington D.C. and future bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church (North); James H. Dillard of New Orleans, President of the Jeanes Board and General Secretary of the Slater Board; Miss Belle H. Bennett of Richmond, Kentucky, President Woman’s Missionary Council, Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and George Whipple Hubbard, founder and first president of Meharry Medical College in Nashville. Pamphlet, *The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers: A Historic Statement*, 3, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt; Reavis L. Mitchell, “George Whipple Hubbard,” in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed., Caroll Van West (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 446-447.

³³Williamson defines and utilizes three main “mentalities” to explain southern white thinking on race. “Liberalism” was the most optimistic of the three, considered “Negroes” capable of absorbing white culture, “refused to close them out brusquely and across the board somewhere far below the white man,” and could imagine “with relative equanimity . . . an eventual parity of Negroes with whites in the enjoyment of many –but never all–white cultural ideas.” “Conservatism” was more pessimistic, assumed blacks were inferior, and “sought to save him by defining and fixing his place in American society.” “Radicalism,” the most pessimistic mentality, considered “Negroes” as “retrogressing rapidly toward his natural state of savagery and bestiality,” and was certain that African Americans would eventually become extinct in the American context. William A. Link divides Williamson’s racial liberals into pre-First World War “moderate paternalists” as exemplified by the SSC and post-First World War “liberal interracialists” as exemplified by the Commission of Interracial Cooperation(CIC) I will argue that Link’s two groups represent one consistent stream. In fact, most of the prominent leaders of the CIC had been SSC members. I will therefore use “interracialist” and “racial liberal” interchangeably. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 4-7, 85-88, 484-486; William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 240-267.

proselytizers, racial liberals were not so concerned with social control as with the amelioration of the social conditions under which blacks suffered. Moreover, for most racial liberals, the call for amelioration via interracial cooperation in no way threatened the status quo of social segregation.³⁴

The African American members of the Colored Training School's Executive Board were well known and revered followers of Booker T. Washington (who was himself a member of the board) and his relatively accommodative strategy.³⁵

³⁴The white racial liberals of the American Interchurch College Executive Board fit squarely into Grantham's social justice camp. The racial liberals were concerned with rural virtues and formed by their concept of limited "Herrenvolk democracy" – democracy for whites only. These southern progressives, therefore, generally accepted racial segregation and black disfranchisement. Regarding the "Negro question," amelioration manifested itself as interracial accommodation – the joint effort of southern blacks and whites to ease the unjust burden that was borne by African Americans. Such work allowed, indeed required, physical integration without mandating social integration. Included under this rubric were also black progressives – for example, the African American members of the American Interchurch College Executive Board -- who constructed civic organization, transportation companies, boards of trade, banks, and public welfare leagues despite, and as a result of, segregation. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xix-xxii, 246-261, 374-385.

³⁵The African American members of the Colored Training School Executive Board were: Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute; James C. Napier of Nashville, noted municipal reformer, first African American to preside over the Nashville City Council, Register of the United States Treasury from 1911 to 1913, and President of the National Negro Business League; Richard Henry Boyd of Nashville, co-founder and secretary of the National Baptist Convention; Charles T. Walker of Nashville, former Treasurer of the National Baptist Convention and former Vice President of the International Sunday School Convention; George C. Hall of Chicago, first president of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. By 1912, the Colored Training School had changed its name to the "Nashville Institute for the Training of Negro Christian Workers" and added three white members to the board: J.D. Blanton, eventual President of Ward Belmont College; J.W. Johnson of Nashville; and Willis D. Weatherford of Nashville, International YMCA student secretary and noted interracialist. Two African Americans were also added: Bishop C.H. Phillips, noted Colored Methodist Episcopal prohibitionist and ecumenical churchman; and Bishop Evans Tyree of the

Washington, optimistic in his view of southern white society, challenged blacks to work toward achieving a level of “nonaggressive” and noncompetitive equality in the economic and educational realms – areas where advancements would not threaten most whites. In exchange for qualified equality in the educational and economic realm, Washington and his followers sacrificed demands for integration in public places, that is social integration, and universal male suffrage – endeavors that induced fear and anxiety among whites. In this way, the optimistic Washington was also a realist thoroughly grounded in the actualities of southern white society. Still, Washington’s accommodationist aspirations melded nicely with white liberal views of race. Both camps agreed to aspire for amelioration via interracial cooperation without threatening

African Methodist Episcopal Church. Bobby L. Lovett and Linda T. Wynn, “James C. Napier” in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed., Caroll Van West (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, Rutledge Hill Press: 1998), 666-667; Pere Magness, “Richard Henry Boyd” in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed., Caroll Van West (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, Rutledge Hill Press: 1998), 82-83; Silas Xavier Floyd, *Life of Charles T. Walker (“The Black Spurgeon”)*, *Pastor Mount Olivet Baptist Church, New York City* (Nashville: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1902); Rayford W. Logan, “Phylon Profile VI: Carter G. Woodson,” *Phylon (1940-1956)*, 6, no.4 (4th Quarter, 1945), 315; Sherman Savage, “Twenty Years of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 20, no. 4 (October 1935), 379; Horace Talbert, “Bishop Evans Tyree,” in *The Sons of Allen: Together with a Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Wilberforce University Wilberforce, Ohio* (Xenia, Ohio: The Aldine Press, 1906), 234-235; C. H. Phillips, *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America: Comprising Its Organization, Subsequent Development and Present Status*, 3d ed. (Jackson, Tennessee: Publishing House C.M.E. Church, 1925), 11; Wilma Dykeman, *Prophet of Plenty: The First Ninety Years of W. D. Weatherford* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1966), 72-78, 102; Pamphlet, The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers, 3, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt; Pamphlet, National Life Insurance, Chancellor’s Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt.

the status quo of social segregation.³⁶

Steeped in social gospel theology and inspired by the ecumenical spirit of the times, the American Interchurch College initiated a conversation between leading white racial liberals and black accommodationists that focused on how best to attack societal ills in general and those of the African American community in particular. Both groups' acceptance of social segregation made discussions possible. With the most crucial societal racial norm secured, dialogue participants felt free to challenge other racial injustices. Conversations, paternalistic yet pertinent, would continue in the meetings of the standing committee on "Negro Problems," chaired by James Hardy Dillard and comprising five Colored Training School executive board members, at the inaugural gathering of the SSC.³⁷ Moreover, with James E. McCulloch as executive secretary of

³⁶The tenets of "Accommodationism" are summed up in Booker T. Washington's speech at the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition on September 18, 1895. Washington challenged blacks and whites to "put down their buckets" where they were. Black folk would accept social segregation and, in exchange, be allowed to strive for commercial success. White folk, by allowing blacks commercial opportunities, would garner the loyalty of their black employees who would forego "strikes and labour wars." Washington called for a spirit of cooperation between whites and blacks and affirmed social segregation when, holding up his right hand, he stated: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Thus was born the "Atlanta Compromise" that defined the core racial beliefs of Washingtonian accommodationism. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 70-78; Louis R. Harlan, Stuart B. Kaufman and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 3: 1889-1895* (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 584-585; Robert J. Norrell, *Up From History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard Press, 2009), 1-445.

³⁷The committee was chaired by James Hardy Dillard and listed as members Belle H. Bennett, Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield, Dr. George A. Gates, Dr. George Whipple Hubbard, and Dr. Willis D. Weatherford of the Colored Training School Executive Board. It is interesting to note that Governor Hooper said very little regarding matters of ethnicity. Hooper was a member of the Fisk University Board of Trustees, had solicited

the SSC, a position that gave him “full authority to represent [the executive committee of the SSC] in all matters pertaining [sic] to programme and other arrangements” and a certain amount of influence over the naming of delegates, the influence of the social gospel over the inaugural proceedings of the SSC was assured. McCulloch’s kingdom-centered theology was further bolstered by the work of several national and local social welfare organizations in Nashville while the Congress was being formed.³⁸

While the influence of some organizations such as the Methodist Training School and American Interchurch College on the SSC’s inaugural meeting is apparent, determining exactly how influential others were is difficult. Included among Hooper’s correspondence are invitations to representatives of several national social welfare entities with a variety of interests. Social gospel advocate Graham Taylor observed that the Southern Sociological Congress was one of four organizations that sparked an “awakening of southern people to their social obligations and opportunities” during the Spring of 1912. The Southern Education Board, the Southern Commercial Congress, and

funds for that institution, and was opposed to lynching. In the spring of 1912, however, when James E. Shepard, President of the National Religious Training School in Durham, and J. C. Masee, Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Chattanooga, asked the governor to “give a place on your program to the discussion of the sociological conditions of the Negroes by the Negroes themselves,” Hooper was conspicuously silent on the matter. James E. McCulloch and the Executive Board members of the Colored Training School of the American Interchurch College were the lead agents who moved race to the fore of the SSC’s agenda. McCulloch, *The Call of the New South*, 361; John Edward McNeal, “James Hardy Dillard: Southern Humanitarian.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1970), 170-171; Ben W. Hooper to Russell Sage, 15 April 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. Shepard to Ben W. Hooper, 5 March 1912, Hooper Papers; J. C. Masee to Ben W. Hooper, 20 March 1912, Hooper Papers.

³⁸Ben W. Hooper to Governors W. W. Kitchin, William Hodges Mann, Emmett O’Neal, James B. McCreary, 7 February 1912, Hooper Papers.

the annual Vanderbilt Biblical Institute rounded out Taylor's list. All three organizations were indigenous to, and had members throughout, the South.

Formed in 1901 as the executive board to the Conference for Education in the South, the Southern Education Board (SEB) organized the annual meeting of the Conference each spring. The meeting usually initiated an educational campaign that encouraged increased public spending on universal education in the host southern state. The South's leading education advocates and ordinary teachers comprised the bulk of the attendees sometimes numbering over a thousand. According to Taylor, the SEB's 1912 meeting in Nashville "gave unusual emphasis to industrial conditions, agricultural interests, and the problem of child labor" – subjects that would be addressed by the SSC.³⁹

The Commercial Congress, which met on the heels of the Education Board meeting -- convening on April 8, 1912, and adjourning two days later – discussed factory conditions, wages, hours of labor, child labor and housing, the "race problem," and "the rural schoolhouse and the country church." Replying to a northern speaker's surprise about religion's role in discussions concerning commercial, educational, and social interests throughout the meeting of the Commercial Congress, one delegate remarked that those familiar with the South had grown used to such "religious jostling."

Such religious jostling was undoubtedly present at the Vanderbilt Biblical

³⁹Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 246-256; Virginius Dabney, *Liberalism in the South* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1932), 333-334; Charles William Dabney, *Universal Education in the South, vol. 2* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1936), 3-10, 54-73; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 1-2.

Institute's gathering in June, given the explicitly religious nature of that organization. Diverging from previous annual meetings, however, the hundreds of ministers gathered from "twelve or more southern states" discussed the "social, civic, and industrial applications of religion." Graham Taylor commented on the consistency with which all of the conventions, including the inaugural meeting of the SSC, addressed social obligations and faced "the critical questions relating to the Negro, to ecclesiastical sectarianism, and to the need and opportunity for the united work of the churches for their respective communities."⁴⁰

Indeed, a social gospel spirit seemed to course through all of the gatherings in Nashville during the spring of 1912. While intellectual cross pollination undoubtedly occurred between the various delegations, one wonders about the extent of such interaction. Because the SSC convened in early May, Secretary McCulloch was concerned about losing delegates to the Southern Commercial Congress and SEB conferences. He felt the "majority of our delegates will have to be brought to a decision before the close of [March]. Otherwise, delegates who would come here will attend the Southern Educational Conference or the Southern Commercial Congress." McCulloch assumed that "no delegate will likely attend more than one Convention here within 30 days. Consequently, we must do our utmost during the next three or four weeks to enlist delegates." Based on his experience with such meetings, McCulloch anticipated that the various delegations would exhibit little redundancy. McCulloch hypothesized, if

⁴⁰Graham Taylor, "The Southern Social Awakening," *The Survey*, 28 (September 14, 1912), 744; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 1-2.

appointed to more than one meeting, the typical delegate would only attend one convention due to time and financial constraints.

McCulloch's suppositions proved true at least among the leadership of the Commercial Congress. Oscar Dowling, president of the Louisiana State Board of Health and member of the SSC's standing committee on "Public Health," was the only member of the Southern Commercial Congress leadership listed among the leadership of the SSC, and none of the Commercial Congress leadership is found in the active or sustaining membership rolls of the SSC. At the leadership levels, the influence of the Commercial Congress on the SSC appears to have been limited.⁴¹

The same cannot be said of the leadership comprising the Southern Education Board. Several SEB members were active in the SSC. They were either present at the SSC's Nashville gathering or were listed on the SSC's membership rolls. Robert C. Ogden – department store entrepreneur, president of the board of trustees at Hampton Institute, president of the board of directors of Union Theological Seminary in New York, and initial organizer of the SEB – was listed as a "sustaining member" of the SSC in 1912. James Hardy Dillard of New Orleans – president of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund Board, general secretary of the Slater Board, vice president of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, dean of Tulane University, and SEB member – chaired the standing committee on Negro problems at the SSC's Nashville meeting and headed other race-related committees in

⁴¹James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 7 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Louis Spencer Daniel to Ben W. Hooper, 22 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Graham Taylor, "The Southern Social Awakening," *The Survey*, 744; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress, 1-2; McCulloch, *Call of the New South*, 212, 360; "Institute for the Students of the Bible," *Nashville Banner*, 1 December 1911, p 4.

1913, 1914, and 1915. Dr. John M. Glenn— director of the Russell Sage Foundation and SEB member – spoke at the inaugural SSC meeting on the cooperation needed among social agencies. SEB member James H. Kirkland – Vanderbilt University Chancellor – served on the child welfare standing committee in 1912. Dr. Wickliffe Rose – University of Tennessee professor of history and philosophy, trustee of the John F. Slater Fund, president of the General Education Board, general director of the International Health Board, president of the International Health Board, and executive secretary of the SEB from 1909 to 1914 – worked on the executive committee of the SSC in 1912, 1913, and 1914. Hollis B. Frissell – director of Hampton Institute in Virginia and SEB founding member – served on SSC’s standing committee on Negro problems in 1912 and subsequent standing committees dealing with race. Clarence Poe – editor of the *Progressive Farmer* and SEB member – was active on the SSC’s executive committee from 1912 to 1914 and served on the SSC’s Press and Health committee in 1915. S. C. Mitchell – president of the University of South Carolina, social Darwinist, social gospel adherent, and second vice president of the SEB – worked on the “church and social service” committee in 1912 and spoke about the "Challenge of a South for a Better Nation" in 1913. These and several other SEB leaders had a lasting impact on the SSC, and the SSC surely benefitted from members’ leadership skills honed while working for the SEB.⁴²

⁴²Charles William Dabney, *Universal Education in the South*, vol. 2, 19-31, 54-58, 64, 67-70, 84, 227, 265-277, 306-307, 315, 318, 451-455; Michael Dennis, *Lessons in Progress: State Universities and Progressivism in the New South, 1880-1920* (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 2001), 8-9, 15-16, 82, 84, 161-162; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 246-256; James E. McCulloch, *The Call of the New South*, 267, 358, 360-

Considering Graham Taylor's account, the rank and file of the Southern Sociological Congress, the Southern Education Board, the Conference for Education in the South, the Southern Commercial Congress, and the Biblical Institute were possibly all drawn from the same southern educational, charitable, religious, and social service institutions and organizations. If so, racial liberalism and social gospel theology were much more pervasive throughout the South than has been previously reckoned.

The Men and Religion Forward Movement was another organization that

361, 364; James E. McCulloch, ed., *The South Mobilizing for Social Service: Addresses Delivered at the Southern Sociological Congress, Atlanta, Georgia, April 25-29, 1913* (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1913), 43-54, 672, 674; James E. McCulloch, ed., *Battling for Social Betterment: Southern Sociological Congress, Memphis, Tennessee, May 6-10, 1914* (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1914), 195, 197; James E. McCulloch, ed., *The New Chivalry – Health: Southern Sociological Congress, Houston, Texas, May 8-11, 1915* (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1915), 249-254, 530-532; A.P. Bourland to Harry Hodgson, 20 January 1914, Southern Education Board Papers, The Southern Historical Collection, The University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill. "Southern Education Board Papers Inventory," Southern Education Board Papers, Chapel Hill. Other prominent SEB men involved in the SSC were Philander P. Claxton: University of Tennessee professor, federal commissioner of education, and head of the Southern Education Board's Bureau of Investigation and Research. Claxton served on the SSC's "The School and Health" standing committee in 1915. President Samuel P. Brooks of Baylor University was on the executive committee of the Conference for Education in the South and was also selected as president of the SSC in 1915. Professor A.P. Bourland of Nashville University and Peabody Normal School was the last executive secretary of the SEB and participated on the SSC's "Government and Health" committee in 1915. George Foster Peabody, railroad magnate and noted philanthropist, was the initial financier of the SEB. He was listed as a member of the SSC in 1912, 1913, 1914, and 1915 but no evidence indicates he attended any meetings.

The influence of the Southern Education Board was waning by 1912. With the death of Robert C. Ogden in 1913 and the dissolution of the Peabody Fund in 1914, the Southern Education Board began a series of reorganizations and name changes (the Southern Education Association, the Southern Education Council, the Southern Education Society between 1916-1921). The organization disbanded in 1921.

influenced the Southern Sociological Congress. Steered by three social activists – Fred B. Smith, head of the Religious Work Department of the International YMCA and an evangelist since 1888; Charles Stelzle, a former trade-unionist-turned-minister who headed the Presbyterian Church USA’s Department of Church and Labor; and Raymond Robins, former miner on staff at Graham Taylor’s church and university social settlement – the Men and Religion Forward Movement desired to increase male involvement in the Protestant Church. In 1910, Smith began to gather support for a North American campaign and helped form a National Committee of Ninety-Seven who organized crusades in seventy-six major North American cities and in more than one thousand smaller communities between September 24, 1911 and April 28, 1912. The movement preached social service and evangelism, stressing that the kingdom of God would come when “the winning of the individual souls to Christ” was “accompanied by the transformation of human institutions according to the mind of Christ.” The dual message of the Men and Religion Forward Movement was often delivered utilizing “muscular” language that emphasized the manly qualities of church work (the movement’s publications contained titles such as *The Masculine in Religion* [1906], *The Manhood of the Master* [1911], and *The Masculine Power of Christ* [1912]). The campaign was considered an unqualified success by social gospel advocates such as Walter Rauschenbusch and Washington Gladden, but its goal of recruiting three million men and boys was not achieved. In the end 7,580 decisions were made for Christ and several lasting social ministries—interdenominational councils, tenement house commissions, free employment bureaus, social centers, industrial and vocational training schools--

were established to address social ills. Some historians even suggest the campaign motivated Governor Ben W. Hooper to organize the Southern Sociological Congress.⁴³

Although the idea of the Southern Sociological Congress was seemingly inspired more by the suggestions of Kate Barnard than by the Men and Religion Forward Movement, the religious campaign did influence the development of SSC during the winter and spring of 1912. On December 2, 1911, the “Nashville Committee of One Hundred of the Men and Religion Forward Movement” extended a call to ministers and laymen to meet in Nashville for two days starting on Wednesday, December 13, 1911. Following the December revival, the Movement returned and coordinated five weeks of simultaneous revival in Nashville churches with the Ministers’ Alliance beginning on February 25, 1912. The revivals concluded in April when the national Movement ceased its continent-wide campaign. Some of the same individuals planning the inaugural gathering of the SSC also coordinated the February revivals. Whitefoord R. Cole, treasurer of the SSC, served as the chairman of the Committee of One Hundred while George H. Detwiler, chairman of the arrangements committee of the SSC for 1912, headed its executive committee. Cole, of course, had also played a key role in developing the executive and advisory boards for the SSC. Likely, as some historians have suggested without conclusive proof, many of the religious leaders suggested by Cole were also involved with the activities of the Men and Religion Forward Movement.

⁴³“The Problem and the Program,” *The Men and Religion Messages*, vol. 4: *Christian Unity/Missions* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1912), 132; Quoted in Gary Scott Smith, *The Search for Social Salvation: Social Christianity and America, 1880-1925* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2000), 339; *Ibid.*, 336-339, 342; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 2.

Moreover, delegates to the SSC possibly were coming from throughout the South, having been moved to action by the Movement. Still, as with the Southern Commercial Congress, the leadership and rank and file of the SSC, excepting Cole and Detwiler, did not include large numbers of individuals associated with the Men and Religion Forward Movement.⁴⁴

Definitely determining the amount of influence exerted by the Men and Religion Forward Movement on the Southern Sociological Congress is difficult, but strong inferential evidence suggests that the Movement played a role in the SSC's early development. In mid-February, Charles Stelzle of the Movement wrote to Hooper and expressed an interest in the upcoming SSC gathering. Stelzle, along with his "Team No. 1 . . . of the Men and Religion Forward Movement," had spent almost all the winter in the south and had been "brought in contact with many of the social questions that must give us very serious concern." He hoped that the SSC would produce "a constructive program which will be of great value to the southern part of the country." Later in March, Stelzle, in the midst of an eight-day campaign in Chattanooga, enclosed "recommendations for Chattanooga, which may interest you, especially in view of the profound sociological conference in Nashville." Stelzle had been calling attention to the SSC in southern campaign cities and had found Chattanooga's men particularly interested. He was traveling on to Memphis on March 17 for another eight-day campaign

⁴⁴Smith, *The Search for Social Salvation: Social Christianity and America, 1880-1925*, 336-339, 342; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 2; "Men and Religion Campaign to Open," *Nashville Banner*, 1 December 1911, p. 13; "Christian Men Called to Meet," *Nashville Banner*, 2 December 1911, p. 13.

and would advertise the SSC there as well. But despite the success of the Movement in Chattanooga, only two of the 24 leaders suggested by Stelzle were listed among the leadership or membership rolls of the inaugural SSC meeting. Still, the influence of the Movement on the SSC is apparent when one examines Stelzle's enclosed three page list of "Social Service Recommendations" for municipalities, counties, states, social workers, and churches. The SSC would adopt a similar campaign model later in 1915 when engaging in its health campaign.⁴⁵

Organizations inspired by social gospel theology were hardly alone in holding sway over the initial meeting of the Congress. The individual appointments of Secretary McCulloch and Governor Hooper determined the flavor and consistency of the SSC's May meeting in Nashville more than any single organization. An examination of the commissioning of delegates reveals McCulloch's significant influence although Governor Hooper exercised ultimate authority regarding attendees. More often than not, the governor and the secretary coordinated their delegating efforts to produce a Congress that was concerned with issues of social justice and social control.

On February 6, 1912, Ben W. Hooper issued a call to sixteen southern governors announcing the creation of the Southern Sociological Congress "for the study of social civic and economic problems, to be composed of delegates from the sixteen Southern States, to meet in Nashville, Tenn., May 7-10, 1912." Barnard is not mentioned in the call, but is simply referred to as "the Commissioner of Charities and Corrections in a

⁴⁵Charles Stelzle to Ben W. Hooper, 19 February 1912, Hooper Papers; Charles Stelzle to Ben.W. Hooper, 8 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 2-4.

Southern State” who suggested to Hooper “a Southern conference for the study and discussion of social problems, and that said conference meet in Nashville on account of its convenience to the entire South.” Like Barnard, Hooper argued that the annual meetings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction – usually convened in the North and attended principally by northerners – often ignored southern concerns. Building on Barnard’s list, Hooper requested representatives from state and county private and public organizations and agencies concerned about quality of life: penal institutions; reformatories and juvenile courts; “Child-Helping Institutions, such as Orphanages, Day Nurseries and Child-Helping Societies”; insane asylums; institutions for the “Feeble-Minded, Deaf and Dumb,” hearing impaired, poor, and elderly; hospitals and nursing schools; state and county medical associations; state and local boards of health; anti-tuberculosis leagues and other health organizations; vice commissions; housing organizations; park commissions; labor organizations; public libraries; colleges and universities; state and county bar associations; state and local women’s clubs; fraternal orders and other societies; “Lodges and Associations which engage in Benevolent Work”; temperance organizations, social settlements and institutional churches; newspapers and magazines.

Judging from his exhaustive list, Hooper had every intention of establishing the SSC as a comprehensive social welfare organization which would further the progressive development of the South. It would serve as a kind of social equilibrium to the popular business-oriented Southern Commercial Congress. Whereas the commercial gathering would address “financial, industrial, and agricultural development,” the SSC would

ensure that “questions of humanity” not be overlooked, thus securing “symmetrical” progress in the South.⁴⁶

That the “call” was issued a mere twenty-four hours before Hooper’s reelection announcement is also important. At first glance the juxtaposition of those two events resulted from political calculation – a one-two punch providing “good press” for two full days. Local papers, however, paid scant attention to the Hooper’s call. Only the Regular Democrat newspaper, the eponymous *Nashville Democrat*, contained any mention of the Southern Sociological Congress. Moreover, the story failed to mention Hooper’s role in the organization, saying only that Secretary McCulloch would be embarking on a two-week trip to encourage the governors of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and Kentucky to appoint delegates. The article also mentioned McCulloch’s continuing on to New York and Washington, D.C. with the intention of lining up men in charge of national organizations and “prominent leaders in special work such as prison reform and the like” to speak at the SSC session. Regardless of whether the timing of the call was politically motivated, Hooper’s primary concern during the winter and spring of 1912 was getting reelected. Although seemingly sincere in his attempt to address southern social ills, he surely realized that the creation of the SSC would energize his reform-minded base, thus aiding his reelection bid.

In his announcement speech, Hooper touted accomplishments of his first two-year term: improvement of the public highways; building Normal Schools; enforcement of laws requiring shop and factory inspections; elimination of excessive clemency; creation

⁴⁶McCulloch, *Call of the New South*, 13-15.

of a new parole system; improved treatment of prisoners, including the education of convicts; and establishment of a juvenile parole system. If reelected Hooper promised to rein in excessive legislative appropriations, improve rural schools, consolidate other educational facilities, and lengthen the school year. Above all else, Hooper swore to enforce the existing prohibition laws in the cities. Most of Hooper's speech was devoted to the temperance issue: "The whiskey power of the nation has centered its fight in this state in the larger cities. It has manipulated the usual city combination between the elements of lawlessness and the ever present political machine." Hooper's zeal for temperance was reflected in his willingness to enact extreme measures to stop "the whiskey power," even extending to the nullification of city charters.⁴⁷

The day before, Governor Hooper had personally corresponded with the sixteen chief executives who received the call. He asked each one to appoint one hundred delegates. Although nine of the sixteen governors replied within days, not all followed his instructions. Many of the governors dillydallied and named delegates only because of Hooper's incessant urging and coaching. Others flatly refused to cooperate. By early March, Secretary McCulloch had not received delegation lists from the governors of South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri. Prodded by McCulloch, who insisted the appointments from the six states be attained at the earliest

⁴⁷"Gov. Ben W. Hooper Announces His Candidacy for Re-election," *Nashville Democrat*, 8 February 1912, p. 5, 8; "Announces Candidacy" *Nashville Banner*, 7 February 1912, p. 1; "Governor Hooper Shies His Castor Again Into Ring," *Nashville Tennessean and the Nashville American*, 8 February 1912, p. 1, 3; Whitefoord R. Cole to Ben W. Hooper, 27 December, 1912, Hooper Papers; McCulloch, *The Methodist Training School for Christian Workers*, 5.

day possible, Hooper reissued his call to the governors almost immediately, informing them that a majority of southern governors had complied with his request and elaborate preparations for the Congress were under way. He enclosed a copy of the original call with the purpose of refreshing their memories. Prompted by the executive committee and “friends in Oklahoma,” Hooper also extended the call to the governors of Arizona and New Mexico. Hooper knew the social ills of the two states were so similar to those of the southeastern states that it would be easy to include them “in a movement of this character.”⁴⁸

A few governors responded to the reissued call with excuses and truncated lists while others replied only after Hooper provided them with names of “persons in your State who have either expressed a desire to attend the Congress or have been suggested by one of your delegates.” In the end, only demagogic Governor Cole Blease of South Carolina flatly refused to comply with Hooper’s instructions. Regarding the Governor of Tennessee’s suggested delegation list, Blease (who had waged a bitter political war against South Carolina’s middle class reformers, including progressive President Samuel Chiles Mitchell of the University of South Carolina) responded, “with all due difference[sic] to you, there are names thereon I would not appoint to go anywhere among decent people. I would be ashamed of myself to request decent people to

⁴⁸Ben W. Hooper to Governors W. W. Kitchin, William Hodges Mann, Emmett O’Neal, James B. McCreary, 7 February 1912, Hooper Papers.; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 7 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Cole L. Blease, 8 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Richard E. Sloan, 23 March 1912, Hooper Papers.

associate with them, and, for that reason, I will have to decline to appoint them.”⁴⁹

Having received suggested nominees from all the other governors, Governor Hooper and Secretary McCulloch began selecting from the ranks those who would comprise what essentially was the leadership contingent from each state. Calling these selected leadership cadres “state subcommittees,” Hooper and McCulloch would then request that each governor commission these leaders, bypassing any further dealings with the chief executives and at the same time controlling who was in charge of the state delegations. Although Governor Hooper determined who would lead a number of the state delegations, at the very least McCulloch suggested the composition of the Texas, Alabama, Georgia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, and Maryland subcommittees. Still, Secretary McCulloch could only suggest names to Hooper. As president of the Southern Sociological Congress, Hooper ultimately determined who would lead the state delegations; but according to the existing correspondence, he never

⁴⁹Ben W. Hooper to Herbert S. Hadley, 22 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Bruce T. Bullion to Ben W. Hooper, 23 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Emmet O’Neal to Ben W. Hooper, 23 March 1912, Hooper Papers; George H. Thompson to Ben W. Hooper, 25 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Emmett O’Neal, 11 April, 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Joseph M. Brown, 11 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Joseph M. Brown to Ben W. Hooper, 13 April 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to George W. Donaghey, 17 April 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to George W. Donaghey, 17 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Bruce T. Bullion to George Taylor, 19 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Phillips L. Goldsborough to Ben W. Hooper, 18 April 1912, Hooper Papers; George H. Thompson to George Taylor, 18 April 1912, Hooper Papers; George Taylor to James E. McCulloch, 22 April 1912; Hooper Papers; Cole L. Blease to Ben W. Hooper, 12 February 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Cole L. Blease, 14 February 1912, Hooper Papers; Cole L. Blease to Hon. Ben W. Hooper, 16 April 1912, Hooper Papers.

rejected one of McCulloch's proposed delegates and rarely rebuffed his advice.⁵⁰

A month after the "Call," Secretary McCulloch suggested that Governor Hooper name two hundred delegates from Tennessee. As president of the Congress, and hosting governor, McCulloch felt that Hooper was justified in naming one hundred more than any other governor. Hooper must have smiled as he read McCulloch's suggestion. 1912 was, after all, an election year; Hooper could pack the hosting halls and churches of Nashville with friends, political allies, and undecided progressives. He probably recognized the kind of press coverage the event would generate. For four days in May, the Tennessee papers would be covering speeches by experts from all over the state and region, recommending reforms that would surely usher the governor back into office.

Governor Hooper asked friends and regional leaders to suggest lists of delegates and appointed many of those who inquired about the Congress. Enclosing copies of the call, Hooper solicited names from business leaders, bankers, labor leaders, ministers, journalists, newspaper editors, educators, and college administrators, asking them, for instance, for a list of "men and women in Chattanooga who are interested in all these social questions, and who would be likely to attend the Congress." Dozens of names were submitted. Memphis businessman Charles C. Hanson provided the names of twenty-two individuals from throughout the state with the assurance that "eight out of ten

⁵⁰James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 26 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Whitefoord R. Cole to Ben W. Hooper, 1 April 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 2 April 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 30 March 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 28 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to V. R. Manning, 27 March 1912, Hooper Papers.

of these parties can and will attend the Southern Sociological Congress.” Reverend J. L. White of Central Baptist in Memphis penned an eclectic list of twenty-seven individuals that included religious leaders, as well as political machine “bosses.” J. I. Finney, editor of the *Columbia Herald* sent a list of fifteen, informing the governor that several of these “had experience with the criminal and unfortunate classes.” Hooper’s secretary, Colonel George Taylor, provided fifty-four names as Hooper had requested. His list included YMCA workers, social workers, school superintendents, members of the Settlement House Association, social workers, prominent labor leaders, workers in the anti-saloon and anti-tuberculosis movements, juvenile judges, college administrators, ministers, church workers, “health enthusiast[s],” kindergarten workers, boy scout leaders, journalists, and politicians. Other nominations came from George J. Burnett, president of Tennessee College in Murfreesboro; I. B. Tigrett, cashier for Union Bank and Trust Company in Jackson; W. N. Page of the Memphis Typographical Union; and the influential Secretary McCulloch.⁵¹

McCulloch dealt with the naming of delegates to the inaugural conference of the

⁵¹James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 7 March 1912, Hooper Papers; George Taylor to Ben W. Hooper, 1 April, 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to John A. Patten, 9 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Charles C. Hanson, 11 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to J. L. White, 15 March 1912, Hooper Papers; J. I. Finney to Hon. Ben W. Hooper, 21 March 1912, Hooper Papers; George J. Burnett to Ben W. Hooper, 21 March 1912, Hooper Papers; I. B. Tigrett to Ben W. Hooper, 22 March 1912, Hooper Papers; W. N. Page to Ben W. Hooper, 24 March 1912, Hooper Papers; S. H. Trezevant to Hon. Ben W. Hooper, 24 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Charles C. Hanson to Hon. Ben W. Hooper; 16 March 1912, Hooper Papers; J. I. Finney to Ben W. Hooper, 21 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to George J. Burnett, 22 March 1912, Hooper Papers; J. L. White to Ben W. Hooper, 2 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to Sam H. Seymour, 15 February 1912, Hooper Papers.

Southern Sociological Congress in a comprehensive fashion. He seemingly sought representatives from every social welfare institution, educational facility, charitable organization, and reform-minded cause. Corresponding with Hooper in April 1912, he sent a letter illustrating his expansive vision. He enclosed a list of institutions which ought to be represented at the May meeting and proposed that each governor work toward appointing as delegates the heads of each in their states. "By a thorough and systematic and persistent correspondence with the appointees of the Governors and with the heads of these institutions and organizations," insisted McCulloch, "we should secure a large delegation from each state." McCulloch's list included educational institutions such as public libraries, colleges, universities, high schools, and boards of education. He also listed civic, fraternal, professional, and governmental institutions such as boards of trade, state and county prison boards, boards of health, anti-tuberculosis leagues, vice commissions, park commissions, housing organizations, labor organizations, women's clubs, state and county bar associations, lodges, and associations. He named child-assistance institutions such as orphanages, day nurseries, kindergartens and child helping societies, reformatories and juvenile courts.

Everything health-related found its way onto McCulloch's register: asylums for the insane, feeble minded, deaf, "dumb," blind and poor; homes for aged men and women; hospitals and schools for nurses; medical organizations and medical colleges. As expected, McCulloch's list included religious entities: temperance organizations, social settlements and institutional churches, mission boards and church mission societies, "Epworth leagues, Baptist young peoples unions, Christian endeavor societies,

Brotherhoods of St. Andrew, Young Men's Christian Associations, Young Men's Hebrew Associations and Young Women's Christian Associations." By mid-March, Hooper had compiled a list of one hundred twelve individuals. Eventually the list would be expanded to include McCulloch's suggestions, interested persons who simply inquired about the coming Congress, as well as influential Tennesseans from various and sundry sectors.⁵²

Hooper's list was equally diverse and lengthy. It included many ministers. Although most of the appointed Baptist, Methodist (ME South and North), Christian, Presbyterian, Catholic, Episcopal, and Jewish clergymen represented "first churches" or synagogues in sizable urban centers such as Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga, some were from small rural communities such as Rockwood in Roane County.⁵³ Hooper named several university and college presidents as delegates: Dr. Brown Ayers of the University of Tennessee; Dr. John R. Race of the University of

⁵²James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 1 April 1912, Hooper Papers; "List of Delegates," 15-21 March 1912, Hooper Papers.

⁵³Among others the list included C. H. Myers of First Methodist Episcopal Church; John Stewart French of McKendree ME Church, South, Nashville; Allen Fort of the Baptist Tabernacle in Chattanooga; Rev. Josiah Sibley of First Presbyterian Church, Knoxville; B.C. Hening, Pastor of Deaderick Avenue Baptist Church; Bishop William Franklin Anderson, ME Church (North), in Chattanooga; Dr. C. H. Williamson of First Presbyterian in Memphis; and five ministers from Rockwood. C. H. Myers to Ben W. Hooper, 26 March 1912, Hooper Papers; John Stewart French to Ben W. Hooper, 25 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Allen Fort to Ben W. Hooper, 2 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Josiah Sibley to Ben W. Hooper, 3 April 1912, Hooper Papers; B. C. Hening to Ben W. Hooper, 8 April 1912, Hooper Papers; William Franklin Anderson to Ben W. Hooper, 13 April 1912, Hooper Papers; George Taylor to William Franklin Anderson, 1 May 1912, Hooper Papers; James O. Donaldson to Ben W. Hooper, 11 April 1912, Hooper Papers.

Chattanooga; Dr. George Burnett of the Tennessee College in Murfreesboro; Dr. Bruce R. Payne of the George Peabody College for Teachers; Dr. James H. Kirkland of Vanderbilt University; Dr. W. H. Franklin of Swift Memorial College; Dr. George A. Hubbell of Lincoln Memorial University; Dr. W. P. Bone of Cumberland University; and Dr. J. D. Blanton of Ward Seminary for Young Ladies in Nashville. He also named several county school superintendents.⁵⁴ Hooper balanced educational and religious leaders with delegates from the business community: representatives of municipal Boards of Trade; banks like the Tennessee Trust Company; businessmen's clubs, as well as representatives from the real estate, textile, construction, and lumber industries. The governor included lawyers, judges, public employees, and politicians. He also commissioned representatives from eleemosynary institutions, like the Tennessee Baptist Orphans' Home and the Tennessee School for the Blind, as well as settlement house workers. Ever mindful of the powerful press, Hooper also named many journalists.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Brown Ayers to Ben W. Hooper, 26 March 1912, Hooper Papers; E. S. Shannon to Ben W. Hooper, 26 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Mety L Kelley to Ben W. Hooper, 24 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Ewin L. Davis to Ben W. Hooper, 6 April 1912, Hooper Papers; W. P. Bone to Ben W. Hooper, 29 March 1912, Hooper Papers; George A. Hubbell to Ben W. Hooper, 30 March 1912, Hooper Papers; J. D. Blanton Ben W. Hooper, 30 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Monroe W. Wilson to Ben W. Hooper, 12 April 1912, Hooper Papers; R. P. Driskill to Ben W. Hooper, 6 April 1912, Hooper Papers.

⁵⁵Lewis T. Baxter to Ben W. Hooper, 30 March 1912, Hooper Papers; J. E. Annis to Ben W. Hooper, 10 April 1912, Hooper Papers; John S. Cooper to Ben W. Hooper, 10 April 1912, Hooper Papers; W. B. Davis to Ben W. Hooper, 30 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Will D. Wright to Ben W. Hooper, 9 April 1912, Hooper Papers; J. W. Scott to Ben W. Hooper, 10 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Mary West to Ben W. Hooper, 12 April 1912, Hooper Papers; D.A. Vines to Ben W. Hooper, 16 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Ewin L. Davis to Ben W. Hooper, 6 April 1912, Hooper Papers; W. J. Stewart to Ben W. Hooper, 13 April 1912, Hooper Papers; John V. Armstrong to Ben W. Hooper, 28 March 1912, Hooper Papers; E.W. Ogden to Ben W. Hooper, 29 March 1912, Hooper Papers;

While Governor Hooper was crafting his delegation list, Secretary McCulloch, instructed by the executive committee, drafted a list of nominees for membership on the “Board of Directors in the permanent organization of the Southern Sociological Congress.” McCulloch instructed Hooper to “request the governors to appoint the directors as indicated, and instruct them to be at the Hermitage Hotel, 3:00 O’clock[sic] P.M., May 7th.” Hooper was to commission the nominees and then, due to time constraints, notify the board as soon as the appointments were made. McCulloch submitted the names of thirty-four individuals representing seventeen states, among them some of the most notable southern progressives of the time. McCulloch’s list provided the members of the SSC’s permanent executive committee: Professor C. H. Brough of Fayetteville, Arkansas, Baptist layman, racial liberal, professor of economics and sociology at the University of Arkansas, future governor of that state, and future president of the SSC; Clarence Poe of Raleigh, editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, educational reformer, and agricultural educator; Dr. Joseph T. Mastin of Richmond, general secretary of the Virginia State Board of Charities and Correction; and the aforementioned W. R. Cole of Nashville. Most of the others on McCulloch’s list managed to secure high positions within the organization. Some, like Jean Gordon of New Orleans, noted suffragist and president of the Southern Conference on Woman and Child Labor, became corresponding secretaries. Others – like Dr. A. J. McKelway of Washington, the National Child Labor Committee’s chief agent in the South; Joseph C. Logan, secretary of Atlanta Associated Charities; Dr. Samuel Chiles Mitchell, Baptist

Rhea Crawford to Ben W. Hooper, 10 April, 1912, Hooper Papers.

layman and prohibitionist, Darwinian, historian, president of the University of South Carolina, advocate of universal education, and father of noted paternalist Broadus Mitchell; John DeWitt, active prohibitionist, administrator of the Tennessee State Reformatory, chairman of the Davidson County Charities Commission, secretary for both the Methodist Training School and American Interchurch College executive boards, and eventual chairman of the SSC's executive board; Dr. James Hardy Dillard, active Episcopal vestryman and president of the Church Club of Louisiana, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Tulane University, president of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund's Board and general secretary of the Slater Board – secured positions on various standing committees. Even Kate Barnard found her way onto McCulloch's list and was slotted as the second vice president of the SSC, although she had no formal duties and did not attend any of the conferences.⁵⁶

Although he used his appointments to commission a vast array of progressives representing every social justice cause imaginable, Governor Hooper reserved considerable space for a number of individuals concerned primarily with the enforcement

⁵⁶Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 92, 141, 192, 199, 212, 225, 227, 266-268, 333; Foy Lisenby, *Charles Hillman Brough: A Biography*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996), 26, 31; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 20 April 1912, Hooper Papers; McCulloch, *Call of New South*, 358-361; Pamphlet, *The American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers: A Historic Statement*, 3, Chancellor's Office Records, James E. McCulloch 1909-1916, American Interchurch College file, Vanderbilt; McNeal, "James Hardy Dillard," 2-3; Benjamin Brawley, *Doctor Dillard of the Jeanes Fund*, (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 2-3, 54-60, 73-78; Whitefoord R. Cole to Ben W. Hooper, 27 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 15 January 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; McCulloch, *The Methodist Training School for Christian Workers*, 5, 7-16.

of social controls, especially regarding the liquor industry. He seemed interested in making his primary campaign issue – prohibition – a significant concern of the Southern Sociological Congress as well.

Temperance forces, as represented by the Anti-Saloon League, were poised to influence the inaugural convention of the SSC more than any other organization or reform interest, judging by Hooper's correspondence and delegates commissioned in the winter and spring of 1912. Like many of the other special interest groups that would participate in the May convention of the Congress, the Anti-Saloon League was explicitly Christian. The "Principles of the Tennessee Anti-Saloon League and Its Policy for 1912" stated clearly as their mission the extermination of the liquor traffic by unifying "all forces that oppose the traffic, chief of which is the church." In fact, the League was organized to be an agency of the church: "The Church in Action against the saloon." Of course, both the Women's Christian Temperance Union and many prohibition leaders also favored broader progressive reforms, so prohibition was not a one issue movement.⁵⁷

Like Barnard, McCulloch, and many prohibitionists, Governor Hooper was clearly concerned with social justice and social welfare causes. He was even more devoted, however, to prohibition. McCulloch was familiar with Hooper's desire to fill the meeting halls and churches of Nashville with temperance forces. The Congress was developing a department on Temperance, and McCulloch believed the May meeting would "afford a good opportunity for the Temperance leaders and workers of the South

⁵⁷Pamphlet, "Principles of the Tennessee Anti-Saloon League, and Its Policy for 1912," 1-7 May 1912, Hooper Papers.

to get together and also relate their work to that of other social movements.” He encouraged Hooper to appoint twenty-five delegates from each state’s Anti-Saloon League.⁵⁸

Hooper embellished McCulloch’s suggestion and asked several state level League leaders to appoint well beyond the requisite twenty-five. According to the available records, at least six state superintendents responded with their lists. Hooper wrote Reverend Brooks Lawrence, superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League in Alabama, emphasizing the importance of the SSC and how its success “depends upon the character of delegates who attend and participate in its deliberations.” So that Alabama was well represented in such discussions, Hooper suggested that Reverend Lawrence appoint fifty delegates who were interested and would probably attend. Hooper elicited support from Henry Beach Carre and W. R. Hamilton, president and superintendent of the Tennessee Anti-Saloon League respectively. Hamilton exceeded Hooper’s request: “While you asked for fifty names this list contains more than that.” Hooper also asked G. W. Eichelberger, state superintendent of Anti-Saloon League of Mississippi and Rev. Norman A. Palmer, state superintendent of the League in Kentucky, to name fifty delegates each. Fresh off the “splendid advance in temperance legislation” during the most recent Legislative session, Palmer enclosed a list of fifty Kentuckians who would surely attend. Eichelberger promised a forthcoming list as soon as he could “ascertain who would be most likely to go.” Frank Barnett of the Anti-Saloon League in Arkansas and Dr. S. A. Smith of the Louisiana Anti-Saloon League also submitted lists with large

⁵⁸James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 29 March 1912, Hooper Papers.

numbers of names.⁵⁹ Consider the Kentucky delegation to the SSC inaugural convention as an example: of the twenty-five total Kentucky delegates to the May convention published by McCulloch on the membership list, six were Anti-Saloon League leaders. They included two of the five vice-presidents of the state league, three of the twelve members of the “headquarters committee,” and the state Anti-Saloon League superintendent, Reverend Norman A. Palmer. President Carre and Superintendent W. R. Hamilton of the Tennessee Anti-Saloon League were included on McCulloch’s 1912 membership list, but that League’s secretary, treasurer, and three vice presidents were absent.⁶⁰ Perhaps McCulloch’s published list was incomplete. Perhaps correspondence from the other state League officials has been lost. Whatever the case, little doubt exists that the temperance forces came out in force in May. The temperance section at the inaugural convention was the best organized and received recognition from U.S. senators and representatives who sent greetings to the congress “and to the conference on temperance more especially.”⁶¹ McCulloch and Hooper asked only Women’s Clubs to

⁵⁹Ben W. Hooper to Brooks Lawrence, 1 April 1912, Hooper Papers; W. R. Hamilton to Ben W. Hooper, 3 April 1912, Hooper Papers; George Taylor to D. A. Smith, 19 April 1912, Hooper Papers; G. W. Eichelberger to Ben W. Hooper, 3 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Norman A. Palmer to Ben W. Hooper, 3 April 1912, Hooper Papers; George Taylor to Frank Barnett, 6 April 1912, Hooper Papers.

⁶⁰Norman A. Palmer to Ben W. Hooper, 6 April 1912, Hooper Papers; McCulloch, *Call of the New South*, 367, 370-373; Henry Beach Carre to Ben W. Hooper, 29 March 1912, Hooper Papers.

⁶¹“Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 1912, p 1; “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, p 7; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 30.

submit as many names as temperance groups, perhaps assuming that southern women overwhelmingly supported prohibition as well as other reforms.⁶²

By late April, Hooper must have been pleased with his arrangements for the Southern Sociological Congress. Influenced by organizations and individuals interested in social justice, social gospel, or social control, he and McCulloch had assembled a veritable who's who of southern progressivism from every part of the South. Moreover, Hooper had secured positions for a number of temperance advocates which would undoubtedly assist his campaign efforts. Yet the pressure of arranging the Congress coupled with running state government and a political campaign caused Hooper to experience what amounted to a nervous breakdown. Letters in April referred to Hooper as being "out of the office on account of illness" or "confined to his room."⁶³

Even though Hooper continued to make arrangements concerning delegates and discounted railroad rates from his sickbed in Mooresburg, Tennessee, more of the responsibilities of the Congress fell to his personal secretary, Colonel George Taylor, and to James McCulloch. By early May, Hooper's condition would clearly preclude his

⁶²McCulloch also suggested that Hooper request the presidents of the Federation of Women's Clubs for each Southern state to appoint 50 delegates to the SSC. He enclosed a list of presidents from Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, D.C, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia. The Hooper Papers contain responses from presidents of the Missouri and Oklahoma clubs. Not one of the presidents, however, of the eighteen states and D.C. are located in the rolls of the SSC for 1912. Harriet E. Shepard to Ben W. Hooper, 23 April 1912, Hooper Papers; George Taylor to D. A. McDougal, 27 April 1912, Hooper Papers; McCulloch, *Call of The New South*, 364-374.

⁶³Ben W. Hooper to Rev. N. A. Palmer, 6 April 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to George W. Donaghey, 17 April 1912, Hooper Papers.

attendance at the inaugural meeting of the Southern Sociological Congress. Hooper sent a telegram to Taylor conveying his regrets to the Congress. He also expressed his hope that “this initial congress will be followed annually by the assembling of the south’s [sic] strongest and best men and women to study and discuss those great moral problems of organized society which are even more important than the enlargement of our commerce and the development of our material resources with the slogan of a solid south for a better nation.” Hooper realized that the Congress could “lead the march which has for it’s[sic] goal the universal education of the children, the more perfect care of the neglected and unfortunate, the removal of the spirit of vengeance from our penal codes and the conduct of our corrective and charitable institutions in accordance with the most enlightened modern methods, free from graft, politics, and humanity.”

But how would Hooper’s absence from the meeting affect his desire for the Southern Sociological Congress to become a permanent organization? How would Hooper’s absence at the initial conference affect the nature of discussions and the actual work done? Would the temperance forces be as dominant without the presence of their most recent patron saint? Moreover, how would Hooper’s absence affect his upcoming reelection bid? Four years earlier, a gun battle in Nashville’s streets set the course of Tennessee politics. Would the future of the Republican governor and the Tennessee prohibition movement now be dismantled in Nashville’s auditoriums and church gathering halls? ⁶⁴

⁶⁴In addition to his SSC work and campaign pressures, Hooper dealt with the death of Senator Robert Taylor and the appointment of his replacement. Hooper was advised by Independent Democrats to appoint one of their own. Regular Democrats

Viewing the earliest developmental stages of the Southern Sociological Congress through the lives of Governor Ben W. Hooper and Reverend James E. McCulloch, one discovers an organization that housed the panoply that was early twentieth century southern progressivism, and thus an organization equally concerned with issues of social control and social justice. Over time, however, the SSC quickly evolved from an entity primarily influenced by the forces of social control, as represented by Governor Hooper's chief, albeit not sole, concern, into an organization primarily shaped by the social justice agenda of McCulloch and his associates. Moreover, the social justice vision espoused by such individuals was rooted in a social gospel theology defined and determined by uniquely southern exigencies. The presence of a southern-flavored social gospel increasingly permeating the SSC is historically relevant for many reasons: it challenges the dominant perceptions of southern religion; it contributes a new historical lens through which one can re-view black accommodationism, white interracialism, and racial gradualism in the South; and it counters commonly held notions concerning the nature and location of the social gospel movement.

Full comprehension of the southern-flavored social gospel of the Southern Sociological Congress and its impact begins with the socio-political context of

prayed the Governor would appoint a Republican so as to drive the wayward Independent faction back into the party of Jackson. The entire situation was exacerbated by the division amongst Tennessee Republicans between the camps of President Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. Hooper appointed Republican Newell S. Sanders which did not elicit the desired effect sought by the Regular Democrats. Ben W. Hooper to Joseph Richardson, 9 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Joseph Richardson to Ben W. Hooper, 12 April 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper to George Taylor, 6-12 May 1912, Hooper Papers; Ben W. Hooper, *The Unwanted Boy: the Autobiography of Governor Ben W. Hooper*, ed. Everett Robert Boyce (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1963), 131.

Progressive Era Tennessee, especially with the way Governor Hooper and Reverend McCulloch incorporated their visions of reform into the SSC during the organization's formative stage in the Winter and Spring of 1912. It also requires understanding of the region's third party political insurgency, born in desperate economic conditions as well as moral outrage and religious revivalism.

CHAPTER TWO

“THE SOLID SOUTH FOR A BETTER NATION”: PERMANENCY, PERSPECTIVES, AND THE 1912 NASHVILLE CONFERENCE

Southern Sociological Congress delegates stepping from their trains into Nashville’s Union Station in early May, 1912, were welcomed heartily by the Board of Trade’s reception committee. Greeters directed delegates to the First Presbyterian Church, headquarters of the SSC; to the Hermitage Hotel, venue for several committee meetings and departmental conferences; and to the Ryman Auditorium, site of opening festivities. All three venues were mere blocks from one another and a stone’s throw from where Edward Ward Carmack was slain. As delegates made their way down Broadway, into the heart of downtown, surely some of them pondered the martyred saint whose shed blood successfully rallied prohibitionists against the political and societal status quo. Indeed, with the martyr in mind, more than a few souls considered the inaugural SSC gathering penultimate to a wider regional temperance crusade. Other delegates exploring Nashville’s streets harbored grander aspirations for the Congress.⁶⁵

On the evening of May 7, 1912, three thousand souls convened in Nashville’s Victorian gothic tabernacle, the Ryman Auditorium, for “the largest and most important

⁶⁵ “Committee Will Meet All Trains,” *Nashville Tennessean and the Nashville American*, 7 May 1912, 9.

gathering for like purposes ever held in America.” Opening night of the inaugural convention, deemed “Student Night,” mixed students from Nashville’s educational institutions with approximately eight hundred delegates and the general public. As the crowd punctuated the Tennessee Industrial School Band’s “popular selections and national airs” with “college songs and yells,” the assembly became a cacophonous carnival. After thirty minutes of festivities, at 8:00 p.m., John H. Dewitt – chairman of the executive committee – took the podium and called the session to order. Dr. James I. Vance, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, then opened the first Southern Sociological Congress with prayer, connecting the Congress with a divine purpose at its inception.⁶⁶

When the SSC convened, Governor Ben Hooper, the man who supposedly “conceived of the gathering and successfully launched it,” was in Mooresburg, Tennessee, recovering from what the pro-Republican Nashville *Banner* called a “nervous condition.” Ira Landrith of Nashville – prohibition leader, president of Belmont College, and chairman of the Men and Religion Forward Movement’s local “committee of One Hundred” – took the stage following the invocation. He began his address by reading a telegram expressing Governor Hooper’s regret at missing the meeting. Landrith then confided, “the exact truth appears to be that the dauntless and too industrious young chief

⁶⁶“Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 1912, 1, 8; “Opening of Great Congress,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 7; “Initial Gathering of Sociological Congress Success,” *Nashville Tennessean and Nashville American*, 8 May 1912, 8; Charles Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 12-14. The *Nashville Democrat* reported that the general public was invited to opening night festivities. “Sociological Congress Opening Session Today,” *Nashville Democrat*, 7 May 1912, 1.

executive of Tennessee has been temporarily forced to take a vacation from his own very practical and effective sociological activities.” Certain local news sources were hardly as gracious with the circumstances surrounding Hooper’s absence.

The aptly named *Democrat* interpreted Hooper’s absence with suspicion. It printed Landrith’s oratory but included a cartoon of Hooper running wildly toward Mooresburg, eyes wide, arms akimbo. In his wake several documents were depicted, one labeled “\$25,000 corruption fund” and two “wholesale charges.” The *Democrat* intimated that Hooper’s “nervous condition” ruse was an attempt to avoid all issues and accusations a week before both parties held their conventions.⁶⁷

Despite his absence, Hooper had set the tone for the Congress six weeks before. His “Challenge of the Southern Sociological Congress,” like his telegram, emphasized increased regional nationalization and suggested “The Solid South for a Better Nation” as the SSC slogan. For Hooper, lost cause ideals sacralizing the blood-soaked southern soil had been enlarged yet also subsumed by a new patriotism. At its root was a resurrected southern chivalry working in a new social context and imbued with “a pervading passion for righteousness, a vicarious love of humanity, an unselfish

⁶⁷“Problems of the South,” *Nashville Democrat*, 8 May 1912, 1; “The Governor Defiantly Hurls the Charges,” *Nashville Democrat*, 8 May 1912, 1. “Sighting a Most Favorable Landing,” *Nashville Tennessean and the Nashville American*, 7 May 1912; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 7. Governor Hooper insisted that a “\$25,000 slush fund” had been established to sink his prohibition efforts. Hooper also identified Mayor H. E. Howse of Nashville as a key instigator of the fund raising effort. In their cartoon, the *Democrat* also lampooned the *Nashville Tennessean*, depicting the paper as Hooper’s diminutive “houn dawg” running beside the governor, tail between its legs, seeking “fatherly advice.” The previous day the *Tennessean* had run its own cartoon of Hooper steering the SSC ship into Nashville, with the flag of “Progress” flapping above its bow.

enthusiasm to spend itself in helping to develop the nation on the solid foundation of social justice, health and purity.” The SSC was, therefore, a challenge to the men and women of the South to: end child labor; make education universal; educate the dependent, the defective and the delinquent; secure civic righteousness, temperance, and health; guarantee justice to all regardless of race, color, or religion; defend the powerless; persuade the Church to validate its leadership role in southern society by a “universal and unselfish” social ministry; seek universal brotherhood; volunteer “for a crusade of social service” to secure public health and purity. With prophetic flair and apocalyptic rhetoric, Hooper envisioned the Southern Sociological Congress as “a call to arms, . . . a crusade of social and civic betterment” that would re-fashion a region, a nation, indeed the world. He foresaw the coming kingdom that all would surely glimpse in Nashville.⁶⁸

Governor Hooper was not the only SSC visionary absent from Nashville. In her correspondence with Tennessee’s governor, Kate Barnard, Oklahoma’s charismatic commissioner of charities and correction, who had first suggested the creation of a “Southern Conference for the study and discussion of social problems,” expressed surprise and annoyance upon discovering the governor had co-opted her idea. Having heard nothing from Hooper for three months, Barnard was vexed when the local newspaper’s list of delegates named by Governor Cruce of Oklahoma provided her initial

⁶⁸Ben W. Hooper, “The Challenge of the Southern Sociological Congress,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 15-17; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 12. The “Challenge” was published in each bound volume of SSC annual speeches through 1918.

news of the governor's intention to conduct a regional meeting. Moreover, she was displeased that no one else in her office had received a commission to attend the SSC convention. Regardless, Barnard tempered her ire and calmly promoted her vision of the SSC in her correspondence with Hooper.

Informed and inspired by her experience with the Southern Convention of Uniform Child Labor Laws, Barnard envisioned an SSC that would craft model social legislation intended for implementation by southern legislatures. Having read that the SSC would take up the issue of prison reform, Barnard enclosed a penal bill that would be presented in the next Oklahoma legislative session as well as a bill introduced in the Oklahoma Senate that proposed scientifically caring for the insane. Barnard's legislation eschewed traditional notions of retributive justice for rehabilitation and shunned mere custodial care of the insane. She conveyed her hope that Hooper would read the penal bill and include such reforms in his SSC address.

Although she expressed support, Barnard was seemingly displeased with the outcome of her previous suggestions. She lamented that there was no time to make improvements which would guarantee the Congress' success. She was also perplexed that Governor Cruce failed to include sociology professors, university intellectuals, and noted jurists in his list of delegates. Strong minds were required if southerners were to bring about reform. Assuming her initial suggestions to Hooper had been dismissed, Barnard had arranged travel to California for health reasons and would not attend the Congress. Despite Hooper's pleadings and promise that her name would be added to the speaker's list, Barnard did not venture to Nashville. In fact, Barnard never attended any

meeting of the Southern Sociological Congress despite being named second vice president of the organization for 1912. Still, Barnard's influence and her vision for the Congress were voiced throughout discussions on organizational permanency.⁶⁹

Nashville's delegates embodied the ethical proclivities of Hooper as well as those of James McCulloch. The pair's influence over the appointment process ensured that the SSC would be a comprehensive southern social welfare organization helping direct the abolition of the region's many social ills. The gathered throngs, therefore, represented the many facets of early twentieth century southern progressivism with its varied issues of social control and social justice. Hooper's telegram suggested the inaugural gathering be "followed annually by the assembling of the South's strongest and best men and women to study and discuss those great moral problems of organized society which are even more important than the enlargement of our commerce and the development of our material resources." As the throng in Ryman Auditorium responded to Hooper's written comments with prolonged applause, key personalities were not present, permanent status for the SSC was not secured, the nature of discussions was not determined, dominance by

⁶⁹Hobart Huson to Ben W. Hooper, 22 March 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers, 1911-1936, The Special Collections Library of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Kate Barnard to Ben W. Hooper, 9 March 1912, Ben W. Hooper; "Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night," *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 1912, 1.

Barnard's dissatisfaction was echoed by her underling, Hobart Huson, Assistant Commissioner of Charities and Correction for Oklahoma. Huson, interpreting Hooper's actions as extremely discourteous, claimed that the Russell Sage Foundation and the National Conference of Charities and Correction had determined the design and direction of the organization. Huson held to Barnard's original vision of the Congress – an organization led primarily by southerners interested in crafting model legislation to remedy southern social problems. Contrary to Huson's accusations, only four speakers – Dr. Bernard Flexner of Louisville, Jean Gordon of New Orleans, Hasting H. Hart and John M. Glenn – held positions with the Russell Sage foundation.

either the social control or social justice forces was not resolved, and the prominent role of social gospel theology was not yet evident.⁷⁰

Having read Hooper's telegram, Ira Landrith launched into his "Address of Welcome." Stressing the SSC's unprecedented role of organizing southern social welfare interests, he also noted the importance of the Southern Commercial Congress and Conference of Southern Education. Both had met recently in Nashville and, in Landrith's mind, comprised two parts of a southern progressive trinity. Echoing St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, Landrith emphasized the centrality of the SSC: "commerce, education, social service – these three – but the greatest of these is the Southern Sociological Congress. Nor is such comparison odious, since prosperity in the once impoverished South may well give us Faith; and education, Hope; while surely the sole inspiration of this Congress is Love."⁷¹ Like other orators gracing the Nashville gathering, Landrith contemplated the SSC's mission in theological terms.

Landrith considered the SSC's task an explicitly ecumenical Christian endeavor seeking the transformation of southern society. If the SSC was to successfully advance cures for southern social ills, delegates would have to bridge regional rifts and

⁷⁰"Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night," *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 1912, 1, 7; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 7; "Initial Gathering of Sociological Congress Success," *Nashville Tennessean and the Nashville American*, 8 May 1912, 8; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 376. It's interesting to note, as does historian Charles E. Chatfield, that Hooper called the Congress together and never attended a meeting. His name however, according to the *Banner*, was always greeted with prolonged applause.

⁷¹"Opening of Great Congress," *Nashville Banner*, 8 May, 1912, 7; Ira Landrith, "Address of Welcome," in *The Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 19.

denominational divides. Quoting social gospeler Henry Sloane Coffin, pastor of New York City's Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church and associate professor of pastoral theology at Union Theological Seminary, Landrith saw the SSC as more than a small sect of pilgrims providing the requisite religious stimulus required for the journey heavenward. Rather, the assembled Christians were "trying to transform the City of Destruction into the City of God" and therefore needed the "cooperation of every fellow Christian." Such social transformation was a task "too tremendous, too comprehensively Christ-like, for either sectionalism or its twin iniquity, sectarianism."⁷²

Despite his elevated opinion of the SSC, Landrith insisted the organization could not function as a lone sectional entity. The South's problems "will soonest be solved by a solid nation working for a better South, and not alone by a solid South striving for a better nation." Success required progressive, "right-minded," southerners welcoming the assistance of northern philanthropy in all righteous endeavors. Sectional coordination was especially needed in addressing the "negro problem."

Calling the plight of African-Americans, "the South's one most acute and delicate problem," Landrith opined that "the time has come in the providence of the God of peace and brotherhood when the white patriot on the ground can – and he must – join the white patriot at the North in studying, and in doing, what is best to be done for the physical, moral and intellectual well-being of the black man of the South." With an air of southern progressive paternalism, Landrith further asserted that "no past prejudices . . . and no

⁷²Landrith, "Address of Welcome," in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 20-21; Bradley J. Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 79, 94-95.

ancient resentments . . . must be permitted now to discourage or disturb the Southern white man in the discharge of his duty to help to good citizenship his less favored Afro-American neighbor.” Landrith knew southerners clearly comprehended the race problem and were required, with the aid of northern philanthropy and the grace of God, to solve it. Beyond issues of ethnicity, Landrith emphasized the two sections working together to overcome a host of southern ills, insisting that the work of northern and southern Christians was a task for united righteousness far beyond the reach of sect, sectionalism, or schism.⁷³

Although he insisted that the SSC must busy itself about more than one race and one issue and subsequently addressed the need for compulsory education, medical inspections in schools, child labor legislation, housing reform, and the prevention of sin, poverty, and disease, first in Landrith’s mind and foremost on his heart was the plight of African Americans. In his desire to create a social conscience “sensitively aware of its duty as its brother’s keeper,” Landrith accurately pinpointed the South’s, indeed the nation’s, most severe ill. Moreover, Landrith considered the amelioration of all southern social ills, especially the race problem, as a challenge which could be vanquished by a nationwide ecumenical effort inspired by love and propelled by a theology of societal transformation. Unbeknownst to the multitude reveling in his vision, Landrith’s concern for ethnically rooted social ills and his call for ethically motivated Christianity foreshadowed the SSC’s ideological shift that would shape the meetings in Nashville

⁷³Landrith, “Address of Welcome,” in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 20-21.

(1912), Atlanta (1913), and Memphis (1914).⁷⁴

The SSC's religious and racial interests were evident to the Nashville press. The *Nashville Tennessean* considered the inaugural gathering a "meeting place for churchmen, schoolmen, and all broad-minded citizens" where the "spirit of Christianity enters into all social service." The *Democrat* also noted the SSC's ecumenical flavor, deeming the organization a place where delegates elevated above denominationalism cooperated in uplifting humanity. The *Nashville Banner* observed that oratory "touching the negro problems" was the most vitally interesting single feature of the meetings. Graham Taylor of the muckraking *Survey* also recognized the role of interracialism and the social gospel. He observed that "the consistent note of social obligation" was "not less striking than the absolute honesty with which speakers from the South faced the critical questions relating to the Negro, to ecclesiastical sectarianism, and to the need and opportunity for the united work of the churches for their respective communities."⁷⁵ In Nashville, a Southern Sociological Congress influenced by purveyors of social control

⁷⁴"Opening of Great Congress," *Nashville Banner*, 8 May, 1912, 7; Landrith, "Address of Welcome," in *The Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 21-23; "Drys' Train Attacked with Stone of Bullet; Missile Pierces Window of Observation Car Imperiling the Vice Presidential Candidate," *New York Times*, 17 October 1916, 1. By 1916, Ira Landrith would be the U.S. vice presidential candidate on the Prohibitionist ticket. It is noteworthy that such a staunch temperance leader would spend so little time blaming liquor traffic for societal woes.

⁷⁵"The Great Awakening," *Nashville Tennessean and the Nashville American*, 7 May 1912, 6; "Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night," *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 1; Graham Taylor, "The Southern Social Awakening," *Survey* 28, (September 14, 1912): 744; "Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night," *Nashville Banner* 7 May 1912, 1, 7; Dyer, "Southern Problems that Challenge our Thought," in *The Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 25-33; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 15; "Opening of Great Congress", *Nashville Banner*, 8 May, 1912, 7.

and social justice began to transform into an entity primarily influenced by a southern-flavored social gospel fusing the voices of black accommodationism and white interracialism. Over four days of business sessions, board meetings, general sessions, and departmental conferences in the churches, halls, and hotels of Nashville, the issues of social gospel-infused religion and race moved to the forefront of delegates' minds.⁷⁶

Like all subsequent gatherings of the SSC, the inaugural convention revolved around four major activities. The main societal interests of the Nashville assemblage were introduced in the eight general sessions and nine departmental conferences held over four days. Intended for all delegates, the general sessions provided a small sampling of discussions conducted in the afternoon departmental conferences.

Comprised of individuals with similar interests, the nine conferences met simultaneously on the afternoons of May 8 and 9 and spent several hours discussing and debating a variety of southern ills. Whereas the general sessions and departmental conferences were

⁷⁶C. Vann Woodward noted the religious nature of the SSC, calling it "largely a ministerial affair." Moreover, Woodward observed that many of the Congress' southern welfare leaders were "former preachers or prominent laymen." A number of the professional social workers also had ministerial experience. Contrary to Woodward, Charles E. Chatfield asserted that just as many leaders of the SSC had educational backgrounds as had religious ones. In his 1967 dissertation, John Joel Culley observed that fifty-two speeches were delivered "on the race question" between 1912 and 1919. Twenty-nine of the fifty-two speakers (55 percent) were educators, four of these college presidents. Ten speakers were clergy (19 percent), three of these bishops. Six speakers served the medical profession (12 percent). Regardless of ministerial presence, the SSC had a marked ecclesial flavor as evidenced by the oratory examined herein. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1951), 423, 451-452; "Social Program of the Congress," in *The Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 9. Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 24-25; John Joel Culley, "Muted Trumpets: Four Efforts to Better Southern Race Relations, 1900-1919" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1967), 141-142.

important implements sharpening the SSC's ethical focus, any hope of lasting influence required transition from a fledgling and transient gathering into a fixed and coordinated institution. Before any speaker took the stage of the Ryman, before any social justice vision was secured, the Congress' nascent "board of directors" met for the express purpose of seeking permanency and polity for the organization. Once the SSC opened, business sessions further helped the board divine the will of the general body of delegates.⁷⁷

Hooper's opening telegram suggesting an annual assembling of the South's "strongest and best" men and women to examine timely ethical issues forced the SSC leadership to seek permanency. The *Nashville Banner*, mouthpiece of the Tennessee Republican party, pressed the issue even further with its determination that the SSC session was undoubtedly the nation's first meeting "of this exact nature" and must therefore become a permanent fixture. After four days of discussion, the board of directors discussed the establishment of the Southern Sociological Congress as a permanent southern social welfare fixture and created a workable framework that successfully served the organization for the better part of a decade. In the process, the directors revealed their sentiments regarding issues of permanency, organizational vision, and structure that warrant evaluation.⁷⁸

⁷⁷"Sociological Conferences," *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 2, 7, 11; "Sociological Leaders Talk," *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 3, 4, 7); Ennion G. Williams "Sociological Importance of Vital Statistics," in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 148-150; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 29-30.

⁷⁸James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 29 March 1912, Hooper Papers; "Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night," *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 7 1912, 1.

In March and April of 1912, the governors of the sixteen states eventually represented at the initial SSC convention had appointed two “directors” to meet with the preliminary executive committee in the afternoon prior to opening night. Together, these two groups formed the board of directors of the Congress. Almost all of the significant business and administrative accomplishments in Nashville were carried to completion by the board, while the daily thirty-minute perfunctory business sessions mostly gauged delegates’ sentiments. Sequestered from the SSC’s general membership, the directors hammered out business matters before presenting their opinions to the greater SSC at the business sessions. The board first convened just hours before the opening night’s festivities, at 3:00 p.m. on May 7, in the ninth-floor assembly room of the Hermitage, Nashville’s swank new Beaux Arts hotel. Prior to discussing policies for the year ahead, the board elected John H. Dewitt, chairman of the SSC preliminary executive committee, chair of the board of directors. Joseph C. Logan, general secretary of Associated Charities of Atlanta, was designated board secretary.

The majority of those present were in favor of making the SSC a permanent fixture of the social welfare establishment. Directors differed, however, on why permanency was necessary. A number of directors expressed the opinion that “the congress had no justification for existence on any theory that there are social problems peculiar to the southern states.” Indeed, though most agreed that the Negro problem was most acute in the southern states, they also insisted that such issues were a singular part of a larger national “racial problem.” These “national-view” directors insisted that people on the Pacific Coast as well as in the South faced similar racial dilemmas.

Moreover, the racial issues found in the cities of New York and Philadelphia were akin to those manifested in Savannah and New Orleans. Likewise, many of the directors insisted that child welfare and labor problems and issues surrounding infant mortality, child hygiene, and recreation were not peculiarly southern.

A few directors, on the other hand, expressed the need “for an organization for the discussion of the great social problems that belong to the South individually.”

George H. Detwiler – head of arrangements for the executive committee, president of Nashville’s ministers’ alliance, and pastor of West End Methodist Church -- opined that four regional organizations representing the Southwest, Northwest, Southeast and Northeast would best address the unique social issues found in each region. Dr. Charles A. Ellwood (professor of sociology at the University of Missouri), Dr. W. S. Rankin (secretary of the North Carolina Board of Health), and Dr. C. S. Potts (chairman of the School of Government at the University of Texas) all concurred with Detwiler’s sentiment. Buoyed by Kate Barnard’s initial vision of the SSC as a southern conference that would settle the region’s distinctive problems in a fashion somewhat different from northern solutions, this sectional contingent felt the South had peculiar needs transcending the national discussion best addressed by an organization like the SSC (in that sense, their discussions anticipated the Regionalist movement centered at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, two decades later).

With questions surrounding permanency unresolved, directors turned to issues of governance. John H. DeWitt presented a tentative constitution and by-laws. Discussion about the name of the new organization immediately ensued. Some wondered if the

name “Sociological Conference” best described the mission of those assembled in Nashville. With evening fast approaching, a committee was established to review the constitution and by-laws “in order that it might be presented in the best possible shape” to the general business session the next morning. Permanency status was also deferred until the next day. The board of directors then adjourned and made their way to the opening night festivities at the Ryman.⁷⁹

They reconvened at the Hermitage Hotel the next morning, May 8, prior to the general business session. Almost all agreed that permanency for the SSC was desirable and stressed mobilizing “southern resources and southern interest for advancing upon the common social problems of the nation.” Barnard’s vision of a uniquely southern organization dealing with regional social problems had been discarded in favor of Hooper’s opinion that southern ills were symptomatic of a larger national malady. Although Hooper echoed Barnard’s views in his February “Call,” his later “Challenge of

⁷⁹“Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1; “For Permanent Organization,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912. The “constitutional and by-laws committee” consisted of “Dr. McElway of Washington, Dr. Williams of Virginia, Professor C.S. Potts, University of Texas at Austin, Judge McCullough and Dr. W.S. Rankin of Raleigh, N.C.; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress, 12, 17-22; “Sixteen States in Southern Conference,” *Survey* 27, (23 March 1912): 1948; A. J. McKelway, “The Southern Sociological Congress, *Survey* 28, (1 June 1912): 359-361; The bylaws and constitution had been crafted by the preliminary executive committee twice a week for two months prior to the inaugural gathering. “Sociological Congress Opening Session Today,” *Nashville Democrat*, 7 May 1912, 1. Despite being deemed “sociological,” the SSC functioned as a social welfare entity. L. L. Bernard, sociologist at the University of Florida, observed that the SSC eschewed “the merely general” and eliminated “fine-spun theories” in favor of action. Hardly surprised, Bernard noted that the “southern conception of the scope and meaning of the sociology is radically different from that of the east.” Bernard realized that “sociology is practical, or nothing, in the South.” L. L. Bernard, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” *American Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 1 (July 1913): 91.

the Sociological Congress” emphasized the South rendering a service to the nation. Two days into the Congress directors achieved consensus. They also dismissed Kate Barnard’s combative view that the “northern dominated” National Conference of Charities and Corrections (NCCC) foisted northern views on all discussions of social problems.⁸⁰

The directors focused on coordinating with the National Conference, not competing with it. Such emphasis shaped the SSC into a pan-southern organization dedicated to reform and armed with awareness markedly national in scope. Consequently, southern and national luminaries were drawn into dialogue. The directors envisioned future SSC gatherings as venues where the South’s as yet “undeveloped talent for leadership in social service” could be tapped. Such interstate meetings would foster discussions among leaders with shared experiences – discussions that would be carried by southern newspapers, thus educating the public about social welfare causes. Certain directors also argued that southerners would more likely attend a southern congress than a meeting of the NCCC, except when that body met in a southern city. Alexander Johnson, general secretary of the National Conference estimated that attending the

⁸⁰Kate Barnard to Ben W. Hooper, 9 December 1911, Ben W. Hooper Papers; A. J. McKelway, “The Southern Sociological Congress, *Survey* 28, (1 June 1912): 359-361; “Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1; “For Permanent Organization,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 359, 374, 385. Grantham accurately describes the SSC as “a regional organization . . . showing greater awareness of social reforms in other parts of the country.” The SSC’s national vision was demonstrative of the new phase of southern progressivism ushered in by Woodrow Wilson’s administration when “southerners experienced and unaccustomed excitement – a thrill of pride and exhilaration – in the knowledge that one of their own had at last ascended to the presidency.”

national conference in a northern or western city would cost the 700 or 800 delegates at Nashville an additional \$30,000 in traveling expenses. The majority of directors agreed to make the SSC a permanent agency, to have annual meetings, and to hold them in conjunction with the NCCC whenever that organization convened in a southern city. The directors also decided to postpone ultimate action on permanency and gauge the sentiment of the general session later that morning. It seemed Hooper's vision of a "Solid South for a Better Nation" would be realized, but delayed.

Wednesday's general business session was called to order by George Detwiler in the First Presbyterian Church at 9:30 a.m. There – surrounded by the nave's brilliantly colored Egyptianesque columns replete with serpent heads, lotus blossoms, and papyrus forms. Thomas B. King of Memphis presided over the ensuing "informal discussion" on permanency. In short order, representatives from Alabama, Arkansas, and California spoke in favor of the SSC's permanent status. Sensing eminent passage, Mr. King then moved that the Southern Sociological Congress be made a permanent organization. The motion carried.⁸¹

Emboldened by the actions of the general business session on Wednesday, Alexander J. McKelway, chief southern agent of the National Child Labor Committee and chairman of the SSC's committee on organization, presented the directors' report at the general business session on Thursday. The report recommended permanency for the

⁸¹"Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night," *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 1912, 1; "Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress," *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1; "Sixteen States in Southern Conference," *Survey* 27, (23 March 1912): 1948; McKelway, "The Southern Sociological Congress," *Survey* 28, (1 June 1912): 359-361.

Southern Sociological Congress and outlined the constitution and by-laws. Both proposals were adopted with few changes or discussion, and the Southern Sociological Congress became a permanent organization.

Declaring that the Congress would “study and improve social, economic, and civil conditions in the South,” the SSC constitution and by-laws closely resembled that of the NCCC. Unlike the National Conference, the SSC was organized geographically, not institutionally. Because membership in the NCCC was based on an individual’s membership in a social welfare organization, the National Conference became an umbrella entity for those entities. In contrast, SSC regular membership was composed of “all persons interested in its work who shall register their names and pay the annual fee.” No organizational tie was necessary. Moreover, although members were designated “delegates” if appointed “by organizations and institutions engaged in social service,” delegate status was also awarded to those appointed “by the Governor of each state cooperating with [the SSC]” or by city mayors in cooperating states. As witnessed in Hooper’s correspondence with James E. McCulloch, the delegates in Nashville were more often than not appointed by a governor and thus identified more with their respective states than with any organizational affiliation. The SSC, therefore, became an organization of individuals grouped according to interests, an “organization of specialists . . . making it possible for every person interested to bring his efforts to bear directly upon the thing concerning which he has special knowledge or special ability.” Such structure, or lack thereof, helped explain why the full panoply of southern progressivism, indeed national progressivism, was on display in Nashville and at subsequent gatherings.

The constitution and by-laws also delineated duties of SSC officers and committees. The officer ranks of the SSC included a president who, as chief executive officer and chairman of the executive committee, supervised the work of the committees, accepted resignations, and filled officer and committee vacancies. The first and second vice-presidents attended meetings and existed solely to assume presidential duties if the office were vacated. The treasurer received and disbursed all revenues of the SSC as directed by the general secretary and approved by the president or executive committee member named by the president. The general secretary, undoubtedly the most powerful position with the longest list of responsibilities, was also ex-officio secretary of the executive committee. He was in charge of all SSC correspondence, maintained membership rolls, received all membership dues and reported them to the treasurer. Such duties earned the general secretary a salary and expense account that was determined by the executive committee. The general secretary position, on a motion by Gus W. Dyer, was made a full-time position.

On the last two evenings of the convention, during the general sessions, the “Committee on Permanent Organization” presented its recommendations for elected

⁸²Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 17-22; James E. McCulloch, “The Constitution and By-Laws of the Southern Sociological Congress” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 355-357; “Sociological Congress,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 6; “Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1; “Southern Sociological Congress Organizes on Permanent Basis,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 1, 11; McKelway, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” *Survey* 28, (1 June 1912): 359-361. Regular members paid \$2 a year, sustaining members paid \$10, and life members paid \$100.

officers, standing committee chairmen, standing committee membership, and state corresponding secretaries for the following year. Without discussion from the floor, the SSC delegates elected Governor Hooper as their president; Alexander J. McKelway, chairman of the committee on organization, as first vice-president; Kate Barnard as second vice-president; Marvin Early Holderness, a Nashville banker, as treasurer; and James E. McCulloch as general secretary. Delegates also elected standing committee chairmen, standing committee membership, and state corresponding secretaries absent of any challenges or debate from the floor.

The SSC's constitution and by-laws specified several committees and outlined their functions. The executive committee would consist of the president, treasurer, one member from each southern state elected annually by the Congress, and the ex-president of the Congress. In addition to the executive committee, the constitution and by-laws created standing committees correlated to each proposed subject of discussion for the upcoming annual meeting (also called departmental conferences), a committee on organization, and a committee – consisting of the standing committee chairmen – who crafted a social program and determined which committees had jurisdiction over particular resolutions.⁸³ Although the work of the executive and organization committees

⁸³With three to four executive committee members residing in Nashville between 1912 and 1915, the quorum requirement located the SSC's executive power in that city for a number of years. The executive committee included Mrs. W. L. Murdock of Birmingham, member of the National Conference of Charities and Correction; C. H. Brough of the University of Arkansas, professor of economics and sociology, future Arkansas governor, and future SSC president; Dr. Wickliffe Rose of Washington, D.C., trustee of the John F. Slater Fund and executive secretary of the Southern Education Board; L. L. Bernard of the University of Florida, professor of sociology; W. Woods White of Atlanta, chairman of the Georgia YMCA Committee; Bernard Flexner of

was significant, all substantive ethical issues were discussed in and shaped by the departmental conferences and general sessions. Among the multitude of issues presented by conference and session speakers, the plight of African Americans and the role of the social gospel in ameliorating all social issues seemed most obvious.⁸⁴

Louisville, noted attorney and Zionist; Miss Agnes Morris of Baton Rouge, director of the Bureau of Child Hygiene of the State Department of Health; H. Wirt Steele of Baltimore, member of the Maryland Board of State Aid and Charities; A. T. Stovall of Oklona, Mississippi; Charles A. Ellwood of the University of Missouri, professor of sociology; Clarence Poe of Raleigh, editor of *Progressive Farmer*; Mr. Hobart Huson of Oklahoma City, Assistant Commissioner of Charities and Correction of Oklahoma; Judge J. A. McCullough of Greenville, South Carolina; Mr. Whitfoord R. Cole of Nashville, president of the Napier Iron Works and member of Nashville's Industrial Bureau; Professor C. S. Potts of the University of Texas, chairman of the School of Government; Dr. J. T. Mastin of Richmond, general secretary of Virginia's State Board of Charities and Correction; Governor William E. Glasscock of West Virginia.

Standing committee chairmen were also selected. W. S. Rankin of North Carolina, secretary of the state board of health, would chair the "Public Health" committee. John H. Dewitt of Nashville, chairman of the SSC's preliminary executive committee and chairman of the SSC's board of directors, would head the "Courts and Prisons" committee. Alexander J. McKelway of the District of Columbia, chief southern agent of the National Child Labor Committee and chairman of the SSC's committee on organization, would steer the "Child Welfare committee. Joseph C. Logan of Atlanta, general secretary of Associated Charities of Atlanta and secretary of the SSC's board of directors, would guide the "Organized Charities" committee. James Hardy Dillard of New Orleans, president of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund Board, general secretary of the Slater Board, vice president of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and dean of Tulane University, would chair the "Negro Problem" committee. John Rice of Fort Worth, professor of religion at Southern Methodist University, would lead the "Church and Social Service" committee. "Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress," *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1; "Southern Sociological Congress Organizes on Permanent Basis," *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 1, 11; "Sociological Officers Named," *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 2; "Congress Holds Final Session," *Nashville Banner*, 11 May 1912, 2; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress, 17-22; McCulloch, "The Constitution and By-Laws," *Call of the New South*, 355-357; McKelway, "The Southern Sociological Congress, *Survey* 28, (1 June 1912): 359-361.

⁸⁴The six departments were Public Health, Organized Charity, Courts and Prisons, Negro Problems, The Church and Social Service, and Child Welfare;" "Southern Sociological Congress Organizes," *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 11.

The main societal interests of the Nashville assemblage were introduced in the eight general sessions held over four days at the First Presbyterian Church. Organized to air a sampling of discussions conducted in the afternoon departmental conferences, two general session meetings were held each day. Morning sessions lasted longer than those held in the evening and included eight to nine informative, often technical, speeches on specific issues related to an overall theme. The two or three speeches given at the evening sessions were more motivational, often sermon-like, in tone and quality.

Following the Tuesday night opening, Wednesday morning's ten o'clock gathering addressed a variety of children's issues. Speakers proposed sundry remedies for illiteracy, infant mortality, and child hygiene. They also addressed various issues associated with dependent children, delinquent children, "feeble-minded children," and "mountain children." In true southern progressive fashion, most speakers agreed that amelioration should come from the intervening government, business sector, or church. Those insisting on ecclesiastical action were the first of many Nashville orators linking the church with social service.⁸⁵

In the wake of oratory demanding that interventionist state governments save dependent children from the harsh working conditions of the textile mills, increase care for "feeble-minded" children, and reform the juvenile court system, Dr. George H.

⁸⁵In cataloguing the many characteristics of southern progressives, Dewey W. Grantham listed their desire for economic development, interest in increased regulatory power of the state, and greater enthusiasm for religion that stressed social reform. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xviii-xix. For the full itinerary of the inaugural meeting of the SSC see "Program of the Social Congress," *Nashville Tennessean and The Nashville American*, 7 May 1912, 8; "Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress, *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1, 9.

Detwiler – pastor of West End Methodist Church in Nashville and chair of the SSC arrangements committee – challenged the business sector to intercede in societal matters. In his address, “The Need of the Mountain Children,” Detwiler emphasized that successful ecumenical efforts depended on increased business intervention. Utilizing an array of facts and figures, he asserted that mountain whites, without question “the purest type of Anglo-Saxon citizenship to be found on the American continent,” were capable of the highest possible development. His characterizations to the contrary, mountain folk were victims of arrested development due to isolation. Although new agricultural techniques and industrial methods unleashed a social, political and religious transformation deemed the “New South,” Detwiler observed inaccurately that Appalachia had remained unchanged. Such status could be remedied with an influx of modern industry. More than the church, Detwiler found the railroad and the factory the most efficient missionaries, anticipating in many ways the philosophy of the 1960s Appalachian Regional Commission. The railroad “was open to a highway of communication with the outer world; the factory to develop indigenous resources and socialize the people.”⁸⁶

Qualifying his statements concerning the church, Detwiler assured attendees that modern industrial forces were neither more significant nor more effective than religion

⁸⁶G. H. Detwiler “The Mountain Whites of the South,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. James E. McCulloch (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1912), 62-66). “Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1, 9; Cora Bristol-Nelson “The Care and Training of Feeble-Minded Children” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 40-44; Bernard Flexner “The Child and the Court,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 37-40.

but were a necessary impetus for transformation. Moreover, such forces would positively challenge the hermeneutic of mountain whites. Appalachian people were intensely religious and well supplied with churches, Detwiler observed, but their theology needed revision and their religious life needed socializing. Still, Detwiler's paternalistic tone was somewhat mitigated when he insisted that any mission-minded endeavor – religious, educational or social – be indigenous in order to overcome the media's misleading description of mountain folk.

Not all in the great assembly hall agreed with Detwiler's remedy. In the ensuing discussion, James I. Vance of Nashville – Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, future moderator of the Presbyterian Church, U.S, and future chairman of the Federal Council of Churches – voiced his surprise that Dr. Detwiler offered railroads and factories as Appalachia's salvation. Informing those assembled that he was “one of the mountain whites to whom our New England friends send their missionaries,” Vance offered Christian industrial education as mountain folk's salvation, not dependence on uncertain, invasive industrial forces.⁸⁷ Although unable to agree on a remedy for the plight of Appalachian folk, both Detwiler and Vance shared theological and ecclesiological views rooted in a social gospel theology influenced by specifically southern situations and settings.⁸⁸

⁸⁷G. H. Detwiler “The Mountain Whites of the South” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 62-66; “Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 9.

⁸⁸Graham Taylor, “The Southern Awakening” *Survey* 28, (14 September 1912): 744. Other speeches were given during the Tuesday morning general session. Mrs. Kate Waller Barrett of Alexandria, Virginia – president of the National Florence Crittenden

Religious imagery permeated the oratory of the Congress.⁸⁹ Influenced heavily by the inescapable evangelical Christianity of the South, some speeches emphasized the spiritual dimensions of Christianity, the pietistic component of the Christian life, and the need for spiritual salvation. Most, while employing one or more such themes, accentuated the temporal responsibilities of Christianity, the imperative to social service, the communitarian over the individualistic, “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men,” and all action which hastened the kingdom of God on earth. Indeed, the social Christianity of the seminary infused the faith of those who gathered in Nashville, Atlanta, Memphis, Houston, Birmingham, Blue Ridge, New Orleans, Knoxville, and Washington D.C. from 1912 to 1920. The religious leaders of the SSC perceived their religion as a manifestation of the social gospel – “the application of the teaching of Jesus Christ and the total message of the Christian salvation to society, the economic life, and social

Mission – spoke on the “Rights and Hindrances of Dependent Children.” Miss Agnes Morris of Baton Rouge – organizer of Women’s Clubs in Louisiana – talked about “Child Hygiene.” S.G. Gilbreath of Johnson City, Tennessee – superintendent of East Tennessee Normal School – outlined “The Extent of Illiteracy in the South.” Gertrude Knipp of Baltimore – Executive Secretary of American Association for Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality – spoke on “Infant Mortality.” Dr. Hastings H. Hart of New York City – director of the Child Helping Department of Russell Sage Foundation – opined on “The Relative Value of the Institutional and Placing-Out Systems.” “Program of the Social Congress,” *Nashville Tennessean and The Nashville American*, 7 May 1912, 8; “Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress, *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1, 9.

⁸⁹Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920,” 41. Culley, “Muted Trumpets: Four Efforts to Better Southern Race Relations, 1900-1919,” 142. At the first gathering in Nashville ten of the fifty-two speakers had a ministerial background (almost 20 percent), and three of those were bishops. Even more ministers were present at Atlanta a year later.

institutions . . . as well as to individuals,”⁹⁰

The theology of the social gospel was clearly articulated by Dr. Henry E. Cope of Chicago – general secretary of that city’s Religious Education Association – when he outlined the “Relation of Educational and Social Work” at Wednesday evening’s general session at the First Presbyterian Church. Considering the interconnectedness of humanity, Cope claimed society was entering a new age where “we are just beginning to think, not in terms of man, but in terms of manhood; not of the individual, but of the society; not only of persons, but of persons as integral parts of a larger personality.” Along these same lines, Cope refused to perceive the SSC as “a convention of professors of sociology, each anxious to astonish all the others with the baffling intricacy of his social theories.” Rather, Cope regarded the organization as “a parliament of those who see wide enough and far enough to take all living in the terms of one common life, to

⁹⁰For the Social Gospel see Shailer Mathews, “Social Gospel,” in *A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, ed. Mathews, Shailer and Smith, Gerald Birney (New York, 1921), p. 416; Arthur Meier Schlesinger, “A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900,” *Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings* 64 (1932), 542; Charles H. Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1940), 319; Aaron I. Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1943), 57; Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America* (New York, 1949), 170; Kenneth K. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism in The Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 164; Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion: A History of Southern Baptists, 1865-1900* (Kingsport: Vanderbilt University Press, 1961), 210-212; Ronald C. White, Jr. and Hopkins, C. Howard, *The Social Gospel* (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1976), 86; Ronald C. White, Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel, 1877-1925* (San Francisco, 1990), x; J. Wayne Flynt, “Dissent in Zion: Alabama Baptists and Social Issues, 1900-1914,” *Journal of Southern History* 35 (Winter 1969): 542; John Lee Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (University of Tennessee, Knoxville 1987), 65-66; Ralph E. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885-1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 1-6.

think of the fact that everywhere we are living as a society, and to know that we will never have right living until we know the laws of this larger social life, until we have harmonious and right social adjustment.” Cope was sure those associated with the SSC would propagate the view that all of society was an interdependent whole in need of complete social transformation. Calls for “uplift here, reform there, patching here, and meditation there” would no longer suffice. Society had to change at the most elemental level. “Social realization rather than social reform” had to become the mantra of the faithful if harmony, coordination, cooperation and unity were to rise out of the ashes of conflict and chaos. Key to Cope’s vision of social justice was a massive revision of the educational apparatus.

Cope opined that the educational system in all its multifaceted forms failed the masses because it stressed individualism over interdependence. It failed to emphasize the importance of education in public living and its role in public advancement. The church was the worst offender of all. Cope was sure that half the causes of social ills would diminish, if not disappear, if churches stopped “developing individuals in an individualistic type of piety and for individual salvation.”

Cope asserted that a new “democratic education” was necessary to counter the individualism of “social conflict, misery, waste, and at last anarchy and ruin.” The educational status quo, replete with rampant individualism, should be supplanted by an educational system interested in fostering equal rights and the obligation to serve others over particular privilege. It would train the individual for social living, which would then hasten the kingdom of social realization. The new kingdom of God would not

come “through machinery; it will not come through ordering and adjustment; it will not come through legislation.” Borrowing a phrase from Leo Tolstoy, Cope insisted that the new kingdom would “come from within,” born “in the realm of motives, ideals, and volition.” Moreover, no man could be forced into the new kingdom; he must desire to come. Catalyzing the new kingdom would be a host of educational institutions, homes, churches, and Sunday schools training men and women “to will the way of social righteousness.” Education changed minds. Education developed “the power to will right,” quickened emotions, guided aspirations, dealt “with the springs of conduct.” Education sought justice. Men were oppressed, observed Cope, because they wanted cheap goods and big profits; lives were crushed in poverty because others demanded abundance and luxury. Education altered the soul. “We will never cure our social ills” claimed Cope, “until we cure our own hearts The times are out of joint because our own hearts are out of harmony.” Ultimately, according to Cope, education would supplant individualism with communitarian interdependence.⁹¹

Cope’s social gospel vision wasn’t the only one articulated in the general sessions at Nashville. Gathered Thursday morning in the Ryman for the fourth general session,

⁹¹Henry Cope, “Education and Social Service,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 249, 254, 257. Owen R. Lovejoy also spoke on Wednesday evening. Owen R. Lovejoy “Child Labor and Compulsory Education,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 67-72; “Program of the Social Congress,” *Nashville Tennessean and The Nashville American*, 7 May 1912, 8; “Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1, 9; Leo Tolstoy’s *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, was first published in Germany in 1894, after being banned in his home country of Russia. It advocated organizing society based on a literal Christian interpretation of scripture and demanded nonviolence when faced with evil. Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You: Christianity Not as a Mystic Religion but as a New Theory of Life* (London: William Heineman, 1894), 1.

delegates heard an assortment of oratory calling for a multitude of modifications. Speakers demanded an end to indeterminate and open-ended prison sentencing, insisted on more vocational training and general education for prisoners, called for the abolition of the convict lease system, pressed for more inspections of unsanitary jails, exhorted city governments to provide more playgrounds and recreation centers in high crime areas, and enumerated the benefits of systematic aid for released prisoners. Interspersed throughout the presentations were tinges of a social gospel that emphasized the interconnectedness of a humanity gathered under the authority of an immanent Godhead.

Gus W. Dyer of Nashville – Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University and vice-chairman of the SSC’s preliminary executive committee – opened the session quoting Leo Tolstoy: “you cannot overcome evil with evil, but you must overcome the evil, if you overcome it at all, with good.” For Dyer, and more than a few other session speakers, overcoming evil with good meant providing a better environment inside and outside prison walls. Dyer stressed the importance of prisons becoming opportunities to reform the criminal and restore him to an orderly life. Dyer’s restorative vision was undergirded by a Christian message of brotherhood and love that viewed the devalued as venerable. He even supposed that the “worthless criminal and pauper” could stand and fight the noble battle. Even the prisoner could become pure and virtuous. Dyer recalled meeting a Chattanooga Salvation Army worker who stressed the importance of surrounding the “unworthy” with a positive, hopeful environment conducive to uplift. Fully grasping the redemptive possibilities for criminals, asserted Dyer, would initiate a complete revolution. Thousands of these men using their lives to destroy society, “if

approached in the right way and by the right people,” would become powers for social righteousness and devote their lives to build up rather than tear down society. Social revolution hinged on the societal environment outside the penitentiary becoming less conducive to crime and circumstances inside the prison walls becoming more contributive toward true conversion.⁹²

Other speakers echoed Dyer’s two-fold theme of societal and bureaucratic reform. Phillip Weltner of Atlanta – General Secretary of the Prison Association of Georgia – wondered why the state expected so little of the policeman, “when his real function takes equal rank with the ministry itself.” Weltner insisted that law enforcement must be reformed: “the blue-coat,” inspired to seek higher ground, must learn his duties as guardian of the peace and must therefore treat all individuals with integrity. Such change would surely remedy a system where crimes were punished without consideration of the man being prosecuted and courts debased rather than uplifted.

Weltner attached systemic change to his accompanying call for environmental change. In the neighborhoods of Atlanta where most arrests were made, Weltner observed that there was no respectable means of recreation, only diversions provided by cheap dance halls, vaudeville, bars, and dives. For Weltner, the remedy was obvious, if not heavy handed: the city should replace the five or six blocks of “thirty-seven negro beer saloons, . . . four blood-and thunder moving picture places, and twenty odd houses

⁹²G. W. Dyer “The Purpose of Imprisonment,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 89-91; “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 11.

of ill-fame” with a recreation center. This singular act of social control would reduce crime by offering neighborhood African Americans a positive recreational option.⁹³

For Emory Lyon of Chicago – Superintendent of Central Howard Prison Association – the work to reform prisoners began upon release. Although training in the trades should be offered to the penitentiary resident, practical assistance in the form of systematic aid was also needed for released prisoners. Lyon insisted that “widespread, personal, practical, brotherly interest in the man who seeks to take up again the broken threads of life” seriously reduced recidivism rates. He produced figures demonstrating 70 to 80 per cent of those aided in a practical way responded satisfactorily. Such success energized his call for cooperation among officials, employers, social service workers, and all good citizens and ensured that “no man . . . leave the prison gate without a friend, adviser, and counsellor [sic].” For Lyons, such assistance, such Christian action, was imperative if they were to seriously demonstrate actual belief in the Brotherhood of Man.⁹⁴

Louis J. Bernhardt of Atlanta – Secretary of the Georgia Prison Association – focused on the immorality infused throughout southern penitentiary systems. A prisoner himself for twenty-two years and currently an evangelist to prisoners, Bernhardt spoke of

⁹³Phillip Weltner, “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 11; Philip Weltner “Municipal and Misdemeanor Offenders,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 108, 112.

⁹⁴F. Emory Lyon, “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 11; Philip Weltner “Municipal and Misdemeanor Offenders,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 108, 112; F. Emory Lyon “The Object of Imprisonment,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 122-124.

the needless “garb of dishonor, the stripes,” and the cruel lash. Both failed “to bring out the moral qualities of a man . . . to lead a man up into the better walks of life.”

Bernhardt also revealed that prison foreman and other officers were often worse criminals than the men held in the cells. He wondered how moral misdeeds of prison officials affected the average prisoner. Concerning the issue of convict leasing, Bernhardt asked how a state claiming to morally reform and remake the criminal had a right to rob wives and children of their bread-winner “for the sake of making a few men rich at the expense of fallen humanity.”

Bernhardt offered an evangelical solution to the immorality of the penitentiary. “Judging from my own personal experience,” he stated, “what we need in the penitentiary systems of America today is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Like many of the attendees, however, Bernhardt’s evangelical religion was informed by the social gospel. He further elaborated his theological remedy: “And when I say the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I don’t mean to get up on a platform and preach, and sing and pray. . . . We can carry the gospel of Jesus Christ in the form of human favors.” Bernhardt espoused an evangelicalism of social action: “Give an opportunity for education for those who have been deprived of that opportunity. . . . carry the gospel of Jesus Christ in the form of serviceable labor that will prepare the man to earn his own living when he comes out of prison.” He also demanded an evangelicalism of political change: “we can carry the gospel of Jesus Christ into our State Legislature, that they may make some provision for a man after he pays the penalty of his crime, so that he may not be forced back into a life of crime when he meets the world again.” Much like James E. McCulloch, and many

other church leaders at the 1912 gathering, Bernhardt proffered a soteriology calling for more than just individual salvation. He wanted the church to save society one individual at a time.⁹⁵

Bernhardt's oratory moved at least one social gospel titan in attendance to respond. Graham Taylor of Chicago – Professor of Applied Christianity at Chicago Theological Seminary and founder of the Chicago Commons settlement house – wanted to know how a community with such a penal system could label itself Christian. Angered by “communities of Christians that are not Christian communities,” Taylor declared that many localities were “unmaking and unmaning” men in tax-supported prisons. He questioned how a penal system could justify placing boys from 18 to 25 years of age, first offenders, with repeat offenders. Taylor opined angrily that a system meant to reform, a system designed to elicit penance, had become a “seeding-down” place for crime. The situation was unconscionable: “When a poor victim becomes what his surroundings force him to be, then society, with as much conscience as religion, puts the penalty of the law upon him.” The professor closed with a benedictory call to action: “If anything on God's earth should touch the quick of the conscience of any people claiming to be free Americans, or Christians, it is these unvarnished but awfully sharp and hard facts which this session of Congress is hearing.” Taylor's sermon-esque oratory

⁹⁵Louis J. Bernhardt “The Prisoner's Side,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 129-134; “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 11; McCulloch, *The Open Church For the Unchurched*, 170, 174, 178-179, 185-191, 194-200, 206.

would hardly be the last altar call at the inaugural meeting.⁹⁶

Thursday evening's session felt like a revival as several hundred people poured into First Presbyterian to discuss church work. Taking the dais to speak of "Co-ordination and Co-operation" among social agencies, John M. Glenn of New York – general secretary of the Russell Sage foundation – premised his remarks: "never in the history of this country had there been a more important or a more significant meeting than this Sociological Congress." The SSC 's throngs testified that "the people of this country had come to believe that better conditions should prevail and that men who work should have a fairer deal, a larger opportunity."

Echoing Henry E. Cope's views on interconnectedness, Glenn noted that successful social work required cooperation and coordination. Many social agencies, however, found it as difficult as individuals to love their neighbors and to remember that all were "members one of another." Glenn observed how social agencies often failed to look beyond their own limits for allies who could accomplish beneficial and necessary tasks. As a result, these agencies became overloaded and many who needed help were kept in misery. Glenn insisted that cooperating agencies had to coordinate their resources in order to remedy misery among the "least of these." Glenn considered the churches most responsible for enlightening others about the causes of every wrong and evil.

Because churches taught "as a cardinal doctrine the brotherhood of man," they

⁹⁶Graham Taylor "An Observation," in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 137.

were theologically bound to be socially responsible. By becoming social agents aware of both congregational and community circumstances, the churches would begin truly to live spiritually. No church, asserted Glenn, could claim to be righteous if they refused to seek out the social evils in their community in a spirit of cooperation and coordination with other social agencies. Glenn envisioned regional churches developing comprehensive programs with social, commercial, and municipal agencies that would eliminate the sources of every social evil and create “more closely knit communities and a higher citizenship that will produce healthier, pleasanter [sic], more beautiful and more righteous cities.”

While stressing cooperation and coordination, Glenn realized that community and individual needs could not be met by merely giving material relief to the poor and contributing to social agencies. Social agencies, and especially the church, had to address the injustices, the root causes, that gave rise to social maladies like child labor and low industrial standards. Failure to alleviate the causes of social misery, such as immorality and living conditions that depleted human strength and spiritual life, was an intolerable community scandal. Glenn observed churches utilizing meager ameliorative methods to address poverty. Such myopic action resulted in many aid recipients being locked “in poverty and misery by easy-going, pittance-giving methods.” Glenn was sure that ecclesial action founded on a thorough knowledge of conditions would eliminate root causes of societal ills and free the unfortunate person from mere aid.⁹⁷ Other

⁹⁷“Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 2; John M. Glenn, “Cooperation and Coordination,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 267, 269, 270, 271, 272.

speakers followed Glenn with similar suggestions.

Dr. Charles S. MacFarland of New York – executive secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and its Commission on the Church and Social Service – offered an address on “The Church and Modern Industry.” Analyzing the world order, MacFarland considered the church “the conscience, the interpreter, the guide of our Democracy.” But the progress of the church was being retarded by the current social and industrial order. Because industrialism had morphed into “the chief element in our democratic order and its sovereign movements,” congregants no longer had the luxury of observing the cultural shift as “calm, dispassionate, economic students.” Instead, activist churches had to create a new environment that would ensure their relevance. At the vanguard of this new creation would be the previously neglected and new task that was social service.

And yet, MacFarland asserted that social service was hardly new. The Church had “always been, either indirectly or directly, the leader, the inspirer, the supporter of philanthropy, charity and social uplift,” and stood “without the suggestion or intimation of a peer.” Accolades aside, the church had failed. She had failed, as had all institutions, to adjust to a new environment. It was now incumbent on the church, as the great physician, to repair the social damage and restore the social order.

For MacFarland, a new theological paradigm connecting past with present had to be built and maintained. The “Church’s Industrial Creed” of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America rested on such a paradigm. The new creed called for equal rights and justice for all men: protection of workers’ livelihoods despite industrial

change; arbitration between management and labor; safer industrial conditions; the abolition of child labor; regulation of working conditions for women; the suppression of the “sweating system;” the reduction of labor hours to the lowest practicable point; a greater degree of leisure including one day of rest per week; a living wage in every industry; the highest wage that each industry can afford; an equitable division of the products of labor; suitable provisions for the elderly and disabled; and a sympathetic pledge of assistance for a labor cause which belongs to all who follow Christ. For MacFarland, the new creed was essentially “the older Creed—‘I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ our Lord’—simply this, translated into common human terms, and that is all.” For MacFarland, the new Industrial Creed, placed side by side with the older Creed, could serve as guidance for the church’s new challenge to modern industrial reality. Like Glenn, MacFarland also insisted that cooperation and coordination were essential to the Church’s social service venture.

MacFarland opined that the Church was obliged to seek state assistance. The issues embodied in the Industrial Creed involved more than simply persuading individual employers to be morally responsible. Entire industries had to conform. They had to deal not only with ideals, but with an economic system. Church and state had to engage in a symbiotic relationship that would realize reform: The church was “to do her work in the order of modern industry by bringing to bear upon it the idealism of her Gospel and by infusing it with the impulse of her sympathy.” The state was tasked with producing proper economic conditions that allowed the idealism of the Gospel “to have as clear and fair a field as possible.” In this way, the church was more than justified, Macfarland

opined, “not in entangling herself in economic machinery, but in turning to the State for a cooperation which will enable her to do her sacred task.” Cooperation between ecclesial and political forces were mandatory if the church’s social service was to restore a balanced social order. Essentially, MacFarland decreed, the church had no actual choice but cooperative social service: “She must do it or revise her Gospel. . . . It is one thing or the other—the Teaching of Jesus or the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche; God or Mammon; Barabbas or Christ.”⁹⁸

For MacFarland and other SSC delegates, remedying racial problems was key to restoring the social order. Viewing African American social issues through the hermeneutic of the social gospel, many SSC delegates were racial moderates who accepted segregation and black disfranchisement but also called for interracial accommodation – the joint effort of southern blacks and whites to ease the unjust burden that was borne by African Americans. Such work allowed, indeed required, physical integration without mandating social integration. Such interracialism was clearly evident when the SSC convened for the sixth general session on Friday morning. It would also inform the seventh and eighth general sessions.⁹⁹

⁹⁸Charles MacFarland “The Church and Modern Industry,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 292-307; “Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 2; “Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 2; W. Woods White “The Money Shark Business,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 240-246. Woods White of Atlanta spoke on “The Money Shark Business” following MacFarland. White conveyed the story of how an organization of businessmen in Atlanta had significantly undermined the loan shark business by creating a bank to loan at a “reasonable rate of interest.”

⁹⁹Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 4-7, 85-88, 484-486; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 240-267; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xix-xxii, 246-261,

The *Banner* reported on Friday, May 10, that “no single feature of the first session” had been more “vitaly interesting than were the addresses of this morning touching the negro problems.” Indeed, hundreds had gathered in the Ryman to hear speakers discuss social issues associated with African Americans. Most speakers espoused a social gospel theology informed by unique southern contingencies: a set of beliefs, more specifically, that uplifted African Americans would hasten Christ’s kingdom on earth.¹⁰⁰

Dr. Charles I. Minor of Asheville, noted tuberculosis specialist, opened the Negro problems session detailing the tuberculosis epidemic in African American communities. Like many in attendance, Minor’s racial views, rooted in “scientific findings,” seemed to suggest the inferiority of African Americans: “Certain races, and especially the Indian and the negro, are apparently constitutionally prone to the disease and show a very bad resisting power, while other races, like the Jews, especially when they adhere to the excellent hygienic laws of their faith, show an unusual resistance.” Minor realized that the tuberculosis problem, like other societal woes, was less about genetics than environment. Eradication was possible, he asserted, because prevention was essentially a sociological question: “It is a matter of the education of the ignorant poor to decent habits of living. It is a question of proper tenements with adequate ventilation and light and water. It is a question of workshop sanitation and of shorter hours of labor and of a

374-385.

¹⁰⁰“Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 1.

living wage.” Minor focused the remainder of his speech on the last point especially.

The seemingly unsolvable problem of assuring everyone sufficient means for a decent living underlaid all sociological questions. Though economically egalitarian, Minor eschewed Marxist dogma. Rather, he envisioned an eschatological time in the evolution of humanity when racial and class related social ills would be solved, “not perhaps by Socialism, although so many now acclaim its virtues, but by the application in every-day life of the old truths taught so long ago in Judea by the Great Teacher, whose wisdom we all acclaim, but whose principles of brotherly love so few of us find ourselves able to follow.” Minor’s millennial day was hardly independent of humanity’s action. Humanity had been charged with uplifting our “brother in black,” as well as the great industrial class. Calling humanity to heed Augustine’s call – “I am a man and nothing affecting humanity can be alien to me” – he insisted that all take a wholehearted interest in their brothers for their own sake. Such interest was imperative for the Christian and all humanity: the kingdom would come only when the African-American and the industrial class were uplifted.¹⁰¹

Slightly more pessimistic of the African American plight, Oscar Dowling of Shreveport, president of Louisiana’s state board of health, spoke of “The Negro and Public Health.” Suggesting the innate inferiority of African Americans, Dowling viewed African Americans more as one single community health problem than as sick individuals. He listed poverty, irresponsibility, thriftlessness, and a lack of social

¹⁰¹“Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night,” *Banner*, 10 May 1912, 1; Charles I. Minor, “The Sociological Aspect of the Tuberculosis Problem,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 178-180, 185-186.

conscience as elements representing a chain of causation resulting in one-third of the ten million southern blacks living in an environment that propagated disease. Still, despite his rather negative view of blacks, Dowling held out hope for redemption and, unlike southerners with a conservative mentality, stopped short of strictly defining the African American's place in society.

Dowling stated that true reform would occur if "the ethical basis of the race" were seriously altered. Such reform depended on blacks attaining economic stability which would then lead to greater responsibility and thriftiness. Moreover, Dowling insisted that education was a fundamental necessity to "fit the negro" for society and elevate the African American out of squalor. He also called for legislation and its enforcement by health officers to eliminate "the vice diseases" of syphilis and gonorrhea.

In the end, Dowling's tone was optimistic despite his assertion that the root cause for African Americans not accepting civilization and citizenship was innate and racial, not environmental. Dowling, like Minor, suggested that African Americans would become desirable members of society as they rose in civilization. Such predictions reflected the liberal hope that the beleaguered black man or woman could absorb white culture and attain a certain level of status in white society.¹⁰²

Unlike the tentative Dowling, other orators of the general sessions and departmental conferences fully embraced, and even augmented, the interracialist vision.

¹⁰²Oscar Dowling, "The Negro and Public Health," in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 212-216; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 4-7, 85-88, 484-486; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 240-267; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xix-xxii, 246-261, 374-385.

No speaker provided more positive predictions about the African American's future than Nashville's Willis D. Weatherford. Originally planning to pursue a degree in theology, Willis D. Weatherford instead completed his doctoral studies in literature at Vanderbilt in 1902. Then he promptly accepted the position of International YMCA Student Secretary for Colleges of the South and Southwest, a position that appealed to his desire for pastoral and pedagogical service. The job required the young idealist to travel throughout the South where he was responsible for two hundred "Y" campus chapters in fourteen states. In a typical year, Weatherford visited seventy-five schools, lectured two to four times a day and daily interviewed at least two dozen students and faculty members. Such forays exposed Weatherford to the racial ills, attitudes, and tensions that plagued the region. Influenced by his social-gospel-infused Methodism, Weatherford emphasized the interdependence of whites and blacks. He predicated the survival of both ethnic groups on the vital paternalistic efforts of whites in his 1910 opus, *Negro Life in the South*. In it, he declared, "It is not the negro that is on trial before the world, but it is we, the white men of the South." Such issues of religion and ethnicity were foremost in his mind when he spoke to the SSC's sixth general session in Nashville. In 1908, Weatherford also organized an interracial YMCA conference that called for cooperative study of the "race problem." As a result, the YMCA organized home mission classes where both blacks and whites studied racial issues, utilizing *Negro Life in the South* as a discussion text.¹⁰³

¹⁰³Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 235-236; Sara Trowbridge Combs, "Race Reform in the Early Twentieth Century South: The Life and Work of Willis Duke Weatherford," (M.A. thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2004), 27-39, 51-57;

In his address, “The Negro and the New South,” Weatherford argued that the South had been reborn economically and intellectually. It had taken southern agriculture forty years to rebound from the losses of the Civil War, but farm values had experienced a net gain of 102 percent between 1900 and 1910. Such figures proved undisputedly that this “New South” was the economic miracle of the world. Likewise, the past eleven years saw marvelous changes, with student enrollment doubling and professor’s incomes increasing at southern colleges and universities. A “regular renaissance” had swept over the college world as a similar awakening was witnessed in public school systems. Such evidence proved to Weatherford that southerners were living in a new intellectual South.

But, true progress could not be measured by economic and intellectual advancement alone. Such gains absent any improvement in a region’s attitude toward humanity were futile and hollow. Though possessions and knowledge were a basis for greatness, Weatherford was sure that “the essence of our greatness must be in the attitude we have toward our fellowmen.” Like other southern liberals of his time, Weatherford viewed the entire progressive decade through the lens of race, and he considered the “new appreciation of the value and sacredness of the person” as “the most marked characteristic of the thought of the first decade of this century.” Moreover, he based the significance of the SSC on its actions to uplift African Americans: “A Congress like this has absolutely no meaning save insofar as we attach sacredness and value to personality.

Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 485; Dykeman, *Prophet of Plenty*, 66-71; Culley, “Muted Trumpets,” 141-142., 132. Weatherford’s Blue Ridge Assembly, built with donations from Northern philanthropists, hosted a variety of YMCA gatherings, the SSC in 1917, the University Commission on Southern Race Questions, various interracial groups, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

And when you say personality that means all personality, it means the bad as well as the good, it means the defective as well as the efficient, it means the unattractive as well as the attractive, it means the diseased as well as the physically sound—yes, more than all these, it means the black as well as the white.” Anything less than complete fulfillment of such sacred duty would make the Congress a mere mockery and the delegates “sham men and women trying to play at make-believe interest in humanity.”

Invoking Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*, Weatherford insisted that all humanity, including African Americans, must be treated “as if he were valuable in himself, not simply as if he were valuable to us as a tool which we may use for our own aggrandizement.” To do otherwise, to value African Americans as a mere “hewer of wood and a drawer of water,” dehumanized both black and white. Weatherford noted that the esteemed Booker T. Washington shared similar sentiments when he stated, “I cannot hold any man in the gutter without staying in the gutter myself.” Expanding on Washington’s philosophical foundation, Weatherford further asserted: “The South cannot take the attitude of despising the negro without implicitly despising humanity as humanity. The very foundation of all civilization lies in an appreciation for the individual person.” For Weatherford, the SSC’s primary function was to address the supreme race question of whether the white race would value “humanity as humanity” and embrace “a kindly, sympathetic attitude toward the negro as a part of humanity.” The members of the SSC had “to begin to think of the negro as a human being, whom God

has put here to be developed, ennobled, made worthy and useful.”¹⁰⁴

The last speaker of the session embraced Weatherford’s call but approached all racial problems with a moralist mindset. Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts of Washington D. C., superintendent of the International Reform Association, headlined the seventh general session.. A “Christian lobbyist, ” Crafts had urged the U.S. Congress to restrict divorce, control sexuality, limit or prohibit the use of narcotics and alcohol, censor films, and enact Sabbath laws. Consistent with his proscriptive moral agenda, he noted that the South, compared with the East and West, was “the most American, the most moral, the most religious, the most Sabbath observing, and has the largest percentage of saloonless territory.” For this reason, the South was best equipped to handle the race problem.

Despite his paternalistic insistence that unintelligent suffrage should be “corrected by the impartial disfranchisement of all ignorance, white or black,” Crafts acknowledged the wrongs committed against blacks by whites and listed the existence of “two separate races, accustomed to independent action in religion, education, and other branches of activity” as a primary disadvantage. Because of ethnic separation, separate and unequal racially segregated institutions, and a litany of social ills, Crafts hoped that the SSC would mark a turning point for Southern churches who had generally failed to

¹⁰⁴Willis D. Weatherford “The Negro and the New South,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 220-225; “Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 1, 14; Alexander Johnson “The Care of the Degenerate,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 171; C. P. Wertenbaker “My Experience in Organizing Negro Anti-Tuberculosis Leagues,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 216-220; J. L. Ludlow, “National Deterioration by Neglect of Public Health,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 194-197; William H. Samford, “Fundamental Inequalities of Administration of Laws,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 124-129.

recognize that “the church is called to apply the principles of righteousness not alone to individuals but to the whole social life, to business and politics and pleasures: to the city, the state, and the nation.” Crafts called upon a socialized church to address the racial situation in the South--to condemn lynch mobs, to assist African Americans in developing better family and community lives for the sake of both races, and to better educate blacks. Moreover, Crafts hoped that acknowledging the church’s social role would lead Christian businessmen and college professors to become social service leaders.¹⁰⁵

The eighth general and final session featured the luminous Dr. Graham Taylor, president of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy and noted social gospeler. Highlighting the “Qualifications of the Social Worker,” Taylor startled “his hearers into breathless silence one moment” and inspired them “to spontaneous and enthusiastic applause the next.” Arousing such fervor was the Chicago professor’s exposition of the greater American social movement and its four component parts: the movement for more effective philanthropy; the movement for better civic administration; the movement to humanize industry, and the movement to socialize and humanize religion. Taylor was quick to qualify socialized religion as the catalyst that would crystalize change in the other three realms. Paraphrasing Giuseppe Mazzini, the Italian revolutionary democrat, he insisted that every economic or industrial problem was essentially a religious problem.

¹⁰⁵“Leadership in Social Work,” *Nashville Banner*, 11 May 1912, 1, 2; Wilbur F. Crafts “The Potential Resources of the South for Leadership in Social Service,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 313-19; Lyda Gordon Shivers, “The Social Welfare Movement in the South: A Study in Regional Culture and Social Organization,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, UNC, Chapel Hill: 1935), 53-54.

In Taylor's estimation, the organization doing most to address society's religious problem was the Men and Religion Forward Movement.

Taylor maintained that the Men and Religion Forward Movement was stirring men in the churches to work for and with their own communities as never before. Clearly, such revival demonstrated that more folks cared for others than ever before in the history of the world. Moreover, such civic and social awakening would undoubtedly progress until it would be impossible to have communities of Christians that were not Christian communities. Ecumenical in tone, Taylor embraced the individualistic religion that Wilbur Crafts repudiated. He warned: do "not be driven to the alternative of saying that you must either work for the individual or for his surroundings. Work both ends of the line at once." For Taylor, a social gospeler and a pietistic evangelical worked in concert: "You cannot work for the individual successfully without working for his surroundings. Moreover, if good men help to make surroundings better, good surroundings also help to make men good." Taylor envisioned all of God's children with a place in the choir, working to save individuals by saving society and saving society by saving individuals. Along with other theological themes articulated by general session orators, Taylor's emphasis on social service realizing social salvation accentuated the social gospel's influence on the Nashville gathering.¹⁰⁶

Historians have noted that the social gospel was hardly a unified social or

¹⁰⁶Graham Taylor "Qualifications of Social Workers," in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 346, 349-352; "Sociological Leaders Talk," *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 7; Charles A. Ellwood, "The Divorce Problem," in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 238.

theological movement. With prophets in sundry civic, business, academic, and ecclesiastical sectors, multitudinous socialized messages were shaped by unique and localized contingencies. Although the multifaceted oratory in Nashville supported such historiographical assertions, certain stylized social gospel themes emerged. Those motifs deserve further examination.¹⁰⁷

Roughly half of the general session speakers in Nashville utilized social gospel themes of human interdependence, social salvation, and an expected millennial moment. When Henry E. Cope spoke of persons being “integral parts of a larger personality” he was emphasizing the interdependence of all humanity that laid at the heart of his concept of society. Likewise, John M. Glenn of the Russell Sage Foundation stressed that individuals must learn to love their neighbors and “remember that we are members one of another.”¹⁰⁸

For many social gospel speakers, the concept of interdependence existed alongside a belief in social salvation. Christian lobbyist Wilbur F. Crafts asserted that “the church is called to apply the principles of righteousness not alone to individuals but to the whole social life.” Although Cope was sure that “half the causes of our present ills” would disappear if churches stopped “developing individuals in an individualistic type of piety and for individual salvation,” most orators emphasized the importance of

¹⁰⁷Christopher H. Evans, *The Kingdom is Always but Coming: A Life of Walter Rauschenbusch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2004) xxiv.

¹⁰⁸Henry Cope, “Education and Social Service,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 249, 254, 257; John M. Glenn, “Cooperation and Coordination,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 267, 269, 270, 271, 272.

individual and social salvation. Graham Taylor seemed to embrace an individual-based soteriology when he advised “not be driven to the alternative of saying that you must either work for the individual or for his surroundings.” Likewise, Louis J. Bernhardt of the Georgia Prison Association clearly advocated an evangelicalism of social change and political action. Like many of the SSC speakers, he insisted that transforming individuals would ultimately transform society.¹⁰⁹

In Nashville, residents of the rostrum predicted kingdom-like societal transformation. Gus W. Dyer of Vanderbilt University insisted that changing one criminal at a time would lead to a complete revolution in which thousands will serve in the name of “social righteousness.” Cope spoke of a “kingdom of social realization” initiated when enough individuals were trained for social living. Charles S. MacFarland of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America suggested that a final, seemingly millennial, restoration of the social order would occur only after the church embraced social service and coordinated efforts with the state. Tuberculosis specialist Charles I. Minor envisioned a final stage in the evolution of humanity when the truths of Christ applied throughout society would remedy all social issues. For Minor and other speakers, however, that eschatological moment would arrive only after African Americans were uplifted out of their misery.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹Louis J. Bernhardt “The Prisoner’s Side,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 129-134; Graham Taylor “An Observation,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 137; Wilbur F. Crafts “The Potential Resources of the South for Leadership in Social Service,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 313-19.

¹¹⁰G. W. Dyer “The Purpose of Imprisonment,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 89-91; Henry Cope, “Education and Social Sevice,” in *The Call of the New*

The social gospel-informed liberal interracialism of Charles I. Minor, Graham Taylor, Wilbur Crafts, and especially Wills D. Weatherford influenced significant aspects of the general sessions. The same social concerns introduced in the eight sessions were discussed in the nine SSC departmental conferences that convened once a day during the afternoons of May 8 and 9. The conferences were concerned with issues of, and titled themselves after: child welfare, temperance, adult dependents and delinquents, public health and housing, recreation and medical inspection, charity organization, tuberculosis, “the Church and social service,” and “Negro problems.” Like the general sessions, the departmental conferences covered an array of southern progressive issues, but due to their intimacy and unstructured nature, engaged in nuanced, issue-driven discourse. Not all of the nine conferences viewed their respective

South, ed. McCulloch, 249, 254, 257; Charles MacFarland “The Church and Modern Industry,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 292-307; Charles I. Minor, “The Sociological Aspect of the Tuberculosis Problem,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 178-180, 185-186; Willis D. Weatherford “The Negro and the New South,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 220-225; Graham Taylor “Qualifications of Social Workers,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 346, 349-352.

Social gospelers Walter Rauschenbusch and Josiah Strong implied a kind of global interdependence among all Christians. Rauschenbusch did so when he spoke of the social gospel being translated into “international terms” in light of World War I. Strong inferred human interconnectedness when he insisted that “different races of men are members of one great social organism.” Gary J. Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, and Modernity, 1900-1950* (Louisville: Westminster John Know Press, 2003), 120; Ronald C. White, Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All: Race Reform and the Social Gospel, 1877-1925* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991), 20-21; Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (MacMillan: New York, 1917), 2-9.

Rauschenbusch stressed the importance of both individual and social salvation. He also considered himself an evangelist and the social gospel as evangelism. Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 96; Evans, *The Kingdom is Always but Coming*, xxvi, xvii, xxx.

issues through the bifocaled spectacles of religion and race. In addition to the increasingly influential “Negro” and church conferences, the public health and housing section, the charity organizations section, the tuberculosis section, and the temperance section addressed topics of religion or race.¹¹¹

The “public health and housing” conference, chaired by Dr. W. S. Rankin of Raleigh – Secretary of the North Carolina Board of Health – convened in the Hermitage Hotel’s assembly room. Rankin focused his discourse on British intellectual Herbert Spencer’s concept of society as a social organism in which all interdependent humanity rose or fell together, “dwarfed or god-like, bound or free.” Building on Rankin’s exposition, Dr. E. G. Williams, Health Commissioner of Virginia, stressed the importance of vital statistics providing the demographic and historical description of any class. Studying mortality and migration patterns would especially prove insightful regarding those elements of the social organism “losing in the old-world struggle for existence,” and would therefore reveal if African-Americans as an ethnic group were vanishing into extinction. If Rankin provided a true model of how an interdependent and interconnected society operated, Williams offered a way to examine the most vulnerable within that society. The tuberculosis, recreation and inspection, as well as the temperance conferences, were hardly as detailed in their examinations of church and

¹¹¹“Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 2, 7, 11; “Sociological Leaders Talk,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 3, 4, 7; Ennion G. Williams, “Sociological Importance of Vital Statistics,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 148-150; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 29-30.

race-related issues.¹¹²

The tuberculosis conference, headed by Mr. E.G. Routzahn of Washington, D.C. – secretary of the Southern Anti-Tuberculosis League – was so small that it met in a Sunday School room, mainly discussed the need for tuberculosis nurses in small communities and the importance of coordinating all efforts with the national association. Routzahn did touch on race problems connected to the fight against consumption and stressed coordination and cooperation with churches, as well as women’s clubs, associated charities, boards of trade, police forces, state boards of health, municipalities, county boards of health, and county and city school superintendents.

The “Recreation and Medical Inspection” section, led by Dr. Luther Gulick of New York – director of Child Hygiene for the Russell Sage foundation – conducted proceedings at the YWCA and the Hermitage Hotel. Following Gulick’s opening discussion on children and recreation, J. J. Keyes – Superintendent of Nashville public schools – emphasized the importance of young men and women having coeducational opportunities “on absolutely equal social terms” in churches and schools. Discussions followed on the dangers of limited recreational outlets, the primacy of home influence on child development, and the need for medical inspections of school children by competent medical men. Nothing more was said of the church’s role.¹¹³

¹¹²“Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 2; Ennion G. Williams “Sociological Importance of Vital Statistics,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 148-150.

¹¹³“Sociological Leaders Talk,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 4; “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 2, 11.

The temperance conference, under the direction of H. R. Carre – Professor of Biblical Theology and Exegesis at Vanderbilt University and President of the Anti-Saloon League of Tennessee – gathered at Vine Street Christian Church. Better organized than other departmental conferences, the temperance section urged support for the pending federal Kenyon-Sheppard-Webb-McCumber Bill prohibiting the shipment of liquor from a “wet” state to a “dry” with a strongly worded resolution deeming liquor traffic the greatest menace to home and civic life, acknowledging the groundswell of southern support for temperance, and emphasizing that federal laws were needed to cease interstate transport of liquor into and through those territories that had banned it. At one of the sessions, Silena M. Holman, Tennessee’s WCTU president, was chosen to lead WCTU chapters in letter writing campaigns to senators and representatives of their respective southern states. Despite calling on “churches of every name and creed” to emphasize individual abstinence, many temperance leaders present, including the esteemed Dr. Edwin Dinwiddie – the Secretary of the National Anti-Saloon League of America -- failed to recognize or commend the actions of religious forces in the Tennessee temperance fight only a few years earlier. Ironically, after Nashville, the temperance section would never again be a significant force in the SSC. In fact, the temperance departmental conference was disbanded after the Nashville gathering.¹¹⁴

Themes of social Christianity and liberal interracialism present in the general

¹¹⁴“Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 7; “Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 1912, 1; “Sociological Leaders Talk,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 3; “Southern Sociological Congress Closes To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 2; Nancy Curtis, “The Kenyon-Sheppard Bill,” *Baptist Standard* (Dallas) 24, no. 22 (30 May 1912): 21.

sessions' oratory were absent from the child welfare, adult dependents and delinquents, and recreation and medical inspection conferences. Moreover, the fervor and frequency of such speeches diminished even in the church and social service and Negro problems conferences. With the general sessions speeches acting as introductions or exhibitions of departmental discussions, one can deduce that dialogue on religion and race was prolific throughout the departmental conferences. The existing sources, however, fail to reveal the extent of such conversations. The social gospel-fueled, and interracialist-inspired, general session speeches garnered more coverage than departmental conference exchanges. Such conversations seemed to have been absent from the smaller, more intimate, conferences where spirited conversation might have led to divisions among delegates. No such impression could be gleaned from the proceedings a year later in Atlanta. There, in the de facto capital of the New South, issues of race and religion would dominate most departmental discourse. Because the prominence eventually wielded by the SSC's conferences on the church and social service and race relations originated with the inaugural meetings in Nashville, examination of them helps illuminate the SSC's evolution.¹¹⁵

The Church and social service conference met at McKendree Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Reverend James Buchanan of Richmond opened the initial meeting with prayer as Professor Samuel Zane Batten, Chairman of the Social Service

¹¹⁵Charles Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920," 20-38, 43-44, 52; Culley, "Muted Trumpets," 120-126. L.L. Bernard, "Southern Sociological Congress," *American Journal of Sociology* 19 (July, 1913): 93; James E. McCulloch "Introduction," in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 3-4.

Commission of the Northern Baptist Convention, presided. Unlike a number of general session speeches, only a few church conference discourses explicated social gospel themes. Moreover, church conference oratory received less press coverage than the general sessions and less coverage in McCulloch's edited SSC compendium.

The initial speeches of the church and social service conference were hardly noteworthy. Christian lobbyist Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts opined that the church could best address social evils by engaging in united action. For Crafts, the culmination of such consolidated ecumenical engagement should be a letter writing campaign to congressmen, senators, and governors recommending passage of pending legislation. Speaking on "The Church and the Home," Professor Charles Ellwood of the University of Missouri expressed alarm about recent statistics revealing that 90,000 divorce were filed annually. Ellwood noted that the divorce rate was growing about three times faster than the population and presciently predicted that if the rate of divorce held steady, by 1990 one-half of all U.S. marriages would terminate in divorce. Ellwood's inspired solution was insisting that the church must speak out about the sacredness of marriage.

A few speakers did insist on church-led social action. Dr. A. J. McKelway, Secretary of the National Child Labor Association, spoke on "The Church and the Child." Dividing needy children into four classes – afflicted, dependent, working, and delinquent children – he strongly advised that every church provide a committee to work especially on behalf of such children. McKelway also emphasized the importance of final passage of the Children's Bureau legislation by the U.S. Congress and highlighted the work done among the poor by associated charities. Charles F. MacFarland of the

Federal Council of Churches expounded upon “social evangelism” and Reverend Rufus W. Weaver of Nashville’s Immanuel Baptist Church (later a longtime president of Mercer university who helped desegregate the Baptist school) spoke on “The Church and Social Conscience.” Both men were well received and “each made an appeal along modern lines for the betterment of living in this world through church influences.” Moreover, both speakers predicted great improvements would be secured through interdenominational cooperation. The most convincing and socially Christianized call to action delineated by any departmental conference, and perhaps during the entire Nashville gathering, came from Samuel Zane Batten.¹¹⁶

A colleague of Walter Rauschenbusch, the peripatetic and zealous Batten had been led to the social gospel via his temperance reform work. He eventually became the organizational force behind the Brotherhood of the Kingdom. Serving primarily as a think tank comprised by and for northern social gospel luminaries, the Brotherhood of the Kingdom was committed to: “the practical realization” of the kingdom of God, disseminating kingdom theology “through pulpit, platform, and press,” communicating kingdom tenets to the common people, and infusing “the religious spirit into the efforts for social amelioration.” A key component of the larger social gospel movement, the Brotherhood of the Kingdom was an intellectual salon that clarified social gospel theological and ethical tenets. On occasion, the frustrated Batten challenged the group’s emphasis on intellectual discussion over concrete social action. His kinetic ethos was on

¹¹⁶“Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 7.

display throughout his Nashville speech.¹¹⁷

Batten addressed a large audience and delineated four items in modern Christian thought: evangelism, missions, education and social service. He defined evangelism as “making the good news known to all and persuading those who hear to believe the message;” missions as “giving the gospel to the peoples of the earth, that they may love God and may enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom;” education as “the training of lives for the Kingdom, that they may be built up in Christ and may be fitted for service in the world;” and social service as “applying the principles of the Gospel to the whole life of man and building up in the earth a city of God.” Although he asserted that no one item by itself could initiate the whole Kingdom, like Graham Taylor in his general session address, Batten declared that social service promoted interests and activities that would most likely secure the Kingdom’s success. For Batten, social service was an integral part of all true religion, “at once its clearest expression and its strongest passion.”

Batten defined social service as an effort for man’s betterment which sought to uplift and transform community life. True social service achieved three essential tasks.

¹¹⁷Christopher H. Evans, *The Kingdom is Always but Coming*, 104-105, 109; Smith, *The Search for Social Salvation*, 445; Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 140; Paul M. Minus, *Walter Rauschenbusch: American Reformer* (New York: MacMillan, 1988), 84-90. Samuel Zane Batten filled sundry ecumenical and social service positions in Northern Baptist circles before becoming associate secretary of the Federal Council of Churches. He penned a number of books, among them were: *The New Citizenship* (1898), *The Christian State* (1909), *The Social Task of Christianity: A Summons to the New Crusade* (1911), *The New World Order* (1919), and *If America Fail: Our National Mission and Our Possible Future* (1922). In the foreword of *The Social Task of Christianity*, Batten acknowledged that the discussions amongst his friends in the Brotherhood of the Kingdom “had clarified his thought and intensified his conviction.”

First, social service was ameliorative. It relieved distress, delivered the oppressed, rescued the fallen, and assisted the needy. Batten observed that no less than the teachings of Jesus emphasized philanthropy and service. Moreover, separating religion from philanthropy “was a fatal theological and ethical error.”

Second, social service was preventative. Beyond relieving the distressed and delivering the oppressed, Batten charged social service with identifying and removing harmful causes and replacing them with helpful and “saving” causes. Where simple charity would build a hospital while operating an ambulance at the foot of the cliff to care for those who had fallen off, social service would construct a fence to forestall the initial fall. Batten’s expression of social service fed the hungry by securing conditions where everyone could “earn their daily bread.” It cared for the sick by keeping people well; it lifted up the fallen “by keeping people on their feet.” Such action made social service “a good deal cheaper and easier than rescue” and “just as Christian.” Preventative social service also properly healed disturbed and broken individual social relationships in a spirit of justice and love. For Batten, healthier individual relationships resulted in healthier social conditions, the eradication of social evil, and the continual and collective construction of a “Christian social order in line with the Lord’s Prayer” that was truly “the realization of the idea of the Kingdom of God.”

As with Gus W. Dyer, Henry Cope, Charles MacFarland, Charles Minor and other general session speakers, Batten felt social service was also millennial. It hastened, and ultimately culminated in, the Kingdom of God. Batten’s estimation of the Kingdom was “all-inclusive,” and it brought “a blessing for the whole life of man.” Christ’s Kingdom

would not come to judge the social order but to Christianize it. Batten observed that the Christian concept of the Kingdom might mean more than a human society on earth, but it certainly never could mean less. The social gospeler insisted that seekers of the Kingdom of God were laboring to build on earth a city of God according to Scriptures, not a “heaven in the skies.” Such a concept of the Kingdom was not simply one ethical focus of Christianity, it was *the* theological and ethical touchstone of the faith.

Kingdom-focused theology was as old as scripture. Quoting Albrecht Ritschl, the nineteenth century liberal German theologian, Batten asserted that since “the second century nothing has less guided the church in its effort for social betterment than the idea of the Kingdom of God on earth in the sense in which Christ and his apostles used the term.” Batten, and other social gospelers, worked to refocus Christianity on the Kingdom as the “master-thought of Jesus’ life and the ethical center of his teaching.”

Batten’s social gospel soteriology was a logical corollary to his Kingdom theology. The “Son of Man did not come merely to save a few individuals out of the world,” insisted Batten, “but to make men citizens of the Kingdom of God.” Christianity was not “a life of isolation,” it was not solitary religion. Much like Wilbur F. Crafts, Louis J. Bernhardt, and Graham Taylor, Batten stressed winning individuals to Christ so they would become like Christ in character” One became like Christ the more he sought true fellowship with his “brothers.” Social gospelers stressed a salvation that was individualistic in so far as individual believers were called or “saved” into a community of the faithful. The community of Christ would continually expand into society until the two became one – a Christian society. Batten, therefore, offered a clear eschatological

vision: “The Kingdom of God never means anything less than a human society on earth; and so the program of the Kingdom never contemplates anything less than the making of a Christian social order.” In Batten’s estimation, social service would constitute a Christian vanguard ultimately catalyzing society’s transformation.

Batten stated that the social service sector of the church, having accepted the ideal of a Christian social order, would unite their intelligence, faith, and forces on behalf of this great end. In doing so, social service would “make Jesus Christ a FACT in the social life of the world”; endeavor to secure for every individual the best social conditions possible; and apply Gospel principles to the personal, social, economic, industrial, political, international life of man. Such actions would redeem the social order, thereby effectively establishing the Kingdom of God on earth as it was in heaven. Batten insisted that such building up “from the very foundations a human and worthy social order” was mandatory: “A church that does not serve is not Christian; a church that is not social is not fully Christian; a church is Christian in so far as it serves men and is social in spirit.” At the heart of the Christian mission, therefore, was social service. It was neither an addition to nor a substitute for the Gospel. It was an essential and necessary part of the Christianity of Christ.¹¹⁸

Like many of the SSC general sessions speakers, Batten’s exposition on social service contributed to a collective ethic rooted in social gospel themes which influenced

¹¹⁸Samuel Zane Batten “The Church and Social Service,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 267-292; “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 7.

the SSC's future agenda. For example, Batten firmly believed that social service best insured the success of other Kingdom-inspired endeavors. More than any general session speaker, Batten stressed that social service addressed the root cause of societal woes, replacing negative and destructive conditions with positive and constructive ones. In this way, social service was preventative. Like other orators, Batten spoke of individual salvation, but he was more explicit about links between individual wholeness and millennial expectation. He emphasized that the healing possibilities of social service in the lives of broken individuals would result in healthier community conditions, the eradication of social evil, and ultimately the realization of the Kingdom. Moreover, Batten defined the nature of the Kingdom as nothing less than a completely Christianized social order, a core concept around which all other ethical endeavors revolved. Still, despite his clear theological and ethical vision for social service, Batten's speech, like all others heard in the church and social service departmental conference, failed to embrace or even mention the social-gospel-informed interracialism embraced by other speakers.

The melding of social gospel and interracialism present in more than a few general session speeches was more discernible in the race conference. The "Negro Problems" conference met at the Board of Trade over two days. Six of sixteen conference members served on the executive board of McCulloch's Colored Training School, so the composition of the SSC group had been heavily influenced by the paternalistic dialogue between white and black board members prior to the SSC

gathering.¹¹⁹ The two meetings were well attended by “men of both races, and it was found that there was not time to hear all who wished to speak on the subject.” A “Race Relationships” committee of sixteen men and women was established, and ten of those appointed in Nashville attended the Atlanta gathering the following year. In this way, the race discussion managed to maintain a certain amount of continuity throughout its existence. Reverend John Little, a Presbyterian minister who headed that denomination’s mission in Louisville, was elected secretary of the conference while the esteemed James Hardy Dillard – President of the Jeanes Fund, director of the John H. Slater Fund, and member of the SSC’s preliminary executive board – presided. Ultimately, Dillard would play a crucial role in shaping the SSC into one of the leading interracial organizations of its day.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹The committee was chaired by James Hardy Dillard and listed as members Belle H. Bennett, Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield, Dr. George A. Gates, Dr. George Whipple Hubbard, and Dr. Willis D. Weatherford of the Colored Training School Executive Board. James E. McCulloch, “Organization of the Congress,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 361; McNeal, “James Hardy Dillard,” 170-171; Ben W. Hooper to Russell Sage, 15 April 1912, Hooper Papers; James E. Shepard to Ben W. Hooper, 5 March 1912, Hooper Papers; J. C. Masee to Ben W. Hooper, 20 March 1912, Hooper Papers; Charles Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 27; James H. Dillard, “The Present Situation,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 347.

¹²⁰The *Banner* listed the following attendees: “Willis D. Weatherford, New York; J. L. D. Hinds, Lebanon; Lee Bidgood, University of Virginia; Grover C. Huckaby, Baton Rouge; Maurice S. Evans, Durban, Natal, South Africa; Rev. James F. Snedecor, Tuscaloosa, Ala; Julia S. Tutwiler, Livingston, Ala.; Mrs. B.W. Barnwell, Sewanee, Tenn.; Mrs. Bessie L. Allen, Louisville, Ky; Jane Owens, Memphis; Mrs. G. Schlaffer, Henderson, Ky; Miss Laura D. Gill, Sewanee, Tenn.; Miss Katherine Pettitt, Lexington, Ky., Mrs. C. J. Swan, Evanston, Ill.; Mrs. Elizabeth G. Phippen, Hanover, Va.; C. B. Wilmer, Atlanta, Ga; A.F. Watkins, Hattiesburg, Miss.; Walter M. Purvis, Stuttgart, Ark., J.D. Hammond, Augusta, Ga.,” and several “Nashville people.” “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 7.

Foremost and exemplary among the SSC's racial liberals, James Hardy Dillard was born to wealthy Virginia landowners in 1856 and spent his formative years on his family's plantation with its three hundred fifty slaves. Various life experiences, coupled with his family's progressive Episcopal faith, informed Dillard's views of race. At an early age, Dillard was exposed to the cruel realities of plantation slavery when he witnessed a young black boy being whipped severely for playing with other young boys instead of overseeing cattle. While teaching Latin at Tulane, Dillard was horrified when a lynching occurred within two miles of his home and no one in the community offered objections. Despite writing local clergymen and encouraging them to express revulsion, the only resulting public protest was Dillard's opinion letters published in a local paper. Dillard's social gospel faith, rooted in Christian love that was "a combination of justice and kindness, with thinking and doing justice as the basis" also motivated him to challenge white churches to preach more on the subject of interracial brotherly love.¹²¹ Dillard felt that all Christians had a moral imperative to extend a helping hand to their black brothers and sisters: "If humanity and religion mean anything, they mean good will to man and the application of the eternal principles of justice and righteousness now and always."¹²²

Dillard hardly hesitated to actualize his racial views. He encouraged the southern citizenry to discuss and investigate racial issues with the intention of alleviating the

¹²¹McNeal, "James Hardy Dillard," 2, 24, 31,103.

¹²²James Hardy Dillard, "Introduction," in Lily Hardy Hammond, *In Black and White: An Interpretation of Southern Life*(New York, Chicago, Toronto, London, Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1914), 9.

burden on the black citizen. Surely, thought Dillard, a fortuitous by-product of addressing black social ills would be the improvement of relations between African Americans and whites. Dillard championed the improvement of public schools for blacks and insisted that blacks be given increased educational opportunities. Although he appreciated the realistic need for industrial education, he believed that classical education was more important if black society was to build a leadership and professional class.¹²³ Dillard felt that improved educational opportunities for African Americans would eventually lead to a degree of economic equality for blacks and would contribute to a higher degree of black ownership and quality leadership. Ultimately, Dillard insisted that African Americans should administer historically black institutions, a belief more progressive than mere noblesse oblige paternalism.¹²⁴ In 1920, Robert R. Moton, future President of Tuskegee Institute, summed up Dillard's accomplishments by saying how hard it would be to find a man anywhere in America who had displayed "more tact, thoughtfulness, patience, and courage in dealing with the intricate and delicate problems

¹²³McNeal, "James Hardy Dillard," 95-101.

¹²⁴McNeal, "James Hardy Dillard," 255-56; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 240-267. Dillard's racial views, much like Weatherford's and Minor's, rebut William A. Link's division between pre-First World War "moderate paternalists" and post-First World War "liberal interracialists." Link's paternalists utilized education to instill sympathetic racial attitudes in whites and encourage the accurate emulation of white class hierarchy in the black community. Link's "liberal interracialists" sought racial cooperation and understanding based on institutionalized contact between whites and blacks. While definitely a paternalist, Dillard sought greater coordination between blacks and whites and rallied for greater educational and leadership opportunities for African-Americans. Dillard, like other SSC leaders, defies Link's categorization due to his involvement in the "paternalist" Southern Sociological Congress and the later "interracialist" Commission on Interracial Cooperation.

that one must meet in striving to adjust race relations in the South.”¹²⁵ That Dillard, when a professor at Tulane University, was recommended by Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute and Wallace Buttrick of the General Education Board to be chief executive officer and President of the Anna T. Jeanes Board in 1907 was no surprise. Later, in 1910, Dillard also became Director and General Agent of the Slater Fund.¹²⁶

On the first afternoon of conference meetings, Dr. Dillard insisted in his opening address that Negroes were in the South to stay “in large masses” and that white southerners had a responsibility to uplift their black brothers and sisters. Dillard suggested that whites should question negative African American stereotypes dominating newspapers of the day. Newspapers should refrain from emphasizing negative aspects of black life and direct “more attention to good things.” Dillard touted the Jeanes Fund’s plan to educate rural African Americans by supplying paid visiting teachers in isolated areas throughout the South. Dillard also anticipated the important work of the

¹²⁵Robert R. Moton, *Finding a Way Out: An Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1920), 274; McNeal, “James Hardy Dillard,” 252.

¹²⁶McNeal, “James Hardy Dillard,” 25; For a brief description of educational reform see Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 246-261. The turn-of-the-century educational awakening, largely funded by northern philanthropy, produced the Southern Education Board(SEB). The SEB focused on “stimulating public sentiment in favor of more liberal provision for universal education in the public schools,” was funded with \$53 million given by John D. Rockefeller in 1902, and underwrote state-level public school improvement campaigns. Still, any efforts initiated by the Southern Education Board were directed mainly toward improving the educational facilities and opportunities of white pupils. Improvement of black education came as a result of the Ana T. Jeanes Fund (1907), which raised the quality and number of educated teachers in black elementary school; the Phelps-Stokes Fund(1910), which studied the “Negro’ question; and the Rosenwald Fund(1920), which subsidized the construction of black educational facilities.

“university commission” convening later that day to discuss the race problem.

The remaining departmental speeches were more paternalistic than Dillard’s. A.F. Watkins of Hattiesburg, Mississippi – future President of Millsaps College -- followed Dillard with a short talk on the conditions in Southern Mississippi. Believing that the Golden Rule would solve the Negro problem, Watkins, self-described as “one of the youngest ex-slave owners living in the United States,” stressed that he did not believe in social equality but was opposed to vicious race prejudice as well. Dr. Cary Breckenridge Wilmer of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Atlanta, interpreted the golden rule differently: “We have got to put down in black and white what the golden rule means. Every negro needs a good white friend, as a rule.” J. D. Hammond, President of Paine College in Augusta, echoed Wilmer, stating that, more than anything else, blacks needed to trust that the Southern white man would ensure justice to his people. For Hammond, the solution to any racial problem was the responsibility of whites alone.¹²⁷

Speakers on the second day of conferences focused mainly on educational and health issues. James Hardy Dillard opened the race meeting with a brief address advocating better rural schools for both races. But this pressing need applied “with especial force to the negroes,” 80 percent of whom lived in the South. Anticipating the Great Migration between 1915 and 1930 that would alter American demographics, Dillard stated his belief that the South was undoubtedly “the best place for the colored population” and that better educational facilities were mandatory to keep newly urbanized African Americans in southern cities. Dr. G. W. Hubbard, founder and first

¹²⁷“Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 7.

president of Meharry Medical College, declared tuberculosis among the black population a menace to both races. To ensure self-protection and improved health conditions in the community at large, whites should offer information to African Americans about disease prevention. Key to such a task was the cooperation of white physicians, ministers, and others. Dr. G. H. Huckaby of Baton Rouge, combining the calls of Dillard and Huckaby, appealed for education of both black and white, “especially along sanitary lines.” Moreover, Huckaby insisted that all Southern states should “co-operate in securing the passage of a model vital statistics law as a crying need for hygienic reform.” Although appeals for interracial cooperation on the educational and sanitary fronts were significant, the most important accomplishment of the conference was the founding of the Commission of Southern Universities on the Race Question.¹²⁸

This new commission met on the morning of May 9 for the first time in room 205 at Nashville’s YMCA. Composed of one representative from each of the eleven southern state universities, the commission was coordinated by Dillard and founded on the premise that state educational institutions owed it to African American people to study scientifically the societal woes of their communities and consequently take steps to better their situation. The eleven representatives, along with James Hardy Dillard and Willis D. Weatherford, declared that the commission would be permanent and quickly elected Charles H. Brough as chairman and W. M. Hunley – Adjunct Professor of Political

¹²⁸“Sociological Leaders Talk,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 7; Charles Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 27.

Science at the University of Virginia – as secretary.¹²⁹ With governance issues resolved, Dillard initiated a “scientific” discussion of the race question by offering his view of existing race conditions in the South, and then encouraged each of the members to provide their opinions. The format was followed at each of the subsequent meetings with discussions being either general or focused on a specific topic such as education or migration.¹³⁰

Much like the Southern Sociological Congress, the Commission of Southern Universities on the Race Question viewed itself as an intellectual clearinghouse, a place where intellectuals would gather to present and study, discuss and formulate. The organization endeavored “to foster a scientific approach to the study of the race question in the South.” Also, like the Southern Sociological Congress, the Commission desired to consult black and white leaders in order to stay abreast of existing relations between the races. Unlike the SSC, the Commission was solely an entity of the college campus and

¹²⁹Those present at the meeting were: James Doster Dean of School of Education, University of Alabama; Charles H. Brough, Professor of Economics and Sociology, University of Arkansas; James M. Farr, Vice-President and Professor of English, University of Florida; R. J. H. DeLoach, Professor of Cotton Industry, University of Georgia; W.O. Scroggs, Professor of Economics, Louisiana State University; W. D. Hedleston, Professor of Ethics and Sociology, University of Mississippi; Charles W. Bain, Professor of Greek, University of North Carolina; Josiah Morse, Professor of Psychology and Philosophy, University of South Carolina; James O. Hoskins, Dean and Professor of History and Economics, University of Tennessee; W. S. Sutton, Dean of Department of Education, University of Texas; W. M. Hunley, Adjunct Professor of Political Science, University of Virginia; James Hardy Dillard, President Jeanes Fund and Director of the Slater Fund, New Orleans; Willis D. Weatherford, International YMCA Student Secretary, “Sociological Conferences,” *Nashville Banner*, 9 May 1912, 14.

¹³⁰*Minutes of the University Commission on Southern Race Questions*, Charles Hillman Brough Papers. Special Collection Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, 5.

aimed “especially to influence College men to approach the subject with intelligent information and with sympathetic interest.” Upon hearing the commission’s creation and program, Booker T. Washington confided to James Hardy Dillard: “Our future salvation as a race depends largely upon working the white people of the South up to a conscientious and intelligent interest in our welfare. This I am more and more convinced of each day.” For Washington and so many others in Nashville, the commission was key to such conscience raising work.¹³¹

The University Commission convened eight times between 1912 and 1917. Meeting for three day conferences, typically in a southern college town, commission members investigated the economic plight and civic status of African-American, discussed the quality of education offered the black community, pushed for more socially active and ecumenically focused southern churches, condemned Southern injustice and the inability of blacks to receive a fair trial, and denounced lynch law. The racial

¹³¹White guest speakers included Lily Hammond, wife of President John D. Hammond of Paine University and author of *In Black and White*; Joel E. Spingarn, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Columbia University and Chairman of the NAACP Board of Directors; George Foster Peabody, director of the General Education Board and treasurer of the Southern Education Board; Julius Rosenwald of the eponymously named philanthropic fund; and Willis D. Weatherford, International YMCA Student Secretary. African American guest speakers included President Hollis Burke Frissell of Hampton Institute; Robert Russa Moton, future President of Tuskegee Institute; John Hope, first African American president of Morehouse College; Monroe N. Work of Tuskegee Institute, author of multiple editions of the *Negro Year Book* and *A Bibliography of the Negro in Africa and America*; George E. Haynes of Fisk University; and Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute. *Minutes of the University on Southern Race Questions*, University of Arkansas Libraries, 5, 6, 16, 25 28, 41; Culley, “Muted Trumpets,” 191-193; Louis R. Harlan, Stuart B. Kaufman and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 11: 1911-1912* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 542-543.

concerns and dialogue of the commission influenced the oratory and attitudes of future gatherings of the Congress and impacted the final act of the Nashville gathering.¹³²

Several departmental conferences and even some general sessions recommended resolutions addressing assorted social ills. In lieu of adopting specific declarations, the resolutions committee formulated a social program, as provided for in the constitution, that summed up the discussions of the Nashville gathering. The result was a “Social Program of the Congress” that served as a rallying call and amelioration pledge.

The social program maximized the general tenets of SSC delegates. It advocated prison reform and abolition of the convict lease system; improvement of the juvenile justice system; suitable care for “defectives,” the blind, deaf, insane, epileptic and “feeble-minded;” acknowledgment of the correlation between alcohol and disease, crime, “pauperism,” and vice; establishment of preventive measures regarding alcoholism; standardization of marriage and divorce laws; eradication of child labor by legal statute; creation of school attendance laws, and abolition of prostitution. The last two points of the social program deserve special notice. The Congress championed the “solving of the race question in a spirit of helpfulness to the Negro, and of equal justice

¹³²*Minutes of the University on Southern Race Questions*, University of Arkansas Libraries. At the second meeting of the University Commission in Athens, Georgia, six 3-person committees were appointed to study various “conditions”-- religious, educational, hygienic, economic, civic, and race adjustment -- of the “Negro’s situation.” Regarding the religious condition, W.O Scroggs of LSU maintained that African Americans suffered because the “other-worldliness” of rural evangelical *white* Christianity unknowingly assisted the ascendancy of race-baiting demagoguery. He proposed the “socialization” of rural white clergymen’s theology in order to counter such villains who had captured the minds of country folk. Other facets of African-American and white Christianity would garner considerable attention at the second gathering of the University Commission in Athens, Georgia.

to both races.” Furthermore, the Congress promoted “the closest cooperation between the church and all social agencies for the securing of these results.” The church, engaged in actions of the Kingdom along with other secondary social agencies, was the means that would achieve the ends the Congress desired.¹³³

Without question, the oratory of the departmental conferences and the general sessions in Nashville affirmed the racial and religious agenda of the social program, as well as Hooper’s “Challenge.” General session and departmental conference speakers recalled the social gospel themes of human interdependence, social salvation, and the earthly eschatological Kingdom. They also espoused interracial uplift for the “brother in black,” deemed the personalities of African Americans and whites individually sacred, considered the black and white communities interconnected, and accentuated interracial cooperation between the races. The influence of the social gospel in concert with liberal interracialism magnified the prominence of the church and race relations departmental conferences for the next two years. By the time of the SSC’s second annual gathering in Atlanta, the “chief significance of the congress centered on race problems.” There, “both races sat on the same floor and both took part freely” in general sessions and departmental conferences. Such equality was unprecedented in the South. Also in Atlanta, the conference on the church and social service – deemed “a close second” to the conference on race problems “in the degree of interest manifested” – proposed thirty-five resolutions rooted in social gospel ecumenism and ethics. By the Memphis

¹³³James E. McCulloch, “Social Program of the Congress,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 9. “Congress Holds Final Session,” *Nashville Banner*, 11 May 1912, 2.

meeting in 1914, at a joint session with the National Conference of Charities and Correction, the conferences on the church and social service and race relations were so esteemed that they were the only two sections convened by the SSC. The National Conference of Charities and Correction, meanwhile, concentrated on affairs relating to public health, child welfare, courts and prisons, and associations between charities.¹³⁴

Many delegates came to Nashville eager to christen a prohibitionist campaign that would transform a region. Well represented, well organized, and washed in the blood of Carmack and Christ, the temperance forces were overshadowed by social gospellers and interracialists with a more comprehensive agenda. In Nashville, delegates transformed the SSC from a conceptual organization marshaled by a martyr into an entity primarily pursuing a social justice agenda. In the process, issues influenced by the persona of Governor Ben W. Hooper were eclipsed by the agendas of James E. McCulloch, Willis D. Weatherford, and James Hardy Dillard. Seeds of social gospel-inspired interracialism planted in Nashville would blossom in Atlanta and bear fruit in Memphis.

¹³⁴Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 20-38, 43-44, 52; Culley, "Muted Trumpets," 120-126; Bernard, "Southern Sociological Congress," *American Journal of Sociology*, 19 (July, 1913): 93; James E. McCulloch "Introduction," in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. James E. McCulloch (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1914), 3-4.

CHAPTER THREE

“THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN”: RELIGION, RACE, AND THE 1913 ATLANTA CONFERENCE

Atlanta was an appropriate, albeit troubling, choice for the second annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Congress. At the time of the Atlanta gathering, the city was enjoying a peaceful interregnum in race relations following the September 1906 riot. Whereas Booker T. Washington’s so-called “Atlanta Compromise” of 1895 was originally hailed as a milestone in southern race relations, rallying blacks and whites around the accommodationist cause, its call to “cast your buckets down where you are” rang hollow in the wake of the three-day 1906 horror. African American accommodationist elites nevertheless had distanced themselves from working-class blacks and collaborated with white interracialists to achieve a sort of normalcy after 1906. Cooperation between black and white elites had prevented additional racial violence in the short term and created an environment where “the best elements” of Atlanta’s African Americans could attain greater opportunities and freedoms. For five days in April 1913, the SSC convened amidst this cautious racial optimism that would unravel in the weeks following adjournment. On April 29, the last day of the SSC gathering, coverage of the violent death of a young factory worker named Mary Phagan dominated the front page of the *Atlanta Constitution*. Racial violence would soon revisit

Atlanta, but not before blacks and whites held unprecedented discussions about the future of both communities.¹

Between the 1912 and 1913 meetings, General Secretary James E. McCulloch piloted the SSC from its Nashville headquarters. Despite having the SSC program committee – comprised of the president and chairpersons of each standing committee – and various local Atlanta organizing committees at his disposal, McCulloch shouldered most SSC duties. A month after the inaugural meeting, he conveyed his yearly plans to Nashville banker and SSC treasurer, Marvin Early Holderness. McCulloch – splitting his time between the SSC and the American Interchurch College for Religious and Social Workers – envisioned the SSC defining the southern social welfare agenda. Engaging in a comprehensive correspondence campaign, he intended to harmonize the causes of members and other southern organizations with SSC goals. He also wanted members pressuring their state legislators for legislation amenable to the SSC program. In an attempt to lengthen membership rolls, McCulloch planned a tour of southern cities. By February, he hoped to spend considerable time campaigning for the next Congress.

Available sources fail to demonstrate if McCulloch actually engaged in all of these activities. They clearly occupied him. Before the end of 1912, he edited and

¹Mark Bauerlein, “Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1906” in *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, ed. Walter Rucker and James Nathaniel Upton (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2006), 23-24; David F. Godshalk, *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005), 1-3, 10; Louis R. Harlan, Stuart B. Kaufman and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 3: 1889-1895* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 584-585; “Pinkertons Hired to Assist Police Probe the Murder of Mary Phagan,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

published *The Call of the New South: Addresses Delivered at the Southern Sociological Congress*. He also retired the SSC's debt with a substantial donation from Anna Russell Cole, wife of railroad magnate, banker, and philanthropist Edmund R "King" Cole and mother of SSC treasurer Whitefoord R. Cole. Absent her generosity, the SSC would have begun and ended with the Nashville meeting.

The SSC's survival depended on reliable revenue. Following the 1912 Congress, McCulloch informed Governor Hooper that the event cost about \$3500. Collected fees, at \$2 per member, only amounted to \$1200 with added subscriptions outstanding. The revenues were so disappointing that, at the close of the inaugural convention, the SSC was between \$1,000 to \$1,200 in debt. Fortunately, McCulloch's interviews with Mrs. Cole following the 1912 Congress resulted in her "founding" the Congress by contributing \$2500 annually. With SSC finances secured, McCulloch proposed an annual budget of \$6,500 with \$1,500 to be used for publications and the remaining \$5,000 for maintaining an office which became "a clearing house for the promotion of social and civic movements throughout the South," for annual convention expenses, and for McCulloch's \$1800 salary. McCulloch's budget projected that annual revenue would come from fees (\$1,500), a bonus from the host city (\$2,500) and an annual contribution from Mrs. E.W. Cole (\$2,500). McCulloch calculated that the bonus would cover the expenses of the Congress session and the Cole donation would maintain the office. By his own estimation, McCulloch recognized that Mrs. Cole's gift underwrote the permanency of the movement. The Atlanta convention, and every meeting thereafter,

would focus primarily on issues, not finances.²

Although records depict McCulloch as working diligently in the interval between conventions, they document little else. The executive board sometimes met between gatherings, but their minutes, agendas, and official correspondence remain unrecovered or lost. General session and departmental conference oratory, host-city newspaper and national periodical commentary, and archival records also fail to detail correspondence between McCulloch and local arrangement committees and are silent about the SSC work of other principals. Between 1912 and 1915 these same sources, however, reveal an SSC vision and agenda being formed at the annual meetings where experts asked questions and debated solutions to social issues and problems.

In Atlanta, the general sessions and departmental conferences focused intently on the twin themes of religion and race. The *Atlanta Journal* observed that no department eclipsed any other, but then noted that the church conference produced the most significant recommendations. In the same spirit, L. L. Bernard, University of Florida

²James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 4 May 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 12 June 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to M. E. Holderness, 22 July 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; W. R. Cole to M. E. Holderness, 24 July 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; Graham Taylor, "The Southern Social Awakening," *Survey*, XXXVIII (September 14, 1912), 744; "Prominent Men Attend Congress of Sociologists" *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1913, 1; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 36-37; James E. McCulloch, "Introductory Note," in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 8; James E. McCulloch, "Resolution of Thanks Adopted by the Executive Committee," in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 363; James E. McCulloch, "Constitution and By-Laws of the Congress," in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 671; James E. McCulloch, "Organization of the Congress," in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 675; *The Vanderbilt Alumnus* article, "Mrs. Anna Russell Cole, Friend of Vanderbilt, Dies," Mrs. E. W. Cole Alumni File, Special Collections and University Archives, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University.

sociology professor, observed that the Church conference's speeches, discussions, and thirty-five resolutions reflected the great religious awakening of the Church's role in the world. In Nashville, socialized religion and interracial cooperation had eclipsed temperance to become the SSC's core foci. In Atlanta, these same ethical forces increasingly influenced general session and departmental conferences from the convention's opening to its close.

The overall religiosity of the Southern Sociological Congress was once again conspicuous. Reverend Cary Breckenridge Wilmer, rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Atlanta, noted that some Christians might view the 1913 gathering as antagonistic and insist that churchly concerns and sociology were mutually exclusive. Like many who gathered in Atlanta, Wilmer considered social service a scientific matter and emphasized church cooperation with specialists irrespective of their religion. Wilmer understood the SSC to be a forum where Christian statesmen and experts could investigate ways to inject the kingdom of God into societal situations. Still, despite the presence of such specialists, no one presented a paper on theoretical sociology during the entire four day session. Staying true to the idea that sociology in the South must remain practical, SSC participants eschewed sociological theories in favor of practical action. In that vein, most agreed that race problems warranted the most attention.³

³“Sociological Delegates Sure to Receive Cordial Welcome” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 April, 1913, 4; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; Charles Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920: The Development and Rationale of a Twentieth-Century Crusade” (M.A. thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1958), 26, 43-44; Culley, “Muted Trumpets,” 120-126; L.L. Bernard, “Southern Sociological Congress,” *American Journal of Sociology*, XIX (July, 1913): 92-93.

Though impressed with the enthusiastic spirit and prodigious output of the church and social service department, L. L. Bernard considered the race problems conference the chief significance of the congress. Among the three to four hundred delegates gathered for the four meetings on race relations, eighty-nine were African Americans appointed by the governors of their respective states. The same spirit of racial solidarity witnessed in Atlanta would become even more prominent in Memphis a year later.⁴

At the 1913 and 1914 gatherings, as African American delegates met on the same floor and on an equal footing with whites, orators of both races expressed a utopian racial vision and concrete agenda that stressed a variety of social gospel tenets. Themes explicated in Nashville were discussed in Atlanta. Some speakers simply expounded upon their previous year's declarations. Most, undoubtedly emboldened by Atlanta's socialized spirit, called for more comprehensive changes. Henry F. Cope – general secretary of the Religious Educational Association – had previously emphasized education's potential to socialize individuals and similarly stressed the redemptive nature

⁴Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 44-46; Culley, "Muted Trumpets," 124-126, 142, 168; Bernard, "Southern Sociological Congress," 92-93; James H. Dillard, "Statement of Race Relationships" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 483; W. T. B. Williams, "The Southern Sociological Congress," *Southern Workman*, XLII (June 1913), 324; Philip Welner, "Southern Sociological Congress," *Survey*, XXX (May 17, 1913), 245; Morton Sosna, *In Search of the Silent South*, 17-18. Culley asserted unquestionably that blacks in attendance were full members. Sosna observed that African Americans only obtained "some nominal recognition" and that the eighty-nine black delegates gathered at the 1913 Atlanta meeting were considered "responsible citizens," not full members. The membership rolls from the 1913 meeting, however, included the names of several prominent black leaders. Moreover, even if those gathering in Atlanta took one view of black participants' membership status, the leaders at later gatherings took an altogether different view as the Memphis meeting clearly demonstrated.

of social work. Samuel Zane Batten – Chairman of the Social Service Commission of the Northern Baptist Convention – repeated his views on social salvation and social service, but devoted additional space to the kingdom and the interdependency of humanity. Willis D. Weatherford – International YMCA Student Secretary for Colleges of the South and Southwest – further accentuated the interconnectedness of southern blacks and whites. Adding to his calls for more educational opportunity, James Hardy Dillard – president of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund Board, general secretary of the Slater Board, vice president of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and dean of Tulane University – demanded a separate, but truly equal, segregated society.

But Atlanta was more than mere addendum. Atlanta's voices were more exacting and numerous. Additional voices joined the growing chorus for a socialized Church and society. Walter Rauschenbusch of Rochester Theological Seminary challenged the Church to establish the most far-reaching and revolutionary social program possible. John E. White – pastor of Second Baptist Church in Atlanta – depicted a grander societal vision that included social salvation for the poorest and least fortunate. Wilbur P. Thirkield of New Orleans – bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church – provided an overarching theological theme of interconnectedness under which all others could operate.

In an era rife with racial oppression, SSC participants called for social justice and love, discussed the Kingdom as the millennial reign of God, and expressed salvation as both social and individual regeneration. They also emphasized interracial cooperation. Hoping to yield greater – albeit limited – equality for blacks, they called for

coordination between socialized churches and society, requested greater educational opportunities for African Americans, and demanded higher standards of living and improvements in health services for all “brothers in black.” The most prevalent theme in Atlanta was the social-gospel infused doctrine of “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man”: the belief that an interconnected humanity acted under the agency of the God made flesh. This tenet informed most general session and departmental conference oratory and inspired interracial ideological harmony in the “race problems” conference. Atlanta and Memphis must be viewed in tandem: at Atlanta in 1913 the social justice forces from the 1912 Nashville meeting further crystallized concepts and primed participants for Memphis in 1914.⁵

Arrangements in Atlanta resembled those in Nashville. The Southern Sociological Congress was headquartered on the second floor of the YMCA building at Auburn Avenue and Prior Place, and all general sessions, excepting the Sunday afternoon gathering, met less than a block away at the recently constructed Wesley Memorial Methodist Church. On the evening of April 25, 1913, educators, churchmen, laymen, and sociologists from 32 states gathered in the church’s auditorium-style sanctuary – replete with American flags, American eagles, and American shields – for opening night. As stained glass visages of John Wesley and other Methodist heroes gazed down on the nave, delegates and members rose and zestfully sang “America.” Touted as southern in name only, opening night Congress participants from every region immersed themselves

⁵Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 26, 43-44; Culley, “Muted Trumpets,” 120-126, 142, 168; Bernard, “Southern Sociological Congress,” 92-93.

in patriotic zeal and imagery, eager to promote national health and righteousness.

Alexander J. McKelway – acting president in the absence of Governor Hooper – first took the rostrum. Beneath all manner of red, white, and blue he called the session to order. Father George S. Rapier – beloved priest and rector of Atlanta’s Sacred Heart Catholic Church – then opened the Southern Sociological Congress’ second annual meeting with prayer.

Following Rapier’s prayer, several speakers set the overall mood for the Atlanta meeting. The audience applauded Mayor James G. Woodward of Atlanta when he encouraged them to confront problems with old-fashioned common sense, shun fanaticism, and embrace reason. Trusting such reason would be divinely appointed, Governor Joseph M. Brown of Georgia urged delegates to be “of real service in uplifting down-trodden humanity.” Chancellor James H. Kirkland of Vanderbilt couched his remarks in true social gospel fashion, urging that all the Congress’ work must be done in the one spirit of justice and love, of human suffering and human affection. Kirkland implored everyone to proclaim such justice and love from the pulpits as well as the factories, workhouses, sewing rooms, and coal yards. Such social evangelizing would undoubtedly establish justice and love that supremely reigned everywhere. The audience frequently applauded Kirkland throughout his address.⁶

More than any other speakers on opening night, John E. White – pastor of

“Social Workers Convene Today in Annual Congress” *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 April, 1913, 1; “Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here,” *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; “Prominent Men Attend Congress of Sociologists” *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1913, 1.

Second Baptist Church in Atlanta – and Alexander J. McKelway – chief southern agent of the National Child Labor Committee – captured the spirit of the second annual Congress. White expected the South would always be bound by geography but would also be defined by history. And that definition was the task of the SSC: to see that the South “shall realize in her destiny and in her contribution to the nation and to the world all that God has intrusted to her in possibility and in power.” In the spirit of Governor Hooper’s 1912 “Challenge,” White envisioned a Congress expanding lost cause ideology, sacralizing southern soil and southern ideals to include salvation for the poorest and least fortunate. The South would be the example for the nation to follow, and the Congress would lead the effort to cleanse the South of her most egregious sins. Viewing the Congress as an instrument for constructive self-criticism of the homeland, White diverged slightly from Hooper’s theme and expressed special concern for the ten million poor whites isolated from social progress and the ten million African Americans constituting the greatest single southern social problem. In White’s view, the South’s failure to solve such problems could eventually alienate society’s strata bottom to top.

As he envisioned the Congress propelling the South to national prominence, White also visualized the religious vanguard of the SSC directing the ethos of the SSC. Coopting religious language, White believed that the Congress’ program outlined fundamental principles of brotherhood that encouraged everyone to straighten the crooked places in their lives. He considered the social gospel “sufficient unto all things” and especially capable of providing a proper spirit of human relationship. Reshaping lost cause imagery, White depicted the socially aware SSC as a mountaintop

reflecting a new radiant southern self scrutiny that would save the nation.⁷

Alexander J. McKelway expressed similar expectations before the packed sanctuary. Like White, he considered the Congress an entity concerned with studying and improving southern social, civic, and economic conditions. If its slogan was “the solid South for a better nation,” the Congress’ objective was to marshal the South for “a crusade of social health and righteousness.” Recognizing that the solid Democratic South may have lost its political significance, McKelway emphasized that southern problems were essentially American problems. Echoing the dominant sentiments of the 1912 board of directors meetings, McKelway asserted that southern racial problems were akin to northern and western immigrant issues. Shrewdly seeking to maintain the South’s racial divisions, McKelway observed that ethnic problems were interconnected, with the North possessing its share of racial problems. The South was beginning to experience a northern-like immigrant problem, and the whole nation was being affected by California’s approach to “Asiatic races.” For McKelway, the SSC was neither sectional nor provincial; collective national wisdom, not regional experience, would best solve ethnic problems.

Following McKelway, James E. McCulloch, executive secretary of the Congress, gave a brief address; President Samuel Chiles Mitchell of the University of South

⁷Hooper, “The Challenge of the Southern Sociological Congress,” in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 15-17; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 12; White, “The Significance of the Southern Sociological Congress” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 16-19; “Social Workers Convene Today in Annual Congress” *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 April, 1913, 1; “Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here,” *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; “Prominent Men Attend Congress of Sociologists” *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1913, 1.

Carolina closed the session. An informal reception honoring Anna Russell Cole followed. According to the SSC executive committee's resolution of thanks, Cole was recognized as the "Founder of the Congress." Surrounded by hundreds of SSC delegates, the dignified Cole deflected attention from herself, stating: "Night breaks into morning when we have such men as have spoken tonight." In the ensuing days even more men and women would eagerly spread the SSC message.⁸

Sunday morning found SSC orators in twenty-eight Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Congregational, Christian, Baptist, Lutheran, and Catholic pulpits throughout Atlanta. Some of the more notable speakers included: Dr. Henry P. Cope of Chicago, general secretary of the Religious Educational Association, who spoke at Wesley Memorial Methodist; Dr. Charles S. MacFarland of New York, general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, who addressed congregants at Grace Methodist; Dr. James H. Kirkland of Nashville, chancellor of Vanderbilt

⁸McKelway, "Remarks of the Acting President," in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 13-15; "Social Workers Convene Today in Annual Congress" *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 April, 1913, 1; "Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; "Prominent Men Attend Congress of Sociologists" *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1913, 1; A. J. McKelway, "The Southern Sociological Congress," *Survey* 28, (1 June 1912): 359-361; "Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress," *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 359, 374, 385; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 12 June 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; James E. McCulloch to Ben W. Hooper, 4 May 1912, Ben W. Hooper Papers; Graham Taylor, "The Southern Social Awakening," *Survey*, 38 (September 14, 1912), 744; "Prominent Men Attend Congress of Sociologists" *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1913, 1; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 36-37; James E. McCulloch, "Resolution of Thanks Adopted by the Executive Committee," in *Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 363; *Vanderbilt Alumnus* article, "Mrs. Anna Russell Cole, Friend of Vanderbilt, Dies," Mrs. E. W. Cole Alumni File, Special Collections and University Archives, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University.

University who preached at Westminster Presbyterian; and Dr. W. L. Poteat, president of Wake Forest College who lectured at Second Baptist. Gifted as they were, none of the orators drew as much attention or garnered such numbers as Walter Rauschenbusch, professor at Rochester Theological Seminary, when he addressed the second general session at Atlanta Auditorium on Sunday afternoon.⁹

A German-Baptist preacher in the “Hell’s Kitchen” section of New York City between 1886 and 1897, then professor of church history at Rochester Theological Seminary, Walter Rauschenbusch’s pietistic evangelism was reshaped by the poverty he witnessed among his neighbors. Having professed a personal conversion experience as a teenager, Rauschenbusch’s encounter with urban poverty combined with his increasing accommodation of liberal ideologies associated with the emergent Progressive Era to produce the prophetic *Christianity and the Social Crisis* in 1907. This opus secured Rauschenbusch’s status as chief theologian of the social gospel and catapulted the movement to the forefront of American Protestant thought. Historians have noted that the social gospel may have produced more prominent activists and scholars, but none captured the *Zeitgeist* of the social gospel better than Rauschenbusch. His influence and eminence clearly captured the hearts and minds of the 1500 men and women of “the new movement in reform” who packed Atlanta Auditorium on the afternoon of Sunday, April

⁹“Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; “Social Workers Will Fill Atlanta Pulpits,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; “Social Workers in Many Pulpits” *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 April, 1913.

27, 1913.¹⁰

Governor-elect John M. Slaton of Georgia presided as Father W. W. Memminger, rector of Atlanta's All Saints' Episcopal Church, read a supportive message from Woodrow Wilson. Progressive Congressman Richmond P. Hobson of Alabama, Spanish-American War naval hero and noted prohibitionist, then delivered a speech on the perils of intemperance before Rauschenbusch finally rose to address the crowd concerning "The Social Program of the Church." As Rauschenbusch took the podium, people formally and simultaneously gathered in southern cities and universities to discuss southern societal ills. The *Atlanta Journal* posited that the world had never witnessed more people assembled for social service work.¹¹

Rauschenbusch insisted that the Church should establish "the highest and bravest, the most far-reaching and revolutionary social program." He considered such a program inherent in the concept of the reign of God on earth. Surely every recitation of the Lord's Prayer and its desire for God's kingdom to come, God's will to be done, called for an ideal earthly social condition. The theologian wondered: "What wrong would survive and what rights be suppressed if that petition were fulfilled?" Rauschenbusch further observed that the Church lacked programs designed to realize God's earthly social reign. No Christian creed embodied even a "germ of a social program for the Church."

¹⁰Christopher H. Evans, *The Kingdom is Always but Coming*, xix-xxv; "Attacks Made on Child Labor" *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 April, 1913, 1.

¹¹"Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; "Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun," *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1.

Although Rauschenbusch envisioned the Church as “the polestar of justice and truth” designing all social life according to God’s will, he was neither saddened nor surprised by the lack of a social program. The Church, like most of humanity, lacked a scientific understanding of social laws. In fact, he acknowledged that ideas surrounding continuous, systematic, and intentional social progress were recent inventions. Still, he perceived a concerted movement operating in all civilized nations. He considered humanity to be on the march, a situation unparalleled in history and most favored by God. Best embodying the movement was the program adopted by the Federal Council of Churches in 1908 and expanded in 1912.

Rauschenbusch considered the social creed of the Federal Council as the best embodiment of a Protestant social program. Certain that the creed’s adoption fifty years earlier would have saved the nation untold sin, shame, degradation, and death, Rauschenbusch incorporated its entirety into his address. Among other requests, the exhaustive creed called on the Church to stand for equal rights and complete justice for all men. Regarding the household, the Church must ensure family purity, back uniform divorce laws, regulate marriage, and demand proper housing. For children, the Church must seek proper educational and recreational opportunities, end child labor, and call for greater regulation of women’s working conditions. Pertaining to the “least of these,” the Church must support the suspension and prevention of poverty, end the liquor traffic, and stress the conservation of health. In the industrial realm, the Church must guarantee greater worker safety, protect workers from the hardships of unemployment, obtain suitable provision for older and injured workers, stand for arbitration in industrial

disputes, agitate for a six day work week, endorse moves to gradually reduce hours to a reasonable work week, seek increased leisure time for workers, ensure the highest living wage possible, and guarantee the most equitable division of industry profits. Though certain that the Church had no set social program, Rauschenbusch perceived an unwritten program woven throughout its life. The social creed was the unwritten program made flesh, the embodiment of an ideal as old as Pentecost but denied for generations.

Rauschenbusch knew the Church had ultimately misunderstood its origins in Jesus Christ and forgotten its mission to seek the reign of God on earth. For centuries, ecclesiastical powers had “caged Christ in her temples, blanketed him in her vestments, muffled his voice with her theologies.” So institutionalized was Christ, Rauschenbusch was sure that the modern Church would kill him again if he reappeared in their midst. At the same time, he realized that Christ was impossible to contain and his ideas always reemerged. Offering an ecclesiological corrective, Rauschenbusch observed that Christ was the Church’s subconscious mind, and the Church must seek to be the socialized mind of Christ. The Church’s mission incorporated all socioeconomic strata, races, and denominations. Such a mission depended upon the individual Christian experiencing a mental regeneration in which the inspiration of Christ might move “as a storm over the soul” or “as a gentle welling-up of the water of life.” Such a salvation experience created social Christians brought in line with that “inwrought semiconscious social program” the Church had possessed from the beginning. The social program would eventually culminate in the millennial hope of God’s reign on earth.

Elucidating his millennial ecclesiology, Rauschenbusch demanded the Church’s

social program be inclusive as well as ecumenical. The Church must affirm that a man's personality had inherent worth. Although the state saw humanity as mere citizens, producers of goods, or soldiers, the Church must see them as a soul, a child of God, a brother or sister of Christ, a being of eternal value even when he or she was at their lowest. Rauschenbusch anticipated resistance to such views from the ruling classes who resented the working class' increasing self-assertion. He especially emphasized the Church's ministry to those at the lower reaches of the socioeconomic scale, including those least capable of caring for themselves. As Jesus emphasized interest in "the least of these" as a sign of discipleship, the Church and state must attend to the average and below average. In doing so, the Church, which had always possessed a compassionate spirit, must be careful not to pauperize those whom it desired to help by its charity. His admonitions applied to charity among different classes, as well as races.

In addition to class, Rauschenbusch spoke of ethnicity, noting that the social program of the Church must create a spirit among all that would not tolerate wrong. He observed that most Christians were keen about redressing the wrongs associated with their own class; but when such social sympathy was applied to another race, nation, religion, or class, cries for help thumped "against soundproof walls." Rauschenbusch cautioned the Church never to sanction indifference or contempt toward nations, religions, social classes, or ethnic groups. Such actions circumscribed God's love and checked the growth of the Christian spirit. True Christian community involved demonstrating love toward all classes, ethnic groups, and people of faith.

Just as Jesus reached beyond the bounds of Judaism toward international

humanity, the Church's social program must de-emphasize any differences and accentuate society's greater humanity. Rauschenbusch's ecumenism was not just interdenominational or interfaith in its scope and vision; it was also international and even intergovernmental. Just as the early Church pioneered the idea of common humanity, an international organization should address modern developments in the interest of justice and peace. In that same vein, the Church must teach a hatred for war, not simply because it was financially expensive, but because killing and brutalization was the antithesis of God's kingdom. Rauschenbusch's international social gospel entity would ensure interdenominational unity, international peace, and the reign of the kingdom. In true Baptist fashion, he also insisted that his vision maintained separation of Church and State but considered such separation efficacious only when the Church was allowed to shape society. Envisioning a Church that simply sought to hasten God's kingdom, he emphasized the Church's role in salvation.

To the masses gathered in Atlanta, Rauschenbusch offered up an evangelical soteriology, insisting that the social program called all humanity to be fully saved. Salvation, demanded the Rochester theologian, always and everywhere involved the Church mediating redemption to the lost. Individualistic as his concept of salvation was, Rauschenbusch also maintained that a proper spiritual environment was necessary to attain full salvation. Theories of regeneration must be approached with the common sense conclusion that one's social environment can save or damn. If one thought otherwise, Rauschenbusch argued, why then fight the saloon? Reformers, depicting the saloon as a corrupting social influence, had demanded its demise for decades. If

environment was inconsequential, why not preach personal salvation and ignore the saloon? With so many evangelical prohibitionists present, imagining that anyone hearing this analogy would disagree with the theologian's logic is difficult. Yet, Rauschenbusch's evangelicalism was radical at its core.

Rauschenbusch held that the sinner was lost by way of individualized sin and social environment. For example, a prisoner was lost because of the sin in his heart *and* because he was cut off from most saving influences, leaving only the "saving influence of solitary brooding and meditation" as a redemptive agent. The vengeful inclinations of powerful classes had placed prisoners in hellish surroundings. Rauschenbusch insisted that the permanent social program of the Church should positively transform the existing vindictive penal system into a more redemptive one. In the same vein, he also called for the abolishment of contract labor, decrying the State's decision coercively to back a prisoner into a corner while the corporation exploited him. With hope, redeeming the penal system would redeem the prisoner; with hope, saving the social environment would save the individual soul.

Rauschenbusch's ecclesiological themes of inclusiveness and ecumenism – with special emphases on the millennial reign of God, socialized regeneration, acceptance of a variety of classes and ethnic groups, unity of all creeds and denominations, and international peace – and his soteriological themes of individual and social redemption – were continually echoed at the 1913 gathering. While the German Baptist minister from Hell's Kitchen struck the theological tone for the Atlanta meeting, other orators added

harmony to the reinforcing chorus.¹²

Sunday evening found delegates gathered once again at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church for the third general session. Rauschenbusch's words still stirred the thoughts of the assembled and were woven into most addresses given. Dr. Owen H. Lovejoy of New York City, general secretary of the National Child Labor commission, spoke on the "Gospel for Modern Industry." Building on Rauschenbusch's ecclesiology, Lovejoy's gospel depicted the millennial moment when children would reap justice. For Lovejoy, 'thy kingdom come' evoked an eventual era when play and recreation would supplant child labor. The time was not far off, insisted Lovejoy, when men and women would awaken and rid the nation of the awful curse that was child labor. Only then would children receive their share of the joys of life. The next speaker reinforced Lovejoy's vision.¹³

Miss Julia C. Lathrop of Washington, D.C., Hull House alumna and director of the Federal Children's Bureau, took the podium next to address "The Program of the Children's Bureau." Pleading for the necessity of vital statistics, Lathrop outlined the bureau's mission to ascertain and publicize the welfare of the nation's twenty-nine-and-a-half million children under the age of fifteen. To complete its charge, the bureau employed fifteen persons and received a yearly appropriation of approximately \$30,000.

¹²Rauschenbusch, "The Social Program of the Church" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 504-511.

¹³"Attacks Made on Child Labor" *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 April, 1913, 1-2; "Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun," *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1

With her meager funds, Lathrop publicly pushed states to record birth registrations – only eight states had adequate laws – and to pass uniform laws regarding vital statistics, thus ensuring comparable data. Such legislation would allow the bureau to track the progress of each child, understand their livelihoods, and ensure that improvements were made and opportunities provided. Though such methods would undoubtedly hasten the kingdom, Lathrop refrained from such explicit theology.¹⁴

The clergyman following her on the dais stated such sentiments clearly. Wilbur P. Thirkield of New Orleans – bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, board member of McCulloch’s Colored Training School, former president of Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, and former president of Howard University in Washington, D.C., – strode to the rostrum to deliver what one newspaper called an “address out of the ordinary” and another termed a “masterful sermon.” Address or sermon, “The Cathedral of Cooperation” co-opted Rauschenbusch’s concepts of a social program and the reign of God and integrated them with the racial reality of the SSC. Defining his core concept, Thirkield’s vision presaged later interracial organizations, and his theological language was laced with social gospel imagery. The “Cathedral” represented an ideal central organization acting as a clearinghouse for cooperative civic, religious, and moral reform activities. It therefore encouraged united activity. Such an organization was not a --or

¹⁴“Attacks Made on Child Labor” *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 April, 1913, 1-2; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; Julia Lathrop, “The Program of the Children’s Bureau” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 225-233.

the – Church, but rather a religious organization without a Church “rooted in the hearts and sympathies and reciprocal relations of all the people.” In this way, it represented a higher order of social morality separate from, but related to, the Church. The Cathedral of Cooperation represented a “permanent basis of Christian union, moral sympathy, and cooperation among all races,” a community sanctuary where all ethnicities united in activity, uplifting all people morally and socially. An America that had become the melting pot of the nations required such well delineated cooperation.

According to Thirkield, racial cooperation between “the best elements of two races” had secured an anti-saloon victory in 1885 Atlanta. The victory moved the city’s Evangelical Ministers’ Association to request quarterly meetings of white and black ministers for mutual prayer, to bolster unity, and to consider common ethical, civic, and religious questions. The calls were rejected. Insisting it best for whites and blacks separately to work out their own salvation, leaders of both communities failed to establish any moral bond or basis of cooperation; a second prohibition campaign also failed two years later. By 1906, with no channels of communication open between white and African American leadership, the two groups stood apart as race riots terrorized Atlanta. At that crucial time, a Cathedral – a common meetingplace for the religious leaders of both races, a basis of cooperation on which to build peace and moral order – did not exist. With fires still smoldering, the Colored YMCA and Governor William J. Northern convinced white leaders to seek a common basis for counsel and cooperation. Thirkield recalled how community leaders entered the first post-riot meeting as strangers. In crisis, these black and white men fell on their knees and “prayed themselves into a

spirit of brotherly sympathy and cooperation.” Such action elevated the unassuming YMCA building to a Cathedral of God. Thirkield felt such history enforced his plea for cooperation over separation, neglect, or repression of all races. The bishop was proposing nothing more than the principle of the Golden Rule and the application of the Sermon on the Mount to black and white southerners who must together chart a common life and destiny.

Like many social gospel speakers at the Nashville and Atlanta meetings, Thirkield rooted his plea for cooperation in the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In the theological paradigms of German liberal theologians Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf Harnack, the phrase was a central metaphor for a kingdom of God founded on the intrinsic worth of every soul and guarded by a God revealed in Christ. Liberal interracialists like Thirkield reinterpreted its meaning in the southern biracial context. For Thirkield and many of those gathered, the moral condition of the social whole depended on ethnic and class cooperation. Cooperation among blacks and whites especially limited lawlessness in the form of mob rule and racial antagonism resulting in race prejudice. Love for Christ had not produced progressive demands for humanity, justice, and sympathy. Racially antagonistic epithets – “Sheeny, Nigger, Dago, Hobo” – were unChristian and damned all African Americans because of the objectionable qualities of a few blacks. Race prejudice left unvanquished would hamper religious progress and the dissemination of true civilization to the “weaker brother.” One could never Christianize people that he patronized or despised as inherently inferior. The bishop insisted that all phenotypes were gifts from God. Cooperation bred social and

religious progress towards true civilization and proliferated democracy.

The bishop considered “reverence for man as man” a core ethical component of both the Christ who revealed the value of every human soul and modern democracy. Immanuel Kant’s imperative always ““ to treat humanity, whether in yourself or another, as a person, never as a thing”” informed Thirkheld’s democratic belief that the commonweal benefitted when everyone was given equal opportunity to develop “the divinest” within them. Democracy would manifest its best qualities as all humanity planned and worked together in sympathy and cooperation.

Like most liberal interracialists of the era, despite talk of brotherhood and reverence for all humanity, Thirkeld stopped short of full justice. The bishop depicted a Jesus who never taught the full equality of humanity but instead provided a working principle which would eventually yield harmony, peace, and higher development to individuals and society. Thirkeld’s cooperationism simply provided uplift to “the weaker brother.” Addressing the fear of social equality, he believed social privileges and civil rights existed, but not social rights. A man of his time, he recognized that fear of bi-racial social equality created objections to the spirit of cooperation. Thirkeld knew that men desired sympathy, humanity, civic justice and human rights over full equality. Such efforts could just as easily result in a coming kingdom. In that spirit, he called for the establishment of an organization, a Cathedral, “as broad as humanity and as catholic as Christ,” in every town and city. Greater interdenominational, interfaith, and interracial cooperation would yield social betterment, mutual sympathy, religious tolerance, and a

kingdom already glimpsed but not fully realized.¹⁵

If Rauschenbusch's address best represented the prevailing theology of the Atlanta attendees, Thirkeld's best expressed their dominant racial opinion. Shaped by southern realities and the social gospel, SSC men and women accepted racial segregation and black disfranchisement but called on blacks and whites to cooperate and improve societal conditions hampering African American achievement. As one historian noted, denying social and political equality to southern blacks made nearly every other progressive reform possible. It also motivated SSC delegates to seek separate racial spheres but truly equal schools, accommodations, and opportunities. Atlanta was the venue where the social justice opinions present at Nashville predominated and where the SSC was transformed into a solid social gospel organization intently focused on interracial cooperation. More than any other general session oratory, the speeches of Rauschenbusch and Thirkeld crystallized core concepts manifested at the Atlanta meeting. With a few notable exceptions the remaining general session speakers simply appended the core concepts of these two theologians regarding religion and race.

Monday evening's general session began as the previous three had. Delegates packed into Wesley Memorial Church to hear Clifford Rose of Chicago speak. Billed as the "lawyer who quit making money to fight vice," Rose became so interested in

¹⁵Wilbur P. Thirkield, "A Cathedral of Cooperation" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 476-482; "Attacks Made on Child Labor" *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 April, 1913, 1; "Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun," *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 4-7, 85-88, 484-486; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 240-267; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xix-xxii, 246-261, 374-385; J. Philip Wogaman, *Christian Ethics*, 174-175.

abolishing the “white slave trade” and prostitution that he gave up his law license to fight both social evils. In his speech, “The War on Segregated Vice,” Rose repudiated the idea of necessary evil. A menace to society, prostitution should remain illegal. Rose asserted that most prostitutes were “defectives” victimized by an inadequate social environment. Utilizing sociological – instead of theological – language, he posited that prostitution was a societal disease. Allowing children to develop in a more wholesome physical and moral environment would eventually eliminate the ailment.¹⁶

Alexander Johnson of Angola, Indiana – secretary of the National Conference of Charities and Correction – spoke next on “The Blight of Feeble-mindedness and the Conservation of Mental Health.” Using what some called “lantern slides” and others a “stereopticon,” Johnson showed how defectives looked; presented hereditary charts to explain modern mental health tests; demonstrated how the mentally disabled were taught and employed at the New Jersey Training School at Vineland; displayed the amusements they enjoyed and how they lived, and described a plan to care for and “control” them. Johnson’s presentation argued against conventional attitudes and treatment of the mentally disabled.

Johnson especially decried the common practice of imprisoning mental patients. He considered such punishment cruel and instead advocated permanent custodial care with beneficial employment opportunities and treatment. He deemed foolish the repeated cycle of short term imprisonment, arrests, trials, commitments, and detentions.

¹⁶“Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning*, 51-52.

If provided a nurturing and educative environment, the disabled could contribute positively to society. Johnson also advocated testing all public school children for feeble-mindedness before they became old enough to do serious harm. Until such individuals became dangerous – sexually or otherwise – they should be taught in special classes, but live at home with their parents. At a certain age, when they became dangerous, the “higher classes” – deemed “imbeciles” and “morons” – were to be sent to state or private institutions for training and education. Such education would be chiefly industrial with each individual trained in useful work by which, under proper supervision, he could earn a living. Though most of Johnson’s plans were far more humane than the prevalent practices of his day, like most of his progressive contemporaries he also advocated eugenics.

Johnson frankly expressed his belief in eugenics because if defective conditions could be eliminated, “every social burden would cease to be.” Johnson rooted the worst form of mental illness in immoral conduct such as alcoholism and crime. Therefore, he advocated sending trained adult imbeciles and morons to asylums, assuring his listeners that none would enter society unless they were first sterilized. Johnson, unlike many of his contemporaries, however, considered mass sterilization a last resort and opted instead for complete and permanent segregation of all defectives. With such separation secured, surgical procedures would be unnecessary. As appalling as his solutions sound to later generations, Johnson’s tenets were generally accepted by those gathered at Wesley

Memorial and by most progressive reformers.¹⁷

The same could not be said of the succeeding oration. Taking the dais rather late in the evening, Edwin M. Poteat – president of Furman University – asked the audience whether they wanted to go home and sleep or stay and listen to his speech. Those present, incapable of foreseeing the coming anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic tirade, urged Dr. Poteat to deliver his address. Addressing issues of “National Stewardship,” Poteat – a noted Baptist progressive – opened his speech evoking iconoclast Horace Bushnell’s observation that “every man’s life is a plan of God, and we are admonished under this topic that every nations’ life is a plan of God.” Poteat added that God committed resources and capacities to nations with a prescribed mission. He considered the Jewish nation as an example. Called the “chosen people” because they were chosen for a special mission, the Jews received and developed the greatest religious ideas of history. Poteat heaped similar accolades on the Greeks, Romans, and the British: God dispensed grace upon all three nations which in turn provided the world with gifts of language, literature, ethics, politics, philosophy, architecture, and jurisprudence. In Poteat’s estimation, the United States, granted a similar dispensation, had given the world a perfected democratic model emphasizing the coexistence of “a free Church in a free State.” For Poteat, history had been one great political struggle between the forces of despotism and democracy. The United States, the trustee of great political principles and

¹⁷“Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; Alexander Johnson, “Care and Training of the Feeble-Minded” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 246-251; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1.

religious ideals, served as a beacon for the rest of humanity and ensured the eventual defeat of despotic forces worldwide as humanity marched ever forward toward world peace and the coming kingdom of heaven. With few objections from most of the assembly, Poteat continued with an increasingly triumphal and objectionable oration.

Poteat suggested that the United States possessed pure democracy and pure religion, that the evangelical Christianity inherited from English nonconformists and American free churches was superior to all others forms of religion. The nation would discharge its preordained mission to the world when such religion began altering America's politics and business. In a similar supercessionist vein, Poteat stated that the Jewish nation had forfeited its religious stewardship when it rejected its greatest leader and that Protestants were now marching triumphantly to the millennial Zion. Atlanta's *Constitution* reported that Poteat had hardly "paid his respect" to the Jewish faith when he focused his tirade on Catholics: while Catholics had been building hospitals and orphanages nationwide, Protestants had been negligent. But attitudes were changing. Americans must rise up and ensure that "no church with its head abroad" ever gained dominion. With the words, "I don't see where a red cap on a man's head adds any sense to his brain," echoing through the cavernous nave, A. J. McKelway – acting president of the Southern Sociological congress – left his chair behind Poteat and strode to the rostrum. "Pardon me, but there can be no discussion along denominational lines," commented McKelway. Poteat thanked him profusely and the audience "burst out into thunderous applause." After one or two more comments, the shamed speaker sat down.

After the session a number of delegates gathered around McKelway and thanked

him for his interruption. Speaking to the press, McKelway insisted that the SSC, as an interdenominational agency concerned with the problems of human welfare, welcomed all Protestants, Catholics, “men of all faiths or of none,” to its membership and free platform. With the “Social Program of the Congress” calling for “the closest co-operation between the church and all social agencies for the securing of these results,” McKelway opined that “church” in the program was being used in its widest significance as “the great agency for which all good men strive.” In the spirit of interdenominational ecumenism, McKelway felt duty bound to interrupt Poteat and suggest that he was going too far. An address with which most of the audience would probably agree and which “would have been entirely appropriate at a Protestant gathering,” was inappropriate at an ecumenical sociological congress and might wound the feelings of Catholics or Jews. Ironically, the politically and theologically progressive Poteat proffered the strongest challenge to the dominant ecumenical and interracial spirit present in Atlanta and Memphis.

Following Poteat’s dismissal from the dais, delegates conducted important organizational business. Prior to adjournment, they unanimously elected Governor William H. Mann of Virginia – author of the 1903 “Mann Law” which closed 800 saloons in the rural regions of his state – president of the SSC. They chose Dr. John E. White of Atlanta’s Second Baptist Church first vice president, Mrs. J. A. Baker of Houston second vice president, and Marvin Early Holderness, the Nashville banker, treasurer. When officials offered Dr. J. E. McCulloch’s name for unanimous election as general secretary, the audience erupted in applause. Several minutes elapsed before

Nashville's John H. DeWitt, chairman of the SSC's board of directors and the "courts and prisons" departmental conference, could officially announce election results. Unlike Nashville delegates who built the SSC's institutional framework in directors and business meetings, Atlanta delegates spent little time administrating. The assembly adjourned after they elected officers and organized a committee on time and place for the third annual gathering. Tuesday's last two general sessions were a return to normalcy and firmly reflected the theological leanings of most delegates.¹⁸

It is perhaps symbolic but nonetheless revealing that a meeting preoccupied with issues of racial harmony and social justice elected one of the nation's most prominent political prohibitionists as president. Perhaps the choice was strategic, an attempt to hold off the right, pietist wing of evangelicalism in the Congress. Or perhaps it was a more heart felt gesture of the full range of SSC delegate thinking about the complex relationship of the southern church, social control, and social justice.

¹⁸"Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun," *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; E. M. Poteat, "National Stewardship" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 36-39; "Governor Mann Made President" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; "McKelway Stops Poteat's Attack on Two Religions" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1. It is interesting to note that Poteat's speech in McCulloch's edited compendium did not include the anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish comments made before the general session; Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1915), 12; "\$1,426 is Pledged for Sociologists" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913. John H. Dewitt; James E. McCulloch; Alexander J. McKelway; Professor C. S. Potts, chairman of the School of Government at the University of Texas; and Dr. J. T. Mastin of Richmond, general secretary of Virginia's State Board of Charities and Correction were appointed to a committee on time and place for the next congress. Administrative attention was also given to fund raising. Between Saturday and Tuesday morning, Atlantans had only pledged \$1426 for the Congress' expenses, only half of the \$3000 "needed by the guarantor of the SSC to make good their guarantee."

Tuesday morning, the fifth general session opened in Wesley Memorial Methodist Church with another echo of the old social order. A. J. Barton – Corresponding Secretary of the Education Board of the Texas Baptist General Convention and future director of the Southern Baptist Temperance and Social Service Commission (a precursor to the Baptist Social Service Commission and the Christian Life Commission) – then addressed the assembly on “The White Man’s Task in the Uplift of the Negro.” The paternalistic Barton, assuring all that he represented the best interests of the previously slave-owning “first-class white folks” and not the race-baiting “po’ white trash,” reminded delegates of their responsibility to uplift black neighbors and friends – those who most likely descended from “old family servants.” Dripping with *noblesse oblige* and laced with “happy Negro” imagery, Barton’s speech called for more contact between the races, greater protection and preservation of African American human (read legal) rights, more economic opportunities for blacks, and ample access to industrial education. Departing from the spirit of Rauschenbusch and Thirkeld, Barton admonished white Christians for thinking that evangelism was all that African Americans required but then proposed Christianizing blacks with a “predominating white citizenship” and a “predominating Christian civilization.” White ministers were duty bound to educate African American ministers in the ways of the white churches, to strip the black church of emotionalism and replace it with so-called intelligent theology. Since religious uplift was the foundation of all moral reform, the former slave-owning class was obviously qualified to provide an unadulterated religion for an African American generation corrupted by centuries of barbarism, slavery, and impulsiveness.

To Barton, the salvation of slave religion rested in the heart and hands of paternalistic slave-owning religion. Although the session's remaining oratory was less overtly paternalistic and generally more progressive, it sharply contrasted with the general gatherings before and after it.¹⁹

Tuesday morning's presentations rarely referenced issues of religion and race at all. Dr. Paxton Hibben of New York City – noted diplomat, politician, and future journalist – offered thoughts on “Politics and Social Service,” and Orin C. Baker, general secretary of the New York Traveler's Aid Society, tendered observations on “The Traveler's Aid Work of America.” Both ignored issues of race and religion. Henry F. Cope, the religious educator who so eloquently expounded on the social gospel in Nashville, followed both men with an atypical speech absent of spiritual themes.

Highly critical of the nation's educational status quo, Dr. Henry F. Cope of Chicago – general secretary of the Religious Educational association – asserted that American popular education, with its bent toward industrial servitude, failed to secure social progress. In his address, “The Relation of Education to Social Progress,” Cope observed that the grand American experiment of compulsory universal education was overly obsessed with money-making, emphasized selfish materialism, and sanctified “snobbish ideals of a superficial culture.” All levels of American education miscarried their original mission when they failed to emphasize social character and the individual's

¹⁹Arthur J. Barton, “The White Man's Task in the Uplift of the Negro” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 460-476; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity*, 22.

responsibility to society. Unlike his Nashville address, Cope only hinted at the overly individualistic nature of the educational system and stopped short of linking heightened social responsibility to the kingdom of God.²⁰

Deviating from his fellow afternoon orators, J. J. Hall of Atlanta – the Southern director of the American Peace Society – stressed “The Sociological Message of the World-Wide Peace Movement” and emphasized the Church’s role in the crusade. In league with educators, philanthropists, businessmen, club women, doctors, and lawyers calling for an international court of national honor and justice, the Church was waking up to its responsibility in peace work. Arising from its slumber, in Hall’s estimation, the Church realized it could not be true to its high calling and to the teachings of Jesus without leading the movement against war. The Church had a mission to rail against the horrors of war in all instances, to be a purely pacifist entity ensuring an end to all wars regardless of their cause or consequence, to organize all humanity under the banner “one for God and one for humanity!” Hall’s speech stood in sharp contrast to the overall arc of the SSC’s narrative. Although many delegates held and even proselytized pacifistic leanings, by the 1917 meeting in Blue Ridge, pro-war SSC speakers unabashedly offered jingoistic rhetoric bejeweled with theological justification. The address was also remarkable for incorporating religious themes at a session where orators were less focused on theological explanations. The next speaker at least mentioned religion and

²⁰Henry Cope, “Education and Social Sevice,” in *The Call of the New South*, McCulloch, 249, 254, 257; Henry Cope, “The Relation of Education to Social Progress,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 39-42; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

race, if only in passing.²¹

Tuesday's morning session ended with a return to the theme of social control by Dr. Henry Stiles Bradley of Worcester, Massachusetts, discussing "The Drag on Modern Civilization." Dividing humanity's 100,000 years of existence into 75,000 years spent in savagery, 20,000 in barbarism, and 7,000 in civilization, Bradley believed humanity had made advances in discoveries and inventions during the previous century but had not made similar progress among ordinary folks. Only recently had humanity paid serious attention to scientific race development and humanity's improvement. Bradley perceived forces within humanity's reach that, if used intelligently, would usher in far-reaching and beneficent changes.

Bradley thought three things in particular – "a discovery, an idea, and a method" – would significantly advance humanity's standing. Ironically, Bradley believed the "discovery," the airplane, would eventually end modern warfare. The "idea," humanitarianism ("as old as Jesus of Nazareth" but "reborn in recent years"), offered new hope for peace and progress. Half a century earlier – a time when certain Englishmen considered killing Australian aborigines so they could supply their dogs with a steady supply of flesh – African Americans were considered inferior and undeserving of rights. More recently, however, sweeping missionary movements had humanized the image of "the savage." Bradley was sure that most reasonable individuals bestowed basic rights on the poorest African or most superstitious Tibetan. Placing little hope in

²¹J. J. Hall, "The Sociological Message of the World-Wide Peace Movement," in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 35; "Governor Mann Made President" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

the coming kingdom, Bradley thought a “method,” eugenics, would perfect humanity. In the spirit of Alexander Johnson’s comments the previous evening, Bradley considered war and the reproduction of the unfit as the heaviest drags upon humanity. The “burden of bad breeding” increasingly weighed down the human race, with the mentally deficient comprising four percent of the population at a cost of \$30,000,000 in healthcare expenses. Such costs could be remedied by segregating or surgically sterilizing the mentally disabled.²²

After Tuesday’s afternoon general session closed, delegates adjourned to their departmental conferences. Regrouping for the evening session at 8 p.m., the final gathering stood in stark contrast to the afternoon meeting. With themes of race and religion once again dominating the oratory, the harmony fostered in the race problems departmental conference was evident on the session floor as both white and black delegates responded positively to speeches.²³

Following the music and invocation, Dr. John A. Rice of Forth Worth’s First Methodist Church – noted biblical modernist and chairman of the SSC’s church and social service conference – affirmed that “This is the Hour of the Southern Church.” The first nineteen centuries of the common era interpreted Christianity using theological terms. But the twentieth century would interpret it using sociological language.

²²Henry Stiles Bradley, “The Drag on Modern Civilization,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 23, 29-32; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

²³“Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; L.L. Bernard, “Southern Sociological Congress,” *American Journal of Sociology*, XIX (July, 1913): 92-93.

Examining society sociologically revealed the awakening of a new social consciousness that emphasized greater respect for humanity's worth and world views. Such awareness also revealed hard social realities: twice the rate of burglary in the United States compared to the rest of Christendom; a divorce rate growing ten times faster than the population rate; death among children and adults caused by preventable diseases like tuberculosis; high dropout rates in public schools; few public playgrounds with trained directors; poor industrial working conditions resulting in injured workers; underpaid women laborers; increased institutional populations trapped at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale, and denominations rooted in inadequate religious conceptions and inefficient religious activities.

Rice hoped the new social consciousness coupled with a new social conscience would forge a new social industrialism. Public sentiment demanded that "higher ups" face the consequences of conscienceless conduct and offer all workers a fair deal. Rice observed that the previous generation built commerce on monetary profit, but the next would build it "around the man." A new industrialism would be defined by scientific management, securing the most efficient working methods, higher wages, the lowest expenses, the most educated workforce, the best quality product, an eight hour day, and one day's rest in seven. New industrialism informed a new civic ideal that replaced the old-time boss and the cheap politician with a rising democratic class. Every man would now count as much as any other. Moral legislation would eventually eliminate the liquor traffic and other anti-social forces.

In Rice's estimation, religion, like other segments of society, was awash in "new

tendencies” integral to the social gospel. He noted a hermeneutic shift: ancient prophets were no longer considered “mere foretellers, peeping into the future and writing history in advance.” They were increasingly viewed as forth-tellers, “thundering with divine impellment against social wrongs and pleading with divine authority for social righteousness.” Rice also perceived Christian emphasis shifting from the individual to the social. Congregants interpreted the Lord’s Prayer as a social expectation of universal brotherhood instead of as an individual petition. They considered Jesus the savior of the individual sinner as well as the founder of a community of regenerate sinners serving God and the world. They knew Christians were commissioned to evangelize individuals as well as create a social order responsive to social service. A new social science, a new interdenominationalism, and a concentrated coordination between home, Church, School, State, municipality, commerce, and industry would effectively Christianize society.

This new social faith, Rice insisted, would elucidate the downtrodden’s dilemma, counter their practical fatalism, and lead the nation to proclaim the kingdom was at hand. Rice’s progressive exuberance and optimism about the new age aborning elicited response: if God challenged the South with the new social consciousness, the new social conscience, the new industrialism, the new civic ideal, the new tendencies in religion, the new social science, the new correlation of redeeming forces, then how would her people answer?

Rice answered his own question. Certain conditions in the South made the situation “the hour of the Southern Church for social service.” Southern Churches faced

a new rural landscape where over half a million farms were cultivated by renters. “Alien syndicates” from the North were buying up acreage, absentee landlords were increasingly commonplace. In this countryside of “landless man and manless land,” rural churches responsible for ameliorating the burden of the sharecropper and tenant farmer were dying alongside their declining agrarian communities. The rural South would improve only when ecumenical forces bettered schools, roads, social advantages, and cultured influence.

Cities overflowing with rural immigrants were similarly challenged. Among such masses Rice described two classes of country folk. Wealthy rural townfolk flocked to cities and demanded lower taxes regardless of the injurious effects on the commonweal. They were joined by the unambitious poor who strained the resources of southern cities and forced churches to readjust their theological perspective. To remain relevant, the Church needed to enter the public policy fray and help redefine the factory system; reform the housing code; regenerate amusements and playgrounds; and recreate a sense of community reminiscent of the traditional agricultural town. The Church must save the cities.

For Rice, the Church’s relevancy also hinged on its relationship with labor. In reaching out to unions, Rice saw a way to stave off more radical forces competing with the kingdom, an opportunity to ally with fellow travelers on the kingdom road, and a means to recruit a growing immigrant population for work in the kingdom. In his estimation, unions were trying to determine the Church’s stance on social issues. The Church must act on such threats before socialistic anti-religious sentiment, embodied in

menaces like the International Workers of the World, engulfed American unionism. Rice envisioned a socialized Church as a middle way between godless socialism and individualized pietistic religion. Following the lead of the Federal Council of Churches, southern churches should engage in social service and push social legislation in conjunction with labor organizations. Rice attributed divine sanction to unions' appeals for a better quality of life. Organized labor had advanced within the growing southern urban immigrant population faster than any other organization and Rice was convinced that southern churches could only recruit the newcomers with union assistance. He was equally sure that the South's social welfare depended on her relationship with foreigners. As the unions had enrolled immigrants into their organizations, so the white southern social gospel forces must enlist the cooperation of immigrants for social service. Socialized churches also needed to initiate similar work in African American communities.

Reeling off the African American community's miraculous accomplishments over the previous half-century, Rice noted the white community's missed opportunities to work with their black neighbors for social improvement. Now was the time for both communities to combine their forces for mutual betterment. Rice recounted how over fifty years African Americans had demonstrated their capacity for self achievement by acquiring several million dollars worth of wealth, 20 million acres of land, and more than 500,000 homes. A professional class fifty thousand strong had emerged, and the black community averaged raising a million dollars a year for educational institutions. Witnessing such achievement, whites could no longer question African Americans'

capacity for education. According to Rice, such doubts had dissuaded southerners from assisting earlier black endeavors and resulted in noble, but misguided, northern educational experiments that severed spiritual ties between southern whites and blacks. Rice called for rapprochement within a mutual understanding “for securing the preservation of race integrity” and mutual betterment.

Like most interracialists, Rice called southern blacks and whites to ease collectively the unjust burden that was borne by African Americans to achieve social uplift. In the process, race integrity would be maintained by social segregation while physical integration between the two groups working in concert for positive change would be allowed, indeed required. As with the immigrant, the future of the South depended on cooperation between the African American and white communities. Interconnected and interdependent – the South would rise or fall based on both communities’ mutual decisions to act collectively or independently. For Rice, such action was compulsory for white interracialist Christians. African Americans’ needs impelled Christian effort: “we must believe in the sufficiency of the gospel for them or deny its efficacy for ourselves.” Anything less than constant and consistent searching for mutual social betterment risked diluting Christ’s message to a dribble.

Rice glimpsed a world clarified by the new social conscience and bolstered by the new social faith, where the Church improved the lot of the sharecropper and tenant farmer; uplifted the urban poor; fused with the labor union; recruited the immigrant; and

collaborated with the African American community to secure mutual salvation.²⁴

If Rice's vision was an end, a product of the kingdom on earth rooted in reality, the next orator provided the means. Dr. Henry Cope of Chicago – general secretary of that city's Religious Education Association – described “The Call and Qualifications of the Social Worker.” At the SSC's previous meeting in Nashville, Cope depicted socialized educators as kingdom workers supplanting individualistic education with an educational system interested in acquiring equal rights over particular privilege, training citizens for “social living,” and ultimately hastening the “kingdom of social realization.” In Atlanta, Cope similarly portrayed social workers attacking the causes of societal ills and consequently reconstructing a new creation.

Cope considered the social worker less a reformer and more a manipulator of social conditions in an attempt to create a “new humanity.” Building a new creation required an updated vision for social work. Social workers would no longer tinker with an outdated framework. Their work of reconstructing society required a vision “beyond soap and brooms, and beyond ordinances and laws.” Social workers must change society by altering the “hearts of and habits of men,” by going where character was made and sustained – into homes and schools. In Cope's estimation, social work fundamentally changed society and humanity by permanently abolishing causes of injustice. Social work was, therefore, a spiritual quest that redeemed souls by saving society.

Cope stressed that social workers must constantly focus on the spiritual act of

²⁴John A. Rice, “This is the Hour of the Southern Church,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. McCulloch, 648-661; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

improving individual character by bettering social conditions. Clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and releasing the bound reconstituted social conditions under which character developed. For a better person to grow, the social worker must enrich and improve the soil – the conditions – in which people developed. Cope’s social worker labored for a living wage; denounced child slavery; secured rights for the oppressed; and sought economic justice in order to provide “the largest, fairest, and most helpful opportunity” for humanity. Social service was a means to an end, an end that produced greater numbers of godly individuals. Such service was therefore divine; it combated the causes of social injustice, gave everyone a chance to improve; and saved the souls of humanity – all of humanity. Cope’s inclusive view of humanity was on full display following the benediction. When the floor was opened for one minute talks from members, blacks and whites, given equal time to address the audience, spoke openly and earnestly from the church’s nave.²⁵

Over four days of general sessions, orators had stressed various social gospel tenets. Nashville’s social gospel themes of human interdependence, social salvation, and millennial expectation were even more prominent a year later. Overall, however, Atlanta speakers were more concerned with issues of race and influenced by the unifying rubric of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Orators like Chancellor James H. Kirkland and John E. White issued comprehensive calls for social justice and love. Kirkland insisted the SSC’s work be

²⁵Henry F. Cope, “The Call and Qualifications of the Social Worker,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 661-666; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

done in a singular spirit of love and justice as expressed from the Sunday pulpit as well as in the weekday coal pit and factory. White knew the SSC could shape the South into a sacred, atoned city on a hill, shining as a beacon of justice and love for the rest of the nation.

Others, like Walter Rauschenbusch and John A. Rice discussed the Kingdom as the millennial reign of God and understood salvation as both social and individual regeneration. Rauschenbusch considered the Church an organization created solely for the kingdom of God, an entity that would usher in God's ultimate sovereignty over social injustice. He also held that the sinner was "lost" because of individualized and socialized sin and, therefore, in need of both individual and social salvation. Rice perceived a nation awakened to a new social faith and renewed by the ancient concept of the kingdom. His concept of Christian commission included both evangelization of the individual and creation of a social order conducive to salvation and service.

The most prevalent theological theme of the 1913, however, was the social gospel infused doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the belief that an interconnected humanity acted under the agency of the God made flesh. The tenet informed the liberal interracialism that dominated most sessions. It sustained Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkeld's call for ethnic and class cooperation. It supported Alexander McKelway's observation that all ethnic problems in all sections were interconnected. It backed Rauschenbusch's view that the Church must never sanction indifference or contempt between nations, religions, social classes, or ethnic groups. It inspired Rice's observation that ameliorating African Americans' needs was mandatory, not optional. It

was the theological stream that ran through most general session and departmental conference oratory, inspired interracial ideological harmony in the race problems departmental conference, and led African Americans and white delegates in the closing hours of the last general session to stand and voice common sentiments. The scene was somewhat unprecedented in “acceptable” southern circles: blacks and whites who had been sitting together on the same floor in separate sections rose to express satisfaction about the progress made between the races in Atlanta and the promise of a better overall understanding between black and white communities. The sentiments of all present were best captured by a young black Atlantan when he declared that “the white man and the Negro of the Old South understood each other in the order which was then dominant, and that the young white man and the young Negro of the present were beginning to understand each other and to reach a basis of co-operation.” Though general session speeches surely inspired a portion of the gratitude and hope witnessed on the final evening, L. L. Bernard attributed such harmony to the good feeling increasingly manifested in the departmental conferences. If black delegates held no illusions about absolute justice and equality as a goal of white southerners, at least the rhetoric of the previous four days seemed better than the lethal racism and hatred of the Atlanta race riot and its aftermath.²⁶

²⁶Walter Rauschenbusch , “The Social Program of the Church” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 504-511; A. J. McKelway , “Remarks of the Acting President,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 13-15; Wilbur P. Thirkield, “A Cathedral of Cooperation” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 476-482; John A. Rice, “This is the Hour of the Southern Church,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 648-661; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; John E.

Atlanta's departmental conferences were somewhat dissimilar in attitude and focus than those convened the previous year. Speakers utilized social gospel or liberal interracialist language in most of the seven departmental discussions. Titles had also changed since the inaugural gathering. Temperance interests, so prominent in Tennessee's 1912 political season, did not constitute a separate conference in Atlanta. The previous year's Committee on Organization, charged with selecting discussion topics for the following Congress, decommissioned the "tuberculosis" and "recreation and medical inspections" departmental conferences. Two groups experienced important name changes between the first and second SSC gatherings: the "adult dependents and delinquents" department became the "courts and prisons" department; the "Negro problems" conference was now the "race problems" conference. A new, somewhat insignificant, "traveler's aid" group was also initiated in Atlanta. The seven departments met twice a day during the mornings and afternoons of April 26 and 28.²⁷

The "organized charities" conference, chaired by Joseph C. Logan— secretary of

White, "The Significance of the Southern Sociological Congress" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 16-19; "Social Workers Convene Today in Annual Congress" *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 April, 1913, 1; "Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; "Prominent Men Attend Congress of Sociologists" *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1913, 1; L.L. Bernard, "Southern Sociological Congress," *American Journal of Sociology*, 19 (July, 1913): 92-93.

²⁷Orin C. Baker, "The Travelers' Aid Work of America" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 336-344; "Governor Mann Made President" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1. Atlanta papers provided minimal coverage of the travelers' aid conference. McCulloch provided two papers from the conference in his edited compendium but only Baker's dealt with traveler's aid directly. The conference never again convened after the Atlanta meeting.

the Associated Charities of Atlanta – met at the Wesley Memorial Church. Themes of rehabilitation and efficiency dominated departmental discussions. Two speeches, in particular, best captured the overall tone of the department.

Saturday afternoon found Logan presenting a film titled “The Other Half.” It depicted a man spending his pay for alcohol while his family nearly starved. Delivered to Atlanta’s Associated Charities, the man was eventually “cured”. Logan observed that simple relief did not heal the man. Treating the cause of his inebriety was the only solution. In the context of charity, when treatment was substituted for relief, the applicant was converted from a victim into a community teacher. Logan opined that society’s duty to the “necessitous” was fulfilled when the individual in need received treatment. Rehabilitation of the individual was instrumental in the rehabilitation of society.

Like Rauschenbusch, Logan emphasized bettering society and hastening the kingdom by saving, or rehabilitating, the individual. “God’s kingdom cometh one by one,” insisted Logan, and organized charities must therefore, “in God’s economy,” recognize individual personality as primary social needs before helping an entire class. Social salvation was simply the sum total of individuals redeemed, or in Logan’s estimation, rehabilitated.²⁸

Dr. Walter S. Ufford, secretary of Washington D.C.’s Associated Charities, speaking on family rehabilitation in the context of organized charity, advocated policies

²⁸J. C. Logan, “The Applicant for Charity – A Victim or a Teacher,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 289-294; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1.

that ensured the integrity of the family. Ufford posited that poor widowed mothers should never be separated from their children. Such detachment policies inefficiently forced society to assume responsibility of children before all family resources were fully exhausted. Ufford also importuned the State to locate men who abandoned their wives and children. When such men refused to resume their family obligations, they should suffer hard labor and their wages be given to their families. Striking a harsher tone that smacked of social control, Ufford insisted that the wife who refused to swear out a warrant for her deserting husband must suffer the consequences. Having suffered severe deprivation, she would most likely bring her deserting husband to justice.

For Ufford, the number of responsible citizens produced from children of such families best gauged charitable efficiency. Efficient charities must chiefly concern themselves with children. Though not explicitly theological in intent, Ufford's language of efficiency secured the theological result of redemption. Keeping a single mother with her newborn, for example, ensured that child's protection and development. The union also redeemed the mother while saving the child's life. The homeless man, who is frequently a "deserting husband," should be united with his family and legally compelled to undergo medical examination. Anything less than reunification failed to rehabilitate his family and denied his children needed opportunities. In the interest of a charity's children and in the name of efficiency, Ufford also proposed segregating the "feeble-minded"; training boys and girls in a vocation; teaching social hygiene; recording child body growth and development; mandating physical training; inspecting homes to ensure conducive learning environments; using the school as a neighborhood and recreation

center; and promoting greater involvement in the Boy Scout and Camp Fire Girl movements.²⁹

The “courts and prisons ” conference, moderated by John H. DeWitt – previous chairman of the SSC’s board of directors and current administrator at Tennessee’s State Reformatory – convened at First Baptist Church. Meeting four times over two days, discussions centered on the abolition of convict leasing and capital punishment. Speakers on both issues utilized Christian ethical themes to support their argument against these social ills. Hooper Alexander of Atlanta – U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia – summarized the sentiments of department speakers when he identified the convict lease system as “one of the many manifestations of the ancient struggle between feudalism and democracy.” Alexander drew parallels between convict lease and slavery. The government denied justice by unfairly placing free men’s work in competition with a convicts’ or slaves’ forced toil. Alexander compared convict leasing to first century money changers of the temple who held similar privileges. Following Jesus’ example, all purveyors of democracy and social Christianity must now overturn the tables of injustice.³⁰

Saturday afternoon, Dr. Emory F. Lyon of Chicago – superintendent of Central

²⁹Walter S. Ufford, “Tests of Efficiency as Applied to Societies for Organizing Charity,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 266-279; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1.

³⁰Hooper Alexander, “The Convict Lease and the System of Contract Labor – Their Place in History,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 161-174; “Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here,” *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2.

Howard Prison Association – questioned the need for capital punishment. Lyon observed that most modern death penalty justifications were still rooted in a spirit of retaliation and revenge. With the present criminal code based on the ancient decalogue, Lyon wondered why two thousand years of the “new dispensation” had not eliminated such principles of punishment. At the nation’s founding, no less that Benjamin Franklin considered the death sentence as un-Christian as those that justified revenge. Lyon debunked claims that capital punishment deterred crime. He noted that capital punishment states suffered from the greatest number of murders and an increased number of lynchings, while non-capital punishment states witnessed no increase in serious crimes. He asked delegates to imagine a world where the golden rule was actually and immediately applied to the question of capital punishment. A Christian people serious about obeying the command to love one another could not seriously contemplate or justify the taking of human life.³¹

The “public health” conference, led by Dr. W. S. Rankin of Raleigh – secretary of the North Carolina Board of Health – also met at First Baptist Church. Departmental oratory concentrated on disease prevention, education, and the need for uniform “vital statistics laws.” Unlike the organized charities and courts and prisons rhetoricians, public health speakers noticeably neglected social gospel language but embraced an interracialist agenda. Representative of the many speakers at Saturday morning’s

³¹F. Emory Lyon, “Is Capital Punishment Justified?” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 193-203; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1.

meeting, Dr. Seale Harris of Mobile, secretary of the Southern Medical Association, pleaded for full time county health officers who would guide public health policies focused on prevention and education. Observing that the South's climate was conducive to diseases like malaria, hookworm, pellagra, typhoid fever, dysentery, and other tropical and subtropical diseases, Harris lauded the SSC's success in stimulating discussions between public officials, philanthropists, physicians, sanitarians, and others interested in southern social betterment. He hoped such coordination would result in disease eradication.

For Harris, education educed eradication. He recommended that every man, woman, and child in malarial districts be taught to take prophylactic doses of quinine from May to November and to screen their homes. Intelligent citizens who had already taken such preventative measures were immune from the disease. Education campaigns should be conducted by physicians, taught in public schools, supported by municipalities and counties, and bolstered by state agencies draining malarial swamps and enacting preventive legislation.

Prevention assisted educational campaigns. Recognizing the invaluable role played by the United States Public Health Service in the yellow fever prevention campaign, Harris challenged cities on the Gulf of Mexico to destroy the breeding grounds of the stegomyia mosquito. He also commended efforts of the Rockefeller Commission for the Eradication of the Hookworm in preventing further soil pollution that spread the disease. To halt the spread of pellagra, Harris challenged Southerners to move away from corn-based diets.

Considering Negro and poor white health conditions, Harris' tone became paternalistic. It was high time, insisted Harris, for southern whites who were most responsible for managing the public's welfare to prevent the continued spread of tuberculosis and other diseases among blacks. Foreshadowing the health campaign that would develop out of the SSC meetings in Houston and New Orleans in 1915 and 1916, Harris insisted that a disease education campaign should be conducted among the black population. Whites should teach blacks better work, diet recreation, and sleep habits. Harris' paternalistic concern for African Americans was still interracialist in nature. He hoped that poor blacks and poor whites were capable of eventually saving themselves, albeit with intervention. The South's future depended on it. Poor southern whites and blacks – disease-free, stronger physically and morally, and laboring more efficiently – would attract outside capital and capitalists.³²

Saturday afternoon, Dr. Cressy L. Wilbur of Washington, D.C., director of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, asserted that laws ensuring an accurate system of vital statistics constituted the South's greatest public health need. Reminding attendees that vital statistics had been called the "bookkeeping of humanity," Wilbur knew such recordkeeping could save lives and create positive change. Relevant statistics foretold which populations would die prematurely, how to reduce mortality, and what programs could deliver a healthier and happier human race irrespective of ethnicity. Provision of such information should be the primary duty of a nation, state, or municipal public health

³²Seale Harris, "Public Health Problems and Southern Prosperity," in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 71-81; "Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2.

service.

Like Seale Harris, Wilbur presaged the health focus that would command the Houston and New Orleans conferences when he emphasized the connection between vital statistics and community health. Recalling President Woodrow Wilson's 1912 inaugural insistence that "the first duty of law is to keep sound the society it serves," Wilbur regarded the recording of the nation's vital statistics a fundamental function of a government charged with safeguarding national health. Anything less was a failure of society.³³

Similarly interested in saving society, the "child welfare" conference, chaired by respected social gospeler and acting SSC president A. J. McKelway of the National Child Labor Committee, failed to discuss the theological and ethnographic themes present in other departmental discourses. Meeting at First Methodist Church, McKelway echoed Cressy L. Wilbur's call for a uniform vital statistics law, but emphasized how such legislation would curtail child labor. McKelway lamented that no agency knew the extent of child labor in the South and no figures had been gathered since the 1900 census year. Absent dependable statistics, social welfare agencies were deprived of ethical arguments against industrial abuses.³⁴

Adding his name to the chorus calling for uniform legislation, Dr. Hastings H.

³³Cressy I. Wilbur, "The South's Greatest Public Health Need" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 127-151; "Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2.

³⁴A. J. McKelway, "The Extent of Child Labor in the South and Needed Legislation" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 234-241; "Governor Mann Made President" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

Hart of New York – director of the child helping department of the Russell Sage Foundation – commented on comprehensive child welfare programs undertaken by a number of state legislatures. Hart was especially keen on Ohio’s law providing services to all dependent, neglected, and delinquent children. The legislation mandated supervision by an administrative board; adjudication of interests by a juvenile court, public funding for mothers of such children; medical examination of school children; psychological studies of “defective” children; institutional care for delinquents; placement and supervision in family homes; and regulation of child labor “with careful consideration of the interests of working children.” Hart called all sectors of society to cooperate and initiate state welfare programs, and emphasized the interconnectedness and interdependency of society. Echoing Wilbur Thirkeld and John Rice in the general sessions and the prevailing spirit of the race and church conferences, Hart insisted that the social problem was a unified and tentacled system: “We cannot divide it into sections, as, relief to the poor, rehabilitation of families, public health, child welfare, child labor.” Social welfare forces could only comprehend and ameliorate such “inextricably interwoven” interests if they engaged in mutual cooperation. Any resolution of the child welfare problem, therefore, helped resolve the larger social problem.³⁵

Focusing on one particular facet of the child welfare program, Mrs. Kate Waller Barrett, director of the Florence Crittendon Mission for unwed mothers in Washington, D.C., stressed the aftercare for both mother and illegitimate child. In accord with Walter

³⁵Hastings H. Hart, “A Community Program for Child Welfare” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 217-225; “Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here,” *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2.

Ufford of the organized charities conference, Barrett maintained that suckling infants should be kept with their mothers. The simple act of nursing a child lowered infant mortality rates dramatically. Citing statistics from a maternity hospital, Barrett revealed that six of the ten bottle-fed babies separated from their mothers died while all seventy-nine babies nursed by mothers were alive and well. Armed with these facts, Barrett suggested that early or improper weaning robbed children of their rightful food and was akin to murder. Undoubtedly challenging the assembly's prevailing sensibilities, Barrett declared that the mother keeping her so-called illegitimate child was in the best interests of both. Besides, "a marriage certificate does not carry with it a diploma for a conscientious and intelligent motherhood, nor does the lack of a marriage certificate rob a woman of these qualities if she possesses them." Women with the God-given endowment for motherhood should be allowed to keep and nurture their children. Anything less threatened the life of the child, the mother, and society.³⁶

While the organized charities, courts and prisons, public health, and child welfare departments dealt peripherally with themes of interconnectedness and social salvation, the church and social service and race problems conferences dealt primary with those and other social gospel topics. In Atlanta, these conferences drew the most delegates, seized most of the press coverage, and focused most intently on the social gospel-inspired interracialist vision.

The church and social service department's speeches, discourse, and

³⁶Kate Waller Barrett, "The Unmarried Mother and Her Child" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 242-246; "Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2.

recommendations expressed the spirit and sweep of the southern social gospel. With its thirty-five resolutions, this conference was also the most prolific in recommending specific actions. Reflecting the department's panoptic range of social gospel interests, practically every southern denomination and religion sanctioned the resolutions. They stressed the need for social surveys inventorying community conditions and necessities as well as Church resources available to meet these needs. They also emphasized more aggressive educational policies: churches should use films to answer questions about sanitation, the milk supply, and meat and vegetable inspection; congregations should encourage elementary schools to foster social and civic education; denominations should encourage states and cities to establish training schools for defectives and delinquents. Resolutions demanded ecumenical coordination with YMCAs, YWCAs, and United Charities. In this same spirit, they asked churches to jointly establish Protestant hospitals, urban "Union Missions," woman's boarding homes, downtown social centers for men, and information pages in the local newspapers. Resolutions also emphasized weekly ecumenical evangelization in Union Missions, shops, factories, and businesses. Nor did they neglect personal evangelism. The final resolution declared that no church should "replace emphasis upon vital, personal religion" and that regenerated individuals would ultimately Christianize the social order. Regarding children, resolutions asked churches to give special attention to street children, newsboys, juvenile courts, amusements, and play. They also encouraged mothers to form Mothers Councils to discuss child psychology and eugenics. With a nod toward family preservation, a resolution asked ministers to refrain from marrying divorced people where the grounds

for the divorce were “unscriptural”(i.e. not the result of adultery). Resolutions urged churches to be the epicenter of community involvement; to set regular times when local social workers could report on their activities; to encourage wider social use of their physical plants; to conduct open forums on current events; to seek improvements in local public utilities; to monitor the cost of living and the “economic conditions that control it;” and to be examples of efficiency. Other recommendations emphasized coordination between denominations and labor; the exchange of ministerial delegates with labor unions; and the ecclesiastical observation of Labor Sunday. Remaining resolutions encouraged the wealthy to meet the needs of their communities; asked all denominations to establish departments of social service; exhorted the Church to deepen concern for public health; and urged all Christians to fight alcohol, gambling, and the cocaine trade. The apogee of departmental discussions, these resolutions actuated the social gospel faith of church conference delegates. Their discussions relied heavily on biblical and theological arguments that characterized the SSC as a whole.³⁷

Chaired by Dr. John A. Rice of Forth Worth, the church conference met at Central Congregational Church. The conference’s theological nature was evident when Philadelphia’s Samuel Zane Batten, leading social gospel advocate, opened his address: “We are living in a new and wonderful time. The present age is one of the great creative epochs in the world’s history. . . . The age of the social gospel is here and the social

³⁷“Sociological Delegates Sure to Receive Cordial Welcome” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 April, 1913, 4; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 26, 43-44.

reformation is upon us. A great new age is struggling to the birth, a great Messianic movement is at our door.” Unlike the previous year’s departmental proceedings, dynamic ecclesiastical discussions were the norm, not the exception. More than a few speakers injected their social gospel views into speeches addressing human interdependence; the nature and mission of the Church; the Kingdom of God; the proper role of social service; and the foci of soteriology. The themes repeatedly reverberated through the sanctuary of Central Congregational Church over three days, delineating department dialogue and defining theologically the church and social service conference.

Of one mind with general session rhetoricians, department orators focused on the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Speaking to the interconnectedness and interdependency of all humanity, Batten observed that humanity was a single unit stuck in the same boat for good or ill. As such, everyone was bound in their brother’s bondage and free in his freedom. For decades, religion had been shamed when faced with urban poverty, exploited children, prostitution, civic corruption, and industrial injustice. Now a unified humanity filled with justice and brotherhood would construct a more just and Christian human society. Striking a similar tone in his address on denominationalism, Reverend Cary Breckenridge Wilmer of Atlanta’s St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, supposed humanity, like the Church, had been “broken into pieces in order that it may come together again.” Wilmer viewed history with the eye of a dispensationalist, observing that history was entering its final stage – that of Christian, Church, and societal unity. With “the end” of this known reality now in sight, humanity would settle all antagonisms and realize societal harmony. Insisting on cooperative efforts between the Church and

organized labor, Henry A. Atkinson – secretary of the Congregational social service commission – insisted that coordinated efforts must be based on common community interests. He recognized that employers, employees, and the general public must all share the benefits of justice and health. Observing that individual success depended on the success of all, Atkinson accurately summarized the department’s theological view of humanity. A socialized ecclesiastical community interacted with, and uplifted, this interconnected humanity.³⁸

Discussion leaders thought the task of the ecumenical Church involved redeeming society. Samuel Zane Batten viewed the Church as the lead, albeit not solo, actor in this venture. Batten considered societal redemption a harmonious and coordinated process between the family, state, and Church. The Church -- as society’s institute of faith and hope – was charged with preaching God and the kingdom, upholding the Christian ideal for all to see, intellectually and ethically educating the body of Christ, and uplifting the same congregants for “courageous living.” These congregants were then sent out “to hunger after justice, to seek the kingdom and its righteousness, and to build on earth a Christian social order.” The family – as humanity’s institute of love and trust – was responsible for shaping individual lives for

³⁸“Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here,” *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; Samuel Zane Batten, “Social Service and the Church” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 512-533; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; C. B. Wilmer, “Denominationalism as an Aid as a Hindrance to the Kingdom of God” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 635-647; Henry A. Atkinson, “Cooperative Efforts of the Church and Organized Labor in Behalf of Social Health and Justice” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 571-583.

the kingdom, training its members to be self-sacrificial and mutually financially generous, and seeking the perfection of the race and state. The state – as the community’s institute of rights and duties – was appointed with maintaining justice between all persons, seeking righteousness in society, providing conditions conducive to a proper spiritual life, embodying kingdom principles in its daily functions, and the sending forth of its citizens to inject the kingdom into all social and political institutions. Batten’s practical division of labor clarified his theological views. The Church alone could not hasten God’s kingdom. Moreover, the Church could never save society alone. Social salvation would be realized through the state and family, as well as the Church.

Operating as the community’s “moral powerhouse,” Batten’s Church strove to realize a kingdom-like righteous and brotherly human society. The Church would coordinate its work with other agencies of human uplift – the YMCA, the YWCA, the Anti-Saloon League, and civic societies – and organizations serving the kingdom absent any ecclesial connection – public schools, juvenile courts, and various charitable organizations. Batten urged churches to cooperate with non-Christian organizations doing kingdom work, to “give itself to the world” and “lose itself for the sake of the kingdom.”

Considering the “The Social Task of the Modern Church,” William Louis Poteat – president of Wake Forest College and noted Baptist evolutionist who had offended many delegates with his earlier mildly antisemitic and anti-Catholic remarks – bemoaned the *ekklesia*’s narrow focus on individualistic evangelism over the kingdom of God. The Church’s mission field was society large and prepared for sowing. Working in and

through society, he called on the Church to influence legislation, protest racism, stop prostitution, challenge irresponsible journalism, end child labor, and reform prisons. The Church would relieve societal injustice, remaking its communities into “a little province of the kingdom of God.”

Dr. Warren H. Wilson, superintendent of the Presbyterian Home Missions’ Department of Church and Country Life, possessed an ecclesiology informed by his rural church work. Contrasting country and town churches, Wilson characterized the rural institution as “unsocial” and individualistic, carrying this teaching so far “as to make a virtue of disobedience.” Moreover, individual liberty neutralized organized collective action. In this way, country church folk lacked a socialized perspective and robbed their young and poor of their place in the kingdom. Furthermore, “the stronger people” of the community devoted to individualism often dominated the weaker, younger, and poorer congregants. The result was a self-professing democratic church that was, ironically, undemocratic and unrepresentative of its congregation and community. Wilson shunned church unions as a remedy, observing that social betterment of the rural community and congregation “must come in a spiritual form rather than an organic form.” Instead, the country sorely needed a spirit of service targeting the entire community. Like Poteat and Batten, Wilson envisioned an ecumenically-minded *ekklesia* engaged in social service actualizing the kingdom of God.³⁹

³⁹“Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here,” *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; Samuel Zane Batten, “Social Service and the Church” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 524-533; William Louis Poteat, “The Social Task of the Modern Church” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 534-540; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April,

For many department speakers, complete social redemption only came with the realization of the kingdom of God. Several speakers elaborated on this theme. With humanity awakening to a new social self-consciousness, Samuel Zane Batten observed that the Church was rediscovering “the fundamental idea of Christianity,” the kingdom of God. Batten judged the recent interest in the kingdom the master thought of the era, nothing less than “a new revelation from heaven.” Moving beyond his Nashville assertion that the kingdom was the master-thought and ethical center of Christ’s teaching, Batten insisted the kingdom was more than mere ethereal thought, more than a human society on earth. The kingdom of God encompassed a “great and comprehensive ideal.” It was “a great social synthesis” which included the whole life of man consummated in the creation of a righteous, fraternal, and Christian society. The kingdom was essentially a fellowship of individuals who loved God and lived as brothers, a community applying “the principles of the gospel to the whole life of man—personal, social, economic, industrial, political, international.” Though emphasizing comprehensive societal transformation, Batten’s Christian men were communicants who accepted the kingdom ideal and then realized it in human society. Citizens of the kingdom must love others and help them whenever they needed help; inject their beliefs into city ordinances and civil statutes; create better civic conditions; and incorporate their faith and love into systems and social institutions. In short, they functioned “to make the kingdom of God a FACT in the whole life of the world.”

1913, 1; Warren H. Wilson, “The Socialized Rural Church” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 552-565.

Agreeing with Batten's assessment in principle, Poteat was less certain about the full implications of the kingdom ideal. Referencing liberal theologian Adolf von Harnack, he credited the Reformation with restoring Christianity as a "spiritual religion with an earthly task," opening the way for an original analysis of Jesus' purpose for the personal and social life of humanity. Poteat acknowledged that Christians had merely glimpsed the kingdom's content but had not yet understood its exact relation to the machinations of civil government. Diffidence notwithstanding, Poteat considered the kingdom an all-embracing social ideal eventually realized in human society, a non-institutional social spirit set to transfigure the family, the State, industry, and politics. Unsure of the kingdom's exact composition, Poteat was certain of its spiritually substance: it was a spirit, a germ of awareness that would reorder the basic structures of society. Throughout the ages this great ideal of Jesus had been obscured but not eliminated from Christian thought. The kingdom was leaven operating as a purifying and corrective force throughout Christian history. It changed Church and society even when hidden. It supplanted the standard pagan family with the standard Christian family. It replaced the pagan's conception that women were inferior with the Christian's principle that men and women were equal before God. Though early Christianity did not propose abolition of universally accepted pagan slavery, the Apostle Paul's writings eliminated the distinction between bond and free, treated slaves as brothers, and transformed public opinion so thoroughly as to make slavery an impossibility. The Christian man, the Christian home, the Christian Church, the Christian school, Christian government, and all social betterment institutions organized with and without Christianity evolved from

the concept of the kingdom of God.

Reverend Cary Breckenridge Wilmer's understanding of the kingdom was arguably the most coherent and comprehensive. Calling the kingdom of God "our term for the goal of human society," Wilmer first traced its scriptural roots. He described the kingdom of God as a time-honored phrase assigned a variety of meanings in the course of its development through the centuries: Old Testament prophets foretold of the kingdom's coming; John the Baptist announced it was at hand; Jesus of Nazareth borrowed John's phrase and then assigned it a slightly altered meaning. The next two thousand years produced varied interpretations of the phrase. Some identified the kingdom with the ecclesiastical organization that was the Church while others projected its completion altogether into the next world. Though differences abounded, Wilmer acknowledged one central idea necessarily accepted by all kingdom believers: the entire universe constituted the present kingdom of God: "It may not be satisfactory. It may not be the goal at which we aim. But in the acknowledgment of the present actual reign of the Eternal God lies the only hope of any ultimate reign of justice, fraternity, and love."

Wilmer elucidated the extent of the kingdom. God presently reigned over nature, humanity, and history. God even sanctioned sociology, which Wilmer defined as the "science of human fellowship." Human society rested on fundamental laws of association that, when obeyed, allowed humanity to develop fully. Sociology, charged with discovering these temporal laws of truth, carried perhaps the highest mandate of heaven. Although Wilmer recognized God's present reign, he also acknowledged a kingdom not yet perfected.

Wilmer discerned that the Old Testament prophets often contrasted a present sovereign's reign with "the ideal sovereign" and understood that another wise King would eventually come and reign in a spirit of righteousness. Likewise, Christians must recognize that the present reign of God was not the final phase of the kingdom. Utilizing a popular political phrase, Wilmer surmised, "If God reigns he does not altogether rule." God's government was actual but preceded a future perfected kingdom absent of disobedience and dominated by justice, fraternity, and love. Personally transformed individuals constituted the base of the consummated commonwealth.

Moving his focus from the kingdom to citizens of the kingdom, Wilmer cited Ezekial 36: 26-27 – "And I will put *my Spirit within you*, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them." Kingdom citizens would live in a spontaneous obedience to the law and the gospel. Conflict between God's authority and human liberty – constituting the key problem of human life – would achieve synthesis when God's spirit dwelled in the hearts of humanity. As Jeremiah wrote – "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; . . . and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother" (Jeremiah 31: 33b-34a). External restraints and religious teaching were temporary stopgaps. In the perfected kingdom, churches and policemen would be unnecessary. With material civilization conquered and the social order perfected, human beings would work in harmony with God and neighbor and a balance between unity and variety would be achieved in the kingdom. But not before the tenets of the kingdom were actualized by its

eventual citizens.⁴⁰

Several department speakers focused on social service. Repeating elements of his Nashville address verbatim, Batten's speech emphasized the four chief items in the program of the kingdom: evangelism ("The winning of men unto God and his kingdom"); missions ("The proclamation of the good news to every man and the extension of the kingdom into every land"); education ("The development of every life in spirit, mind, and body, and the training of men for life in the kingdom"); and social service ("The application of Christian principles to social life and the building of a Christian type of human society"). Batten thought each emphasis had its place in the kingdom and that all four items combined to redeem society. He focused most intently, however, on social service.

Batten's concept of social service embraced all forms that bettered humanity. Social service transformed human society by saving individuals, who were primarily social beings, as well as institutions that influenced and regulated social conditions and needs. Social service was "social" because it acknowledged that societal problems could not be solved by individuals alone. It sought to remedy the cause rather than ameliorate the symptom. More specifically, it attempted to adjust human relations in a spirit of justice and love; to understand the causes of social evils; to prevent poverty and the

⁴⁰"Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; Samuel Zane Batten, "Social Service and the Church" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 512-533; William Louis Poteat, "The Social Task of the Modern Church" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 534-540; "Governor Mann Made President" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; C. B. Wilmer, "Denominationalism as an Aid as a Hindrance to the Kingdom of God" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 635-647.

crime and misery it produces; and to improve social conditions to ensure healthy lives and a more humane society.

Social service ultimately yielded a social salvation that culminated with the coming kingdom. Explicating the same soteriological views he had a year earlier, Batten asserted that any present salvation must include “the body as well as the spirit.” Any real salvation must affect all of humanity’s relations and conditions while the Church, in its effort to better humanity, must take the sum of humanity’s condition into account. In other words, true salvation involved creating a new social order: establishing a proper kind of community life; utilizing the best methods of house construction and city planning; embracing safe coal mining methods and industrial practices; seeking right and helpful social relations; delivering greater happiness and better opportunities to African Americans; equalizing opportunities; securing a more just and equitable distribution of goods. Such activities concerned all humanity and constituted the macro-social problem, a problem solved only by concerted collective action. For Batten, those who limited the kingdom to persons or relegated it to the distant future fell short of Christianity’s whole truth. Church programs premised on anything less than creating a new Christian social order misconceived the kingdom. Acknowledging an interest in the whole life of man, Batten’s concept of salvation was more institutional than individual and more focused on eliminating causes than dispensing charity.

Batten associated social salvation with rectifying social ills and their causes. Although Christianity had been “a great philanthropic impulse” and had produced various forms of loving service, Batten was certain that a Christian philanthropy

overemphasizing personal redemption could not ultimately cure social ills. Some philanthropic helpfulness even complicated social issues. Individual effort alone essentially dealt with results, neglected causes, and fell short of achieving effective individual redemption. Although he considered the charitable impulse necessary, Batten especially criticized charity that insufficiently addressed root causes of poverty. Such charity evaded duty and served as “a sop to a sentimental and unintelligent conscience.” Batten hardly eschewed a message of personal salvation: “It is very right that we should preach the gospel of love and should work for individual souls.” But he insisted that something beyond personal regeneration, evangelism, and mere charity must be achieved. Christian charity must “do more than build hospitals and run soup kitchens;” it must deal with the causes of poverty and misery. He insisted that the Good Samaritan must become a social worker, follow social methods, and engage in social action. For Batten, social salvation most efficiently secured personal salvation because humanity was an interconnected unified whole – to help man at any point involved helping him at every point. The evangelist would only reap the true harvest when he addressed basic physical needs and eliminated societal ills through effective social service.

William Louis Poteat considered both individual renewal and social action as core components of the Church’s calling. He urged churches to criticize, support, cooperate, and sympathize with state, municipal, charitable, educational, and public health departments but warned that Jesus’ kingdom was not founded on political policies. Rather, the Church’s responsibility to social service included protesting all social ills and seeking legislation to suppress unrighteous practices, restrain the wicked, defend the

helpless, and give life an opportunity to thrive. In a more traditional capacity, churches must commit themselves to specific social programs, offer Sunday school classes in applied Christianity, and encourage theological seminaries to place sociology on an equal footing with the history of Christian metaphysics. The Church, as guide and inspiration of neighborhood social life, must also sway public opinion regarding social welfare, recreation, and religious education. Poteat envisioned a Church embracing all things social while shunning all things political, but he failed to draw a specific distinction between the two. Like Batten, though, Poteat was very precise when criticizing the Church's misdirected emphases. He pointed out that the Church's practical effort had been "narrowed to an individualistic evangelism, plucking brands from the burning, saving souls, as many as may, out of an evil and doomed world." The Church must instead earnestly seek "to save men, not out of the world, but for the world." By engaging in social service work, the modern Church would transform personal lives by infecting them with the kingdom ideal. Other speakers shared Poteat's vision.

Building on the speeches of Batten and Poteat, Henry D. Phillips stressed the needs of southern factory workers while F. M. Crouch accentuated the role of socialized education. Emphasizing the centrality of the Church's social mission, Henry D. Phillips suggested that Christian settlement houses were the most effective means of serving the southern factory population while sustaining the evangelical message. In this way, Jesus Christ crucified could be intelligibly interpreted in a communal context. Attempting to meld evangelical Appalachian congregants with their overwhelming need for social salvation, Phillips acknowledged that "man must 'be born again'" but must also be given

“a chance to be born right the ‘first’ time.” F. M. Crouch of New York – Field Secretary of the Joint Commission on Social Service of the Protestant Episcopal Church – viewed the Sunday school as a social agent, the means to disseminate a perfected ideal of social service. Crouch envisioned a vanguard of teachers, “inoculated with the social gospel,” emphasizing the social aspects of the Bible as a corrective to an overly individualistic point of view. Such teaching would provide young men and women a more accurate conception of Christianity. Advanced pupils could study the various phases of the social problem, local community needs, and methods of social service. Beyond instruction, Crouch advocated actual community service for all ages from the kindergarten department to the adult Sunday school class. He hoped such efforts would reorient Christianity toward a greater concern for human society and welfare.⁴¹

The church and social service department’s colloquies offered a variety of perspectives on social gospel themes. Like many general session speakers, church department orators emphasized interconnectedness. Samuel Zane Batten therefore considered humanity as a single unit defined and determined by its commitment to the neediest member. Henry A. Atkinson recognized that interdependency dictated that individual success hinged on community success. Though emphasized in the Nashville

⁴¹Samuel Zane Batten, “Social Service and the Church” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 512-533; William Louis Poteat, “The Social Task of the Modern Church” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 534-540; Henry D. Phillips, “The Social Mission of the Church to the Factory Populations of the South” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 566-571; “Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; F. M. Crouch, “The Sunday School as a Social Agency” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 545-552; “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

general session speeches of Henry F. Cope and the Russell Sage Foundation's John M. Glenn, the theme in Atlanta served as a comprehensive rubric under which all other social gospel tenets functioned. Church department speakers based their views of church, salvation, the kingdom of God, and social service on the idea that society's interconnectedness was divinely ordained and mandated social action.

Views of interconnectedness shaped participants' ecclesiological paradigms. Whereas many social gospelers only emphasized the ecumenical Church's role in redeeming society, Samuel Zane Batten was sure such redemption would entail a coordinated process between various institutions. The new millennium would be founded by a consortium of social forces, not by the Church alone. Warren H. Wilson's rural church experience provided a vision less comprehensive than Batten's. Wilson realized that the inwardly-focused rural church would only change from the inside out. Such churches must experience a spiritual awakening to challenge the radical individualism embedded in their ecclesiology. Only then could they be socialized from without. Wilson's and Batten's differing perspectives were hardly at odds. Although they dealt with congregations shaped by different cultural forces and informed by varying theological strains, both churchmen envisioned a socialized Church hastening the kingdom.

Church department delegates visualized the kingdom as a future reality quickened by humanity's work in the social realm, but they also witnessed its present certainty. Samuel Zane Batten viewed the kingdom as a community that loved God, lived out gospel principles, and realized the Christian ideal in the here and now. In this same vein,

William Louis Poteat depicted the kingdom as a purifying force altering the church and society of the past, present, and future. Cary Breckenridge Wilmer understood the kingdom as God's present universal reign not yet fully actualized in God's future perfected rule. All of the speakers comprehended the kingdom as both future goal and present reality and thought it would be fully realized through the work of social service.

Church conference speakers envisioned a comprehensive social service redeeming society and ushering in God's kingdom. But they shared the common dilemma of the national social gospel movement: especially balancing social service that saved both individuals and institutions. They mostly emphasized one type of salvation over the other. Although Samuel Batten advocated transforming human society by way of individual salvation, his brand of social service focused more intently on eliminating the causes of societal maladies through institutional salvation. Such salvation affected all of humanity's relations, solved the collective social problem, and ultimately hastened the kingdom. As it redeemed society, social salvation almost as an after thought would also save interconnected individuals. William Louis Poteat embraced both individual redemption and societal action but considered social service a corrective to the Church's narrow emphasis on personal salvation. In contrast to Batten, Poteat's social service would hasten the kingdom by propagating a socialized personal salvation. Socialized individuals would then socialize society. In line with Poteat, Henry D. Phillips emphasized that personal salvation delivered in a socialized communal context would ultimately save society. F. M. Crouch saw socialized education as a means of infusing Christianity with heightened social concern, but seemed unconcerned with societal

salvation.

The focus of church department discussions changed significantly between 1912 and 1913. In Nashville, only Samuel Zane Batten, with his lengthy treatise on social service, elucidated social gospel themes. In Atlanta, social gospel subjects dominated departmental sessions and were congruent with most general session speeches. One subject, however, was notably absent: the association of social salvation with the particular social reality of African Americans. No orator linked the social service of white churches to the plight of black churches. Absent was any clarion call to assault the causes of African American disparities. Such matters were the realm of the race problems departmental conference. In Atlanta, the laborers in the vineyard were divided and specialized. The church conference tilled the theological soil which produced the fruits of the race department.

The race problems conference was arguably the most significant departmental gathering in Atlanta. Despite the department's hopeful tone in Nashville, few anticipated its ultimate success. Several African American delegates, expecting discrimination, prepared resolutions of protest to the conference. Their complaints were never tendered because, as one observer stated, "no reason was intruded for their presentation." At all the general sessions in Atlanta, African Americans and whites sat on the same floor, but in separate areas. Both groups also participated in all the departmental conferences. Arrangements were also made for Atlanta University's senior classes to attend several sessions. The *Atlanta Independent*, the city's African American-owned daily, recognized that the ethos of the SSC fell short of that encountered at any

Atlanta University Conference organized by W. E. B. Dubois. In contrast to SSC participants, Atlanta Conference delegates acknowledged the unjust reality of their condition but hardly embraced the philosophy behind those conditions. The *Independent*, nonetheless, acknowledged that the race problems conference was probably the most significant event since the close of the war. The *Atlanta University Bulletin* offered generous praise of the honest discussion of southern conditions and “genuine condemnation of the universal injustices under which the colored people of the South are obliged to live.” The same publication rejoiced that the South’s “thinking people” were so convinced of the existing wrongs that they spoke out courageously. Such actions were significant and represented a long step toward rectifying prevailing injustices. L. L. Bernard, University of Florida sociologist, wrote in the *American Journal of Sociology* that the race problems conference historically significant because for the first time southern whites and blacks “met on an equal plane, intellectually, for the discussion of their common problems.” Atlanta certainly marked a turning point for the Congress.⁴²

The race problems departmental conference, once again chaired by Dr. James Hardy Dillard of New Orleans – president of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund Board, general secretary of the Slater Board, vice president of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, dean of Tulane

⁴²Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 44-46; Culley, “Muted Trumpets,” 124-126; “The Second Southern Sociological Congress” *Atlanta Independent*, 10 May 1913, 6-7; L.L. Bernard, “Southern Sociological Congress,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 19 (July, 1913): 92-93; James H. Dillard, “Statement of Race Relationships” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 483; W. T. B. Williams, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” *Southern Workman*, 42 (June 1913), 324; Philip Welner, “Southern Sociological Congress,” *Survey*, 30 (May 17, 1913), 245; “Southern Sociological Congress,” *The Atlanta University Bulletin*, 12 (July, 1913), 25. A few race conference speakers also addressed students at Atlanta University.

University, Dillard University's eventual namesake, and member of the SSC's preliminary executive board – met at the Baptist Tabernacle. Establishing the conference agenda with his opening address, Dillard asserted that earnest and thoughtful southern whites were determined to face race problems in cooperation with each other, African Americans, and like-minded northerners. Conditions would only improve if and when whites and blacks engaged in discussions marked by “plainness and honest conviction, and at the same time with good feeling and sympathy.” Dillard’s desired discussions were realized in Atlanta with speakers emphasizing the interconnectedness of both ethnic communities, social and legal justice for African Americans, educational opportunities for blacks, increasing the number of black-owned-and-operated farms, and improving the health and hygiene of African Americans and their neighborhoods.⁴³

Inherent in Dillard’s desire for cooperation was his realization that southern blacks and whites were inextricably knotted together. Striking a holistic tone, he observed that southern society’s public welfare required the education and general improvement of African Americans and improved public health hinging on common cooperative efforts between the two races. C. V. Roman, an African American Nashville physician, proffered similar observations in his accommodationist address entitled “Racial Self-Respect and Racial Antagonism.” Among numerous “basic general truths,” he considered humanity greater than race and postulated that civilization would devolve into Sodom and Gomorrah unless justice and fraternity genuinely grasped

⁴³James H. Dillard, “The Present Situation” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 347-350.

citizens' hearts and minds. With white supremacist demagogues promising to better poor whites' predicaments at the expense of African Americans, Roman observed that southerners of both races would survive or perish together and that interracial cooperation must be encouraged by intelligent and conservative members of both races. Both ethnic communities had to overcome inaccuracies of ordinary gossip and "systematically taught tenets of false philosophies and unsound political creeds" if all individuals were to be valued equally regardless of race. Inspired by the kingdom faith, other orators offered similar calls.⁴⁴

"Humanity is humanity whether the color be black or white, and I know no fiat of God that makes white any more valuable as a color or any easier to deal with than black," Willis D. Weatherford boldly declared. Adding that every white uplift agency should also practice black uplift, he designated the Church to lead the charge. Dispensing more than mere charity, the Church must instill a new appreciation of individual sacredness and communal brotherhood. The Church must ensure safety for all, an equal chance to make a living, and the recognition of every person's worth. Only the Church, not legal mandates, could infuse southern souls with such an estimate of humanity. Only the Church with its message of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man could inject new meaning into every life. Only the Church could convince southern society to extend this sense of sacredness to all men regardless of their educational standing, moral code, or ethnicity. Employing the most eloquent and inclusive rhetoric of the

⁴⁴C. V. Roman, "Racial Self-Respect and Racial Antagonism" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 444-454.

conference, Weatherford asserted: “we cannot build up any civilized community so long as personality is not held sacred We cannot despise some persons and value others, for personality is personality, whether it is poor or rich, whether black or white.” Hatred directed toward any individual undermined the sacredness of all humanity, threatened civilization, mocked Christian ethics, and damned the soul of the perpetrator.

Weatherford especially feared that recent lynchings were symptoms of a “horrible cancer” that would slowly destroy southern civilization, derail the coming kingdom, and unleash an apocalyptic antithesis of God’s reign replete with raw barbarism. Weatherford therefore called for a new crusade based on the sacredness of all humanity regardless of race. “We are not eight million negroes and twenty million whites,” he declared; “we are twenty-nine million human beings, and whatever affects one of our company must of necessity affect the other 28, 999, 999.” Weatherford challenged attendees to accept a new vision of humanity, a modified image of southerner, a daring concept of neighbor. He considered black and white as one, interdependent, working toward a common goal, a common justice.⁴⁵

In discussing the social and hygienic conditions of Negroes, Josiah Morse, University of South Carolina philosophy professor and one of the few Jewish delegates, also emphasized an interdependent faith. Acknowledging the need for rational scientific methods to solve race problems, he revealed his impatience with sociological fact-finding. “We need not more facts, valuable as these are,” Morse stated, “but more faith;

⁴⁵Willis D. Weatherford “How to Enlist the Welfare Agencies of the South for Improvement of Conditions Among the Negroes” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 350-360.

not more statistics and academic studies, but more religion, more genuine religion.”

True religion, not facts, would produce the love, sympathy, charity, and *noblesse oblige* needed to deal with the less fortunate African American. True religion would challenge demagogues who declared that African American elevation alchemically produced white decline. Morse’s praise for kingdom religion also included a caveat: beware of separate race-based solutions.

Morse cautioned churches to eschew forming separate Negro departments informed by separate Negro statistics. He declared that African Americans were human beings possessing insignificant physical and intellectual differences compared to their white brethren. Moreover, social conditions determined morality or immorality, happiness or unhappiness, love or hate, irrespective of color. Separate societal studies in psychology, logic, ethics, sociology, economics, religion, or art for African Americans were therefore redundant. A few basic facts trumped all scientific statistics: the universe rested on the foundation of righteousness, justice, honesty, and love; injustice created more injustice; African Americans were here to stay, and white society’s welfare was inextricably interwoven with that of their black brethren. No amount of scientific study and requisite statistics altered southern reality. That which economically and legally benefitted white communities likewise benefitted African American communities.⁴⁶

Several departmental speakers stressed social and legal justice for their African American neighbors. Pleading with the privileged, James Hardy Dillard demanded that

⁴⁶Josiah Morse, “Social and Hygienic Conditions of the Negro and Needed Reforms” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 397-405.

southern elites ensure basic justice for all citizens. He recognized that southern courts, much like those of other nations, often favored the rich over the poor and the more privileged race over the less regarded one. The South needed courts of justice, not mere courts of law. Outside the courts, Dillard recognized that lynch law aggravated crime, weakened the letter and spirit of the law, and could ultimately undo southern society and halt progress if left unimpeded. Regarding social justice, Dillard realized that southern whites and blacks must reform their historical relationships. Paternalistic affection for blacks, typified by the image of the “black mammy,” must be supplanted with mutual respect. An exemplary interracialist, Dillard upheld social and political segregation while emphasizing economic equality and social justice. Like others gathered in Atlanta and later in Memphis, Dillard demanded a separation that was truly equal.⁴⁷

W.O. Scroggs, sociology and economics professor at the University of Louisiana, insisted that unjust social regimes could not endure. He noted that the 1912 Republican and Progressive national party platforms, for the first time since the Civil War, did not reference race. Although certain Negro leaders and their Northern sympathizers bewailed the race plank’s absence, Scroggs considered the de-politicization of southern racial problems a prerequisite for solving such issues in a spirit of equal justice to both races. Acknowledging the inadequate treatment of African Americans as Dillard and other interracialists had, Scroggs found no remedy in social integration. Social segregation was a basic fact of race relations, a well reasoned standard “found in all ages

⁴⁷James H. Dillard, “Statement on Race Relations” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 483-484; James H. Dillard, “The Present Situation” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 349.

and in all countries where members of diverse races have been brought together in anything like equal numbers.” He chided northerners who deemed the southern institution senseless and prejudiced. Southerners provided the Negro numerous civil rights, such as “protection of life, limb, and property.” In fact, southern blacks had more industrial freedom than their northern and western counterparts and could obtain an elementary education for the asking. But Scroggs also realized that comparative well-being was hardly absolute well-being. The southern black’s civic condition was often appalling.

Listing a litany of lamentable problems, Scroggs was especially irked by a lack of equal accommodations on passenger trains. Although separate cars reduced friction between the races, railways often provided only open-platform coaches for African Americans. Such quarters were overcrowded and often supplied with only one toilet. Scroggs considered such treatment inexcusable. No honest white merchant would sell Negro customers inferior goods and then sell white patrons better articles at the same price. But railways did just that with impunity. These same railways also endangered the lives of their black clientele. When Scroggs discovered that a particular train carried its black patrons in a wooden coach and white patrons in a steel one, a gentleman remarked: “Well, I guess it costs the road more to kill a white man than a nigger, and so it takes extra precautions for us.”

Scroggs also described a southern legal system rife with injustice. In southern courts of law, blacks were granted legal, albeit unequal treatment. They were afforded legal due process, but then punished more harshly. It was not that African Americans

received more than his legal deserts, but that the white man received less. The educator attributed such unevenness to whites' racial animosity and blacks' lack of money and political influence. Slightly elevating the latter reason over the former, he observed that poor whites often suffered similar jurisprudential injustices but still noted that most white justice was "over-tempered with mercy."

Seeking remedy for the southern judiciary, Scroggs suggested that blacks should serve on juries judging members of their own race. He noted, however, that the average southerner objected to the proposal, believing there existed "a kind of freemasonry" among blacks that caused them to protect one another. Like C.V. Roman and Willis D. Weatherford, Scroggs bemoaned the lynch mob and "leather-lunged demagogues" charading as champions of southern womanhood. Lynching dehumanized African American victims and transformed white men into anarchists and murderers. Such injustice was an outward sign that inward grace was lacking. He wondered why judges, lawyers, preachers, and teachers had remained silent when faced with a mob spirit so prevalent among the ignorant masses. Invoking a masculine yet just Christianity, he challenged southern manhood to confront and overcome the mob's sovereignty. He made similar challenges to those overseeing education, urban planning, education, and public policy.

Scroggs found fault with accepted southern ways. Reflecting the sentiments of many SSC delegates, he challenged whites to accept a poor black underclass forced: to live in overpriced, urban, substandard slums rampant with vice; to bear a greater tax burden; to attend separate inferior schools; to suffer inadequate access to municipal

public libraries and parks; to avoid entree to social uplift campaigns, settlement houses, day nurseries, and fresh air farms. He even went so far as to suggest limited suffrage for “intelligent and highly respectable” Negroes. Scroggs had few qualms about excluding the ignorant and propertyless from the ballot so long as such policy was impartially enforced. But “the good character and good understanding clauses” had vested too much power and trust in the hands of local registration officers. If existing election laws were properly implemented, every worthy black man could vote. The interracialist Scroggs consistently stressed separate racial spheres but equal human justice. His views were overwhelmingly accepted by Atlanta delegates.⁴⁸

Charles Hillman Brough – University of Arkansas sociology and economics professor, future progressive Democratic governor of Arkansas, and future SSC president – emphasized that African Americans as citizens were entitled to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the equal protection of the laws to safeguard such inalienable rights. Brough’s argument for equal justice, however, stopped at the ballot box, and he observed that the regulation of suffrage in the South and North would always be determined by the principle of expediency. Still, like Scroggs, the future SSC president opined that separate but equal should be exactly that. He railed that only the most prejudiced bigot who argued that blacks lacked a “white soul” would refuse them equal access to “quasipublic utilities,” courts, and public accommodations. Echoing Scroggs and other Atlanta speakers, Brough considered separate railroad coach laws wise, but

⁴⁸W. O. Scroggs “Desirable Civic Reforms in the Treatment of the Negro” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 412-419. “Governor Mann Made President” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1.

discriminations in service wrong. Brough and Scroggs captured the dominant interracialist views in Atlanta. In classic accommodationist fashion, even black delegates compromised their claim to the ballot box for economic opportunity and accepted segregation as a progressive reality.⁴⁹

Presaging future African Americans who asserted that injustice anywhere threatened justice everywhere, C. V. Roman boldly declared: “No man is secure in his rights so long as any man is deprived of his rights.” For Roman, the choice was clear: “*Justice and liberty are for all or for none.*” Unlike later black generations, the accommodationist Roman hardly threatened the social status quo. Of one mind with Scroggs and Dillard, the black physician desired social separation rooted in true equality. He was sure that segregation would benefit both races but would especially improve African Americans’ views of themselves. Segregated black souls creating independent ideals instead of accepting those merely superimposed by whites would result in “sane, conservative, unselfish, patient, negro leadership” anchored by a sense of self identity. For too long the Negro had accepted the white community’s estimate of him. Abolitionists overestimated his capability immediately to exercise his rights as a citizen while “the standpatter” underestimated his rights as a man. Few whites had ever been willing to let African Americans evolve naturally. Consequently, blacks had frequently “disappointed friends by inefficiency and irritated enemies by imitation.” A kind of segregation providing separate but truly equal public accommodations,

⁴⁹Charles H. Brough, “Work of the Commission of Southern Universities on the Race Question ” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 361- 368.

educational institutions, economic prospects, and occupational opportunities would empower the African American collective psyche, raise standards in the black community, permit blacks to solve their own problems, and secure social justice for all persons of color. Such self sufficiency required southern whites to relinquish their negative vision of their black brethren.

C.V. Roman called whites to participate in black self-actualization. As African Americans sought professional and business opportunities, he asked whites to support such constructive workers instead of exploiting white fears. Contrary to speakers who considered black religion overly emotional and its adherents spiritually lacking and in need of guidance, Roman insisted that African Americans were not children in need of constant paternalism. Roman counseled whites to emphasize blacks' virtues over perceived vices. White newspapers often reported any accusation of crime with large bold headlines but rarely print corrections or retractions. Roman also asked the press to drop racist words such as "nigger, darky, Sambo, coon, etc." from their vocabulary, insisted that papers never mention the race of a criminal, and demanded they never report the speeches of race agitators and political demagogues. Roman urged whites to allow economic opportunities by employing Negro district nurses and assistant health officers. Curbing his egalitarianism considerably, Roman also insisted that whites "persistent effort to treat all negroes alike" impeded the "healthful growth of class distinction" among blacks and lessened the influence of "the intelligent and virtuous over the ignorant and vicious." Desiring that all set their eyes "on *justice for all men*," so that the "momentum of righteousness will overcome . . . even the *race question*," Roman

held firm to class divisions. African American justice would be secured only when the talented “negro” upper class held sway over the black masses. Regardless, Roman’s call for justice based on black self identity and agency added a new dimension to the SSC’s racial agenda without diminishing its overall interracialist vision based on cooperation.⁵⁰

Almost all of the SSC delegates called for interracial cooperation as a means for greater justice. Recognizing that Negroes were a permanent southern fixture and that white southerners’ welfare and happiness were interconnected to the plight of their black neighbors, Josiah Morse, portending the work of the Commission of Interracial Cooperation, suggested that every southern community create a biracial committee. These committees would be dedicated to securing Booker T. Washington’s call to be “separate as the fingers” in social relationships, yet “one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.” Morse also wanted an SSC committee to create educational curricula on the Negro for public schools and desired all southern colleges and universities to teach a course on “Race Adjustment.” For most gathered in Atlanta, however, their collective vision of cooperation concentrated on education, agriculture, health, and hygiene.⁵¹

⁵⁰C. V. Roman, “Racial Self-Respect and Racial Antagonism” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 444-454; Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” in *A Testament of Hope*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1986), 290; E. C. Branson, “The Negro Working Out His Own Salvation” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 383-397; Charles H. Brough, “Work of the Commission of Southern Universities on the Race Question ” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 361- 368.

⁵¹Josiah Morse, “Social and Hygienic Conditions of the Negro and Needed Reforms” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 405.

Commenting on the present situation of race relations, James Hardy Dillard recognized that southern economic and moral welfare depended on improving the region's black schools. The African American community needed more educational money to secure better trained black teachers and longer school terms, more supervision from white education superintendents, more programs for African American educators, and Negro schools dedicated to addressing the practical life of their local communities. Emphasizing practical and pragmatic pedagogy, Dillard spoke a language SSC delegates understood. Atlanta attendees asserted that African American improvement hinged on industrial education.⁵²

All race department delegates seemingly spoke with one mind concerning Negro training. Charles Hillman Brough best summarized the interracialist position on education. Quoting William Seneca Sutton, dean of the School of Education at the University of Texas, Brough affirmed the educator's assessment that the highest welfare of the "black child of Providence" was linked to equality of industrial opportunity and educational enlightenment, not social or political equality. Brough considered industrial education and all it entailed – "teaching the negro the lessons of the nobility of toil, the value of thrift and honesty, the advantages attaching to the division of labor and the diversification of industry and the dangers lurking in the seductive credit system" – to be an effective panacea against forces delaying African American economic development: "the tenant system, the one-crop system, the abuse of the credit system, and rural

⁵²James H. Dillard, "Statement on Race Relations" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, McCulloch, 484-485.

isolation.”

Grace Bigelow House, vice principal of the Penn School on South Carolina’s St. Helena island (an outgrowth of the abolitionist Port Royal experiment), predicted that racial problems would be remedied when educational systems trained backward blacks to lead useful, industrious, and moral lives in their communities. Recognizing that classical higher education sustained an African American professional class of doctors, lawyers, teachers, and business professionals, House considered industrial training the foundation of African American education. She also argued that black education benefitted white southerners. Referencing Booker T. Washington, House maintained that 90 percent of the southern black prison population possessed no trade or skill and 61 percent were illiterate. Such figures disproved the assertion that “the negro grows in crime as education increases.”

Claiming that the socialized Church and school were *the* social and welfare agencies on which all others stood, Willis D. Weatherford envisioned both institutions working in tandem to uplift African Americans. The socialization of black schools required more revenue overall, a more practical curriculum, better trained teachers, more adequate school supervision, and supervising Jeanes Foundation or Slater Fund teachers employed in every southern county. Such improvements would create schools that uplifted African Americans, valued all humanity, and ministered holistically to their communities.⁵³

⁵³Charles H. Brough, “Work of the Commission of Southern Universities on the Race Question ” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 363, 365-366; Grace Bigelow House, “The Need and Value fo Industrial Education for Negroes”

Atlanta delegates agreed that blacks' economic success and eventual full citizenship hinged on African American agricultural achievements. As the *Atlanta Journal* reported, with blacks comprising 40 percent of all southern agricultural workers, the race's future was seemingly tied to the land they plowed. Although William M. Hunley – Professor of Economics and Political Science at Virginia Military Institute – considered tenancy, mono-culture agriculture, rural isolation, and abusive credit the archenemies of southern farm life, he insisted that southern blacks' economic situation was nonetheless solid. Hunley agreed with Dillard's assessment that Negro problems were southern problems. Insisting that only lasting and cooperative economic improvements would improve African American lives, he called for the eradication of the tenant system and increased farm ownership.⁵⁴

E. C. Branson – head of the rural economics and sociology department at the State Normal School of Georgia – took a more paternalistic and condescending view of the African American future, though, like Hunley, he traced that future to the land. The southern Negro must work out “his own salvation, not in terms of politics, not in terms of formal education, but in terms of property ownership; and mainly in terms of land in the rural regions.” Branson observed that southern blacks were becoming increasingly

in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 433-434; Willis D. Weatherford “How to Enlist the Welfare Agencies of the South for Improvement of Conditions Among the Negroes” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 353-354.

⁵⁴“Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; William M. Hunley, “The Economic Status of the Negro” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 368-377 .

ruralized. Whereas the African American population increased by 10 percent from 1900 to 1910, the black farm population increased 20 percent during the same decade. Over the same period the southern black urban population decreased. Branson noted that nearly one-fourth of southern black farmers owned the farms they cultivated. Moreover, whereas southern white farm ownership increased 12 percent during the twentieth century's first decade, African American farm ownership increased 17 percent. The paternalistic Branson hailed their achievement while admitting that agricultural achievement was their last best hope. He considered expectations that blacks would succeed at the highest levels of competition to be unreasonable. African Americans' opportunities to progress existed "upon the lower levels, where life is less intense, the struggle for existence less desperate, and surrounding circumstances more propitious and helpful."

According to Branson, southern rural blacks were still dependent on southern whites. By virtue of property ownership, African Americans and their religion were becoming "civilizable" and "Christianizable." Absent such ownership and agency, Branson was sure that black religion would always be an emotional, unfocused frenzy. Economic successes helped bridge black religion's divide between emotion and conduct and contributed to gains in church activities, organization, ownership, and growth. Nevertheless, southern blacks still depended on white neighbors for church construction, spiritual and financial guidance, and general uplift to work out their own salvation. In this vein, Hunley charged southern white Christians to be concerned with black men's

souls as well as their physical needs.⁵⁵

Although several speakers agreed with Hunley's and Branson's agricultural assessments, they also lamented the African American community's ignorance of scientific farming and business methods. Grace Bigelow House touted the benefits of the annual "Farmer's Fair and Conference" held on the Penn School's farm. The event attracted agricultural experts to speak on subjects vital to the Carolina sea islands' farming interests. The school also engaged in farm demonstration work that aroused interest in better tools, live stock, and business methods. Under House's leadership, the school also engaged in microfinance through the St. Helena Cooperative Society, a seventy-five member organization that provided small loans at low interest rates for seed, fertilizer, and farm machinery. Access to credit provided advantages to smaller farmers usually afforded only to large farmers.

R. J. H. DeLoach, professor of cotton industry at the University of Georgia, concurred with House's emphasis on scientific farming techniques and demonstration work. To DeLoach, assisting African American agricultural endeavors would best commence with the kind of simple extension work taught in farmers' institutes. For too long, southern whites had neglected to help black farmers become more efficient. In DeLoach's estimation, southern whites had "climbed up on the lower race instead of having lent a helping hand during his long period of adversity." Such selfishness cost both southern blacks and whites and recompense must now be paid in full. Willis D.

⁵⁵E. C. Branson, "The Negro Working Out His Own Salvation" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 383-397 .

Weatherford agreed and looked to the United States Farm Demonstration work as a source for Negro uplift. Through the farm demonstration method, hundreds of farmers on the edge of destitution had learned to grow fine crops and lived in commodious houses. Weatherford felt it imperative that work be extended to African Americans as well as whites. The fruits of efficient labor, especially for African Americans, would ensure full economic citizenship and make society slightly more kingdom-like.⁵⁶

Auguring a theme that would drive the 1915 Houston SSC session, race department speakers seized on the theme of health among African Americans. For justice to be realized and for the kingdom to be hastened, delegates understood that the Negro must be lifted out of unhealthy surroundings. James Hardy Dillard recognized that the prevalence of tuberculosis and other contagions in many African American communities menaced the health of all southerners. He encouraged cooperation between city and state health authorities, black physicians, ministers, and teachers. Dillard also believed that public schools and advanced institutions serving both races should teach applied rather than theoretical sanitation and hygiene. Josiah Morse thought it unreasonable to expect successful living in any sphere of life from those living in unsanitary shacks located in unsightly surroundings. He posited that anti-shanty laws and public health laws would prevent overcrowding, transmission of disease, and

⁵⁶Grace Bigelow House, "The Need and Value fo Industrial Education for Negroes" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 431-440; J. H. DeLoach, "The Negro as a Farmer" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 378-382; Willis D. Weatherford "How to Enlist the Welfare Agencies of the South for Improvement of Conditions Among the Negroes" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*., ed. McCulloch, 350-360.

proliferation of vice. George W. Hubbard, dean of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, observed that many African Americans were ignorant of commonly known sanitary rules. Such ignorance contributed to the greater prevalence of infectious diseases and higher death rates in African American communities and was especially troublesome to wealthier southern whites who employed blacks as servants, maids, and cooks. Hubbard's solution included public school instruction on practical hygiene, Sunday school curriculum on public health, greater numbers of nurses and physicians working in African American communities, coordinated public health programs, tubercular hospitals in every state, and regulations requiring doctors to report all tuberculosis cases. Willis D. Weatherford was sure that any relief work required higher levels of efficiency and coordination. Foreshadowing the work of the Congress in 1915, he urged city charities to organize Negro departments that would make careful studies of the sanitary conditions, housing problems, and health conditions in African American city neighborhoods in order to initiate solutions. Weatherford also called for greater involvement of African Americans within these departments to promote agency among black communities. In essence, Weatherford insisted southern city charities "cease to work for negroes and begin to work with negroes." Charities must treat African Americans as "responsible members of the community, and not as dependent wards." In short, Weatherford suggested that the best service to African Americans would come by helping them to help themselves. Such agency would ultimately "strengthen the whole race by uniting its leaders in a constructive service for their own people." For

Weatherford, such actions were the only sustainable way to solve racial problems.⁵⁷

While the church conference parsed various social gospel perspectives and then advocated their practical application through an all-encompassing social service, the race conference viewed specific social problems and their amelioration through the lenses of racial experience and socialized religion. If the church conference operated as an ethical and theological roundtable, the race conference functioned as a practical policy think tank. Both conferences were equally influenced and motivated, by the ideal of interconnectedness.

Like church conference speakers who considered humanity a single unit that succeeded or failed together, race conference calls for interracial cooperation rested on the premise that black and white southerners shared a common humanity. C. V. Roman, insisting that a failure to cooperate would usher in moral decay and white demagoguery, considered such common humanity greater than race and a basis for southern salvation. Willis D. Weatherford insisted that all personality was sacred regardless of class or race. He thought the Church's social actions should instill the ideals of individual sacredness and communal brotherhood into southern institutions. Informed by such spirit, speakers addressed specific social issues affecting the African American community.

⁵⁷James H. Dillard, "Statement on Race Relations" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 483-484; Josiah Morse, "Social and Hygienic Conditions of the Negro and Needed Reforms" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 403-405; George W. Hubbard "The Prevalence of Contagious and Infectious Diseases Among the Negroes, and the Necessity of Preventative Measures" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 407-408, 410-411; Willis D. Weatherford "How to Enlist the Welfare Agencies of the South for Improvement of Conditions Among the Negroes" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 350-360.

Speakers like James Hardy Dillard demanded basic legal and social justice for all citizens. Like most SSC delegates, Dillard supported social segregation but specified that separation be truly equal. W.O. Scroggs insisted that African Americans be granted equal access to legal due process and that black juries should judge members of their own race. In the social realm, he lamented the existence of a poor black underclass and suggested that limited suffrage for educated blacks might alleviate such situations. Charles Hillman Brough and C. V. Roman insisted that a separate but truly equal system would safeguard individual inalienable rights and permit blacks to solve their own social problems.

Speakers also called for increased educational and economic opportunities. James Hardy Dillard recognized that economic improvement hinged on educational expenditures securing better trained teachers and practical vocational training. Like other conference leaders, he emphasized that industrial training and pragmatic pedagogy would counter social forces delaying African American development. Willis D. Weatherford envisioned socialized churches working with African American schools to ensure moral and economic uplift. Most delegates agreed that African American economic and political success was tied to agricultural pursuits.

William M. Hunley, E. C. Branson, Grace Bigelow House, and R. J. H. DeLoach railed against farm tenancy, mono-culture agriculture, rural isolation, and abusive credit. In the name of uplift, they demanded more exposure to farm demonstration and extension work, greater use of scientific farming techniques, and access to fair credit. Economic uplift would ameliorate unhealthy surroundings such as poor hygiene and

sanitation that most African Americans experienced.

The 1913 race conference analyzed those issues in depth. Unlike the previous year in Nashville where the founding of the University Commission on Southern Race Questions took center stage, in Atlanta, the race department – informed by the work of the University Commission and its leaders – came into its own, becoming the key conference that influenced most SSC discussions. The Atlanta meeting was also distinguished by its cooperative attitude. All efforts of racial salvation were guided by an interconnectedness rooted in a socialized faith. As Josiah Morse insisted, faith informed by genuine religion rather than by more facts and statistics would initiate a new millennial era of interracial justice. Such faith guided the race department's discussions in Atlanta.

When the Atlanta meeting began, SSC delegates hardly fathomed what they would witness over the ensuing four days. In Nashville they had observed an SSC initially influenced by temperance and other social control forces begin to embrace a social justice agenda informed by a social gospel-inspired interracialism. Still, opening night attendees at most only glimpsed the SSC's deepening commitment to social justice causes. But as the sessions continued, both white and black delegates were surprised by the extent of interracialism. Contemporary observers of both races deemed the SSC's focus on race historically significant, perhaps the most important interracial event since Reconstruction. Such elevated conclusions aside, the language and actions evident in

Atlanta established the SSC as the premier southern interracial entity of the 1910s.⁵⁸

The SSC's social gospel vision was not the first of its kind in the South. Northerners brought the social gospel southward in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Workers for the American Missionary Association (AMA) and the American Freedmen's Union Commission (AFUC) worked with the first freedmen, founded black universities and colleges throughout the South, continued their ministry well into the twentieth century, and laid a solid foundation for later civil rights victories. Funded by northern philanthropic interests, the Slater Fund, Anna T. Jeanes Foundation, Rosenwald Fund, Southern Education Board (SEB), General Education Board, and Peabody Education Fund focused on improving public educational opportunities for poor southern whites and blacks. Southern social gospelers like Atticus Haygood, bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), president of Emory College, and Slater Fund agent; James Hardy Dillard, president of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund Board and general secretary of the Slater Fund; and Edgar Gardner Murphy, Episcopal priest, executive secretary of the SEB, and secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, eventually joined such educational endeavors. Despite their interest in alleviating southern social ills and their inclusion of southern religious reformers, none of these associations were

⁵⁸Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 44-46; Culley, "Muted Trumpets," 124-126; "The Second Southern Sociological Congress" *Atlanta Independent*, 10 May 1913, 6-7; L.L. Bernard, "Southern Sociological Congress," *American Journal of Sociology*, XIX (July, 1913): 92-93; James H. Dillard, "Statement of Race Relationships" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 483; W. T. B. Williams, "The Southern Sociological Congress," *Southern Workman*, 42 (June 1913), 324; Philip Weltner, "Southern Sociological Congress," *Survey*, 30 (May 17, 1913), 245; "Southern Sociological Congress," *Atlanta University Bulletin*, 12 (July, 1913), 25.

indigenous to the region and were therefore only marginally “southern.”⁵⁹

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, southern denominations waged their own social gospel crusades. The home mission movement among women in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South worked to improve the domestic lives of immigrants, poor whites, and African Americans. The Southern Baptist Convention’s Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) operated settlement houses and a training school for social workers. Southern denominations’ social service commissions spread the social gospel’s message throughout the region. Even congregants of the most conservative southern denomination – the Presbyterian Church in the United States – pushed child labor laws, operated mission schools, founded settlement houses, and cautiously advocated interracial cooperation. Such endeavors represented a growing southern social gospel movement that reached its zenith in the first two decades of the twentieth century. They also demonstrated southern denominational resistance to ecumenical coordination.⁶⁰

The SSC represented the apotheosis of this southern social gospel surge. It was a homegrown movement built on the social gospel ministries of disparate southern denominations. But its ecumenism – especially regarding racial concerns – distinguished it from such denominational endeavors. The SSC incorporated southern social gospelers of sundry southern faiths under the aegis of a unified and comprehensive social program

⁵⁹Ralph E. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 1-24, 148-151.

⁶⁰J McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 1-5; Carol Crawford Holcomb, “Mothering the South,” 179; Flynt, “Feeding the Hungry and Ministering to the Broken Hearted,” 83-137.

focused on redeeming the South. The 1913 convention's explicit interracialist thrust marked a turning point for both the SSC and the southern social gospel. In Atlanta, southern social Christianity – focusing with concerted ecumenical force on regional racial ills – created a new southern interracialist vision. Some historians argue that southern interracialism – the development of a wholesome atmosphere for cross-racial understanding built on a spirit of goodwill, cooperation, and institutionalized contact between the races – was a reaction to post-World War I racial violence and the ensuing Great Migration. In fact, such interracialism obviously predates the war and set the agenda for the 1913 Atlanta meeting. The SSC's interracialist vision as expressed by several of its leaders later shaped the Commission of Interracial Cooperation(CIC), the Southern Regional Council(SRC), and other organizations that subtly, but significantly, challenged the southern status quo. The seeds of social gospel inspired interracialism germinated in Nashville and blossomed in Atlanta. They would bear fruit in Memphis.⁶¹

⁶¹Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 240-267; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xix-xxii, 246-261, 374-385.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN AND THE CHALLENGE OF CUSTOM: RELIGION, RACE, AND THE 1914 MEMPHIS CONFERENCE

The entire city of Memphis warmly welcomed delegates to the third annual gathering of the Southern Sociological Congress as they arrived at Grand Central terminal and Union Station on May 5 and 6, 1914. Even policemen decked out in new uniforms wore badges designating them members of a seemingly ubiquitous reception committee. As delegates advanced up South Main to the SSC headquarters at the Hotel Chisca, they encountered other visitors attending one of the eleven social welfare conferences convening concomitantly with the National Conference of Charities and Correction and the SSC. The first few weeks of May 1914 found the American National Red Cross, the American Association of Officials in Charity and Correction, the American Association of Societies for Organized Charities, the National Conference for the Education of Backward and Truant Children, the National Conference of Jewish Charities, the National Federation of Settlements, the National Probation Association, the Mississippi Valley Tuberculosis Conference, the Federal Council of Churches' Commission of Church and Social Service, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National League of Urban Conditions Among Negroes (a forerunner to the National Urban League) meeting in Memphis. With so

many organizations in residence, the *Commercial Appeal* paid especial attention to the SSC and the National Conference of Charities and Correction, observing that both desired “to make the burden of life easy, to make the love of humanity broader and to make every man the keeper of his brother.” The *News Scimitar* interviewed one promoter who likened the SSC to a crusade “not for rescuing an empty tomb in a foreign land, but to keep thousands of tombs empty in our own country.” That same daily depicted the SSC as overflowing with religion but nonsectarian in its work “for the higher civilization based on the love that Christ said men must bear one to another.” Clearly, the SSC’s reputation as an ecumenical social gospel organ preceded the delegates’ arrival.¹

James E. McCulloch more than any other individual maintained that reputation. Although sources fail to detail the General Secretary’s activities between the 1913 and 1914 meetings, three volumes of SSC speeches attest to his labor. By July, 1913, he had edited and published *The South Mobilizing for Social Service: Addresses Delivered at the Southern Sociological Congress*. Encompassing over seven hundred pages, it included speeches from the Atlanta general sessions and every departmental conference. The speeches presented at meetings of the race problems department were separately reproduced in an additional work, *The Human Way: Addresses on Race Problems at the*

¹Walter Cain, “Lofty Is the Principle and High the Aim of the Sociological Congress,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 16; “Two Meetings of Far-Reaching Social Value,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 3 May 1914, 6; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; “Delegates Arrive for a series of 12 in 1 Meetings,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 6 May 1914, 1; “Will Discuss Charity in All its Branches,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 3 May 1914, 3.

Southern Sociological Congress. A third compact work, *The Challenge of Social Service*, contained the speeches of Rochester Theological Seminary professor Walter Rauschenbusch, Congregationalist minister Henry Stiles Bradley, Norfolk Health Commissioner Powhatan Schenck, Professor E. C. Branson of Georgia's State Normal School, General Secretary Charles S. MacFarland of the Federal Council of Churches, and Warden W. H. Whittaker of Virginia's Occoquan Workhouse. Beyond his publishing responsibilities, McCulloch coordinated the 1914 meeting with the SSC program committee and local Memphis arrangement committees.²

In many ways, the Memphis meeting resembled previous SSC gatherings. It hosted several former SSC speakers who focused on the twin themes of religion and race. In Nashville, Graham Taylor -- Professor of Applied Christianity at Chicago Theological Seminary, founder of the Chicago Commons settlement house, acting president of the National Conference of Charities, and editor of *Survey* -- had attacked the southern penal system and outlined a socialized religion capable of reforming philanthropy, improving civic administration, and fostering human industry. In Memphis, he would likewise emphasize ecclesial and societal cooperation to eliminate the causes of social ills. Dr. Charles S. MacFarland of New York -- executive secretary of the Federal Council of Churches and its Commission on the Church and Social Service -- restated, almost verbatim, his Nashville argument that the Church must cooperate with the state to

²James E. McCulloch, "Introductory Note" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 3-4; James E. McCulloch, ed., *The Human Way: Addresses on Race Problems at the Southern Sociological Congress* (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1913); James E. McCulloch, ed., *The Challenge of Social Service*, (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1913).

readjust the industrial order. Building on his Atlanta observations that blacks and whites comprise a common humanity, C. V. Roman – the Nashville African American physician – detailed how coordinated health policies would benefit both communities. Willis D. Weatherford likewise elaborated on his social gospel-informed views of interracial interdependency by preaching “real democracy,” the idea that society should recognize the inherent worth of every human being.³

Speakers who had never before addressed the SSC also elucidated familiar themes. They further explained social gospel interpretations of the kingdom; the role of social service in transforming the economic and political order; the nature of social salvation; the means and methods of interracial cooperation; the need for better African American educational opportunities; and the necessity of improved sanitation and housing for all communities.

Overall, however, the Memphis meeting represented an aberration from the SSC’s norm. Local delegates’ insistence on strictly enforced segregation challenged the SSC’s interracial spirit and its acceptance of African Americans as full members. SSC speakers responded with oratory emphasizing the need for a more egalitarian social order and with actions that actualized the rhetoric of racial interconnectedness and

³Graham Taylor “Qualifications of Social Workers,” in *The Call of the New South*, ed. James E. McCulloch (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1912), 346, 349-352; Charles S. MacFarland, “The Preparation of the Church for Social Service” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 105-106; C. V. Roman, “The Inter-Racial Interest of Health” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 169-178; “Social Workers of South in Session,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1. “Sociological Leaders Talk,” *Nashville Banner*, 10 May 1912, 7.

cooperation. Though momentous, such social justice rhetoric was limited. To avoid any further contention, subsequent SSC gatherings addressed racial concerns in a more ambiguous and circuitous fashion. As a result, the 1915 and 1916 meetings were deemed health congresses. Although racial issues would continue to play a significant role in future SSC events, Memphis marked the last time they would be placed center stage.

Delegates registering for the SSC meeting discovered local racial attitudes that were uncharacteristic of previous gatherings. At the insistence of Memphis SSC delegates, whites registered either at the SSC's headquarters housed at the Hotel Chisca or at substations in the Hotel Gayoso or Business Men's Club. But "special arrangements" were made for African American delegates at the Beale Street Baptist church located four blocks east of the Orpheum Theater. For the first time, the SSC provided segregated registration and information bureaus. Local delegates' insistence on strictly enforced segregation in a variety of SSC matters would spark contention by the convention's close.⁴

In addition to altered registration arrangements, the SSC experienced temporary organizational change as well. Because the National Conference of Charities and Correction had also selected Memphis to host their yearly convention, the SSC, in accordance with their constitution and by-laws, met jointly with their northern partner. Attesting to the SSC's evolution since 1912, leaders of both organizations decided that the SSC would assemble only its two most significant departmental conferences: the

⁴"Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; "Social Service The Theme of Addresses," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 3 May 1914, 9.

conference on church and social service and the conference on race relations.

Meanwhile, the National Conference of Charities and Correction concentrated on public health, child welfare, courts and prisons, and associations between charities. The SSC's departmental conferences assembled during the day at Central Baptist Church, and the general sessions convened during the evening hours in the Orpheum Theater.⁵

With only two departmental conferences represented, the SSC deviated from its previous routine. The morning and afternoon gatherings were deemed departmental conferences and the evening events were designated general sessions. All meetings functioned similarly, however, except that delegates could initiate discussion from the floor during the morning and afternoon departmental meetings. Also in Memphis for the first time SSC events were not scheduled concurrently. Such schedule changes encouraged the two conferences to intermingle. The church and social service department held its first meeting Thursday morning, May 7, at Central Baptist Church. Following lunch, the race relations department convened its initial meeting in the same location. The Thursday evening session dealt with issues related to the church department. Friday morning focused on race and that afternoon on church. The Friday

⁵“Southern Sociological Congress Opens To-Night,” *Nashville Banner*, 7 May 1912, 1; “Permanent Organization of Sociological Congress,” *Nashville Banner*, 8 May 1912, 1; “Sixteen States in Southern Conference,” *Survey* 27, (23 March 1912): 1948; McKelway, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” *Survey* 28, (1 June 1912): 359-361; Charles Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 20-38, 52; James E. McCulloch, “Introduction” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 3-4. The constitution of the Southern Sociological Congress(SSC) closely paralleled that of the National Conference on Charities and Correction. It included an article that mandated a joint meeting of the two organizations when the National Conference met in a southern city.

evening session and both of Saturday's sessions met jointly with the National Conference of Charities and Correction. The SSC and the National Conference only met collectively for these last three sessions. The SSC convened separately from May 6 to May 9 while the National Conference met from May 8 to May 15.⁶

Friday evening, May 6, SSC delegates and the general public filed past the local photograph exhibit in the Orpheum's hallway on their way to the main opera hall. Passing framed images of girl inmates sewing, studying, playing, and baking at the Home of the Good Shepherd, attendees eventually entered the meeting space. There, above the full length of the Orpheum's stage, a banner declared, "The Solid South for a Better Nation." Few realized the multiple meanings of the term "Solid South." A region unified politically and culturally behind the Democratic party and white racial hegemony would be challenged, albeit on a very limited scale, by a significant number of delegates. The events of the ensuing days would reveal a kind of solidarity Memphis delegates undoubtedly did not anticipate.⁷

The SSC meetings opened as any other. Around 8 p.m., Reverend T. E. Sharp of St. John's Methodist Church in Memphis took the dais to deliver the invocation. Judge W. J. Bacon, a Memphis judge serving as temporary chairman at the opening session, offered the address of welcome on behalf of city political boss Mayor E. H. Crump. He

⁶"Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

⁷Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 20-38, 52; James E. McCulloch, "Introduction" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, McCulloch, 3-4; "Picture Exhibit Will Show Need of Warfare Against Child Labor," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 30 April 1914, 6.

then introduced William Hodges Mann, former progressive Virginia governor and SSC president. Sounding more like preacher than politician in his introduction, Governor Mann called the gathering to serve God and humanity. Posturing more like a politician for the remainder of his address, he discussed recommendations already submitted to the 1914 session of Virginia's General Assembly. Though hardly an inspiring rhetorician, Mann covered Progressive Era social control and social justice issues relevant and familiar to the Congress. He called for state-sponsored consolidated homes for the old, infirmed, and poor in every congressional district; a eugenics policy based on segregation, not sterilization; work farms and road work for "misdemeanants"; foster homes for poor children; a comprehensive probation law; strict enforcement of women and child labor laws; an industrial school for delinquent Negro girls; a recovery facility for alcohol and drug addicts; greater expenditures for farm demonstration work; a Negro industrial exposition; additional vocational training for penitentiary prisoners; and systematic work to promote preventative medicine, temperance, and higher ideals in the home. Governor Mann closed his remarks by introducing Graham Taylor of Chicago, acting president of the National Conference of Charities and editor of *Survey*. Taylor replaced Tennessee Governor Ben W. Hooper, who could not attend. To silence Hooper's political critics, Mann added that the Tennessee statesman "never shirked a duty" and that "he was a man who had the sincere admiration not only of members of his own party but of probably a majority of those who opposed him politically." The mere

mention of Hooper elicited spontaneous applause.⁸

Taylor delivered his speech without notes to the near capacity crowd. So informal was the atmosphere toward the beginning of his remarks that Taylor was interrupted by Governor Mann who inquired whether he favored women's suffrage, a subject not discussed in Nashville or Atlanta. Delegates warmly applauded Taylor's reply that Chicago's voting women eliminated that city's segregated vice district and shuttered more than 1,000 Illinois saloons. Continuing his speech, Taylor helped set the tone of the third annual gathering by emphasizing the need for co-operation between reformers in order to obtain better living and moral conditions. For Taylor, the joint gatherings of the SSC and National Conference of Charities and Correction exemplified this greater spirit of cooperation which was constantly growing among all reform agencies. He challenged delegates of both organizations to seek cooperation based on the elimination of causation: "The charity of yesterday is the simple justice of today."⁹

Seeking social justice meant addressing root causes, especially regarding racial problems. Observing the racial composition of the SSC delegation seated on the main orchestra-level floor, Taylor congratulated the audience "upon the fact that you have set

⁸"Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; "Social Workers of South in Session," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; "Two Conferences Will Open Tonight," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 6 May 1914, 5; William Hodges Mann, "Statement on Race Relations" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 11-21.

⁹"Social Workers of South in Session," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5.
"Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

aside one-third of the space in this theater for the negroes.” Such policies clearly demonstrated that the SSC was genuinely interested in working together across racial boundaries. Cooperation was the first step toward eliminating the causes of social ills, but it wasn’t the only one. As a social gospeler, Taylor could not envision eradication without ecclesiastical involvement.¹⁰

Taylor perceived the community and church in a symbiotic relationship. The church could not fulfill its mission if the community failed, and no community could succeed if it allowed the church to falter. The church’s duty was to improve all aspects of community living which in turn would secure the church’s progress. Such church work was hindered if the community made it easier “for the people to do wrong than to do right.” Therefore, the church was responsible for bettering community social conditions while establishing moral standards. Never before, insisted Taylor, was the work of the church more valuable. To secure society’s salvation, community and church must meet “on the common platform of good deeds, of human courage and sacrifice that glorifies God and promotes the fellowship of man.” Only such cooperation imbued with love of God and each other would make the nation truly Christian. Emphasizing kingdom-based cooperation as a means to eradicate the causes of social dysfunction, Taylor established the character of the Congress’ discussions. Over the next three days, speakers would focus on inter-class and interracial public-private cooperation, as well as

¹⁰“Social Workers of South in Session,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5.

“Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

kingdom-focused social service, in order to eliminate social and racial ills.¹¹

Unlike the previous two annual gatherings, only a few speakers in Memphis explicated social gospel interpretations of the kingdom of God. Following a rousing rendition of “Help Somebody Today,” Reverend C. A. Waterfield of Paris, Tennessee, took Central Baptist’s pulpit at Thursday morning’s meeting and challenged static and staid notions of the church. He considered the living Church relevant for all time yet it was constantly morphing into “all that men, her sons, through all their passing generations, should need her to be.” Waterfield contended that the church’s present mission was social and called southern industry fully to embrace the tenets of the kingdom. Exegeting Luke 19, he asserted that the Zaccheus story held special importance for southern business and industry. Zaccheus’ corrupt business practices not only jeopardized his own soul, they obstructed the kingdom’s full efficacy. A southern businessman who ignored “the social bearings of his business” likewise stymied his own salvation while hindering the advance of the millennial kingdom to come. Now was the time for “the individualists and the socialists, the aristocracies and democracies, the capitalists and laborers” to realize that all had more in common than differences. Now was the time for social cooperation, not economic competition. Other speakers further

¹¹“Social Workers of South in Session,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1. Though both the *News Scimitar* and the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* listed Dr. John E. White, pastor at Atlanta’s Second Baptist Church, as presenting a speech entitled “The Significance and Work of the Present Session,” the address was not covered in either paper, and James McCulloch did not provide a copy of the speech in his edited compendium.

detailed such kingdom theology.¹²

On Thursday evening, delegates and the general public gathered in the Orpheum Theatre to hear speeches concerning the church and social service. James Howerton – Presbyterian minister, professor of philosophy at Washington and Lee University, and former president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches – discussed the nature of the kingdom in sociological and economic terms. Specifically, he argued that the social order’s salvation hinged on the transformation of the economic order. Not to be misunderstood, Howerton explained to the assembly how social salvation incorporated individual redemption. He emphasized that the “Christian ideal is primarily and fundamentally personal and individual” and to perfect love, justice, and truth is to perfect “these attributes in the greatest possible number of men and women.”

For Howerton, the Christian ideal was also a social ideal, and the social ideal was not simply the sum of individual ideals. In essence, while society was “not an abstract entity existing apart from its constituent individuals,” it was “more than a mere aggregation of those individuals.” Instead, society was an interconnected social organism, “in which different persons stand in different relations and exercise different functions toward one another and to the social body.” As an individual became more dependent upon others and society as a whole, he increasingly influenced the moral

¹²C. A. Waterfield, “The Social Message of the Church to Modern Industry” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 45-47, 50-52; “Social Workers of South in Session,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; “Help Someone is Sung at Congress as Workers Meet,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 7 May 1914, 1.

welfare of society, society's institutions, and the moral welfare of others through those institutions. The result was cyclical: society would only be bettered by morally improving men and women; yet a better society helped improve those men and women. "Betterment" involved imbuing social relations and institutions with the principles of love, justice, and truth. Howerton therefore asserted that the social organism – and its constituent economics, politics, and jurisprudence – "must be leavened with the same principles which constitute individual character until it becomes the kingdom of heaven." In this way individual salvation and social salvation were inextricably knotted, and the Church was required both to reform individuals and institutions. For him, the key to all reform efforts, all redemption, indeed the kingdom itself, was the salvation of the economic order.

Howerton focused intently on the economic order. The political system was a means to reform the economic system which was in turn a means to establish the ethical order. The present social order conflicted with Christian ideals because the economic system was founded on selfishness whereas the kingdom of heaven rested on the principle of love. The economic system must cease seeking the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number of people and begin producing the greatest number of good men and women. Howerton contended that self-interested businessmen and industry titans produced most of society's evils. Conversely, unselfish business leaders acting in the interest of the commonweal could leaven the entire capitalist structure. When the motivation that formed the SSC also energized political meetings, legislatures, board rooms, and labor unions, then the prayer "*thy kingdom come*" would be realized.

Such hope was hardly utopian or fanciful, asserted Howerton. The past century had witnessed the abolition of slavery, and Howerton hoped the twentieth would witness the eradication of the liquor traffic, prostitution, child labor, economic slavery, and war.¹³

Of one mind with Waterfield's and Howerton's theological and societal vision, Memphis speakers understood that the realized kingdom ultimately hinged on socialized religion in the form of social service. Thursday morning at Cental Baptist Church, British-born Rabbi Emanuel Sternheim of Greenville, Mississippi's Hebrew Union Temple declared that true religion insisted on human service. Careful not to confuse the progressive "voice of the twentieth century . . . as the latest word of God," Sternheim held that the current *Zeitgeist* revolved around a socialized religion rooted in a Godly love that vanquished class divisions. The Church should ensure righteous city government, extend its duties into the educational real, encourage "clean and wholesome" amusement within urban settings, and elevate city beautification efforts.

At the same session, A. M. Bruner, national secretary of the Industrial Evangelistic Foundation based in Chicago, advocated social service as part of a larger interchurch enterprise to the industrial classes that also incorporated Bible study, personal evangelism and missions. Inspired by the Men and Religion Forward Movement, his community extension would strengthen morality and men by sharing the gospel message in places such as shops, factories, railroad yards, car barns, engine

¹³James R. Howerton, "The Present Social Order in Conflict with the Ideals of the Church" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 30-34, 37-44; "Social Workers of South in Session," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; "Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

houses, police stations, parks, summer resorts, boarding houses, office buildings, and hotel lobbies. More evangelical in tone than other speakers, Bruner envisioned bridging the chasm that existed between the church and the shop by bringing the rich and poor together for prayer and communication. Elemental to saving souls and industry, while staving off the perceived scourge of socialism, the worker had to be reached in his element. Such social evangelism necessitated the integration of religion and social service, a theme that resonated with Memphis delegates.¹⁴

Organizers allocated significant time for discussion on the relationship between the church and social service. Following Sternheim and Bruner, Reverend W. H. Slingerland of the Russell Sage Foundation's Department of Child-Helping offered his ecclesiological views and defined the role of social service. He held that the church was guided by a dual mission. Its primary duty was to bring individuals "the high and holy message of the gospel; then to teach and train them as members of the household of God." Only then could the church begin to reconstruct human society so that individuals could live in a Christian environment. Slingerland considered the church an influential instrument for personal salvation as well as "a leaven of righteousness" reforming of the social order. The two converging theological streams were inseparable; the spiritual mission was the only force capable of cleansing the world of individual and social wickedness while social service was the natural, inevitable, complement to spiritual

¹⁴"College President and Two Other Prominent Social Workers Are Attending Convention," *Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1; Emanuel Sternheim, "The Social Mission of the Church to City Life" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 56-60; A. M. Bruner, "The Workingman and the Church" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 61-63.

beliefs. Therefore, all religious and social forces must unite as two coordinated teams of horses pulling the omnibus of progress. Yet, Slingerland's simile was rhetorically flawed. Though touting teamwork between the two forces, he placed greater priority on the religious impetus. True religion was "the real source of the essentials of social service The social movement of to-day is but another channel through which the vital spirit of religion is flowing out to humanity." Religion actually guided social service as together they galvanized progress toward the kingdom. In this way, religion was indispensable to social service.¹⁵

Reverend Charles S. MacFarland, general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, made similar assertions at the church and social service department's evening session. He declared that preparing for social service required that congregations understand the relation between "religious devotion and human impulse, the moral identity of spiritual life and social passion." The leader of social movements must recognize the personal compassion within the church while the church must infuse divinity into social movements. Invoking Christ's admonition in the Gospel of Matthew that "Inasmuch as ye did it . . . to one of these brethren ye did it . . . to me"(Matthew 25:40), MacFarland challenged his listeners to apply such gospel teachings to an industrial economy that killed 35, 000 men and injured another 2 million every year. In

¹⁵Geraldine Youcha, *Minding the Children: Child Care in America From Colonial Times to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2005), 301; W. H. Slingerland, "The Coordination of Social and Religious Forces" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 73-77; "Social Workers of South in Session," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; "Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

that same vein, he railed against child labor, deplorable working conditions, and preventable disasters. The Christian church and her laymen had a clear choice: “It is God or Mammon, the philosophy of Frederich Nietzche or the Sermon on the Mount, Barabbas or Christ. It is the duty of the Church to throw the light of the gospel upon these human wrongs, or else she must revise her gospel.” Careful not to confuse the kingdom of heaven with an economic condition, MacFarland understood the church’s mission as making the economic order the expression of moral and spiritual ideals. Like Slingerland, he envisioned a religiously infused social service shaping the economic status quo into a re-formed spiritual reality. His comments sparked a good-natured debate the next afternoon.¹⁶

Friday afternoon’s speakers further explored the relationship between religion and social service. George B. Mangold, director of the St. Louis School of Social Economy at Washington University, separated himself from widely-held views when he declared that social service was not “coextensive with religion, it is not a branch of Church work.” He argued that social service dealt with the social and living conditions of humanity and should therefore form a prominent part of the Church’s work in solving human problems. Social service should not, however, serve in an exclusively subordinate role to the church. Such work claimed its own body of principles that should be properly applied to an interconnected and interdependent society in order to secure

¹⁶Charles S. MacFarland, “The Preparation of the Church for Social Service” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 105-106; “Social Workers of South in Session,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

better and happier lives, simultaneously to improve the individual and transform society. As such, social service was too important and dignified “to allow the use of persons who are no longer able to serve the world in their chosen profession.” Mangold desired a social service differentiated from, and independent of, every other profession or institution. Though such views represented the next era of social work that would eventually slough off perceived impediments placed by religion, most SSC theorists could hardly fathom any social service divorced from faith.¹⁷

Preceding Mangold at the Orpheum’s podium, Father Peter A. Crumbley, a Franciscan monk from Memphis, affirmed the Catholic social gospel view. Society was sick and in need of regeneration. Social service endeavored to diagnose and remedy the disease. Religion – “the tie of union that binds man to God, the acknowledgment of God’s right to demand our entire service” – was the foundation of any ameliorating enterprise. Effective social service must consist of more than philanthropy, patriotism, or civic pride. It must be permeated with a “charity which sees in our brother our Maker’s image.” Crumbley was adamant: “*social service, to be true and lasting, must be built on religion as its solid basis.*”

Charles Spurgeon Gardner, noted sociology and homiletics professor at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, agreed with Crumbley’s assessment, adding that social service comprised the “normal function” of the minister’s work and was not simply an

¹⁷George B. Mangold, “The New Profession of Social Service” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 83-84, 90; “Social Workers of South in Session,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

addendum. Ministers, as servants of and to the community, desperately needed training in social science, particularly sociology, in order “to see in religious work something more than a narrow, non-social evangelism which has sole reference to a post-mortem salvation.” Whereas Crumbley saw religion imbuing social service with its necessary ethical base, Gardner believed that social service must save religion from an excessively individualistic evangelism. Both perspectives accommodated the notion that social and religious institutions were necessarily inseparable if the kingdom was to be realized.¹⁸

Regarding the many sessions in Memphis, C .A. Waterfield observed that “the chief emphasis and the largest service of the Congress was in the department of the church and social service.” Waterfield deemed the local church the strongest institution in southern public life. If local congregations could be convinced – as were most SSC delegates – that the “religio-social crisis in the South” constituted the greatest in church history, complete kingdom-like social salvation would be realized.

Church speakers had envisioned an ecumenical Church engaged in social service to achieve societal transformation. James Howerton recast such transformation in sociological and economic terms. Like Waterfield, he insisted on reforming the economic order to attain social salvation. In the process, individuals – interconnected to each other through society – would be redeemed. Rabbi Emanuel Sternheim detailed

¹⁸Peter A. Crumbly, “The Religious Basis of Social Service” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 69-70, 73; C. S. Gardner, “The Preparation of Ministers for Social Service” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 91-92, 98; “Social Workers of South in Session,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1.

such social transformation, insisting that the Church should secure righteous governments, educational institutions, and amusements. A. M. Bruner insisted that any social change must include the industrial classes.

Speakers also discussed the nature of social service. Most considered it inherently religious. Father Peter A. Crumbley insisted true social service was built on a religion that bound man to God and demanded societal justice. Charles S. Gardner was sure that social service saved religion from hyper-individualism. George B. Mangold expanded the scope of social service by advocating for its effectiveness beyond the Church.

Discussions of social salvation generated discourse on the nature of such salvation. Howerton insisted that individual salvation depended on social salvation; if society was saved, individuals would seek redemption. Reverend W. H. Slingerland advocated a different approach that produced the same result: the Church by leading individuals to the gospel would eventually reconstruct society. Charles S. MacFarland synthesized both views, insisting that the Church should shape the economic order into an expression of individualized spiritual beliefs. Regardless of their emphasis on individual or societal salvation, almost all speakers agreed that redemption was a means to hasten the coming kingdom.¹⁹

¹⁹James R. Howerton, "The Present Social Order in Conflict with the Ideals of the Church" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 30-34, 37-44; "Social Workers of South in Session," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1, 5; "Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; Peter A. Crumbly, "The Religious Basis of Social Service" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 69-70, 73; C. S. Gardner, "The Preparation of Ministers for Social Service" in *Battling for Social*

But Memphis' speakers also realized that the institution of a kingdom-like society required more than mere class-based social service. To fully actualize societal redemption, the race question must be solved in a spirit of cooperation with their black brethren.

The *Commercial Appeal* hailed the initial race relations conference as “the most remarkable one thus far held during the session of the Congress.” Delegates filling the Orpheum Thursday afternoon found one third of the lower, orchestra level, floor reserved for African Americans. With the exception of a few gallery seats, the entire theater was full. “Race cooperation” was the theme for the afternoon conference.²⁰

Bishop Theodore DuBose Bratton of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi opened the afternoon session with a paternalistic call for ecclesial assistance. Bratton regarded southern blacks as the white man's responsibility, “an inheritance from the fathers just as natural as his love of fatherland.” The bishop considered cooperative religion a healing balm capable of remedying racial and moral ills arising from this relationship. Representing the *noblesse oblige* mentality of the former plantation class

Betterment, ed. McCulloch, 91-92, 98; “College President and Two Other Prominent Social Workers Are Attending Convention,” *Commercial Appeal*, 7 May 1914, 1; Emanuel Sternheim, “The Social Mission of the Church to City Life” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 56-60; A. M. Bruner, “The Workingman and the Church” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 61-63; W. H. Slingerland, “The Coordination of Social and Religious Forces” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 73-77; Charles S. MacFarland, “The Preparation of the Church for Social Service” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 105-106; George B. Mangold, “The New Profession of Social Service” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 83-84, 90.

²⁰Race Co-operation Theme of Speakers,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 8 May 1914, 1.

and echoing strains of A. J. Barton's Atlanta address, Bratton envisioned a cooperation clearly controlled by white churches capable of curing an ailing race "so young in self-control" and so full of "ignorance and vice." Characterizing African American religion as overly emotional, childish, and devoid of mature Christian morality, he insisted that blacks embrace the same faith that had transformed primitive Anglo-Saxon people sixteen hundred years earlier into modern Americans. Preachers, teachers, and well-intentioned lay people must now counsel, guide, and generally assist the weaker, infantile Negro. Although interracialists generally accepted Bratton's assertions, others speakers at the race sessions possessed a more democratic view of cooperation; held a slightly less paternalistic view of African Americans; and were guided more by social justice than social control. In fact, the speaker who followed Bratton eagerly embraced the need for uplift while also challenging racial stereotypes and recognizing a more democratic strain of racial cooperation.²¹

Following the Atlanta gathering, Booker T. Washington commented that "every colored man whom I have seen tells me [the SSC meeting] was one of the best things that has ever occurred in the South, and you do not know how very much the colored people seem lifted up." Some historical commentators have passed off the remarks as characteristically Washingtonian hyperbole to encourage the interracialist agenda. Regardless of his motivation, Washington spoke highly of the SSC and was warmly applauded as he mounted the Orpheum's platform accompanied by Robert Russa Moton,

²¹Theodore D. Bratton, "Race Co-operation in Church Work" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 147-152.

administrator and instructor at Hampton Institute and future president of Tuskegee Institute. After he had introduced Washington but before the wizard of Tuskegee spoke, Governor Mann requested that Moton lead “his people in singing some of the songs of their race.” Moton obliged and “in a fine baritone voice” started singing “I Want to Live Up Yonder.” The entire African American section of the audience joined him in each refrain. Following sustained applause, the black section sang “We Are Climbing Higher and Higher” and “Swanee River.” The audience, positively charged, took their seats as Washington commenced.²²

Although Washington acknowledged that the “best element of the white people” supported and encouraged southern blacks in their endeavors to acquire property, education, and Christian character, his vision of the Congress strayed off Batton’s paternalistic path. Washington knew the SSC could serve as a cooperative forum for open and honest conversation, an instrument utilized to dispel racial misconceptions, and a means to secure greater justice for African Americans.

The Congress, he began, needed to be a venue for the expression of candid opinion where whites and blacks could discuss and debate issues of common interest. Such debate ensured greater understanding between the races, produced a secure space where blacks could appeal directly to whites, and was an easier way for “liberal-minded white people who are desirous of helping” to come in contact with blacks “in a manner

²²Culley, “Muted Trumpets,” 125-126; Booker T. Washington to James Hardy Dillard, 14 May 1913, The Papers of Booker T. Washington, Manuscript Division, The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; “Race Co-operation Theme of Speakers,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 8 May 1914, 1.

that will not embarrass them.” Washington observed that in the past whites and blacks talked “too much about each other and not enough to each other.”

Open conversation would promote greater understanding between the races and dispel commonly held racial misconceptions. Washington especially wanted the Congress to convince southern whites that education did not disqualify southern blacks from industrial and agricultural labor. Rather, Washington maintained that increased educational opportunities made blacks more useful in even the most humble or practical occupations. Moreover, Washington was quick to dispel notions about higher education ultimately undermining social segregation. In no way did the educated Negro desire to integrate socially into white society. Education simply assured African Americans greater likelihood of happiness and success within their own race. True interracial dialogue would ultimately mobilize public sentiment to seek equal justice and punishment regardless of ethnicity, secure better schools for African American children, and provide separate but truly equal accommodations for black railroad passengers.

Though he mostly assuaged whites’ concerns, expressed satisfaction with social segregation, upheld the economic status quo, and limited his critique of injustice, Washington was critical of certain political leaders. Having championed honest and pointed dialogue, the Wizard of Tuskegee proffered some of his own. It was time, he firmly announced, for white southern leaders to prevent the Negro from being used “as a political ‘scarecrow.’” Washington assured his audience that the Negro was not seeking social equality or political domination over white southerners. Rather, he wanted both races to advance. The South must show the world that it was possible for two races to

inhabit the same region, adhere to the same laws, and advance into the future without acting unjustly toward the other race.²³

Friday morning at Central Baptist, the race relations conference reconvened to discuss “Hindrances to Negro Progress.” Those attending felt African Americans could surely work out their own salvation if impediments to redemption were removed. Speakers remarked on the need for better educational opportunities, the necessity of separate but equal housing, and improved urban conditions.

Florence Kelley – noted New York socialist, social worker, settlement house resident, secretary of the National Consumer’s League, active member in the National Association for the Improvement of Race Conditions, and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) – was the first speaker on education. Demanding the abolition of illiteracy and increased educational opportunities for African Americans, Kelley nevertheless sounded less the integrationist and more the accommodationist when she called for a curriculum emphasizing domestic science for elementary-aged girls and agricultural and industrial labor for young boys. Kelley was amazed that so practical a nation taught its children subjects which failed to secure prosperity or happiness for the recipient once formal education ceased. Despite such criticism, Kelley observed that compared to northern schools the southern educational

²³“Negro Has Been Tool of Politician Says Washington,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 8 May 1914, 7; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; Booker T. Washington, “The Southern Sociological Congress as a Factor for Social Welfare” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 154-159.

system did a better job educating its black citizenry for future employment. Indeed, all school systems should educate Negro children as future workers.²⁴

Other native southern orators envisioned a more socially just future for African Americans. John D. Hammond, president of historically black Paine College in Augusta and secretary of the Southern Methodist Board of Education, emphasized a more varied approach to Negro education. For too long, white southerners had worked under the assumption that Negroes were a child race and had therefore prescribed for them a one-dimensional educational curriculum heavily focused on industrial and agricultural training. By over-emphasizing practical education for blacks, southern whites risked making them materialistic. Careful not to disparage industrial education, Hammond declared that “we need even more of it, and of a better kind than we now have, for both races.” But he believed that African American education was seriously lacking a curriculum that shaped ideals, which he defined as “the product of abstract thought and the higher intuitional process.” Ideals only ripened when the mind had “passed through certain phases of natural and induced development” aided by the rigorous concentration and atmosphere of the college or university. Limiting access to such educational opportunities insured “future destitution of those higher ideals by which all races live and grow.” Continued circumscription would only produce a race devoid of properly

²⁴“Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; James M. McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy: From Reconstruction to the NAACP* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 387-388; Florence Kelley, “The Negro Children as Future Workers” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 132-137.

prepared political, religious, and business leadership. “The experience of two races living side by side for the last half century,” Hammond observed, demonstrated the need for “leaders of this high type” in each race, because one race could not supply satisfactory leaders for the other. Envisioning a coming day when the Negro would have his own higher institutions, Hammond called on the church to strengthen black institutions by training its leaders for the interim. If the two chief southern communities were to remain truly separate but equal, the white church had to divorce itself from any race prejudice, “practice brotherly love to the brother of low degree,” and provide educational opportunities for an African American community that would one day govern itself.²⁵

Other orators similarly demanded improved urban living conditions. Arcadius McSwain Trawick, Methodist minister and YMCA student secretary for the South, revealed that a million Negro families occupied urban houses not adapted to twentieth-century realities. He categorized these structures as shack-like separate houses, old buildings in dire need of significant repairs, and tenement houses accommodating three to thirty families. All residences were similar in their failure to provide adequate family living space and sufficient bedrooms. The structures provided only limited kitchen facilities and lacked running water, sinks, toilets, bathtubs, refrigerators, screens, and proper ventilation. The living conditions were especially hard on children who were crowded, ate at irregular hours, and were forced to play in alleyways and tiny trash-

²⁵Ronald C White, Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All*, 203; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; John D. Hammod, “Religious Conditions Which Hinder Negro Progress” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 138-145.

strewn yards. These families rarely ate together or exchanged communication between parents and children. They lacked family reading time with its accompanying questions, story telling, family games, no cultivation of habits or manners, and family prayers. With such constant assault on the senses, Trawick understood why so many Negroes were “backward in appropriating the better gifts of civilization.” There was “nothing to look upon to suggest beauty, order, and conformity to the law.” Deplorable conditions also produced low self-esteem in African Americans which contributed to personal moral decay and community collapse. Trawick recognized that a remedy was within reach of Christian social communities and that those who were saved from the shack improved themselves morally and socially. For Trawick and many others, housing reform was a requisite component of moral and societal reform.²⁶

George Edmund Haynes – the African American director of the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes (a forerunner to the Urban League), settlement house coordinator, founder of Fisk University’s social science department, and creator of the first college-level African American history course – added bite to Trawick’s observations. Whereas Trawick simply described the abhorrent living conditions of urban blacks, Haynes explored the causes of such circumstances.

Haynes shared that the 1900 census reported that the black urban population had increased seven-eighths as fast as the urban white population since 1890. Both pull and

²⁶Ronald C White, Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All*, 201; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; A. M. Trawick, “Lack of Proper Home Life Among Negroes” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 112-120.

push factors caused this migration. Increased employment opportunities, varied social experiences, and numerous conveniences pulled blacks into southern cities. At the same time, laws discriminating against black farm tenants and laborers pushed them off the land. Haynes described rural blacks arriving in the cities, immediately limited by residential segregation which severed friendly contact between white and black people. Completely ghettoized, urban blacks found themselves in communities lacking sewers, proper water connections, adequate drainage and garbage collection, and decent street car service. Seeking to improve their communities, African Americans' requests to public officials were ignored or denied. Blacks trying to relocate to areas providing adequate services faced prejudice and opposition.

Had Haynes been railing against such injustices a mere generation of two later, he might have concluded that segregation was a social evil worthy of history's trash heap. Instead, he accepted segregation as a reality and suggested that whites and blacks staunch urban migration by providing more opportunities to acquire land, eliminate laws directed at black farmers, and provide more recreation and amusements in rural districts. He also called for increased educational opportunities for those African Americans who sought a better life in the city. He insisted that both races should undertake an organized effort to help urban blacks better adjust to city life and overcome the effects of segregation through some form of interracial community cooperation. Moreover, whites and blacks within neighborhoods should form social service organizations expressly targeting improved housing as well as economic, educational, and religious improvements for Negroes. Haynes stated succinctly that Negroes must have better-trained leadership and

impartial community justice. He desired a “square deal” for his race in equal conveniences and facilities, equal protection for black homes and neighborhoods, equal opportunity in industry, education, and “all walks of life.” Like many of his SSC colleagues, Haynes demanded a just segregation, an arrangement that was separate but truly equal as the “foundation for peace and welfare.” Haynes would hardly be the last Memphis speaker to call for such equality.²⁷

Instead of embracing Bishop Theodore DuBose Bratton’s paternalistic call to guide blacks away from their emotional religion and toward a more mature Anglo Saxon faith, SSC speakers – in their calls for improved educational, housing, and urban conditions – espoused Booker T. Washington’s view of the Congress as an open symposium capable of diffusing racial myths and fostering interracial understanding. They called for a practical curriculum of household, agricultural, and mechanical interests that prepared southern blacks for the workforce, as well as curriculum that could shape African Americans’ ideals in preparation for political, religious, and business leadership. Concerned with the dilapidated state of many black neighborhoods,

²⁷Reavis L. Mitchell, “George Edmund Haynes,” in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed., Carroll Van West (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 413-414; Janice M. Leone, “Bethlehem House, Nashville,” in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed., Carroll Van West (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 65; “Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; George E. Haynes, “Some Conditions Among Negroes in Cities” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 120-131; George E. Haynes was instrumental in Nashville’s interracial settlement house initiative, the Bethlehem House. Bethlehem House was a joint effort of the Methodist Training School, Fisk University, and the Women’s Missionary Council of the Methodist Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

these speakers revealed how substandard housing conditions created a flawed family dynamic and traced the causes of such conditions to the rapid influx of urban black workers and the prejudice that prevented sanitary and health reforms in black neighborhoods.

In their many demands for manifestations of racial justice, speakers accepted social segregation as a needed institution but challenged the corrupt ways in which it was imposed. They viewed segregation as a system that, when administered properly, encouraged interconnected ethnic communities to develop fully but in separate social spheres. But such successful social separation still required blacks and whites regularly to engage in dialogue to solve common problems. SSC delegates of both races tried to model such egalitarian segregation in their sessions by sharing the same floor and dais and giving each other equal time to respond and rebut. When such traditions were challenged by Memphis racial customs, these delegates defended their vision in momentous fashion.²⁸

²⁸Theodore D. Bratton, "Race Co-operation in Church Work" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 147-152; "Negro Has Been Tool of Politician Says Washington," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 8 May 1914, 7; "Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; Booker T. Washington, "The Southern Sociological Congress as a Factor for Social Welfare" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 154-159; Ronald C White, Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All*, 203; John D. Hammod, "Religious Conditions Which Hinder Negro Progress" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 138-145; A. M. Trawick, "Lack of Proper Home Life Among Negroes" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 112-120; McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy*, 387-388; Florence Kelley, "The Negro Children as Future Workers" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 132-137; George E. Haynes, "Some Conditions Among Negroes in Cities" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 120-131.

Beyond dialogue, SSC delegates also engaged in interracial action. Following Friday morning's oratory, as in Atlanta, many of the 100 or so Negro delegates participated in discussions. Following the talks, Governor Mann offered a resolution creating a committee devoted to focusing the attention of churches of both races – together with civic and political groups – on the need for better housing and sanitary laws in poor communities. The resolution passed without a dissenting vote. The final session, to be held Saturday evening, would provide similar appeals for change coupled with an unprecedented act of interracial solidarity.²⁹

Although billed as a joint convention, the National Conference of Charities and Correction and the Southern Sociological Congress only met together on Friday evening (May 8), Saturday morning (May 9), and that evening. Responsibility for the nightly general sessions alternated between the two groups. The initial gathering of both organizations at the Orpheum on Friday evening doubled as the National Conference's opening session.

The dissonance among more than 1000 delegates softened when local catholic bishop, Thomas F. Gallo, offered the invocation. Rabbi Samfield of Memphis' Temple Israel welcomed the joint conventions. Following this ecumenical greeting, Graham Taylor spoke on the relationship between humanitarian government and social Christianity. He identified the trend of entrusting humanitarian and social concerns to public administrators rather than church and religiously affiliated voluntary agencies as

²⁹“Conference Program Today,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 8 May 1914, 10; “Mann Again Heads Southern Congress,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 9 May 1914, 1.

the greatest transition of the times. Tracing the influence of modern social Christianity on political movements, Taylor recalled the socialized church's role in the British Chartist movement. The same religious forces were even more engaged in the Christian Socialism of Frederick Denison Maurice, the nineteenth century Anglican theologian, King's College professor, and author of the *Kingdom of Christ*. Maurice called for the "humanizing of religion and the religionizing of politics" and predicted a future where the two would be more symbiotically connected. Taylor recognized that Maurice's prognostications had been realized, as religion's role now overflowed into politics and spawned humanized local governments increasingly engaged in humanitarian efforts. The religious infiltration had become so extensive that church and community were now completely interdependent. The church was a driving ethical force, but its religious ideals of individual and collective service were even more essential to the state's progress and perseverance. Because of this interdependency, the community could not succeed if the church failed, and the church could not succeed if the community failed. Despite such observations, that very evening would find the Memphis community at odds with the overwhelming majority of SSC delegates over racial and religious matters.³⁰

As if to portend the SSC's inability to create a thoroughly biracial social welfare

³⁰"Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; "Race Co-operation Theme of Speakers," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 8 May 1914, 1; "Next Southern Sociological Meet Goes to Houston, Tex.," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 9 May 1914, 1; "Taylor Discusses County Government," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 9 May 1914, 5; Graham Taylor, "President's Address" in *Proceedings of the Forty-First National Conference of Charities and Correction*, ed. William T. Cross (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Fort Wayne Printing Company, 1914), 1-2, 13-14.

movement driven by the social gospel, racial realities in Memphis divided delegates and the broader reform movement. During all SSC events in Memphis, Willis D. Weatherford, who chaired the committee on organization and was secretary of the race relations conference, had honored the organization's constitution which mandated seating for all dues-paying African Americans on the main floor of any meeting space. The Orpheum's main floor, however, was traditionally designated whites only. Memphis' SSC arrangements committee took offense at the breach of racial etiquette. Friday morning, before the first joint gathering of the National Conference and the SSC, a group of Memphis businessmen approached Weatherford to protest the mixed seating arrangement. The businessmen, Weatherford, and other SSC officials discussed the situation for two hours without resolution. The local Memphis contingent believed that Negroes belonged in the balcony where they had always sat. As a result, National Conference officials who organized Friday evening's events followed local custom and limited the main floor to whites only. In protest, the black SSC delegates walked out. Weatherford was incensed by the lack of respect and humanity. The next session added insult to injury.³¹

SSC and National Conference delegates gathered again at the Orpheum the next morning. The floor was awash with standards designating areas for the various state

³¹ Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920," 57; Culley, "Muted Trumpets," 126-130; Dykeman, *Prophet of Plenty*, 75-77; "The Meetings at Memphis," *Survey*, 31 (May 30, 1914), 234. Although Dykeman alleged that the meetings organized by the SSC were completely unsegregated, the *Commercial-Appeal* claimed that the meetings were integrated on a group basis only. Still, even though the general sessions were not desegregated on an individual basis, the action was an affront to the Jim Crow laws of the day.

delegations. As in Atlanta, the Memphis Congress engaged in a limited amount of business. Prior to Saturday's early session, the most significant action taken had been the naming of members to the organization and time and place committees on Thursday afternoon, along with the election of officers and the passing of Mann's resolution on Friday morning. Now, at the next-to-last gathering, the time and place committee awarded the 1915 convention to Houston, Texas. Pleased with the selection of Houston as a host city, SSC delegates reacted differently when the Memphis local arrangements committee presented a report urging segregated seating at the remaining convention sessions. The report was submitted to the Congress "for ratification or rejection." Delegates, bending to the segregationists, had already agreed to separate welcoming centers. Now they were being asked to change a policy in existence since the SSC's founding.³²

After several hours' interruption for reports from the states, an ad hoc committee attempted to address the local grievances about seating. Weatherford informed the local arrangements committee that the Congress would not segregate its black members during that evening's general session. The local delegates and the owner of the Orpheum

³²"Conference Program Today," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 8 May 1914, 10; "Mann Again Heads Southern Congress," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 9 May 1914, 1; "Help Someone is Sung at Congress as Workers Meet," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 7 May 1914, 1; "Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; "Next Southern Sociological Meet Goes to Houston, Tex.," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 9 May 1914, 1; "Next Southern Sociological Meet Goes to Houston, Tex.," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 9 May 1914, 1. On Friday, Mann was re-elected by acclamation at the morning session, Judge W. J. Bacon of Memphis' city court was elected a member of the committee on courts and prisons, J. P. Kranz was re-elected state corresponding secretary, and Crumley and Bratton were re-elected to the church and social service committee.

protested adamantly. Weatherford, not wishing to embarrass local delegates, arranged a compromise, agreeing to hold the final session at the First Methodist Church.³³

With this obstacle to harmony removed, James Dillard presided over the final Memphis session at First Methodist Church where one third of the lower floor was filled with black delegates. Ironically, the closing session's theme was "Inter-Racial Interests and Interdependence." Robert Russa Moton of Hampton Institute, the first speaker of the evening, agreed with thoughtful blacks and whites who recognized that the rural South offered the largest economic, social, and moral opportunities for the Negro. Based on this widely held assumption, Moton observed that southern blacks, constituting the region's industrial workforce, would require "sympathetic cooperation" from white industrial workers to ensure the common good. The Hampton professor also argued that a better and more just working environment produced more reliable, skillful, and efficient laborers.

Improved educational opportunities, better housing, and a truly equal though separate segregated system topped Moton's list of enhancements for black workers. Echoing the concerns of another African American professor, George E. Haynes, Moton observed that no laborer could provide efficient and conscientious service without being "well housed, well fed," and stimulated by those influences that made one mentally, morally, and physically strong. Moton especially targeted segregation for preventing the Negro from growing "normally in his physical, mental, or moral life" and, thus, for

³³ Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920," 57; Culley, "Muted Trumpets," 126-130; Dykeman, *Prophet of Plenty*, 75-77; "The Meetings at Memphis," *Survey*, 31 (May 30, 1914), 234.

undermining worker productivity. In the realm of public accommodations, he stressed that racial separation had never equated to equal treatment or equal accommodations on railroads or steamboats, in restaurants or on street cars as required by Supreme Court decisions. The “Southern conscience ought to be aroused” to the extent that southern whites would demand “absolutely equal accommodations for both races in all places where there is local segregation.” Such egalitarian segregation also should extend to the hiring of black constables, magistrates, and policemen to oversee black communities. Such simple acts would increase community cooperation and reduce crime exponentially. Similarly, black street cleaners would clean their own neighborhoods more zealously. Above all else, Moton believed that the best way to cement cordial relationships between the races was practical education for both races. Moton also agreed with John Hammond of Paine University who insisted that, in addition to being practically trained, laborers must also be trained intellectually, morally, and spiritually if they were to improve the South economically. The remaining speakers echoed his sentiments.³⁴

C. V. Roman, an African American physician who had also spoken at the Atlanta gathering, followed Moton in the pulpit. Like Moton, he realized that blacks and whites were “geographically one people, but ethnically two races.” Therefore, mutual respect and cooperation were necessary to secure future prosperity. They must march in separate

³⁴“Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday,” *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; “South Must Develop the Negro,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 10 May 1914, 11; Robert Russa Moton, “Inter-Racial Interests in Industry” in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 159-168.

regiments, but as a solid phalanx, to the “music of civilization.” The health of each race depended on the health of the other. Public health policy, more than any other social policy concern, revealed the interconnectedness and interdependency between the two ethnic communities. An unjust distribution of preventative health opportunities or the lack of proper sanitation in one community would negatively affect all others in a real way. All the population healthy, Roman reasoned, constituted a safer environment than part of the population diseased and isolated. As remedies, Roman proposed increased moral instruction in addition to a more equitable distribution of public health resources.

Roman was convinced that moral teaching was an effective preventative. He observed that knowledge did not always improve morals, but morals almost always improved health. He placed the Church among the many agencies responsible for health by teaching morality. For example, Roman felt that improved morals rather than earlier and more detailed knowledge about sex was a better remedy for venereal disease. Just as churches commissioned missionaries to spread the gospel in other lands, so too missionaries of health must spread their gospel in the Southland.

Roman also proposed to maximize racial cooperation and minimize racial commingling. He, like Haynes and Moton, considered unjust segregation problematic. In the context of public health, it was deadly. Unequal access to treatments, fewer medical facilities, understaffed hospitals, inadequate numbers of trained medical personnel, unimproved sewers and drainage, and fewer health workers speaking on preventative measures in black communities meant more disease, higher death rates, and less productivity in black *and* white communities. Instead, Roman proposed an

increased number of Negro doctors and nurses in black communities and in the Negro wards of city hospitals and more black sanitary inspectors in African American neighborhoods. Whites, in health matters, must do what was right rather than what was perceived as profitable. For too long, black neighborhoods had been denied equal treatment because of greed and financial profit. All southern communities had suffered as a consequence.³⁵

Willis D. Weatherford entered the pulpit last. Where Roman had emphasized the pragmatism involved in interracial cooperation on all matters of health and had relegated the Church to a moral role, Weatherford considered cooperation primarily a religious issue. Weatherford had observed the overall increase of various kinds of interracial cooperation throughout the South. Southern whites, by reading about and discussing the many facets of black life, were beginning to understand the needs of the African American community. "The best element of the South" also shared in the religious and social uplift of African Americans and their communities. Southern whites were beginning to view blacks as capable of real progress. Weatherford held that such an attitude was informed by a Christianity interested in African Americans because they were human, "a race of God's children" destined to grow into God's likeness. White social gospel interracialists had a greater confidence in the Negro because they were beginning to have greater confidence in all humanity and were increasingly moved by the

³⁵"Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; "South Must Develop the Negro," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 10 May 1914, 11; C. V. Roman, "The Interracial Interest of Health" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 169-178.

conviction that in every human being the image of God existed. Such realization mandated that true Christians actively help all neighbors in need regardless of race.

With southern religion increasingly informed by racial reality, Weatherford preached what he called “real democracy,” which consisted of treating every person as if he had inherent value. Weatherford believed that the South was best poised to solve the race issue. God had given the South a unique opportunity to show the world what could be done “under the spell of high ideals and religious consecration” to practice true and vital brotherhood. Weatherford’s religious interracial vision was informed by a social gospel that emphasized the salvation of society. Not only would the South be saved by wrestling with, and overcoming, her racial fears, she would also save the world. The South, uniquely blessed with her racial situation and biblical religion, would serve as a shining example for all Christendom to emulate. “If our problems are ever solved,” Weatherford stated as he closed his remarks, “it will be because the spirit of Jesus so pervades us all that the white man will trust the colored man and the colored man sincerely believe in the white man, and both together unite with God in working out a truer and grander destiny.” Weatherford glimpsed a millennial kingdom day when the “lion would lay down with the lamb” and the black man and white man could live in true harmony.

With Weatherford’s words still echoing in the nave of the limestone and granite church, the Memphis meeting of the Southern Sociological Congress came to a close. The gathering had focused intently on the role of kingdom-infused social service to address the root causes of social injustice. Chief among these causes was an unjust

segregation system that separated African Americans from whites and institutionalized inadequate housing, sanitation, healthcare, and educational opportunity. Faced with such disparity, most Memphis delegates vowed cooperatively to seek a more egalitarian – yet segregated – system and realized their vision by rejecting unjust customs. Such actions were significant as they communicated an acceptance of blacks as full members and instilled meaning into rhetoric emphasizing the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.³⁶

Granted, not all of the delegates at Memphis approved of the Congress' agenda. One member commented that the organization's emphasis on religion proved that the group was "too damn pious," while another felt that the stress on race made the affair feel like a "Negro 'big meeting.'" Dr. Joel Spingairn, a key member of the NAACP who attended more than a few SSC meetings, declared that the movement for the protection of the Negro would receive "no assistance whatever from the 'social uplift' forces" assembled in Memphis.

Criticism notwithstanding, the Memphis meeting cemented the SSC's reputation as a leading religious organization focused on interracial cooperation. The social gospel-infused- interracialism glimpsed in Nashville two years earlier and more clearly delineated in Atlanta, dominated the third annual gathering. Never again, however, would the twin themes of religion and race play such a central role in an SSC event. Memphis delegates' oratory and actions emphasizing racial interconnectedness,

³⁶Willis D. Weatherford , "Religion the Common Basis of Cooperation" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 178-188.

egalitarianism, and what historian Joel Williamson deemed racial “liberalism” – the mentality that blacks could absorb white culture and achieve a limited parity with whites in the enjoyment of many cultural ideas – challenged southern customs too directly. The Memphis Congress was momentous, but its challenge was momentary. The 1915 and 1916 health congresses discussed many of the same issues of race and religion, but not as overtly.³⁷

³⁷“The Meetings at Memphis,” *The Survey* 32 (May 30, 1914):234; C.A. Waterfield, “Southern Sociological Congress,” *The Survey* 32 (May 30, 1914): 244; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 4-7, 85-88, 484-486; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 240-267.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONSERVATION OF HEALTH AND THE PRESERVATION OF HUMANITY: COMMUNITY WELFARE AND ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY AT THE 1915 HOUSTON AND 1916 NEW ORLEANS CONFERENCES

The Southern Sociological Congress executive committee, meeting at the YMCA's Blue Ridge Assembly in August 1914, chose "The Conservation of Health" as the 1915 Houston convention theme. Initially hoping that ensuing annual gatherings would also organize around singular themes, SSC leaders, energized by the Houston meeting's success, chose "For health, justice, and cooperation" as the slogan for the 1916 New Orleans convention. The shift in focus was convenient if not strategic. Although SSC historian E. Charles Chatfield postulated that the 1915 and 1916 "health congresses" were primarily efforts to attract outside organizations into the SSC's orbit of influence, the May 1914 confrontation in Memphis probably weighed most heavily in the executive committee's decision. Perhaps also the redundancies that crept into 1913 and 1914 presentations on ecclesiastical social justice and race relations spurred SSC leadership to seek a different focus for the 1915 meeting.

Having confronted local racial customs in Memphis, SSC executive members undoubtedly wanted to avoid similar challenges in Houston and New Orleans. Perhaps hoping to circumvent any problems, executive secretary James E. McCulloch met with

Houston's African American leaders on Monday, May 3, five days prior to opening night. Deemed the "Negro Branch of Southern Sociological Congress," as well as "the general committee for negro welfare," these black leaders convened at the city's Colored Carnegie Library to outline their community's role in the upcoming convention. The *Houston Daily Post's* coverage was short on specifics but assured readers that attendees would consummate the task before them. Members elected J. B. Bell, a wealthy African American grocer and real estate developer, chairman of the general committee. Bell then appointed an executive committee to look after the visiting black delegates to the SSC and scheduled another meeting for the next day. The meeting was upbeat and absent of any contention. Either McCulloch's preemption worked or black leaders simply saw no need to protest. Houston's – and later New Orleans' – local racial customs did not compel arrangements committees to publicly oppose biracial registration, seating, or arrangements. At the penultimate general session in Houston, however, African Americans – comprising half of the audience – were "assigned" to the gallery of the City Auditorium without protest. Because Houston newspapers failed to mention other instances of segregated seating at the 1915 convention, one might reasonably infer that such grouping was an isolated incident. Although a similar slight preceded the Memphis walkout a year earlier, African Americans in Houston saw no need to protest. Like their white SSC brethren, African American delegates most likely desired to avoid public confrontation while privately voicing any concerns they might have.

Publicly, racial ills – like all other social ills – were subsumed by the SSC's grand public health emphasis. Retooled as a public health organization, SSC orators

spotlighted familiar social gospel themes of interconnectedness, brotherhood, ecclesial cooperation, social salvation, and Christ's imminent kingdom but increasingly co-opted economic efficiency arguments that emphasized the conservation of health, improved sanitation, disease prevention, and greater governmental regulation. The SSC's new preoccupation – its “health campaign” – also precipitated a reorganization of priorities, culminating in traveling crusades and the great New Orleans Health Congress of 1916.¹

Although Reverend C. A. Waterfield of Paris, Tennessee, lauded the SSC's fresh focus as “another sort of Civil War in the South . . . a crusade for physical, mental, and moral health for the individual and the community,” the organization's public health campaign was not unprecedented in the region. Houston and New Orleans SSC delegates participated in a larger health impetus sweeping the South at turn of century in response to recurring yellow fever, typhoid, and smallpox epidemics, as well as crusades against hookworm and pellagra. The American Medical Association, working to improve the public and economic status of physicians, had for decades promoted stronger local and state medical organizations, advanced the development of better medical schools, and encouraged doctors to lead public health work. These same forces pressured states to establish uniform licensing standards for medical professionals, publicly funded labs, insane and tubercular hospitals, pure food and drug laws, bureaus

¹James E. McCulloch, “Introduction” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 3; “Texan was Elected President of the Sociological Congress” *Houston Daily Post*, 11 May 1915, 1; Charles Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 20-38, 60; “Negroes Are Interested in the Sociological Congress” *Houston Daily Post*, 4 May 1915, 10; “Committees Were Named at Colored Workers Meeting” *Houston Daily Post*, 6 May 1915, 7; Marguerite Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City, 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 137-138.

of vital statistics, milk and food inspection systems, regularly scheduled medical examinations of school children, and – most importantly for the South – state boards of public health.

Established in the late nineteenth century South as a response to various epidemics, state boards of health lacked significant administrative standing. By 1913, every southern state had reorganized or reestablished their health boards and granted them expanded authority over quarantines, water supplies, rabies outbreaks, systematic lab work, tuberculosis campaigns, vaccine production and distribution, and the dissemination of health bulletins. In 1909, when John D. Rockefeller committed up to a million dollars to his eponymous Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm, he funneled the funds into the well-regarded state health boards that oversaw sanitary surveys, demonstrations, and organizational efforts. Between 1909 and 1914, clinics supported by the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission examined over a million people and treated more than 440,000 infected persons in the South. Rockefeller followed up his Sanitary Commission with the International Health Commission(IHC) – later named the International Health Board – which financed and established county health systems. The IHC adopted the “intensive community model” as the central component of its program. IHC campaigns mapped out a community’s geographic and demographic profile, conducted microscopic examinations of the entire population, and then treated the infected. The Sanitary Commission’s – and later the IHC’s – work boosted regional public health activities, advanced the establishment of county health programs, encouraged increased state health related appropriations, and opened the door

for future campaigns like those undertaken by the SSC.²

James E. McCulloch's "Address to the Churches," published in the SSC's 1915 volume of speeches, effectively captured the social gospel ethos undergirding the SSC's new health focus. McCulloch acknowledged SSC members' ecclesial influences: they had been saved as individuals, called to social service, and trained in the ways of social work. Now, insisted McCulloch, social servants must engage in a social ministry as old as scripture. The SSC's public health campaign descended from Mosaic legislation that sanctioned sanitation and Jesus' healing ministry that inspired the creation of church-sponsored orphanages, sanitariums, and hospitals. Assured of the cordial sympathy of all churches, the SSC would now translate the ekklesia's historic healing mission into public policy by fighting disease, reducing drug use, enacting preventative measures against plagues, creating a public conscience regarding health, rallying support for local and national health agencies, campaigning for personal health, and ensuring the efficiency of societal agencies seeking disease prevention.³

Influenced by the regional *Zeitgeist* and the SSC's social gospel ethos, the SSC reoriented its departmental conferences. At the 1915 Houston meeting – which convened from Saturday, May 8, to Tuesday, May 11 – the seven previous conferences were condensed into six: "Public Health," "Moral Health," "The Health of Children," "Health and Race Relations," "The Church and Health," and "Mental Health". At the 1916 New

²"Conferences," *Survey*, 34 (June 12, 1915), 251; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 310-318; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 214-217.

³James E. McCulloch, "Address to the Churches" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 3.

Orleans convention – which met from Wednesday, April 12, to Sunday, April 16 – the departments expanded to eleven: “The Government and Health,” “The School as Conserver of Health,” “The Medical Profession in Public Health,” “The Press as the Champion of Public Health,” “Race Relations,” “The Church as the Guardian of the People’s Health,” “Law and Order,” “Teaching of Sociology in Southern Schools,” “Traveler’s Aid,” “Temperance,” and “The Conference for Social Workers”. The SSC also emphasized its model health program and instituted a health extension campaign. Despite such changes, at the Houston and New Orleans gatherings the SSC still functioned primarily as an intellectual clearinghouse where orators formulated and explicated social gospel themes informed by unique southern contingencies. As in Nashville, Atlanta, and Memphis, SSC rhetoricians in 1915 and 1916 stressed the importance of human interdependence, ecclesial cooperation, social service, social salvation, and the coming Kingdom of God. But they were now recast in light of the new public health thrust.⁴

The theme of interdependence that had influenced dialogue, debate, and action at previous conventions echoed through the auditoriums, halls, and churches in Houston and New Orleans. Addressing Sunday’s afternoon general session at Houston’s City Auditorium, Baylor University’s Dean J. L. Kesler, reflecting on the Apostle Paul’s assertion that “No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself,” observed that all Christians possessed a common responsibility, bore a common heritage, lived a common

⁴“Sociological Congress Will Be Welcomed Saturday Night” *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 8; “Southern Sociological Congress,” *Progress* 2 (April, 1916), 179; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 66.

life, and served a common humanity in the name of a common God. Speaking to the opening session at New Orleans' Crescent City Theater, Samuel P. Brooks – Baylor University president and the SSC president from 1915 to 1916 – recalled a Christ who prioritized human health over church sacraments and insisted attendees act similarly. Like Kesler, Brooks noted Christ's specific emphasis on human interconnectedness and observed that disease transmission accentuated the Savior's prescient theology; twentieth century germs infected Democrats and Republicans, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants, infidels and devout Christian believers alike. Although Kesler's and Brooks' views recalled past SSC gatherings, 1915 and 1916 health convention speakers revised their theology of interconnectedness to accommodate renewed interest in public health.⁵

Speaking to the newly formed Conference on the Health of Children in Houston, John S. Tilley of Montgomery, Alabama, qualified “worthwhile religion” according to two familiar principles, “the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.”

Theologically, an interconnected humanity functioned under the agency of the God made flesh. The thought had inspired interracial ideological harmony at the Atlanta gathering and encouraged egalitarianism at the Memphis meeting; but at the Houston and New Orleans conventions, speakers like Tilley used it to emphasize the interconnectedness

⁵J. L. Kesler, “The New Attitude, the New Knowledge, the New Responsibility” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 460; Samuel P. Brooks, “The Task of Good Citizenship” in *Democracy in Earnest: Southern Sociological Congress 1916-1918*, ed. James E. McCulloch (1918; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 18; “Congress Meets Wednesday; Program Finished” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 10 April 1916, 5; “Social Congress Delegates Swarm Into New Orleans” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 12 April 1916, 1; “Uplift Congress Program Includes Notable Speakers” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 9 April 1916, A10.

inherent in the Christian healing imperative. More specifically, he employed it to criticize congregations who, because they failed to acknowledge the universality of interdependency, emphasized long-distanced philanthropy but ignored the needs of their own communities. Tilley recalled that the earliest Christians focused on immediate amelioration. Jesus healed those before him and Paul visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction. Many contemporary community needs still involved meeting these same, often health related, needs, but modern Christianity failed to grapple boldly with such local evils. Local community institutions lacked cooperation that secured solutions. “The Great Galilean,” Tilley stated, “was not farsighted in sympathies”; he recognized immediate misery and devoted energy towards relief. The church should unreservedly do the same: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned locally as well as globally.⁶

Addressing Sunday afternoon’s general session in New Orleans, Charles S. Gardner – Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s influential sociology professor – observed that men who were not living or dying unto themselves were also not sick unto themselves. Humanity was so closely bound together, so interdependent as never before, that questions of health were a matter for the community and not merely the individual. All ministers of the Gospel, as community and kingdom servants, were therefore duty bound to address laws of health as matters of social righteousness and propagate the Master’s words concerning community health so that all Christians would understand

⁶John S. Tilley, “Treatment or Punishment for the Prisoner” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 263-265; “The Southern Sociological Congress,” *Houston Chronicle*, 5 May 1915, 6.

that health of body and soul was the “insistent Christian ideal.” Echoing Tilley and Gardner, other orators – emphasizing the health imperative with urgent and even militaristic language – called for coordinated and instant efforts.⁷

The health conventions’ rhetoric evoked immediacy. At the 1915 opening session, standing under a banner that read “Typhoid, tuberculosis, malaria, hookworm – not diseases but crimes,” Houston’s Mayor Ben Campbell insisted that interconnectedness mandated imminent action. There was a time when “we denied being our brother’s keeper,” Campbell intoned, but that time had passed. Deteriorated community conditions compelled social justice forces to aid the many who were ignorant of the elementary principles of preserving health. With the Lusitania’s sinking dominating the headlines, Alabama Governor R. M. Cunningham followed Mayor Campbell with a jingoistic call for a new declaration of independence that would initiate a war, not a destructive one pitting men against men, but an instructive fight leading men against the four great crimes of the South: malaria, typhoid, tuberculosis, and hookworm. His call to arms rested on the realities of interconnectedness and interracialism. Disease knew no race; tuberculosis might leave the black community only to infect the prettiest white woman in town.

Although the macroscopic focus on disease prevention and sanitation de-emphasized racial concerns, they were hardly muted. Speakers emphasized increased interracial cooperation in the context of public health. Speaking before Thursday

⁷Charles S. Gardner, “The Minister As Health Propagandist” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 377-378. “A Growing Social Effort in the South,” *The Survey* 36 (May 20, 1916): 196.

morning's race relations conference in New Orleans, Fisk University President Fayette A. McKenzie insisted that a healthy white race required a healthy black race. Disease knew no boundaries, and every citizen – rich and poor, old and young, white and black – had a stake in persuading the public to cooperate in disease eradication. Moreover, a complete “southern cure” would prevail only when African American homes, as well as those of whites, were provided with “the essentials of decent living” and proper sanitation.⁸

Addressing health and race relations in Houston, Baptist pastor Benjamin F. Riley of Birmingham – former president of Howard College, head of the Southern Negro Anti-Saloon League, noted interracialist, and New South booster – reviewed a litany of causes contributing to unusually high mortality rates among southern black communities. Poorly-educated blacks could hardly overcome poor housing conditions, the temptation of cheap liquor, ignorance of sanitary laws, and general moral lapses, absent the paternalistic cooperation of southern whites. Fortunately, Riley noted, God had intertwined the lives of southern whites and blacks so that the “aloof” race was obliged to assist the “declining” race with whom they shared a common brotherhood. Such unity guaranteed that races living and working side by side could not remain unscathed by disease. Any contagion afflicting the African American community would invariably enter white homes by way of black domestic workers. Only an “obligatory Christlike service to the negro” could improve the station of both races while maintaining the social barrier that separated them. One year removed from the Memphis walkout, however,

⁸Fayette A. McKenzie, “Housing and Community Health Among Negroes” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 364, 366.

speakers were quick to distinguish Riley's paternalistic cooperation from outright social integration.⁹

Speaking to Monday evening's capacity crowd at Houston's City Auditorium, Nashville physician C. V. Roman informed listeners that he and his fellow African Americans desired cooperation based on united sympathy to overcome race antagonism rooted in misunderstanding. Contrary to race demagogues seeking to gain "place and personal power" by purposefully and publically misinterpreting calls for brotherhood as social equality, Roman insisted that cooperation in no way undermined the status quo. Despite such assurances, the negative nature of interconnectedness threatened to undermine any attempt to help the neediest neighbor. Just as societal interdependency – in its most positive iteration – could convince the strongest to uplift the weakest, the reverse was also possible. Immoral politicians disseminating the delusion that friendship fomented revolution imperiled the safety of the moral; the prejudice of the most ignorant threatened the judgment of the most learned. Roman asserted that interracial cooperation based on united sympathy undermined this darker spirit of interconnectedness. True friendship that bridged, but maintained, the social divide hastened a new heaven and a new earth and would initiate "the golden age of the world." Several SSC delegates contemplated the church's role in realizing this new age.¹⁰

On Sunday, May 9, 1915, Houston's *Daily Post* printed a cartoon best exhibiting

⁹B. F. Riley, "Causes of Unusual Mortality Among Negroes" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 385-392; Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 201-202.

¹⁰C.V. Roman "The Negro Woman and the Health Problem" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 395-398, 401.

the overall spirit of the health congresses. Captioned, “The Object of the Congress,” the illustration depicted a diminutive David – armed with his shield labeled “Southern Sociological Congress” and his sling of “science” – poised to strike a Goliath-like Grim Reaper draped with the sash of “disease.” The image, blending faith in science with that of religion, captured the SSC’s emphasis on ecclesial cooperation. Engaging in social service, the church – armed with the latest scientific knowledge and aligned with an array of southern institutions both inside and outside of the SSC – would finally slay the specter of disease looming large over the region.¹¹

Of one mind with past SSC speakers, orators in Houston and New Orleans envisioned a socialized church engaged in cooperative social service effectuating Christ’s kingdom. Reminiscent of the Atlanta gathering, where delegates sought to harmonize sociological and ecclesial concerns, orators in Houston pressed the church to cooperate with scientific specialists. Speaking before the church and health conference, SSC publicity secretary C. H. Waterfield recalled founder Anna Russell Cole’s original vision: creating an organization where scientific information and religious “dynamics” were equally disseminated. Cole’s SSC was to be a middleman between scientists – those “prophets of right living” – and the people difficult to arouse though it benefitted them to become so.

Speaking at Sunday afternoon’s general session in Houston, Dean J. L. Kesler of Baylor University expanded Cole’s vision, insisting that the work of science was the work of God. But beyond mere middleman status, the SSC would seek a union between

¹¹“David Meets Goliath”*Houston Daily Post*, 9 May 1915, 6.

religion and science. When Jesus' promised "life and life more abundantly," Kesler noted, he essentially acknowledged the importance of physical health. When he healed the sick and sent twelve and later seventy to do the same, Jesus envisioned a church that ministered to bodies as well as to souls. The modern body of Christ should likewise "seek the healer's wand in serum and surgeon's knife," build hospitals and nurseries beside chapels of worship.

Kessler insisted the church must also make the prevalent means of physical deliverance, the biological sciences in the form of preventative medicine, accessible to society in order to heal the sick and almost raise the dead. Recognizing that scientifically-based prevention was better than healing and formed the basis of all action hastening Christ's reign, Kesler challenged the church to reclaim its prophetic voice and abolish those conditioning factors that sicken society: poverty; industrial bondage; unemployment; poor sanitation; overcrowded and inadequate housing; impure food; improperly labeled drugs; and suppressed opportunity. Kesler queried: "If it's pure religion and undefiled to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, is it not purer religion to prevent affliction?" The church must wield its influence to put a prevention program on the map. Failure to do so threatened its very existence. A religion concerned about the church and forgetting the people, obsessed with ritual and ignoring life, preoccupied with speculative dogma and overlooking the Christ who fell among modern industrial thieves, would find its pews empty.¹²

¹²"Sociological Delegates Sure to Receive Cordial Welcome" *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 April, 1913, 4; "Social Congress is in Full Swing Now; Great Work Begun," *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April, 1913, 1; Charles Chatfield, "The Southern

Echoing Kesler, Charles S. MacFarland – General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches – recollected at the final Houston general session how Jesus had made healing a sign of his Messiahship. In that theological tradition the church should establish its credibility by healing the sick on an even grander scale. According to MacFarland, the traditional militancy of Christianity used erroneously in the past should now be harnessed to destroy sickness. A new militant Church, united with the “new social impulse of Christian faith” and intent on a holy crusade for public health, was most concretely expressed by the Social Creed of the Federal Council of Churches.

Many of the social creed’s sixteen articles of social faith focused on physical health. They called for: protection of families “by the single standard of purity;” uniform divorce laws; proper regulation of marriage; proper housing; the fullest possible development for every child, especially by the provision of proper education and recreation; the regulation of women’s toil which would also safeguard the physical and moral health of the community; the protection of workers from dangerous machinery and occupational diseases; suitable provision for old age, as well as for incapacitated, and injured workers; a release from employment one day in seven; the gradual and reasonable reduction of hours, and some degree of leisure. MacFarland reasoned that all of the creed’s health articles were best comprehended in one phrase: “the churches must

Sociological Congress,” 26, 43-44; Culley, “Muted Trumpets,” 120-126; L.L. Bernard, “Southern Sociological Congress,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 19 (July, 1913): 92-93; “Founder Will Not Attend the Congress” *Houston Daily Post*, 9 May 1915, 6; J. L. Kesler, “The New Attitude, the New Knowledge, the New Responsibility” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 449, 459-460; “Strong Plea Made for a National Health Bureau” *Houston Chronicle*, 10 May 1915, 10.

stand for the conservation of health.” Moreover, this same expression best summarized the emphasis on health in the Hebrew and Greek testaments.

MacFarland assured his audience that entire biblical chapters dealt with the conservation of health. He pointed to the first four books of Israel’s law which outlined a war on disease led by Jehovah and his chosen captains. As a result, public health comprised significant parts of the Hebrews’ ethical code, rituals, worship, and daily life. Jews were to make themselves a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, an effective practice as evidenced by the permanency of the Jewish race. MacFarland contended that Jesus divested Judaism of formalism and abrogated some of its laws by their fulfillment but had no fault with the Hebrew war on disease. In fact, the healing ministry of Jesus was an expansion of the Hebrew code: Jesus made no artificial distinctiveness between the healing of the soul and the healing of the body. Rather, Jesus made his healing ministry of men’s bodies a sovereign test of his own messiahship and spiritual lordship. Following the Transfiguration – the sacred scene where he revealed his spiritual sovereignty – Jesus healed a lunatic at the foot of the mountain. At the moment of Jesus’ supreme spiritual exaltation, MacFarland opined, he made the healing of men’s bodies the natural expression of his own personality. This attitude prevailed throughout the New Testament and the history of the Church.

Throughout all her history the church of Christ had been the healer of bodies and souls. She must reclaim her position as a spiritual force leading the fight against disease. MacFarland considered Paul’s amalgamated gospel as that of physician to body and soul. Monasteries on every European hillside were symbols of spiritual retreat and physical

regeneration. The Church's new crusade was that of engineer, physician, and nurse. She must reach beyond social amelioration and wage militant warfare against the causes of disease – the industrial system, tenement housing, improper sanitation, poor sex hygiene, and impeded motherhood. The Church's crusade would institute a new order, a newer humanitarianism that could bring forth heroism and courage. Desiring MacFarland's vision, many delegates wondered if the Church could realize it absent assistance from certain institutions.¹³

For many speakers in Houston and New Orleans, science and religion cooperating to ensure physical, social, and moral health required a key ingredient, the state. In Houston, Rabbi George Fox of Ft. Worth also envisioned churches allied with science to improve public health. The church must educate ministers and congregants about cleanliness, affiliate with uplift and “human regeneration” agencies, reconstruct itself as a social uplift organization, and work with state and nation to enact laws that safeguarded public health.¹⁴

Following Rabbi Fox at the podium, L. K. Williams – African American pastor at Ft. Worth's Mt. Gilead Baptist Church – likewise stressed the church's cooperative and constructive relationship with the state. The church taught that religion was primarily individualistic, but it also stressed social relationships. Tending to the latter, Williams noted, the church should quicken its congregants' moral nature while seeking and

¹³Charles S. MacFarland, “War on Disease – A Worthy Objective for a Religious Crusade” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 510-521.

¹⁴George Fox, “Why the State and the Church Should Require Health Certificates Before Marriage” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 162-164.

supporting laws that would promote the physical wellness of all parishioners. Additionally, the church should: help reshape public schools into health centers where children could learn through labs and the study of physiology; support all eleemosynary institutions; and encourage the state to construct well-ventilated and lighted artistic meeting houses as architectural models for others. Urging ecclesial support of certain state endeavors, Williams nevertheless warned the church against transferring all charity work to governmental forces. Specifically, the church must develop an effective message of soul salvation that incorporated “morality, intelligence, and economic well-being.”¹⁵

Concomitant with their calls for cooperation between congregation, state, and science, SSC speakers urged the church to adopt a coordinated, cooperative, and comprehensive program that addressed the spiritual, social, and physical needs of all souls, minds, and bodies. L. K. Williams suggested the black church’s historically comprehensive gospel as a model adaptable to current conditions and potentially replicated by the universal body of Christ. Following the Civil War, the black church became a clearinghouse for the race’s activities and endeavors. William challenged it again to alleviate human suffering and preserve its patrons’ health by engaging in a social service acquainted with the complexity of African American health problems, committed to preserving the physical vigor of the black race, and charged with educating the masses about the physiological, moral, and spiritual aspects of disease prevention.

¹⁵L. K. Williams, “Health Problems of the Negro Church” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 431-433.

Undoubtedly inspired by the all-encompassing African American social Christianity of Chicago's Institutional Church and Atlanta's First Congregational Church, Williams challenged the entirety of the black church to follow such examples and become more institutional. Once refocused, African American congregations would provide day nurseries for working parents, gymnasiums, swimming pools, public bathing stations, and playgrounds. They would educate mothers about child-rearing, nutrition, housekeeping, health, values. They would provide a forum where locals discussed the community's moral and physical perils, and underscore preventative measures to be taken. Their work would be coordinated by a newly-developed social service commission guided by wise social policy, stressing prevention as well as cure. Victims of unsanitary conditions would be cared for while the church sought to improve conditions, worked in the homes of the needy, and established nurse-training schools and hospitals.¹⁶

While Williams mainly focused on transforming the black church, other speakers applied his institutional model to the Church universal. H. Beach Carre – Professor of Biblical Theology and Exegesis at Vanderbilt University and President of the Anti-Saloon League of Tennessee – contemplated the church as a conservator of social health with a complete educational program that dispensed the “gospel of salvation from disease.” With half of all southern deaths categorized as premature, Carre suggested a union of necessity between the medical profession, the church, and philanthropic

¹⁶L. K. Williams, “Health Problems of the Negro Church” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 427-431; Ralph E. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 170-190.

organizations. The arrangement would accentuate the church's unparalleled role as an educational institution replete with pulpits, Sunday schools, social service committees, missionary societies, and volunteer organizations that spotlighted the conservation of health. Educational facilities – namely buildings and grounds – could be used to organize a national health university. All types of lay men and women would teach a curriculum based on lab records, scientific treatises, municipal, state, and national reports and publications. With such resources at its disposal, the church could take its message into the tenements and rural areas using movies, lantern slides, and health exhibits. Carre maintained that “only . . . the disinterested love of those putting their faith in the gospel of health” would save society from disease and death. Because such love was more fully developed in the church, it should offer facilities to train others. Carre, like L. K. Williams, envisioned an institutional church, but one intently focused on public health as the catalyst for complete societal salvation. Concentrating on conserving health, the church could open up new fields of activity that provided “the saving power of the gospel of love.” Intent on remaking the church into a public health school, Carre re-imagined the social gospel as a health message that saved society as well as individual lives.¹⁷

As speakers in Houston and New Orleans linked interconnectedness to disease prevention and yoked social service to scientific cooperation, they also reworked salvation as a holistic deliverance from physical conditions inducing both social and

¹⁷Henry Carre, “The Program of the Church as the Conserver of Social Health” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 505-510.

individual sin. Addressing Houston's church and health conference, Southwestern University professor John C. Granbery premised salvation on one's comprehension of an organic and interdependent society. Society was an organism replete with differentiated, yet mutually dependent, structure, and functions. Contiguous and interdependent, these units psychically interacted; they intercommunicated thought, feeling, and purpose. Considering such circumstances, Granbery queried, how was it possible to isolate an individual soul and save it? How could someone cut loose one soul from the intricate "interminable network of psychic bonds?" Quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson's assertion that man did not "have" a soul but rather was a soul, Granbery likewise refused to view the soul as a spiritual entity separate from the physical body. It was one's personality, one's spiritual existence, one's essential life. Spiritual salvation was physical salvation and vice versa. Moreover, physical/spiritual salvation was linked to social salvation. Society would be saved only when the outward relations of those born again were properly adjusted to the Christian ideal. The pronounced individualist, unsocialized in his thinking and conduct, was not truly saved until he realized his social duties and the social character of sin and salvation.¹⁸

Addressing the Monday afternoon general session in Houston, Samuel P. Brooks, Baylor University president and newly elected SSC president, detailed salvation's essence by comparing man's interconnected state of being to God's relationship with the community. Brooks recognized that man's nature was so interrelated that any

¹⁸John C. Granbery, "The Primary Function of the Church – To Save Life" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 489-493.

consideration of his physical system in isolation from the psychological or the spiritual was futile. Likewise, God was the “psychical center of the universe” and all physical “instrumentalities” that shaped societies residing within this universe were but manifestations of Him. Such physical media must therefore function properly so that God was not hindered. Similarly, spiritual salvation was connected to social reform; one was unattainable without the other. Specifically, the body must first be preserved, then the mind. Brooks acknowledged ministers who emphasized enacting sanitary reforms prior to moral reforms but argued that moral reforms only worked when “conditioned on and in” sanitary improvements. Similarly, churches often considered spiritual salvation as an individual matter, but it was most easily achieved where social conditions were “clean and pure and wholesome.” Like Granbery, Brooks tended to drop distinctions between spiritual and social salvation. He recognized a singular salvation dependent upon improved physical conditions so that all would have “life more abundant, life physical, life mental, life spiritual, each a supplement to the other.”¹⁹

At Houston’s Sunday afternoon general session, Philadelphia’s Samuel Zane Batten also emphasized a holistic soteriology rooted in Christ’s intention to save the “whole man”. Contrary to traditional interpretations that considered Jesus’ healing wholly spiritual and inward, Batten asserted that the healing Christ commissioning disciples “to go and do likewise” never distinguished work that saved souls from that which rescued bodies. Instead, humankind’s redemption was deliverance from

¹⁹Samuel P. Brooks, “Mental Health Safeguarded by Physical Health” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 249-251.

everything that was “dark and evil and tragic” as well as “the rebuilding of life in righteousness, health, and joy.” New life was spiritual, social, and health-related. Batten equated soul salvation with “the salvation of man from unnecessary disease and suffering and the deliverance of society from human waste and loss.” He similarly regarded the kingdom as social and spiritual, an entity composed of human beings comprised of “flesh and blood, of heart, and brain, of body and spirit” so completely interknit and interdependent that no part could be separated from the others. Batten’s assertions – like those of Granbery, Kesler, and Brooks – challenged atomistic concepts of salvation. Salvation was complete or nothing. Society and individuals were either saved from all suffering – mental, physical, social, spiritual – or not. As disciples of Christ, Batten believed all Christians had a responsibility to continue the ministry of Christ and, in doing so, make no distinction between spiritual and physical works of Christ. The kingdom was about all derivations of salvation, both spiritual and social, including deliverance from disease, poor sanitation, and poor diet. Salvation was not just about saving the soul, not just saving the individual in a narrow sense. Salvation was “as wide as the purpose of God and as inclusive as the being of man.” The Son of Man had come to save the life of man in all its iterations for the kingdom and its uses.²⁰

As speakers conditioned salvation on deliverance from disease, they also connected the kingdom’s realization to the community’s physical health. In Houston, Samuel Zane Batten revisited major themes from his 1913 Atlanta address, challenging

²⁰Samuel Zane Batten, “Modern Miracles of the Church in Health Conservation” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 461-462.

the notion of the Kingdom as “a sublimated something up in the clouds, something far away from concrete things.” Rather, it was composed of living men and women made up of body and spirit, interdependent so that neither could be considered apart from another. One’s fitness for the kingdom was revealed in the way one fulfilled or neglected simple humanities – feeding the hungry, nursing the sick, visiting prisoners, and helping the weak. Challenging claims that disease and its causes were God’s will, Batten claimed the Creator predetermined health and life. Disease resulted from knowable causes, such as ignorance of health, hygiene, and nutrition rules. Such ignorance was a sin where knowledge was possible. The Kingdom’s program implied the redemption of the holistic life of man; it could only be realized when the Church educated the masses about the direct correlation between sanitary conditions and morbidity as well as the miracle of prevention.

Batten challenged the Church to teach God’s law and enact preventative public health policies intended to hasten God’s kingdom. Congregations must teach that health was a Christian duty. Ignoring the laws of health was as sinful as breaking the ten commandments. Slowly killing a family via an unsanitary tenement was the same as throwing strychnine in a milk bottle. Every unnecessary death was a community crime. The church must show the community how to live out its faith, to select efficient public officials, and appoint a decent Board of Health. Simultaneously, the church must address the causes of societal sickness. Congregants must: rescue the outcast while abolishing the white slave traffic; feed a hungry family while creating an industrial order where all could earn daily bread; build an orphanage while extending the life-expectancy of

fathers. These same communicants must understand that the prevention of social evils was religious and spiritual work. Nursing the sick, visiting prisoners, feeding the hungry, and caring for orphans was as much a spiritual service as studying causes of poverty, organizing a Board of Health, starting a crusade against dirt, teaching people the laws of health, and providing a good housing code. Only then would God establish the kingdom.²¹

Henry Cope, general secretary of the Religious Education Association in Chicago, was more precise in his call to action. Like Batten, Cope challenged the church to socialize communicants to hasten the kingdom. But he specifically considered Sunday Schools the best organized entities for the task. Outlining his vision before Houston's Sunday afternoon general session, Cope instructed Sunday Schools to deal with more than mere "sublimated souls alone." They must address the physical foundations of life, "come down from the clouds" and engage concrete conditions. For too long the church had been content to save souls while letting "bodies and conduct, mind and morals go on their way robbing, despoiling, or betraying humanity." The Sunday School must adapt and teach hygiene and sanitation, assist in the development of one's fullest personality, activate clear consciences in young people, demand universal health so that all might realize their potential, organize parents into classes on child rearing, and instruct educators on direct moral training. In doing so, the church's educational wing would teach its students to understand the art of life in divine terms and to see the body as the

²¹Samuel Zane Batten, "Modern Miracles of the Church in Health Conservation" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 460-475.

servant of the spirit. Instructing people in the knowledge and realization of spiritual ideals, the Sunday School would serve the kingdom by teaching people how to build the new Jerusalem.²²

Of one theological mind with Batten and Cope, Baylor University Dean Kesler knew the church could not establish the ideal community called the kingdom of heaven – that new, regenerated, readjusted, and redeemed social order – without health. Science, he observed, was pressing into the kingdom “with hands full of healing and hearts full of love.” What biology made possible, religion was obliged to make prevail. The work of the kingdom would be disseminated through teaching, preaching, religious and daily papers and schools, public school teachers and health inspectors, school and city nurses, public health officers, physicians, and a unified national health department. For Kesler, the work of science was the work of God. Sanitaria, hospitals, and Pasteur institutes were the temples of science, yet “temples more and more consciously working at the kingdom of God” – doing good, healing the sick, practicing what the Master did. As the kingdom’s private citizens and as sworn enemies of disease, congregants were obliged to “put on the toga of a new citizenship,” take the vow of new knighthood and fight against forces threatening to invade “the very citadels of our civic life and our national efficiency.”²³

²²Henry F. Cope, “The Sunday School As a Health School” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 486-488.

²³J. L. Kesler, “The New Attitude, the New Knowledge, the New Responsibility” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 449,459-460; J. L. Kesler, “Physical Health Championed By the Church” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 503.

In Houston and New Orleans, SSC speakers intently focused on disease prevention and sanitation reform and reformulated the social gospel themes that dominated previous conventions. Reconsidering interconnectedness, they now viewed such efforts as imperative because diseases wreaked devastation irrespective of race, class, or gender. Malaria, typhoid, tuberculosis, or hookworm infecting poorer neighborhoods eventually made their way to wealthy white sections. Orators revised their ecclesiology, envisioning a cooperative church presently and actively seeking a perpetual union with science. Armed with such knowledge, the church would practice social service that conquered disease and reshaped society. Speakers also updated their social soteriology. Salvation was understood as a holistic deliverance from physical conditions that induced both social and individual sin. Speakers replaced distinctions between spiritual and social salvation with a redemption from everything tragic, especially unnecessary disease and suffering. Delegates conditioned the kingdom's realization on the physical health of the community; the regenerated and redeemed social order could not prevail in the absence of health with their theological themes revised, speakers contributed new non-theological, economic arguments promoting the public health emphasis.

SSC speakers typically coopted economic efficiency language to plead for the conservation of health, decry military conflict while declaring war against disease, address the causes of physical and societal disease, and seek increased state regulation. In Houston and New Orleans, the SSC's focus increasingly shifted from interracialism to public health, from the social gospel to efficiency, from a regional context to a national

one.

The SSC's push for efficiency accurately reflected changing attitudes among southern progressives as a whole. According to William A. Link, southern progressives particularly wanted properly-structured schools and public health institutions that would radically reshape public attitudes and ultimately replace backwardness and poverty with modernization. Reformed educational and public health systems would correctly socialize young southerners, transmit new values, alter existing harmful habits, and increase the performance and efficiency of the region.²⁴

Southern educational and health reformers, translating reform campaigns into public policy, accompanied faith in efficiency with calls for increased bureaucratization and government intervention. Dewey W. Grantham observed this pattern in the development of early twentieth century southern social reform. The most significant reform movements – namely, the prohibition crusade and campaign for railroad regulation – acquired a strong regional organization but eventually looked to Washington for national action. When Democrats, their party apparatus controlled by senior southerners, won the U.S. House of Representatives in 1910, and Woodrow Wilson – who was born in Virginia – took the presidency in 1912, southern reform organizations became more comfortable nationalizing their efforts.²⁵

The Southern Sociological Congress fit this new emphasis. While emphasizing efficiency and centralization, SSC speakers, influenced by the era's nascent

²⁴Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 203-204.

²⁵Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 351-352.

environmental ethic, connected the language of conservation with their public health emphasis. At Houston, Baylor University Dean Kesler quoted Theodore Roosevelt when insisting on the conservation of national resources. Failure to do so would rob the future and exacerbate the “greater problem” of “our national efficiency.” Whereas Roosevelt and advisors such as Gifford Pinchot were concerned mainly with natural resources, Kesler strove to conserve humanity -- whose fullest efficiency had been impeded by poverty, unregulated industrialization, unemployment, poor sanitation, and substandard housing – as an economic resource. In his keynote address in Houston, James E. McCulloch echoed Kesler and called the conservation of the people’s health “the greatest factor making for the prosperity and happiness of the country’s population.” At Houston and New Orleans, demands for “the conservation of health” formed the basis of the overall public health push and served as a common banner under which “efficiency and centralization” progressives and their social gospel brethren could rally.²⁶

If disease prevention and sanitation reform exemplified efficiency by conserving human resources, military conflict epitomized inefficiency. With stories of the *Lusitania* dominating the headlines of Houston’s *Daily Post* and *Chronicle* and war coverage – along with news of the *Sussex* incident – punctuating New Orleans’ *Times-Picayune*, SSC speakers coopted militaristic language to declare a war on disease. At Houston, Dr. Seale Harris of Mobile, secretary of the Southern Medical Association, deemed Europe a

²⁶J. L. Kesler, “The New Attitude, the New Knowledge, the New Responsibility” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 449,454, 459-460; J. L. Kesler, “Physical Health Championed By the Church” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 503; “The Sociological Congress” *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 6.

“charnal house” and cited grim statistics: 500,000 dead and five million wounded since European hostilities had begun. Even more dispiriting, Harris observed, over the same time period sickness had killed 600,000 American men, women, and children and infected another six million. Where the “war on disease” had been conducted – that is, where an educational campaign had been initiated – diseases like tuberculosis had begun to dissipate. Such fights, in concert with a proposed national department of health, would realize scientists’ hopes to prevent unnecessary disease and death.²⁷

While Harris dealt specifically with the losses in the European war, other speakers attacked the inefficiencies of war altogether. At Houston, Deerin Call, former director of the American Peace Society in Washington, D.C., maintained that war eliminated the “biologically fit” and seriously retarded the progress of the race. War removed recruits during their most procreative period, increased the death rate of civilians, and spread disease. The result was lost economic potential: fewer marriages took place; the birth rate declined; epidemics ran rampant; emigration increased; atrocities against civilians multiplied; and overall human achievement declined. War produced a eugenics-like situation in reverse: the fit died while the unfit lived, married,

²⁷“Health Message From the Grave Heard by Sociologists” *Houston Chronicle*, 10 May 1915, 1; “Sanitation Given as the Key Toward the Promotion of the Movement to Lengthen Lives of People” *Houston Daily Post*, 10 May 1915, 1; “Lusitania is Torpedoed and Sunk off Coast of Ireland,” *Houston Chronicle*, 7 May 1915, 1; “Lusitania Deaths Total 1526,” *Houston Chronicle*, 8 May 1915, 1; “Berlin Admits Sinking Lusitania and Claims Full Justification,” *Houston Chronicle*, 9 May 1915, 1; “Germany Accepts Full Responsibility 1198 Went to Death with Lusitania” *Houston Daily Post*, 9 May 1915, 1; “Over 1500 Lives Believed Lost When Steamer Lusitania Was Torpedoed” *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 1.

and produced even more unfit offspring.²⁸

Although Call touched on the economic inefficiencies of war – mentioning the resulting exorbitant war debt, wasted capital, higher prices, less consumption, lowered production, and higher taxes – Dr. C. S. Waterfield, the SSC’s publicity secretary, focused most intently on the subject. He insisted that war undermined health, blocked education, ignored the commonweal, and usurped prosperity. With a single modern fighting ship costing \$12 million dollars, an amount equivalent to half a dozen universities or one thousand fertile farms, Waterfield argued that war was the “greatest gatherer, assessor and dissembler of wealth.” It rearranged the economic order to favor militarism and undermine social welfare. Yet, despite the multitude of inefficiencies associated with war, militaristic language was also compelling. It evoked images of precision drilling, effective chains of command, and efficient eradication of one’s opponent.²⁹

Co-opting the language of battle, SSC speakers demanded an efficient war against disease. The language of soldierly efficiency was emphasized nightly when the “Congress Battle Hymn,” sung to the tune of “Tipperary,” opened or closed general sessions in Houston and New Orleans. Insisting that “It’s a hard fight, to save the children; It’s a hard fight, we know,” choirs and attendees called “doctor captains” on their “far-flung fever line” and “preacher pickets” to lead the “sons of Lee and Lincoln”

²⁸Deerin Call, “War as a Destroyer of Public Health” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 93-103.

²⁹“The Forces that Make For War and Those For Peace” *Houston Daily Post*, 10 May 1915, 5.

onward over the silent fiend Disease stalking the land.³⁰

Because of the European conflict, James E. McCulloch – addressing New Orleans’ Sunday evening general session – deemed the United States the new promised land of humanity. As such, America – the recently anointed “high priest of the world and champion of human rights” – was duty-bound to “declare war on war everywhere” and demand human rights for all nations and races. The Congress was no more than the churches’ war council composed of that body’s first line officers who pushed the church to improve societal efficiency by attaining improved physical, mental, and moral health for all.³¹

Speaking before Houston’s Tuesday afternoon general session, Cora Frances Stoddard of Boston – Secretary of the Scientific Temperance Federation – utilized similar jingoistic language, calling the Congress a council of war fighting disease, inadequate housing, substandard city sanitation, general inefficiency, misery, delinquency, crime, vice, degeneracy, and any and all other “strongholds to which we lay siege on this battlefield for human progress.” All segments of society – not just doctors and preachers – were engaged in the fight. Mothers and fathers stood for sound parenthood; various professionals sought proper moral and industrial training; mental health experts fought for improved care of the “unfit”; and all “conservators of race” and

³⁰“Many Notable Health Experts Will Speak in Meetings Today” *Houston Chronicle*, 9 May 1915; “Sociological Congress Will Be Welcomed Saturday Night” *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 8; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 61-62.

³¹James E. McCulloch, “A Challenge to the New Chivalry,” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 27-36.

“apostles of a new social order” battled along their particular “lines of trenches,” insisting that everyone live and work and enjoy the fruits of their labor under healthful and just conditions. All social welfare interests demanding healthier homes, cleaner streets, improved mental and medical care, better schools, and more socially active congregations were now soldiers drafted in a war against all things inefficient.

Stoddard’s and McCulloch’s figurative calls to war, along with several SSC speakers’ challenges at Houston and New Orleans, were part of a larger emphasis on prohibition. This crusade would increase economic efficiency by eliminating a major cause of physical, moral, and social health blight. More specifically, Stoddard asserted that the “dark threads of alcohol” were woven into “the very woof and warp” of any threat to human welfare. Alcohol abuse caused fifty to ninety percent of crime, raised the national death rate, shortened the life of the drinker on average by four years, and increased “race degeneracy.” The abundance of strong drink also initiated a cycle: alcohol induced poverty which resulted in child labor that eventually impaired economic opportunity and health. Such economic-related shortcomings resulted in long-term low wages which then begat another generation trapped in poverty and looking toward the bottle for relief. The children of alcoholics, their moral lives undermined and their physical lives shortened, were unwilling and innocent victims in the cycle. Stoddard insisted that damming alcohol’s flow, along with a mental and social hygiene campaign, would improve child mentality, prevent infectious diseases, reduce the death rate, and

promote economic efficiency.³²

Backing Stoddard's claims, Edwin C. Dinwiddie, Superintendent of the National Temperance Bureau in D.C., informed a Houston general session that prohibition was health reform. Liquor traffic caused directly or indirectly 25 percent of the nation's poverty and 32 percent of its pauperism. Moreover, the saloon bred crime, fueled family discord, created physical and mental deficiency, despoiled childhood, uprooted morals, undermined honest politics, and corrupted public life. Abolishing the liquor trade and educating the public about its evils would remedy all other evils and usher in an age of total abstinence. Additionally, Dinwiddie argued that such reforms would rightly re-prioritize society's purse. The \$2.5 billion liquor trade accounted for six times the cost of the Panama canal, three times the amount spent on education, five times the value of the nation's annual cotton crop, and equaled the value of its wheat harvest. Beyond any moral imperative, the detrimental economic impact of alcohol consumption demanded its eradication.³³

SSC speakers at both Health Congresses focused intently on eliminating the causes of preventable disease. As with liquor, orators considered typhoid, tuberculosis, malaria, and hookworm both social and economic crimes that robbed society of human capital. In that spirit, Texas state health officer Dr. W. B. Collins – speaking in Houston

³²Cora Frances Stoddard, "The Alcohol Question And Social Justice" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 124.

³³Dinwiddie, Edwin C. "The Relationship of Alcoholism to Poverty and Crime," in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 114-123.

– observed that preventative medicine was becoming a societal priority as a more ethically minded public acknowledged the need for more effective treatments and state health campaigns. Echoing Collins, University of Texas’ C. S. Potts recounted how the prevalence of smallpox and typhoid had been diminished by increased availability of preventative serums. Moreover, yellow fever had been mitigated so much that southerners suffered “but little from it.” Other speakers, though less optimistic in their assessments, were equally committed to disease eradication. Dr. J. T. Bernard, superintendent of Dallas’ tuberculosis hospital, noted that ninety percent of the nation’s diseases were preventable. Such scandalous statistics demanded greater interest and expenditures on medicine that would destroy germs before they reached an advanced developmental state. Considering disease prevention an economic issue demanding a social solution, SSC secretary James E. McCulloch acknowledged that many urban leaders put selfish commercialism ahead of community welfare. McCulloch challenged such notions, endorsing instead a kind of communitarian economics that rejected sacrificing the interdependent whole for individual profit. In a similar vein, other Houston speakers insisted that sociology refocus its aim on the prevention of “sickness and inefficiency – physical and mental” by destroying the causes of both.³⁴

These same delegates especially desired to diminish disease prevalent in children. In Houston and New Orleans, orators eager to reduce all causes of infant mortality were chiefly concerned with eradicating preventable diseases that killed 250,000 annually and

³⁴“Opening Session,” *Houston Chronicle*, 5 May 1915, 6; “What the Delegates Say” *Houston Daily Post*, 10 May 1915, 3; “The Sociological Congress” *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 6.

hoped to recruit physicians, preachers, social workers, teachers, lawyers, state officials, and everyone “interested in better health for the South.” These forces enlisted the aid of Oscar Dowling – president of the Louisiana State Board of Health – who assembled an electric sign that spelled out the word “baby” in lights. At regular intervals the sign darkened and then relighted City Auditorium, signifying the death of one U.S. baby every twenty seconds. The *Houston Chronicle*, taken with the effectiveness of the prop, reported that every flash made childhood deaths suddenly real, providing a way to actualize infant mortality, quicken pulses, and stir emotions.³⁵

Moving beyond pathos, most Health Congress speakers utilized fiscal language to bolster their arguments for disease eradication. At Houston, Ellis Caswell, University of Texas’ director of extension, reported that the productivity loss resulting from the three million individuals infected with tuberculosis, typhoid, diphtheria, smallpox, yellow fever, malaria, or hookworm – along with their underemployed care givers – cost the nation \$1.5 billion annually. Of these usual epidemiological suspects, consumption was by far the most costly, removing \$1 billion a year from the U.S. economy. Surgeon R. H. von Ezdorf of the U.S. Public Health service informed Houston delegates that the three to four percent of southerners who suffered annually from malarial fever made the southern labor situation uncertain and inefficient. In fact, some southern mills operated at a loss the previous year. During that same period, \$2.625 million was expended in eleven

³⁵“Disease is a Crime When it Can be Prevented say Health Speakers.” *Houston Chronicle*, 9 May 1915, 1; “The ‘Baby’ Sign” *Houston Daily Post*, 9 May 1915, 6; “Sociological Congress Will Be Welcomed Saturday Night” *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 8.

southern states for funerals and \$4 million for medication. Moreover, in a separate speech, von Ezdorf observed that the one-half million typhoid sufferers cost society \$94 million. C. H. Brownlee insisted in his Houston speech that hookworm was especially detrimental to society because it robbed young students of their vitality and, due to inattentiveness and fatigue, their education. Speaking before the Saturday morning general session in New Orleans, University of South Carolina's Josiah Morse recounted that the average U.S. wage earner lost nine days annually because of sickness. With the nation's workers numbering close to thirty-eight million, such lost productivity amounted to 941,112 years. As for those who worked while sick, Morse estimated that South Carolina alone lost \$30 million due to the lowered vitality of ill, on-the-job workers.³⁶

More than other societal segment, the African American community suffered the greatest efficiency losses because of disease. Speaking before Houston's Tuesday morning's health and race relations conference, sociologist Monroe N. Work – head of Tuskegee Institute's Records and Research and editor of the *Negro Year Book* – maintained that forty-five percent of regional African American deaths were preventable, which represented an annual loss of \$200 million to the South. With fifteen to twenty percent of all deaths attributed to tuberculosis alone, this “white plague” cost the region an amount equal to the economic output of 3,500 factories with a combined 700,000

³⁶von Ezdorf, R. H. “Prevention of Typhoid Fever,” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 68; Ellis, Caswell, “The Financial Cost of Preventable Disease,” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 41-42; von Ezdorf, R. H. “Prevention of Malaria,” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 72-73; Brownlee, C. H., “The Price Paid by the South to the Hookworm Disease,” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 50-54; Josiah Morse, “Labor Values Destroyed by Disease” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 211.

employees. Put another way, Work noted, such staggering financial losses surpassed all southern cities' combined revenues.³⁷

Also in Houston, Philadelphia's R. R. Wright – editor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church's *Christian Recorder* – insisted no prosperity existed without labor and no labor without physical health. Ill health subverted prosperity. It led to a loss of wages, a loss to society by the withdrawal of productive labor, and a loss of family due to the cost of care. African Americans' prosperity, like that of any group, depended upon the length of their working life. Early African American deaths undermined such prosperity. The typical African American male died at age 46, a full ten years before their white male counterpart, and was sicker more often than their white neighbors. Southern society's 2.5 million sick African Americans equaled \$20 million in hospital costs and \$50 million a year in lost wages. Such losses in productivity were unjustified, unsustainable, and demanded remedies.³⁸

Influenced by their desire to eliminate the causes of disease and thereby increase productivity, Health Congress speakers called for improved sanitation methods, the reduction of mosquito-infested swampland, a comprehensive education campaign, and a reformed system of segregation. Because poor sanitation was disease's primary determinant, efficiency-focused speakers focused intently on improving housing conditions, intentional city planning, updated sewerage, and better drainage. Speaking at

³⁷Monroe N. Work, "The South and the Health of Negroes" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 412-421.

³⁸R. R. Wright, "Health As the Basis of Racial Prosperity" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 437-446.

the closing session in Houston, John Ihlder – Field Secretary of the National Housing Association – underscored how unsanitary living conditions acted as either a direct vehicle of disease or so depressed vitality that occupants were unable to resist diseases. Tenements especially – with their restricted space for light, air, and movement – exemplified circumstances that increased physical, social, and moral ailments. Ihlder foresaw an impending housing crisis. With land-overcrowding underlying most preventable urban ills, southern cities faced increased industrial development and an influx of immigrants at the close of the war. Instead of following the North’s model – immigrants, tenements, then reform – Ihlder demanded houses have slats for improved ventilation, screens so windows could be opened, enough rooms to avoid overcrowded sleeping arrangements, and airy spaces devoid of kerosene lamps. Similarly, Ellis Caswell, the University of Texas’ Director of Extension, determined that basic modern sanitary improvements like window screening, hygienic toilets, and properly-located wells could prevent seventy-nine percent of all disease related deaths.

Not content with mere appeals to benevolent landowners, Ihlder also insisted that city planners create a new urban reality. If well-intended design could develop clean, less crowded, amply screened homes, it could also envision a city of tomorrow guided by certain principles: space for sun and air, for private outdoor family space, for neighborhood recreation, for city parks, for larger yards. A true suburban sprawlist ahead of his time, Ihlder envisioned cities built “out, not up” akin to the Russell Sage development on Long Island and Fairfield outside of Birmingham. Ihlder’s ideal healthy city was also properly drained while providing ample sewerage.

Speakers accentuating sanitation's central role in disease eradication realized that their goals depended on comprehensive plans accommodating improved sewerage and drainage. Focusing on urban remedies, John Ihlder suggested southern sanitation advocates duplicate Savannah's infrastructure which provided pure water in its mains, better sewerage, modern disposal plants, and privies that decreased pollution. Cities should also model their efforts after New Orleans' commissions that dealt exclusively with sewage. Dr. Walter Brumby, Amicable Life Insurance Company's Assistant Medical Director and the Texas State Board of Health's former president, highlighted hookworm's dependence on unsanitary toilets and ignorance of personal hygiene. Sewers eliminated the former, mitigated the latter, and lowered death rates. Concentrating on rural issues, he further informed his Houston audience that typhoid fever was a result of shallow wells, surface water, unprotected springs, and sewage-contaminated streams located in the countryside. Better localized drainage would eliminate these factors. Addressing New Orleans' government and health conference, Dr. R. H. Creel of the U.S. Public Health Service insisted that typhoid would be eliminated only when unprotected cesspools and vaults were sealed off from flies that spread the disease. He cited Richmond's success in reducing typhoid mortality three fold over twenty-six years by simply keeping flies from human waste. Similarly, water evacuation on a more massive scale would seriously reduce malaria's affects.³⁹

³⁹John Ihlder, "Housing and Health" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 138-149; Ellis, Caswell, "The Financial Cost of Preventable Disease," in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 41-46, 49; Brumby, William, "Distinct County Health Problems," in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 46-49; R. H. Creel, "Housing in Preventing Disease" in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 127.

Such sentiment informed Health Congress speakers calling for swamp reduction. Addressing Houston's mental health departmental conference, George Eames Barstow, president of the Pecos Valley Land and Irrigation Company and former president of the National Drainage Congress, insisted that reclaiming sixty million acres of southern swamps would decrease malarial deaths by 250,000 and support seventy-five million people with an annual product of \$3 billion. Moreover, Barstow urged support of the Newlands River Regulation Bill which mandated control of rivers' headwaters and stopped their overflow into lowland areas. Reminding delegates that three to four percent of southerners annually suffered malaria attacks, R. H. Von Ezdorf of the U.S. Public Health service encouraged local authorities to drain swamps and streams, fill in low places, use oil as a larvacide, and stock standing water with fish. Officials should also conduct an educational campaign promoting the use of screens, mosquito netting, fans and insecticides.⁴⁰

Other speakers similarly emphasized education's panacean and palliative properties. Delegates taking the dais in both Houston and New Orleans considered prevention a scientifically-guided educational undertaking. Addressing Houston's health of children conference, Dr. M. M. Carrick – Dallas physician and noted sanitation expert – stressed educating mothers in order to reduce infant mortality. Mothers needed preventative medicine to “start children out right” and improve their “hereditary chances.” Above all, health workers and educators must emphasize breast feeding as the

⁴⁰Barstow, George Eames “Society's Lack of Health” Prevention of Typhoid Fever,” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 87-93; von Ezdorf, R. H. “Prevention of Malaria,” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 70-77.

greatest protection from disease. Of the same mind, esteemed Nashville architect Henry H. Hibbs demanded the direct instruction of parents to ensure optimal prenatal environments and improvements in expectant mothers' nutrition. All mothers, especially those of the working class, required sufficient rest and an improved standard of care during pregnancy. Such environmental fitness reduced digestive and respiratory diseases that were prime factors in infant mortality.⁴¹

Beyond their call to educate expectant mothers, orators also focused on the existing public schools apparatus as a promising means to an end. In Houston, C. H. Brownlee recalled that \$100,000 per year was lost trying to teach unreceptive children prior to the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission's anti-hookworm campaign of the previous decade. He therefore called for renewed efforts to eradicate all diseases by educating children and the general public about ideal sanitary conditions. At Houston's moral health conference, Miss Ethel B. Claxton – superintendent of Texas' Harris County School for girls – echoed Brownlee's sentiments and emphasized compulsory education's role in eliminating contagious disease by conducting in-school medical inspections, physical training, and school lunch programs. These programs increased social efficiency by improving students' vitality, attentiveness, and ability to perform school work. Building on successful programs in rural and free schools that reduced ill health, Dr. W. B. Collins – Texas' state health officer – contemplated creating a ten

⁴¹Henry H. Hibbs, "The Influence of Prenatal Conditions on Infant Mortality" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 176-189; M. M. Carrick, "Prenatal Responsibility of Parents for Children" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 170-173.

lecture health course for public schools.⁴²

A few speakers in Houston and New Orleans addressed the connections between African American efficiency, improved community health, and public education. Before New Orleans' Friday morning's race relations conference, Reverend William H. Holloway – African-American sociology and theology professor at Talladega College in Alabama – questioned educational experts' exclusive emphasis on black industrial education. He named two kinds of southern education: “a black and a white, which tend to accent the differences and widen the breach between man and man.” White education created a whole man with unlimited social and economic opportunities while black education made a half man capable of working a finite range of physical vocations. Echoing John D. Hammond – President of Augusta's Paine College – who, in Memphis, similarly had questioned interracialists' narrow focus on black industrial education, Holloway advocated a full range of academic opportunities for African Americans that would improve their economic and physical standing. Likewise, Philadelphia's R. R. Wright postulated that the South could save billions by spending mere millions to teach African Americans the rules of health and sanitation to improve their lot mentally, morally, and physically. In Wright's estimation, such health changes were far more necessary than alterations to segregation laws. Health, not political rights, was the basis of black prosperity. Other speakers differed with Wright and demanded priority on

⁴²Robert Granville Caldwell, “The Relation of the School to the Public Health.” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 223-230; Brownlee, C. H., “The Price Paid by the South to the Hookworm Disease,” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 50-54; “What the Delegates Say” *Houston Daily Post*, 10 May 1915, 3.

segregation reform in order to ensure improved health and increased economic opportunities for African Americans.⁴³

Recalling a theme explored at the Memphis gathering, SSC speakers in Houston and New Orleans – concerned with segregation’s negative affect on public health, economic opportunity, and overall efficiency – envisioned a reformed social system that was separate but truly equal. Like Fisk University’s George E. Haynes, who in Memphis insisted that both races engage in interracial community cooperation to help urban blacks overcome the ghettoizing effects of segregation, African American John Wesley Gilbert, professor of Greek at Augusta’s Paine College, focused intently on the relationship between housing and African American health. Specifically, he observed that urban blacks – segregated into ghettos lacking proper sanitation, pure water, and proper sewerage – were less healthy than poor whites. Forced into shotgun shanties or stifling airless and sunless tenement rooms located in lower-lying and poorly drained areas, African Americans’ death rates were twice as high as white urban dwellers. Beyond poor living conditions, Gilbert also recognized that home ownership, a factor that lowered death rates, was often denied ghettoized African Americans. Despite such obstacles, blacks did not complain about segregated housing in principle, but that such conditions were inferior and unequal. Moreover, blacks could not change the situation because whites controlled all policy-making apparatuses. Although Gilbert argued that Christian social service should awaken the public’s conscience to the state of African American

⁴³R. R. Wright, “Health As the Basis of Racial Prosperity” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 437-446.

housing and health, his main appeal was economic. Good housing was good economic policy in that healthy and efficient laborers spent more money. Gilbert also acknowledged the *economic* interconnectedness of the two races. African Americans with poor health mainly meant a loss in real estate values, additional expenses due to increased crime, added maintenance of courts and prisons, and greater scarcity of cheap black labor because of sickness and death.⁴⁴

Louisiana's Oscar Dowling echoed Gilbert's sentiments on segregation and economic interconnectedness. Whereas racial segregation kept traditional social ideals intact, it was designed to do little else. More specifically, noted Dowling, it exacerbated the spread of communicable diseases which also threatened neighboring whites communities and undermined efficiency. In Virginia, where the average typhoid case cost \$150 a week, it was more efficient to allocate that money proscriptively for disease prevention and improved sanitation. Likewise, it was cheaper to eradicate hookworm in African American communities than spend the estimated \$27.5 million to provide repeat instruction for sickly and inattentive school children. Dowling insisted that health was purchasable. Adequate funds wisely and intelligently expended would heal both African

⁴⁴John W. Gilbert, "City Housing of Negroes in Relation to Health" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 405-412; Mitchell, "George Edmund Haynes," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed. West, 413-414; Leone, "Bethlehem House, Nashville," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed. West, 65; "Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; George E. Haynes, "Some Conditions Among Negroes in Cities" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 120-131.

American and white communities and improve overall social efficiency.⁴⁵

Addressing Saturday evening's general session in New Orleans, Charles M. Bishop – President of Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas – traced the South's lynching epidemic to post-Reconstruction segregation. That era's social milieu motivated fearful whites to separate from their black brethren in the name of self preservation which, according to Bishop, spawned a two-tiered legal system that denied equal justice to either race and fed whites' justifications for mob violence. Such actions increased lawlessness, further aggravated racial antipathy, and led to more mob violence. As a remedy, Bishop – perpetuating racial stereotypes while challenging the status quo – suggested the creation of special courts to deal with rape allegations made against African Americans, demanded that the military harshly and quickly disperse mobs, and insisted that African Americans be granted fair educational opportunities in the form of adequately equipped schools and a liberal arts curriculum. Such limited intervention would undo the worst elements of segregation and undermine the fear that fueled racial violence. Other SSC delegates embraced comprehensive intervention.⁴⁶

For many orators at the 1915 and 1916 health congresses, increased governmental intervention and centralization represented the quintessence of efficiency. Almost all

⁴⁵Oscar Dowling, "Cost of Preventable Disease in the South," in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 29-40; "Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; "South Must Develop the Negro," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 10 May 1914, 11; Robert Russa Moton, "Inter-Racial Interests in Industry" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 159-168.

⁴⁶Charles M. Bishop, "The Causes, Consequences, and Cure of Mob Violence," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 191-200.

speakers, irrespective of motivation, demanded the creation of a national health bureau charged with coordinating local and state public health efforts. Some speakers called for further efforts that smacked of social control – increased state regulation of movie content, oversight of mental health facilities, and the issuance of health certificates before marriage – while others focused on social justice efforts benefitting mothers and working women.

Speakers in Houston and New Orleans could not envision efficient public health policies absent a national bureau coordinating such efforts. Accurately capturing the sentiments of Houston's delegates, Dr. Seale Harris of Mobile deemed national health more important than national peace, commerce, agriculture, railroad rates, or foreign relations. Yet, while providing bureaus for all of the former interests, the federal government left national health to the care of states, cities, and individuals. Harris demanded creation of a national health bureau whose chief officer would serve on the president's cabinet. Newly-elected SSC president, Samuel P. Brooks, likewise called for a national board of health. He found it unconscionable that a farmer's cholera-infected hogs qualified for immediate governmental assistance while a poor wife with a husband stricken by tuberculosis would receive only a sympathy letter. Such sentiments culminated at Houston's closing general session Tuesday evening when SSC delegates unanimously voted to request U.S. Congressional action in establishing a cabinet level federal health bureau. Copies of the resolution were sent to President Wilson and to the

U.S. Congressmen representing southern states.⁴⁷

Concomitant with their calls for a national health bureau, SSC speakers demanded increased governmental regulation at the national and state levels. Some addressed issues of social control reminiscent of earlier SSC gatherings. In Houston, Orrin G. Cocks of the National Board of Censorship's Advisory Council, pushed for federal regulation of the fledgling motion picture industry so that reform forces could use such technology as an instrument for "public enlightenment and moral inspiration." He envisioned an independent national board establishing standards, sending advice on definite themes to the manufacturers, and paternalistically assuming responsibility "for the protection of the defenseless, the impressionable, the abnormal, the degenerate." The board – comprised of parents, professional people, educators, social workers, settlement leaders, businessmen, and church leaders – would be "wide awake to the wholesome and developing standards of public morality" and pass them on to those who entertain the public in order to develop an entirely new art. When such methods failed or when the will of the people was nullified, the board would call upon city authorities to enforce its decisions. In this way, Cocks viewed his "inspiring experiment in democracy" more as a positive community influence than a censorship board.⁴⁸

⁴⁷"Strong Plea is Made for a National Health Bureau" *Houston Chronicle*, 10 May 1915, 10; "Sanitation Given as the Key Toward the Promotion of the Movement to Lengthen Lives of People" *Houston Daily Post*, 10 May 1915, 1; "Sociological Congress Favors National Health Department" *Houston Daily Post*, 12 May 1915, 8; "Sociologists Demand Federal Health Bureau" *Houston Chronicle*, 12 May 1915, 9.

⁴⁸Orrin G. Cocks, "Public Amusements Safeguarded for Moral Health" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 332-333, 335-338.

Some SSC orators called for greater control of certain populations to preserve public health. At Houston's Conference on Mental Health, C. A. Yoakum of the University of Texas called for state control of all mental facilities to ensure sympathetic and scientific treatment. He envisioned state facilities initiating treatment based on psychological case study, engaging in non-restraint techniques, employing more specialists, and funding a systematic plan to study the preventable phases of insanity. In the name of scientific and social efficiency, he also encouraged state mental-health workers to control the socially unfit and using hospital data determine which communities bred mental disorder. Addressing Houston's Conference of Church and Health, Rabbi George Fox of Forth Worth's Temple Beth-El similarly expressed his hope that governments and churches would require premarital health certificates to reduce the "multiplication of diseased progeny." With syphilis causing fifty percent of the country's insanity, gonorrhea producing ninety-five percent of its child blindness, and venereal disease influencing seventy-five percent of its childless marriages, Fox realized that individual states enacting patchwork policies would never eliminate root causes. Moreover, some states doing nothing would undermine those that acted. Fox therefore pleaded for a national law to control certain populations. Before New Orleans' church and the conservation of life conference, Oscar Dowling – Louisiana Board of Health president – called for a law requiring a health certificate examination limited to diseases transmissible from person to person. The legislation would protect unborn children, aid development of "a social conscience on the single standard of morals," educate the masses, recoup any expense via increased efficiency, lessen the number of community

dependents impoverished by the deaths of diseased waged earners, and perfect society one individual at a time.⁴⁹

Other SSC speakers supplanted such social control interests with an overall social justice focus. Speakers were especially concerned with bettering the lives of working women and their children. Speaking at the SSC's Public Health Conference in Houston, Mrs. Minnie U. Rutherford of Arkansas – suffrage proponent and WCTU representative – reckoned that the state's chief concern was the preservation of mothers' health as a matter of social efficiency. Women overburdened with the feeble-minded, underdeveloped, and socially incompetent had little time to teach and develop their “normal” children. Moreover, with women comprising twenty-five percent of the wage earning class (forty-seven percent of whom earned only \$2 less than the lowest living weekly \$8 wage) not surprisingly one-sixth of all children lived in tenements and died before reaching their first birthday. Rutherford's proposed remedy involved strengthening state minimum wage laws, enfranchising mothers to secure the health of children, supplying mothers with pensions, prohibiting liquor traffic to reduce feeble mindedness, and expanding quality public education. In Houston, Mary Geary – Professor of Domestic Economy at the University of Texas – also stressed the relationship between child nutrition and societal efficiency. Because breast-fed infants and well-nourished children had higher survival rates and contributed positively to the

⁴⁹C. A. Yoakum, “Insane Asylums as Destroyers and Restorers of Health” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 364-372; George Fox, “Why State and Church Should Require Health Certificates Before Marriage” in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 159-164; Oscar Dowling, “The Marriage Health Certificate,” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 111-113.

economy, Geary advocated a greater number of milk stations guaranteeing clean affordable milk and European-style school meals programs. Speaking to Houston's health of children conference, Ms. C. A. Waterfield of Tennessee also imagined a more Europeanized United States, providing mothers with training and guaranteed salaries for working women, thereby ensuring access to nurses, nourishing food, nurseries, free milk dispensaries, and meals to nursing moms. Questioning the efficiency of a patchwork social welfare network dependent on churches, individuals, benevolent organizations, boards of health, and municipalities, she also called for increased government intervention via medical inspections of schools, more board certified nurses instructing mothers about infectious diseases and unsanitary conditions, and greater regulation of mid-wives who were mostly "foreign born and ignorant." The current state obsessed with its taxable lands, money-making interests, cattle, and industries must necessarily explain why "a growing power-possessing young population" was not a greater asset.⁵⁰

SSC speakers' interests in governmental intervention and centralization foreshadowed an overall refocus of organizational priorities. At the 1917, 1918, 1919 and 1920 conventions in Blue Ridge, Birmingham, Knoxville, and Washington respectively, the SSC became less concerned with southern issues defined by regional exigencies and more consumed with national concerns, especially war.

The organization's Houston plan and accompanying health crusade also hastened

⁵⁰Mary Geary, "Relation of Nutrition to Public Health" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 340-349; Minnie U. Rutherford, "The Conservation of the Health of Mothers, A Primary Responsibility of the State" in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 153-157; Mrs. C. A. Waterfield, "The Conservation of the Health of Children – A State Privilege and Asset." in *The New Chivalry*, ed. McCulloch, 191-199.

the SSC's national focus. At the SSC's second health congress in New Orleans, the general program included representatives from national public health organization such as the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the National Playground Association, the U. S. Public Health Service, the Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality, the National Housing Association, and the Federal Children's Bureau. Clearly, the SSC's new public health emphasis, along with its accompanying demands for results-based action on a grander scale, increased the organization's national status, added major elements to its network of organizations with similar agendas, and synthesized its social justice and efficiency interests.⁵¹

Intent on developing a South-wide public health program, the SSC executive committee created the "Houston Plan" as a model for improving health in delegates' cities. First and foremost, the new thrust embodied a shift in overall tone. Governors, college presidents, educators, social workers and ministers no longer met in mere sessions to talk, but in "rallies, positive and enthusiastic mass meetings planned to give impetus to great movements of vital importance." Filled with the spirit of public health, delegates would then rouse their own communities to work harder for programs in "matters of health and better living" and adopt the Houston plan as soon as feasible.⁵²

⁵¹Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 66.

⁵²"Health Crusade in South to be Planned in Houston," *Houston Chronicle*, 8 May 1915, 1; "Cost of Disease on the South," *Houston Chronicle*, 7 May 1915, 14; "Disease is a Crime When it Can be Prevented say Health Speakers." *Houston Chronicle*, 9 May 1915, 1; "Sociological Congress Will Be Welcomed Saturday Night" *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 8; "Sociological Congress in Session in Houston" *Houston Daily Post*, 9 May 1915, 15.

Focusing first on religion's role in southern communities, the program began Sunday morning with laymen occupying pulpits and preaching health messages. Sunday afternoon at three o'clock found Houston's Sunday School children and young people's societies attending a mass meeting at the city auditorium where speakers considered health subjects. That evening, all the city's churches gathered for a mass meeting that combined an enthusiastic rally with a study session on health questions.⁵³

Monday found delegates engaged in a whirlwind of community activity. Participants met that morning in "health institutes" at Houston's First Baptist, First Methodist, and First Presbyterian Churches. These "Moral Health," "Public Health," and "Health of Children" conferences culminated with a public address at 11 o'clock. That afternoon schools closed for the automobile parade that formed at Houston's federal building. Led by a squad of mounted police and the municipal band carrying banners reading "Wealth, not filth; health, not filth" and "The new chivalry, health!" automobiles provided by the Chamber of Commerce and private citizens traversed the downtown streets carrying Mayor Ben Campbell, health board and civic club representatives, and SSC officers. Later that evening, public school pupils, various educational institutions, college students, and social service agencies held a mass meeting to consider the health of children while a smaller citizens meeting studied and adopted plans for improving community health. The Tuesday morning conferences on "Health and Race Relations,"

⁵³"Disease is a Crime When it Can be Prevented say Health Speakers." *Houston Chronicle*, 9 May 1915, 1; "Sociological Congress Will Be Welcomed Saturday Night" *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 8; "Sociological Congress in Session in Houston" *Houston Daily Post*, 9 May 1915, 15.

“Church and Health” and “Mental Health” – which met respectively at the First Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist Churches – closed the Houston gathering and rounded out the Houston Plan.⁵⁴

Prior to departing Houston, SSC Executive Secretary James E. McCulloch announced that “a continuation committee of citizens to work with and through existing organizations for health” had been left behind to draft a working model for a community health crusade which would be sent to every significant southern city. Their product was an immediate four-year public health crusade that included community health surveys and an initiative to produce “a clear translation and a full exposition” of disease conditions and health processes in the South and nation. The Church played a key role in the operation touted as “a campaign of obligation and opportunity, civic, economic, and religious, for the conservation of health--physical, mental and moral.” By April 1916, at the massive New Orleans health congress with its six hundred delegates, the campaign had morphed into a community extension service, replete with surveys, exhibits, and promotions, eager to engage a dozen smaller cities throughout the South. The health plan honed in Houston would now be transported throughout the region.⁵⁵

Following James E. McCulloch’s and Gus Dyer’s preliminary discussions with a

⁵⁴“Disease is a Crime When it Can be Prevented say Health Speakers.” *Houston Chronicle*, 9 May 1915, 1; “Sociological Congress Will Be Welcomed Saturday Night” *Houston Daily Post*, 8 May 1915, 8; “Sociological Congress in Session in Houston” *Houston Daily Post*, 9 May 1915, 15; “Health Message From the Grave Heard by Sociologists” *Houston Chronicle*, 10 May 1915, 1; “Governor Mann is Not Coming” *Houston Daily Post*, 7 May 1915, 7.

⁵⁵James E. McCulloch, ed., *The New Chivalry*, 459-460, 460-462; “Conferences,” Survey, 34 (May 1, 1915), 251-250.

local committee of one hundred and the formation of local survey, exhibit, entertainment, membership, publicity, and Sunday service committees, the SSC launched its first extension campaign in Columbia, Tennessee in 1916. The three day program, held between the evenings of Friday, June 23, and Monday, June 26, became standard for succeeding health visits. Representatives from state and national agencies – Dr. W. H. Slingerland of the Russell Sage Foundation, Secretary C. C. Menzler of the Tennessee State Board of Charities, Director H. H. Hibbs of Nashville’s Interchurch Summer School of Philanthropy, Dr. Albert J. Read of the Battle Creek Foundation for Race Betterment, Dr. Vincent Kuhn of the Tennessee Anti-Tuberculosis Association, and SSC Secretary James E. McCulloch – lectured daily on child welfare, public health, prison reform, and other social service and community welfare issues at Columbia High School’s new auditorium.

Several activities comprised the four day event. Although the *Forward* reported “record-breaking crowds” gathered at the many meetings, Columbia’s *Daily Herald* observed only a small number of citizens at Friday’s opening. On Saturday, the SSC sponsored an all-day meeting where the local entertainment committee’s community dinner attracted a slightly larger audience. Lamenting the small number of people participating, the *Daily Herald* nonetheless deemed the dinner a huge success. Observers praised the “Better Babies Day” where children, after thorough physical and mental examinations, were awarded honors. With each gathering gaining greater numbers, Sunday found the high school auditorium packed for that evening’s mass meeting.

The campaign involved more than just scheduled events. Twenty-six local

committees investigated education, sanitation, religion, crime, immorality, disease, and poverty in the community. SSC officers also displayed a health and social welfare exhibit that incorporated information on public health, housing, child welfare, and temperance, while the Tennessee State Department of Food and Drugs, the state Anti-Tuberculosis Association, and the Battle Creek Race Betterment Foundation fielded their own presentations. On the final night of the campaign, eighty Columbian Congress members convened to adopt a program that would attempt to alleviate the problems revealed by the survey. Officers were then elected to ensure the program's execution.

Despite the relatively low participation at Columbia, the SSC initiated further health conferences in the fall and winter of 1916. With sociologist W. C. Headrick of Nashville as the SSC's extension secretary, the new campaign started in Winston-Salem and concluded in Chattanooga.⁵⁶

The SSC's new periodical, *Forward*, reported on the fall's new campaign. In January 1916, Georgia State Normal School professor Frederick A. Merrill of Athens changed the name of his *Education Monthly* to *Progress: A National Journal of Education, Industry, and Social Service*, a name he considered more fully descriptive of

⁵⁶Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 72-75; "Office Talk," *Forward*, I (July, 1916), 38-39; "Final Plans for Coming Congress," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 9 June 1916, 1; "Splendid Meeting General Committee on Coming Congress," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 10 June 1916, 1; "Coming Congress to Meet at High School Building," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 15 June 1916, 1; "Lack of Attendance only Drawback for Welfare Conference," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 24 June 1916, 1; "Auditorium Packed to Hear Problems of Life Disclosed," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 26 June 1916, 1; "Local Secretary Fry Says Congress Has Scored Success," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 26 June 1916, 2; "Business Section of Local Extension Selects Officers," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 27 June 1916, ; "Office Talk," *Forward*, 1 (September-October, 1916), 37; "The Extension Campaign," *Forward*, 1 (January-February, 1916), 2.

the periodical's mission. Concomitantly, *Progress* became the official mouthpiece for the Conference for Education and Industry in the South, the Southern Summer School of Social Service in Nashville, and the Southern Sociological Congress. J. E. McCulloch, W.D. Weatherford, and secretaries of the other reform organizations were installed as associate editors and their members began receiving the journal. By May 1916, Merrill, calling for a southern social service journal that bypassed northern editorial opinions, negotiated a merger of *Progress* with the SSC's new bimonthly, *Forward*. Keeping the latter's name, the new journal – subtitled “Health, Justice, Cooperation” – disseminated the health crusade's accomplishments throughout the South.⁵⁷

Leaving Nashville on September 18, 1916, the campaign visited ten southern cities in two months. Traveling in a customized Pullman car capable of carrying nineteen passengers and every exhibit, twelve workers and speakers arrived in Winston-Salem the following day. Between September 19 and December 16, the group worked in Farmville, Petersburg, and Hopewell, Virginia; Charlotte, North Carolina; Rock Hill, Spartanburg, Greenville, and Seneca, South Carolina; and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Almost immediately after arrival in each locale, SSC staff united that town's religious forces “in an invitation” who then appointed an organization committee. The organization committee named an executive committee of fifteen who coordinated a general committee of one hundred. The general committee located suitable buildings for the welfare exhibit, venues for meetings, and cooperated with SSC staff in conducting

⁵⁷Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 70-72; “New Orleans Conferences,” *Progress*, 2 (May, 1916), 202, 204; *Progress*, 2 (February, 1916), 54, 60.

campaign work. No financial commitment was made at any step of the process. SSC staff only requested that locals conduct a membership campaign and carry out all final recommendations. In each city, the twelve staffers organized a study of social and civic conditions, conducted public meetings, and displayed the same health and social welfare exhibits on public health, housing, child welfare, temperance, pure food and drugs, racial betterment, and tuberculosis used in the earlier campaign. SSC staff in conjunction with local committees then submitted a community development program that made specific recommendations concerning the protection of food and water supplies, the improvement of housing conditions, waste disposal, abolishing surface toilets, improving working conditions, building more playgrounds and parks, and suppressing vice.⁵⁸

Much like the earlier Columbia campaign, the Chattanooga program illustrated this modified approach. Events began with a mass meeting at Pilgrim Congregational Church on Sunday, December 10, where Mayor Jesse Littleton emphasized his city's cooperative spirit after which Gus Dyer and James E. McCulloch detailed the program. SSC staff also spoke that morning at city churches.

The SSC conducted a week long Chattanooga campaign that included community meetings, a comprehensive public survey, and a health exhibit. Somewhat mimicking the Men and Religion Forward movement, SSC members held nightly revival-like general meetings and more specialized daily meetings in local homes. With only fifty at Wednesday evening's meeting and thirty-five comprising another night's assembly, the

⁵⁸Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 74-77; "Office Talk," *Forward*, 1 (September-October, 1916), 37; "The Extension Campaign," *Forward*, 1 (January-February, 1917), 2; "Office Talk," *Forward*, 1 (January-February, 1917), 37.

Chattanooga Times observed that participants primarily discussed low attendance. Chattanoogaans seemed more interested in the health exhibit which attracted 1,700 on opening day. The health survey also elicited significant interest.

Seeking information for their comprehensive public health survey, SSC staff members administered physical examinations and canvassed schools, penal institutions, hospitals, charity organizations, neighborhoods, and factories. The information was incorporated in a report presented to the community at the final meeting and published in city papers. It criticized the fee system used by Chattanooga jails, substandard public sanitation, horrendous housing for the poor, and the inadequate lighting and heating found in public schools. The study suggested the creation of a board to evaluate individual charities' worth and stressed community action to improve factory districts. The local press embraced the SSC's suggestions, emphasizing that the community would benefit only if the recommendations were implemented fully.⁵⁹

Although SSC forces hoped to visit another thirty-five small southern cities between January and June 1917, publications failed to report that campaign's nature and scope. With no publication, not even the SSC's own *Forward*, detailing any subsequent

⁵⁹Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 77-79; "Tells How to Prolong Life," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, 12 December 1916, 12; "To Organize Society Here," *The Daily Times*, 13 December 1916, 12; "First Aid to Childhood," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, 14 December 1916, 12; "Plan An Open Forum for Social Service," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, 13 December 1916, 12; "Sociologists Find Defects," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, 13 December 1916, 12; "Officials and Fee System," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, 13 December 1916, 12.

crusades, any 1917 campaign was limited at best.⁶⁰

The 1916 extension campaign represented the acme of the SSC's public health focus. In towns from Columbia to Chattanooga, speakers implemented the language and social theology of the meetings, organizing entire communities to address problems of education, sanitation, religion, crime, immorality, disease, and poverty. They also formulated survey-based community development programs that recommended realistic improvements. In the summer and fall of 1916, the SSC placed action over rhetoric. The change was short-lived.

Ultimately envisioned as a southern, social gospel, interracial organization, the 1915 Houston convention began the SSC's evolution into a national, progressive, efficiency-oriented, public health entity. In the wake of the second health congress at New Orleans, the SSC relocated its headquarters from Nashville to Washington, D.C. in the fall of 1916 and entered its third and final iteration. Having coopted militaristic language to conquer regional public health issues, the SSC would now focus on wartime social issues, reviewing all priorities through that lens for the 1917, 1918, and 1919

⁶⁰Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 72-75; "Office Talk," *Forward*, 1 (July, 1916), 38-39; "Final Plans for Coming Congress," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 9 June 1916, 1; "Splendid Meeting General Committee on Coming Congress," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 10 June 1916, 1; "Coming Congress to Meet at High School Building," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 15 June 1916, 1; "Lack of Attendance only Drawback for Welfare Conference," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 24 June 1916, 1; "Auditorium Packed to Hear Problems of Life Disclosed," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 26 June 1916, 1; "Local Secretary Fry Says Congress Has Scored Success," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 26 June 1916, 2; "Business Section of Local Extension Selects Officers," *Columbia Daily Herald*, 27 June 1916, ; "Office Talk," *Forward*, I (September-October, 1916), 37; "The Extension Campaign," *Forward*, I (January-February, 1916), 2.

conventions.⁶¹

⁶¹Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 80-81; "Jottings" *Forward*, II (September-October, 1916), 37; "Jottings," *Survey* 37 (March 17, 1917), 703; "Social Problems of the Southland," *Survey*, 38 (August, 11, 1917), 428.

CHAPTER SIX

FIGHTING THE WAR AND WINNING THE PEACE: SECURING DEMOCRACY AND NATIONALIZING THE GOSPEL AT THE 1917 BLUE RIDGE, 1918 BIRMINGHAM, AND 1919 KNOXVILLE CONFERENCES

Sitting in the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly's beautiful Robert E. Lee Hall overlooking the Swannanoa River, delegates to the 1917 Southern Sociological Congress convention heard familiar social gospel themes. With the *Southern Workman* reporting that ministers and former clergy were better represented at Blue Ridge than at any previous convention, Richard Carroll – African American Baptist minister; founder of the Columbia, South Carolina's Industrial Home for Boys and Girls; and former editor of the *The Southern Ploughman* – startled no one when he encouraged white southern ministers to promote social service evangelism among black ministers, thereby hastening the South's social salvation. African Methodist Episcopal Zion Bishop George W. Clinton followed, urging churches to emphasize the "New Negro's" progress and to promote racial harmony despite unspeakable barbarities. Both men's concerns expressed the social gospel-inspired interracial spirit that had dominated the Southern Social Congress since its 1913 Atlanta convention.

The 1917, 1918, and 1919 Blue Ridge, Birmingham, and Knoxville conventions respectively resembled previous gatherings with some speakers motivated by social

Christianity emphasizing themes of interconnectedness, social salvation, the imminent kingdom, and interracial cooperation. They also championed economic efficiency and government intervention that defined the Houston and New Orleans meetings. But with the United States entering the European conflict four months prior to the SSC's Blue Ridge opening on 30 July 1917, speakers recast these previous themes. That was even more true of the Birmingham meeting in April 1918, where an attendee commented that "the consciousness of the war was in the background of every meeting, and every speaker spoke with peculiar earnestness because of the pressure of war needs." Blue Ridge's "Council of War," Birmingham's "Win-the-War Campaign," and Knoxville's "Reconstruction Conference" hailed wartime and post-war social work, a new age of democracy initiated by war, Church and society roles in undermining Bolshevism, and a new era of race relations induced by the sacrifices of African American troops. As they shifted their focus to winning the war and securing the peace, SSC speakers increasingly infused their theological tenets with nationalistic motivations and goals. Between 1917 and 1919, convention oratory depicted social work and the conservation of health a greater patriotic duty than Christian responsibility. They also regarded national bureaucratic programs preferable to Christian social service, opined that military might instead of ecclesial efforts would more likely secure a kingdom-like society, viewed the new democracy as a more desirable goal than the Kingdom of God, and esteemed blood shed by brothers on the battlefield as important as human interconnectedness.¹

¹Elwood Street, "Southern Social Problems," *Southern Workman* 46 (September, 1917), 475-477; Charles Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 81-82; "A Survey of Southern Problems," *Survey* 40 (May 11, 1918):163; Grantham, *Southern*

Like the 1915 and 1916 health congresses, the war congresses reoriented departmental conferences to reflect the SSC's new direction. New Orleans' eleven conferences were reformulated into ten. The "Race Relations," "Traveler's Aid," "Temperance and Industrial Relations," "Home and Industrial Relations," "Public Health and Temperance," "Church and Social Service," "Administration of Law and Prison Reform," and "Juvenile Life, Country and City" departments reflected established interests. The newly formed "Social Work in War Times" and "Community's Duty to the Man in Uniform" conferences reflected new, wartime social realities.²

SSC speakers considered social work a moral force countering wartime and immediate postwar social ills of liquor, prostitution, and venereal disease. Public health orators at Houston and New Orleans had called for a figurative and expansive war against poor sanitation, deplorable health care, lackluster educational opportunities, and preventable diseases such as typhoid, tuberculosis, malaria, and hookworm in order to conserve health and ultimately secure economic efficiency. Blue Ridge and Birmingham speakers were more concerned with winning a literal war.

Wartime speakers urged churches and communities to focus on eliminating sources of inefficiency that undermined wartime victory and postwar peace. Specifically, SSC participants – like those of other southern social agencies – focused on

Progressivism, 310-318; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 390.

²"Social Problems of the Southland," Survey 38 (August 11, 1917), 427-428; "Congress of Social Workers featured by Splendid Talks and Local Results" *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 16 April 1918, 5, 8; "Bishop Bratton Elected President of Southern Sociological Congress" *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 17 April 1918, 3.

the needs of servicemen, their families, and their communities. In doing so, they revealed their desire to control social forces and maintain traditional values. At Blue Ridge, Reverend Worth M. Tippy of the Federal Council of Churches' church and social service commission called on congregations to assist YMCA military training camp work and denominational agencies to support congregant soldiers. Reverend Kirkland Finlay of Columbia, South Carolina, asked churches to provide social centers and recreation rooms as alternatives to saloons, brothels, and other dens of iniquity. Soldiers visiting such establishments were not depraved, Finlay insisted, but bored by wartime drudgery which replaced the restraining influences of home. Dr. Paul B. Johnson of Washington, D.C., American Hygiene Association representative, considered the American soldier an average American boy away from home, "plus the uniform" and "the crowd spirit." He urged communities near training camps to augment ecclesiastical efforts, offer soldiers alternative amusements, protect the virtue of town girls, and eliminate prostitutes.³

At Birmingham, Dr. C. W. Stiles of the U.S. Public Health Service further elaborated on churches' and communities' roles in eliminating sources of inefficiency. More than his Blue Ridge colleagues, Stiles' speech oozed nationalism. He proclaimed public health a patriotic duty and declared that any act interfering with public health, especially the health of soldiers, was consciously or unconsciously unpatriotic and pro-German. Stiles had special contempt for any unnecessary personal or community illness caused through carelessness or penuriousness demonstrated disloyalty.

Stiles spoke intently about the tuberculosis problem, the privy problem and its

³ "Social Problems of the Southland," Survey 38 (August 11, 1917), 427- 428.

connection to typhoid, and churches' responsibility for its eradication. He targeted venereal disease as the community's single greatest health problem and posited comprehensive public health plans as permanent solutions. Recalling the 1916 health extension campaign, these plans would be helmed by full-time health officers removed from political infighting and accountable to independent Boards of Health. Stiles proposed linking community health with public education, suggesting that Boards of Health include school superintendents among their members while Boards of Education similarly incorporate health officers. Among the many responsibilities of the properly funded health officer such as ensuring proper sanitation of homes, food, stores, schools, and churches; undertaking medical inspection of all school children; coordinating health and educational agency efforts; and consulting with road, sewer, and civil engineers to keep down mosquitoes – Stiles emphasized cooperating with police to suppress prostitution, establishing institutions to provide free diagnosis and treatment of venereal diseases, and developing plans to limit their spread. Like his Health Congress predecessors, Stiles rooted his proposals in the need for societal efficiency. Unlike those same delegates who decried war as the supreme example of economic inefficiency that wasted capital, inflated prices, reduced consumption, lowered production, hiked taxes, undermined health, blocked education, ignored the commonweal, and usurped prosperity, Stiles demanded increased efficiency – especially as it pertained to public health – to win a war. His attitude exemplified a shift in SSC delegates' priorities that continued after

the war.⁴

In Knoxville, delegates called for postwar governmental intervention to expand wartime social welfare successes and, thus, win the peace. In mobilizing American society to win the war, governments had expanded their reach to eliminate disease, preach social morality, and bureaucratize the public health apparatus. Speakers insisted that post-war governments expand these efforts while applying lessons gleaned from massive militarization. Frank H. Gardner, a United States Health Service official, observed that the government had engaged in two conflicts: one to suppress autocracy abroad and another, still ongoing, to eliminate devitalizing forces that destroyed the efficiency and virility of American soldiers and citizens. Before the war, knowledge of venereal diseases had been confined to the medical profession and a few social workers; the issue took center stage with the war's outbreak.

Fully cognizant of the war's comprehensive inhumanity, Gardner nevertheless perceived its benefits. In the name of military preparedness, intervening governmental institutions established bureaucracies that treated venereal disease during and after the war. Gardner considered the draft supremely beneficial for those 80,000 infected inductees, many of whom had never seen a physician. He also praised the U.S. Congress' Chamberlain Kahn Act passed in July 1918 as part of the 1919 Army

⁴C.W. Stiles, "A Community Program for Public Health," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 76-79; "Full Programme of Sociological Congress, Which Opens April 14" *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 10 April 1918, 5; "Sociologists Will Gather Sunday In Three Day Session," *Birmingham News*, 12 April 1918, 2; "Public Health is Being Discussed by Sociologists," *Birmingham News*, 15 April 1918.

Appropriation. Among its provisions, it established the Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board – consisting of the Secretaries of War, Navy, and Treasury, as well as the Surgeon-Generals of the Army, Navy, and Public Health Service – that initiated a program of prompt treatment for infected soldiers; legally suppressed prostitution; provided servicemen with wholesome recreational opportunities; and instituted sex education classes stressing the dangers of venereal disease. It also instructed the newly established Venereal Disease Division of the United States Public Health Service to investigate the causes, treatments, and prevention of venereal disease; cooperate with state boards of health to control these viruses; and prevent their spread between state populations. The law allotted one million dollars per annum for two consecutive years to the various state health organizations for the prevention, control, and treatment of venereal diseases.

Gardner further pushed governments and churches to enact expansive palliative and preventive policies. Public health authorities should establish free treatment clinics that disseminated prevention literature, social service workers and community nurses, and serve as clearinghouses caring for the poorer “irresponsible class” of patients judged responsible for the health crisis. Agreeing with voices deeming venereal disease mainly a moral issue, Gardner also called the Church to stand as a “bulwark of social morality and personal purity” against vice and prostitution. He also recalled earlier socially-minded SSC speakers who emphasized interconnectedness when addressing the racial component of venereal disease. With seventy percent of all African American draftees infected, Garner was concerned that blacks could transmit venereal disease to white

employers and their families. His call to ecclesiastical action, however, sounded like an afterthought. It occupied barely a paragraph and was devoid of any overt social gospel references. Like C. W. Stiles, Gardner's crusade to eliminate the venereal scourge was informed primarily by a desire for optimal efficiency.⁵

Philander P. Claxton, U.S. Commissioner of Education and former University of Tennessee professor, insisted that health education, *the* key social work component, determined economic efficiency. Just as education produced children more likely to experience the nation's "rich heritage of opportunity," superior education – fostered by governments coordinating health campaigns and enforcing health regulations – yielded healthier children better prepared for responsible citizenship and economic improvement. With an average infant mortality rate of three hundred thousand babies per year, Claxton predicted reduced economic growth, impeded citizenship, and hampered industrial progress unless government increased access to preventative health education. He advocated physical education guaranteeing children the "proper bodily and mental equipment" to carry out their learned principles and supported a pending U.S. Senate bill that provided an additional \$20 million for health education.

International affairs informed Claxton's comprehensive educational vision. The country had emerged from isolation to occupy an historically unprecedented position of world leadership. President Wilson had been charged with untangling the threads of

⁵Frank H. Gardner, "The Government's War on Venereal Diseases," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 86-94; "Dixie Sociological Congress Convenes in Knoxville Sunday," *Knoxville Sentinel* 10 May 1919; "Judge D. C. Webb of Knoxville is Vice President" *Knoxville Sentinel* 14 May 1919, 1.

international justice and law. Now a creditor nation with unprecedented position, the U.S. was poised to become the world's greatest commercial force. Educational problems should therefore be considered in the broadest light. Claxton insisted that education, not just disease eradication, ensured optimal economic efficiency that, in concert with military might, assured democracy's triumph over autocracy. Blue Ridge, Birmingham, and Knoxville speakers further explored such issues.⁶

Addressing the 1917 Confederate Veterans' reunion, Woodrow Wilson reminded attendees that this one united nation, great in spirit and in purpose, could be "an instrument in the hands of God to see that liberty is made secure for mankind." SSC speakers likewise considered the Great War a holy crusade pitting democracy against autocracy. At Birmingham's Lyric Theater, Dr. Stockton Axson – Secretary of the American Red Cross and President Wilson's brother-in-law – observed that the world's masses chose democracy over autocracy, fully aware that the choice would exact armed conflict. Axson painfully comprehended the theological paradox of killing for freedom: "Surely God must either laugh or weep" at this fight for humanity, fight for democracy, fight to end war for all time. Other orators added like-minded theological assertions about the Great War.⁷

⁶"Judge D. C. Webb of Knoxville is Vice President," *Knoxville Sentinel* 14 May 1919, 1.

⁷Stockton Axson, "America's Answer to the German Challenge," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 54, 56, 60, 62; "Brilliant Talks Feature Session of Sociologists," *Birmingham News*, 15 April 1918, 7; "Full Programme of Sociological Congress, Which Opens April 14" *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 10 April 1918, 5; "Sociologists Will Gather Sunday In Three Day Session," *Birmingham News*, 12 April 1918, 2; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 310-318; Link, *The Paradox of Southern*

Outlining “The Moral Basis of Permanent Peace” at Birmingham, Dr. Frederick Lynch – Secretary of the Church Peace League of America and editor of *Christian Work* – opined that the war’s declaration was unprecedented for placing the service of humanity foremost. It sought neither territorial gain nor revenge and, with its moral, ethical, and religious aims, marked a great civilized step forward by attempting to establish worldwide democracy, especially for those oppressed by authoritarianism.

Lynch spiritualized democracy while militarizing social gospel tenets to justify the war’s goals. He deemed democracy a “religious thing” originating with Jesus Christ and the idea that every human soul had worth as a child of God. He de-emphasized the monarchical facets of the kingdom: Christianity began as a democracy of equal souls in the kingdom of God and in such democracy lay the peace of the world. Patriarchal interconnectedness demanded sacrifices for the right of small and weak nations to live free from “fear of dictation, domination, or invasion,” no longer mere pawns moved about the map. Only a righteous peace anchored by a united League of Nations committed to peaceful dispute resolution would secure these rights. Lynch’s version of the league was simply brotherhood, defined by cooperation, good will, mutual service, applied to nations as Christianity had applied those principles to individuals. Such actions placed the kingdom of righteousness above the selfishness of nationalism. Whereas an ethical double standard – “Christian for individuals, pagan for nations” – had defined past international policies, the war would secure “the gospel of nations,” a Christian standard of conduct between nations similar to that observed between righteous

Progressivism, 388.

men.⁸

Also at Birmingham, Charles MacFarland – the Federal Council of Churches General Secretary – similarly depicted the war as a moral and spiritual conflict between “the sword of autocracy” and the spiritual weapons of democracy. Like Christ, the United States faced the holy city and with God’s grace would “steadfastly set its face to go to Jerusalem,” fulfill its calling, and establish the peace of Jesus. Having exhausted every means known to avoid armed conflict, the nation had been forced into a utilitarian defensive war sanctioned by Christian conscience and dedicated to establishing justice and righteousness. In sharp contrast, the Imperial state of Germany had historically embraced physical warfare “as the very sacrament of spiritual reality” in its literature, philosophy, and preaching. It was a country creating a new Beatitudes, a place where the meek would serve the mighty and the strong would prey upon the weak. Echoing Lynch, MacFarland insisted that as a Christian nation the United States had no choice but to fight the Kaiser; seek the reconstruction of international institutions upon the basis of justice through peaceful arbitration and as a practical measure toward greater freedom for all peoples; and help establish a League of Nations. A socialized Christianity that had emphasized society’s salvation and the hastening of God’s commonwealth could not imagine accomplishing these goals absent a war to end all wars and a peace that

⁸Frederick Lynch, “The Moral Aims of the War,” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 73-76; “Win-The-War Meet of Social Workers Considered Best Session Ever Held” *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 18 April 1918, 5, 10; “Full Programme of Sociological Congress, Which Opens April 14” *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 10 April 1918, 5; “Sociologists Will Gather Sunday In Three Day Session,” *Birmingham News*, 12 April 1918, 2.

recreated the international order as a new Zion.⁹

Frank Morrison of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) glimpsed elements of this anticipated millennial moment already beginning to form. Before a Birmingham general session, Morrison insisted that organized labor more than any other element of national life understood the value of freedom and democracy and would continue to protest against autocracy, be it political or industrial, international or domestic. The guarantees of human conservation should be recognized in war as well as in peace. Morrison acknowledged trade union support for the Wilson administration but warned employers against using the war “to establish principles of peonage.” The old order was undergoing a radical change, a change which would have a far-reaching effect on the world’s laboring men and women. Time tested exploitative tactics would prove ineffective and ultimately undermine industry. Facilitated by the union movement, laborers had convinced the world’s collective conscience that builders of houses deserved as much honor as builders of poems; honest and conscientious men digging streets earned as much dignity as industry leaders driving automobiles in those streets; women cooking and serving palatable and wholesome meals from clean kitchens deserved as much respect as women gracing drawing rooms with their music. The coming triumphant peace would enshrine such judgements. A new day of social justice

⁹Charles Macfarland, “The Moral Causes of the War,” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 64-67, 72; “Full Programme of Sociological Congress, Which Opens April 14” *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 10 April 1918, 5; “Sociologists Will Gather Sunday In Three Day Session,” *Birmingham News*, 12 April 1918, 2; “Brilliant Talks Feature Session of Sociologists,” *Birmingham News*, 15 April 1918, 7; “Patriotism Marks Opening Session of Sociological Congress” *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 15 April 1918, 5, 15.

and increased opportunity for the laboring masses would accompany the cessation of hostilities and post-war democracy.¹⁰

Speaking at Knoxville's closing general session, Hastings H. Hart – Child Welfare Director of the Russell Sage Foundation – recalled a South never fully recovered from the economic depression caused by the Civil War. That era found colleges and universities underfunded, public school systems deficient in schoolhouses, teachers, and equipment, a wide gulf between educational expenditures for black and white children, large numbers of southern farmers dependent upon a single crop and indebted for the current season's supplies, appalling housing conditions for the poorest, poorly-organized juvenile reformatories and orphanages, sub-standard charities, widespread poverty, and rampant child labor. But in the present Hart believed he was witnessing the rise of a truly reconstructed and democratic South, outlining the war's positive contributions to southern economic and social conditions. Government expenditures in the form of hospitals, roads, ships, and military supplies had raised average daily wages while increased wartime demand lifted prices for cotton, tobacco, horses, mules, and other farm products. Concomitantly, military examinations of volunteers exposed the prevalence of preventable physical diseases and social maladies while soliciting governments to mitigate substandard social conditions and reorganize social institutions.

¹⁰Frank Morrison, "Labor's Challenge to Democracy," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 229-231; 234; "Full Programme of Sociological Congress, Which Opens April 14" *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 10 April 1918, 5; "Sociologists Will Gather Sunday In Three Day Session," *Birmingham News*, 12 April 1918, 2; "Win-The-War Meet of Social Workers Considered Best Session Ever Held" *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 18 April 1918, 5, 10; "Frank Morrison Discusses Labor Problems Here" *Birmingham News*, 17 April 1918, 1.

Knoxville delegates contemplated a new society imbued with social justice, endowed with stronger public institutions disseminating democratic ideals, dedicated to uplifting all citizens, and devoted to undermining incipient leftist radicalism. Though seemingly similar to early millennial visions anticipating a hastened kingdom of God, this new society would instead coalesce around invigorated nationalism.

Hart already glimpsed this newest iteration of the South. Government spending spawned post-war businesses, higher wages, higher prices, more prosperity, and increased demand for improved housing, new farm buildings, new wagons and carriages, automobiles, expensive furniture, fine clothes, better food, cook stoves, household implements, and comfortable beds. Southerners also demanded that increased public revenues, resulting from the recent general prosperity, be utilized for community social obligations such as good roads, waterworks, and sewers. They also insisted on training more competent school teachers and reshaping the role of community schoolhouses.¹¹

Echoing John Dewey's observation that schools only achieve their fullest function when providing full and adequate social services for all ages and classes, Dr. Henry F. Jackson of the U.S. Bureau of Education discussed the "Practice of Citizenship" at Knoxville's opening session. Before the 1902 annual meeting of the National Educational Association, Dewey had initiated a movement envisioning public schoolhouses as centers facilitating social and intellectual activities among polyglot neighbors, maintaining social order at the community level, providing continuous

¹¹"Dixie Sociological Congress Convenes in Knoxville Sunday," *Knoxville Sentinel* 10 May 1919, 1; Hastings H. Hart, "Social Reconstruction in the South," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 49-66.

instruction to wage-earners, and acting as a “better class of settlement house” where citizens exchanged ideas and beliefs and sought reasonable forms of recreation and amusement. Jackson refocused this “social center movement,” noting that the war revealed a fundamental need to organize humanity “on juster and saner lines in the construction of a better sort of world.” As the only democratic American institution that was “non-sectarian, non-partisan, and non-exclusive,” Jackson considered the public schoolhouse the most quintessentially American institution, the most successful social enterprise yet undertaken by any nation, and the only institution furnishing a platform on which all the people could meet. He proposed that schoolhouses be used as community capitols, the central location of all democratic activity. Schools would function as community polling centers during elections, reminding voters of “the ideal which the ballot box represents.” Serving as democratic venues, schools would become politically relevant, granting educational efforts “the commanding influence in public affairs they were designed to exercise.” A by-product of political activism, schools would begin operating as intellectual clearinghouses, thus realizing Dewey’s desire to construct an improved settlement house model, where ideas were graciously exchanged and freedom of thought and expression were the norm. The school-as-forum would furnish the means for mutual understanding and create public-mindedness propelled by honesty, thereby becoming a “worthy university of the people” by creating morally good and responsible citizens.

Reminiscent of Frederick Lynch’s 1918 Birmingham address, Jackson spiritualized democracy and militarized social gospel tenets, infusing Dewey’s “social

center” ideal with hyper-nationalism. Unlike Lynch, who posited nationalistic means to achieve kingdom-like ends, and unlike Walter Rauschenbusch who eschewed American nationalism and considered democracy a subservient expression and “method” of Christianity in the political realm, Jackson utilized social Christian means to realize nationalistic ends. Jackson’s “social center” democracy embraced nationalism while bridging political, intellectual, class, and ethnic divides to create a millennial commonwealth deemed “socially integrated.”

Quoting Franklin Henry Giddings, Columbia University sociology professor, Jackson asserted that “perfect social integration” was the state’s primary purpose. But this ultimate eschaton, though steeped in religious imagery, was essentially a new nationalistic democracy, not a kingdom of God destined to redeem every nation. Although Jackson imagined his brand of “social integration” being achieved by spiritual rather than physical means, the end result was a nation with the will to be one people. If the kingdom of heaven was within, as Tolstoy had declared, so was the American Republic. Jackson considered the two as opposite sides of the same epistemological coin. The new democracy was the kingdom of God and vice versa. Schoolhouses were to function as localized temples to democracy. When schools served as polling places Jackson suggested that ballot boxes – “the symbol of our membership in America, our Ark of the Covenant” – be positioned in decorative, symbolic, altar-type displays. As intellectual clearing houses, the forum where citizens spoke truth “every man with his neighbor”(Ephesians 4:25), public schools would also replace churches as community educational hubs. Like Jackson, several Knoxville speakers wrestled with destabilizing

postwar exigencies and placed primacy on securing democracy.¹²

When the SSC convened in Knoxville between 11 May and 14 May 1919, the nation was reeling from the Red Scare's initial events. In January, newspapers and officials portrayed Seattle's five-day general strike as an IWW and Bolshevik-led plot intended to spark nationwide revolution. Motivated by growing paranoia, in February the U.S. Senate's Overman committee expanded its investigation of German wartime subversion to include Bolshevism and other anti-American radicalism. Violence replaced peaceful May Day parades in the streets of Boston, New York, and Cleveland as socialists clashed with policemen and soldiers. Throughout the spring, profiteering newspapermen sensationalized events while fearmongering politicians touting their "100 percent Americanism" capitalized on public anxiety and frenzied nationalism. Eager to undercut autocracy, defeat Bolshevism, and preserve postwar millennial democracy, several SSC speakers demanded better labor-capital relations and embraced Christian socialism.¹³

Emphasizing that human welfare was industry's "primary object," University of Oklahoma sociology professor Jerome Dowd observed that western civilization had

¹²"Dixie Sociological Congress Convenes in Knoxville Sunday," *Knoxville Sentinel* 10 May 1919, 1; Henry E. Jackson, "The Practice of Citizenship," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 31-40; John Dewey, "The School as Social Center" in *The National Educational Association Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty First Annual Meeting, Held Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 7-11, 1902* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902), 373-383; Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), 153.

¹³Lynn Dumenil and Eric Foner, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 218-222.

conspicuously progressed away from autocracy and towards freedom and democracy in the realms of industry, family, religion, and government. The war had been fought because some nations were blind to this universal trend. With victory won, Dowd perceived the new worldwide labor uprising as a continuation of the democratic revolution recently secured. Problematically, not all capitalists and progressives enthusiastically embraced labor's struggle, and Dowd knew that their attitude would determine whether this new revolution would continue peacefully or devolve into Bolshevism. He believed it was feasible to bring about a permanent peace between labor and capital by applying democratic principles to industry. Currently, the laborer held no permanent connection with any industry, had no say in management decisions, and shared only a small portion of profits. Dowd proposed that every laborer have a voice in how industry conducted business and be engaged in a true working partnership with management. Other Knoxville orators further elucidated this democratic industrial ideal.¹⁴

Robert Burns Eleazer – Secretary of the Southern Methodist Laymens's Missionary Movement, editor of *The Missionary Voice*, and future Education Director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation – rallied social gospel forces to stand with labor and vanquish the Bolshevist threat. Eleazer noted that the 1916 Methodist Episcopal Church's social creed declared in favor of "industrial democracy," the "most equitable division of the product of industry" that could ultimately be devised, and the

¹⁴Jerome Dowd, "Industrial Democracy," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 147-149.

“fullest possible cooperative ownership of industry and natural resources upon which industry depends.” Moreover, the General Conference of Canadian Methodism had more boldly demanded “nothing less that a transference of the whole economic life from a basis of competition and profits to one of cooperation and service.” If social Christianity with its prevailing emphasis on denominational social service, adoption of social creeds, proliferation of books responding to social problems, multiple human relief agencies, and demands for palliative legislation truly desired to transform society by transforming individuals, it must bring men into right relationship with God *and* with each other. These Christ-like citizens would be profoundly concerned with the salvation of men from death but also from “the living death of injustice, of oppression, of ignorance and hunger and cold and despair.” Such societal salvation required awakened congregants and their churches to demand minimum wage legislation, shorter work hours, housing reform, regulation of working conditions, anti-child labor laws, compulsory education, old-age insurance, and a sustained challenge to the anti-social and un-Christian principles of competition and exploitation. Jesus, Eleazer proclaimed, elevated men to the level of brotherhood and cooperation, not competition and conflict.

Eleazer observed that any potential Christian democratic society would be sabotaged by an American capitalism seeking to “give to others as little as possible” and to “get from others as much.” Political democracy’s recent victory would be vacuous absent economic democracy. But Eleazer shunned revolution – “a result of hopeless apathy or indifference on the part of those who by every right should lead in the crusade for social justice” – as the means of catalyzing such change. Instead he favored social

evolution “rooted in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man” as an alternative to the explosive violence that rocked revolutionary Russia. Co-opting the belief that inspired interracial harmony at the Atlanta gathering, encouraged egalitarianism at the Memphis meeting, and emphasized Christian healing at the Houston and New Orleans conventions, Eleazer fashioned it into a visionary ideal “born of the principles of Jesus, the first great democrat” that would undermine Bolshevism by establishing a Christian, democratic socialist ideal reminiscent of the millennial kingdom.¹⁵

In his Knoxville address, “The Coming Democracy: How Shall It Come?,” Dr. Worth M. Tippy of the Federal Council of Churches echoed the remarks of Eleazer by demanding the abolition of poverty, assistance to labor, equal pay, equal justice, and an evolutionary democracy that would eliminate Bolshevism’s appeal. Unlike Eleazer, Tippy was less concerned with theological tenets and justifications, focusing more on public policies and political ideology. Observing that wartime social emergencies had initiated unprecedented cooperative efforts regarding labor organization, collective bargaining, the eight-hour day, cost of living adjustments, equal pay for women, improved housing standards, social insurance, federal unemployment compensation, and increased federal regulation of capital and labor, Tippy anticipated a postwar era of large scale social action which would steadily increase in power. The aims of this new emphasis would include: abolishing poverty; more equally distributing the products of

¹⁵Robert B. Eleazer, “The Search for Social Justice,” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 149-154; Overview, Robert Burns Eleazer Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University.

common labor; improving living and work conditions; providing balanced diets; controlling vice; funding wholesome and abundant leisure recreation; democratizing education; extending democratic ideas and religious principles to religion, social life, education, industrial management, and politics; improving public administration; widening government's regulatory role to control venereal disease, provide job training, improve food production, expand conservation, ration steel and coal, restrain luxuries, and increase taxation for war emergencies; and establish permanent institutions of international cooperation.

Insisting that social change was inevitable, Tippy warned that society must choose either radical change in the form of Bolshevism or gradual change as exemplified by the British Labour Party. The former was violent, programmed, betrayed the democracies of the world, undermined the war effort, suppressed freedoms, confiscated property, murdered officials, and threatened the world with a new autocracy. The latter was progressive, evolutionary, constitutional, and "genetic." Tippy's "Coming Democracy" embraced the British model. He praised its rejection of social controls based on the class struggle and its acceptance of democratic methods built on the Christian cooperation of all classes, not "by violence but by united action in a comprehensive brotherhood." Social workers, ministers, businessmen, professionals, city officials, and laborers would jointly enforce an orderly social evolution chiefly concerned with the well-being of the masses. Although Tippy's speech was largely political in tone, it also addressed the churches.

When Reverend R.E. Vale of Knoxville's Second Presbyterian Church inquired

about the churches' role in social reconstruction, Tippy insisted they replace competing missions in needy neighborhoods with consolidated cooperative congregations; teach ministers economics as well as theology; coordinate efforts with civic, charitable, commercial, and educational agencies of the community, federal government, and national social agencies; stand in solidarity with workers; teach class cooperation in the face of class struggle; and empower the spiritual ministry of the church. But these ecclesiastical efforts were an afterthought, a small constituent part of an anticipated political transformation.

Blue Ridge, Birmingham, and Knoxville delegates imbued social gospel tenets with nationalistic concepts in their calls for autocracy's demise. Considering Christianity a democracy of equal souls in the kingdom of God, speakers consecrated the Great War as a holy crusade that would save democracy from autocracy. Interconnectedness that had previously engendered interracial harmony and interstate health crusades now justified international conflict demanding stronger nations to shed blood on behalf of terrorized weaker nations. A soteriology that had emphasized spiritual and social salvation or holistic deliverance from sinful physical sources now equated redemption with victory in battle. The concept of an evolving democracy driven by political and economic policies subsumed the anticipated kingdom of love and justice. Informed by the new democracy, SSC delegates reassessed New South interracialism and its benefit to the "New Negro."¹⁶

¹⁶Rev. Worth M. Tippy, "The Coming of Democracy – How Shall it Come?," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 11-20; "Dixie Sociological Congress Convened in Knoxville Sunday," *Knoxville Sentinel* 10 May 1919, 1.

Addressing the 1917 Blue Ridge conference, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Bishop George W. Clinton of Charlotte acknowledged the failure of his white brethren fully to recognize African Americans' changed lives, conditions, and aspirations made manifest by the Great War. There existed a New Negro resistant to anyone attempting to apply "methods employed under the old antebellum system" who was an essential part of the New South's latest incarnation. Insisting the social equality question held no rightful place in any race relations discourse "on the broad and high plane of justice and equity," Clinton refused to discuss "or even consider" it. Rather, he called for a re-evaluation of race relations in light of the war and its eventual aftermath. At Blue Ridge and Birmingham, SSC speakers understood that African Americans' wartime and home front sacrifices provided increased and justified opportunities to demand beneficial social and economic changes. Moreover, delegates viewed the Great War as a means to improve the living standards of African American soldiers eventually returning to a new society full of hope and opportunity.¹⁷

SSC wartime speakers acknowledged that African Americans' sacrifice earned them greater participation in the anticipated postwar democracy. Addressing Birmingham's race relations conference before a full capacity biracial audience at First Methodist, Bishop Theodore DuBose Bratton of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi recognized the courage of young blacks who had "gone over the top" in France alongside "the sons of the old South" to make the world safer for democracy. Bratton observed that returning black soldiers, having experienced a "world vision" that

¹⁷"Social Problems of the Southland," *Survey* 38 (August 11, 1917), 428.

justified greater enjoyment of American democracy, would demand more freedoms.¹⁸

Detailing African American wartime accomplishments, Tuskegee Institute's Monroe Work also conveyed their reasonable postwar aspirations. Because southern blacks battled in France to make the world safe for democracy and supported war efforts at home, they thought it reasonable that southern whites help them secure increased access to socioeconomic opportunity. By providing a significant source of labor fighting in Europe, African Americans had filled the worker gap, raised their standard of living, and supported the war effort with war bonds and draftees. Of the 560,000 southern blacks registered under the draft law, ninety-thousand had been called up. On the home front, southern black laborers built aviation fields, outfitted warships, constructed the \$60 million nitrate plant at Muscle Shoals, and increased industrial development in Birmingham. Urban and rural wages increased as a result, and large numbers of black workers invested their surplus money in livestock, land, and educational opportunities for their children. For example, African American communities raised \$170,000 for the Rosenwald rural school campaign, thus achieving greater levels of self-sufficiency during the war. All these accomplishments, Work observed, revealed a South that embraced a new attitude emphasizing better pay, more just treatment, sufficient protection under the law, and improved educational facilities. But Work also relayed black labor concerns, especially treatment received "from representatives of the law – policemen, constables,

¹⁸"Race Conference Attracts Crowds," *Birmingham News*, 16 April 1918, 1; "Full Programme of Sociological Congress, Which Opens April 14" *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 10 April 1918, 5; "Sociologists Will Gather Sunday In Three Day Session," *Birmingham News*, 12 April 1918, 2.

deputy sheriffs, and petty officers – men who are too free with their pistols.” African Americans’ “natural desire” was to remain in the South, he observed, but recurrent injustices could drive them northward to join brethren taking full advantage of that region’s increased social, economic, and political opportunities.¹⁹

In 1916, four hundred thousand African Americans migrated northward. Comprehending the potential socioeconomic impact of continuing African American out-migration, SSC speakers demanded improvements to stanch the exodus. In 1917, delegates to the Blue Ridge convention dedicated the closing session in Asheville to race relations, specifically the newly developed “great migration”. Understanding that black migration was largely caused by high northern wages combined with ill treatment in the South, speakers insisted that increased interracial cooperation ensuring fair opportunity and increased socioeconomic opportunities would slow if not end departures. Fisk University’s George E. Haynes observed that the migration was simply an acceleration of a thirty-year trend and that most migrants were fleeing from places exhibiting the greatest racial friction and the poorest economic opportunities. The flow would slow only when blacks and whites “talk frankly and act honestly in common.”²⁰

¹⁹ “Full Programme of Sociological Congress, Which Opens April 14” *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 10 April 1918, 5; “Sociologists Will Gather Sunday In Three Day Session,” *Birmingham News*, 12 April 1918, 2; “Congress of Social Workers featured by Splendid Talks and Local Results” *Birmingham Age-Herald*, 16 April 1918, 5, 8;

²⁰ “Social Problems of the Southland,” *Survey* 38 (August 11, 1917), 428; “A Survey of Southern Social Problems,” *Survey* 40 (May 11, 1917), 163-164; Carole Marks, *Farewell – We’re Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 1; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 390.

Bishop George W. Clinton was more specific with his assessment, listing migration's multiple causes. Primarily, the two races failed to understand one another. Contrary to the popular opinion that southern white men understood African Americans, Clinton knew that white men regardless of region neither comprehended the black experience nor expended much effort to do so. In fact, prior to the SSC's inauguration, all movements initiated by white folks such as Edgar Gardner Murphy's Conference on Race Questions first held in 1900, despite good intentions and limited success, eventually failed to grasp racial complexities or provide ultimate remedies because they ignored African American opinions. Moreover, race discussions and remedies lacked "the spirit of hearty cooperation." African Americans must join hands with whites to initiate any substantial change in race relations and engage in actual service capable of overcoming wide disagreement in theory. Clinton also noted the Church's hesitancy to craft any solution by practically applying the gospel. A wide gap existed "between the teachings of Jesus and their practical application by the Church of to-day." Any racial remedy must acquaint itself with African Americans' needs, emphasize the spiritual worth of every black person, popularize African Americans' progress, condemn barbarities committed against blacks, and guarantee that a sense of fair play prevail and produce harmony.²¹

African American Reverend Hugh Henry Proctor of Atlanta's First Congregational Church offered a more straightforward assessment: "Jim Crow-ism"

²¹"Social Problems of the Southland," Survey 38 (August 11, 1917), 428; Bishop George W. Clinton, "What Can the Church Do to Promote Good Will Between the Races," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 367-371.

caused migration. Countering Professor Haynes who identified the exodus as part of a thirty year trend, Proctor considered it more spontaneous. He agreed that blacks were tired of living under a double standard “of conduct and character;” but they also resented segregation, disfranchisement, and the perpetual threat to their physical safety. Only when they were left alone and granted security under the auspices of a democratic community – what Proctor called a square deal – would the movement north cease. Attacking the many injustices and inconsistencies of the current system, Proctor did not seek to abolish Jim Crow and voting restrictions, adhering instead to the interracial demand for a separate but truly equal society. Other orators, speaking in more conciliatory tones, focused on economic solutions to migration.²²

At Birmingham, with war concerns motivating exceptionally frank and earnest discussions about southern race relations, President Robert Russa Moton of Tuskegee Institute insisted that better economic opportunities and educational facilities would keep blacks in the South. Many southern blacks had informed him that they preferred living in the South, provided they could receive one-half to two-thirds the wages they received in the North, be assured of adequate educational facilities; and fair, just treatment. YMCA student secretary Willis D. Weatherford – chairman of Birmingham’s race section – lauded the SSC’s efforts to seek “just and equal treatment” in the courts as well as improved labor conditions for African Americans. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of black and white communities, he emphasized that these reforms

²²“Social Problems of the Southland,” Survey 38 (August 11, 1917), 428.

would benefit both by keeping blacks in the South as a consistent source of labor. With the interchange of ideas in Birmingham giving both races a more thorough understanding of each other, Weatherford noted that similar work was being extended to every Tennessee county through local interracial groups that emphasized interconnectedness in hopes of subverting forces that feared the dawning postwar democracy. Such grassroots aspirations would play a more prominent role at Knoxville.²³

Knoxville delegates were undoubtedly influenced by the outbreak of racial riots and lynchings that would become known as the Red Summer of 1919. As the SSC held its opening session on 10 May 1919, mobs of white sailors in Charleston, South Carolina, targeted black residents and their property after a white soldier was purportedly pushed off a sidewalk. By the end of the day at least one man lay dead, scores were wounded, and the entire city was under martial law. As the summer progressed, riots grew in number and intensity. Fisk University's George Haynes reported that between 1 January and 14 September, thirty-eight riots claimed the lives of forty-three African Americans and four whites. Welcomed home at first as conquering heroes and "new Negroes" entitled to extended freedoms, black soldiers who battled to expand democracy abroad were now denied it stateside. Corporal Burris Alexander who had served with engineers in France lamented the loss: "America will you let us fall, After we so bravely answered you call?" Had freedom's door been closed against the black man, he asked, "as it was before?" America seemed to answer his query in the affirmative. Many whites felt threatened by the elevated status of uniformed blacks, white soldiers were often eager to

²³"Race Conference Plans Discussed," *Birmingham News*, 16 April 1918, 13.

see their black brothers-in-arms restored to inferior pre-war status, and workers facing an economic downturn resented increased competition with black veterans for jobs and housing.²⁴

Many Knoxville orators reflected the rising racial anxiety, anticipated even greater conflict, and proffered solutions to such unrest. T. S. Settle, special district representative of the War Camp Community Service, was especially concerned that extra leisure time for working people created by eight-hour laws and child labor laws as recommended in the Paris Peace Treaty would produce the “point of explosion in race relations.” With racial clashes occurring most often during idle hours, laborers confined in inadequate facilities with limited opportunities would invariably incite unrest. As a remedy, Settle suggested that soldiers should return home to find newly-constructed outdoor playgrounds, athletic fields, and indoor gathering places. Beyond providing physical exercise, such community centers located in black neighborhoods would promote musical events and offer demonstrations of better home making, sanitation, and cooking, thus serving as “central clearing-houses” for the civic and moral betterment of the interconnected community. Just as Americans, with their hearts “afame with patriotism” provided time and money for soldiers’ constructive leisure time, Settle counseled similar sacrifice to ensure that the fruits of victory be gathered and harmony

²⁴“For Action on Race Riot Peril: Radical Propaganda Among Negroes Growing, and Increased Violence Set Out in Senate Brief for Federal Inquiries,” *New York Times*, 5 October 1919; Jan Voogd, “Red Summer Race Riots of 1919,” in *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, ed., Walter C. Rucker and James N. Upton (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 550-559; Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2011), 14-17.

ensured.²⁵

At Monday afternoon's general session in Knoxville, Vanderbilt's Edwin Mims deemed lynching "unjustifiable under all circumstances and conditions" and undeniably "wrong in the sight of man and of God." Attacking common justifications, the professor of English countered that northern lynchings did not make them "any less damnable in the South." Furthermore, neither the perceived radicalization of southern blacks nor the judiciary's slow and deliberate justice system warranted violence against African Americans. Although differences of opinion existed regarding definitions of mercy, justice, and democracy, lynching threatened the very foundations of Christian civilization. "All must see this old problem and solve it in the light of the present day," he implored, and examine it "from that angle of the best people of the other race." To that end, Mims called upon anti-lynching forces immediately to pressure governments to enact legislation and educate the general public and especially school children about the evils of lynching and mob violence. Having crushed oppression in Germany, democratic forces must do likewise in the South. Delegates responded to Mims' call by "standing as one man" to pass a resolution strongly condemning lynching and mob rule as "both un-American and subversive of law and order." The resolution called upon editors, ministers, and teachers to denounce violence against blacks as "both a disgrace and a menace at home" which discredited American democracy abroad. The resolution also

²⁵T.S. Settle, "The Proper Use of Leisure Time," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 68-71; "'Give Negro A Chance,' Urge Noted Speakers," *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 1; and "Sociological Congress Urges Betterment of race Relations," *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 16.

urged what most white southerners considered dangerous intrusion: “the immediate exercise of all possible state and federal powers to put a speedy end to these outrages throughout the country.”²⁶

Recalling the interracial interconnectedness that had perennially sustained SSC conventions, other Knoxville speakers were more optimistic about future race relations. Despite frenzied warnings of impending racial violence, famed interracialist James Hardy Dillard insisted that the shared sacrifice of war would ultimately result in a “mutual feeling of felicitation and co-operation” among southern whites and blacks. Noting the unprecedented physical and moral progress of blacks, Dillard observed that the war had a peculiar influence on all southerners. With African Americans having “borne their part nobly,” it followed that such patriotism would improve race relations when individuals informed by Christian and democratic interconnectedness realized that the well-being and advancement of one individual, race, or nation did not mean the debasement of the other.²⁷

Reverend Alfred F. Lawless of New Orleans, Superintendent of the Negro Congregational Churches in the South, similarly insisted that interracial interconnectedness was instrumental in subverting post-war racial discord. Lawless

²⁶Edwin Mims, “The Call of the South to Prevent Lynching,” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 129-136; “Dixie’s Call to Stop Lynching,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 16; “Dixie Sociological Congress Convenes in Knoxville Sunday,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 10 May 1919, 1.

²⁷“Give Negro A Chance,’ Urge Noted Speakers,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 1; “Sociological Congress Urges Betterment of race Relations,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 16.

condescendingly considered African Americans fundamentally black Anglo-Saxons imbued with the ideals and aspirations of their white brethren, thereby lessening the perceived “negro problem.” He called delegates to recognize that slavery was buried and to allow blacks their place “in Anglo-Saxon ideals of citizenship, justice and fair play.” What every African American wanted to know, Lawless declared, was whether the new democracy for which African Americans had been fighting included him as part of that democracy? Would returning black soldiers’s expectations be met? Would they be provided for as every other American citizen? They especially wanted schools, better treatment from whites in black sections of towns, abolition of red light districts in African American neighborhoods, a general retreat from “the misrepresentation of things,” and opportunities to “appear in their own light.” African Americans harbored fundamental human aspirations. They sought to supplant the idea that they wanted merely “a negro’s place” with the realization that they deserved “a man’s place . . . with the emphasis on the Man!”²⁸

Baylor University’s J. L. Kesler implored delegates to reconsider the “race problem” as neither a black nor a white matter, but a human dilemma that would only be resolved when all citizens acknowledged that every human being possessed “human rights, human interests, and human possibilities” and insisted upon “equality of opportunity – economic, industrial, educational – equality before the law, equal sanitary

²⁸“Give Negro A Chance,’ Urge Noted Speakers,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 1; and “Sociological Congress Urges Betterment of Race Relations,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 16.

provision, equal protection of person and property.” Americans would find a solution, Kesler summarized, when they consciously acknowledged common brotherhood and ceased to exploit the weak “as chattels and property.” Only then would the “perils of two segregated races, living in the same territory, with mutual interrelations” be minimized. Embracing interconnectedness as the key component of racial reconciliation, Kesler – reflecting the SSC’s nationalistic tone – also considered the race problem an American rather than merely a southern, problem. Americans were one people, however many nationalities or races they represented.

Like all Progressive Era interracialists, Kesler was quick to differentiate equal opportunity from social equality when discussing racial remedies. “In the South neither the Negroes nor the white people want to intermingle socially,” he insisted. But such segregation must be based on mutual interracial respect. Although American democracy accommodated “separate as races or classes or crafts,” it fundamentally recognized these segregated souls as human beings and citizens. Instead of social equality, blacks wanted an “equal chance for personal and social development” with especial emphasis on equal educational opportunities. Like their white brethren, blacks should be educated in tax-funded public schools made effective by compulsory attendance. Kesler also demanded separate but truly equal railroad cars and accommodations and called for a new industrial order where blacks would have increased economic opportunities. With rising racial violence accompanying community recognition of African Americans for their wartime sacrifice, Kesler sought to capitalize on the latter to undermine the former. Like many SSC delegates, he also knew that any substantive social, political, or economic changes

must be undergirded by mutual respect and reinforced by interracial interaction.²⁹

Other Knoxville delegates understood that such interconnectedness involved even greater cooperation. Undoubtedly influenced by Dr. Weatherford's Birmingham description of county-level interracial groups, in Tennessee some SSC delegates proposed expanding grassroots efforts to exchange ideas, instill racial harmony, and instigate racial reforms. Dr. W. A. Bell, African American professor at Augusta's Paine College and future president of Miles College, called for better racial cooperation initiated by "conferences of selected groups of both races for discussion and study of community conditions and for working out co-operative programs of community development." These groups would work in concert with other local organizations, conferences of "negro race leaders, and county district and state conventions to implement a "program for reconstruction" for African Americans. On the whole, the plan repackaged demands heard at almost every SSC race conference: better living conditions; improved communities; heightened morality; greater economic efficiency; increased home ownership rates; education campaigns to suppress venereal diseases; clean and healthful recreation and regulation of amusement places; better labor conditions; equitable pay; greater numbers of skilled black laborers; improved farm conditions; more hospitals, anti-tuberculosis societies, day nurseries, social centers and kindred agencies; more credible news coverage of blacks; the elimination of negative racial stereotypes, unfair propaganda and Jim Crow sections in daily papers; grammar

²⁹J. L. Kesler, "The Outlook," in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 112-122; "Dixie Sociological Congress Convenes in Knoxville Sunday," *Knoxville Sentinel* 10 May 1919.

school training for every “normal” child; improvement in teacher efficiency; a just distribution of school funds for black high schools and higher education institutions; a compulsory education law; equal treatment before the law; equal accommodations in public places and on public carriers; a fair voting qualification law that treated both races alike; and the ending of “Jim Crowism” and lynching. But the plan also hinged on “the negro and white church working as societies to interpret the two races to one another.” The SSC had to move beyond its traditional model. Local committees must replace or at least seriously augment the annual SSC conventions as clearinghouses promoting social and civic movements. Interaction between black and white leaders must become more common and more comfortable. African American soldiers’ wartime sacrifice had motivated “the best Southern white people” to seek justice for their black brethren. Bell knew that African Americans had to capitalize on the moment, “conserve this feeling of brotherhood,” and “realize upon this quickened sense of human justice.” Bell also believed that only interpersonal relationships produced lasting interracial reform.³⁰

Speaking to Monday’s general session, Will W. Alexander – head of the YMCA’s National War Work Council – reported that an “inter-race commission” had been organizing local groups in a number of southern communities. Although little to date had been mentioned about the organization, Alexander said it was composed of the “sanest white men and the sanest negroes of each district” who would work together for their community’s common good. The idea had originated with the paternalistic duty to

³⁰“Condemn Lynch And Mob Rule,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 13 May 1919, 23; “Dixie Sociological Congress Convenes in Knoxville Sunday,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 10 May 1919, 1; “Dixie’s Call to Stop Lynching,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 16.

make returning black soldiers “fit for citizenship.” Although leaders had originally thought they would make African American soldiers “as effective with the ballot as they were with the bayonet,” Alexander and his colleagues soon realized that black troops faced communities leery of this expanded political status for black veterans.

Southern Christian interracialists like Alexander had more faith in African American soldiers and, along with his associates, raised \$75,000 for two training schools charged with remedying “readjustment and reconstruction problems.” With large numbers of African American troops returning to rural communities, those hamlets required representative citizens capable of interpreting the soldier’s life in such a way as to impress on citizenry its “deep responsibility” for soldiers’ mental, physical, and social welfare. The first such school held at Blue Ridge Assembly therefore taught over one thousand white men practical suggestions “as to the best receptions” of returning black soldiers and the most efficient methods of establishing “the minimum amount of machinery to accomplish the reception from an economic and industrial standpoint.” The second school, held at Atlanta’s Gammon Theological Institute, taught African Americans adaptation methods with the realization that, as soldiers, many of them had experienced unprecedented freedoms in Europe. Alexander confessed surprise at the “sanity and open-mindedness of these negro men” who possessed “no wild theories, no unreasonable demands, and no impossible aspirations.” Rather, they wanted a chance “to be allowed to work out their lives like men, and to be given a place that men can occupy,” an opportunity “to have an active participation in the constructive building up of this nation.” The interracial commission strove to extend the work of these two

schools to counties throughout the South and, in the process, mold the SSC's interracial vision into a more interpersonal and localized iteration.³¹

On 20 August 1919, the SSC presented a program to the Governors' Conference at Salt Lake City, Utah. Titled "To Improve Race Relations," the program's paternalistic agenda encouraged blacks to help prevent crimes that provoked mob violence (specifically, rape) and demanded prompt trials and speedy executions of persons guilty of such crimes, legislation that would make it unnecessary for victimized women to testify in court, and bills permitting governors to dismiss sheriffs who failed to protect prisoners. The program also called for the protection of black rights by securing proper traveling accommodations, improving housing conditions, ending extortionate rents, and providing adequate educational and recreational facilities. Most importantly, the program promoted closer cooperation between whites and blacks. Coopting Will W. Alexander's grassroots model, the SSC hoped to organize local committees of blacks and whites that would consider interracial problems, encourage the employment of black physicians, nurses, and policemen to engage in sanitation, and law enforcement in their own communities, and ask each state governor to appoint a standing commission to study the underlying causes of race friction and to recommend means for its removal. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the SSC or Governors' conference ever followed through with its program.³²

³¹"Give Negro A Chance,' Urge Noted Speakers," *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 1; "Sociological Congress Urges Betterment of race Relations," *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 16.

³²"Social Problems of the Southland," *Survey* 42 (September 6, 1919), 826.

The race relations section of the SSC considered this Salt Lake City program its latest and best response to lynching and other facets of the “Negro question”. Perhaps some members hoped the localized component of the plan could shape the SSC’s next phase. In 1912, the race relations departmental conference, influenced by a social gospel-infused interracialism, had set the SSC on a trajectory that established it as the preeminent racial policy organization in the South. By 1915, the SSC’s racial concerns were subsumed by its new public health thrust and economic efficiency arguments that emphasized the conservation of health, improved sanitation, disease prevention, and greater governmental intervention. In 1917, the SSC shifted its focus to winning the war and securing the peace, and reviewed any racial concerns in light of those new priorities. By 1919, prominent SSC interracialists like James Hardy Dillard, Willis D. Weatherford, and Will W. Alexander hoped to reestablish the SSC as a moderate voice countering the integrationist NAACP that was critical of the SSC for not safeguarding the black franchise from Ku Klux Klan inspired violence.³³

The SSC’s regional interracial thrust further diminished when shortly after the Knoxville gathering organizational leaders such as James E. McCulloch attempted to broaden its national presence by rebranding it as the “American Sociological Congress”. The SSC had reorganized at Blue Ridge in 1917, dividing the general secretary’s work between the educational and executive secretary (a position never filled) and creating a five member governing board empowered to transact business between SSC annual

³³Seligmann “Criticism and Correction,” Survey 42 (September 27, 1919), 907-908.

conventions and irregularly scheduled executive board meetings. This new structure effectively supplanted the former executives board. James E. McCulloch as educational secretary carried on as the SSC's chief administrator and guided the organization's new direction.³⁴

At Knoxville, SSC leaders, following McCulloch's lead, adopted a plan to nationalize the Southern Sociological Congress and proposed dividing the organization into six regional units. The first of these, the Southwestern Sociological Congress (SWSC) – representing Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas – was formed to coordinate with the former SSC now elevated to overseer status as the American Sociological Congress. The SWSC functioned as a completely separate organization with its own president, vice president, board of governors, state executive committees, and state secretaries. Charles H. Brough – University of Arkansas sociology and economics professor, former SSC president, and governor of Arkansas – served as the SWSC's first president. McCulloch served as its educational secretary while holding that same position with the SSC. Although McCulloch believed the new division would “unquestionably lead to growth,” little evidence suggests that the SWSC effectively functioned after its initial convention at Oklahoma City in February

³⁴Elwood Street, “Southern Social Problems,” *Southern Workman* 46 (September, 1917), 475-477; Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress,” 81-85; “Social Problems of the Southland,” *Survey* 38 (August 11, 1917), 427-428; James E. McCulloch, “The Constitution and By-Laws,” in *Democracy in Earnest*, ed. McCulloch, 411-13.

1920.³⁵

President Theodore Bratton's opening address at the American Sociological Congress' inaugural meeting at Washington, D.C., reflected the convention's overall tone as well as its expanded venue. Echoing the nationalism that had dominated the Knoxville convention and sounding strikingly nativist before the eight hundred delegates at the Metropolitan Methodist Church, Bishop Bratton said the object of the Congress was to "keep America American" by purging society of "reds, ultra socialists, and other theorists" whose false doctrines entered into all departments of national life, including the family. Indeed, Bratton blasted communists who threatened the foundation of American civilization. Such red intellectuals acted in concert with radical un-Americanized aliens who preached wrong theories of government, family life, and strange ideas that ranged "from soviet to atheism and from child marriages to free love practices." Speeches by Shailer Mathews who discussed "The Sociological Leadership of the Church" and Toronto's T. Albert Moore who detailed Canadian churches' sociological programs stood in sharp contrast to the rest of the oratory that dealt mainly with Americanization, Bolshevism, and isolationism. Despite reports on African-American progress in property ownership, scientific achievement, and education, the race relations discussions lacked the breadth and depth of earlier conventions, undoubtedly exacerbated by James Hardy Dillard's unprecedented absence. This latest iteration of the

³⁵James E. McCulloch, "Organization," in *Distinguished Citizenship*, ed. McCulloch, 172-173; "Judge D. C. Webb of Knoxville is Vice President" *Knoxville Sentinel* 14 May 1919, 1; Joseph A. McCullough, "The Southern Sociological Congress," *City and State* 1 (November, 1919), 5; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 96-97.

SSC, building on the dominant nationalism witnessed in Knoxville, sought to “promote health, justice, patriotism, and training for citizenship,” “teach the sacredness of law both as to person and property,” and “foster loyalty to home, church and government.” No longer an organization primarily seeking a “Solid South for a Better Nation,” the American Sociological Congress strove for a “Righteous America for World Service.”³⁶

With the SSC relinquishing its regional role, a new organization appeared to fill the interracialist void. In January of 1919, at the Georgian Terrace Hotel in Atlanta, SSC members Willis Duke Weatherford, Will W. Alexander, and James Hardy Dillard met with other interracialists (John Eagan, Atlanta businessman and industrialist; Meredith Ashby Jones, pastor of Ponce de Leon Baptist Church; James H. Dillard, director of the Slater and Jeanes funds; Dr. Plato Durham, professor of theology at Emory University; R.H. King, YMCA executive secretary for the South and War Work Council worker; and Wallace Buttrick of the General Education Board) to decide the best and most efficient way to address southern racial concerns. In consultation with black leaders, they settled on Will Alexander’s grassroots model that enlisted local committees of blacks and whites to consider interracial problems, study underlying causes, and recommend remedies. This new interracial group called itself the interracial commission and promptly raised the necessary funds to organize two training schools, one at Blue Ridge for whites and another at Gammon Theological Institute for blacks, that would educate local committeemen. Under Alexander’s leadership, the commission then began

³⁶Chatfield, “The Southern Sociological Congress”, 96-99; ““Americanize U.S.’ Sociologists Urge,” *Washington Post* 10 May 1920, 7.

organizing state-level offices consisting of two staffers – one white, the other black – that would organize county and city level meetings. Conscious of “the responsibility which a Christian democracy” imposed on its self-reasoning citizens, black and white leaders conducted conferences “in the spirit of Jesus Christ,” with an “atmosphere of mutual confidence and wisdom.” The emphasis was on conversation based on the fact that in 1919 getting whites and blacks in a room to talk together was a significant accomplishment. By July of that year, 106 county-level conferences had been convened.

In February of 1920, the new organization known as the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) recruited additional members: Tuskegee Institute President and longtime SSC member Robert Moton; Robert E. Jones, the sole black bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church and editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*; John Hope, SSC member and Morehouse College president; Isaac Fisher, Fisk University professor and editor of the *Fisk University News*; and John M. Gandy, President of Petersburg Normal and Industrial Institute in Virginia.

Founded as a response to the growing racial crisis at the end of the Great War, the CIC soon became a permanent fixture devoted to altering racial attitudes. The organization never sought to dismantle systemic segregation, but rather emphasized interracial cooperation that focused blacks and whites “together around some concrete situation which need[ed] attention,” such as improved African American health, living, and educational standards; necessary legal aid; and the abolition of lynching. Both its

origins and much of its membership traced their heritage to the SSC.³⁷

Following the Washington convention, the American Sociological Congress underwent a return to more regional concerns as the Southern Cooperative League for Education and Social Service. Dr. Philander P. Claxton and Bishop Theodore Bratten served as the organization's president and vice-president respectively. As the organization's executive secretary, McCulloch kept his familiar role as chief operating officer. In March 1921, Claxton and McCulloch met with the Carnegie Cooperation, the Spellman Fund, and the General Education Board with the hope of receiving twenty thousand dollars in funding. The money was contingent on McCulloch raising another thirty thousand, a sum he was sure the organization could acquire. SSC records are unclear whether or not the Cooperative League received funding or how this meeting affected the League's viability and vision.³⁸

Meeting at Nashville in December 1922, the League outlined its five point program: secure adequate funding for public welfare, public education, and public

³⁷“Give Negro A Chance,’ Urge Noted Speakers,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 1; “Sociological Congress Urges Betterment of race Relations,” *Knoxville Sentinel* 12 May 1919, 16; Dykeman, *Prophet of Plenty*, 136-144; Ann Wells Ellis, “The Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 1919-1944: Its Activities and Results” (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, 1975), 9-20, 22, 57-58; Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South: 1913-1945*, 177-178; White, *Liberty and Justice For All*, 236-237; Pamphlet, “Southern Women and Race Cooperation. A Story of the Memphis Conference, October Sixth and Seventh, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty.” Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 2-4, North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/racecoop/racecoop.html>; “A Handbook for Inter-Racial Committees,” Edwin Mims Paper, Special Collections and University Archives, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University

³⁸James E. McCulloch to C. H. Brough, 7 March 1921, Charles Hillman Brough Papers, Special Collection Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

health; promote law and order and encourage “proper social legislation”; foster “good-will [sic] in inter-racial relations”; maintain a clearing house for southern social, educational, and moral conditions and work; and lead a South-wide campaign “for exalting the home to its rightful place of supreme importance in society.” The last point took on special importance for the new organization. With speeches entitled “The Ethical Basis of Better Home Life,” “The Home as Educational Factor,” and “The Home and Efficient Citizenship,” the Southern Cooperative League took a kind of inward turn. McCulloch’s 1924 book, *Home: The Savior of Civilization*, reflected this shift. This book advocated a new kind of Christian education that would supplant the Sunday School with a character based home school called the Home Council. Though occasionally mentioning the importance of service, McCulloch’s work emphasized a private pietistic religion and minimized social Christianity. In one passage, describing the kingdom of God as a place absent of child-labor and war, McCulloch repeatedly called it a “far-off good day” or a day “far in the future.” The kingdom was no longer imminent and the old social issues were hardly relevant. Reflecting the shift, the Southern Co-Operative League in 1926 renamed itself the Home Betterment League and revealingly arranged to use the recently created magazine, *Better Homes and Gardens*, as its official mouthpiece. Later in 1926 the organization underwent another name change as the National Home Betterment League. By 1931, McCulloch was an administrator at Vanderbilt University’s School of Religion and records fail to show the status of the

league. At some point between 1926 and 1931, it faded into obscurity.³⁹

Reflecting this decade long confusion about regional and national agenda, SSC leaders moved their headquarters from Nashville to Washington, D.C., in 1916. The change reflected a trend among regional reform movements which increasingly looked to the nation's capital for direction. Southern organizations in particular became more comfortable nationalizing their efforts now that southern Democrats controlled the highest levels of the federal government. Executive Secretary James E. McCulloch called the decision "a foregone conclusion," as if the transfer were intended all along. The oratory at Blue Ridge, Birmingham, and Knoxville reflected the shift, demonstrating that SSC speakers and delegates became increasingly concerned with nationalistic motivations and goals over mere southern social welfare work. Between 1917 and 1919, SSC speakers considered social work and health conservation primarily patriotic, not Christian, duties. They favored centralized national bureaucracies over Christian social service. And they supplanted visions of a temporal kingdom of God with an almost eschatological "coming" democracy. The southern social gospel-inspired interracialism of earlier SSC meetings had been shoved into the background, still present but hardly influential. The creation of the Commission of Interracial Cooperation merely reflected

³⁹"The Southern Sociological Congress" pamphlet attached to a letter from J. E. McCulloch to Charles Cason, 6 March 1920, James E. McCulloch Alumni File, Special Collections and University Archives, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University; "The American Sociological Congress," James E. McCulloch to S. B. Souby, 29 March 1920, Alumni File, Vanderbilt University; "The Program of the Home Betterment Congress," James E. McCulloch Alumni File, Vanderbilt University; "The Home Betterment League," James E. McCulloch to L. B. Smelser, 12 February 1926, Alumni File, Vanderbilt University; James E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (Washington, D.C.: The Southern Cooperative League, 1924), 1-81.

the SSC's loss of prophetic vision. During the following three decades, the CIC gradually bent the arc of southern religion towards justice while the SSC lost its way in the typically ballyhoo 1920s cosmetic emphasis upon homes and gardens.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Elwood Street, "Southern Social Problems," *Southern Workman* 46 (September, 1917), 473-477; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 80-82; "A Survey of Southern Problems," *Survey* 40 (May 11, 1918):163; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 310-318; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 351-52; 390.

CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the Southern Sociological Congress' 1913 Atlanta gathering, Ray Stannard Baker, noted muckraking journalist and author of *Following the Color Line*, declared its racial discussions to be the most impressive ever held in the South, adding that they marked "a new departure in the Southern attitude toward the Negro." Emerging in 1912 from Progressive-Era Tennessee's turbulent prohibitionist politics, the SSC housed the panoply that was early twentieth century southern progressivism, counting advocates of various social control and social justice strains among its assemblage. By 1913, the organization had found its dominant voice, embracing a social justice vision rooted in social gospel theology shaped by southern social problems, especially "the Negro question." A southern social gospel-inspired interracialism drove the SSC's agenda for most of its existence. When in 1915 SSC leaders reorganized the Congress to reflect its new preoccupation with public health and sanitation, speakers and delegates bolstered their desire to eradicate disease with their belief in the interconnectedness of society and their anticipation of Christ's post-millennial kingdom. Although they initially viewed the Great War as a means to expand social welfare programs and secure a more kingdom-like society void of autocracy and injustice, between 1917 and 1919 SSC participants increasingly regarded national bureaucratic programs preferable to Christian social service, favored military might, not ecclesial efforts, as optimal means to

a kingdom-like end, and inferred that inclusive democracy was a more reliable basis for reform than the kingdom of God. The SSC's social gospel interracialism was coopted by the Commission of Interracial Cooperation which also incorporated most SSC leadership, continuing the SSC's work for the next three decades.¹

Progressive movements in America ebb and flow according to changing historical contexts. Massive tides of immigration from southern and eastern Europe between 1880 and 1920 provided labor for America's economic transformation into the most powerful industrial nation on earth. Urbanization, poverty, and social dislocation accompanied these changes. Religion frantically sought to address such currents of change, no less in the South than in the North.

But by the 1920s, new social patterns became ascendent. Nativism, revulsion at war and internationalism, fear of foreign-inspired radicalism, nostalgic aspirations for a return to "normalcy," the eclipse of idealism by materialism and narcissism, all conspired to send American religion in new directions. Bruce Barton's 1920s classic, *The Man Nobody Knows*, transformed the Jesus of the Progressive Era (as depicted in Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps*) from social reformer to corporate efficiency expert, the founder of "modern business," and inspirer of the working man. American Christianity roused from pietism and individualism by the human distress of the earlier era, settled back into more familiar and less ethically demanding patterns amid the prosperity and

¹Ray Stannard Baker, "Gathering Clouds Along the Color Line," *World's Work*, 32 (June 1916), 235; Pamphlet, "Southern Women and Race Cooperation. A Story of the Memphis Conference, October Sixth and Seventh, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty." Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 2-4, North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/racecoop/racecoop.html>.

materialism of the later decade.

Periods of war in American history usually deflect reforms movements, and this was certainly true of the waning of Progressivism in the 1920s. So the transformation of the SSC agenda during the late teens and its eclipse during the 1920s need hardly be explained within the broader context of the social origins and eclipse of reform movements, whether secular or religious. Adding the special role southern racial paranoia in the aftermath of the First World War, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, and nationwide revulsion at immigrants, radicalism, and liberalism, the fate of the SSC seems more predictable than quizzical. Indeed, the survival of its core reformist concern for racial fairness in the Commission of Interracial Cooperation is what seems astounding, not its coopting by familiar southern social, political, and economic conservatism.²

By the end of the 1930s, scholars of sociology and history had established definitive opinions about the Southern Sociological Congress that remained largely unrevised for eight decades. In her 1935 dissertation, Lyda Gordon Shivers called the Southern Sociological Congress the primary southern social conference of the twentieth century's second decade but provided only a twelve page examination recognizing its church and social work department as the primary force pushing a socially minded interracial agenda. In his 1936 work, *Southern Regions of the United States*, Howard W. Odum referenced Shivers' work, discerning the SSC's "religious and revival motivation"

²Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1925) 1-245; Charles M. Sheldon, *In His Steps: "What Would Jesus Do?"* (Chicago: Advance Publishing, 1898) 1-282.

that underlay proposals to ameliorate or eradicate abuses of the chain gang, county jail, and lynch mob. But – like his protégé, Shivers – Odum overlooked the interplay between the social gospel and the SSC and undervalued the organization’s impact on the southern racial milieu.³

Odum’s and Shivers’ studies reflected the historiography of the era. Arthur Schlesinger’s 1932 examination, “A Critical Period In American Religion, 1875-1900,” deemed the social gospel a theological and ethical reaction to social ills associated with modern industrial capitalism and increased urbanization. Tired of treating mere symptoms of these crises, Schlesinger’s northern religious leaders – immersed in the regionally dominant liberal theology – developed the social gospel as an ethical antidote for societal disease. Schlesinger’s assertion that the social gospel was a response to unique crises forever married the movement to liberal theology, emphasized the movement’s interest in class-related concerns over its focus on racial problems, and limited the movement’s influence to the industrial North and Midwest. His analyses influenced a generation of historians and sociologists.⁴

Although recognizing social gospel tenets in SSC oratory, proceedings, and proposals, later examinations minimized the movement’s influence. Earl Charles

³Shivers, “The Social Welfare Movement in the South,” 50-62; Odum, *Southern Regions*, 137, 139.

⁴Schlesinger, “A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900,” *Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings* 64, 538-543; Luker, “Interpreting the Social Gospel: Reflections on Two Generations of Historiography,” in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, 1-2; Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism*, 3-4, 5, 122, 318-321; May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*, 3-265.

Chatfield's 1958 thesis – "The Southern Sociological Congress, 1912-1920: The Development and Rationale of a Twentieth-Century Crusade," the most significant study of the SSC to date – acknowledged the presence of social gospel clergymen who emphasized transcending individual concerns and the earthly establishment of the community of God. He maintained, however, that the most important element of the SSC was its belief that rationally-derived conditions primarily shaped an organic and interdependent society. Chatfield listed the social gospel as one of many influences contributing to such a mind-set but discounted the extent of its impact on subsequent southern social welfare programs. Moreover, while acknowledging that the SSC helped liberalize racial attitudes by providing a forum for interracialists, Chatfield ignored its formative influence on the Commission on Interracial Cooperation and minimized the SSC's overall interracial legacy.⁵

While social gospel historians ignored the movement's impact on southern social ills, historians of race, also under the influence of the Schlesinger thesis, ignored the social gospel's work to improve southern race relations. Historians focusing myopically on northern social gospelers' responses to urban and industrial problems found ministers responding to class based social injustices while ignoring racial problems. Had they glimpsed southward where some eighty-nine percent of the nation's African Americans resided as late as 1910, these scholars would have encountered a social gospel reacting to

⁵ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 450, 452; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," iv-ix, 107-151.

the southern racial reality with interracial cooperative action.⁶ The next wave of southern Church historians – responding to civil rights struggles, the “new” social history, an empowered Christian right, and multiple denominational rifts – successfully challenged the Schlesinger thesis as they explored southern and interracial manifestations of the social gospel. While they increasingly esteemed the SSC as a southern social gospel entity, most revisionist histories offered no new analysis of the organization’s adaptive theology and glossed over its impact on southern race relations.⁷

Closer scrutiny of the SSC reveals speakers and delegates adapting the social gospel’s theological and ethical principles to unique regional crises. Operating amid the southern religious landscape, SSC members created a southern social gospel that preached personal and social salvation, individual responsibility and corporate interconnectedness, the justified receiving their eternal reward in heaven and seekers of social justice hastening an earthly kingdom of God. SSC rhetoric and actions demonstrated the blending of southern pietistic evangelicalism’s emphasis on spirituality with liberal theology’s priority given to on ecumenism, social service, and community. Not only does the history of the SSC support historiography purporting the existence of a

⁶Miller, *American Protestantism and Social Issues*, 9; Reimers, *White Protestantism and the Negro*, 53; Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea*, 197; Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 302.

⁷Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity*, 65-68; Flynt, “Dissent in Zion,” *Journal of Southern History* 35 (Winter 1969): 527, 542; Flynt, *Alabama Baptists*, 268; Thompson, *Tried as by Fire*, 29-42; Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity*, 3-6; Harper, *The Quality of Mercy*, 7-14; White and Hopkins, *The Social Gospel*, 86; White, Jr., *Liberty and Justice for All*, x; Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 1-6; Holcomb, “The Kingdom at Hand,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 35/2 (Spring 2000): 49-66; McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South*, 87.

social gospel in the South, its adaptive theology also challenges the notion of a static and definitive social gospel fitting prescribed parameters. Historians of race, class, religion, and region have for decades accepted the SSC on the roster of those “who counted” as social gospel entities. Applying “the teaching of Jesus Christ and the total message of the Christian salvation to society, the economic life, and social institutions . . . as well as to individuals” – Shailer Mathews’ classic definition of the social gospel – SSC delegates additionally adjusted the movement’s tenets to their ethical reality, a move that challenges commonly held notions about the SSC and contributes to a more inclusive understanding of the social gospel.⁸

As they reshaped social gospel beliefs to address regional social ills, SSC delegates became especially concerned with “race problems.” In an era rife with racial oppression, SSC participants emphasized interracial cooperation as represented by the oft repeated phrase “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.” Hoping to establish greater, albeit limited, equality for blacks, delegates called for coordination between socialized churches and society. They requested greater educational opportunities for African Americans, demanded higher standards of living and improvements in health services for all “brothers in black,” encouraged white delegates to meet on an “equal plane” with African American members, and produced an ethereal racial vision and concrete agenda stressing a variety of social gospel tenets. SSC speakers also accepted social segregation as a requisite institution but challenged the

⁸Lindley “Deciding Who Counts: Toward a Revised Definition of the Social Gospel,” in *The Social Gospel Today*, ed. Evans, 17-26.

corrupt ways in which it was imposed. They promoted instead a system that, when administered properly, encouraged interconnected ethnic communities to develop fully but separately. They consistently stressed independent racial spheres but equal human justice; a kind of segregation that provided separate but truly equal public accommodations, educational institutions, economic prospects, and occupational opportunities to empower African Americans, raise standards in the black community, safeguard individual rights, permit blacks to solve their own problems, and secure social justice for all persons of color.⁹

As reflected by the SSC's race agenda and in accordance with Joel Williamson's classification of southern racial "mentalities" most white members were without question racial liberals who were optimistic about the possibility of blacks coopting the best qualities of a supposedly superior white civilization to reach a relatively high place

⁹"Prominent Social Workers Begin Arriving in Memphis to Attend Sessions which Open Wednesday," *Memphis News Scimitar*, 5 May 1914, 1; George E. Haynes, "Some Conditions Among Negroes in Cities" in *Battling for Social Betterment*, ed. McCulloch, 120-131; Chatfield, "The Southern Sociological Congress," 26, 43-44; Culley, "Muted Trumpets," 120-126, 142, 168; Bernard, "Southern Sociological Congress," 92-93; Walter Rauschenbusch, "The Social Program of the Church" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 504-511; A. J. McKelway, "Remarks of the Acting President," in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 13-15; Wilbur P. Thirkield, "A Cathedral of Cooperation" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 476-482; John A. Rice, "This is the Hour of the Southern Church," in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 648-661; "Governor Mann Made President" *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 April, 1913, 1; John E. White, "The Significance of the Southern Sociological Congress" in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service*, ed. McCulloch, 16-19; "Social Workers Convene Today in Annual Congress" *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 April, 1913, 1; "Notable Congress of Social Workers Has Convened Here," *Atlanta Journal*, 26 April, 1913, 2; "Prominent Men Attend Congress of Sociologists" *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 April, 1913, 1; L.L. Bernard, "Southern Sociological Congress," *American Journal of Sociology*, 19 (July, 1913): 92-93.

in society. Paternalistic in nature, racial liberals called for the “better elements of the white race” to assist in elevating Negroes above their existing lowly station. But the SSC’s racial agenda could more specifically be classified as interracialist. William A. Link, in *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, divided Williamson’s racial liberals into pre-First World War “moderate paternalists” as exemplified by the SSC and post-First World War “liberal interracialists” as exemplified by the Commission of Interracial Cooperation. Link chose to focus on the SSC’s paternalism to the exclusion of its emphasis on interracial interdependence as exemplified by the SSC’s insistence that blacks and whites meet on the same floor and – as University of Florida sociologist L. L. Bernard observed – “on an equal plane, intellectually, for the discussion of their common problems.” Such actions were historically and socially unprecedented in the South.¹⁰

In essence, Link created an artificial distinction between a paternalistic SSC and an interracialist CIC. SSC members later applied their open discussion model to local county-level committees of blacks and whites studying the underlying causes of racial problems. The CIC, with most of its leadership pulled from SSC ranks, later adopted this local grassroots model as the basis of its organizational structure. In this way, the SSC’s social gospel interracialism created an ethical space amenable to the CIC’s and later the Southern Regional Council’s gradualism. Although Martin Luther King, Jr. in his “I Have a Dream” speech called racial gradualism a “tranquilizing drug” that stalled the promises of democracy, such liberal interracialism set southern society on a slow crawl

¹⁰L.L. Bernard, “Southern Sociological Congress,” *American Journal of Sociology*, XIX (July, 1913): 92-93

towards justice. Providing a forum for white race liberals and black accommodationists, the SSC's brand of interracialism mitigated the policies of racial demagogues and the brutal injustices of the lynch mob in the four decades preceding segregation's demise.¹¹

SSC participants adapted the social gospel's theological and ethical principles to unique southern exigencies. In the process, they melded southern evangelical spirituality with liberal theology's insistence on social action, focusing most intently on racial ills. Emphasizing "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," SSC delegates embraced a southern social gospel-inspired interracialism that battled the most egregious injustices of the segregated system. The SSC's story continues to challenge our commonly held historical perceptions and provides us with a fuller historical and theological understanding of a social gospel movement that continually influences the national religious landscape.¹²

¹¹Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 4-7, 85-88, 484-486; Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, 240-267.

¹²Stackhouse, "A Preface," in *Perspectives on the Social Gospel*, ed. Evans, xi-xiii; Stackhouse, "The Fifth Social Gospel and the Social Mission of the Church," in *The Social Gospel Today*, ed. Evans, 146; Lindley "Deciding Who Counts," in *The Social Gospel Today*, ed. Evans, 26.

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