

Integrated Churches: Why Are There So Few? From Page 1

Long says. "Whites worry about who are in their churches. Blacks cannot freely go to white churches, but whites have always been free to go to black churches."

Long adds that the same situation exists for blacks in the churches that has existed in other facets of society. One example, he says, is early school integration, during which black people elected attend white schools, but white people did not want to accept black educational traditions.

Rodney says that, locally, there are isolated incidences in certain areas where blacks and whites worship together, but it is more a matter of convenience than a desire for communing among the races.

"If you live in a predominantly white area, you might attend a white church, but that's few and far between," Rodney says. "People prefer to be in their own environment because they are comfortable there."

The first local church to integrate, Rodney says, was St. Philips Moravian Church, a historically black church that accepted a white family into its congregation in 1969. Rodney says a black family also joined predominantly white Calvary Moravian Church, but that still there aren't many whites and blacks worshipping together in Winston-Salem.

Among the few blacks who do worship in an integrated situation, there seem to be no major adjustment problems.

Lee Brown a member of predominantly white First Assembly of God, says he is more satisfied in a white church.

Because of his disenchantment with what he saw as a misuse of church funds and his dissatisfaction with other aspects of the black church, Brown says he decided to leave.

"I was really looking for a change," says Brown, who says he held a high position in a local black church before joining the white one. "I had stopped going to church because I was discouraged. Then one day I saw a church program on television around Christmas time. It was something about the way they carried on their service that impressed me."

Brown contends that the money in the white church is put to better use and he can see more "tangible" causes his money is used to fund. "There are always new programs being organized to help members and the community," he says.

But Rodney says that, generally, when whites and blacks mix religiously, it presents a problem for the black people involved.

"When whites come into a black church, the congregation questions why he or she is here and the blacks are resentful," Rodney says. "The choir can't sing. The organist makes mistakes. They are uncomfortable."

On the other hand, Rodney says, once a black member comes into the white church, he is pretty much a novelty and is accepted. "But as soon as you

become one of the boys, they won't treat you the same. When the novelty wears off, they forget you," Rodney says. "After a few months, he (the black member) will get the cold shoulder and he won't be able to hold any church positions."

Rodney offers no explanation as to why the philosophy of separatism in religion was developed, but he speculates that some people may have misinterpreted a verse in the Bible in which the Apostle Paul speaks of being "unequally yoked."

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness?" Paul says to the Church of God at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 6:14. Paul further says, in verse 17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

Rodney feels that Paul was referring to Christians mixing with non-Christians rather than to racial separation, as some have chosen to interpret the passage.

Another minister, the Rev. J. Ray Butler, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, says that the Bible makes no reference to racial separation. "The idea of separation is man-made, not Christianized or biblical," Butler says. "The Bible only speaks of the church."

The Rev. G. W. Roland, pastor of Antioch Christian Church, says, "I think it (integration in churches) is nothing more than what is commanded by the Lord. He says, 'Whosoever will, let him come.' We are the ones who make the difference. The Master will have no segregation in heaven."

Rhodford Anderson, pastor of Union Chapel Baptist Church, which is attended by some white worshippers, says his church doesn't consider race.

"I expected some comments when the white people came (to his church), but I didn't get any," Anderson says. He adds that the white people who are in his church have lived among black people for quite some time and may be the products of integrated marriages or courtships.

Father Morris C. Boyd, a white man who pastors predominantly black St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church, which is frequently attended by area white Catholics as well, says the Catholic Church condemns racial prejudice. "There is no such thing as that (racial segregation) in this church," Boyd says. "We're not into that kind of game. The Protestants have that kind of thing."

In a random *Chronicle* poll, most residents expressed no objections to blacks and whites worshipping together or to blacks joining a white church. And most say there is no difference between white churches and black churches.

"I don't see any difference (between the white and black church)," says Helen Hogg, a member of

Galilee Baptist Church. "Religion is a thing that you should share, no matter what color you are."

But Hogg says she wouldn't leave predominantly black Galilee to attend a white church unless she moved to a different area and the nearest church was a white one.

Reginald Stocks, a Jehovah's Witness, says integration in churches is fine with him.

"I think that's the way it should be," he says.

But Pauline Turner, a member of Zion Memorial Baptist Church, says she doesn't approve of integration in churches or of black members leaving a black church to attend a white church.

"You know, I really don't care for this mixing thing," Turner says. But she adds those who want to do so have that prerogative.

Geneva Hill, a member of First Baptist Church, says members attend churches for the things they are accustomed to and that some blacks may find what they need in a white church.

"It's whatever you are accustomed to being offered," Hill says. "And people are accustomed to certain things in certain churches."

Hill says that not all black churches or preachers offer the same things to their congregations. "People go where they feel most

comfortable," she says.

"If I lived in a white neighborhood, I would attend that (white) church," Hill adds. "God is everywhere. He is spirit."

And Harvey Hampton, a member of Piney Grove United Methodist Church, says he agrees with the fact that the his denomination's conference is integrated. Hampton says there isn't a need for blacks and whites to worship separately, but a basic difference between black and the white church services may account for the separation.

"In our church, education is one of the most important things there is," Hampton says. "The United Methodist Church is not as spiritual as the Baptist and Holiness churches, yet you get a real good thought (from the sermon) and teaching."

Hampton says that black churches stress emotional services, while white ones stress biblical education.

Long also sees differences between black and white church traditions and rituals.

"The difference between black churches and white churches are the same basic differences between blacks and whites," Long says. "White churches were brought over from Europe and black churches have the Afro-American experience and not the European experience."

"The three differences

are emotional, social and preaching," Rodney says. "When we preach, we soul. And a white preacher preaches brain. Whites deal with the theological concept and read what they write. Blacks also read, but add feeling. Martin Luther King's preaching can make you cry. But, listen to Billy Graham, he doesn't make you cry."

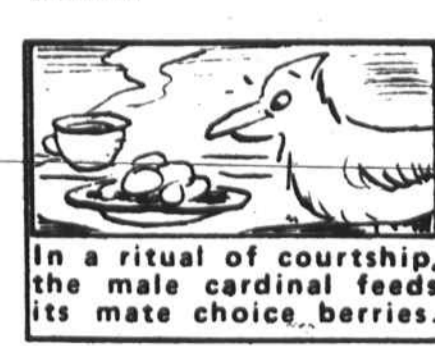
Long and Rodney say that they aren't sure if blacks are satisfied with the type of service they find as members of white churches.

Long offers one thought on the matter. "Some black folks have a need for the kind of service white folks have, kind of quiet," he says. But he adds that some blacks may go to a white church as a form of protest against whites not living up to the concept of what a Christian should be.

The minister of one white church where several blacks attend says blacks are attracted to his church because of its warmth and because it blends the characteristics of the black and white church service.


The Rev. Ron McManus, a white minister who pastors First Assembly, where Lee Brown attends and where the number of black members has increased from three to 20 in the past year and a half, says that the church has the same interest in its black members that it has in its white ones.

"There is a loving caring atmosphere here at First Assembly," says McManus. "We preach the word if God so it can be appreciated by people on all levels. Our worship service is expressive, but not excessive."



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