

Protesting the Struggle:  
Carl McIntire and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1964

Bobby G. Griffith Jr.

In electric times, sometimes electrifying figures end up on the wrong side of history. Such is the case with Carl McIntire, the fiery Fundamentalist Presbyterian with a sixty-year-plus career. During the Civil Rights Movement, McIntire and other Christian Fundamentalists worked hard to stop government intervention that granted basic civil rights for minorities. Much of the rhetoric was couched in terms of liberty and Americanism. Analyzing this opposition provides insight into the past and helps inform the present. During the Civil Rights era, many on the Right religiously, opposed this movement from areas other than the pulpit. In fact, the use of mass media, and intertwining of politics with Christian Scriptures provides a basis to understand current trends in the area of religion and politics. Examining Carl McIntire's opposition to the Civil Rights Movement between 1954 and 1964 provides insight into the genesis of the so-called New Christian Right which began in the 1970s, as well as a background for racial division in theologically and socially conservative Christian groups.

*Understanding Fundamentalism*

The Christian Fundamentalist movement in the United States is more than a religious movement.<sup>1</sup> It is a cultural phenomenon which seeks to restore its understanding of purity in religion, morality, and politics and inject it into broader culture. While it is misunderstood, and lampooned, it played a forceful role in the twentieth century. Despite their minority status in comparison to other religious and social groups, Fundamentalists were influential in culture, media, and politics. Its modern incarnation has its roots in a reactionary theological movement in

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this essay, I will refer to American Christian Fundamentalism as "Fundamentalism."

the late 1800s which produced the work *The Fundamentals*. It later shifted from a religious movement to a cultural movement by the 1920s as theological institutions and Christian denominations began to reinterpret Christian texts in light of current events. In response to the demythologization of the “old time religion,” broader changes in society, politics and science, Fundamentalism became a distinct movement and identity.

As this identity emerged in the 1920s, controversy ensued. Institutions such as Princeton Theological Seminary experienced internal conflicts among faculty and students. Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist groups encountered tension, shifts in leadership, internal struggle, and splintering. This struggle for respect, power, control, and “Christian” identity culminated in the Scopes Trial in 1925, which one interpretation of the Genesis account of Creation was pitted against Darwinian Evolutionism, leading not only to Fundamentalism’s defeat, but a rallying point for the maligned.

Throughout the era known as the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy of the 1920s, leaders, institutions, and media outlets grew using the label “Fundamentalist.” Once this mantra and identity were accepted and incorporated into religious and cultural discourse, Fundamentalism became a distinct movement. Though varied in minor degrees, Fundamentalists shared many of the same attitudes and fears in issues such as morality, science, and Christian theology. Though some in this movement sought to simply keep the “fights” within the bounds of Christianity, many wanted to expand their movement and dialogue from religion to broader society.<sup>2</sup> Hence, Fundamentalism became entwined in politics and other cultural issues offering critique, alarm and solutions to society’s ills. This led to alignment on the part of

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<sup>2</sup> D.G. Hart’s biography of Gresham Machen deals with Machen’s rejection of cultural Fundamentalism while holding to basic Fundamentalist interpretations of Christian Scripture. After Machen’s death many Fundamentalists attempted and still attempt to claim him as “their own” though Machen himself did not classify himself as Fundamentalist. D.G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America* (Phillipsburgh, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994).

Fundamentalists with right-leaning political and social movements, whether the Old Right (1900-1930s), McCarthyism, or the New Right (1970s-present).<sup>3</sup>

Carl McIntire emerged in this movement in the 1930s. He was part of the exodus of theologians, students and ministers who left the Presbyterian Church U.S. by choice or force. In McIntire's case, he was defrocked for his Fundamentalist views. This was only the beginning; however, because McIntire began a movement within Fundamentalism he later called the Twentieth Century Reformation. This movement incorporated McIntire's newspaper, the *Christian Beacon*, his publishing company Christian Beacon Press, a radio station, and a program *The Twentieth Century Reformation Hour*, which reached its peak in the late 1960s as it aired on over 600 stations with several hundred thousand listeners. McIntire's mission was to return America to his vision of what it once was. He created organizations like the American Council of Christian Churches and International Council of Christian Churches to build a national and global consensus among Fundamentalist churches and social conservatives. Though he was a pastor in Collingswood, New Jersey, he cast himself as a world leader in the Fundamentalist movement.

In the 1930s he was outspoken in his opposition to theological liberalism, but also Fascism and Communism. After World War II, he viewed Communism as the greatest threat to American liberty. He viewed social movements, such as Civil Rights, with great skepticism and fear because he saw his ideal America slipping away as the government grew in size and power.

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<sup>3</sup> For a short overview see: Micheal Lienesch, "Right Wing Religion: Christian Conservatism as a Political Movement," *Political Science Quarterly* 97.3, (Autumn, 1984), 403-425 and Corwin Smidt, "Evangelicals Within Contemporary Politics: Differentiating Between Fundamentalist and Non-Fundamentalist Evangelicals," *The Western Political Quarterly* 41.3, (Sept, 1988), 601-620. For basic cultural interpretations see: Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); D.G. Hart, *That Old Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002) and George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991). A few representatives of alarmist interpretations, particularly earlier ones are: Arnold Forster & Benjamin Epstein, *Danger on The Right* (New York: Random House, 1964) and Erling Jorstad, *The Politics of Doomsday: Fundamentalists of the Far Right* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

He, like many, capitalized upon the fear of Communism in the dynamic society of the 1950s and 1960s. McIntire opposed court rulings related to segregation, and Federal legislation granting Civil Rights. He believed that many of the leaders, politicians, pastors and activists were tied to Communism, directly and indirectly. He firmly believed a Soviet planned fifth column existed in the United States and employed charged rhetoric and innuendo to promote this belief. McIntire's actions during the Civil Rights Movement played an interesting role in the history of religion and Civil Rights as he built a following during this time of opposition.

### *Religion and Civil Rights*

The historiography of the Civil Rights Movement is quite broad. Because this was an important moment in the Twentieth Century, there are robust scholarly contributions from many points of view.<sup>4</sup> With regard to the role of Christian religion and Civil Rights, most scholars tend to focus on groups which supported the movement.<sup>5</sup> This scholarship typically hones in on the positive role of African-American churches and white churches, normally separating the two. When the role of white ministers and churches is synthesized with African-American churches, the accounts typically focus on the struggle white ministers faced in their support of Civil Rights. However, when religious opposition is explored, it is usually relegated to a chapter or paragraph in a larger work dealing with the extreme Right or some other similar movement, figure or institution. Still, there is more to the "story." Though history is often viewed as the accounts of "the victorious," fuller perspectives can be gained when placing events in their broader context.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See: Manning Marable, *Race Reform and Rebellion, The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1900* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1991) and Joe Street. *The Culture War and the Civil Rights Movement* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2007) for excellent overviews of the Civil Rights Movement.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice Like a Trumpet: White Clergy and the Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements, 1954-1973* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1998) and James Findley, "Religion and Politics in the Sixties: The Churches and the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *The Journal of American History* 77.1, (Jun., 1990), 66-92 are good representatives of this approach.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Eagles, "Toward a New History of the Civil Rights Era," *The Journal of Southern History* 66.4, (Nov., 2000), 815-817.

One of the advantages wrought by social historians has been the focus on “history from below.” This takes historical accounts solely from the hands of the “victor” and seeks to broaden the perspective by highlighting forgotten voices, whether common people or those who were the losers in the historical account. Of course, there are some Civil Rights accounts from this perspective, but still, popular history typically sees Civil Rights from the lens of Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and other “larger than life” figures.<sup>7</sup>

The role non-African-American religion played in the Civil Rights Movement can be viewed in three ways: supporting, vague, and non-supporting. Many diverse expressions of Christianity lauded key moments in the Civil Rights Era. When the Supreme Court made its ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, there was a sense of support from Roman Catholics, mainline Protestants, and broad Evangelical groups.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention and National Association of Evangelicals endorsed the ruling.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the National Council of Churches and mainline denominations such as the Presbyterian Church U.S. and United Methodist Church commended legal action that ordered desegregation.<sup>10</sup> Many white clergy in the South supported desegregation and granting equal rights for all races.<sup>11</sup> This was not easy to do. It often came with the risk of violence, societal out casting, and potential job loss.<sup>12</sup> For the white ministers and churches that supported civil rights, it was a risk they needed to take at the time.

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<sup>7</sup> Clayborne Carson, “Martin Luther King: Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle,” *The Journal of American History* 74.2, (Sept., 1987), 448-450.

<sup>8</sup> Trice, Mike. *Religious Newspaper Coverage of the Civil Rights Struggle: 1954-1964* (PhD. Diss., University of Southern Mississippi), 28-47.

<sup>9</sup> Jerry Bearle Hopkins, *Billy Graham and the Race Problem, 1949-1969* (PhD Diss., University of Kentucky, 1986), 58.

<sup>10</sup> Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice*, 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

The most prominent Protestant in the United States during the Civil Rights era was Billy Graham. As a leading Fundamentalist turned Evangelical leader, many looked to him to usher in white acceptance of Civil Rights, particularly post-*Brown v. Board*. Instead, Graham's actions were often vague, couched in spiritual terms, and apolitical.<sup>13</sup> Graham consistently called for Americans to look at all sins, not just racism.<sup>14</sup> He believed the way to end racism was for people to experience conversion and that revivalism would take root in American life.<sup>15</sup> The idea that salvation would cure social ills was rooted in Graham's former Fundamentalism. It was the Fundamentalist crusaders who taught that Communism, Fascism and other "problems" in American life could be eliminated through Christian revivals. Graham's reluctance to fully embrace the Civil Rights Movement led to later criticism from African-American groups.<sup>16</sup> Still, in the wake of the "Little Rock Crisis" where nine African-American students sought to integrate into the school system, Graham was called on by President Eisenhower to provide support in the face of Fundamentalist opposition in Arkansas.<sup>17</sup> Despite this even, Graham's actual role in the Civil Rights era was passive and he cannot be considered among those who staunchly supported the movement.

Religion also played a negative role in the Civil Rights Era. There were religious groups which argued for the status quo within American life. Numerous reasons were given to support an anti-Civil Rights agenda. Some fearfully argued against race-mixing, desegregation, and utilized conspiracy theories designed to debunk the movement as a means of destroying white culture or American heritage. Others, such as Carl McIntire utilized the Cold War as their ally. They made the case that Civil Rights legislation, court rulings and other government actions

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 23. This assessment is also supported in Hopkins' *Billy Graham and the Race Problem*.

<sup>14</sup> Hopkins. *Billy Graham and the Race Problem*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 83.

enlarged government and furthered Communist subversion in the US. From *Brown v. Board* to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, each moment of progress for Civil Rights was marked with allegations of Soviet infiltration, the radicalization of American citizens, and the fear that basic rights were disappearing. These arguments were not just made from the pulpit, but through the use of mass media. In fact, mass media was the most important tool for Fundamentalists to propagate their agenda, ideologies, and build their followings.

### *The Role of Mass Media*

Fundamentalists needed mass media to propagate their messages on a wide-scale. Had they not utilized media tools, organization and assimilation would have never occurred. Religious historian Douglas Abrams depicts Fundamentalists as “peddlers.”<sup>18</sup> They simply sold ideas in opposition to views with which they disagreed. To do this, Abrams argues Fundamentalists adopted business models within their organizational practices. The so-called Roaring Twenties was an era of organization and efficiency in American culture, and Fundamentalist leaders took these ideas and applied them to “evangelism and church ministries.”<sup>19</sup> This application led to the marriage of religion and consumerism. Soon, marketing tactics combined with sensationalism and vivid imagery were used to capture larger audiences. Fundamentalists did this through radio and print media.<sup>20</sup> This proved successful in attracting followers, and allowed Fundamentalists to build institutions and spread their messages.<sup>21</sup>

If one sought to be a leader in Fundamentalism, media was the key. Multiple newspapers were founded by Fundamentalist leaders. A few notable examples are Carl McIntire’s *Christian Beacon*, John Rice’s *The Sword of the Lord*, J. Frank Norris’ *The Fundamentalist*, *The Voice of*

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<sup>18</sup> Douglas Abrams, *Selling the Old Time Religion: American Fundamentalists and Mass Culture: 1920-1940* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2001), 22.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-34.

*the Independent Fundamentalist Churches of America*, and *Truth and Liberty*. These papers were typically published by churches with the pastor as the chief editor. Most ran commentaries on news events, political issues, religious controversies, all entwined with Scriptural interpretation and application to create solidarity among Fundamentalists across the US.

The capitalization of print media gave Fundamentalists outlets to attract larger followings, but radio was Fundamentalists most successful tool.<sup>22</sup> Many groups broadcasted sermons. McIntire not only began his *Christian Beacon* in the 1930s, but also his radio career. For many years, his Bible Presbyterian Church in Collingswood, New Jersey aired his sermons on several local stations. Once McIntire attracted a wider following through the *Beacon* and his organizations, he began his own radio station in New Jersey and with a syndicated radio program that focused more on social and political commentary than Christian sermons. McIntire called his program *The Twentieth Century Reformation Hour*, named not only after his first book *The Twentieth Century Reformation*, but also the movement he believed he led.

Though McIntire promised his *Christian Beacon* would not engage in politics “one whit,” it was a promise soon broken.<sup>23</sup> From the *Beacon’s* first issue in 1936 through its last issue in the early 1990s, politics was discussed and couched in terms Fundamentalists could imbibe, discriminate and propagate. McIntire viewed himself and his use of mass media in prophetic terms. He believed the use of media was divinely appointed and a means to combat evil and purport the message of the Bible.<sup>24</sup> One such evil was his belief that America was losing basic freedoms. McIntire viewed the Civil Rights Movement with suspicion. He often tied the movement to Communism and warned Americans that America would soon lose its freedom. He

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>23</sup> *Christian Beacon*, (13 February 1936), 1. Hereafter, *Christian Beacon* will be abbreviated *CB*.

<sup>24</sup> William Howe Cianci, *Carl McIntire: A Study of His Philosophy and Use of the Mass Media* (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1972), 241.

did this to build a consensus in order to preserve his notion of traditional values and small government. Why would a minister take up such a political cause? McIntire himself said, “Freedom is everybody’s business. Your business, my business, the church’s business. And the man who will not use his freedom to defend his freedom...does not deserve his freedom.”<sup>25</sup> Because of his views on freedom, Carl McIntire stood in direct opposition to the Civil Rights Movement. His use of mass media helped promote his political ideas which he married to his Fundamentalist religious views.

*Carl McIntire and Civil Rights, 1954-1962*

“You either agree with McIntire or the Devil. Take your choice,” said one of McIntire’s parishioners in an interview in the early 1960s.<sup>26</sup> Though the context for this statement is not fully known, it provides the basis for McIntire’s treatment of the Civil Rights Movement. While some religious leaders during this time nuanced their negative arguments, like the Reverend Billy Graham, Carl McIntire was blunt in his opposition.

The events surrounding *Brown v. Board* were chaotic. America was engulfed in a Cold War with the Soviet Union. People acted unruly and violent in their opposition toward the Supreme Court’s decision to desegregate the American public school system, and hosts of leaders wasted no time to weigh in on the African-American struggle for Civil Rights. Carl McIntire grounded his opposition to Civil Rights in a Cold War framework. In the period between *Brown v. Board* until Kennedy’s proposals for Civil Rights legislation in 1963, McIntire employed tactics of fear and suspicion to discredit the movement. He rightly understood that the Civil Rights Movement was on a world stage, which he attempted to use for his advantage.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>26</sup> Arnold Forster and Benjamin Epstein, *Danger on the Right*, 100.

However, his public rhetoric tied the movement to his fight against Communism, the Soviet Union, mainline Christianity and social liberalism.

For many, Civil Rights represented a dramatic struggle of good and evil. Many today would agree with this statement and believe “evil” was opposition and “good” was the Movement. Sometimes good and evil are based upon perspective, whether right or wrong. For McIntire, Civil Rights was part of a “Satanic” conspiracy for Communist world domination. So engulfed with this belief, he republished a graphic outlining groups such as the Congress For Racial Equality (CORE) and the Methodist Federation For Social Action as Communist front groups.<sup>27</sup> McIntire tied these social justice organizations to a broader Communist movement which he believed infiltrated Christian denominations like African Methodist Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church US, and the United Methodist Church.<sup>28</sup> McIntire firmly denounced many non-Fundamentalist Christian groups and leveled particular criticism toward the World Council of Churches. He used charged rhetoric which alleged the WCC was involved in an effort to bring the world under Communist control, even in their support of civil rights.<sup>29</sup>

The *Christian Beacon* continually published lists of ministers who publicly supported the Civil Rights Movement and connected them to “Moscow’s Religious Fifth Column” in America.<sup>30</sup> Shortly after the initial allegations, McIntire charged that over 7,000 clergy in the US were members of Communist front groups.<sup>31</sup> Many of these pastors were, of course, “dupes” according to McIntire who said their calls for peace and nonviolence were part of a greater movement to empower left-leaning politicians to usher in a Communist America.<sup>32</sup> According to

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<sup>27</sup> “Apostasy Proof Package,” *CB*, (22 July 1954), 4-5.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> “Resolution,” *CB*, (12 August 1954), 1, 4, & 8.

<sup>30</sup> J.B. Matthews. “Moscow’s Religious Fifth Column in the United States,” *CB*, (9 September 1954), 2-3.

<sup>31</sup> “Political Religious,” *CB*, (28 October 1954), 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

McIntire, the World Council of Churches was actively involved in this endeavor. The WCC used its influence to initiate a socialist agenda through Marxist ideology, the recently translated Revised Standard Version, the social gospel and the teaching of “the brotherhood of man.”<sup>33</sup>

One concept employed by Mainline Protestants during the Civil Rights Era was “the brotherhood of man.” The idea behind this phrase implies a common denominator among human beings. In its full usage it promotes the idea that God is the father of mankind, and mankind belongs to one another. This terminology was employed to promote the social gospel, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century movement promoted by theological liberals, who sought social and economic justice. In post-World War II America, Mainline Protestants used this teaching to promote peace, economic justice, end nuclear proliferation, and promote civil rights. The problem many Fundamentalists and Evangelicals had with the social gospel was its lessening of the importance of personal conversion and its stress on goodwill, social harmony and action.<sup>34</sup>

The Evangelical and Fundamentalist argument against the social gospel was simple. They believed revival and mass conversions must take priority over social ills.<sup>35</sup> Once enough people converted to Christianity, only then could the Church address social problems, like racism. Still, that did not stop Evangelical endorsement of the Civil Rights Movement and other social justice agendas. There was much Evangelical support for much of the Civil Rights Movement, but it was nuanced with the need for revival and conversion before society could truly change.<sup>36</sup>

Many in the Fundamentalist movement, however, opposed Evangelical support of Civil Rights because it led to partnerships with liberal and mainline Christians. Fundamentalists believed in the concept of “separation,” which teaches that doctrinally pure Christianity must be

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<sup>33</sup> “Resolutions,” *CB*, (4 November 1954), 4-5; “NCC’s Message,” *CB*, (9 December 1954), 1,3 & 5; “Communist Controlled Churches,” *CB*, (20 October 1955), 5 & 8.

<sup>34</sup> Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 118.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

separate from corrupted theology, even the result is absence from social action for good causes. McIntire was a Fundamentalist of this stripe. He believed that partnering with groups not holding to Fundamental Christianity was sin. Furthermore, he vehemently opposed to the concept of the “brotherhood of man” even as it pertained to the Civil Rights Movement. In the mid-1940s, McIntire railed against this teaching and said, “How wonderful that would be if it were true! But it is not. We are not brothers one of another, nor are we children of God until we have been born again.”<sup>37</sup> He saw “the brother hood of man” in terms of communism and labeled it a “collectivistic idea” designed to control economic and social freedom.<sup>38</sup> According to McIntire society “must have a remedy for sin before we can have a remedy for our social problems.”<sup>39</sup>

Later, as the Civil Rights Movement was in full view of American society, McIntire’s opposition rhetoric increased. When accused by mainline Protestants of racism because of his outspoken views, McIntire called the association “false.”<sup>40</sup> He publicly distanced himself from some racist groups, including the Ku Klux Klan, which opposed civil rights and argued that his public opposition toward the movement was based in political philosophy.<sup>41</sup> He lobbied against the Federal Employment Practices Commission because it used “the power of the State to attempt to force matters that belong to the heart and spirit.”<sup>42</sup> For McIntire, politics and religion were intertwined. He believed mainline Protestants erred with their use of the “brotherhood of man” as support for government imposition of civil rights.<sup>43</sup> When charged by religious groups, Christian and Jewish, that he and other Fundamentalists were bigots for opposing the brotherhood of man, he argued that “it is not bigotry to preserve the kind of life which the

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<sup>37</sup> McIntire, Carl. *Rise of the Tyrant: Controlled Economy vs. Private Enterprise*, (Collingswood, NJ: The Christian Beacon Press, 1945), 143.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 205-206.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>40</sup> McIntire, Carl. *Servants of Apostasy*, (Collingswood, NJ: The Christian Beacon Press, 1955), 244.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-245.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 245; “Brotherhood of Man,” *CB*, (5 April 1956), 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-246.

American people have had through the years.”<sup>44</sup> McIntire’s argument was not necessarily for the preservation of segregation, per se, but the republican ideal of limited government.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the anti-big government, racially neutral tone in many of McIntire’s statements, he did delve into the issue of race a few times during the post-Brown, pre-Civil Rights Act period. The *Beacon* republished some articles from other news sources related to race. These articles were depicted and placed in the paper in such a way that a pro-segregationist stance was the obvious conclusion. One article told the plight of a Methodist pastor, suspended from the ministry for his Fundamentalist views.<sup>46</sup> He was disciplined for “unchristian tempers, words or actions.”<sup>47</sup> The article outlined his support for segregation. This minister likened desegregation efforts to Communism, but claimed that racial discrimination and segregation were not the same.<sup>48</sup> Another article, “Carolina Baptist Group Protests Racial Stand” highlighted the protest of Baptists upset at the Southern Baptist Convention for an anti-segregationist platform.<sup>49</sup> Obviously, these two articles do not provide anything definitive, but they possibly shed light into McIntire’s racial views, particularly given a rare instance where he concluded that civil rights would lead to race-mixing.<sup>50</sup> He did not, however, claim that his race was superior, as many who argued against segregation.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> “Brotherhood and Bigotry,” *CB*, (28 February 1957), 1, 4 & 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> “Suspended Minister Assigns Himself a Job,” *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, (24 March, 1955) in *CB*, (31 March, 1955), 5.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>49</sup> “Carolina Baptist Group Protests Racial Stand,” *The Greenville News*, (6 June 1957) in *CB*, (13 June 1957), 4.

<sup>50</sup> McIntire, *Death of a Church*, 70.

<sup>51</sup> One example of a Fundamentalist publication that argued for separation based upon the superiority of Anglo-Saxon lineage was *Truth and Liberty*. A few examples from the Civil Rights Era are “Race Mixing and the Bible: The Christian View of Segregation,” *Truth and Liberty Magazine*, (October, 1957), 39-40; “That which GOD has Separated Let No Man Integrate,” *Truth and Liberty Magazine*, (October, 1958), 36-39; “The Racial Problem,” *Truth and Liberty Magazine*, (October, 1960), 16-18; “Lincoln on Racial Segregation,” *Truth and Liberty Magazine*, (February, 1962), 35-36; and “Is Interracial Marriage Scriptural?” by C.O. Stadskev, *Truth and Liberty Magazine*, (October, 1961), 1-8.

Still, the evidence lends itself to the conclusion that McIntire placed greater emphasis on social structures than race during the Civil Rights Movement. His fear Communism and an enlarged American government were the impetus of dissent. This seems logical given his support of churches in Africa, South Korea and Latin America, which shared his Fundamentalist views. Additionally, key figures in his International Council of Christian Churches were not American, nor were they white. It could stand to reason that McIntire viewed race as it operated within his social sphere. Still, this is unclear, though evidence in McIntire's associations shows his willingness to work with non-white religious groups when they did not threaten his political and religious values.

#### *McIntire and the Civil Rights Act*

By the 1960s, Carl McIntire had made his way on many lists. While he spent the 1950s and 1960s fighting Communism and the Civil Rights Movement, supporting HUAC and J. Edgar Hoover, he managed to find himself on Right Wing watch lists. During John F. Kennedy's campaign for the American Presidency, the Democratic National Committee called McIntire one of the five most "anti-Catholic bigots in America."<sup>52</sup> Additionally some of McIntire's associations with others on the Right garnished him the label "hate peddler" by many on the Center and Left politically in America.<sup>53</sup> By the time Kennedy began the push for Federal civil rights legislation, McIntire's *Twentieth Century Reformation Hour* aired on nearly 600 stations, thousands attended his "March For America" events, the *Christian Beacon's* circulation neared 45,000, the Christian Beacon Press was publishing multiple McIntire authored pamphlets and books, and his Christian Admiral Hotel hosted hundreds of guests weekly.<sup>54</sup> McIntire also helped

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<sup>52</sup> "DNC's Memorandum" *CB*, (29 September, 1960), 1, 3 & 8.

<sup>53</sup> Forster and Epstein, *Danger on the Right*, 107; "About the Wiscasset, Maine, Freedom Rally," *CB*, (18 July, 1963), 7.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 101, 105 & 111.

found and operate two colleges, a seminary, the International Council of Christian Churches, and the American Council of Christian Churches. Carl McIntire, ruler of a Fundamentalist army, now waged war against the impending Civil Rights Act.

As more Protestant groups assisted mobilization efforts for groups like the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and CORE, McIntire intensified his criticism.<sup>55</sup> In addition, President Kennedy's interest in Civil Rights legislation, led to McIntire's cry of "unrighteousness" because he believed Kennedy's high view of human ability to change society was wrong.<sup>56</sup> McIntire said that Kennedy lacked global understanding.<sup>57</sup> Because McIntire saw the Civil Rights Movement as a part of a Moscow-driven plan to overrun America, he viewed Kennedy as naïve. Kennedy's commencement speech at American University in 1963 offended McIntire because Kennedy dared to challenge domestic issues in a public venue. Kennedy said:

Finally, my fellow Americans, let us examine our attitude towards peace and freedom here at home. The quality and spirit of our own society must justify and support our efforts abroad. We must show it in the dedication of our own lives -- as many of you who are graduating today will have an opportunity to do, by serving without pay in the Peace Corps abroad or in the proposed National Service Corps here at home. But wherever we are, we must all, in our daily lives, live up to the age-old faith that peace and freedom walk together. In too many of our cities today, the peace is not secure because freedom is incomplete. It is the responsibility of the executive branch at all levels of government -- local, State, and National -- to provide and protect that freedom for all of our citizens by all means within our authority. It is the responsibility of the legislative branch at all levels, wherever the authority is not now adequate, to make it adequate. And it is the responsibility of all citizens in all sections of this country to respect the rights of others and respect the law of the land.<sup>58</sup>

McIntire called Kennedy "condescending" in his rhetoric, and said the Soviet Union was pleased by this speech because it endangered America.<sup>59</sup>

Shortly after Kennedy's important address, Civil Rights forces mobilized for a "March on Washington." This demonstration intended to show the federal government that civil rights

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<sup>55</sup> "The Protestant Desegregation Drive," *The Shreveport Times*, (30 June, 1963) in *CB*, (11 July, 1963), 5.

<sup>56</sup> Carl McIntire. "The President's Speech and Biblical Considerations," and "What Fellowship Hath Righteousness With Unrighteousness," *CB*, (27 June, 1963), 1 & 8.

<sup>57</sup> "The President's Speech and Biblical Considerations," 1 & 8.

<sup>58</sup> John F. Kennedy, "Strategy of Peace" (1963), in *A Documentary History of the United States*, ed. Richard Heffner (New York: Signet, 2002), 396.

<sup>59</sup> "The President's Speech and Biblical Considerations," 1 & 8.

legislation was a must to consider and pass. A. Phillip Randolph, organizer of a similar march during the 1940s was key, as well as other groups such as the SNCC, CORE and NAACP. Many historians have treated the March on Washington as one of the most important events of the 1960s, and even the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Carl McIntire treated it as a Communist action.

Prior to the March, McIntire warned his *Christian Beacon* readers that one of the chief reasons not to support the demands the marchers planned to make was because Communists supported their demands.<sup>60</sup> He reproduced articles from Communist publications such as *The Worker* to minimize the importance of this event and to connect it to his Communist conspiracy.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, McIntire argued that “the President’s Civil Rights Program involved the destruction of property rights as they have always been recognized and practiced under the Constitution.”<sup>62</sup> Regarding the planned March, McIntire claimed that politicians were “exploiting Negroes” and the promise of civil rights elicited “lawlessness and riot.”<sup>63</sup> The day after the March, the *Beacon* reproduced several articles from *The Worker* and *new america* with key phrases and words underlined to reiterate McIntire’s connection that civil rights legislation was tantamount to Communist infiltration intended to usher a revolution.

The *Beacon*’s critique of the March on Washington continued with an entire issue devoted to critique and accusation. McIntire attended the March as a counter protestor and “reporter.”<sup>64</sup> He declared that civil rights legislation was “the wrong approach” and that “the racial problem” in the US had “developed.”<sup>65</sup> McIntire’s use of the word “developed” is important. In his commentary, he painted the drive for civil rights as a construct brought upon

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<sup>60</sup> “March on Washington,” *CB*, (8 August, 1963), 1 & 8.

<sup>61</sup> *CB*, (8 August, 1963), 1-8.

<sup>62</sup> “Peace and Civil Rights,” *CB*, (8 August, 1963), 8.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>64</sup> “August 28 March on Washington Opposed by American Council of Christian Churches: Washington Suppresses News Released by Opposition Leaders,” *CB*, (5 September, 1963), 1 & 8.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

the US by outside forces who wanted to subvert and destroy republican values. He believed America already provided equality to all. He pointed to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as examples. McIntire declared the March “gave an entirely erroneous impression to the world concerning the status and position of the Negro in the United States.”<sup>66</sup> Throughout his commentary, he alerted his readers to an impending Communist revolution, the loss of basic freedoms, and called them to heed J. Edgar Hoover’s warnings.<sup>67</sup> McIntire never referenced the real discrimination many African-Americans faced, nor did he make mention of noted crimes committed solely because of race. Instead, he placed the “racial problem” at the feet of Communists and liberals.<sup>68</sup>

Despite McIntire’s opposition, federal civil rights legislation moved forward. In the wake of President Kennedy’s assassination, McIntire and other outspoken leaders of the Right found themselves under attack.<sup>69</sup> This was the fruit their opposition to civil rights and other social movements. Still, it did not slow McIntire’s resistance, and, perhaps, increased it.

Once the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was inevitable, McIntire wasted no time promoting his opposition. He solicited help from Senator Strom Thurmond, who he called a “Christian Patriot.”<sup>70</sup> Also, the *Beacon* made economic arguments that promised “equality” would create more inequality because it endangered property rights and personal freedom.<sup>71</sup> In April, McIntire published a letter sent to President Johnson, which urged him to veto the bill. McIntire drew upon his ideas of liberty and implored the President that Biblical freedom would be restricted in post-Civil Rights Act America.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, McIntire continued his charge that granting civil

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 1 & 8.

<sup>69</sup> “Hate,” *CB*, (5 December, 1963), 8.

<sup>70</sup> “Senator Thurmond – Christian, Patriot,” *CB*, (12 March, 1964), 7.

<sup>71</sup> ““Civil Rights” – A Weapon for Reds,” by James Shaw, *CB*, (9 April, 1964), 2.

<sup>72</sup> “From Dr. McIntire – A Letter To President Johnson,” *CB*, (2 April, 1964), 1.

rights was in opposition to the Constitution. After all, the Bill of Rights and Constitution provided the rights African-Americans sought leading McIntire to charge their demands infringed upon “personal liberty.”<sup>73</sup> He posed the question, “have we reached a day when, in order to have a “Negro freedom movement,” we must restrict the liberty of all Americans, including Negroes?”<sup>74</sup> McIntire did not mention the specific liberties that would be lost, but still made multiple allegations that free exercise of religion was in danger, property rights were at risk, and somehow anti-discrimination would lead to more discrimination.<sup>75</sup> One interesting request McIntire made was for a delegation from the ACCC. He called it was fair since both Kennedy and Johnson met with delegates from the mainline NCC.<sup>76</sup> There was a sense of irony in this request. The minister who argued against equality and fairness on the basis it already existed requested it for himself. McIntire concluded his letter with the admonition that “Big Government” was contrary to Scripture, and that too many believed “The Federal Government is my shepherd, I shall not want,” instead of God.<sup>77</sup>

During the time Congress debated the Civil Rights Act in 1964, McIntire and his organizations were busy. The *Beacon* reproduced speeches by Senators Robert Byrd, Barry Goldwater and Strom Thurmond, and continued the mantra that an impending Communist revolution awaited America.<sup>78</sup> The McIntire-affiliated International Christian Youth-USA (ICY) planned and hosted seminars in Mississippi to counter the NCC’s social justice oriented youth.<sup>79</sup> McIntire’s hotel, The Christian Admiral, advertised patriotic conferences for the summer.<sup>80</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 1 & 4.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 1 & 4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 4. This argument for “equal time” is interesting in light of McIntire’s later loss of his radio station in New Jersey for failure to comply with the Fairness Doctrine, granting equal time to opposing viewpoints.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>78</sup> ““Civil Rights” – A Weapon For Reds,” 2.

<sup>79</sup> “ICY-Mississippi Challenge To NCC-WCC “Revolution in the Delta” Program,” *CB*, (7 May, 1964), 1

<sup>80</sup> “Christian Admiral Conferences,” *CB*, (7 May, 1964), 4

ACCC held its annual conference in the Deep South with the theme, “Unmasking the Enemies of Faith and Freedom,” who, of course, were the advocates of civil rights.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, advertisements for Highland College announced to the *Beacon*’s 80,000 readers that it was the “20<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation College in the West.”<sup>82</sup> There was at least one sermon published which argued that the Civil Rights Act was akin to Soviet rule and contrary to “the basic rights of Bible law which is fundamental in Anglo-Saxon law and the foundation of our American system of law.”<sup>83</sup> The *Beacon* also published several Civil Rights related editorial cartoons. One featured an oversized, ape-like, caveman carrying a club labeled “Federal Power Cudgel,” wearing an animal skin named “Civil Rights “Bill”,” holding a petite blonde by the hair called “private property.”<sup>84</sup> The point was obvious. The America McIntire and others believed once existed had slipped away. Still, in the face of impending defeat, McIntire called his 20<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation movement into action and used organizations, mass media, and cult of personality to continue the fight.

After the Civil Rights Act passed, his Christian Beacon Press churned out thousands of copies of two pamphlets: *The Bible Versus “Civil Rights”* and *Repeal the “Civil Wrongs” Bill For Biblical Reasons*. Both outlined the usual combination of politics with McIntire’s beliefs that the Bible stood in opposition to the Civil Rights Act. McIntire alleged that “all citizens, including the Negro” were under “new bondage.”<sup>85</sup> Again, he made the case that this Act was simply Communism brought on America and warned his readers that the end of American

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<sup>81</sup> “ACCC to Hold Spring Convention in the South,” *CB*, (13 February, 1964), 1.

<sup>82</sup> “Advertisement for Highland College,” *CB*, (7 May, 1964), 7.

<sup>83</sup> R.T. Woodworth, “Civil Rights – Jacob’s Voice, Esau’s Hands,” *CB*, (14 May, 1964), 2 & 6.

<sup>84</sup> ““Bill” Is A Product of Devilution!” (7 May, 1964), 1.

<sup>85</sup> Carl McIntire, *Repeal the “Civil Wrongs Bill” For Biblical Reasons*, (Collingswood: NJ, The Christian Beacon Press, 1964), 2.

freedom loomed in the near future.<sup>86</sup> Still, McIntire vowed to press on with his opposition, and hoped for change because of his warnings against Communism and Martin Luther King's vow to continue the Movement.<sup>87</sup>

### *McIntire and King*

The name Martin Luther King invokes reverence in most American circles today. In the 1960s, this was not the case. As a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, King was continually under scrutiny. He was investigated by government authorities, jailed for protests, and ultimately was assassinated. For his efforts he won a Nobel Peace Prize, honorary degrees, a named federal holiday decades later, and the opposition from those who protested the Civil Rights Movement. Carl McIntire mentioned King very little in his writings, but what he did mention sheds insight into the Fundamentalist critique of the era.

The first critique McIntire and others published in the *Beacon* was theological. King emphasized the idea of "love" in ways Fundamentalists did not agree because he stressed love over "Fundamentalist fervor."<sup>88</sup> McIntire called King's cries for love "a sham" and more "tactic than reality" because King sought to "legislate love."<sup>89</sup> He also challenged King to prove that segregation was a sin, a cornerstone of religious promotion of civil rights.<sup>90</sup> Another issue of Biblical interpretation was King's acceptance of theological liberalism. It is true that King was not theologically conservative in the Evangelical or Fundamentalist sense.<sup>91</sup> King also allied

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 3 & 6 and Carl McIntire, *The Death of a Church*, (Collingswood, NJ: The Christian Beacon Press, 1967), 72-77.

<sup>87</sup> "Communist Endorsement," *The Bible Versus Civil Rights*, (Collingswood, NJ: The Christian Beacon Press, 1964), 4.

<sup>88</sup> "The Essence of Love – The Theology of Martin Luther King," by Lee Dirks, *CB*, (26 March, 1964), 3.

<sup>89</sup> Carl McIntire, "An Open Letter to Martin Luther King," *CB*, (11 June, 1964), 7.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 7. This mention of segregation is one of the few times the *Beacon* directly addresses the issue.

<sup>91</sup> For an example of King's theological liberalism see: Martin Luther King Jr., "The Humanity and Divinity of Jesus," *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr., Volume 1: Called to Serve January, 1929-1951*, ed. Clayborne Carson, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 257-262. This paper received a B+ and his professor wrote, "a solution which would appeal to the liberal mind." (257)

himself with Mainline Protestantism and was influenced by theologians of that stripe. Because of this, McIntire and others chided his denial of Fundamental doctrines such as the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and publicly called King to “return to the Bible” in his preaching and abandon his public advocacy of Civil Rights.<sup>92</sup>

Second, McIntire took issue with King’s call for civil disobedience and insinuated King was more interested in publicity than real progress. According to McIntire, King’s use of Saint Augustine’s view concerning the validity of unjust laws was against Scripture and moral law.<sup>93</sup> McIntire chided King’s “Letter From a Birmingham Jail,” and accused him of an attempt to stand “in the train of the Apostle Paul or John Bunyan.”<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, McIntire made the claim that non-violent protest, still led to violence.<sup>95</sup> He based this on his assumption that King’s approaches created the fear which King argued against without mention of Jim Crow laws, lynching, and other social inequalities.<sup>96</sup>

McIntire’s views concerning King’s admonition of civil disobedience is curious. On one hand, McIntire implied the State must be obeyed because God ordained it.<sup>97</sup> On the other, McIntire viewed some states as invalid in their role as law givers. In the 1930s, McIntire advocated disobedience to the Nazi government in its oppression of religious freedom, and racial suppression of Jews.<sup>98</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s, McIntire opposed social movements on the basis particularly when they violated a law or statute. But in the late 1970s, McIntire himself

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 3. McIntire’s interaction with King’s letter is minimal. He continually rebuked King for his use of government legislation, arguing that King’s lawbreaking was against God’s laws as well as the State’s.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 3. Also, see *Outside the Gate*, 86. McIntire argued that King’s “so-called nonviolent approach which always produces violence, and it is the revolution he is after, a condition in which the state is going to provide for and take care of the Negroes through its socialistic endeavors.” (86)

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 3. These views can also be found in *Author of Liberty* and hundreds of articles and editorials throughout the *Christian Beacon*.

<sup>98</sup> “Why Christians Should Be Kind to the Jews,” *CB*, (27 October 1938), 3; “Pastors Oppose Oath to Hitler,” (23 June 1938), 1; “Confessional Clergy Stir Reich,” *CB*, (4 June 1936), 1; “Nazis Protest Catholic Celebration,” *CB*, (19 August 1937),1; “Germany to Continue Persecution of Jews,” *CB*, (2 February 1930), 1.

disobeyed the “Fairness Doctrine” and caused public spectacles in his open defiance toward this law. It seems that McIntire’s opposition toward King and the Civil Rights Movement stemmed from his personal interests combined with an irrational fear of Communism.

McIntire’s third critique was naturally related to Communism. Because he believed legislation King wanted sapped individual rights and gave government more power, it was Communistic.<sup>99</sup> McIntire’s fears had some basis in reality. The *Beacon* republished articles from *The Worker* and other Communist publications which promoted the Civil Rights Movement, as well as King.<sup>100</sup> This obviously caused McIntire much alarm and chided King that he was advancing a global Communist agenda.<sup>101</sup> He warned of a “non-freedom freedom” based upon federal legislation, which trampled states’ rights, and made society less free.<sup>102</sup> McIntire’s opposition to Communism, coupled with his opposition toward many of King’s views led him to the accusation that King was more interested in advancing a personal and Communist agenda than the Gospel.<sup>103</sup> In McIntire’s eyes, King offered superficial, State-directed solutions more Communist than Christian.

#### *Assessing McIntire’s Losses*

Despite his efforts, McIntire failed in his opposition of civil rights. He articulated his views in republican terms that married Fundamentalism with politics, and mobilized his base to protest a growing government. McIntire’s actions against the Civil Rights Movement provide important insight into the broader Conservative resurgence which occurred in the 1960s. The 1964 Presidential election gave way to so-called “angry conservatism,” represented in the

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 7 and “Reuther, King Call Peace Big Post-Election Issue,” *The Worker* (8 November, 1964) in *CB*, (19 November, 1964), 7.

<sup>101</sup> “Open Letter to Martin Luther King,” 3, 7 and 8.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 7.

candidacy of Senator Barry Goldwater and popularity of George Wallace. McIntire and other religious leaders threw their support behind Goldwater, though he did not fully ally himself with religious leaders. Other Fundamentalists supported George Wallace and other politicians who vehemently opposed Civil Rights. In fact, Carl McIntire referred to Senator Strom Thurmond as a “Christian Patriot,” enjoyed a friendship with him, and commissioned him to write editorials for the *Christian Beacon*.

The anti-Civil Rights protests led to something else: division. Fundamentalist theologies are not only taught in white churches. In fact, there are African-American churches which share similar social and religious values. However, the impact of Civil Rights protests furthered a racial divide that still exists among theologically conservative churches. Fundamentalist and Evangelical operated colleges enroll African-American students at rates much lower than the national average for colleges and universities.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, some groups, such as the National Association of Evangelicals, that supported civil rights legislation, have issued statements for racial reconciliation and forgiveness for past racism and discrimination.<sup>105</sup> These were the effects of McIntire’s and others’ rhetoric, though they stressed their protests were only political in nature.

McIntire’s and others’ relationships with politicians, fund raising activities, and base building set the stage for future mobilization and division. Though Fundamentalists and others on the Right ultimately lost the culture wars of the 1960s, they gained a religious and social constituency that adhered to a conservative political philosophy. Later, McIntire became a novelty and passé among religious conservatives, but many of his methods and beliefs captured a portion of the public consciousness. This became evident with the so-called “New Christian

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<sup>104</sup> “Blacks Still Not Wanted At Many Christian Colleges” *The Journal of Higher Education* 17, (Autumn, 1997), 81.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

Right” in the 1970s, the Moral Majority, and various right-leaning Christian political groups which impact American society today.<sup>106</sup> One recent example was the religious protests against the Equal Rights Amendment which used arguments similar to McIntire’s protests of the Civil Rights Act.<sup>107</sup> These groups maintained that social structures which provided security, peace, and prosperity in the past were threatened by an impending action on the part of left-leaning politicians.<sup>108</sup> The need for preservation led to mobilization, which led to protest. This led to great divides which scholars would do well to explore further.

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<sup>106</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Right Wing Religion: Christian Conservatism as a Political Movement*, 409.

<sup>107</sup> Donald Matthews, ““Spiritual Warfare”: Cultural Fundamentalism and the Equal Rights Amendment,” *Religion and American Culture*, 3.2, (Summer, 1993), 133-135.

<sup>108</sup> Clarence Lo, “Counter-movements and Conservative Movements in the Contemporary US,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 8, (1982), 108.

