Trends in Black-White Church Integration*

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Historically, the separation of blacks and whites in churches was well known (Gilbreath 1995; Schaefer 2005). Even in 1968, about four years after the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. still said that "eleven o'clock on Sunday is the most segregated hour of the week" (Gilbreath 1995:1). His reference was to the entrenched practice of black and white Americans who worshiped separately in segregated congregations even though as Christians, their faith was supposed to bring them together to love each other as brothers and sisters. King's statement was not just a casual observation. One of the few places that civil rights workers failed to integrate was churches. Black ministers and their allies were at the forefront of the church integration movement, but their stiffest opposition often came from white ministers. The irony is that belonging to the same denomination could not prevent the racial separation of their congregations. In 1964, when a group of black women civil rights activists went to a white church in St. Augustine, Florida to attend a Sunday service,

the women were met by a phalanx of white people with their arms linked to keep the activists out (Bryce 2004). King's classic "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" was a response to white ministers who criticized him and the civil rights movement after a major civil rights demonstration (King [2002]).

Since King's remarks in 1968, progress in black-white church integration has supposedly been made. Surprisingly, however, there is little quantitative evidence that documents such progress or a lack of it. It is important to understand the status of, and change in, black-white church integration because integrated worship is an important measure of interaction, closeness, and race relations between blacks and whites. Even though American society is no longer just black and white, black-white relations have remained a central focus in race relations in this nation. Social distance between blacks and whites has remained the greatest (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Warren and Twine 1997; Yancey 1999). Blacks and whites often have totally different views of events and problems in our society. Whites blame blacks for being hypersensitive and quick to make accusations of racism, while blacks say that whites have no idea how much discrimination and prejudice still control their lives. Whites find race a very uncomfortable subject to discuss, so many just do not talk about it. Some even go so far as to say that we have a color-blind society.

Blacks find this refusal to talk honestly about race clear evidence of some form of racial blindness, but certainly not a good kind (Blauner 2006; Bobo 2006; Gallagher 2006; Omi and Winant 1986). Many blacks argue that as long as we all don't see the racial landscape clearly, we will never make the kind of substantial, permanent progress that we could. Although segregation between blacks and whites in residential neighborhood and workplace has been well researched and documented (see, for example, Farley et al. 1978; Farley and Frey 1994; Feagin and Feagin 2003; Herring 2006; Massey and Denton 1987, 1993; Oliver and Shapiro 1995; Royster 2006), one can hardly find systematic information on black-white church segregation or integration (Yancey 1999). This is certainly an area that cries for research.

One difficulty of studying black-white church segregation

or integration is the dearth of representative samples, especially at the national level. Fortunately, the 1978-1994 General Social Surveys (GSS's) provide some useful information to address this issue. Although church integration could be defined broadly, we choose a narrow definition of it in this paper because of its available measurement. We define black-white church integration as the intermixing of black and white worshippers in the same church, which is the opposite of black-white church separation. We measure it by the attendance of the same church by black and white worshippers. At the individual level, attending the church of another race indicates an action of racial integration in congregations. At the aggregate level, rate of attending the same church by members of different racial groups measures the degree or level of church racial integration. We seek to answer three questions: (1) What were the trends in the rate of black-white church integration in the period of 1978-1994? (2) How had the likelihood of attending the same church by blacks and whites changed in the period under study, holding other relevant factors constant? (3) What variables predict the attendance of churches of other race among blacks and whites?

The next section briefly reviews the literature. We then offer our hypotheses that answer our research questions. The subsequent section describes our sample, variables, measurements, and methods of data analysis. This is followed by the presentation of our research results. The final section summarizes the findings and discusses their implications.

Most of the literature on the subject of blacks and whites attending church together confirms the concern that churches have remained highly segregated; yet there exists very little quantitative research on this issue. Based on the National Congregations

Survey, Emerson (2006) estimated that only 7 percent of American congregations are racially integrated. Protestant churches were least racially mixed at a rate of 5 percent; Catholic churches (15 percent) were three times more likely to be multiracial than Protestant congregations; and all other non-Christina congregations were 28 percent multiracial (Emerson 2006).

One black pastor of a small integrated congregation in

Birmingham, Alabama placed the onus for the lack of integration on both blacks and whites. "The church is segregated now because that's what we like. In King's era, churches were segregated because whites didn't want to be around blacks. Now it's two-sided. Today we both choose to be separate," said the late Spencer Perkins, son of the Rev. John Perkins, one of the founders of the religious racial reconciliation movement (Gilbreath 2000: 11)

Another study found a difference in worship patterns of blacks and whites.

"Blacks were much more likely than either whites or Hispanics to read the Bible, pray to God, attend Sunday school, participate in a small group, and have a quiet time during a typical week. Church attendance levels were the same among all three groups, and the likelihood of born again individuals sharing their faith with nonbelievers was also equivalent across all three of the major ethnic groups" (Barna 2001: 3).

Some denominational studies confirmed a pattern of segregated worship and the often discriminatory practices and halting efforts of some denominations to try to bring blacks into their mostly white flocks. We did find some work that tried to explain the segregation in American churches in terms of history and culture.

One of the first detailed sociological studies of black religious life was done by W. E. B. Du Bois in his book, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study,* in 1899 (Zuckerman 2002). In fact, many credit Du Bois with creating the sociology of religion. Du Bois praised the African Methodist Episcopal Church of American as "the most remarkable product of American Negro civilization," and he theorized that the black church was the way in which African Americans preserved and maintained their African culture in slavery and after emancipation.

Larry L. Hunt and and Matthew Hunt (1999) studied attendance at black churches in the rural South using data from the 1972-1994 General Social Surveys and the 1984 National Alcohol Survey. They found that attendance at black churches was "involuntary" and driven more by the segregated nature of the rural South than choice.

"The thesis suggests that segregation has shaped two major

forces that mobilize involvement in the black church, especially in the historical mainline denominations: (1) the structural absence of secular outlets for achievement that has indirectly made the black church the community context in which status, leadership, and respectability can be achieved, and (2) the cultural presences of powerful community moral pressures to support the institution that provides both material and spiritual nourishment to the black community" (Hunt and Hunt 1999: 780).

Although Hunt and Hunt used the 1972-1994 GSS's, they did not examine whether or not blacks or whites attended each other's churches. Nor did their follow-up study (Hunt and Hunt 2001), which focused on whether African Americans have a distinctive religiosity and whether there is support for the "semi-involuntary" interpretation of African American religious involvements.

Evans, Forsyth and Bernard (2002) studied the continued existence of segregated churches in the Catholic Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana. They pointed out that for the Catholic Church, there are practical considerations involved in maintaining segregated churches, as it becomes more difficult to staff small parishes with a dwindling number of new priests, and the clergy already in place age and become unable to fulfill their duties. The researchers used surveys, interviews, and historical documents to conduct their study of the diocese. They found that blacks had not really been integrated into the white churches of the parish. When they were allowed to attend the white churches, they were often permitted to sit in segregated sections of the church or treated in some otherwise discriminatory ways to the point that many blacks left the Catholic Church in favor of Protestant denominations where they could have their own congregations. Finally, the diocese did establish some black churches, but until the 1930s, there were no black priests to staff these African American churches. In the 1970s, the church attempted to reintegrate the churches with uneven results. There was friction among the black and white parishioners that led to boycotts and other problems. Another impediment to reintegration was that blacks had developed their own distinctive worship practices infused with their music and culture that were more meaningful to them than those employed by the white

churches, and they did not want to give those practices up in the name of integration (Evans, Forsyth and Bernard 2002).

The hidden segregation among the Catholic churches points to a pattern of racism within church denominations. In the past, white Christians have used their religion to justify support for such racist practices as slavery, ban on inter-racial marriage, and racial segregation. When the National Council of Churches decided to support the civil rights movement during the 1960s, several southern denominations and churches protested. Some decided to withhold their donations to the organization and some congregants even left their churches (Wood 1972). White evangelical Christians supported various forms of segregation until the 1990s. Several, including Billy Sunday, held separate services and meetings for their black and white followers. One of the first to challenge segregation was internationally known evangelist Billy Graham, who in 1953 caused a furor by removing a rope that separated his audience according to race Chattanooga, Tennessee (Gilbreath 1995). Among the best known of the openly discriminatory denominations was the Church of Latter Day Saints which forbade black men to be in its priesthood until 1978 (Kimball 2006).

However, even churches that had no written sanctions against blacks have in their roots some form of discriminatory practice toward people of African descent. In her study "The Black Experience Within the Episcopal Church," McAdams (1998) described a denomination that has a long history of exclusionary practices dating back to the 14th century when it was believed that slaves should not be baptized because that might make them want to be free. Later in 1623, the Church of England, a precursor of the Episcopal Church, baptized slaves at Jamestown, Virginia, but the old idea that baptism would lead to ideas of freedom resurfaced. After the Revolutionary War and the formation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, the church formed black congregations. In 1602, Absalom Jones, a former slave, became the first black minister ordained by any denomination in the United States. Jones, an Episcopalian, and Richard Allen, a Methodist, were the first leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Philadelphia in 1816 (McAdams 1998). Another source set the

date of the founding of the AME Church as 1819 (Murray 1989).

By the turn of the century, there were only 15,000 black members of the Episcopal Church in the U.S. Throughout the 20th century, there were various efforts to form groups within the church to minister to blacks, but blacks were not consecrated as bishops and could not have full representation in some church bodies. In the 1960s, in response to the civil rights movement, Episcopalians decided to merge black parishes with white ones. "Blacks were expected to assimilate into the culture of white churches, but instead became unwelcome second-class citizens. There was a distinct lack of opportunities for black clergy in white or integrated parishes, and for this reason, the Church had difficulty in recruiting young blacks to the clergy"(McAdams 1998: 5).

Finally in 1994, the church adopted a statement called "the Sin of Racism" in which it acknowledged complicity in the genocide of Native Americans, slavery and racism, apologized, committed itself to work for a better future, and, two years later, established an anti-racism commission. McAdams wrote that only 4-6 percent of Episcopalians are black. "In the black community, the Episcopal Church carries an image of exclusiveness, open only to whites and light skinned professional African Americans" (McAdams 1998: 6). This image harks back to Weber's ideas of stratification as embodied by churches as an institution (Weber [2001]).

The Methodist Church, now known as the United Methodist Church, also has a long history with black membership. At the beginning of the 20th century, most blacks were Baptist or Methodist (Murray 1989); however, despite the importance of black Methodists to the church, racism has also been part of Methodism in America. For this reason, most black Methodists have worshipped in all black Methodist denominations since 1819 when Richard Allen organized the AME Church and 1821 when James Vargic organized the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Like the Methodist and Episcopal churches, the Presbyterian Church USA is also overwhelmingly white. An article published by the church's Racial-Ethnic Ministries said that "It is also worth noting that while 71.9 percent of the total population of the United States is white, 94 percent of the members of the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.) are white" (Koenig 2001: 1).

Black Christians have seen their churches as islands of freedom and self-expression in a racist culture (Murray 1989). While Murray (1989: 69) does not provide any numbers, he wrote that

> "By definition Methodists were Protestant, gentile and church members, and the black membership was a minute portion of black Americans. Yet the experience of the church was very similar to that of American society. Racial inclusiveness in the Methodist Church originated because white Methodists did not see the depth of racism in society, and black Methodists, like other black Americans were not willing to accept changes that simply gave a new appearance to American racism."

Over time deep philosophical differences arose between black denominations and churches and white ones. "African Americans lean toward a social emphasis; the white churches lean toward the evangelical, especially in the South, and for some reason, we have not been able to get those two to work in concert," said the Rev. E. Bailey, an African American pastor in Dallas (Gilbreath 2002).

Other historical studies documented the rise of black churches in response to second-class treatment at white churches (Bauer 1992; Collins 1998; Gravely 1984; Lincoln 1999). These black churches became a power base for blacks who went to church not only for religious solace and celebration, but also to coalesce to fight the discrimination and other social problems that beset them. Gravely (1984) pointed out that the African Methodist Episcopal churches of Philadelphia fought slavery in the South not only because it was morally wrong, but the members had a personal vested interest in eradicating an institution that could threaten their own freedom.

Sometimes trying to foster more diversity within a denomination has meant a total reevaluation of the denomination's origins. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 1995 issued a statement denouncing its racist beginnings and its support for slavery (SBC 1995). The denomination was founded in Augusta, Georgia in 1845 when slaveholders split from the main Baptist body. In the resolution

of 1995, the Southern Baptists asked for forgiveness from African Americans. Remarkably, the resolution acknowledged that many congregations had either intentionally or unintentionally barred blacks from worshipping in white Southern Baptist congregations. At the time the resolution was issued about 500,000 blacks were members of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC 1995).

Even politically and theologically liberal denominations have had their problems with integration. Mark D. Morrison-Reed (1994), a black Unitarian minister, who was elected president of the Unitarians in Canada about a year ago, described the problems black Unitarian ministers had kept their congregations going. Although the Unitarians boast about being liberal, Morrison-Reed wrote that at its height in 1968 before a painful schism between black and white Unitarians, black membership in the church was only 1 percent. He described the pain of being in an extreme minority:

"I am a black-born, Unitarian-bred minister of the liberal faith. I am an anomaly. This uniqueness has placed me in a dilemma. My allegiance is split. My long and enriching experience with Unitarian Universalism has led me to a commitment to the liberal ministry. At the same time, I am proud to be an Afro-American, and I realize my fate is tied to that of the black community.... The quandary I face is twofold. First, given my chosen vocation as a minister in a white denomination, how can I serve the black community? And, second how can I inform the Unitarian Universalist tradition through the black experience? (Morrison-Reed (1994: xii)"

It would be far from fair to say that only black ministers like Morrison-Reed are concerned about the segregation on Sunday morning. There have been some research and reports on the "racial reconciliation" movement among mostly white churches concerned with finding the ways to become more diverse (Chaddock 1998; Davies and Hennessee 1998; Gilbreath 2002; Okholm 1997; Peart 2000; Sherkat and Ellison 1999). However, most of the researchers note that most churches will have a difficult time convincing their own congregants that such an effort is necessary. One of the more successful attempts has been undertaken by the United Methodist Church, which for decades was strictly segregated (Collins 1998).

Collins describes how resistance to the civil rights movement carried over into many congregations which equated whiteness with godliness and patriotism and a defense of "our way of life." In 1959, one Alabama state senator even introduced legislation that would allow any congregation to withdraw from the parent denomination if it disagreed with the parent group and maintained ownership of its property (Collins 1998:55).

Drew R. Smith (2001) studied the church attendance patterns of residents of predominantly black Indianapolis public housing complexes to determine how churches relate to poor black people in the cities. Although dozens of churches were near the housing complexes, for one of them located in a white neighborhood, there was very little substantive integrated interaction among church members and housing complex residents. Smith found that while the white churches said they were involved with the residents of the housing complexes, it was only as providers of charity. Seldom did this volunteer work lead to actual invitations to the poor blacks to visit the white churches.

It appears that much still has to be done to bridge the gaps that have widened over hundreds of years.

Hypotheses

We propose that in the period under study, the rate of black-white church integration had slowly increased. We also expect that the likelihood of attending the same church by blacks and whites had slowly increased. The gradual rise in the rate and likelihood of black-white church integration was due to progress in American society and new efforts to bring people of different racial backgrounds together. As a result of the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most overt racial discrimination in daily life and social institutions including church attendance had declined (Bobo 2006; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Bryce 2004; Chaddock 1998; Collins 1998; Davies and Hennessee 1998; Farley and Frey 1994; Gallagher 2007; Lincoln 1999). Anti-black racial prejudices had also decreased (Firebaugh and Davis 1988; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1997). As American society became more open, racial integration in general and church integration in particular should

have increased. Moreover, there have been some accelerated efforts, most notably the racial reconciliation movement, to bring more integration to churches since the late 1980s (see Emerson and Smith 2000). For example, there has been an explosion of racial-reconciliation conferences, books, articles, study guides, videos, speeches, organizational practices, formal apologies, and even mergers of once racially segregated organizations in the evangelical community since the late 1980s (Emerson and Smith 2000). These efforts should have contributed to an increase in black-white church integration. While multiracial congregations were rare in the 1950s and 1960s, the number of such congregations has increased significantly across the nation since the 1970s (see DeYoung et al. 2003 for details).

The slow progress in black-white church integration can be explained by a number of cultural and structural factors. The cultural explanation argues that blacks and whites feel more comfortable to worship with people who share the same racial background (Emerson and Smith 2000). This in-group preference due to similar worship styles, desires to be with familiar people, and similar expectations about congregations tends to resist change. Similarities of like people in social associations engender group consensus and stability, which enable the creation of meaning and belonging (Verbrugge 1977). Chaves and Montgomery (1996) provided some evidence on the congregational preferences of people with similar characteristics through an experiment. However, direct evidence of black-white in-group congregational preferences is still lacking. Furthermore, structural factors probably play even more important roles in the internal homogeneity of congregations among blacks and whites.

One such structural factor is the persistent residential segregation between blacks and whites. This structural explanation contends that continuous residential segregation between blacks and whites severely limits the ability of churches to attract people outside their current dominant racial group, resulting in continuous black-white church segregation. Since people normally attend church in the neighborhood they live, a high level of continuous black-white residential segregation becomes a barrier for progress in interracial

congregations (Emerson 2006). Emerson (2006) documented some effects of neighborhood diversity on multiracial congregations, although he also claimed that this is neither a necessary nor a sufficient factor for multiracial congregations.

Social network theory, another structural explanation, maintains that people are recruited to join a congregation through social networks that are themselves homogeneous. The recruitment of racially diverse people could lead to the marginalization of people who are different and the instability of congregations. Competition from churches of other race could further increase the internal similarity of congregations. Empirical studies of Popielarz and McPherson (1995) and Emerson and Smith (2000) confirm these principles.

A third structural explanation is that differences between blacks and whites in average social class standing further increases the internal similarity of their churches, because people with atypical socioeconomic characteristics tend to have a higher dropout rate in voluntary associations including religious organizations (Blau 1977, 1994). Another structural explanation is that internally similar congregations are less costly than internally diverse congregations because the latter have greater potential for internal conflict and require greater efforts necessary to maintain social solidarity and group identity (Emerson and Smith 2000). The final structural explanation is that black-white racial tensions remained high as shown in such events as the consternation over the Rodney King trials (Feagin and Vera 1995), and efforts at black-white church integration were limited (Davies and Hennessee 1998; Evans, Forsyth and Bernard 2002; Gilbreath 2002; Lincoln 1999; Okholm 1997; Yancey 1999). A combination of these cultural and structural factors at the individual, community, and societal levels, accounts for the tenacity in the internal homogeneity of black-white churches.

Within each group, blacks or whites with a higher socioeconomic status should be more likely to attend the church of other race than their respective counterparts with a lower socioeconomic status because a higher social status is normally associated with less prejudice and more tolerance. In addition, people at the top

of the social hierarchy often associate with each other to maintain their status and separate themselves from those who do not have as much prestige and power; on the other hand, blacks or whites of lower class backgrounds may find less necessity of attending the same churches.

Political leanings also have an impact on how likely blacks and whites are to worship together (Morrison-Reed 1994). Blacks or whites who are more conservative are expected to be less likely than their respective counterparts who are less conservative to attend each other's church because conservatives, such as the evangelical Christians, have been less likely to favor racial integration than liberals.

Religion also has an influence on whether blacks and whites are likely to worship together. Protestant churches have for the most part maintained segregated congregations (Bryce 2004; Collins 1998; McAdams 1998; Murray 1989). In most cities, some black churches and white churches mirror each other. For example, there often exist a large, wealthy, influential white Protestant church, and a large influential, solidly middle-class black Protestant church. However, there is a movement to have some integrated worship as some blacks seek out denominations that have not been the traditional choices for black people. For both blacks and whites, Protestants should be less likely to worship with the other race than non-Protestants because of historical tradition.

Blacks and whites in urban areas are hypothesized to be more likely to attend each other's churches than their corresponding counterparts living in non-urban areas because opportunities and options for interracial congregational interactions are greater in urban areas than in non-urban areas. Region is an important factor. Blacks and whites in the South, Midwest, and Northeast should be less likely to attend church with each other than blacks and whites in the West because the West has a progressive reputation and fewer historically segregated communities.

Age should be negatively associated with the likelihood of attending the church of other race because earlier generations were more likely to be socialized into the environment of church segregation than later generations. Men will be less likely to attend

the church of the other race than women since men are more likely to be on the conservative side on social issues than women.

Data and Methods

We use data from the General Social Surveys 1978-1994, the years during which respondents were asked: "Do (Blacks/Negroes/ African-Americans)/Whites attend the church that you, yourself, attend most often, or not?" The GSS's are nationally representative samples of the adult population aged 18 or over. We restricted our analysis to respondents who were black or white and who provided valid responses to the question. This yielded a sample of 1,848 blacks and a sample of 10,310 whites. We did separate analyses for blacks and whites and present them side by side for an easy comparison.

Ideally, covering the periods before 1978 and after 1994 would allow us to understand the trend in black-white church integration more thoroughly. However, the question on church integration was not asked in the GSS before 1978 and after 1994 so that the earlier and post-1994 trends cannot be quantitatively documented. The GSS asked the question on black-white church integration for the first time in 1978 because of a growing concern about a persistently high level of black-white church segregation even in the mid 1970s. In the period prior to 1978, the level of black-white church integration was at an even lower level because of anti-black prejudice and discrimination and historical black-white congregational segregation. Another limitation is that the question was not asked in 1979, 1981, 1982, 1985, and 1992. Only data for 12 years during the 1978-1994 period are included. Finally, the question does not provide information on the regularity and frequency of attending the church of other race. These limitations notwithstanding, this nationally representative data set spanning 16 years offers a unique opportunity to understand the trends in American church integration.

Our dependent variable is church integration, which is measured by a dichotomous variable with 1 indicating attending the same church of other race and 0 indicating otherwise.

We use a number of independent variables including year of

the survey, education, family income, political orientation, religion, region, urban residence, age, and sex. In logistic regression analysis, we created a number of dummy variables for year with 1 for a designed year and 0 otherwise and used 1978 (the earliest year) as the reference category. This allows us to detect any nonlinear effect of year on the likelihood of church integration. Education is measured by years of schooling completed. Family income is an ordinal variable with 12 categories ranging from under $1,000 to $25,000 or more. Political orientation is a 7-point ordinal scale with 1 indicating "extremely liberal" and 7 indicating "extremely conservative." Religion was coded as a dummy variable with 1 for Protestant and 0 otherwise. Urban residence is a dummy variable with 1 for urban and 0 otherwise. We created regional dummy variables for the Northeast, Midwest, South, and used the West as the reference category. Age is a ratio variable measured by years. Sex is a dummy variable with 1 for male and 0 for female.

We first computed the rates of black-white church integration by year from 1978 to 1994. We then did logistic regression analysis separately for blacks and whites. For each subsample, we tested two models. The first model includes dummy variables for years only, and the second model adds other socioeconomic, political, demographic variables to the first model to see how the likelihood of church integration changed over time after holding these variables constant.

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for black and white respondents separately. For both groups, females out-numbered males, especially for blacks (65 percent females versus 35 percent males). On average, blacks were three years younger than whites. A large majority of the respondents lived in urban areas, more so for blacks. The white respondents were somewhat more evenly distributed across regions with higher proportions in the South and Midwest. Blacks, on the other hand, were highly concentrated in the South (52 percent). Whites had higher levels of education and family income than blacks. However, in terms of political orientation both groups were moderate based on the median scores. For both

groups, Protestants constituted the majority, especially among blacks; Catholics also comprised a large proportion (29 percent) among whites, but a small proportion among blacks; other religions made up around 6 or 7 percent for both groups. The proportions before 1988 were somewhat higher than later years, and the 27 percent for blacks in 1987 was due to over-sampling.

Figure 1 shows the trends in black-white church integration for the period under study. It is evident that the rates of whites attending the same church with blacks slowly increased with fluctuations from 37 percent in 1978 to 57 percent in 1984, then leveling off at the 40 percent range for almost a decade except for 1988, and finally jumping to 61 percent in 1994. The rates of blacks attending the same church with whites followed a similar trajectory except for a slight decline in 1994. The overall trends for both blacks and whites were slow increases in church integration over time. This is in agreement with our hypothesis. The levels of whites attending black churches were slightly higher than those of blacks attending white churches with the exception of 1990 and 1993. For the period of 1978-1994, the rate for whites attending black churches was 47 percent, and the rate for blacks attending white churches was 41 percent.

We use logistic regression analysis to answer our second research question. The results of logistic regression models for both the black sample and the white sample are presented in Table 2. Note that in the black sample, the black respondents reported whether whites attended their churches. Model 1 shows the logistic regression coefficients (i.e., B's) and odds ratios of the dummy variables for years only. All the logistic regression coefficients are positive, indicating that the likelihood for whites to attend the black churches in later years was higher than that in 1978 (the reference category), but only 1980, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1994 were significantly different from 1978. The overall pattern is similar to the pattern shown in Figure 1 (whites attending black church)—gradual increases with fluctuations. The odds ratios show the same pattern but are easier to interpret. For example, an odds ratio of 2.662 for 1994 means that the odds for whites to attend black churches in 1994 were about 2.7 times the odds for whites to do

so in 1978.

Our main interest lies in Model 2, which includes socioeconomic, political, and demographic variables in addition to the year dummy variables. The sign of the logistic regression coefficients does not change although the magnitudes of B's and odds ratios do and fewer coefficients are statistically significant at the .05 level. Figure 2 based on the odds ratios of Model 2 shows that holding other variables constant, the likelihood of whites attending the same church with blacks had stagnated over time except for 1984 and 1994. This pattern is different from the pattern shown in Figure 1 and Model 1. It suggests that the slowly increasing pattern observed in Figure 1 and Model 1 can be largely explained by the differences in these socioeconomic, political, and demographic variables. However, controlling for these variables, there was little progress over time.

Was the pattern of blacks attending white churches any different? Models 3 and 4 show evidence. In the white sample, the white respondents reported whether blacks attended their churches. Model 3 replicates the pattern shown in Figure 1—gradual increases in the likelihood of blacks attending the same church with whites with fluctuations. Except for 1983, all other years were significantly different from 1978 in the likelihood of church integration. However, controlling for other variables in the equation, the likelihood of blacks attending white churches did not increase much as shown in Figure 2 based on the odds ratios from Model 4.

Turning to our last question "What variables predict the attendance of the same church with other race among blacks and whites?", we examine the effects of socioeconomic, political, and demographic variables on the dependent variable in Models 2 and 4. In the black sample, urban blacks were about 2.3 times (3.257 – 1 = 2.257) more likely to report that whites attended their churches than non-urban blacks. Blacks in the South and the Midwest were 75.9 percent (.241 – 1 = -.759) and 62.3 percent (.377 – 1 = -.623), respectively, less likely than those living in the West to report that whites attended their churches. Blacks in the Northeast were not significantly different from those in the West in that regard.

Black Protestants were less likely to report that whites attended their churches than their non-Protestant counterparts. However, education, family income, political conservatism, age, and sex do not make significant differences in reporting church integration.

In the white sample, the majority of the predictors show effects consistent with our hypotheses. For example, urban residence significantly increases the likelihood of black-white church integration. Whites in the South, Midwest, and Northeast were less likely to report blacks attending the same churches with them than those in the West. Education and family income are positively associated with reporting black-white church integration. White Protestants were less likely to see blacks attending their churches than their non-Protestant counterparts. However, consistent with the finding from the black sample, political orientation appears to be not a good predictor of black-white church integration, so does gender. Albeit significant, age shows only a slight yet positive effect of reporting black-white church integration because of the very large sample size.

Conclusion

Using the 1978-1994 GSS data, this paper analyzes the trends in black-white church integration, a topic of great importance but little systematic research. Our bivariate analysis indicates that both the rate of whites attending black churches and the rate of blacks attending white churches had slowly increased with vacillation in the period under study. However, multivariate logistic regression analysis reveals that the likelihood of whites attending black churches and of blacks attending white churches had remained stagnant, holding socioeconomic, political, and demographic variables constant. We also find that urban residence, region, and religion are good predictors of black-white church integration, but political orientation and gender are not, and the effects of education, family income, and age vary depending on the specific samples.

Our findings suggest that progress in black-white church integration had been very sluggish or almost non-existent if socioeconomic, political, and demographic variables are held constant. We argue that an array of cultural and structural conditions including tenacious in-group congregational preferences, persistent

black-white residential segregation, social network recruitment and competition, black-white disparity in average social class standing, lingering black-white racial tensions, and limited efforts in black-white church integration explains this lack of progress. This also suggests that merely eliminating racial prejudice and discrimination cannot bring black-white church segregation to an end (Emerson and Smith 2000), and structural and cultural changes are required for black-white church integration. As a Judeo-Christian nation, church attendance is a significant indicator of the kind of society we have. As long as blacks and whites do not attend church with each other, then the injuries and separation of the past are not only in the past, but they are alive and well among us. Faith is at the core of the belief systems of many Americans. Church attendance provides a significant and meaningful opportunity for contact between members of different races. Multiracial congregation can increase egalitarian, cooperative, and intimate contact between different races, which can decrease racial prejudice and encourage racial harmony (Yancey 1999). Multiracial congregation is perhaps one of the solutions to the race problem in America (DeYoung et al. 2003). Racial reconciliation is a move in the right direction, but the movement appears to have made a minor impact on the racial separation of worshipers. Real consorted endeavors must be made at the national, state, and local levels to boost black-white church integration.

Today, when one visits various churches, it is still likely that congregations will be completely segregated or very slightly integrated—one or two white families in a black church, or five or six black ones in a white congregation. It is a profound statement on the state of race relations that Sunday morning remains such a segregated time that integrated congregations still merit news coverage because of their rarity. Because of the limitation of the GSS, we cannot document the changes after 1994. Future research should fill this gap with nationally representative samples.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Black and White Samples

	Blacks	Whites
Gender		
Male	35%	42%
Female	65%	58%
Mean Age	43 years	46 years
Residence		
Urban	92%	84%
Rural	8%	16%
Region		
Northeast	18%	20%
Midwest	24%	30%
South	52%	33%
West	7%	17%
Mean years of schooling	11.55	12.56
Mean family income	$8,000-$9,999	$15,000-$19,999
Political views	Moderate	Moderate
Religion		
Protestants	87%	64%
Catholics	7%	29%
Other	6%	7%
Year of Survey	8%	11%
1978	7%	11%
1980	8%	12%
1983	9%	10%
1984	9%	10%
1986	27%	10%
1987	6%	7%
1988	6%	7%
1989	5%	6%
1990	7%	7%
1991	6%	7%
1993	3%	3%
1994		

Table 2. Logistic Regression Estimates Predicting Black-White Church Integration, U.S., 1978-1994

	Black Sample				White Sample			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Predictor	B	Odds Ratio	B	Odds Ratio	B	Odds Ratio	B	Odds Ratio
Year (ref.=1978)								
1980	.544*	1.722	.357	1.428	300***	1.350	.253***	1.288
	(.246)		(.279)		(.088)		(.096)	
1983	.115	1.122	.194	1.214	.056	1.058	.194	1.214
	(.240)		(.329)		(.088)		(.118)	
1984	.839***	2.313	.589**	1.802	.380***	1.462	.281***	1.324
	(.235)		(.269)		(.089)		(.098)	
1986	.336**	1.399	.012	1.013	.073*	1.076	-.086	.917
	(.229)		(.262)		(.090)		(.100)	
1987	.516**	1.675	.361	1.435	.375***	1.456	.214**	1.238
	(.193)		(.221)		(.089)		(.099)	
1988	.618**	1.855	.220	1.246	.619***	1.857	.427***	1.533
	(.258)		(.293)		(.099)		(.109)	
1989	.365	1.440	.098	1.103	.265***	1.304	.090	1.094
	(.263)		(.299)		(.100)		(.111)	
1990	.311	1.365	.207	1.230	.412***	1.509	.268**	1.307
	(.268)		(.314)		(.104)		(.116)	
1991	.385	1.469	.139	1.149	.473***	1.605	.276**	1.318
	(.247)		(.286)		(.098)		(.109)	
1993	.233	1.263	.007	1.007	.593***	1.809	.378***	1.459
	(.262)		(.298)		(.099)		(.110)	
1994	.979***	2.662	.820**	2.271	.431***	1.539	.207	1.230
	(.323)		(.400)		(.125)		(.137)	
Education			.033	1.034			.077***	1.080
			(.022)				(.009)	
Family income			.008	1.008			.023**	.023
			(.018)				(.010)	
Pol. conservatism			.030	1.031			.022	1.022
			(.039)				(.018)	
Protestant			-.554***	.574			-.420***	.657
			(.172)				(.050)	
Urban			1.181***	3.257			.986***	2.680
			(.254)				(.076)	
Region (ref.=West)			-.975***	.377			-.623***	.536
Midwest								
			(.267)				(.069)	
South			-1.423***	.241			-.444***	.642
			(.257)				(.067)	
Northeast			-1.037	.355			-.384***	.681
			(.074)				(.274)	
Age			-.002	.998			.004***	1.004
			(.004)				(.001)	
Male			-.126	.882			-.047	.954
			(.117)				(.046)	
Constant	-.544***	.581	-.243	.784	-.665***	.514	-.146***	.117
	(.171)		(.569)		(.063)		(.193)	
-2 Log likelihood	2531.3		87.442		13855.275		11040.457	
Model χ^2	24.855		133.647		96.360		700.748	
Pseudo R^2	.018		.117		.013		.105	
Degree of freedom	11		21		11		21	
N	1,848		1,459		10,310		8,628	

* p≤.05** p≤.01 ***p≤.001

Notes: The odds ratio is the antilog of the B, and standard errors are in parentheses.

Figure 1. Rates of Blacks or Whites Attending the Same Church with Whites or Blacks, U.S., 1978-1994

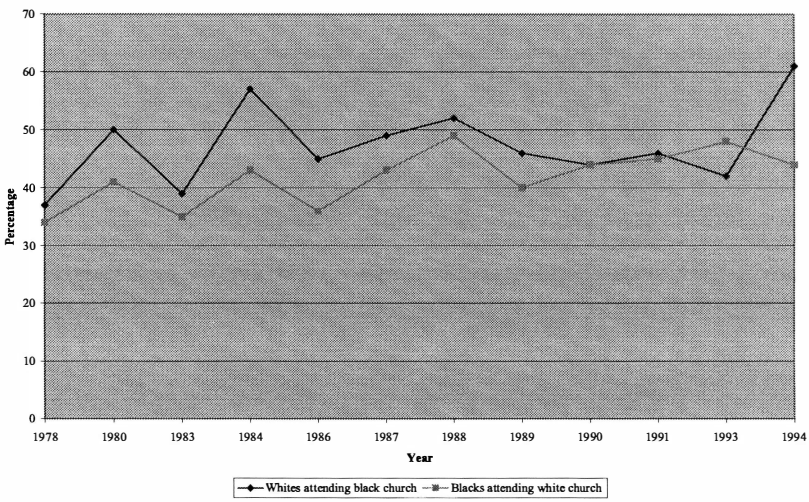
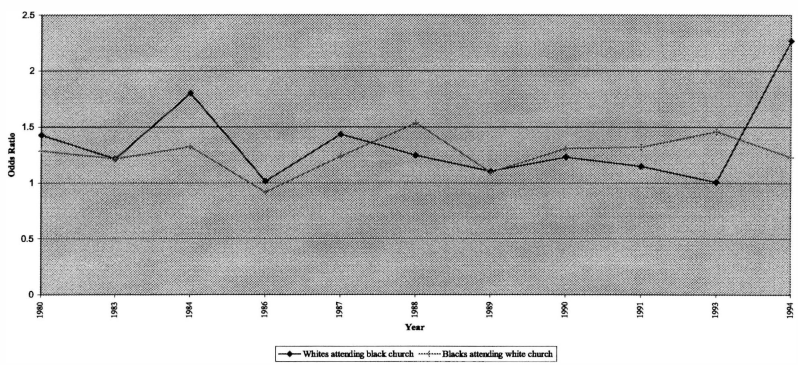


Figure 2. Odds Ratios of Attending the Same Church with Other Race by Year and Race, 1980-1994 (Reference = 1978)



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