Through segregation the Negro has been dominated politically
The tragedy is that the Church sanctioned it
But the tide has turned now Segregation is passing away

III Notice one other point of the text It mentions that this new city descends out of heaven from God rather than ascends out of earth from man

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 80, "God's Judgment on Western Civilization" / "The Vision of a World Made New"

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

"Propagandizing Christianity,"
Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church

[12 September 1954]
Montgomery, Ala.

King preached this homily, one of his most overtly evangelistic messages, during his first month as Dexter's pastor. Encouraging his listeners to become "propaganda agents" for the cause of Jesus, he poses this challenge: "If Hitler could do all of this with an evil idea it seems that we could rock the world with the truth of the saving power of the gospel"

Text Acts 1:8

Introduction For the average person, the word propaganda has evil and viscous overtones. Propaganda is considered something used by the demagogue to spread evil ideologies. Because of the high state of development that propaganda has reached in totalitarian nations, it is readily dismissed as something to be condemned and avoided. But propaganda does not have to be good or evil. There is a noble sense in which propaganda can be used. Remember that the term originated in the Catholic Church. Propaganda is simply an attempt to disseminate principles or ideas by organized effort. And so when Jesus says to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel," he is saying in effect, propagate my word, spread it, disseminate it, push it into every nook and cranny of the universe.

1 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
2 Cf Mark 16:15. In another sermon with a similar theme, King wrote an alternate introduction that refers to Harry Emerson Fosdick's sermon, "The Fine Art of Making Goodness Attractive." (Fosdick, The Hope of the World, pp. 195–203). King's introduction reads, "In these days of modern transition confusion, when the forces of evil seem to stand before us like the beaming sun and the forces of good seem to be lost behind the dim fog of obscurity, one is almost forced to question the validity of religion. Xny Has religion lost its power of directing and guiding the spiritual life of society? Has religion been relegated to a mere creedal system with no transforming power? These are serious questions. They are questions which are probably lurking in the minds of all well-thinking Christians and even non-Christians. Amid this situation I am lead to ask another question which to me is all important: Have we as Xnys properly and adequately propagandized Christianity? I can imagine that many of you are now quite astonished after hearing me use the word propaganda in relation to religion. The word propaganda for most of you has usually carried an unpleasant connotation. We often think of propaganda as a means of
In the 1 chapter of the book of Acts Jesus is reported to have said to his disciples, "ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judae, and in Samara, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." I would like to use this text as a basis of our discussion this morning, for it in these words Jesus is calling upon his disciples to propagate his word. He is saying in effect, propagate my word, spread it, disseminate it, push it into every nook and corner of the universe, carry it to every tribe and every race, every nation and every village. Propagate my word to the uttermost part of the earth. This command comes to every generation of Christians Jesus is still saying to Christians everywhere, ye shall be my witnesses, ye shall be my propaganda agents, ye shall be the spreader of my truth in all the world.

Now let us look at this text more closely and see what Jesus means by our being his witnesses. How are we to propagate Christianity? The word witness goes through has three meanings in the New Testament, and these three meanings of the words witness set forth our responsibility in propagating Christianity.

The first meaning of the word is found in the Gospels and Acts. Here witness means simply to go out and talk about the resurrection. In other words it means verbal affirmation. Now this is important. We are forever confronted with the pressing demand to go out and talk about Christianity. Never underestimate the power of words. (Advertising has discovered it, Hitler discovered it.) If Hitler could do all of this with an evil idea it seems that we could rock the world with the truth of the saving power of the gospel. If the advertisers can convince the men that they can't do without their products, we ought to be able to convince men of the productive power of God in Christ. (I can remember as a little boy how my grandmother cooked biscuits and how I would run around the community and share them. They were too good to hold.) Do you really believe in this thing called Christianity? Do you believe that here lies the solution to the world's problems? Do you believe that Christianity has the power to give new meaning to life? Well tell the world about it. Tell your colleagues about it, your workers, your fraternity brothers, your playmates.

And Don't be afraid to defend the Church where necessary. Certainly the Church is not perfect. It has often stood in the way of social and scientific progress and as I will show in a few minutes I am often ashamed of the Church, but in spite of its errors I would hate to see what the world would be like without it.

(a) If someone tells you that all preachers are racketeers and insincere, go back and tell
(b) If they tell you that the church sanctuon ignorance, go back and tell them
(c) you don't have to be a philosopher [or?] theologian to talk about it. Be able to say as the man of old, "I was blind but now I see."
King writes, "I am ashamed of Christianity, but not of Christ" in the margins of his copy of Harry Emerson Fosdick's 1937 book *Successful Christian Living* (pp. 80–81).
II The second meaning of witness comes from Paul. For him, witness means living a triumphant life. It is not enough to talk about it but we must live about it. (Quote Edgar Guest) The most indisputable fact in all the universe is a personal example. As we look around we see divorces rampant, the liquor traffic on the march, gambling almost legalized, sex turned into an immoral plaything. And involved in all of these is Christians—

(a) The Church has been too soporific
(b) The ministers are not to be excused

(Preached at Dexter Sept 10 1954)

ADf CSKC Sermon file, folder 55, “Propagandizing Christianity”

4 King probably refers to Edgar A Guest’s poem “It Couldn’t Be Done” “Somebody said that it couldn’t be done / But he with a chuckle replied / That ‘maybe it couldn’t,’ but he would be one / Who wouldn’t say so till he tried / So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin / on his face. If he worried / He started to sing as he tackled the thing / That couldn’t be done, and he did it!” (Guest, Breakfast Table Chat [Detroit n.p., 1914], p 148)

5 King wrote this date, a Friday, next to the sermon’s title. He probably preached this sermon on Sunday, 12 September. He was also scheduled to deliver a version of this sermon on 2 July 1950 (“Ebenezer Baptist Reveals Slate,” Atlanta Daily World, 1 July 1950)

“Creating the Abundant Life,”

Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church

26 September 1954

Montgomery, Ala

In this handwritten text, King explains that each person can have a meaningful life. “Discover your calling. Then give your heart, soul, and mind to it. And thereby life will present you with meaning that you never thought was there. You are on the road to creating the abundant life.”

Subject: “Creating the Abundant Life”

Text I come that you might have life John 10 10