(3) God so love the world that he gave God’s love is self-giving and spontaneous. No body commanded God to give his love. It is just God’s nature to give. God’s gift to man was given not because God was asked to give it, but because he wanted to give it. Man didn’t even ask for it (Give ill of wife). So it is with God’s love. Can’t you see what the hymn writer meant when he said:

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a present far to small
Love so amazing so divine
Demands my life, my all and all.

(4) God’s love is redemptive. God’s love gives life and new light. It saves us from death.

III Conclusion. All that I have said about the characteristics of God’s love is brought to clearer light when we turn our eyes toward Calvery, for it is here that we find the supreme example of God’s love. And the scene on Calvery is more than a meaningless drama that took place on an earthly stage, but it is a telescope through which we look out into the long vista of eternity and see the love of God breaking forth into time. It is God’s way of saying to wayward man, “Come home I still love you.” (Tell story of the musician who went to France.) Paul was right “Nothing can separate us from the love of God.”

Preached at Dexter Sept 3, 1954

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 69, “God’s Love”

7 King used the following illustration in his sermon “God’s Love,” Sermon notes, 5 September 1954, in Papers 2 327. “So God’s gift to man was given not because God was asked to give it but because he wanted to give it. e.g. a gift that a man gives his wife which she doesn’t ask for is more appreciated than one which is given which she ask for.”

8 King cites Isaac Watts’s hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (1707)

9 Cf Romans 8 35–39

10 King may have misdated the sermon since 3 September was a Friday.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

“The Vision of a World Made New”

[9 September 1954]

[St. Louis, Mo.]

At the invitation of Nannie Helen Burroughs, president of the Woman’s Convention Auxiliary, National Baptist Convention, King spoke at the organization’s annual meeting on the theme of the convention, “The Vision of the World Made New.” He rejects colonialism and imperialism and condemns segregation, noting, “The tragedy is that the Church sanctioned it.” Still he remains hopeful. “Today we stand between

1 Burroughs to King, 3 August 1954, in Papers 2 282–283
two worlds, a world that is gradually passing away and a world that is being born. We stand between the dying old and the emerging new.” Burroughs later wrote King to thank him for sharing with the delegates “What your message did to their thinking and to their faith is ‘bread cast upon the water’ that will be seen day by day in their good works in their communities.”

Frequently there appears on the stage of history individuals who have the insight to look beyond the inadequacies of the old order and see the necessity for the new. These are the persons with a sort of divine discontent. They realize that the world as it is is far from the world that it ought to be. They never confuse the “isness” of an old order with the “oughtness” of a new order. And so in every age and every generation there are those persons who have envisioned some new order. Plato envisioned it in his Republic as a time when justice would reign throughout society and philosophers would become kings and kings philosophers. Karl Marx envisioned it as the emergence of a classless society in which the proletariat would ultimately conquer the reign of the bourgeoisie. Out of such a vision grew the slogan “From each according to his ability, to each [according to his need].” Edward Bellamy envisioned it as Looking Backward as a time when the inequalities of monopoly capitalism would be blotted out and all men would live on a relatively equal plane with all of the conveniences of life. The Christian religion envisioned it as the kingdom of God, a time when God would reign supreme in all life, and love, brotherhood and equal relationship would be the order of society. In every age men have quested and longed for a new order.

Many centuries ago there [strikeout illegible] a man by the name of John was in prison on a lonely, obscure island called Patmos. In such a situation he was deprived of almost every freedom, but the freedom to think. He thought about many things. He thought about a possible new world and a new social order. He meditated on the need for a change in the old pattern of things. So one day he cried out “I saw a new heaven and a new earth. I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.”

John could talk meaningfully about the new Jerusalem because he had experienced the old Jerusalem with its perfunctory ceremonialism, its tragic gulfs between

2 Burroughs to King, 21 September 1954, in Papers 2 295-296, see also Notes on Speech by Martin Luther King, Jr., at Woman’s Auxiliary, National Baptist Convention on 9 September 1954, September 1954, in Papers 2 294
3 Reinhold Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1937), pp. 137-138. “The problem of maturity is not only to achieve unity amidst complexity of impulses but to overcome the particular conflict between the is and the ought of life, between the ideal possibilities to which freedom encourages man and the drive of egoism, which reason sharpens rather than assuages.”
5 King refers to Bellamy’s Looking Backward 2000–1887, a copy of which Coretta Scott gave to him during the spring of 1952. For his thoughts on the book, see King to Coretta Scott, 18 July 1952, pp. 123-126 in this volume.
6 Cf Revelation 21:1-2
abject poverty and inordinate wealth, its political domination and economic exploitation. John could see this old Jerusalem passing away and the new Jerusalem coming into being. He is saying something quite significant here. He realized that the old earth did not represent the earth as it should be. He knew that the conditions of the old Jerusalem did not represent the permanent structure of the universe. The old Jerusalem represented injustice, crushing domination, and the triumph of the forces of darkness. The new Jerusalem represented justice, brotherhood, and the triumph of the forces of light. So when John said he saw the new Jerusalem, he was saying in substance that he saw justice conquering injustice, he saw the forces of darkness consumed by the forces of light. Ultimately history brings into being the new order to blot out the tragic reign of the old order.

II. Now if we will look far enough we will see the truth of John's vision being revealed in the contemporary world. Today we stand between two worlds, a world that is gradually passing away and a world that is being born. We stand between the dying old and the emerging new.

A. On a world scale we have seen the old order in the form of colonialism and imperialism. These lead to domination and exploitation.

(1) Number of persons in the world as compared with number of colored.

(2) Fifty years ago the vast majority of these persons were under some colonial power.

India under British

Africa under British, French and Dutch

China

Indonesia under the Dutch

(3) One of the tragedies of the Church was that it became allied to the old order. Note South Africa and India.

(4) But in spite of this we have gradually seen the old order pass away. Most of these colonial people are now free.

(5) So, like John, we can say we see a new heaven and a new earth. The old order of ungodly exploitation and crushing domination is passing away.

B. On a national scale we have seen the old order in the form of segregation and discrimination.

(1) Segregation has been an instrument all along to remind the Negro of his inferior status. Its presupposition is that the group that is segregated is inferior to the group that is segregating.
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
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”

“Propagandizing Christianity,”
Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church

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, propagandize 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 Samara, 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. Xtn has lost its power of directing and guiding the spiritual life of society? Has religion Xty been relegated to a mere creodal 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 most important. Have we as Xns 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