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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES........................................................................................................i

INTRODUCTION.............................................................................................................1

CHAPTER 1: THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND DESEGREGATION OF THE UNIVERSITY, 1940-1960........................................................................................................7


CONCLUSION................................................................................................................59

BIBLIOGRAPHY.............................................................................................................64
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Leroy Frasier, John Brandon, and Ralph Frasier stand on South Building's steps……………………………………………………………………………………………………7

Figure 2 – Students gather to support UNC’s food workers……………………………………38

Figure 3 – Students pose in front of the Y Building in the 1970s……………………………42

Figure 4 – A local craftsman featured at the Handicrafts Bazaar .................................51
INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twentieth century, a student member of the Young Men’s Christian Association at the University of North Carolina described the newly constructed Y Building as “the centre of college life.” Indeed it was, as it sat in the very center of campus, across from Carolina’s iconic Old Well. Initially designed for religious purposes, the building housed a small chapel, rooms for Bible study, and a main reading area with Christian and secular periodicals. Y men nurtured their spirituality through evangelism at the university and in Orange County. They welcomed incoming undergraduates through the Y’s freshman camp programs, reached out to local clergy, and served several rural Sunday schools. The UNC YMCA’s evangelistic mission of the Progressive Era transformed into one of social activism shortly after the Young Women’s Christian Association was founded at the university in 1936. By the late 1930s, the YMCA openly included women in its projects, challenging campus norms that excluded female students from fully participating in college life.

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2 Francis Osbourne, The Y.M.C.A. in the University (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University Magazine, 1900).

3 Philip Woollcott, Fifty-four Years of the Y.M.C.A (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Dialectic and Philanthropic Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 1914).

4 For examples of early YM-YMCA relations at UNC, see scrapbooks in the Campus Y Records, University Archives, Wilson Library, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to sponsoring social action projects, the two associations jointly hosted social events and included incoming female undergraduates in freshman camp activities.
This thesis examines those emerging social action campaigns while tracing the secularization of the Campus Y\textsuperscript{5} from 1930 to 1980. In the midst of changes brought by civil rights, women’s liberation, and labor movements, the Y remained the center of college life, but the institution began to garner a very different role. No longer did Y students at UNC focus on spiritual self-development. Members increasingly sought to change the society in which they lived, and at times this commitment to social justice meant openly opposing policies set by the university administration.

There is a notable correlation between the declining religiosity of the Y and the increasing social progressivism of its projects. Christianity inspired initial waves of activism but ultimately posed serious limitations for Y students particularly as they explored new avenues for social justice. The real question is why these changes occurred gradually and how they reflected broader trends in American culture. This study of the Campus Y contributes to historiographies of student activism, American Protestantism, and religion in higher education, and social movements in the twentieth century.

Because the bulk of the Y’s projects addressed racial inequality, this study particularly addresses narratives of the civil rights movement. Many prominent civil rights activists were also ministers and church leaders, and faith informed their approaches to social action. For example, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. emphasized permanent Christian values in his sermons:

\begin{quote}
Christianity sets forth a system of absolute moral values and affirms that God has placed within the very structure of this universe certain moral principles that are fixed and immutable. The law of love as an imperative is the norm for all of man’s actions.\textsuperscript{6}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{5} Prior to the departure of Y Director Anne Queen in 1976, few referred to the Y at UNC as the “Campus Y” in official organizational documents. I will use the term to describe the Y when it appears; however, sources mention that the name did not officially change until 1980. Because the Y at UNC existed before the national YMCA obtained copyright, disaffiliation did not pose problems for the continued use of its name.

\textsuperscript{6} Martin Luther King, \textit{Strength to Love}, (Harper & Row, 1963), 95.
This history of the Campus Y at UNC reminds us, too, that we cannot overlook aspects of religious identity when examining civil rights activism. Christianity was central to the Y’s mission for over a century. Without discussing why Y members chose to mobilize, we will never fully understand the changes that followed.

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall argues for revisiting accepted narratives of the civil rights movement that locate it narrowly to two decades—the 1950s and 60s—and confine it mostly to the South. She discusses the role that public memory plays in perpetuating dominant narratives that exclude the political and economic objectives of the movement, preventing “one of the most remarkable mass movements in American history from speaking effectively to the challenges of our time.”

Examining how religion informed civil rights activism at UNC helps to reshape this historiography. Although studies examine student activism or the role of Christian leadership during the civil rights movement, few examine those students who were Christians, and even fewer focus particularly on Southern student activism in the 1960s and 1970s. This history of the Y demonstrates how Christianity offered possibilities for social justice projects at UNC, but

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7 UNC’s chapter of the YMCA was founded in 1860, a year before North Carolina seceded from the Union to fight for the Confederacy. The association then went on hiatus but returned to campus following the end of the Civil War. In the preamble to the YMCA’s constitution, the aims of the order were set forth “to promote Christian sympathy and brotherhood, and to advance the moral and religious welfare of the students.” See constitutions and historical material in the Campus Y Records, University Archives, Wilson Library.


as times changed, how this religious framework placed limitations on students seeking outlets for social justice activism.

A close look at how the Y changed over time can also expand the history of mainline Protestantism in the mid-twentieth century. In his 1994 study of establishmentarian Protestantism and American universities, George M. Marsden argues that the same forces that enabled liberal Protestantism to become dominant also led to religion being eliminated entirely from higher education. This thesis examines secularization on a much smaller scale, yet transformations within the Y help us to understand broader trends within mainline Protestantism. Following a peak in the 1950s and 1960s, mainline Protestant denominations have suffered losses of nearly every empirical measure, including church membership, attendance, and financial support. The Protestant establishment’s influence in American culture dissipated as inclusiveness became increasingly valued. As society underwent profound changes in the second half of the twentieth century, mainline Protestants’ response to accommodate those changes worked against them.

This study uncovers why mainline Protestant values once mobilized by Y student leaders and staff in pursuit of social justice aims no longer worked for them by the 1980s.

This thesis relies heavily on oral history interviews to construct a coherent history of the Campus Y at the university. Archival materials and campus publications provide the skeleton for this narrative, but interviews with Y students, staff, and university administrators offer critical

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details and reflections for close study. Della Pollock describes the performance of oral history, the act of telling a story, as a transformational process:

[Oral history] is cocreative, co-embodied, specially framed, contextually and intersubjectively contingent, sensuous, vital, artful in its achievement of narrative form, meanings, and ethics, and insistent on doing through saying: on investing the present and future with the past, re-marking history with previously excluded subjectivities, and challenging the conventional frameworks of historical knowledge with other ways of knowing.\(^\text{13}\)

The use of oral history for this project on the Y enriches it in several important ways. First, it empowers various historical actors, whose voices would have otherwise been missing from the archive, to contribute to a collective memory of the events that took place at UNC. Furthermore, oral history interviews help to create an engaging, authentic narrative that includes reflections of people’s lived experiences. As shown by Pollock, people remember and share stories that matter to them when interviewed for an oral history project. For a study that explores how value systems informed social activism in the Campus Y, oral history therefore offers critical insights into how Y staff and members saw themselves and others in the university community; and by using oral history interviews in conjunction with archival materials, we gain a better understanding of how and why the Campus Y took measures to drop the “C” in its name by the 1980s.

Chapter 1 of this thesis explores the Y’s early campaigns to desegregate the university; Chapter 2 shows how Y students and staff acknowledged intersections of race and class, during which Christian values played both constructive and contradictory roles in resolving the 1968-1969 cafeteria workers’ strike. Chapter 3 outlines the Campus Y’s eventual disaffiliation from the YMCA and YWCA national bodies and, as a result, its religious heritage. Acknowledging

that much of this history is in recent memory, it concludes by drawing connections to the Y’s current social action projects.
CHAPTER 1: THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND DESEGREGATION OF THE
UNIVERSITY, 1930-1960

On the bright morning of September 15, 1955, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill opened its doors to a new class of eager undergraduate students who each took part in a nearly 160-year-old academic tradition. Though enrollment had certainly increased since the university’s founding to include 6,575 students, but in many ways the incoming class of 1955 resembled that of the original.14 However, with the Supreme Court’s recent ruling in Frasier et

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al. v. Board of Trustees the status quo had changed. After a tumultuous period of litigation, Acting President Harris Purks and Chancellor Robert House announced the university, “having determined that they are academically qualified,” would admit three black students to study. That fall LeRoy Frasier, Jr., Ralph Kennedy Frasier, and John Lewis Brandon became the first black undergraduates to attend UNC (see Fig. 1). And when the time came for the Frasiers and Brandon to enter the university, the students who took initiatives to acclimate the trio were members of the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations, known jointly as the Y.

To understand the role the Y played in desegregation of the university, it is important to know the organization’s history of involvement with race relations and campus outreach in the years leading up to integration. During this earlier period, the Y’s activities contributed to a social consciousness that shaped its social justice work in significant ways. Frank Porter Graham, who eventually became University System President, was Y Secretary at UNC when the YMCA created initiatives to aid black students in Orange County in the 1910s. Members taught locally at “Negro Night Schools,” instructing black students on subjects such as arithmetic, English, history, spelling, and writing. These outings served as a means of religious expression for members who sought to imitate the moral character of Jesus Christ. On campus the Y also organized educational programs and classes for students and sponsored publication of

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17 Although the YMCA and YWCA maintained separate student cabinets into the 1970s, the associations shared committees on race relations and jointly sponsored numerous projects on campus. In 1954 the paid staffs and advisory boards were merged. Because of this close working relationship, I will refer to the two associations together as the Y unless otherwise noted.
the student handbook. \(^\text{18}\) Increasingly the Y sought to transform both its members and the community at large through service.

This work informed the Y’s activities well into the 1930s, 40s, and 50s as the university grappled with the prospect of desegregation. Y students and staff actively pushed for racial equality in higher education through a variety of means. The Y worked to strengthen relationships on campus and in the community, which culminated in tangible social change as it appealed for desegregation of the university. This chapter argues that by adopting a social gospel, one that emphasized service-based action and reflected the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Y supported efforts to admit black students to UNC. Between the 1930s and 1950s, it employed a flexible and inclusive version of Christianity to meet emerging activist demands. This movement among Christian student activists at UNC imitated broader trends in American Protestantism. Although Y students did not hold protests, they clearly saw service as a form of social action. The Y played a role in both preparing whites for integration and acclimating black students to college life through campus tours, talks, letters, and ongoing pleas to university administrators.

**The Social Gospel**

During the late 1930s, YMCA and YWCA hosted fireside “bull-sessions” with faculty at UNC, where the two associations provided a safe space to discuss social problems on campus. The 1939 Yackety Yack, UNC’s yearbook, described these meetings as one of the ways in which the Y tried to “present and develop a religion that is alive, that has to do with the life of the students in relation to each other and to all people… By relation Christianity and social problems

both are given vitality and strength.” Y members believed that people were bound by a common life, and this emphasis foreshadowed events to come. As it sought new avenues for social action, the Y embodied a form of Christianity that allowed for more possibilities. This version involved developing relationships within and outside the insulated campus community.

Leaders at the university, notably Frank Porter Graham, also supported the notion that Christian morality could cure societal ills. While president of the university in the 1930s, Graham worked to advance civil rights causes nationally. He later served as chairman of the Advisory Committee on Economic Relations in the South under President Roosevelt and spoke frequently on the importance of education in promoting “Equal and exact justice to all.” Graham noted, “the treatment of the Negro as the main test of the genuineness of democracy and of Christianity.” When President Truman appointed him to the Committee on Civil Rights in December 1946, Graham remained committed to racial equity and recommended desegregation in higher education. While education helped people to understand each other, Graham claimed, “Religion provided the motivation of good will for making improvements in social rights and relations.”

Y staff and students worked to create an atmosphere of religious pluralism, particularly during the 1950s under the leadership of YMCA Secretary Claude Shotts. While most members were Protestant in some variety, Y meetings on campus did not involve rigorous study of scripture. Y leaders at the university referred to the emphasis on the ministry and teachings of Jesus as advancing a “social gospel.” The social gospel’s adaptability stood in contrast to

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20 Ashby, Frank Porter Graham, 155.

21 Ashby, Frank Porter Graham, 224-225.
religious fundamentalism. Further, the Y valued a variety of voices and perspectives, regardless of Protestant background. Robert Hyatt, Y President in the 1950s, described Y committee meetings as “non-authoritarian” and “affirming and confirming of each individual’s participation.” Because the Y at UNC lacked authority from any particular religious denomination, it reflected trends set by national and regional associations, progressive university officials such as Frank Porter Graham, and in American Protestantism more broadly.22

Cultivating strong relationships in the community remained at the center of the Y’s activities during the 1950s. Gay Currie Fox, Executive Director for the YWCA, also emphasized the importance of religion in addressing civil rights issues and believed in expanding the theological framework of the Y to include a social gospel, which she described as an effort “to broaden commitment to faith, to community, to relating our faith to the university world, and to our churches.” Fox believed that message of Bill Petit, a prominent Baptist leader on campus, guided the Y’s activism at UNC when he said, “If you’re separated from people, you’re separated from God.”23 Service involved not only performing good works but also connecting with others.

Regional Y associations responded to this need to address problems in higher education in the 1930s. The Y at UNC met regularly with other campus associations in Raleigh to discuss the nature of future services and programs for students. Under Frank Porter Graham’s presidency, the Y began to consider the ways in which they could use service as a means for religious expression while addressing social justice issues, such as racial inequality, at the


23 Interview with Gay Currie Fox by Hudson Vaughan, April 13, 2010, #L-0295, in the Southern Oral History Program Database, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
university and in the community. Associations no longer functioned in administrative capacities as they had previously. Instead, they faced new challenges that stemmed from “changing times,” as described by a journalist for *The Daily Tar Heel.*

The national YMCA simultaneously adopted a new religious vision that coincided the rise of liberal theology, prompting some local chapters to split from the national association entirely. In response to the liberalizing YMCA, the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, which had a more conservative approach to religion, established chapters across the United States, and by 1946, the organization operated at 227 campuses. The Y’s theology especially concerned itself with improving race relations at university associations. The Colored Work department, which oversaw the activities of black YMCAs nationally, integrated black students into the larger student association in 1931. Thus, efforts to integrate associations forced interracial dialogue in Y chapters across the nation.

These transformations in local, regional, and national Y associations reflected larger trends in American Protestantism. As conservative Protestants began to devote more time to holy living and missionary work than to politics, “neo-evangelicals,” who took inspiration from leaders such as Carly Henry and Billy Graham, associated social change with personal transformation in the late 1940s. Neo-evangelicals emphasized personal spirituality as the solution to societal ills; in contrast, Y members began to see social action as means for religious expression. Focusing on values such as evangelism, hard work, Bible study, and sexual purity, the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship’s activities reflected values espoused by conservative

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26 Ibid., 235-236.
Protestants. On the other hand, the Y’s social justice work sought to continue the social gospel tradition. Later, these efforts coincided with the rise of the “evangelical left,” a politically-diverse coalition of evangelicals who took part in grassroots movements to alleviate issues of poverty and racism. The evangelical left contributed to the politicization of evangelicalism that sought social, not personal, transformation.

The 1930s also brought major changes to mainline Protestantism when a number of Congregational, Reformed, Lutheran, and Methodist bodies combined to form larger denominations as a way of undoing Civil War era splits, but in the case of Methodists, they kept separate governing bodies for blacks. The Protestant establishment supported a variety of liberal reforms, and church leaders became increasingly involved in current affairs later in the 1950s. Higher education was no exception. Mainline campus ministries flourished alongside evangelical student groups such as the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Campus Crusade for Christ. Despite the notable increase in church attendance and religious activity, some contemporaries doubted the authenticity of this religious revival among mainline Protestants. Church leaders described the faith of the masses as “shallow,” “bland,” and “superficial.”

The Y’s increasingly liberal theology in the decades preceding desegregation of the university reflected broader trends in American Protestantism. When the Y implemented its

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28 Ibid., 3-8.


30 Ibid., 125.


32 Reeves, *The Empty Church*, 124-125.
social gospel to integrate UNC in 1955, members sought “To unite in a desire to realize a full and creative life through God” and “To determine to have a part in making this life possible for all people.” The Y’s version of Christianity inspired members to solve problems in the community and use its authority on campus for the common good. This progressive theology laid the groundwork for its work to desegregate the university. But relationships with prominent members of the university community further legitimized the Y’s efforts to advance civil rights.

The Early Years

The entrance of the Frasier brothers and John Brandon in 1955 followed a long battle for civil rights in both public and higher education. The first attempt at black enrollment at UNC occurred over two decades prior when Thomas Raymond Hocutt, a graduate of North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham, wanted to study pharmacy at the all-white university in February 1933. Conrad Odelle Pearson and Cecil Aubrey McCoy, Hocutt’s two attorneys, sought aid from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which had recently received a $100,000 grant from the American Fund for Public Service to reduce racial inequalities in American education. Despite these efforts, the university refused to admit Hocutt under the premise of separate but equal facilities being available to black students in the state.

In response to these events, the Y built upon its legacy of expanding opportunities for black students in Orange County by hosting speakers who demanded desegregation at the university. Although the YMCA’s work in the community began as an extension of its mission of self-transformation for its members, the organization’s focus broadened over time as it began

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to coordinate with the women’s equivalent to the YMCA, the YWCA, which came to campus in 1936. As Thomas Hocutt attempted to enroll in the university’s pharmacy school, the two associations sponsored talks on the integration of the university. On October 23, 1938, YM-YWCA called for an interracial meeting to discuss the future of interracial action. Y members demanded the union of black and white student associations in North Carolina.

In February 1939 the Y hosted a second interracial discussion group and adopted more radical resolutions to integrate the university at large. YMCA Director Harry Comer expressed his desire to see the integration of Carolina in the near future. The men’s and women’s associations invited Dean James Taylor of the North Carolina College for Negroes to speak on behalf of black college students in the state. Dean Taylor emphasized the inadequacy of the facilities for black students and proposed their immediate admittance to the university. While the Y successfully started a conversation about race beginning in the 1930s, the real work of changing the perceptions of system administrators and students came decades later in the 1940s and 1950s.

The Real Work Begins

The university administration experienced major changes in leadership in the 1950s. When President Frank Porter Graham resigned from his position in 1949, the UNC system grew reluctant to support the progressive causes initiated by both Graham and the Y in earlier years,

35 Pamela Dean, *Women on the Hill: a History of Women at the University of North Carolina*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: Division of Student Affairs, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1987, 10. I will refer to them as separate organizations when reflected in the archive. However, the YMCA and YWCA jointly sponsored most social justice projects beginning in the 1950s.


including desegregation. Graham’s successor Gordon Gray, former Secretary of the Army, did not value social change as Graham had. In his inaugural address Gray stated, “We shall not knowingly allow any campus to become a workshop or laboratory or training ground for the operation of those who are committed to the destruction of American culture and institutions.” Y activists and those at UNC committed to racial equality began to face opposition from the Board of Trustees and the University President.\(^3\)

Despite receiving less support from Gray, the Y’s efforts to desegregate the university continued, and the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of May 1954 and subsequent work of student activists pushed the university system to reconsider its undergraduate admissions policy to admit black students. In the spring following *Brown*, Y leaders petitioned the Board of Trustees to give LeRoy Frasier, Jr., Ralph Kennedy Frasier, and John Lewis Brandon of Durham “their most earnest consideration” and asked them to “approve if at all possible the admission of these students” after undergraduate admissions rejected their repeated attempts to enroll.\(^3\)

President Gray continued to remain silent on the issue of race. After receiving pleas to support desegregation, Gray refused to comment.\(^4\) When these measures failed to convince university administrators to take a stand, Bob Hyatt and Bill Lofquist, student leaders of the YMCA, visited the Frasiers and Brandon in Durham and supported their filing a lawsuit against the Board.\(^4\)


\(^4\) Interview with William A. Lofquist by Hudson Vaughan, January 21, 2010 #L-0288, in the Southern Oral History Program Database, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
While convincing the Board of Trustees to desegregate the university, Hyatt and Lofquist also worked to change the hearts and minds of fellow students. They hosted several meetings a week at sorority houses, attended by both male and female students, to promote positive attitudes toward integration.\(^{42}\) The Y addressed white students’ anxieties with regards to sexuality and attempted to ameliorate them through open dialogue, holding “Human Relations Conferences” to discuss segregation fears. On March 4, 1954, James Taylor from North Carolina College addressed a group of sorority women during a Human Relations program. In addition to explaining the economic costs of segregation, Taylor responded to concerns about interracial marriage, saying, “We Negroes do not want radical changes such as inter-racial marriage… We want only to be treated as human beings.” He assured the women present that they would “still exercise the privilege of choosing [friends]” following integration.\(^{43}\)

Issues regarding race, gender, and sexuality discussed in these meetings were nothing new to the South. Fears of black men courting white women had deep-seated roots, dating back to the Civil War. Because interracial relationships posed a threat to white supremacy, a narrative developed during the Reconstruction period, which depicted black men as perpetrators of sexual violence toward white women. These ideas continued into the twentieth century. White supremacists often justified lynching as a means to protect white women. Any white woman, even of the lowest class standing, could be cast as the respectable victim needing protection. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan performed public displays of violence to restore racial order that had been violated by those being lynched, whether they actually had interracial sex or not.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.

Newspapers spread word of the lynching rapidly, noting the date and time the event would occur, and townspeople gathered in large numbers to watch. Miscegenation laws prohibited interracial marriage, and both whites and blacks could suffer penalty if engaged in illicit sex.\textsuperscript{44} Interestingly, the same standard did not apply to relationships between white men and black women. Although the courts continued to rule in favor of miscegenation laws, illicit relations of white men with black women were considered socially acceptable, suiting the political epistemology of white supremacy that corresponded with the devaluation of black women.\textsuperscript{45}

These particular manifestations of racial violence and white supremacy did not necessarily end with Jim Crow. Courts ruled to desegregate UNC and beyond, but miscegenation laws that prohibited interracial marriage continued to be upheld in decisions until June 12, 1967, when the Supreme Court ended bans on interracial marriage in \textit{Loving v. Virginia}. This ruling followed major milestones in the civil rights movement, with the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts in 1964 and 1965 respectively.\textsuperscript{46} While courts ruled in favor of desegregation and interracial marriage and progressive legislation passed nationally, violence directed at black men, rooted in ideas of white supremacy, did not disappear completely from the South. In his 2004 autobiography \textit{Blood Done Sign My Name}, which largely focuses on issues of race in North Carolina, historian Timothy B. Tyson recalls the death of Henry Marrow, a black man murdered by a group of whites in Oxford in May 1970 for allegedly making a sexual remark to a white woman.\textsuperscript{47}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{44} Sheryll Cashin, \textit{Loving: Interracial Intimacy in America and the Threat to White Supremacy} (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017), 86-90.
\textsuperscript{46} Cashin, \textit{Loving}, 2-3.
\end{flushright}
The Y’s tactful approach to desegregation reflected its continued commitment to service-based activism, allowing it to maintain a central agent for change at the university. The social gospel inspired these conversations with the student body in a way that accommodated a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and belief systems. Though its members voiced support for civil rights, Y students were hesitant to protest the actions of the Board, even among fellow students. Reflecting on the nature of the Y’s work in 1954 and 1955, Lofquist recalled, “[In Chapel Hill] it all happened very, very quietly.” Instead of insisting that whites change their views on interracial dating, the Y acted as a mediator between the incoming students and broader campus community.

Y members had already established a relationship with the Frasiers and Brandon prior to being admitted to UNC. In the summer of 1955, Hyatt and Lofquist invited the Frasiers and Brandon to Chapel Hill for a campus tour. Lofquist described meeting with the students as an “important thing… for us and for the [university].” In September 1955 YMCA President Graham Rights wrote to the Frasier brothers stating that he “would be happy to aid in any way” after expressing the Y’s desire to see their applications processed. The university admitted the Frasiers and Brandon following a case that reached the Federal District Court that year, in which the plaintiffs argued that the Brown decision applied to higher education.

48 Interview with William A. Lofquist.

49 Ibid.

50 Letter from Graham Rights to Leroy and Ralph Frasier, September 15, 1955, Folder 1, in the Leroy Benjamin Frasier papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

51 Frasier et al. v. Board of Trustees court case docket, Folder 3, in the Leroy Benjamin Frasier Papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Frasier, Sr., the Frasiers’ father, replied to Rights later in the fall, noting that his sons had “come to the Y on several occasions” and wanted to spend more time on campus.\footnote{Letter from LeRoy Benjamin, Sr., to Graham Rights, October 5, 1955, in Folder 1, in the Leroy Benjamin Frasier papers, #4375-z, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.}

Due to the timing of the court ruling, the Frasiers and Brandon took placement tests in preparation for classes instead of starting on Thursday, September 15, with their fellow undergraduates. When a journalist from The Daily Tar Heel asked the three students “if they would feel strange after entering the university,” Ralph Frasier replied tiredly, “I’m doing my best to adjust myself to the situation.”\footnote{“Frasiers, Brandon Start Taking Placement Test to Enter General College,” in The Daily Tar Heel, September 15, 1955.} After enduring tests, physicals, and interviews in the days leading up to the classes, the Frasiers and Brandon approached completion of their formal orientation at the university. Provided they registered by the weekend, the trio prepared for official enrollment at UNC as early as the following Monday.\footnote{“Negro Students May Start Classes Today,” in The Daily Tar Heel, September 17, 1955.}

**The Y Focuses on Campus Anxieties**

A pejorative comment made to Lofquist during the campus tour for the black students foreshadowed familiar fears that would linger long after the Frasiers and Brandon arrived at UNC. The Y continued to address racial tensions among whites and blacks by sponsoring “race discussions” about “various aspects of the racial problem including intermarriage and occupational integration” in the fall of 1955. Twenty-one students attended the first meeting held in the Y Library on November 10, including five black students from both graduate and undergraduate programs and Y Director Claude Shotts. Gerry Mayo presided over the meeting, centering it on UNC. The black panelists shifted the conversation off-campus, describing their experiences of exclusion at restaurants and theaters in Chapel Hill. A law student alluded to a
“mounting tension” in the community, which could be solved only by a “step-by-step” process. One step included Y leaders actively living their principles. In the years after the Frasiers and Brandon enrolled, Y President Gerry Mayo and other members rented a house on Franklin Street with several black students.55

Race played a subtle yet central role in complicating dynamics between men and women on campus. The Y’s theology of inclusion helped guide its efforts to mediate. As whites’ anxieties persisted, Y members sought to promote open dialogue on sensitive issues of race and sexuality. White women’s sexuality continued to dominate these conversations. The second speaker at the November meeting, another law student, noted that white students would accept black students “only to a certain point,” referring to “the discussion between a Negro and a white about white girls.”56 A male black student asked a female white student present why “you hang your head down, glance to see if any white boy is watching, and say ‘Hi!’” when approached.57

As the social gospel inspired Y students to mediate, it also inspired members to create a safe space for students to voice concerns about integration. In October 1956 the YMCA invited the Reverend Charles M. Jones to lead a discussion titled, “The Christian Positions on Segregation,” which was open to all students.58 Seeing that whites could perceive incoming black students as a potential threat to the dominant social order, the Y invited speakers such as Reverend Jones and James Taylor to ameliorate worries about racial mixing. However, it is hard

55 Interview with Gerry Mayo by Hudson Vaughan, March 17, 2010, L-0327, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


58 “Covering the Campus,” in The Daily Tar Heel, October 14, 1956.
to gauge the success of these attempts. The Y clearly acted as a mediator at these meetings by balancing the needs of both whites and incoming black students. Although it had a specific agenda to advance civil rights, the Y acknowledged social realities on campus long after the entrance of UNC’s first African American students in 1955.

Conclusion

The Y advocated for desegregation at the university, assisted incoming students, and addressed concerns from the study body for nearly three decades. It relied on leaders within the organization, at the university, and in the community to promote its agenda of racial equality. It adopted a version of Christianity that was inclusive, pluralistic, and service-based. Its Christianity focused on developing and strengthening relationships on campus, including those that seemed controversial. Y members worked to serve the community by both changing the system and facilitating honest discussions about race among students.

Individuals’ faith and the organization’s reputation on campus initially attracted students to join the Y. This leadership played a central role in advocating for desegregation and preparing the student body to receive black students. Progressive administrators and Y staff such as Frank Porter Graham, Claude Shotts, and Gay Currie Fox supported the Y’s efforts to desegregate, but Y members themselves implemented the social gospel by holding race discussions and developing relationships with incoming students. The Y met emerging activist demands with care and tact. Despite these successes, civil rights struggles at UNC did not end with the arrival of the Frasier brothers and John Brandon. In the fall of 1956, only ten black students enrolled in both the graduate and undergraduate schools combined, and these numbers remained low for nearly a decade.\(^{59}\) In the following years, Y students and staff would seek to understand intersections of race and class as they pertain to achieving racial equality. Specific actors would

influence the Y’s theology, and major campus crises would force members to consider its usefulness in working toward social justice.

On April 2, 1968, ninety percent of the university’s cafeteria workers left work to boycott poor labor conditions. Most of the workers were poor women of color. As chaos on campus intensified in the following months, the Black Student Movement (BSM), a newly founded coalition of black student activists, sent a list of twenty-three demands to the university administration that included improved labor conditions for dining hall workers and increased support for black students on campus. Black student activists believed the lack of opportunities for black students at UNC reflected broader issues of race and class in American society. Chancellor Carlyle Sitterson responded the demands in January. His message was clear: he would not provide special treatment to any group. Ignoring most of the demands related to the strike, he referred black students to existing resources on campus, including “the excellent Scholarship Information Service prepared by the YWCA-YMCA.”

The Food Workers’ Strike that shook UNC’s campus demonstrates that earlier struggles for integration were less than fully successful. This chapter traces the Y’s social action projects that led up to the strike, which became increasingly controversial as Y members realized that achieving racial equality at UNC required a sense of urgency. The Christian philosophy of Y staff, and especially Y Director Anne Queen, was not always compatible with that of the younger generation, who aligned themselves with black activists in the late 1960s. When black activists


61 “Reply to BSM Demands, January 1969,” in Folder 14, the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Joseph Carlyle Sitterson Records #40022, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
did not present their demands in the spirit of reconciliation, Queen’s commitment to service, conversation, and tolerance came into conflict with the social justice ambitions of Y students.

**Anne Queen and the Y**

1960 marked the Y’s one-hundredth anniversary at UNC, ushering in a new decade of civil rights activism.\(^62\) Despite efforts made by Y members to desegregate the university in the 1950s, only a handful of black students enrolled in the year Anne Queen took office as Associate Director of the YWCA in 1956, and by the end of the decade black enrollment was only twenty-three in the undergraduate school.\(^63\) Serving as the head of the women’s association, Queen furthered the Y’s commitment to advocate for racial equality on campus and in the community, and she almost immediately tried to make the Y “a center where black students felt at home.”\(^64\) Queen later replaced Claude Shotts as Director of the newly merged YMCA and YWCA in 1964.\(^65\)

Queen had a significant impact on those around her while serving as Director. Y students and staff alike valued her influence and strong moral character, even after they left UNC. Reflecting on the decade that Queen worked, Jim Medford, Y Co-President in 1964 and 1965, stated that the Y “was always an innovative place. It just became increasingly socially minded, especially with Anne Queen.”\(^66\) Queen was compared to Frank Porter Graham as she continued

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\(^64\) Cheatham, “Theology as Roots for Social Action,” 76.

\(^65\) “Anne Queen New Director YM-YWCA,” in *The Daily Tar Heel*, August 6, 1964.

\(^66\) Interview with Jim Medford by Hudson Vaughan, December 10, 2009 #L-0289, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.
the “tradition of directly inspiring students to become involved in struggles for freedom.” Terry Sanford, Governor of North Carolina from 1961 to 1965, expressed the same sentiment, saying Queen followed in the footsteps of leaders such as Edward Kidder Graham, Cornelius Spencer, and Frank Porter Graham. He also believed Queen played a considerable role in making the Y “the social conscience of the campus in a way that it had never been before.”

Queen led Y students and staff during some of the most tumultuous years in university history. Her efforts to promote civil rights causes, even controversial ones, mark this period. This chapter argues that while Queen’s approach to theology largely guided the Y’s social action projects, efforts to engage in activism were not always successful or exclusively Christian, culminating in the 1968-1969 UNC Food Workers’ Strike. While religion first inspired the Y’s involvement, religion also imposed limitations on how Y members worked towards social justice.

The social gospel continued to inform the Y’s efforts to change society at large, but the Y began to take decisive stances on issues of racial equity in higher education under Queen’s direction. Instead of adhering to any specific belief system or denomination, Queen practiced her religion by remaining positive, open-minded, and supportive of those around her. William Friday, President of the Consolidated University System during Queen’s tenure, noted, “she

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67 Ashby, Frank Porter Graham, 325.

68 Interview with Terry Sanford by Cindy Cheatham, December 18, 1990 #L-0050, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

69 Julia Perkins, “Queen of the Hill: Anne Queen and her Legacy to the Spirit and People of Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina, and the Campus Y” (Honors Essay, Curriculum in American Studies, UNC Chapel Hill, 1996), 74.
never quit moving and working and challenging and doing and serving, and… touching the lives of people.”

Queen grew up in Haywood County, North Carolina, where she attended Bethel High School and worked for nearly ten years at a local paper mill. Seeing the struggles of the working class firsthand while attending Spring Hill Baptist Church, Queen became interested in how religion could be used to solve labor issues. These early experiences informed her views on social and economic justice that related to the Y’s projects in the 1960s:

I started out as a paper sorter and then I worked at the paper cutter and then the last and I guess the best job I had was as a paper inspector. I learned a lot during those [years]… I came to understand some of the forces in our society, which I felt needed to be changed… I did understand something of the necessity for a social implication of the faith.

She later left western North Carolina to study at Berea College and Yale Divinity School, where she drew upon the work of theologian Richard Niebuhr and his theory of self-knowledge to develop her own worldview. At Yale Queen belonged to the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, which consisted of those disillusioned with the church as an institution but who viewed Biblical faith as an acceptable approach to solving social issues. Although Queen drew inspiration from Christianity as Y Director, she did not openly advertise her faith to others.

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70 Interview with William C. Friday by Cindy Cheatham, December 18, 1990, #L-0049, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.


73 Interview with Anne Queen by Joseph A. Herzenberg, April 30, 1976, Interview #G-0049-1, Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

74 Cheatham, “Theology as Roots for Social Action,” 44-47.
Instead, she led students and staff with honesty and encouragement, regardless of religious affiliation.\textsuperscript{75}

As Director Queen made social action a priority. In a 1963 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the YM-YWCA to the Dean of Student Affairs, Queen described Y membership:

> It seeks to develop a sense of purpose, sensitiveness to human values, and a capacity for responsible actions through the process of grappling with and struggling to understand life situations, whether problems of students on the local campus, teenagers in Chapel Hill, the sick and infirm in nearby hospitals and sanatoria, minority groups struggling for human dignity… or man in his quest for eternal significance.\textsuperscript{76}

Queen and others believed that membership involved dedication not only to the local community but also to the wider world. Yet her commitment to progressivism did not always reach levels Y students would have liked. During the Food Workers’ Strike, many thought drastic measures needed to be taken in the face of injustice.

Queen’s approach to religion reflected the broader philosophy of Christian humanism that asserts the “inalienable dignity and sacred nature of each and every human being, created by God in His own image.”\textsuperscript{77} Building on the social gospel, which guided the Y’s work during desegregation, Queen’s brand of Christian humanism centered on relationships, even as it required direct action.\textsuperscript{78} Writing on the use of religion in higher education, Queen explained the ways in which Christianity failed to address social ills such as slavery and segregation, saying, “Most ministers have apparently not seen that failing to act in controversial issues oftentimes

\textsuperscript{75} Interview with William C. Friday by Cindy Cheatham, December 18, 1990, #L-0049, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

\textsuperscript{76} Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the YM-YWCA at UNC to Charles Henderson, Jr., Dean of Student Affairs, April 1, 1963, Folder 148, in the Anne Queen Papers #5214, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 47.
means to side with the status quo.”

Indeed, mainline Protestant leaders became increasingly involved in civil rights causes in the 1960s. The Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Presbyterian Church each created commissions on race relations. Clergy and laity marched in opposition to racial segregation, and some were arrested months before the historic March on Washington led by Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1963.

Other Christian theologies emerged in response to social justice demands. During the 1960s, theologians began to think about the application of Protestant theology with respect to experiences of oppression in the United States. As ministers and academics began to wrestle with political and social concerns of the decade, liberation theology developed as a critique of injustice. Liberation theology tied God to the oppressed and framed Jesus Christ as a revolutionary. Because it linked Christianity with social justice, Jesus’ ministry became “the litmus test for proper Christian conduct,” liberation theology responded to the diversity of American experience and included the rise of nonspecific religious orientations such as humanism.

Student Protests Begin

By the time Queen became Director in 1964, student activists, including Y members, began responding more fervently to social issues in the community. Students had already worked

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79 “The Rise of the Interracial Conference in the South,” in Folder 357, the Anne Queen Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

80 Reeves, The Empty Church, 135.


83 Ibid., 21.

84 Ibid., 25.
to desegregate Chapel Hill the year before Queen took office. In May 1963 some 350 individuals participated in a demonstration to open business establishments in town to blacks. The first official sit-in occurred in June, resulting in several arrests. Although many community protesters were UNC students, no unrest took place on campus under the authority of Chancellor William Aycock. Some protesters even appeared before the student honor court for conduct violations, which were later dismissed. These demonstrations in Chapel Hill continued leading up to Congress’ passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964.\textsuperscript{85}

As protests continued, University System President William Friday reported that student leaders often felt more comfortable going to the Y with their concerns than to the university administration directly.\textsuperscript{86} While working to end segregation in Chapel Hill, the Y invited civil rights activists to speak at its annual freshman camp. In the fall of 1963, it brought lawyer Floyd McKissick of Durham to speak; McKissick had been one of the first black students to attend UNC in the 1950s.\textsuperscript{87}

Unrest continued at the university with the passage of the Speaker Ban Law in June 1963, which forbade known Communist Party members to speak on college campuses in North Carolina, in response to anti-segregation demonstrations. Commentators explained the goal of the Ban to “[embarrass] the university administration… for harboring liberals and integrationists.”\textsuperscript{88} The state legislature equated those involved in civil rights causes to

\textsuperscript{85} Snider, \textit{Light on the Hill}, 269-270.

\textsuperscript{86} Interview with William C. Friday by Hudson Vaughan, March 2, 2010, #L-0285, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

\textsuperscript{87} “Memo to the YM-YWCA Advisory Board, September 4, 1963, from Tom Davis,” in Folder 165, Anne Queen Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Communists. Nancy Elkins, assistant director of the Y from 1964 to 1965, considered the Speaker Ban “the greatest travesty that’s ever hit UNC… and just some very misguided people in the legislature who did that.” She alluded to the Y’s central role in challenging the Ban. James A. Medford, Y co-president at the time, worked with the chief of campus security and Herbert Aptheker to file a lawsuit against the Board of Trustees that would allow Aptheker and Frank Wilkinson to visit UNC. In March 1966 Chancellor Sitterson refused to allow Wilkinson, director of the National Committee to Abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee, to speak on campus. A federal court in Greensboro ultimately sided with the twelve students who challenged the Ban, ruling it unconstitutional in 1968.

In the late 1960s student activists became increasingly involved in promoting racial equality on campus while vehemently opposing the Vietnam War. The National Board of the YWCA adopted a particularly rigid stance on the war in 1966, saying it continued “to deplore the loss of life and grievous suffering and devastation” and reaffirmed “its earnest appeal that everything possible be done to avoid further escalation and expansion of the war.” At UNC Anne Queen urged Y students to “channel their energies constructively.” That year the university gained a new chancellor after the resignation of Frederick Paul Sharp in February.

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89 Ibid., 1725-1729.

90 Interview with Nancy Elkins by Hudson Vaughan, May 20, 2010 #L-0284, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

91 Interview with James A. Medford by Hudson Vaughan, December 10, 2009 #L-0289, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

92 “Don’t Distort the First,” in The Daily Tar Heel, March 6, 1966.


94 “Statement on Vietnam, Adopted by the National Board of the YWCA, May 18, 1966,” in Folder 159, the Anne Queen Papers, Southern Historical Collection Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

95 Cheatham, “Theology as Roots,” 103.
While Sharp felt he lacked authority, his replacement, Carlyle Sitterson, worked swiftly to address campus unrest.  

A Christian Attitude to Link Race and Class

Queen’s theology took efforts to promote social justice a step further as Y staff and students became committed to both racial equity and labor rights in the late 1960s. The organization adopted a view that the two were inextricably linked. Without understanding issues of class, Y leaders could not mobilize against racial discrimination effectively. While the Y’s work previous decades emphasized desegregation, its activism during the 1960s focused on the intersections of race and class. Y leaders and members began to understand the more subtle effects of discrimination.

While advocating for blacks in Chapel Hill, the Y established entire committees devoted to their success at the university. Anne Queen played an important role in directing these efforts and supporting students on campus. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Y’s Human Relations Committee began asking about its role as a “conscience on the campus” on issues of discrimination. An anne Queen believed people needed to adopt a Christian approach to social problems, writing, “the problem of race relations is not concerned solely with the emotions of the people. This is a real problem in which political, economic, and social forces are involved.” More importantly, Queen thought people needed to “adopt a Christian attitude to solve the problem,” but at the same time remain “tolerant.” Likewise, in a report on social injustice, the

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97 “Human Relations Committee,” in Executive Committee and Cabinet: General Files, academic years 1957-1958 to 1963-1964, Folder 201, in the Records of the Campus Y, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

98 “Race Relations Workshop at the Southern Region Conference,” in Folder 164, Anne Queen Papers, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
national YMCA mentioned that “education, employment, and housing are deeply related, and associations should keep this in mind.”

In addition to the protests over the Speaker Ban and Vietnam, which generated social unrest and helped people become aware of who belonged on campus, the Y had made specific inroads to social and racial injustice. Y staff at UNC began by overseeing the development of scholarship programs that promoted racial equality, such as the Scholarship Information Center. The Y gathered information on the financial hardships black students faced at universities, particularly in the South, and published a series of guides “providing minority students with information about college opportunities.” The Y continued to offer scholarships for students into the following decade. Student leaders worked with others to recruit black students to the university through the organization’s Carolina Talent Search program as administrators failed to provide necessary opportunities and support to those in need. The Y organized meetings with admissions officers, offered campus tours, and encouraged young North Carolinians of low socio-economic backgrounds to apply to UNC.

The Y’s way of moving through a moderate Christian stance meant providing resources for those who wanted them. But without working to change institutional structures, Y members could not accomplish a mission of racial equality. In 1964, nearly half a decade before the Food Workers’ Strike, the YMCA Executive Cabinet invited Pete Brandon, a local labor union

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100 “Scholarship Information Center,” in Executive Committee and Cabinet: General files, academic years 1967-1968 to 1971-1972, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


102 Interview with Joseph Shedd by Hudson Vaughan, April 16, 2010 #L-0298, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.
organizer, to a Tuesday-night meeting. Brandon had little faith that the recent passage of the Civil Rights Act would help the average black worker. Instead, Brandon claimed the issues facing blacks were changing from “legal equality to economic equality, from conflict of courts to conflict of ballots,” saying, “Economics are the issue and politics are the method.” Besides discussing the problems facing black workers, Brandon proposed that “reconciliation” of working-class whites and blacks “can be accomplished through churches and unions.”

Religion clearly had a place in organizing groups of political action: both churches and unions brought people together to achieve social and economic justice. If its mission dictated a commitment to racial equality, the Y could no longer ignore labor issues plaguing the black community.

**Refining a Theology for Social Action**

As evidenced by its projects in the early 1960s, the Y became more involved in broadening perspectives on how Christianity could be applied to solve social issues. The theology that guided student activism was “increasingly universal in its frame of reference,” noted Professor Maynard Adams, compared to simply spreading the social gospel through service. Reflecting on the decade of Queen’s leadership, Adams mentioned that the Y changed its approach “without lessening its concern for the moral and spiritual growth of students along with their intellectual development.”

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104 “In Honor of Anne,” in Folder 165, Anne Queen Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
the Y had “a definite responsibility to strengthen… the ways in which students can mature in their personal faith and become literate in their theological beliefs.”

But in light of its increasingly flexible mission and emphasis on personal spiritual development, it is important to examine what was necessarily Christian about the Y’s activism. To what extent did the Y’s attempt to cultivate universal values overshadow its Christian heritage? Queen, for example, avoided imposing her religion on others. Local civil rights lawyer Daniel Pollitt noted, “unless you knew her, you had no idea that she was a minister.” Students also held ambiguous views on the role of religion in guiding social action projects. In 1965 Y President Rick Edwards said the Y existed “to serve the university community” but “Beyond this we have no ideology, no clearly articulated statement of what we intend to produce through these various means.” Its goal was to make the university “a sort of secular church.” Spiritual growth clearly mattered to Queen and Y students, but it is more difficult to gauge the degree to which Christian doctrine directly influenced social justice activism. This tension would prove challenging during the Food Workers’ Strike, particularly for Y staff, as the organization’s commitment to achieve ends through nonviolent, constructive means came in conflict with more militant activist demands.

Concerns about the nature of student activism were not limited to Y staff and students at UNC. Southern white students debated a range of social, political, and cultural issues in the 1960s. These students’ involvement in civil rights led to the development of the New Left, a movement that advocated for a broad range of reforms in response to foreign policy and racism.

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105 “Program Policies Committee of the Joint YM-YWCA Advisory Board,” in Folder 148, Anne Queen Papers, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

106 Interview with David Pollitt by Cindy Cheatham, November 19, 1990 #L-0048, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

107 “President of the YMCA Rick Edwards’ Report to the Advisory Board,” in Folder 202, Records of the Campus Y, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
in American society.\textsuperscript{108} Much of their success in these protests came from students’ ability to associate with churches and other religious reformers in the South. New Left organizers used Christian student centers and appreciated the support of religious allies. Secular radicals and religious groups on campus often worked together to organize demonstrations.\textsuperscript{109} The experiences of Y staff and members during the 1968-1969 Food Workers’ Strike shows how such a partnership between nonreligious and Christian student activists developed at UNC.

**Campus in Chaos: The Food Workers’ Strike**

The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in April 1968 ended an era of peaceful demonstration led by student activists in Chapel Hill.\textsuperscript{110} A new black power movement emerged to confront lasting racial inequalities on and off campus. As black enrollment grew, groups of students grew more frustrated with UNC’s complacent administration. Two students, Preston Dobbins and Reggie Hawkins, transformed the UNC chapter of the NAACP into the Black Student Movement (BSM) in 1967.\textsuperscript{111} Dobbins, the coalition’s Chairman, said that the BSM addressed “a need among Negro students on this campus that wasn’t being answered.”\textsuperscript{112} The group mobilized against injustice immediately. In February 1968 a group of sixty BSM activists protested in response to the shooting of three black students in South Carolina. In April the group


\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 281.

\textsuperscript{111} Link, *William Friday*, 142.

\textsuperscript{112} “Black Student Message: ‘We’re Here,’” in *The Daily Tar Heel*, November 17, 1967.
burned Confederate flags in front of Greek housing following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.\textsuperscript{113}

In 1968 nearly all of the university’s non-academic workers were African American. After several failed appeals to the university administration, the workers began coordinating with the BSM to improve labor conditions at UNC’s on-campus dining halls.\textsuperscript{114} Orchestrated by BSM activists, the workers went on strike in April to protest inadequate pay and poor treatment from supervisors.\textsuperscript{115} The conflict lasted into the fall and spring of the following year; Chancellor Sitterson met with student leaders later in February 1969, but they did not reach an agreement.\textsuperscript{116} In March Tom Worley, Y President, and Joe Shedd drafted a letter to the student body in support of the workers. Shedd explained, “It isn’t enough… for the University to just meet the demands, but they must be accepted as legitimate topics of discussion.”\textsuperscript{117} Shedd and Goldstein organized a vigil of 500 people for the food service workers in Polk Place, believing the only way to show support “was to boycott and buy food from the workers” (see Fig. 2).\textsuperscript{118} Preston Dobbins, BSM Chairman, even urged students to strike classes. In a second statement to the student body, Worley and Shedd asked students to strike, hoping it would pressure university administrators to “increase the minimum pay for workers to $1.80 per hour.”\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{113} Link, \textit{William Friday}, 142.


\textsuperscript{115} “Negro Workers Walk-Out Here,” in \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, April 10, 1968.

\textsuperscript{116} Snider, \textit{Light on the Hill}, 282.

\textsuperscript{117} “Leaders Support Boycott,” in \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, March 1, 1969.

\textsuperscript{118} “500 Support Workers in Vigil,” in \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, March 18, 1969.

Noting a sense of urgency, Y students took additional measures to support the BSM, such as endorsing an alternative lunch set-up, but their actions conflicted with the slow progress that Queen’s brand of Christianity brought through patience, conversation, and understanding. Student member Buck Goldstein, for instance, recalled that he was torn between supporting black activists and avoiding confrontation with university administrators during the crisis, but ultimately sided with fellow students.

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120 Interview with Jean Luker by Hudson Vaughan and Sandra Davidson, August 24, 2010 #L-0326, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.

121 Interview with Buck Goldstein by Hudson Vaughan and Sandra Davison, December 16, 2009 #L-0324, in the Southern Oral History Program Database.
Meanwhile administrators continued to deliberate appropriate action. On March 6 State Governor Bob Scott dispatched state police units to open Lenoir Hall to prevent further disruption. As BSM members occupied Manning Hall and operated a temporary food service to replace on-campus dining halls, Governor Scott threatened to involve the National Guard. Chancellor Sitterson and President Friday met with him to discuss the issue.\(^{122}\) When both administrators spoke out against the use of force, Governor Scott disregarded their concerns and sent five squads of highway patrolmen to Chapel Hill.\(^{123}\) Faculty and students were shocked. In a speech to over two thousand students, Chancellor Sitterson finally promised to address the concerns of the cafeteria workers.\(^{124}\)

As these events unfolded, Y staff focused on negotiating with university administrators. Using her position as Chairman of the Chapel Hill Human Relations Commission, established after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Anne Queen went to directly to Chancellor Sitterson in support of the workers. If the issue remained unresolved, she feared, “the peace of the whole community was at stake.”\(^{125}\) Jean Luker, a YWCA staff member, put together a list of the workers’ grievances to distribute on campus. For instance, one worker never had a Sunday off; another suffered horrible burns from an accident.\(^{126}\) Despite these efforts, there were lines that Queen was unwilling to cross. When university-owned dining halls closed, Queen did not

\(^{122}\) Link, *William Friday*, 148-150.


\(^{124}\) Link, *William Friday*, 152.

\(^{125}\) Interview with Anne Queen in Folder 277, Administrative Files, Records of the Campus Y, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\(^{126}\) Interview with Jean Luker.
allow the temporary food service to move to the Y building. Further, Queen refused to take direction from any other activist group, including the BSM.

Queen clearly wanted to resolve the crisis through nonviolent means, even if it meant appeasing hesitant university administrators. She remained committed to making the Y “a sanctuary for people from opposing camps.” Using her connections to Governor Scott and the Board of Trustees, she helped resolve the strike behind the scenes. Queen also avoided direct association with the BSM, who adopted rhetoric similar to black power organizations. BSM leaders, who often projected a militant appearance, donning black berets, leather jackets, dark shades, and walking sticks, did not appear to conform to a balanced and patient Christian mission. In February thirty-five BSM members had even threatened to burn down Lenoir Hall.

The strike divided Y students and staff into two camps. While students believed the Y should meet the demands of black activists, Queen and staff remained committed to the association’s Christian mission that emphasized service, conversation, and tolerance. But as it became apparent that racial inequality was deeply entangled with labor and class issues, this commitment to social justice was put to the test; the Y and BSM differed in strategy. While the Y’s efforts to desegregate the university were centered on making white students feel comfortable, Y students who supported the BSM during strike no longer worried about causing

127 Cheatham, Theology as Roots, 100.
128 Interview with Jean Luker.
129 Interview with Anne Queen in Folder 277.
130 Interview with David Pollitt.
132 Link, William Friday, 145.
discomfort. Accordingly, by the end of the decade, Y students rarely invoked religion in social action campaigns.

As the Food Workers’ Strike began to wind down, university administrators took swift action to prevent future crises. The strike prompted the Board of Trustees to revise the university code in October 1970, and the new amendments redefined disruptive behavior and delegated responsibilities for handling it on campus.\textsuperscript{133} Chaos surrounding the BSM and cafeteria strike appeared to be resolved, and Anne Queen applauded the work of student activists.

Despite accolades from Y staff, students felt differently. The Y “had been fairly ineffectual,” according to one student, saying, “we didn’t have any position from which we could actually be taking the lead.”\textsuperscript{134} If student activists wanted to further the Y’s social justice mission in the coming years, something needed to change. Queen’s commitment to the university and possibly her Christianity, which brought about possibilities for activism, also prevented students from fully engaging with causes that mattered most to them. These internal tensions would result in the Y seeking new direction following her retirement in the 1970s.

\textsuperscript{133} Snider, \textit{Light on the Hill}, 283.

\textsuperscript{134} Interview with Joe Shedd.
CHAPTER 3: MULTICULTURALISM, DISAFFILIATION, AND THE CREATION OF

The YM-YWCA published the first issue of its newsletter *Excelsior* in October 1970. Its contents outlined the Y’s community projects and volunteer activities, including information about Chapel Hill’s third annual Walk for Hunger and yearly Handicrafts Bazaar, along with an announcement about a trip to the United Nations in New York City. In the opening column to the newsletter, Y Co-President Whit Bodman wrote, “This being the first issue… it is only fitting
that there be some literary effort to ‘define’ the Y.”

He alluded to the history and diversity of the organization, the flexibility of its members, and perhaps most importantly Y students’ willingness to serve communities both in Chapel Hill and the wider world:

Perhaps the key word for the Y is “empathy.” Empathy for a [disabled] child at the Murdoch Center, empathy for minority and disadvantaged students who need information regarding college opportunities, empathy for those caught up in the Vietnam War, the Middle East War, the subtle but vicious wars on our streets, empathy for students on campus who are frustrated by the stories they read in newspapers and on news reports.

Bodman’s statement reflected many of the changes that came to define the Y at UNC during the 1970s. As they began to social justice issues both on and off campus, staff and students reconsidered the underlying philosophies that guided the Y’s mission.

Christianity appeared to limit the scope of some of the Y’s interests during this period, and leaders sought to reevaluate the organization’s relationship to religion entirely. This chapter will outline the process of disaffiliation and show how the Campus Y’s new projects in the 1970s and 80s distanced the organization from its two national associations, which had religious missions, and its Christian heritage. It argues that disaffiliation was necessary for the Y to continue its increasingly inclusive and global social justice agenda. It will show that the organization’s secularization was gradual but, at times, incomplete.

**Student Opposition to the Vietnam War**

By 1970 conflict surrounding the Food Workers’ Strike at UNC was resolved. Student activists had successfully pressed university administrators to address the demands of the Black Student Movement and cafeteria workers. As this era came to a close, the Y began to reprioritize its social justice projects in the new decade, and the student anti-war movement seemed to

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135 *Excelsior*, October 30, 1970, Folder 163, in the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

136 Ibid,
overshadow efforts to achieve racial equality. Reflecting on his time as Y President in the early 1970s, Frank Alexander recalled that racism was “not as much a North Carolina issue” but continued to affect other parts of the South.\textsuperscript{137} Protesting the war was prioritized in the new decade. Joe Shedd, Y President, echoed this sentiment: “I consider myself a loyal American… but this war is ripping the fabric of American apart.”\textsuperscript{138} Other concerns, including the women’s liberation movement, were obscured. Susan Dixon, Vice President of the Y in 1970, recalled that despite the movement’s national attention, women’s liberation “was not a major thing on our plate.”\textsuperscript{139} The Y’s activities initially centered on Vietnam in the 1970s.

Realities of the Vietnam War hit home for many students as they wrestled with the prospect of the draft. The Y helped to circulate a petition calling for amnesty for draft resisters in 1971.\textsuperscript{140} The year before, following the Kent State University shootings in May 1970, student activism against the war gained momentum in Chapel Hill. In September students led a vigil in honor of the victims. Thousands attended, marching from the Old Well through a darkened campus.\textsuperscript{141} Y members played a significant role in organizing the event, knowing that it served to call others to action. Susan Dixon described the vigil as a “ritual” that “balances people out so that then they can get up the next day and do something.”\textsuperscript{142}

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\textsuperscript{137} Interview with Frank Alexander by Hudson Vaughan, July 19, 2010 #L-0321, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{138} “2,000 Students Sign Petition For Campaign Privileges,” May 13, 1970, in \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}.

\textsuperscript{139} Interview with Susan Dixon by Hudson Vaughan, April 21, 2010, #L-0294, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{140} “Veterans to Aid Draft Resisters,” in \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, October 14, 1971.


\textsuperscript{142} Interview with Susan Dixon.
\end{flushleft}
Student opposition to the war heightened in response to the events at Kent State. Y members helped to organize trips to Washington, DC, and led demonstrations in Raleigh that brought together various student groups in the area in the early 1970s. In the capitol Y leaders met with members of Congress to lobby against the war. While serving as Y President, Joe Shedd spoke before the North Carolina Congressional Delegation in Washington to express student opposition to Vietnam:

I sense a renewed willingness among students to use electoral politics to effect changes in leadership and policy… I sense that perhaps now people regret the bitter divisions the war has caused among us… I think a sense of purpose is emerging. It’s a sense of purpose which assumes that a person will do what he thinks is right without the naïve comfort of believing he’s on the winning side.\footnote{143}

Although opposition was strong, Y Director Anne Queen and Secretary Norman Gustaveson encouraged students to take constructive action and engage critically with these issues.\footnote{144} While lobbying to members of Congress, they continued to protest. When President Richard Nixon was inaugurated for a second time in January 1973, Y members again mobilized a group of a few hundred to protest in the capitol, where authorities tear-gassed students.\footnote{145}

Anti-war protests polarized campus, and religion played an important role in who supported and opposed US involvement in Vietnam. Groups such as the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Campus Crusade, who primarily sponsored campus ministry projects, rejected Y activists’ anti-war agenda, believing it was inconsistent with the Christian message. As in previous decades, Y staff and students maintained very different views of religious belief compared to evangelical groups on campus. For Y members Christianity was universal and

\footnote{143}{“Statement by Joseph B. Shedd before the North Carolina Congressional Delegation,” Washington, DC, May 12, 1970, in Folder 528, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.}

\footnote{144}{Interview with Susan Dixon.}

\footnote{145}{Interview with Frank Alexander.}
“understood as a commitment to your fellow being.”146 While they did not express an outwardly religious agenda, Y students remained connected to one of the chaplaincies on campus, and one student leader mentioned, “we were still aware of the C in our name.”147 Yet even this expansive view of religion changed in the 1970s as issues affecting campus and the nation became increasingly divisive. These divisions among Christians and student activists in Chapel Hill would cause Y staff and students to question the organization’s relationship to Christianity and national YMCA and YWCA bodies.

Students began to pursue social justice projects with increased vigor in the 1970s, prioritizing activism over maintaining the organization’s pristine reputation for cool-headedness in the university community, especially among administrators. Vietnam War protests at UNC reflected southern student activism more broadly, and support for or opposition to the war often served as a “litmus test” for political orientation. As the conflict escalated, many students began to see the university as part of the problem and criticized the presence of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC). The war also helped to incorporate southern students into broader cultural and political patterns.148

Planning for the Future

In the midst of student opposition to the Vietnam War, Y staff and students began to plan for the long-term. More specifically, they had to decide what would define the organization in the coming years, and considered how to “appeal to a wider range of students.” At an Advisory Board meeting in November 1970, Y Chairman Anne Queen expressed her concern about “a

146 Ibid.

147 Interview with Joe Shedd by Hudson Vaughan, April 16, 2010, #L-0298, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

wave of separation” between whites and non-whites, describing the Y as “a lily-white organization.” Members of the community urged the Board to consider discussing these issues in a global context and mentioned the purpose of Y committee work was “part of a whole effort to promote world justice.”

Anne Queen continued to promote social justice projects that dealt specifically with issues of race. One of Queen’s final undertakings as Y Director involved funding a new black chaplain for minority students at the university. Due to “too many years of injustice” that “left a deep legacy of non-communication,” it was necessary that UNC would avoid hiring another white advisor; the new chaplain would operate “from a religious and theological stance” and aid in “diminishing the injustices and tensions” that exist at the university from decades of racial discrimination. In February 1973 Preston C. Jones, Sr., was appointed to this position. Addressing the Y Advisory Board, Jones hoped to “bring about change” at the university, concluding that he intended his ministry to “be seen as an inclusive one.”

While increasingly global objectives would prompt discussions of disaffiliation from the YMCA and YWCA national bodies following Anne Queen’s departure from the university, Y staff and students believed it was important to maintain these relationships because they served

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149 “YM-YWCA Advisory Board Meeting Minutes,” November 10, 1970, in Folder 170, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

150 Letter to the Y Advisory Board from Bill Brieger, November 9, 1970, in Folder 170, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

151 “The Black Chaplain Fund and the YMCA-YWCA,” September 1970, in Folder 170, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

152 “Some Reflection by the Black Chaplain,” February 1, 1973, in Folder 171, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
specific purposes for the organization. By 1973 the UNC Y remained one of the few remaining student associations in the nation. Paradoxically these national affiliations allowed the Y to remain independent from the influence of university administrators or leaders in Chapel Hill. Moreover, both national organizations continued to supply information on national and international issues for projects consistent with the tradition of “striving for social, political and personal freedom and justice.” The benefits of affiliation continued to outweigh the negatives, and despite the religious mission of the national bodies, student leaders and staff claimed that students with no religious affiliation felt welcome to participate in the Y’s activities at UNC.\footnote{Report on the UNC Y’s Connection with the National YMCA and YWCA,” 1973, in Folder 171, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.}

It did not take long for the question of national affiliations to resurface. In April 1975 the organization formally appointed a special committee from the Y Advisory Board to conduct a “thorough self-study of the Campus Y.” In a letter to Y Advisory Board Chairman George Lensing, Associate Dean of Student Affairs Harold Wallace charged the committee to evaluate “the various projects of the student organization, and the proper degree of affiliation it should have with the national organizations of the YMCA and YWCA.”\footnote{Letter to George Lensing from Harold Wallace, April 15, 1975, in Folder 171, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.}

Although Y students were engaged in multiple areas, a common thread connected the organization’s activities. Y leaders sought to include more people, particularly of diverse backgrounds, and create more global initiatives in response to issues of poverty and violence. In previous decades, controversies at the university, such as the Speaker Ban and the Food Workers’ Strike, did not give members time to reflect on the purpose of the organization and what changes were necessary to sustain its social justice agenda in the long term. Although
President Nixon ordered the withdrawal of US forces in 1973, opposition continued until the war ended in 1975. Anti-war protests dominated the first half of the decade, but the Nixon years were relatively quiet for Y members. One student recalled, “there wasn’t a big issue” that united the Y in the 1970s. The organization’s activities during the period reflect this sentiment. The Y sponsored numerous projects at the university and in the community. With no single concern uniting student activists in the decade, staff and members at UNC had to reevaluate their relationship to their national organizations; further, because Christianity guided the missions of the YMCA and YWCA, they had to consider whether religion would prevent their goals of inclusivity and multiculturalism from being fully realized.

This quiet period was not limited to students at UNC. Following demonstrations against the Vietnam War, student activism across the nation declined. This trend has been attributed to the economic downturn of the 1970s. If students wanted to enter the workforce or attend graduate school, they had to perform well academically, which left little time for activism. This change in campus culture coincided with a religious revival led by the evangelical Reverend Billy Graham. Time, the Wall Street Journal, and the New York Times covered debates among evangelicals between 1976 and 1979. These publications reported that evangelicals began “to reassert the Bible’s authority through politics.” With the Moral Majority appearing in 1979, conservatives mobilized against gay rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and abortion.

155 Interview with Barbara Bitler-Coughlin by Hudson Vaughan, August 20, 2010, #L-0323, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

156 Turner, Sitting in and Speaking Out, 283.

157 Ibid., 262.

158 Worthen, Apostles of Reason, 203.

159 Ibid., 203.
the end of the decade, evangelical values left little room for progressive causes. With evangelicalism on the rise, mainline Protestantism began to lose followers. And by the 1970s even many Protestants did not consider liberal values, including individualism, pluralism, and intellectual inquiry, to be exclusively Christian.\(^{160}\)

In the midst of these developments, 1976 marked important change for the Y; Anne Queen announced her retirement. Queen’s lasting legacy was unquestioned, but her departure brought about an opportunity for reflection. Cathy Stuart, Y President in 1976, described Queen’s retirement as “sea of change for the Y and how the Y was perceived.”\(^{161}\) Y staff and students were faced with the reality of what to do next. Edith Wiggins, who served as one of the associate directors alongside Norm Gustaveson in early 1970s, succeeded Queen as director that year.\(^{162}\) The debate surrounding national affiliations resurfaced as Wiggins took office, and the decision was made to forgo sending a “religious preference card” to incoming students, a tradition which helped connect those new to UNC with the campus chaplain. Wiggins cited the need “to put more distance” between the Y and “the religious aspect of it.”\(^{163}\)

**The International Handicrafts Bazaar and Multiculturalism**

With no unifying social issue or religious ethic in place following Queen’s departure, multiculturalism became the overarching value expressed by Y members. Many of the Y’s new projects had goals of furthering initiatives to end injustice at home and abroad. However, these

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161 Interview with Cathy Rosenthal-Stuart by Sandra Davidson, May 17, 2010, #L-0290, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

162 Interview with Edith Wiggins by Hudson Vaughan, March 8, 2010, #L-0291, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

163 Interview with Edith Wiggins.
agendas needed funding, and for those in the community to appreciate the Y’s social justice projects, they had to understand global politics and culture. The International Handicrafts Bazaar, which began in the 1960s, met these needs in the 1970s. The Bazaar acted as important fundraiser for the organization’s programs, including those at the Murdoch Center for children with developmental disabilities and the Y’s One World Development group, which focused on international causes. Crafts came from many places: Israel, Jordan, Mexico, Peru, Turkey, Norway, and Belgium. Although it began solely as an international event, Anne Queen encouraged Y staff and students to consider inviting Appalachian craftsmen (see Fig. 4). When Y members began hosting them, Queen noted that these craftsmen served to educate on Southern culture.164

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164 “International Handicrafts Bazaar This Week at UNC,” November 29, 1970, in The Chapel Hill Weekly, Folder 418, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Although the Bazaar functioned primarily to fund the Y’s existing projects, it also furthered the organization’s goal of increasing the public’s awareness of social justice issues. In 1971 the decision was made to include an American Indian Pavilion. The inclusion of native crafts had an activist slant. Organizers of the event wanted to challenge the notion that injustices against native communities “are a sad but definitely concluded chapter in American history,” writing, “nothing could be further from the truth.” Thus, the Bazaar’s purpose was “to give the individual an opportunity to view a limited sample of the creative accomplishments of a group of people whose abilities as craftsmen have yet to be fully appreciated.”

By 1972 the Bazaar officially had three goals: to fund the Y’s “general program and administration,” to support “local, regional, and international handicrafts,” and to act as “a ‘celebrative event’… for students, university families, and community people.”

Following Vietnam and in the midst of the Cold War, the Bazaar created a diverse international community that helped to foster learning. The Bazaar was only one of the ways in which students and staff promoted global engagement. Increased efforts to promote multiculturalism at UNC would later support arguments for disaffiliation from the national YMCA and YWCA. Over the course of the decade, the Bazaar not only acted as an important fundraiser for the Y but also served as an educational experience for attendees. Additionally, it became increasingly inclusive. The event showcased crafts from over thirteen countries in

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165 “American Indian Pavilion, International Handicrafts Bazaar, University of North Carolina,” 1971, in Folder 418, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

166 “International Handicrafts Bazaar: General Information for Salespeople,” December 1972, in Folder 419, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Describing it as “a festive occasion on campus,” Susan Stamper, co-chair of the Bazaar, noted in 1977, “it’s an educational as well as cultural event.” Interested “in expanding the cultural-interchange facet of the Bazaar,” Decorations and Display Chairperson Jil Linker asked craftsmen to send print materials about their respective countries for the event.

As Y staff and students worked to incorporate multiculturalism through the Handicrafts Bazaar, many Christians, particularly mainline Protestants, gained awareness of the effects of colonialism and previous missionary projects on international communities. While serving abroad, Protestant missionaries discovered that those of other faiths did not need Christianity as once assumed. As this understanding increased, Protestants began to align themselves with secular causes, including the creation of secular agencies such as human rights organizations in the 1970s. For the Y this tolerance of diversity coincided with the erosion of the organization’s Christian identity.

Disaffiliation

As staff and students pursued multicultural projects, such as the Handicrafts Bazaar, they continued to grapple with the issue of affiliation with the national YMCA and YWCA bodies. They discussed both practical and ethical reasons for distancing the Y at UNC from these larger associations. In February 1978 the Y Advisory Board reviewed an earlier report in favor of

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167 “The 10th annual International Handicrafts Bazaar,” 1976, in Folder 419, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

168 “Bazaar featuring handicrafts, food to begin Friday,” November 30, 1977, in The Daily Tar Heel, in Folder 420, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

169 Letter from Jil Linker, August 28, 1978, in Folder 420, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

170 Hollinger, After Cloven Tongues of Fire, 44-45.
affiliation during the 1974-1975 academic years, citing the high cost of the annual association fees. Ultimately the Board recommended that the Campus Y discontinue its affiliation with the national YMCA but continue with the YWCA. The YWCA appeared to be closer in line with the Campus Y’s progressive mission, which included support of “the women’s movement, with efforts to eliminate racism, and to bring about conditions favorable to equality and justice for all people.”

The national YWCA, for example, openly supported abortion rights and created defense funds to protest the treatment of Native Americans at Wounded Knee during the 1970s. The YMCA, on the other hand, did not focus on these goals explicitly, and the cost of membership dues outweighed the benefits of continued affiliation: Advisory Board members felt that this “was too great a sum to be expended for symbolic reasons… and that the money might be more usefully spent elsewhere.” With the monies freed by disaffiliation, students could now afford to attend external conferences that furthered the Y’s social justice agenda.

With the Campus Y’s continued affiliation with the national YWCA, new problems arose pertaining to the separation of church and state. Other faculty at UNC voiced concern over the presence of the Y at a state university. Ed Glassman of UNC’s School of Medicine wrote to the Y Advisory Board in December 1983, asking how it was possible for “YMCA” to be emblazoned on a building at a public institution. Chairman Dorothy Bernholz, referring to a statement of purpose developed in 1965, responded to Glassman; while the Y had a Christian heritage, it sought “to engage students of all religions, faiths, and especially those with none, as

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171 “Recommendations on Continued Affiliation of the Campus Y with the National YMCA and YWCA,” February 8, 1978, in Folder 402, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


173 “Recommendations on Continued Affiliation of the Campus Y with the National YMCA and YWCA.”
well as those from all kinds of cultural backgrounds,” remaining under the jurisdiction of the Division of Student Affairs.\textsuperscript{174} She accordingly saw “no specific program activities that would offend the constitutional prohibitions against the entanglement of church and state.”\textsuperscript{175}

In 1984 Y staff began to consider disaffiliation from the national YWCA more seriously. Carol Holcomb wrote to the national board in New York, asking to discuss its Christian mission statement and a recent court case that “addressed the YWCA as a religious organization.”\textsuperscript{176} The status of the YWCA as a women’s organization also posed legal problems under the provisions of Title IX, which concerned sex discrimination. Although the YWCA received exemptions from the Title IX policy and the US Civil Services Commission that dealt with religion, Y staff and students struggled to justify continued affiliation with the national YWCA.\textsuperscript{177} A special committee of the Board reviewed the Campus Y’s affiliation with the national YWCA that year. The committee had concerns with the legal problems religion created at a public institution, but more importantly it took issue with the ways in which Christianity limited its mission of inclusivity at UNC:

…the Campus Y is an integral part of the University and as such should avoid the appearance of sectarianism. The Committee does not arrive a legal conclusion regarding any excessive entanglement with religion by the Campus Y. Rather, it treats the issue in light of the Campus Y’s focus for the 80s: a rededication to spanning the differences of the many groups that have become fragmented in our society. The Campus Y must

\textsuperscript{174} Correspondence between Dorothy Bernholz and Ed Glassman, December 6, 1983, in Folder 402, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{176} Letter from Carol Holcomb to Kay Logan, February 17, 1984, in Folder 402, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{177} Letter from Kay Logan to Carol Holcomb, February 28, 1984, in Folder 402, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
identify and develop values which unite different groups in our society. The Campus Y cannot embrace a mission statement which advocates one group over another.\textsuperscript{178}

Financial and legal issues certainly mattered, but the deciding factor in choosing to disaffiliate from the YWCA was the national association’s Christian mission, which conflicted with the Campus Y’s values of pluralism.

The Y at UNC transitioned from active to inactive status with the national YWCA in 1984, a decision made by the Y Advisory Board but supported by students and staff alike.\textsuperscript{179} University administrators also advocated for disaffiliation for similar reasons. Y Director Carol Holcomb received a letter from the Office of the Chancellor in which Susan Ehringhaus, Assistant to the Chancellor, wrote, “it was important for the Campus Y to continue to avoid activities having the purpose or effect of promoting religion or activities that would foster or result in excessive entanglement with a religious organization.”\textsuperscript{180} Despite this, the status of affiliation with the national association continued to be contested following the appointment of Zenobia Hatcher-Wilson as Director in 1985. While students opposed associating with the national chapter for its religious character, Hatcher-Wilson advocated for reaffiliation, citing administrative benefits that would not affect programming.\textsuperscript{181}

After 1986 the debate over reaffiliation mostly subsided. Y members committed themselves “to turning humanitarian ideals into campus activism, community involvement and

\textsuperscript{178} “Report and Recommendations: Findings and Conclusions,” March 16, 1984, in Folder 402, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{179} Letter to Donald Boulton from Les Garner, October 31, 1984, in Folder 402, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{180} Letter Carol Holcomb from Susan Ehringhaus, March 28, 1984, in Folder 402, the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{181} “Campus Y Affiliation Debated,” November 6, 1985, in The Daily Tar Heel.
global action." Diversity clearly became the focus of the Campus Y’s activities. While Christianity had inspired the Y’s projects in previous decades, it now limited possibilities for social action projects, which required flexibility and inclusivity in an increasingly globalized world. However, some aspects of the Y’s work had not changed with secularization: Y student activists maintained a universal outlook that sought to benefit others through service. Specific actors, such as Anne Queen, played critical roles in developing the organization’s theology, but ultimately, students decided what causes mattered most to them. Relying on a Christian mission, aside from the practical problems of affiliating with the national YMCA and YWCA bodies, prevented students from engaging in spontaneous social action projects that this new era of history demanded. Disaffiliation freed members from the constraints religion imposed and allowed for the inclusion of those of different faith backgrounds.

**Conclusion**

During the 1970s and 80s, the Campus Y focused on developing values of inclusivity, openness, and multiculturalism by speaking on global issues. Over time, Y members found their values to conflict with the national organization’s Christian-centered mission. On campus the Y was involved in the Vietnam War protests, promoting international opportunities such as the Peace Corps, and celebrating cultural diversity during its annual International Handicrafts Bazaar. Later the organization focused more intensely on immigration and human rights causes. For various reasons related to its social justice projects, the Y began to reevaluate its relationship to the national YMCA and YWCA.

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182 “Campus Y to Recruit Members,” August 26, 1986, in *The Daily Tar Heel*.

183 See George M. Marsden’s *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Secularization was not limited to the Y at UNC. The Protestant establishment’s influence on college campuses dissipated drastically in the late twentieth century. Marsden suggests Protestant universalism led to religious decline as leaders in higher education grew concerned with sectarianism.
Staff and students took issue with the religious nature of these national bodies. The UNC community began to believe that religious commitments undermined the Campus Y’s attempt to create new and increasingly inclusive programs. Furthermore, the Y’s Christian affiliation posed legal problems at UNC, a public university, as it complicated the separation between church and state. More clearly than ever, religion did not allow the Y to accomplish its social justice goals, and by 1984, it disaffiliated from both the national YMCA and YWCA. Prior to this period, promoting inclusivity through service projects was an expression of Christian values for Y students as they advocated for civil rights causes, but beginning in the 1970s, this meant something entirely different as members sought to focus on global issues and multiculturalism. Christianity was no longer a compelling motivator for Y members because it became defined by a powerful evangelical revival. As perceptions of evangelicals evolved, Y students could explore more possibilities for social justice by turning from religion entirely.
CONCLUSION

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.

–Martin Luther King, Jr.\textsuperscript{184}

On August 23, 2017, the Campus Y, along with three other student organizations at UNC, made a statement to Chancellor Carol Folt, Governor Roy Cooper, the Board of Governors and Board of Trustees, and the North Carolina Historical Commission, demanding that the contested Silent Sam monument be removed from campus immediately. In the letter, students claimed that as a relic of “white supremacist intimidation,” the statue of the nameless Confederate soldier in McCorkle Place stands as “an idealistic representation of a fictionalized ‘southern’ heritage.” The statement was sent shortly after a Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, that left several hospitalized and one woman dead.\textsuperscript{185} With the incident in Charlottesville and controversy surrounding the removal of Confederate monuments fresh in public memory, there was also something very familiar about the demands made by student activists.

In the weeks that followed, the Campus Y openly supported a campus-wide boycott of commercial goods at UNC in response to the university’s inaction on Silent Sam. An alternative lunch stand was set outside the Y Building for students participating in the boycott.\textsuperscript{186} As they did during the Food Workers’ Strike at UNC in the late 1960s, university administrators informed student activists that selling food on campus outside the Pit area was in violation of


\textsuperscript{185} “Four UNC Student Organization demand Silent Sam be taken down,” in The Daily Tar Heel, August 23, 2017.

\textsuperscript{186} “I will boycott UNC, will you” in The Daily Tar Heel, September, 17, 2017.
UNC policy. But unlike the Food Workers’ Strike, Y students could openly sponsor the boycott and sale of alternative food goods, while having the support of Campus Y staff, despite opposition from university administrators.

Early efforts to desegregate the university by Y members mostly involved addressing whites’ fears about an integrated campus in the 1950s, but later this gradual approach to racial equality proved to be inadequate. The Food Workers’ Strike in the late 1960s was a crucial turning point for those invested in social justice activism at UNC. The demands made to university administrations by members of the Black Student Movement required immediate action on behalf of the cafeteria workers and black students at the university. The more passive approach that called for active listening, patience, and compromise espoused by Anne Queen, who quietly committed herself to Christian values, did not align with the urgency of activists’ demands, and as a result, Queen and Y staff discouraged students from fully engaging with the causes that mattered most to them. This period of history brought along rapid transformations for the organization as Y members saw the importance of taking a stand even if that made others uncomfortable.

Following Queen’s retirement, the Campus Y’s official affiliation with Christianity imposed obstacles to achieving social justice aims in an increasingly globalized world. While many mainline Protestants grew increasingly aware of these concerns, Y student activists could not justify the continued use of a Christian label in its name and accordingly its severed ties with national YMCA and YWCA bodies, dropping the “C” in its name. Increasingly the Campus Y became known for what it was not—not racist, classist, colonialist, or sexist. As changing times called for a more pluralistic vision of social justice, an official affiliation with Christianity, while

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serving as crucial inspiration for early projects, limited student activists who wanted to avoid allegiance to a single belief system.

Conversations surrounding disaffiliation of the Y at UNC in the 1970s and 1980s coincided with what some scholars refer to as broader patterns of polarization in American society. This thesis explores how religion informed the Y’s social justice projects at various moments in university history, but it is useful to examine how certain Protestant groups gained visibility through various media outlets and how this increased visibility affected perceptions of Christians in politics and culture. The rise of the Christian Right, as historian Molly Worthen observes, has resulted in significant transformations in mainstream political and social institutions in the United States. By restricting access to abortion services, campaigning against gay marriage, and working to change American systems of public education, conservative evangelicals have shaped public policy in profound ways that set them apart from secular activists who seek progressive social change. And with evangelicalism gaining converts worldwide, the influence of mainline Protestantism has dissipated. While mainline Protestantism once had influence, it somehow never effectively captured the attention of policy makers, perhaps due to its emphasis on gradualism. The question of how Christianity inspires or impedes social justice aims can be applied to contexts beyond the Y at UNC.

Further, the religious motivations of student activists at UNC help us better understand the “long civil rights movement,” described by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “that took root in the liberal and radical milieu of the late 1930s… accelerated during World War II… and in the

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189 Ibid., 262-263.
1960s and 1970s inspired a ‘movement of all movements.’” The history of change in the Campus Y’s religious affiliations allows us to see the 1930s and 1980s as connected. While Y members’ efforts to promote racial equality spanned nearly a half-century, each era of Y history demanded a new approach to social justice issues. And by focusing specifically on the organization’s religious transformations, we can more closely examine people’s values.

Much debate ensued among Christian and conservative groups after Patricia Ireland, former president of the National Organization for Women, a group that promotes feminist ideals and champions abortion and reproductive rights, became president of the national YWCA in 2003. Ireland’s supporters advocated that the organization drop “Christian” from its name, and to this end, Ireland herself stated, “I’m not the head of a Christian organization… I’m the head of a social justice organization.” She continued, “We’re not predominantly sectarian. That should keep us in good stead with the federal government.” Without much controversy or explanation, the national YMCA rebranded in 2010, dropping all but one letter from its name, “the Y.” Although the national YWCA did not officially change its name from “Young Women’s Christian Association of the United States of America” to “YWCA USA, Inc.” until December 2015, conversations surrounding disaffiliation at UNC in the 1980s clearly foreshadowed those to come at the national level. This study uncovers transformations within the Campus Y at UNC, but it reveals that those changes reflected broader trends in American culture. By looking closely at the role religion played in the Y’s projects, we can better

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193 “History,” YWCA USA.
understand the Protestantism’s place in social, political, and educational institutions of the United States.
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