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A COMPARISON OF THE METHODS OF DESEGREGATION OF THE
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI,
AND LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

by

John Richard Crowley, S. J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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LIFE

John Richard Crowley, S.J., was born in Saginaw, Michigan, May 19, 1933.

He graduated from St. Mary High School, Saginaw, Michigan, June, 1951. He entered the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio, September 2, 1951, at which time he enrolled at Xavier University Cincinnati, Ohio.

In September, 1955, he transferred to West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, affiliated with Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, June 13, 1956. He is at present enrolled in the graduate school of Loyola University, working for a degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Since January 1, 1863, the Negro in the United States has been waging a long and arduous battle to obtain his full civil rights. That date marked President Lincoln's "Emancipation Proclamation," which declared all persons held as slaves in rebel states to be free. The Thirteenth Amendment followed on December 18, 1865, abolishing slavery in the United States and its territories. June 16, 1866, witnessed the guarantee of "equal protection of the laws" written into the Constitution as the Fourteenth Amendment. The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified on March 30, 1870, stated that the right to vote should not be denied to anyone on grounds of "race, color or previous condition of servitude." Two subsequent acts designed to enforce and extend the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were nullified by the Supreme Court as exceeding the Federal Government's proper role.¹

¹The first of these acts, designed to bring Federal Government pressure to bear against any effort to circumvent the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, was passed on May 31, 1870, and nullified six years later. The second act, a Civil Rights Law guaranteeing all persons, regardless of race, the use of inns, public conveyances, theatres and other places of amusement, was likewise subsequently declared unconstitutional.

What appeared to many as the largest setback in this drive for full civil rights was the Plessy vs. Ferguson case of May 18, 1896. In establishing the principle of "separate but equal" facilities for Negroes, it allowed for facilities that were indeed separate but all too often unequal. For over half a century jurists observed this interpretation. Despite this obstacle, the Negro continued to march toward full civil rights. Voting restriction devices, employment and transportation discrimination and racial covenants were slowly eliminated by Supreme Court decrees.

Supreme Court decisions in educational cases indicated the road ahead: in 1938 it ruled that a state must admit a Negro to its law school or establish comparable separate facilities; in 1950 it directed that, since equality is impossible in segregation, the University of Oklahoma must stop segregating a Negro student in classrooms, library and other facilities. Only one more barrier remained in the educational field--that of declaring that separate but equal facilities were not and could not be equal.

A decision on this matter would have immense repercussions. The public school systems of the United States are huge. They embrace some twenty-five million pupils and over 900,000 teachers. Buildings, grounds and equipment are worth many millions of dollars, and the salaries paid run into millions more.²

²Robin M. Williams, Jr. and Margaret W. Ryan, Schools in Transition (Chapel Hill, 1954), pp. 3-4.

Segregation, furthermore, enjoyed a highly enforced legal status as recently as 1953. In that year seventeen states and the District of Columbia required segregation in public schools; four permitted segregation; sixteen prohibited segregation; and eleven had no specific legislation on segregation in public schools.³ Generations-old racial practices and customs had also to be considered. But so did the fact that 15,000,000 Negroes, about 10 per cent of this nation's population, were not receiving their due rights. In the midst of such a situation the United States Supreme Court delivered one of the most stirring and controversial decisions of its 164-year old history.

Fifty-eight years less one day after its *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision, the Supreme Court reversed that decree by declaring on May 17, 1954, that Negroes barred by law from attending public schools with white students were deprived of the equal protection of the laws as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. It said, "We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."⁴ It did not then hand down an implementation decree, recognizing the huge problems to be met. It asked rather that the Attorneys General of states with segregation laws submit proposals on the best possible ways of con-

³Harry S. Ashmore, The Negro and the Schools (Chapel Hill, 1954), p. 2, map.

⁴Time, LXIII (May 24, 1954), 22.

forming their school systems to the law of the land. (The cases on which the decision was made came from South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, Kansas and the District of Columbia. In making its ruling the Court issued one opinion covering all the state cases, a separate opinion to deal with the special legal aspects of the District of Columbia case.)

Another full year passed before the Supreme Court, on May 31, 1955, pronounced its implementation decision, directing that desegregation proceed with "all deliberate speed." It allotted to Federal district courts the jurisdiction over lawsuits to enforce the desegregation decision. In March of the following year the decision was extended to all state-supported colleges and universities.

Such a momentous decision was not of course received quietly. Critics and clients alike were loud in their opposition or defense. This was to be expected. A social movement of large proportions was underway and no one could react indifferently. In the North, least affected by the decision, the reaction was generally favorable. In Georgia, Governor Herman Talmadge and Attorney General Eugene Cook were defiant and said they would boycott the implementation debate. In Mississippi, South Carolina and Georgia, state legislatures prepared to permit the abolition of public schools if segregation could not be maintained.⁵ White Citizens Councils began springing up in the deep

⁵ New York Times, May 23, 1954, p. E5.

South. In some quarters, on the other hand, the decision was greeted with jubilation. The N.A.A.C.P. rejoiced in this greatest victory of its forty-five-year history. In Kansas and Oklahoma and other border states it was calmly stated that they expected segregation to be ended with little difficulty. Texas' Governor Allen Shivers stated that they would comply although it might take a long time to iron out the details. Virginia Governor Thomas Stanley proved a model of quiet, wise acceptance.⁶ Elsewhere in the South, quiet, if sullen, acceptance was evident.

Mayor Raymond R. Tucker set the tone for St. Louis when he said immediately after the decision, "The people of our community should accept calmly and intelligently the ruling of the Supreme Court which holds that there must be no discrimination in the public schools of our nation."⁷ In Kentucky, Governor Lawrence W. Wetherby set a similar example with his succinct statement, "Kentucky will do whatever is necessary to comply with the law."⁸

It is not difficult to imagine the vast extent of the effect of this decision. Scarcely a corner of the United States remains uninvolved. The number of people implicated is likewise immense. Hence the significance of the problem can hardly be overestimated, as it indicates an impending social change of great

⁶Time, LXIII (May 24, 1954), 22.

⁷Bonita H. Valien, The St. Louis Story: A Study of Desegregation (New York, 1956), p. 27.

⁸Omer Carmichael and Weldon James, The Louisville Story (New York, 1957), p. 46.

magnitude. An examination of this process in action will be very fruitful. For such a study--as this study of St. Louis and Louisville--should provide some useful principles that can be employed to help meet the problem and facilitate the transition to integration.

The purpose is then: 1) to compare the methods used in St. Louis, Missouri, and Louisville, Kentucky, to implement desegregation in their public schools; 2) to evaluate these methods in accord with the opinions of responsible authorities and in accord with the opinion of the author.

Some terminology must be clarified. This study deals with the closely connected terms of segregation, desegregation and integration. "Segregation is the general term of a system of separation, whether legally required or informally maintained, of children or school officials of different 'racial,' religious, or nationality backgrounds."⁹ Desegregation is "the removal of legal and customary arrangements for separation."¹⁰ Integration is "the establishment of mutually acceptable shared participation."¹¹ Desegregation may be considered, therefore, as the transition resulting in full and final integration. In the thesis an attempt will be made to use the terms according to these meanings.

⁹Williams, pp. 14-15. Italics his.

¹⁰Ibid. 237-238.

¹¹Ibid.

One final remark on terminology. The words race and racial will occur frequently throughout the thesis. They will not be employed in their scientific meaning but merely in their everyday usage. That is, the author subscribes to MacIver's thesis that "the term 'race' should never be used to signify species or permanent genetic divisions of the genus Homo. We know of no such species. . . . For taxonomic purposes we can distinguish three (or four) 'races' of mankind, but here we use the term 'race' in a freer sense. We mean by races clusters of peoples with some geographical identification, each cluster exhibiting typically a characteristic combination of minor physical differences genetically transmissible."¹² In other words, the freer, taxonomic meaning of race will be used in this thesis, not the more fundamental signification.

¹²Robert M. MacIver, The More Perfect Union (New York, 1948), p. 269.

CHAPTER II

THE ST. LOUIS PLAN FOR DESEGREGATION

Missouri was one of the five slave states that did not secede from the Union in the Civil War, despite its pronounced Southern leanings. St. Louis, largest city in that state and the eighth largest city in the United States with a population of some 875,000 in 1954, has partaken of the Southern traditions of Missouri. But it has gradually been influenced, with increased industrialization and urbanization, by Northern attitudes and social patterns.

The social pattern of segregation had not been enforced by law within St. Louis itself. There had been state laws, however, requiring racial segregation in the public schools and forbidding interracial marriage, and these of course dictated the municipal policy. The practice of segregation operated until World War II in the traditional pattern, that is, it was established at public community centers, swimming pools, the legitimate theater, and the major league ball park. Motion picture theaters, places of commercial recreation, restaurants, and some hotels also excluded Negroes, as did private schools and colleges. Residentially, the familiar pattern of all-Negro and all-white neighborhoods prevailed, as well as the transitional zones where Negro families

were replacing white families. Public housing was also segregated, and employment of most Negroes was limited to unskilled and semi-skilled positions.¹

Public libraries, street cars, buses and trains operated on a non-segregated basis. Although racial restrictions hedged about public parks, municipal buildings and railroad stations as to eating facilities, they were otherwise non-segregated.² Such were the customary practices by which St. Louis discriminated against its 175,000 Negroes (20 per cent of the total population).³

The public schools served in 1954 approximately 91,000, of whom 65 per cent, or 59,000, were white pupils and 35 per cent, or 32,000, were Negro. There were for the white pupils eighty-three regular elementary schools, seven general high schools, one technical high school, one college and twenty-six special schools for exceptional children. They were taught by 1,840 white instructors. The Negro public school pupils were instructed by 905 Negro teachers in thirty-five regular elementary schools, two general high schools, one technical high school, one college, and fifteen special schools for exceptional children.⁴ (Cf.

¹Instruction Department, St. Louis Public Schools, Desegregation of the St. Louis Public Schools (St. Louis, 1956), mimeograph, pp. 5-6.

²Ibid.

³Ibid. 4.

⁴Ibid. 3-4.

Table I.)

Table ISt. Louis Public Schools Before Desegregation

Race	No. Pupils	Percent Pupils	Teachers	Schools
White	59,000	65	1,840	118
Negro	32,000	35	905	54
Total	91,000	100	2,745	172

The St. Louis schools for Negroes were overcrowded because of the rapid upsurge in Negro population, and its heavy concentration in congested areas of the city, particularly in the central district.⁵ Some of the schools for whites, on the other hand, especially in transition areas, had too few pupils. It should be noted that over 30,000 children in St. Louis attend private and parochial schools. Catholics make up over 24 per cent of the city's population, but a low percentage of this is Negro.⁶ This factor helps explain the relatively high percentage of Negroes in the public schools.

Such was the situation at the time of the Supreme Court's history-making decision in May, 1954. But St. Louis and the Board of Education were ready. Preparation had come by way of decreasing segregation in the decade before 1954, and by thought

⁵Valien, p. 8.

⁶Ibid. 19.

and action on better human relations.

Citywide forces helped, in the decade before 1954, pave the way for desegregation. Religious, educational, civic, social and labor organizations were working toward the goal of better human relations by reducing discrimination and prejudice. In 1946, for example, the Y.W.C.A. sponsored a five-day Community Race Relations Institute in which thirty-five community organizations participated. The Institute sought to discover techniques of furthering more amicable race relations in St. Louis.⁷ Consequently, the Social Planning Council, with its membership of 199 health, welfare, recreational, and educational agencies,⁸ prompted by the Urban League, appointed a committee to study and submit recommendations on problems of desegregation in member agencies.

The late Mayor Joseph A. Darst created the city's first official Council on Human Relations in 1949. He also appointed the first Negro to the local board of education.⁹ This Council promoted a yearly celebration of Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day, at which part of the program was devoted to human rights in the school.¹⁰

⁷Ibid. 17.

⁸Instruction Department, p. 6.

⁹Clarence T. Hunter, "Changing Community Patterns in St. Louis," Interracial Review, XXIX (March 1956), 45.

¹⁰Valien, p. 17.

Church groups assisted. One religious leader organized the Citizens' Committee on Human Rights. Negro ministers were permitted to preach in Temple Israel, while the Ethical Society granted membership to Negroes. The Metropolitan Church Federation, with 600 member churches, passed a resolution asking for the termination of segregation in member churches. The Interracial Commission of the same Federation sponsored four institutes on the theme, "The Church faces the Race Question."¹¹

Labor unions struck at discrimination and segregation both within and without their organizations. In 1951 the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 688, prophetically urged that the community so prepare for the inevitable desegregation as to accomplish it with a minimum of disturbance and tension.¹² In radio talks with educators the unions helped to foster community-wide discussion of the question.

During this same decade the first cautious steps were taken to bring into contact the pupils of the segregated St. Louis system. When exchange of musical organizations at assembly programs proved successful, there followed panel discussions and classroom-to-classroom visits, then an all-city public high school symphony orchestra, and a centennial pageant featuring over 5,000 students from all schools. The city-wide student council, begun in 1947, opened the way to monthly discussions of

¹¹Ibid. 18.

¹²Ibid. 20.

common problems among the pupils. Among its achievements it numbers the inception of interracial athletics in St. Louis.

Probably the most important influence among youth was Intergroup Youth, organized in 1946 by the regional director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Designed to inspire and stimulate research and discussion, it purposed to "help make democracy a reality in the lives of participating members."¹³ The first project of Intergroup Youth was an area-wide conference affording youth an opportunity to meet on common ground and exchange ideas. Held during Brotherhood Week on February 19, 1947, representatives of thirty area high schools, white and Negro, public and private and parochial, met with singular intergroup results.

Intergroup Youth has directed enthusiasm and vitality into worthwhile activities on school and community level. Human relations clubs, set up in some schools, successfully promoted better understanding among students and parents. Intergroup Youth's "programs and activities have deepened [the students'] awareness of the necessity for understanding and appreciating individual differences; at the same time they have discovered for themselves the fundamental likenesses of all human beings."¹⁴

Consequent to the efforts of these and other groups, noticeable changes occurred in the traditional pattern of segregation

¹³Ibid. 23.

¹⁴Ibid. 26.

in the decade preceding school desegregation. The St. Louis major league ball park was desegregated in 1944. In 1945 the State Constitution's clause on racial segregation in public schools was relaxed. Beginning in 1947 Washington University desegregated. Municipal swimming pools and other municipal facilities desegregated in 1950 after the June, 1949, incident at the Fairgrounds Park pool caused the N.A.A.C.P. to carry that case to the Federal District Court.¹⁵ Desegregation of St. Louis' largest legitimate theater followed in 1951; then came increasing desegregation of leading hotels, capped in 1953 by considerable desegregation in job hiring, illustrated by the hiring of Negro streetcar and bus operators.¹⁶

Desegregation of the Catholic schools was another notable factor in improving community race relations and smoothing the way for public school desegregation. St. Louis University in 1945 opened its doors to all qualified students regardless of color or race. (A poll taken among the student body had indicated that a majority of the students favored desegregation.)¹⁷ Two years later, recently appointed Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter announced that segregation in all Catholic schools would be abolished. Some 700 parents opposed the change, but their opposition quickly died, although some parents withdrew their

¹⁵Ibid. 11-12.

¹⁶Instruction Department, pp. 6-7.

¹⁷Hunter, p. 46.

children from the parochial schools. The help of the St. Louis Catholic Interracial Council, formed in 1944, proved useful in calming the troubled waters.¹⁸ Perhaps the desegregation of the Catholic schools best served to show St. Louisians that desegregation was possible and practicable, provided the leadership was firm and the plan carefully thought-out.

The Board of Education had also made similar preparations for desegregation. Since the employment of Negro teachers in the system in 1877, cordial intercourse on an interracial basis had characterized the system. White and Negro presidents, principals, superintendents and teachers of colleges, high schools, elementary and special schools had held their meetings and functioned together on a non-racial basis. Separate meetings for whites and Negroes had not been the practice. Since the 'thirties integrated committees had written the courses of study and selected the textbooks.¹⁹

With the appointment of Philip J. Hickey in 1943 as Superintendent of Instruction in the St. Louis Public Schools, the pattern of desegregation grew. Within a year he had integrated his office staff, all instruction committees and all educational meetings.²⁰

Sparked by the superintendent's example, integration grew

¹⁸Valien, p. 19.

¹⁹Instruction Department, pp. 7-8.

²⁰Hunter, p. 44.

in the professional educational organizations as it had grown in the performance of professional duties. After 1944, Negro principals participated more as committee members and officers in the Elementary School Principals Association, although it had since its inception in 1918 included all principals. Three years later the St. Louis Women Principals Club initially included Negro women. The same year, 1947, the local chapter of the Association for Childhood Education extended membership to Negroes, who began to play an active role in that group. The Missouri State Teachers Association followed in 1948 by revising their policy to accept Negroes as members.²¹

The St. Louis' system's twenty-five-year-old program to develop understanding and good will between members of the different ethnic and religious groups proved immensely helpful.²² Superintendent Hickey increased and systematized the work done in this field. He established a curriculum committee on Intercultural Relations to serve in the Social Studies Area of the Courses of Study Council. In May, 1945, the St. Louis Public School System became one of eighteen cities participating in an experimental study of intergroup education sponsored by the American Council on Education and financed by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Under the leadership of Dr. Hilda Taba and her staff, far-reaching results were obtained

²¹Instruction Department, pp. 8-9.

²²Ibid.

through a systematic program to assist teachers in developing skills that would prove useful in helping their students overcome the artificial barriers of race.²³ Benefits were reaped through summer workshops, institutes and in-service training classes held at Washington University, St. Louis University, Syracuse University, Harvard, Denver University and the University of Chicago. Authorities on various aspects of intergroup education spoke before the entire staff of the system. A consultant in human relations assisted teachers to guide pupils in the art of cooperative living. An Intergroup Education Association of 525 teachers, administrators and consultants was organized to improve the teaching of human relations in schools. Working with other community groups, the Association provided speakers and audio-visual aids to neighborhood associations and other groups wishing to undertake a program geared toward desegregation. It cooperated also in staging a program based on intergroup education for the Catholic Schools' convention.²⁴

The program in human relations aimed basically to educate for American citizenship by inculcating respect of individual worth, regardless of whether or not segregation continued. The lessening of prejudice and building-up of good feeling accomplished by the program "measurably facilitated acceptance and im-

²³Valien, p. 22.

²⁴Ibid. 22-23.

plementation of the Court's decision."²⁵

In the last couple of years before the Court's pronouncement the Board of Education considered the possible procedures to be followed if segregation were declared unconstitutional. A series of conferences was held in the summer of 1953 with the superintendent of a recently desegregated public school system in which members of the Board, school officials and community leaders had participated. The physical facilities of the system were studied to determine the uses to which they could be put on a non-segregated basis. For several years prior to the decision, a prime question asked whenever the erection of a new building was projected was, how can it be strategically placed whether segregation continues or not? Whenever an intergroup controversy arose over possession of a school building in a fringe area, the solution was sought in terms of leaving as little antagonism as possible. Consequently, when the Supreme Court decision came, members of the Board had ready general outlines of several possible plans for desegregation.²⁶

Such preparation equipped the St. Louis Board of Education to meet the Supreme Court's pronouncement. Scarcely one month later, on June 22, the Board held a special meeting "for the purpose of considering and acting upon the question of desegregation

²⁵Instruction Department, p. 12.

²⁶Ibid. 12-13.

of the schools."²⁷ A program for desegregation was unanimously adopted and announced.

The plan outlined a time schedule for desegregation, beginning in September, 1954, and continuing until the following September. The Board explained why a more expeditious program was not proposed, outlined several general principles governing the process for students and employees, and delegated to the superintendent power to handle any sections of the educational program not referred to specifically in the statement of the plan. The plan closed with a petition to all the citizens of the community for their "help, cooperation and good will."²⁸

As before, so after the plan's publication the valuable assistance of nearly every key community group smoothed the way for the transition. Included among them were "the press, the League of Women Voters, the citywide councils of parent-teacher associations, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the N.A.A.C.P., the Urban League, the Metropolitan Church Federation, representatives of the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Society for Better Human Relations, the Jewish Community Council, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations, and others."²⁹

These organizations contributed to the preparation in

²⁷Ibid. 11.

²⁸Ibid. iv-v.

²⁹Ibid. 20.

various ways. Their cumulative efforts were summed up thus: "Seldom if ever has there been a project on which the key civic and religious organizations and social agencies in St. Louis have cooperated more unanimously than on this. . . . The work of these organizations and agencies plus a respect for law on the part of the majority of the citizens was instrumental in creating a climate of orderliness and good will in which desegregation might take place."³⁰

The St. Louis plan was promulgated on June 22, 1954. The following September desegregation began. It involved the Teachers and Junior Colleges and the special schools for exceptional children. The Stowes Teachers and Junior College, formerly Negro, was merged with the Harris Teachers and Junior College, formerly white. The latter's buildings housed the merged student body and faculty. The preceding June, Stowes had had a faculty of twenty-eight teachers and an average daily enrollment of 340 students, while the corresponding figures for Harris were thirty-three and 528. After the consolidation, approximately 40 per cent of the student body was Negro and 60 per cent white.³¹

The same September witnessed the desegregation of special schools for exceptional children. The two schools for the orthopedically handicapped, Turner for Negroes and Michael for whites

³⁰Ibid. 21.

³¹Ibid. 22.

consolidated and used the Michael building. The Turner school for the deaf merged with the formerly white Gallaudet school. The Gallaudet building served both groups. The hospital school at Shriners Hospital, the Social re-habilitation homes, for boys at Missouri Hills and for girls at Meramec Hills, and the schools for the mentally retarded (which for the most part were classrooms in ordinary elementary schools), of which there had been nineteen for whites and eleven for Negroes, were all desegregated in the same month.³²

The important first stride taken, another significant step remained--the redistricting of the city for the high school and elementary school pupils. New boundaries for the former were published on November 15, 1954, in the local daily and weekly papers, together with maps designating the new boundaries. Grade school boundaries were promulgated on January 30, 1955, in the same manner. Boundaries for both were determined in the same way, although the consideration of traffic hazards influenced the drawing of the grade school boundaries. Each school sent in to the central office an I.B.M. card for each student with his grade and city block indicated. The card made no reference to race. The approximately 6000 city blocks were given I.B.M. cards on the basis of the cards received from the school. Finally the districts were drawn from the assembled statistics. Thus objectivity and the best possible use of facilities were

³²Ibid. 24-25.

insured.

As the January 31, 1955, date drew near for the change in the high schools, each school did its best to prepare its student body for the transition. This was achieved chiefly through "(1) Adaptation of machinery and procedures customarily employed in the transfer, reception and orientation of students and (2) intensifying and broadening the human relations program."³³

The pupils shouldered much of the responsibility for successful desegregation. Vashon High School for Negroes held a series of school meetings pointing up the significance of the change. These well-planned and well-conducted assemblies drew editorial comment in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch: "If all the city's high schools are doing as well as Vashon in calm, intelligent, realistic preparation for an important change in community life, St. Louis has nothing to worry about."³⁴

The rest of the schools were doing just that. They held a variety of school assemblies, wrote welcoming editorials in their school papers, and discussed the forthcoming change in their social science classes. Mothers clubs held welcoming receptions for parents of the incoming students. Neighborhood groups met to decide on means to prepare for the change. It was not surprising, then, that January 31, 1955, saw a peaceful transition

³³Ibid. 35.

³⁴St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Jan. 12, 1955), 2d.

from the formerly segregated high school system to the new desegregated system.

Prior to desegregation, in the semester ending January 28, 1955, there had been an average daily enrollment of 14,134 pupils in the nine four-year high schools, two of which had been Negro. There had been 9,898 white pupils taught by 420 teachers in the seven white schools and 4,236 Negro students instructed by 170 Negro teachers in the two Negro schools. After desegregation, 644 or slightly less than 60 per cent of the Negro pupils eligible for transfer to formerly white schools did so, thus dropping the number at the two Negro schools to 3,592. Principally as a result of their location, the two Negro schools, Sumner and Vashon, and one of the formerly white schools, Southwest, enrolled no students of the opposite race.³⁵ About two-thirds of the high school students attended desegregated schools.

The adult program desegregated with the same ease that typified the high school transfer. The over-6,000 students instructed by over 200 teachers in the semester before the change mixed smoothly in the new system. The manner of desegregation differed slightly: no district lines were drawn; instead racial restrictions on registration in the adult classes were removed. This allowed residents of any part of the city to enroll at the place most convenient and offering the courses desired.³⁶

³⁵Instruction Department, pp. 32-33.

³⁶Ibid. 39-40.

The largest numerical stride in desegregation came in regard to the 123 regular elementary schools, which had, in the spring semester of 1955, an average daily grade enrollment of 62,852 pupils. The eighty-three white schools had 38,877 pupils and the forty Negro schools 23,975 pupils. In kindergarten there was an average daily enrollment of 9,848 pupils, of whom 5,902 were white and 3,946 Negro. These grade school children were taught by 1,204 white and 668 Negro teachers, while the administration was made up of seventy-eight white and thirty-five Negro principals.³⁷

To make ready for this large-scale shift activities sprang up in individual schools and throughout the entire elementary system. Typical of the former were the interracial meetings of P.T.A.'s and mothers clubs of neighboring schools; the establishment of area groups by white and Negro community leaders aimed to insure cordial relations; the setting up of desegregated athletic teams from nearby schools; inter-school visitations by groups of white and Negro elementary pupils; talks to elementary pupils and P.T.A.'s by students from the non-segregated college and high schools. On the system-wide plane the Board of Education operated the playgrounds on a non-segregated basis in the summer of 1955. This careful preparation resulted in an orderly

³⁷Ibid. 41.

and friendly changeover.³⁸

It is not possible to determine exactly the numerical effect of desegregation in the elementary schools because school records are no longer kept by race. A preliminary check, however, showed that Negro children would attend thirty-seven schools formerly for white children. The former would make up from 56 per cent to less than 1 per cent of the school population. White children would attend thirteen schools formerly Negro. The former would make up from 18 per cent to less than 1 per cent of the school population. Hence fifty of the elementary schools would have desegregated classes. Since these schools had an estimated grade enrollment of 40,000, approximately two-thirds of the elementary school population would be desegregated. Due to change in parents' choice for their children and to the considerable shift in population during the summer, a larger number of white and Negro children than originally estimated enrolled in the same schools.³⁹

Only one delay marked the program of desegregation, that due to the delay in the construction of the new technical school, O'Fallon. In the spring semester of 1955, the two technical schools, Hadley for whites and Washington for Negroes, had enrolled respectively, an average daily of 2,073 and 1,201 pupils;

³⁸Ibid. 52.

³⁹Ibid. 47.

whom ninety-eight white and forty-eight Negro teachers instructed. Despite the delay in the erection of O'Fallon, the incoming ninth graders at Hadley were desegregated. Even this partial change caused an increase to 2,630 at Hadley and a decrease at overcrowded Washington to 978. With the O'Fallon building finally readied and equipped, the Board completed desegregating the technical schools in the autumn of 1956. Residence in the two newly drawn districts for technical schools decided attendance, in accord with the general principles governing the desegregation of students. Hadley and O'Fallon handled the entire desegregated enrollment, while Washington served as an urgently needed elementary school. For reasons of economical and educational efficiency advanced courses requiring specialized equipment and enrolling smaller numbers of students were held at either one or the other school. This final move completed the implementation of the plan proposed by the school board for desegregation of the entire St. Louis Public School System.⁴⁰

Consideration may now be given to the implementation of the plan among teachers and staff. Harris and Stowes Teachers and Junior Colleges desegregated first. Following the principles stated by the Board, desegregation took place among faculty, clerical, custodial and lunchroom staffs. The president of Harris became the president of the consolidated college, while

⁴⁰Ibid. 60, 62-63.

the former president of Stowes advanced to the position of Director of Elementary Education supervising Negro and white probationary teachers. The three faculty members of Stowes not placed at the new Harris advanced to the rank of elementary school supervisors. Other staff members not placed at Harris were given positions elsewhere in the system commensurate to their training and experience. No demotions or dismissals marred the transition. The seventy-member faculty of Harris includes at present twenty-five Negro teachers.⁴¹

A like desegregation of teachers, attendants, custodial workers, bus drivers and therapists accompanied the desegregation of special schools and classes for exceptional children. No untoward effects occurred.

The enrollment decrease in formerly Negro high schools and the corresponding increase in formerly white high schools necessitated the transfer of some Negro teachers to schools formerly white. As a result, three of the nine high schools now have integrated faculties; the other six do not.⁴²

Desegregation of faculties also accompanied elementary school desegregation. As with the high schools, transfer of Negro pupils to formerly white schools necessitated the change. Ten of the elementary schools have integrated faculties at the

⁴¹Valien, p. 40.

⁴²Ibid. 47.

present time.⁴³

Teacher and staff integration also took place at the partial desegregation of the two technical high schools in the fall of 1955, and at their complete desegregation in the fall of 1956. In consequence, the fall of 1955 witnessed the presence of more than 500 St. Louis public school teachers serving on integrated faculties.⁴⁴

The smoothness with which desegregation took place did not mean that the plan lacked its opponents. The National Citizens Protective Association, for example, called a mass meeting shortly after the Supreme Court decision to protest the end of segregation. But only about 100 people attended. Newspapers covered the incident factually and non-sensationally. Opposition from this quarter dampened and died.

An incident occurred at the opening of the consolidated Harris College in September, 1954. An anti-desegregation group distributed handbills denouncing the change. No disturbance arose. This occurrence too received but a restrained report in the papers and nothing further developed.

This is not to say that everyone accepted desegregation eagerly. There was some bitterness, much reluctance. In most cases, however, the attitude seemed to be, "Well, we don't like

⁴³Ibid. 40.

⁴⁴Ibid.

it but what can we do about it? It's the law now!"⁴⁵

More of an approval than opposition came from the editorial pages of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. It expressed its disappointment that the entire system was not going to make the change simultaneously. Said the paper on June 24, 1954, "The chief reservation many people feel goes to the long wait before full integration in accordance with the law of the land [is achieved]."⁴⁶ This attitude proved in no way detrimental, however, and probably served to encourage readier acceptance of desegregation when it came on the various levels.

Naturally the question uppermost in the minds of all St. Louisians concerned with the transition was, "What are the results now that we have desegregated?" Answer can be made by summarizing the effects of desegregation.

The more obvious consequences appear first. About two-thirds of St. Louis' public school children now attend desegregated schools.

Desegregation has saved money. Witness the reduction in the number of school buses from thirty-six to twenty-six.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid. 31.

⁴⁶St. Louis Post-Dispatch, June 24, 1954, 20.

⁴⁷Valien, p. 52. This fact is easy to understand when one realizes that, prior to the change, buses had ferried children long distances in order to deposit them at a school for their own race. To illustrate, some Negro children being transported had to cross several other school districts in which there was room available in order to attend crowded L'Ouverture school. Cf. St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 30, 1955, 5J.

It was possible, furthermore, to reduce duplicate facilities for the Teachers and Junior Colleges, the special schools for the orthopedically handicapped and the deaf, and the classes for exceptional children in hospitals and corrective institutions. A like consolidation of courses in the adult classes and technical schools provided for courses of superior quality and wider variety at the same expense. Particularly in the case of adult classes savings of time and money were made because of the opportunity to attend the more conveniently located schools.⁴⁸

Reduction of duplicate facilities and consolidation of courses led to the release of many classrooms, particularly for elementary school pupils. The former Stowes building was used to house 500 elementary pupils in an area where the pupil-teacher ratio was critically high. The same can be said for the consolidation of the special schools and of the adult classes in practical nursing. There has been marked alleviation of 'congestion in schools formerly Negro. Despite population shifts and the construction of public housing units, there is a better distribution of students in accordance with building capacities.⁴⁹

On the high school level the crowding of the two Negro schools was considerably relieved. After desegregation, 3,592 students (as compared with 4,236 before desegregation), enrolled

⁴⁸ Instruction Department, p. 40.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 24, 25, 40, 52-53.

in the formerly Negro schools, a drop of some 15 per cent. Attendance upon this has been a decrease in the disciplinary problems.⁵⁰ The larger number of students in the formerly white schools has simply put to better use the existing facilities. With the reduction in pupil-room ratio teacher morale has swung upward. Desegregation has enabled the Board to inaugurate a building and modernization schedule designed to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio of each school still further from the present thirty-eight to thirty-two.⁵¹

As if in reply to the objection that the change would lessen the enrollments, attendance at the consolidated Harris College increased remarkably. The average daily enrollment increased from 868 during the last semester of the segregated school to 1,038 during the first semester of desegregation.⁵²

The spirit of normalcy and calm that characterized the transition has remained to allow the education of the pupils, the schools' chief concern, to proceed smoothly. The traditional principles insuring that individual abilities, talents, and desires were developed in and out of the classroom were successfully applied to the new situation. The few altercations that occurred between white and Negro children were treated as

⁵⁰Ibid. 33.

⁵¹Ibid. 45, 57.

⁵²Ibid. 23.

ordinary behavior of children of that age, as something that happens between individuals and not representatives of different racial groups. The practice of counsellors, faculty advisors and individual classroom attention has continued unchanged.⁵³

One fear had been that desegregation would effect a general academic slump. Yet it has not occurred. "At all levels," Valien states, "there has been slight program modifications to accommodate the new students. While the kind and amount of change varied from school to school, there is the general opinion among teachers up to the present time that there has been no lowering of academic standards with desegregation."⁵⁴

The "slight program modifications" were scarcely noticeable in the elementary schools, but became more apparent at the high school level. According to teachers, characteristic Negro problems were "poor study habits, intellectual laziness, tardiness, absenteeism, lack of proper grounding in the fundamentals, and difficulties in oral and written expression."⁵⁵ Since students from formerly Negro schools were accustomed to receiving higher grades, it disappointed many of them to receive lower marks in the new system. The causes of such academic downgrading

⁵³ Ibid. 36-39. The material is taken from throughout these pages.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 47-48.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 48.

seem evident from the conditions in the former Negro schools: overcrowding, substandard facilities, high pupil-teacher ratio, steady influx of students from the poorer South, lack of motivation, limited socio-economic background, and the dual standards engendered by a bi-racial educational system and a segregated society.⁵⁶

Teaching less advanced Negro students and teaching in a desegregated classroom presented difficulties for some teachers. All teachers tried to put aside their personal feelings and concentrate on the best possible teaching job. Some felt that they did not know enough about the colored children's background, but most felt that their preparation for desegregated situations had been adequate. Although most teachers did not feel the need for special courses as such, more than 75 per cent were grateful for the human relations workshops that offered solutions to problems resulting from desegregation. To meet these problems, 79 per cent believed that the attitude of "freedom from prejudice" was most important, coupled with patience, understanding, tolerance, faith, flexibility, tact, firmness, fair play, keener insight and humor.⁵⁷

⁵⁶"But in St. Louis. . . the teachers will tell you this: The lowering of the scholastic average in integrated schools is not an indication that Negro children are less bright than white children; all it means is that so-called 'separate but equal' school facilities have never existed." Chester Morrison, "The Pattern of Compliance," Look, XX (April 3, 1956), 42.

⁵⁷Valien, p. 45.

In extracurriculars such as athletics, clubs, school bands and functions, students have mixed naturally and unhesitatingly, and have recognized the special talents and abilities of other students. In the area of strictly "social affairs," difficulties have arisen. Different policies have prevailed at the various high schools, but the general principle is that school activities must not embarrass any student. The curtailment of social affairs, especially dances, outside the schools, has been a source of difficulty and has perhaps aroused a compensatory aggressive attitude toward the Negro pupils. Many of the downtown hotels, scenes in previous years of school dances, segregated. Such restriction on their social activities has caused some pupils to blame the Negro children, instead of the actual cause, namely, adult community patterns incompatible with the full import of democracy. Natural sociability is nonetheless regaining much of the ground lost. Friendliness seems to be the general rule.

It was the opinion of teachers that desegregation created no new health problems.⁵⁸ Moral problems were not mentioned, although this question had been a source of anxiety to parents before the transition.

Desegregation did not change the essential difficulties of a public school education. Very likely it will accentuate them.

⁵⁸Ibid. 51.

But sound educational practices such as those cited above assisted mightily in making the St. Louis transition smooth.⁵⁹ It may be said in summary that St. Louis has given the best proof for the possibility of desegregation: it has worked.

⁵⁹Ibid. 38.

CHAPTER III

THE LOUISVILLE PLAN FOR DESEGREGATION

Louisville, Kentucky, is a border city situated in a state that permitted slavery but held fast to the Union in the War Between the States. Louisville's predominantly Southern ways have become somewhat northernized due to a war-expanded industry and the consequent growth and urbanization. Its 1956 population of 412,000¹ was proud of the growth in size and outlook, as its energetic development association attests. It has had since 1933 a Democratic city government.

Included in Louisville's 412,000 citizens are 65,920 Negroes, 16 per cent of the population. This is an increase of 10,496 in the last decade.² Yet the state's Negro population has fallen by 12,110 in the same period.³ The Catholic element in the population of Louisville is very high, being about 30 per cent. This high percentage explains why more than 23,000 children attend the Catholic parochial schools. Since, on the other hand, a low percentage of Negroes are Catholic, this raises the percentage of Negro children in public schools to nearly 27 per cent.⁴

¹Carmichael, p. 14.

²Ibid. 14-15.

³Ibid. 15.

⁴Ibid. 6.

There were in 1956, 38,523 children enrolled in Louisville elementary and junior high schools.⁵ The high schools enrolled another 7,318 pupils, bringing the total figure to 45,841.⁶ These students received instruction in seventy-five schools, of which fifty-six were elementary, thirteen junior high, five high and one trade schools. There was one night school for adults.⁷

Before the September, 1956, desegregation plan went into effect, the schools enrolled 12,010 Negro pupils and 33,831 white pupils. One of the high schools, Central High, a new and highly modern plant, well-liked by the students, was for the Negroes. Three junior highs were all-Negro, ten all-white. Eleven elementary schools were all-Negro, forty-five all-white.⁸ (Cf. Table II.)

Table II

Louisville Public Schools Before Desegregation

<u>Race</u>	<u>No. Pupils</u>	<u>Percent Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>
White	33,831	73	*	60
Negro	12,010	27	*	15
Total	45,841	100	*	75

* Figures for teachers not available.

⁵Louisville Public Schools, Your Louisville Public Schools, Louisville, 1956.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸These figures were computed by the author.

Louisville was fortunate in obtaining as superintendent of its public schools in 1945 Dr. Omer Carmichael. He brought with him years of experience in education in Alabama, Florida and Virginia. Already widely acquainted with racial problems, Dr. Carmichael began at once to improve racial relations in the public school system. His work had the good fortune to rest on a fine community record dating back many years.

As early as 1923, for example, Negroes were serving on the Louisville police force. Separation of the races never occurred on city street cars and buses. Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. and Urban League-sponsored activities have for a number of years attempted to foster deeper interracial understanding. In 1941 a 15 per cent racial differential in teachers' pay was eliminated as a step toward deeper understanding.⁹ The year 1948 saw the opening of the main building of the Louisville Free Public Library to Negroes, and 1952, the opening of its ten neighboring branches. The University of Louisville in 1950 admitted Negroes to its graduate school,¹⁰ and in 1951 absorbed a city-supported Negro college, in effect initiating the desegregation of the two undergraduate student bodies.¹¹ The following year saw the opening of the public golf courses to Negroes. In 1953 the Nursing School of the City Hospital began to accept Negroes.

⁹Carmichael, p. 41.

¹⁰Ibid. 19.

¹¹Ashmore, p. 37.

The police in 1954 ceased to require racial separation in the Louisville Greyhound bus station.¹² In the same year Mayor Andrew Broadus ordered municipal department heads to move toward less segregation by omitting reference to race in their help-wanted ads and by hiring the best-qualified candidates for city jobs regardless of color.¹³ The Supreme Court in May, 1954, directed a United States Court of Appeals to reconsider its refusal to order a Negro admitted to the municipal amphitheater in Louisville. As a result, that publicly owned building began to sell tickets to "anyone wishing to buy."¹⁴

Further developments came. A few Negro pupils entered Catholic elementary schools in 1955. Whites and Negroes alike began using parks in 1955 which were formerly for Negroes only. Later in the same year parks formerly exclusively for whites were used by both, and in 1956, swimming pools, after some controversy, opened their facilities to members of both races. And during the past decade some Negro clerks have found employment in county and city offices, and occasionally, in chain stores and professional offices.¹⁵

Superintendent Carmichael began immediately to ameliorate

¹²Carmichael, p. 19.

¹³Time, LXIII (February 15, 1954), 19.

¹⁴Ibid. (May 31, 1954), 18.

¹⁵New York Times Magazine, October 7, 1956, p. 12.

general human relations. He may not have expected the Supreme Court school decision. But he did realize the daily increasing need for good human relations. With this in mind he inaugurated a long-range program designed to improve interracial feeling.

His first step was to integrate his own personnel. He turned to the committees, which had always been rigidly separated by race. In 1950, when he needed nineteen committees to study textbooks and make suggestions for adoption, he set up the committees of five white teachers and two Negro teachers each. (He used a permissive technique by which a teacher could decline to assist without harming her position or reputation. Of ninety-five teachers invited, only two declined, graciously, because of personal feelings.¹⁶⁾

Welcome assistance came from the regional office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews shortly after the end of World War II. This office initiated and sponsored a series of interracial human relations institutes, working in conjunction with the superintendent's office. All were interracial, and one held solely for teachers drew about 800. All the groups were integrated, as well as the offices. The next year the Workshop was held for teachers and patrons, and the year after all interested citizens were invited to participate.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid. 12.

¹⁷Ibid.

Growing out of the N.C.C.J. conferences was the organization known as Youth Speaks. It has held a yearly institute for the past four or five years on human relations. Every high school in Louisville and Jefferson County had its representatives at the institute. About 600 to 700 high school students have attended the institute each year. Its success is indicated by the fact that it has several times won the Freedom Foundation award.¹⁸

Another group aiding deeper interracial understanding was the Eastern Council for Moral and Spiritual Education. This group, organized by parents, school patrons, teachers and church workers in Louisville and Jefferson County, set better racial relations as one of its goals. After its first interracial panel discussion on the question, all its meetings were desegregated, and its publicized programs on good human relations had a definite impact on community thinking.¹⁹

Meanwhile Dr. Carmichael continued to develop his project by employing, in 1948, a Negro woman music teacher as Assistant Supervisor of Music. A young Negro woman was employed to take charge of the mimeographing room in the administration building. Later another young Negro woman was hired to serve as clerk for two of the supervisors. "It was thought important," said Dr.

¹⁸Ibid. 73.

¹⁹Carmichael, p. 38.

Carmichael, "that before the schools desegregated, the central offices have Negro personnel as well as white."²⁰ Thus a foundation was laid. Louisville and the school board were reasonably well-prepared for the coming Supreme Court decision.

Several other developments in educational associations assisted in the preparation. The Louisville Education Association voted in September, 1955, to remove from its constitution a clause stipulating that all members be white. It began at once to receive the first of Louisville's 399 Negro teachers into its membership of 1,214 white teachers.²¹ The Kentucky Education Association also began accepting Negro members in 1955 and 1956. Consequently the seventy-nine-year-old Kentucky Teachers Association (Negro), with a membership of 1,500, ceased to collect dues and urged its members to join the former association. It set its own formal dissolution for April 12, 1957.²² In July, 1956, Louisville's racially separated Parent-Teachers Council decided on a single interracial organization, and announced that local P.T.A.'s would automatically be desegregated in the fall. This action joined the fifty-year-old white council of fifty-two chapters and 28,000 members with the five-year-old Negro council

²⁰New York Times Magazine, October 7, 1956, p. 72.

²¹Carmichael, p. 92.

²²Ibid. 92-93.

of sixteen chapters and 3,000 members.²³

Louisville was as ready as could be expected for the decision of the Supreme Court. When the decision came on May 17, 1954, Superintendent Carmichael pointed out the way to be followed. Immediately after the announcement of the decision he said: "There will be problems but they are not insurmountable, as the integration of Negroes at the University of Louisville testifies. The group to suffer most will be the Negro children in the early stages of integration. The real problem will be with adults, however, not the children. . . . the pressure is off so far as the effective date of desegregation is concerned. The Court has given us time for an orderly, systematic study."²⁴ He stressed the fact that children would receive first consideration, and Negro children most of all as being in the greatest need. Teachers would come second and parents of pupils third.

Following the superintendent's lead, the central office intensified its preparatory work, although the school board took no immediate formal action. Some spade work had already been done. The administrative staff had initiated informal exploratory discussions on desegregation the preceding year. They had talked with educators from Indiana, Pennsylvania and New Jersey where desegregation had recently occurred. They had read up on

²³These actions come after the Supreme Court decision. They have been placed here because they fit in logically with the general community preparation for desegregation.

²⁴Ibid. 47.

the matter.²⁵ Dr. Carmichael directed that principals, teachers and central office personnel give thought to defining, studying and discussing the primary problems involved in desegregation and later to encouraging the proposal of solutions. This done, education of the entire community was the next step.

The Parents-Teachers Associations began to arrange meetings for full public discussion of desegregation early in 1955 at the request of Dr. Carmichael. Other organizations, such as churches and church-related groups, women's clubs, civic clubs and other community associations quickly followed their example. Members of the administrative, supervisory and faculty staff, of the Board of Education, ministers and other interested persons served as speakers at the discussions. Question and answer periods often followed the discussions. Much good feeling resulted from the frankly expressed opinions.

Added assistance came from the ministers of the various religious denominations in the city. Directly or indirectly, in sermons, through study and discussion, they hit at the problem from the basic point of view of the brotherhood of all men.

The communications arts gave full support. Press, radio and television were most generous in allotting time and space to programs designed to reach the general public.

Within the schools themselves preparations were underway. Since the fall of 1954 teachers had been readying their pupils

²⁵Ibid. 49-50.

for the transition to desegregated schools and classrooms, trying to convince them that it was best to go more than halfway. Reciprocal assembly programs accustomed the two races to being together. Jointly planned and presented assemblies went one step further. A small booklet was written by two of the teachers entitled Introductions to Integration to illustrate possible projects helpful in preparing the children for desegregation.

Equipped with the remote preparation of the past decade and the intensive work of the 1954-1955 school session, the school board was ready to act in early June, 1955. At this time no plan was outlined. The superintendent simply submitted to the Board of Education a one-page statement sketching what had been done during the preceding year and proposing to continue the general desegregation studies. He recommended that he be instructed to have ready a tentative plan for desegregation by mid-November, 1955. The Board unanimously adopted the proposal.²⁶

By mid-November of 1955 the plan was ready. On November 21, 1955, Dr. Carmichael presented it to the school board. All schools and Parent-Teachers Associations received copies. The newspapers published the plan the following day, November 22, 1955, on the front page. When only one suggestion was sent in for possible revision, the Board of Education adopted the plan at

²⁶Ibid. 81.

its mid-December meeting, 1955.²⁷

Two features highlighted the plan: its simplicity and permissiveness. For elementary and junior high schools the city was redistricted into fifty-six zones.²⁸ The pupils automatically belonged to the school in whose district they resided.

Once the city was redistricted, the parents of each elementary and junior high school pupil were notified by card of the school to which the child belonged. Provision was made on the card for the parent to indicate a first, second and third choice if he preferred a different school for his child (the permissive factor). That preference was honored within the capacities of each building.

The returned cards indicated that 89 per cent of the elementary and junior high school pupils had accepted the assigned school. The other 11 per cent had requested transfers. Forty-five per cent of the Negro children newly assigned to formerly white schools requested transfers; 85 per cent of the white children assigned to formerly Negro schools requested transfers. About 90 per cent of the first choice transfers were granted, while most of the other 10 per cent received a second or third choice. The parents of each pupil in the elementary and junior high schools received a final card designating the assigned

²⁷New York Times Magazine, October 7, 1956, p. 74.

²⁸U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 46.

or re-assigned school.²⁹

The superintendent followed a different procedure for the high schools. No redistricting took place. Parents were informed by card that each senior high school was open to pupils of both races who lived in the district it served. Despite the fact that from 300 to 400 Negro students lived two miles or more from Central High, less than twenty-five requested transfers. This was attributed to the quality of the plant and to the fine loyalty built up around it. But about 100 pupils moving from the junior highs chose to attend more convenient schools where the majority of the students were white.³⁰

Within less than two weeks after Dr. Carmichael submitted his one-page memorandum in June, 1955, the local N.A.A.C.P. petitioned that the schools be desegregated beginning in September, 1955. Dr. Carmichael wanted to be ahead of the N.A.A.C.P.³¹ Although he gave no reason, it is likely that he wished to proceed carefully and deliberately and not be pushed into any rapid, unwise moves. But his recommendation to the Board of Education that the N.A.A.C.P. be informed that a working procedure had been adopted was approved and sent to that group. No further efforts were made by them. They were obviously satisfied with the good intentions manifested by Dr. Carmichael in several conferences with them. These meetings the superintendent

²⁹Carmichael, p. 88.

³⁰Ibid. 89.

³¹U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 52.

characterized as "warm, friendly, and constructive."³² Instead of insisting any further, the N.A.A.C.P. instructed its educational committee to exert every effort to aid the Board of Education to complete desegregation in 1956.³³

With good reason the N.A.A.C.P. had trusted the superintendent. In his own words the opening of the desegregated schools on September 10, 1956, was "quite smooth."³⁴ Although the number of Negro and white students expected to switch to desegregated schools was somewhat less than the actual number, 73.6 per cent of the school population was desegregated at the end of the first day.³⁵ The hostility and confusion surrounding attempted desegregation in Clinton, Tennessee, Mansfield, Texas, and Clay and Sturgis, Kentucky, probably occasioned the last-minute changes. But if it caused a slight decrease in the number desegregated, it did not incite trouble in Louisville.

Several days after the opening of school, a survey showed that only ten elementary and one junior high school had white pupils only; that five elementary schools, three junior high schools and one senior high school had Negro pupils only. Thus of seventy-five Louisville public schools, only twenty served but one race, and fifty-five were desegregated. Residential grouping

³²Ibid. 54.

³³Carmichael, p. 82.

³⁴New York Times Magazine, October 7, 1956, p. 74.

³⁵Carmichael, p. 101.

and transfer-requests were responsible for even this comparatively small number of non-desegregated schools.³⁶

The least amount of desegregation took place on the high school level. The new Negro Central High received no white students. The five formerly all-white schools received only a few more than 100, with no school having more than forty and one having only three.³⁷ But Dr. Carmichael believed that as the pupils moved from the junior high schools yearly, more and more Negroes would choose a more conveniently located white high school. Thus within several years the number of Negroes attending formerly white schools will reach 400 or 500.³⁸

It is needless to remark that the superintendent did not want troublesome interference with the change. Precautions had nonetheless to be taken. The police force cooperated splendidly in the event something should have arisen. For there had been rumblings from Citizens Councils. Cross burnings had occurred on the lawns of three of the schools during the week of school registration.³⁹ But nothing more developed from these potentially dangerous incidents, perhaps because of the cooperation of the police force on the day of desegregation. That day, September 10, 1956, Chief of Police Carl Heustis, together with three police

³⁶Ibid. 118-119.

³⁷U.S. News and World Report, XLI (September 21, 1956), 54.

³⁸U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 50.

³⁹Carmichael, p. 95.

majors and ten police captains, cruised in squad cars equipped with two-way talking equipment around the neighborhood of the high schools. No difficulty arose. The small and poorly organized Citizens Committee picketed the Board of Education Buildings. But no one bothered with them, and no ill effects were felt.⁴⁰ In addition there was one initially alarming incident when it was reported that a white girl had been "roughed up" by several Negro boys. As it turned out, the girl, a troublemaker not at her own school, was at fault. The girl was disciplined and nothing further developed.⁴¹

The effects of desegregation in Louisville may now be considered. The chief consequence has already been stated, namely, that 73.6 per cent of the public school population now voluntarily attends desegregated schools.⁴² Attention may be directed to some concomitant results.

Desegregation has saved money. For example, five little two-, three-, and four-room elementary schools serving small areas of Negroes have been sold, and the children transferred to white schools. The new Negro Central High has a trade department that had cosmetology and beauty culture, tailoring and mass serving of food for commercial purposes, training that the white trade school did not have. But the former lacked the printing trades

⁴⁰U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 50.

⁴¹Carmichael, pp. 137-138.

⁴²Ibid. 101.

and some of the advanced electrical trades of the white trade school. Now, without reduplication of equipment, the pupils have the opportunity to receive such training by attending the other school. Nor at present will more teachers be needed.⁴³

A frequently occurring question raised was, "Do the quality of teaching and the scholastic achievement level fall?" Dr. Carmichael has had much to say on this topic. It was his belief that the Negro teacher is, in general, less capable, despite the fact that in the Louisville system the average Negro teacher has more hours of credit above the high school level than does the average white teacher. He cited two reasons for this. One was that "with few exceptions, the Negro colleges in which the Negro teachers have, except for some who have gone North, received their teacher preparation, are just not as good colleges as the white colleges."⁴⁴ Another important cause is culture. He said, "It's social, economic, environmental. How can a person come out of a slummy, crime-ridden area of the city, with poor churches and few of the things that go to enrich life--how can a person come out of such a background the equal of one who comes out of a more cultured home in a more cultured community?"⁴⁵ Dr. Carmichael was not denying the fact that he had excellent Negro teachers in his schools. He simply pointed out what seemed to

⁴³U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 149.

⁴⁴Ibid. 142.

⁴⁵Ibid.

him a fact, that, "on the average, the Negro teacher is less good than the white teacher."⁴⁶

With respect to student scholastic achievement, the superintendent believed that there would inevitably be some initial falling-down. This was not surprising. A ten-year analysis had shown that the average Negro sixth-grader in the Louisville system was nearly a year and a half behind the average white sixth-grader in scholastic achievement.⁴⁷ The leveling-out would be a slow process. But he added, "insofar as it lessens [the educational opportunity for all], we just have to struggle with it. . . . to me, the Negro is another person and we're going to treat him as another person."⁴⁸ Results so far have borne him out. Some Negroes have done excellently, others very well. But perhaps the majority is in the lower third.⁴⁹ Consequently Dr. Carmichael concluded, "the first semester experience confirms our earlier belief that real effort will be required to maintain current standards in many of the desegregated schools."⁵⁰

The social question has not caused unmanageable difficulties. Competition in athletics has of course been open to all pupils. Negroes have made the varsity football and basketball squads in

⁴⁶Carmichael, p. 125.

⁴⁷Ibid. 124.

⁴⁸U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 146.

⁴⁹Carmichael, pp. 130-131.

⁵⁰Ibid. 129.

some high schools. Each school has continued its usual program of extracurricular activities under the principle that a student is a student and not a member of a particular race. One school met and solved the problem of dances in the following manner. The school student council, after much discussion, decided to have the dance as before, but open to Negro and white couples. Some fifteen or twenty Negro couples attended. Negroes danced with Negroes and whites with whites. It seemed a satisfactory solution.⁵¹

Within the classrooms, particularly among the elementary school children, relations have been happy, after an initial feeling-out period. Due to the training the teachers gave their pupils, the chief fear was that, in most cases where the Negro children were in the minority, they would be spoiled by over-consideration and hurt by their peers electing them to offices for which they were not prepared. Wise teachers were able to face this problem.⁵² A possible outcome may be that this close contact in early years will go a long way toward reducing racial prejudice. That will have to be seen.

Another aspect of some note was this: given their choice, a great many Negroes showed a preference for schools staffed by teachers of their own race. This may possibly have future

⁵¹Carmichael, pp. 122-123.

⁵²U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 149.

importance and may prevent there ever being a total integration in all schools.⁵³

It was not altogether surprising to observe the trend to escape desegregation by moving out of districts containing many Negroes. One estimate was that from fifty to 100 families sought new homes upon receiving their children's school assignments. An experienced school administrator predicted that there would be substantial migration to suburbs or outlying areas as a result of integration. He advanced as another reason that some would find it too expensive or inconvenient to send their children to a distant school under the permissive transfer plan.⁵⁴

One of the biggest worries had been that concerning discipline, disease and morals. Occasional use of vulgar and obscene language has occurred, as did a few pushing and shoving incidents, and some non-racial disciplinary lapses.⁵⁵ But Dr. Carmichael had nothing to report on the matter of disease or morals, which would seem to indicate that all, if not well, was at least tolerable in this area.

In the light of these effects, then, it may be concluded that the Louisville plan for desegregation has been successful.

⁵³Carmichael, p. 122.

⁵⁴U.S. News and World Report, XLI (September 21, 1956), 54-55.

⁵⁵Carmichael, pp. 136-137.

CHAPTER IV

SIMILARITIES IN METHODS OF THE TWO PLANS

St. Louis and Louisville have much in common. Each is the largest city in its state. Both are "border cities" founded on the banks of a great river. They held true to the Union in the Civil War, though each was a slave-holder and reacted angrily to the Reconstruction excesses. Each is in a state that required racial segregation in public schools (Kentucky in all schools). They have grown industrialized and to that extent, northernized. But they retain their traditional Southern flavor.

The similarity carries over into the population composition. Of St. Louis' total population of 875,000, 175,000 or 20 per cent is Negro.¹ Louisville's population of 412,000 shows a close resemblance, with 65,920 Negroes or 16 per cent of the population.² The Catholics in St. Louis make up 24 per cent of the population,³ while 30 per cent of Louisville is Catholic.⁴ Parochial schools educate more than 23,000 Catholics in Louisville,⁵ and more than

¹Instruction Department, p. 4.

²Carmichael, pp. 14-15.

³Valien, p. 19.

⁴Carmichael, p. 15.

⁵Ibid.

30,000 in St. Louis.⁶ In both cities there are but a few Negroes in these schools, due to the low percentage of Negroes that is Catholic. (Cf. Table III.)

Table III

Similarities in Population of St. Louis and Louisville

City	White		Negro		Total	Percent* Catholic
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
St. Louis	700,000	80	175,000	20	875,000	24
Louisville	346,080	84	65,920	16	412,000	30

*The percent Catholic has relevance due to the large number of students in Catholic schools and the small number of Negroes in them due to the small number of Negro Catholics.

The number of school children served is proportionate to the total population. St. Louis' public school population is approximately 91,000, of whom 35 per cent or 32,000 are Negro.⁷

Louisville shows a proportionate number, with 46,000 pupils of whom 27 per cent or 12,000 are Negro.⁸ St. Louis has 172 public schools and Louisville seventy-five. (Cf. Table IV.)

Each of the two cities had taken measures to improve race relations in the years before the Supreme Court decision. Neither city had required racial separation on public transportation. But not until after World War II did definite changes

⁶Valien, p. 19.

⁷Instruction Department, pp. 3-4.

⁸Carmichael, p. 6.

Table IVSimilarities in Their Schools Before Desegregation

City	White			Negro			Total	
	Number	Percent	Schls.	Number	Percent	Schls.	Number	Schls.
	Pupils	Pupils		Pupils	Pupils		Pupils	
St. Louis	59,000	65	118	32,000	35	54	91,000	172
Louisville	34,000	73	60	12,000	27	15	46,000	75

appear in the rigid segregation structure of public parks, swimming pools and municipal buildings. Some of the specific instances have already been noted; suffice it to say that out-moded restrictions were beginning to fall away in many areas.

The Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and the Urban League in both cities had worked for more amicable race relations. The Urban League had assisted the Negro to attain better economic opportunity. In both cities labor unions had worked to some extent against segregation with St. Louis perhaps enjoying more success.

Each of the cities was fortunate in obtaining a far-sighted superintendent of schools. Philip J. Hickey became superintendent in 1943 in St. Louis and Omer Carmichael in 1945 in Louisville. Each integrated his own office personnel, committees, and educational meetings. Each received help from the N.C.C.J., which sponsored human relations institutes for teachers and others in St. Louis and Louisville. Each superintendent told his personnel to begin planning how to meet the possibility of desegregation

as it grew more obvious what the decision of the Court would be.

Both cities made good use of the experience of other communities which had desegregated their public schools. In St. Louis in the summer of 1953 a series of conferences was held with the superintendent of an out-state, recently desegregated public school system.⁹ In the formulation of its program the Board followed President Eisenhower's suggestion that Washington, D.C., serve as a model for other public school systems.

Louisville likewise profitted by the experience of others. According to Dr. Carmichael, "We had talked with educators of areas where segregation had existed until fairly recently--notably in Indiana, Pennsylvania and New Jersey."¹⁰ Added light on desegregation in other cities came from Harry Ashmore's The Negro and the Schools and Robin M. Williams', Jr., Schools in Transition. Without a study of these volumes, said Dr. Carmichael, "nobody is fully prepared to discuss the school desegregation problem."¹¹ Another gold mine was the Southern School News, a monthly magazine containing information on what had been happening in all areas affected by the Supreme Court decision. From the wealth of data in this magazine the Board reinforced a conviction already had: that an overnight, unplanned desegregation most often came to grief, and that, on the other hand, careful

⁹Instruction Department, p. 12.

¹⁰Carmichael, pp. 49-50.

¹¹Ibid. 57.

planning and informed public discussion of the issues could most often produce a climate favorable to desegregation.¹²

In such backgrounds appear the first stirrings of action undertaken to meet the law of the land. That action, springing from the type of communities involved, was aided by the gradual lessening of some restrictions, was pushed along in the educational field by determined leaders and was given invaluable aid by local and national organizations. The specific modes that action took both before and after the Supreme Court decision may be termed "methods." These methods may be thought of as means used to effect the social change from a segregated to a desegregated school system. To these methods St. Louis and Louisville are indebted for desegregation and incipient integration in their schools. Better to understand the methods, an attempt will be made to discover the reasoning behind their use. Finally, although some of the factors considered in this chapter and the next are not themselves methods nor are they strictly part of the plans, they cast light on the methods and plans for desegregation and hence warrant inclusion.

When the expected ruling of the highest court came on May 17, 1954, the superintendents set an example of unequivocal leadership, a factor that may be called simply the method of leadership. Dr. Carmichael in a press release a few weeks before the decision was given stated that Louisville schools would accept

¹²Ibid. 58-59.

the law of the land.¹³ The St. Louis Board of Education on June 22, 1954, unanimously adopted and announced a plan for desegregation. This prompt, straightforward leadership was to prove one of the chief factors in desegregating successfully.

Another method employed was the education of the public, teachers, parents and children. Inasmuch as this was accomplished to a large extent through and with community organizations of all kinds, plus the press and the Boards of Education, their contributions will be discussed together.

Obviously the idea behind the question of community education is enlightenment and inspiration on desegregation. The more people and organizations joining in to assist, the more the community will be educated. In the process, the persons doing the educating will themselves be educated; another reason for enlisting the support of as many different organizations as possible. Still another reason is that support from so many and varied quarters will convince doubters of the universal appeal and necessity of such a change. Finally, sheer desire to be with the in-group will cause many otherwise doubting citizens to assist, or will prevent them from opposing.

Public education was moreover a necessary move. Dr. Carmichael indicated that he thought there was reason to believe that large numbers of people in Louisville opposed desegregation.

¹³Ibid. 43.

He stated: "We believed that the educational process of study and public discussions would work some helpful changes in community attitudes. . . . even if, in some cases, it came out as only willingness to accept, though still to dislike, the inevitable."¹⁴

In St. Louis a somewhat official liaison took place between the Board of Education and community organizations. At a meeting of the President of the Board and representatives of these groups a few weeks after the adoption of the St. Louis plan, the representatives decided to do what each organization could to "explain and interpret the plan. . . . among the people with whom it worked or with whom it had the greatest influence."¹⁵

Their work was varied and effective. The Metropolitan Federation of Churches set aside a Sunday of thanksgiving for public school desegregation. Archbishop Ritter in a pastoral letter asked for cooperation with the Board. The Rabbinical Association urged all citizens to work and pray for desegregation successfully. The League of Women Voters published a booklet, St. Louis Integrates Its Schools, a factual description of desegregation and a plea for cooperation. N.C.C.J.-sponsored Intergroup Youth stepped up its program of teenage leadership groups to help in the actual change. A workshop on the question was run by the Mayor's Commission on human relations. The Urban League, the City-Wide Parent and Patrons Organizations and Alliances

¹⁴Ibid. 53.

¹⁵Instruction Department, p. 20.

promised their support, and worked closely with the superintendent and with one another to insure a successful transition. The local press continued its even-tenored news-reporting, and endorsed the plan wholeheartedly in its editorials.¹⁶

In Louisville the connection between the Board of Education and community organizations was less formal. A citizens advisory committee was not appointed, as the superintendent did not believe it was necessary since the community had already decided to comply with the law.¹⁷ Dr. Carmichael did, nevertheless, contact every rabbi, minister and priest in the city. The reason: his conviction of the "readiness of many citizens to be influenced by ethical, moral, religious or humanitarian considerations."¹⁸ Nor was he disappointed. Representatives of every denomination contributed to smooth the way. The Louisville Times and the Courier-Journal continued their policy of favorable editorials and space for desegregation news. Radio and television stations gave time for programs on the topic, and created programs, such as the panel discussion, "The Moral Side of the News," on WHAS, which at this time took for its topic desegregation.¹⁹

An organization with which the superintendent did operate officially was the P.T.A. "Their instant co-operation was

¹⁶Ibid. 21.

¹⁷Carmichael, p. 50.

¹⁸Ibid. 65.

¹⁹Ibid. 56.

remarkable--and remarkably effective."²⁰ They arranged meetings in their respective schools for full public discussion of the question. Dr. Carmichael himself made over sixty platform appearances. These meetings, reinforced by many others sponsored by other civic, church, women, and community groups, assisted markedly to educate the public for the coming of desegregation.

By means of both school- and community-initiated programs, then, the communities were being prepared for the change that came to St. Louis beginning in September, 1954, and to Louisville in September, 1956.

The method of redistricting proved necessary in both cities. Dr. Carmichael gave as the reason that "only so many pupils could be assigned to the one school in each district, and with the abolition of the old dual system, that one school must accommodate pupils of both races."²¹ The manner of redistricting was quite similar, the sole exception being that Louisville did not redistrict for its six high schools. It announced instead that each senior high was open to pupils of both races who lived in the district already existing. The principles governing the redistricting were essentially the same. There would be no gerrymandering and no regard for race; consideration would be given to the buildings, travel distance and traffic hazards. Louisville had the practical exception that if two schools were close to-

²⁰Ibid. 55.

²¹Ibid. 83-84.

gether, or for other reasons it seemed wise, one district could be assigned for two schools, and parents could decide which school they wanted their children to attend.²² With the new boundaries drawn, school authorities notified the parents by card telling them of the district to which their children were assigned.

The methods employed in preparing for desegregation have been dealt with. Now to be considered are some of the methods involved in the actual realization of the programs. Among these methods was the principle enunciated in both cities stating that the Supreme Court decision was the law of the land and the policy of the Board. Participation in its implementation was thus an officially required duty of every Board employee. Thus individual feelings were subordinated to professional obligations.

Another important method was that of decentralization of authority. St. Louis employed this method more explicitly than Louisville. At several meetings of principals and teachers, Superintendent Hickey emphasized the point that each principal was expected to focus on the solution of problems coming within his school district. He was to make arrangements for preparation for desegregation and take steps to solve any difficulties consequent upon it. The reason was to localize whatever problems might spring up and place primary responsibility upon the official who should have the most intimate knowledge of the area, and who thus could be expected to propose the most apt remedy.

²²Ibid. 84-85.

The central office assisted by requiring people to register their complaints only about the district from which they came.²³

In Louisville the decentralization was less explicit. Antecedent to the formulation of the plan, however, each principal was charged to meet with his faculty in order to discover and refine problems that would probably occur. This took place during the first semester of the 1954-1955 school year. Each principal took the steps he thought most appropriate to make his students ready, and each school cooperated with its P.T.A. to arrange the discussions on desegregation.²⁴

The method of decentralization bore fruit in preparing for the transition, in making the change, and in solving problems after the change was made. Mention has been made of the variety of forms taken by activities preparatory to desegregation which were sponsored by the schools. When desegregation became a fact, the method of relative autonomy continued. In St. Louis it was up to the discretion of principals whether or not social affairs should be permitted. They solved their own disciplinary problems and other special difficulties, such as decisions regarding special classes for poorer-educated Negro pupils, whether or not to pass Negro children who did poorly, and so forth. In Louisville much the same pattern obtained. Local administrators

²³Instruction Department, p. 34; Carmichael, p. 36.

²⁴Carmichael, pp. 54-55.

solved their own problems. One junior high school principal, for instance, reduced the number of interschool basketball games because he feared that the jostling of white and Negro children in the over-crowded gymnasium might cause flare-ups.²⁵

One exception might be cited, that of the case of Billy Branham, a senior who came from Detroit to Louisville with the avowed intention of interfering with desegregation. Because of the nature of the case,²⁶ Superintendent Carmichael and Assistant Superintendent W. F. Coslow, and not the local principal, William S. Milburn, handled it. Although the case drew some attention at first, the difficulty was smoothed away.

Next to be considered is the question of attitudes. Attitudes are important for two reasons: because of the need they illustrate for methods to deal with them, and because they show to some extent the success of the methods used.

What, first of all, was the general attitude in the two cities regarding the Supreme Court decision? It was not joyful, unhesitating endorsement. But neither was it gigantic opposition. The majority of people accepted it, even though grudgingly. If they did not like it, they felt, "It had to come." "There's nothing you can do about it." "It's the law now."²⁷ "The Court

²⁵Ibid. 123.

²⁶Ibid. 108-118. Branham distributed anti-desegregation literature, attended a White Citizens Council meeting with John Kasper, and had a meeting of his own. He was finally admitted to school on condition of good behavior.

²⁷Valien, p. 31.

decided and that's final."²⁸ Others, while not overlooking its legal aspect, regarded it more as a moral victory. "It was the right thing to do."²⁹

Some of the attitudes may be determined more specifically: first of parents, then of teachers and finally of children, both before and after desegregation. In St. Louis, the following was reported of parental attitudes before desegregation:

Many parents offered their services, but along with those who welcomed desegregation there were those who were opposed and those who were resigned. . . . How parents felt about racially mixed schools was reflected in the kind of advice they gave their children.

White and Negro high school students were asked, 'Did your parents discuss integration and how you should act in an integrated school? If yes, what did they say?' Approximately seventy-five per cent of the students indicated that their parents had discussed integration with them. The replies revealed that Negro parents tended to stress 'hard work and study' while white parents, for the most part, emphasized proper attitudes and behavior.³⁰

It seems that these attitudes did not change substantially

²⁸Carmichael, p. 46.

²⁹Valien, p. 64.

³⁰Ibid. 31. These figures, and others that will be given later, were taken from a questionnaire among St. Louis elementary school and high school teachers and high school students. (There were 300 of the former and 1,000 of the latter.) The questionnaire was designed to throw light on questions pertinent to desegregation. Personal interviews supplemented the questionnaires. The schools included in the sample were those that had the highest mixed enrollments and were located in neighborhoods varied in their social and economic characteristics. Cf. Valien, p. 42.

after desegregation took place. The problem cited by teachers as most retarding desegregation and making their task more difficult was how to deal with prejudiced white parents.³¹ It is put summarily thus: "While there have been active and effective mothers' clubs in most schools, sympathetic adults, parent groups and the P.T.A., all of whom worked positively in support of desegregation, eighty-seven per cent of both students and teachers described the adjustment of parents to desegregation as ranging from 'poor' to 'fairly well.'"³²

Louisville did not hope for any better parental attitudes. A public poll in 1949 had shown that 74.7 per cent of the people of Louisville wanted no desegregation in the high schools.³³ Dr. Carmichael faced the issue squarely: "We knew that parents--and grandparents--would be the more difficult problem."³⁴ Yet many parents came to the P.T.A.-sponsored public discussions. They asked deeply interested questions on "getting around the decision," on venereal disease and illnesses, mixed marriages, school standards, teachers instructing children of a different race, discipline and the possibility of retaining some all-white schools.³⁵ (Similar difficulties had been posed by anxious, not

³¹Ibid. 51.

³²Ibid. 54. These figures come from the questionnaire.

³³Carmichael, p. 42.

³⁴Ibid. 54.

³⁵Ibid. 60-65.

over-eager St. Louis parents.) But many worked for desegregation too, as the well-attended and well-conducted P.T.A. meetings proved. This fact was also attested to by the July, 1956, merger of the two racially separate Parent-Teachers Councils into a single interracial organization and the resulting desegregation of the local P.T.A.'s in the fall.³⁶

The permissive factor in school assignment served to mollify some angry, many unwilling parents. Dr. Carmichael remarked: "We knew that there were many individual citizens not happy about the plan for desegregation--my assistants and I had conferences enough with them. But most of them generally eased whatever their objections were by requesting transfers for their children to schools where they hoped there would be few or no members of the other races."³⁷

The principal of the Louisville California elementary school perhaps summed up parental attitudes after desegregation when he said: "Parents are more slowly accepting each other [than the children], but progress is evident. The neighborhood seems to feel a little more relaxed about the situation."³⁸

³⁶Ibid. 93.

³⁷Ibid. 89-90.

³⁸Ibid. 134. A Louisville poll showed in 1956 that opinions had undergone a change in favor of desegregation: 69 per cent accepted the change, while 7 per cent were indifferent and only 24 per cent registered complete disapproval and advocated pushing back the clock and returning to the old system. Ibid. 138.

The teachers' attitudes were much the same with perhaps a little more tolerance and hopefulness exhibited at first. In both St. Louis and Louisville teachers realized that it was their professional duty to accept desegregation as a directive from their employer. Interracial meetings and committees, as well as the summer workshops, helped to make the transition less difficult. Not all, of course, were eager. In Louisville Dr. Carmichael reported that "as one might expect, not all the teachers were enthusiastic about the prospective program. The great majority reflected a helpful willingness, but the dissenters, in at least two cases, were as articulate as any segregationist could like."³⁹ And in St. Louis "a few teachers indicated that desegregation had not changed their basic attitudes."⁴⁰ Despite this admission, "these teachers, as with all others, felt their educational responsibilities and professional standards came first. . . . No teacher felt that such an attitude had in any way interfered with a sense of duty and obligation to do the best possible teaching job."⁴¹ Consequently it was no idle boast that "throughout the St. Louis system one senses a conscious and determined effort on the part of all teachers to make desegregation work."⁴²

³⁹Ibid. 51.

⁴⁰Valien, p. 43.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid. 42.

Teachers in the Louisville system merit the same laurels. Desegregation has not been easy for them. According to Dr. Carmichael, "many of our teachers have had to work harder, as we all expected, and the first semester experience confirms our earlier belief that real effort will be required to maintain current standards in many of the desegregated schools."⁴³ But he also stated that "our teachers. . . are learning a great deal about the adjustment necessary in working successfully with people of another race."⁴⁴ In other words, the same story of hard work, determination and professional dedication spell eventual success. It is obvious that teachers in both cities took to heart and performed on the basis of the words of Superintendent Hickey: "You will determine the degree of success which we obtain by your attitudes and efforts. . . .The attitude of you, the teacher in the classrooms, will determine the general trend of conduct of the entire school system."⁴⁵

The most important people concerned in the transition were the children. It will be interesting indeed to study their attitudes both before and after desegregation.

In both cities the decade preceding desegregation had witnessed much activity designed to bring into contact the youth of

⁴³Carmichael, p. 129.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Valien, p. 31.

both races. These activities increased after May 17, 1954. Prominent among the assisting organizations were "Intergroup Youth" and "Youth Speaks." The generally good attitudes of the majority of students can be traced partially to these groups. And because youth, in general, ordinarily have not imbibed much race prejudice (or not as much as their elders), many of the St. Louis and Louisville youth had open, friendly attitudes.

Perhaps the pre-desegregation attitudes of (high school) students in St. Louis could be summarized by two brief quotations: "Simple good will was the spirit which animated Vashon High School's intergroup assembly. . . intended to prepare young people for the end of segregation in the high schools next month. If all the city's high schools are doing as well as Vashon in calm, intelligent, realistic preparation for an important change in community life, St. Louis has nothing to worry about."⁴⁶ "It was a heart-warming thing to hear the student leaders describe the responsibilities and obligations of student bodies in a democracy. If this is a fair example of the kind of positive thinking and acting being done by our frequently maligned teenagers--and I think it is--then I believe we can abandon any fears for the future of our nation when it comes into their keeping."⁴⁷

⁴⁶St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 12, 1955, p. 2D.

⁴⁷Valien, p. 35, quoting Superintendent Hickey.

A certain amount of disillusionment was perhaps bound to come after desegregation. Restrictions on social activities have caused some short-sighted pupils to blame the Negroes when they ought to have indicted an entire community which has not yet achieved the ideal of complete democratic participation.⁴⁸ Nonetheless in St. Louis, "normal friendships appear to be developing and some students are finding that their school activities 'have really become alive and meaningful with students who have had different kinds of experiences, but who are not very much different from ourselves.'" ⁴⁹

Of Louisville before desegregation Dr. Carmichael said, "We had little apprehension about the attitude of younger children or of many of the older pupils; we knew that racial prejudice is unknown to the very young."⁵⁰

Afterwards friendships seemed to grow naturally, following a somewhat slow beginning. Children began to accept one another as individuals and a better understanding between children of the two races sprang up. They are "seemingly happy and on numerous occasions have expressed a liking for their teachers, their classmates and the school in general."⁵¹ The general attitude of the

⁴⁸Ibid. 50.

⁴⁹Ibid. 51.

⁵⁰Carmichael, p. 54.

⁵¹Ibid. 134-135.

pupils therefore seems to be after some initial reserve, one of natural acceptance and friendliness.

Finally, a number of the effects of desegregation have been cited in sections above. They may be summarized here.

First, the extent of desegregation. Put briefly and in rough figures, about 65 per cent of St. Louis' high school enrollment was desegregated--that is, white and Negro children now attend the same schools and classes--and about 67 per cent of its grade school enrollment.⁵² In Louisville about 74 per cent of all pupils were desegregated.⁵³

Other effects may be put summarily. Both systems have made economic savings by consolidating some schools and classes, closing others and reducing school bus transportation. Scholastically, general averages fell but not excessively. The dipping was not due to race as such but to the socio-economic background of the pupils involved. The main purpose of the schools, education of the pupils, continued unabated. Extracurricular activities--athletics, clubs, bands and offices--have witnessed natural and unhesitating mixing. "Social mixing" has been more of a problem, but has not caused serious difficulties. Health problems did not arise, nor did moral problems seem to be accentuated. Organized opposition to desegregation was slight and ineffective. Community attitudes have become more favorable.

⁵²Instruction Department, pp. 28, 32, 47. The author calculated the percentages from the figures there given.

⁵³Carmichael, p. 40.

CHAPTER V

DISSIMILARITIES IN METHODS OF THE TWO PLANS

The study of the methods of desegregation continue in this chapter by a contrast of the dissimilarities of method in the two plans. It will be found that, in general, these dissimilarities were based on different reasoning in each case. A consideration of the reasoning behind the choice of different methods will cast further light on the subject and will indicate some interesting conclusions.

An interesting variance in the two plans is first the "voluntary" feature of the Louisville plan and the "non-voluntary" feature of the St. Louis plan. By this is meant that under the Louisville plan the pupil had the chance to attend a school other than the one to which he was assigned by district. In St. Louis this device was not used. There was some freedom, however, in the latter's program. Students already enrolled in a school, but not resident in its new district could, but were not required, to continue at that school until they graduated. This privilege was to be granted only if the particular school was not overcrowded.¹ School authorities could also transfer students from

¹Instruction Department, p. iv.

one district to another to relieve over-crowding.² This degree of freedom was not as broad, however, as that granted Louisville students, any of whom could ask, through his parents, to be transferred to a school other than the one to which he had been assigned.

The Louisville device was nonetheless subject to several restrictions. School capacity and the convenience of the other pupils had to be considered. Such transfers were not allowed to crowd out pupils who by residence belonged in that school. Pupils who had received such transfers could be transferred back if attendance, conduct or school work were not satisfactory. Such pupils would not receive free bus transportation, except in unusual cases which the superintendent might approve.³

It is interesting to examine the reasoning behind this device. First, no reasons were given why St. Louis did not make its plan voluntary. It was probably felt, however, that a firm stand, taken and held, would be better than accommodation to the wishes of people who did not want their children to attend desegregated schools. In Louisville contrary reasoning obtained. Superintendent Carmichael envisioned it "as a good ice-breaker certain to minimize individual opposition to the plan. We believed. . . that a good many parents of both races, particularly

²Ibid.

³Carmichael, p. 85.

in the beginning, would prefer their children to attend schools in which their own race was not a small minority.⁴ This sentiment was echoed from most quarters, and even the local N.A.A.C.P. spokesmen, who criticized this feature, agreed that the plan was "basically very good."⁵ From the legal standpoint, Dr. Carmichael pointed out: "The Supreme Court merely held that compulsory racial segregation is unconstitutional. Now, I honestly believe that the decision of the Court is complied with even if there were absolutely no mixing of Negro and white children, provided that situation is the choice--the free choice--of parents."⁶

The results proved that Louisville had made a wise decision. The flexible transfer system did take its toll of man-hours. At the last minute, with the opening of school in September, 1956, troubles in other Kentucky cities caused a few score parents to apply for re-placement of their children, although they had accepted the first placement the preceding spring. Most of these were happily surprised to learn that the transfers could be made, and no trouble arose on this account. Consequently, despite the extra hours of labor it caused the staff workers, the voluntary feature, "though from the beginning it could guarantee no one attendance in a segregated school, eased the road to change for

⁴Ibid. 86.

⁵Ibid.

⁶U.S. News and World Report, XLI (October 5, 1956), 46.

many a dubious parent."⁷ Yet the St. Louis plan worked equally as well: an interesting commentary on two different but just as successful approaches.

Another point of difference in the two plans proved to be the desegregation of faculties in the St. Louis system and the non-desegregation of faculties in the Louisville system. By this is meant the presence of Negro and white teachers within the same school. Before discussing this point, however, it would be well to recall that in both school systems desegregation on a professional level had been the practice for at least ten years before the Supreme Court decision. Nor must the assistance of the N.C.C.J.-sponsored institutes be forgotten.

Actual desegregation of faculties took place, however, only in the St. Louis schools. There it took effect in the consolidated Harris Teachers and Junior College, in three of the high schools and in ten of the elementary schools. The seventy-member faculty at Harris numbers twenty-five Negroes, and altogether more than 500 St. Louis teachers serve on desegregated faculties.⁸ The chief reason for desegregation at the high school and elementary school levels was the fall in enrollment at formerly Negro schools and the corresponding increase at formerly white schools. While taking care not to deprive the Negro schools of too many of

⁷Carmichael, p. 105.

⁸Valien, p. 40.

their best teachers, the Negro teachers selected were chosen because of their instructional efficiency. Willingness to undertake the task and ability to adapt to new situations were further criteria governing the selection of such teachers. But because it was felt that stability of the teaching staff was essential to a smooth transition, as few faculty moves as possible were made.⁹ This also accorded with one of the principles governing desegregation, namely, that "teaching and non-teaching employees. . . will be transferred only to meet the needs of the service."¹⁰ It can be seen, then, that faculty desegregation in St. Louis occurred, not in order to comply with the Supreme Court decision--for that decision did not seem to require faculty desegregation--nor on the basis of any a priori principles, but simply to meet a present concrete need.

In Louisville two reasons governed the non-desegregation of faculties. One was, according to Dr. Carmichael, that "we had decided that we would tackle one major problem at a time--and desegregation of pupils had the first priority."¹¹ The other reason was that there was not the large shift in school population that took place in St. Louis. Superintendent Carmichael was able to close five small erstwhile all-Negro schools and still

⁹Instruction Department, p. 47.

¹⁰Ibid. iv.

¹¹Carmichael, p. 120.

absorb their teachers and students in what had been all-Negro schools.

But desegregation of faculties will come in Louisville in a matter of time, simply because that will "be the logical outcome of pupil integration."¹² The interim is proving of much help, moreover, in affording valuable experience for the eventual desegregation of faculties, as Negro children are becoming accustomed to instruction from white teachers, and to a lesser but still significant degree, white children from Negro teachers. Thus again the different procedures followed in this matter by the two systems have produced good results. This may be significant in pointing to a deeper reason for the success, namely, that a well-founded plan presented firmly and carried out unhesitatingly may be the most important factor in desegregation.

Another variance in the two plans, that of time, may now be considered. This difference in the time of desegregation refers actually to two differences of method. First, the difference in actual dates; secondly, the difference in the step-by-step plan of St. Louis as compared with the system-wide program of Louisville.

As to the actual dates: St. Louis began at once to desegregate. Its plan for desegregation was announced on June 22, 1954. Its first step came the following September, 1954; the second

¹²Ibid.

step came in February, 1955, and the final step in September, 1955. In Louisville the change took place in September, 1956, if the unannounced desegregation of some twenty-eight Negro pupils among the 800 pupils at Louisville Sumner High School during the summer of 1956 be excluded.¹³

Inquiry may now be made into the causes for the different methods in the time of desegregation. St. Louis began in the September following the Supreme Court decision because their school board had been preparing for several years prior to the decision and so were equipped to act. Since their plan was to consist of several steps, a beginning had to be made at once. In Louisville it was felt that "the Court has given us time for an orderly, systematic study."¹⁴ Consequently they took two full years, the first calmly to study problems and establish a climate favorable to the change, the second to produce and publicize the program.

St. Louis' Board of Education cited the following reasons as determining the step-by-step method: the many administrative problems involved; student and teacher assignment; movement of supplies and equipment; formulation and publication of new regulations and policies governing the unified school system; confusion that would result from a simultaneous revision of school boundary

¹³Ibid. 95.

¹⁴Ibid. 47.

lines; the shifting city population; and the fact that an orderly plan would produce the happiest results.¹⁵

The order of desegregation in St. Louis--the teachers and junior colleges and special schools, then high schools and adult classes, finally technical schools and elementary schools--likewise rested on sound reasoning. The following were some of the factors governing the first step: the social maturity of college students; the fact that they and their teachers had taken part in many interracial group activities; the fact that no re-districting was required; and the fact that little communication with parents was needed. It was also "believed that desegregation of the colleges would be accomplished with such efficiency and in such a spirit as to set a high standard for the entire process of desegregation and serve as patterns for the schools that followed."¹⁶ The desegregation of special schools for exceptional children took place at the same time because there was little need for redistricting, the classes were small and the teachers experienced, there had been a number of community interracial activities and services for handicapped children, and this small-scale desegregation, which nonetheless included all the ancillary services of the system in addition to classroom instruction,

¹⁵Instruction Department, pp. iv-v.

¹⁶Ibid. 15.

would provide an opportunity to test the plan for possible weaknesses before applying it on a large scale.¹⁷

The nine general high schools of St. Louis were scheduled to desegregate in the second step because it was felt that careful redistricting, necessary intercourse with parents, and adequate preparations for transfer of large numbers of pupils could in their cases be accomplished in a half year. Since the adult education program was to a large extent housed in secondary school buildings, it also was slated to desegregate in the second step.¹⁸

As a new technical high school under construction was due to be finished by the fall of 1955, the technical high schools were scheduled to desegregate on that date. The regular elementary schools likewise were to change then, as the administrative and communication details would require more time due to the youth of the school population and the large number of schools and persons involved.¹⁹

Returning to Louisville now, it is interesting to note the reasoning that founded their decision to make a system-wide transition. Dr. Carmichael says:

Experience elsewhere indicated that a partial or geographic change particularly might lead to mushrooming opposition. Desegregating a grade at a time or several grades at a time

¹⁷Ibid. 15-16.

¹⁸Ibid. 16-17.

¹⁹Ibid. 17.

obviously would increase social confusion by having some children in a single family attend mixed schools while others remained in segregated schools. Administrative difficulties, too, obviously would be compounded by any partial program. And we decided that universality of participation by the entire school staff from the very beginning would greatly increase the chances of success.²⁰

Louisville also made sure that the (Jefferson) County schools desegregated at the same time. The number of Negroes in County schools was relatively small, there being only about 1,000 in the total 33,000 County school population. But it was thought, from experience of other communities, that there was much wisdom in a common and simultaneous approach in city and county alike.²¹

To throw more light on this divergence of method two factors may be cited. St. Louis' school enrollment, about 90,000, was nearly twice as large as Louisville's, about 46,000; and the latter redistricted only for elementary and junior high schools, not for high schools, while St. Louis redistricted for all. Consequently, there was more clerical work necessary in St. Louis, a time-consuming element. Nonetheless there again appears the anomalous situation of two different methods enjoying equal success. This again bids one look for a more profound reason why the programs were successful.

The next difference to be considered is that in school population. By breaking down the total population of the public

²⁰Carmichael, p. 83.

²¹Ibid. 82.

schools in St. Louis and Louisville the difference in the numbers and percentage desegregated may be observed.

In St. Louis six of the nine high schools, fifty of the 123 elementary schools, the teachers and junior college and all the other adult and special schools and classes desegregated.²² In elementary schools a preliminary check showed there would be Negro children ranging from 50 per cent to less than 1 per cent in thirty-seven formerly all-white schools and white children ranging from 18 per cent to less than 1 per cent in thirteen formerly all-Negro schools. Thus about two-thirds of the elementary school population was desegregated. Since records are no longer kept by race, more accurate figures are not at hand. Summer population shifts and changes by many parents of their children to attendance according to district caused a somewhat higher number of Negro and white pupils to be enrolled together.²³

In the high schools of St. Louis the size of minority groups varied from 33 per cent to less than 5 per cent.²⁴ Calculating from the figures given by the school board, it is seen that 65 per cent of the total high school population was desegregated, while 92 per cent of the white students and only 20 per cent of the Negro students were desegregated.²⁵ That is, of 9,898 white

²²Instruction Department, pp. 32; 39-40.

²³Ibid. 47.

²⁴Valien, p. 38.

²⁵Instruction Department, pp. 28, 32.

white pupils, 9,181 were desegregated; of 4,236 Negro pupils, 862 were desegregated. Finally, more than 500 St. Louis teachers served on desegregated faculties in three high schools, ten elementary schools and at Harris Teachers and Junior College.²⁶

Much the same figures prevailed at Louisville. Of the seventy-five schools, fifty-five were desegregated, eleven had all-white student bodies and nine all-Negro. Five of the six high schools were desegregated; the sixth, Central High, was all-Negro. Fifty of the fifty-six elementary and junior high schools were desegregated. In the desegregated schools were 73.6 per cent of all the 45,841 pupils. Put in rough figures, about 53 per cent of all Negro pupils were in all-Negro schools, 47 per cent in mixed schools; of white pupils, about 18 per cent were in all-white schools, 82 per cent in mixed schools.²⁷ In absolute figures, of 12,010 Negro pupils, 5,630 attended desegregated schools while 6,380 did not. Of 33,831 white pupils, 28,023 attended desegregated schools while 5,808 did not.²⁸ In the schools with mixed student bodies the size of the minority group varied from 49 per cent to one pupil. Finally, there was no desegregation of faculties.²⁹ (Cf. Table V.)

²⁶Valien, p. 40.

²⁷Carmichael, pp. 118-120.

²⁸Ibid. 119.

²⁹Enrollment figures for September 20, 1957, one year after the start of desegregation, showed an increase in the number and per cent desegregated. In city schools, 78.2 per cent or 35,974

Table VNumerical and Percentage Comparison of Desegregation

'City'			White		Negro		Total	
		'Schools'	No.	'Percent'	No.	'Percent'	No.	'Percent'
	'Mixed**'	56	9,181	92	862	20	10,043	65
'St. Louis'	'Not Mixed**'	76	717	8	3,374	80	4,091	35
	'Mixed**'	55	28,023	82	5,630	47	33,653	73.6
'Louisville'	'Not Mixed**'	20	5,808	18	6,380	53	12,188	26.4

* These figures, except for the number of schools, are for the St. Louis high schools only. Comparable figures were not available for the total system as they were in Louisville. Still the percentages are useful in making comparisons, although the absolute figures are not so useful.

**Mixed means that the schools and children were desegregated in practice, that is, both white and Negro children attend the same school and classes.

Not mixed means that the schools and children, while desegregated in principle, are not desegregated in practice.

One final contrast should be noted which deals chiefly with the climate of opinion. In St. Louis the desegregation of the

of the 46,922 students are in mixed student bodies. There are ten all-white schools, eight all-Negro schools, and fifty-seven mixed schools. Attending mixed schools are 28,302 white children and 7,672 Negro children. Attending all-white schools are 4,930 white children, while 5,118 Negroes attend all-Negro schools. There are 179 more white children and 2,042 Negro children in mixed schools than last year, 778 fewer white children in all-white schools, and 1,262 fewer Negro children in all-Negro schools. Louisville Courier-Journal, October 2, 1957, Section 1, p. 15.

Catholic schools was considered by many to be a principal factor in smoothing the way for desegregation in public schools. In Louisville, however, no such example was at hand. It is true that the three Catholic colleges desegregated in 1950. But the same cannot be said of the Catholic elementary and high schools. The reason was the Kentucky Day Law, which prohibited all schools, private as well as public, from having mixed enrollments. An attempt to amend the Day Law in 1951, initiated by the Rt. Rev. Felix W. Pitt, secretary of the Catholic School Board, and endorsed by the Mayor's Legislative Committee, failed to get through the State Legislature before the Supreme Court decision.³⁰ Catholic schools did desegregate a year before the public schools in 1955, even though the number desegregated was slight. Their action did not, however, provide an example equal to that of the St. Louis Catholic schools. This final contrast between the methods of the two plans for desegregation concludes this chapter.

³⁰Carmichael, p. 35.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This final chapter is intended to summarize the methods used by St. Louis and Louisville in the desegregation of their public schools. It also will offer evaluations of the two programs for desegregation, by responsible authorities and by the author.

The following outline may provide a rapid summary of the methods employed in the two desegregation programs:

Remote Preparation

General

Activities for better human relations

By the cities, community groups, school boards
(Example of Catholic schools in St. Louis)

Particular

Study of other communities *see previous questionnaire*

Study of problems related to cities themselves

Proximate Preparation

Formulation of a program

Leadership and decisive policy

Of superintendents, school boards, civic authorities

Community education

Of parents, teachers, children

By schools, city organizations, communication arts

Through publicity, discussion, workshops, assemblies

Book introduction to desegregation

Desegregation

Redistricting and pupil re-assigning

Differences

Voluntary in Louisville, not so in St. Louis

Faculty desegregation in St. Louis, not so in Louisville

Time differentials

Step-by-step in St. Louis, system-wide in Louisville

Use of authority and decentralization

Meeting of opposition

Effects of desegregation
 Numerical and percentage
 Economic
 Scholastic
 Social
 Hygienic and moral

Following this brief summary the evaluations of responsible authorities may be examined. In considering the methods of desegregation reasons were cited which authorities and the author believed to underlie those methods. Here, then, the plans will be evaluated in their entirety, that is, the evaluation will cover the general and particular preparation, the methods used in desegregating, and the results of desegregation. First St. Louis and secondly Louisville will be considered. There follow evaluations of the St. Louis program by responsible authorities:

The New York Times remarked editorially on February 2, 1955, "[Desegregation] is a problem that can be licked; and it will be licked the more easily if it is approached by other communities in the spirit of St. Louis." The Times attributed the success of St. Louis to a "maximum of understanding, patience and good will on every side" and to a "campaign of public education by community leaders in the school districts." It added, "No news? It certainly is news--or it ought to be news--to those persons of little vision and less faith who think that the problems of desegregation are insuperable."¹

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch followed up by declaring

¹The New York Times, February 2, 1955, p. 26.

editorially a few days later, "Several Eastern newspapers, including the New York Times and The Christian Science Monitor, have complimented the 'border state' of Missouri for its progress in public school desegregation. As border states go, Missouri seems to be leading the way."²

Superintendent Philip J. Hickey himself said, "I think . . . [the plan] has worked beautifully."³ St. Louis B'nai B'rith thought so too, selecting the superintendent for its annual award.⁴

The Urban League of St. Louis likewise showed its pleasure with the accomplishment in honoring Superintendent Hickey with its annual achievement award. It stated the reasons prompting the award: "In deep gratefulness to you for the leadership you provided and the statesmanship you exhibited in successfully guiding the St. Louis Public Schools out of a racially segregated and into a democratically integrated system of education." It concluded happily that "giant strides were made in the desegregation of public school education" and "integration in public school education in St. Louis has been accepted by the community."⁵

The most recent and perhaps most significant tribute came in

²The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 10, 1955, p. 2B.

³Boyd, p. 47.

⁴Valien, p. 64.

⁵Urban League of St. Louis, 37th Annual Report (1956), no pagination.

February, 1957. Dr. Philip J. Hickey was elected to the presidency of the American Association of School Administrators at the eighty-third annual convention in Atlantic City.⁶ An undoubted factor in his election was his vision and firmness in bringing St. Louis up to the rank of a city with a desegregated public school system.

The success of Louisville likewise did not pass unnoticed. It stirred more excitement in fact than had the success of St. Louis, possibly because of the commotion in other cities at the very time Louisville was quietly desegregating. From all quarters congratulations poured in. Those which took the form of an evaluation may be particularly noted.

President Eisenhower said, "I think Mr. Carmichael must be a very wise man. I hope to meet him and I hope to get some advice from him as to exactly how he did it, because he pursued the policy I believe will finally bring success in this."⁷ The President did meet Dr. Carmichael in a White House conference on September 20, 1956, when the two men discussed the question.⁸

New York Times education editor Benjamin Fine wrote from Louisville, "Segregation died quietly here today. Its peaceful passing created no more than a token ripple of protest. The democratic process was seen working at its best. . . . When the

⁶The Louisville Courier-Journal, February 21, 1957, Section 1, p. 1.

⁷Carmichael, pp. 101-102.

⁸Ibid. 102.

history of this proud Southern city is written, this day will undoubtedly go down as a historic landmark. Historians will note that a social revolution took place that may advance the cause of integration by a generation."⁹

The New York Times remarked editorially, ". . . no achievement so well commands the quiet satisfaction of a job well done as the orderly and unexcited acceptance of desegregation within the public schools. . . . Louisville demonstrated the wisdom of complete preparation. . . . Dr. Carmichael took the public into his confidence. He co-operated as far as possible with parents who wished to transfer their children, as he reorganized school districts. . . . For two years the Superintendent has been laying the groundwork, in speeches and meetings, for peaceful compliance."¹⁰

The Louisville Courier-Journal attributed the smooth transition to "the leadership of their community, and their own good sense and good will without which that leadership would mean little."¹¹

Another positive evaluation came from the Interracial Review. In its editorial pages it declared, "We believe that

⁹The Louisville Courier-Journal, September 11, 1956, Section 1, p. 1.

¹⁰The New York Times, September 11, 1956, p. 25.

¹¹The Louisville Courier-Journal, September 13, 1956, Section 1, p. 6.

Dr. Carmichael has demonstrated the validity and effectiveness of a sound policy that will inspire educational leaders in other areas to achieve similar gains. The Louisville pattern is a demonstrated success and in our judgment, Dr. Carmichael richly deserves the commendations and acclaim he has received for his vision, sound judgment and courageous leadership. The Louisville achievement is an example for educators throughout the nation."¹²

Two final evaluations may conclude this section. Both are significant in that they represent action more than words. The first was the awarding of an honorary degree of doctor of law to Dr. Carmichael by the University of Kentucky in May, 1957, for his outstanding work in the field of education.¹³ This award echoed a similar honor received the preceding year from Station WHAS-TV, which named Dr. Carmichael, along with Jefferson County Superintendent Richard Van Hoose and Catholic School Board Secretary Monsignor Felix N. Pitt, as the "Personalities of the Year," all for their roles in successfully desegregating the schools.¹⁴

The second event was the filming of Louisville's desegregation. The thirty-minute film, one in a series called "Report from America," was produced for the U. S. Information Agency by

¹²Interracial Review, XXIX (October 1956), 166.

¹³The Louisville Courier-Journal, May 23, 1957, Section 1, p. 1.

¹⁴Carmichael, p. 146.

the National Broadcasting Company. The movie was to be shown first in England and on the British Broadcasting Company television, then elsewhere in Europe, Asia and Africa.¹⁵ This is perhaps the finest commentary on the preparation, methods and success of the Louisville program for desegregation.

To Dr. Carmichael may be granted the final word on the success of the Louisville program. In his opinion, "It is possible to report that the program has worked far more smoothly than we had dared hope, that there have been no serious incidents, and that our teachers and pupils are learning a great deal about the adjustment necessary in working successfully with people of another race."¹⁶

The author's evaluation may now be presented. It is his opinion that a number of factors may be noted as responsible for the success of desegregation in St. Louis and Louisville. Most important among these were the direct and indirect preparation, both during the decade preceding desegregation and after the Supreme Court decision; the example of the desegregated Catholic schools in St. Louis; the clear and decisive policy of those in authority; the precisely formulated plans; the education of the community; the cooperation of so many organizations; the principle of decentralization; the effective steps taken to deal with

¹⁵The Louisville Courier-Journal, April 9, 1957, Section 1, p. 8.

¹⁶Carmichael, p. 129.

opposition; and the good will, law-abidingness and humanitarian attitudes of the majority of citizens.

If asked to select the most important factors, the author would set down the leadership of those in authority in the first place, community education (which would include the example of the St. Louis Catholic schools) in the second place, and the ethical standards of the people in the third place. Such a classification is the more justified, it is believed, in view of the differences in the two plans. Such variations demonstrate that what was most important was not minor details in the plans but the firmness and finality with which the policies were promulgated and effectuated, and the attitude with which they were received.

The sole criticism here suggested deals more with the publicity connected with the plans than with the plans themselves. The author would like to have seen some comment on the moral effects of desegregation. Moral questions were raised by parents before desegregation; the use of vile language was cited afterwards. But in neither city was anything said with respect to this point after desegregation. Perhaps this indicates that, if school morals have not grown better, they have at least not deteriorated. Or possibly it was felt that such a delicate (and explosive) subject should not be touched upon. Nonetheless, from a scientific point of view it would have been most instructive to determine the effect on morals and ethical standards--which after

all, are one of the means of social control and as such, open to investigation by the sociologist--of desegregation. In the absence of positive data, however, it is unwise to engage in any apriorisms. The question will therefore be left untouched.

In conclusion, it is the opinion of the author that the two plans for desegregation have been successful. It is true that many minor problems and defects remain. In general, however, the goals aimed at in desegregating the schools have been achieved: the principle of segregation in public school education has been abandoned, the process of desegregation has taken place, and the practice of integration has been realized among the majority of schools and students.

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APPENDIX I

REASONS FOR SUCCESSFUL DESEGREGATION

In this brief appendix the reasons of two authorities for the success of desegregation will be given. Of St. Louis, Bonita H. Valien states:

In summary, teachers attributed successful desegregation to (a) a strong school board and school officials, who acted promptly with a definite plan to be administered with firmness; a decentralized plan of administration (68.3 per cent); (b) initial desegregation of the Catholic schools (55.9 per cent); (c) strong community leaders (54.1 per cent); (d) positive support of community organizations, influence of the press, the church and law enforcement officials (49.2 per cent); (e) preparation of community for desegregation (36.5 per cent); and (f) St. Louis is law-abiding (12.1 per cent).

Students attributed success to (a) preparation of students through Intergroup Youth and Human Relations Clubs, also constructive work on the part of principals and teachers (79.1 per cent); (b) cooperation on the part of students, both Negro and white, to make desegregation work (59.1 per cent); (c) fairness and firmness of teachers and administrators--a desire on the part of both to make integration work (34.5 per cent); (d) St. Louis is law-abiding; 'it is not the deep South'; 'it wanted to set an example for the rest of the Nation' (18.9 per cent).¹

Dr. Carmichael lists as the most important factors in Louisville's successful desegregation:

(1) A long period of good racial relations and interracial adjustment in other fields, on a gradual basis, before we attempted to desegregated the schools.

¹Valien, pp. 63-64. This is from the questionnaire cited above, p. 67.

- (2) Prompt and clear-cut acceptance of the decision of the Supreme Court as the law.
- (3) Prompt and clear-cut announcement, following the Court's 'how and when' ruling, that it would be carried out without undue delay or any effort at subterfuge.
- (4) Careful, systematic and thorough preparation of pupils and teachers and the community at large for the change.
- (5) Full co-operation of City and County officials, and a County program similar to ours in timing and objectives.
- (6) A friendly press, alert and thorough in its news coverage and vigorous in its editorial comments.

Beyond all this, of course, was the firm foundation on which all else was built: the respect of Louisville's citizens for law and order, and their recognition of the human rights involved.²

²Carmichael, pp. 142-143.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by **John R. Crowley, S. J.**,
has been read and approved by three members of the Department of
Sociology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the
thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact
that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the
thesis is now given final approval with reference to content,
form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

June 4, 1958

Date

Thomas These, S.J.
Signature of Adviser