



Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights (Religion in the South)

Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr.

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Meeting at an African American college in North Carolina in 1959, a group of black and white Episcopalians organized the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and pledged to oppose all distinctions based on race, ethnicity, and social class. They adopted a motto derived from Psalm 133: ""Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity!"" Though the spiritual intentions of these individuals were positive, the reality of the association between blacks and whites in the church was much more complicated. *Episcopalians and Race* examines the often ambivalent relationship between black communities and the predominantly white leadership of the Episcopal Church since the Civil War. Paying special attention to the 1950s and 60s, Gardiner Shattuck analyzes the impact of the civil rights movement on church life, especially in southern states. He discusses the Church's lofty goals?exemplified by the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity?and ignoble practices and attitudes, such as the failure to recognize the role of black clergy and laity within the denomination. The efforts of mainline Protestant denominations were critically important in the struggle for civil rights, and Episcopalians expended a great deal of time and resources in engaging in the quest for racial equality and strengthening the missionary outreach to African Americans in the South. Shattuck offers an insider's history of Episcopalians' efforts, both successful and unsuccessful, to come to terms with race and racism since the Civil War.



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