



# **The Exercise of Informal Power Within the Church of Christ: Black Civil Rights, Muted Justice, and Denominational Politics**

*Robert C. Douglas*

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This is the only study to examine how the unofficial hierarchy - editors of denominational journals, academic leaders, and pastors - shaped the Church of Christ's response to the Civil Rights Movement. This study demonstrates the existence and operation of an unofficial hierarchy within the Church of Christ, consisting of editors of denominational journals, academic leaders of Church related schools, and significant pastors. The work examines how this elite exercised informal power in shaping the Church of Christ's response to the black civil rights movement, including the marginalization of dissenting voices. The hierarchy is identified through surveys, content analysis of denominational journals, and an examination of special college lecture series, noting particular topics and speakers. The analysis reveals overlapping circles of influence and collaboration between elite members with a few to determining a response to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

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