

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE
OF EPISCOPAL CHURCH WORKERS

On Wednesday, April 28, 1954, a special meeting of the Triennial Conference of Episcopal Church Workers met at Saint George's Church, Second and You Streets, N. W. Host of the Conference was the Rev. John Burgess, Canon of the local Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul and Chaplain to Episcopal students at Howard University.

Introduction

The proceedings commenced with a brief worship service in the chapel. Following the service the group went to the parish hall, where the President announced the order of the day. There was to be a panel on the continuation of the Conference followed by a period of deliberation by committees appointed by the President; luncheon, during which Mr. Peter Day, Editor of the Living Church, would speak; and a final session in which the committees would give the results of their cogitations and their recommendations.

After the meeting had been formally called to order, the secretary for the special meeting read the general letter sent previously to all members of the Triennial Conference. This step was important in that the letter contained a list of the agenda for this meeting and formed the basis of the selection of committees for deliberation. The next step prior to any discussion was the reading of the list of present officers of the Conference, which is as follows:

President...The Rev. Thomas S. Logan
First Vice-Pres. ... The Rev. Richard B. Martin
Second Vice-Pres. ... The Rev. John H. Coleman
Secretary ... The Rev. A. A. Birch
Assistant Sec. ... The Rev. Llewellyn E. Williams
Necrologist ... The Rev. Edgar C. Young
Parliamentarian ... The Rev. Theodore Jones
Chairman of Executive Committee ... The Rev. H. R. Moore
Chairman of Committee on Disposal of Business ...
The Rev. John C. Davis

The President informed the group that Fathers Shelton H. Bishop, Cedric Mills, and L. S. Thomas were unable to attend, each because of an emergency. He expressed regret that the panel would suffer the loss of their contributions.

Section One

The President now came to the business of the day. He announced these points for discussion: (1) Procurement of a sample of opinion concerning the continued existence of the Conference as a Church organization; and (2) the program to be pursued should the conference continue, including the agenda listed in the general letter just read. The President also reminded this assemblage that the work done today was of an advisory nature, to be presented as such to the Regular Meeting which will precede the General Convention.

The problem of the existence of the Conference was handled in a panel led by representatives of the various Provinces of the Church in the United States. The President appointed these speakers and asked each to speak for two minutes. The appointees were as follows: (1) The Rev. Tollie Caution, New York City; (2) The Rev. Richard B. Martin, Norfolk, Va.; (3) The Rev. John C. Davis, Cleveland, O.; (4) The Rev. H. Randolph Moore, Los Angeles, Calif.; (5) The Rev. John H. Coleman, Brooklyn, N. Y.; (6) The Rev. Edgar C. Young, Philadelphia, Pa.; (7) The Ven. James K. Satterwhite, Jacksonville, Fla.

① Father Moore, a former President of the Triennial Conference, was first to speak. He favored the continuation of the body because it is necessary to the work for integration of the Negro into the full life of the Church.

② Father R. B. Martin felt that the body should continue, but that it should be so reconstituted as to have a positive purpose. Its present tendency of watching over matters regarding Negroes makes it negative in emphasis and approach. He expressed the opinion that the purposes of its founding have been almost all realized. The Conference should be integrated because any problems which are worthy of consideration at all are worthy of it by the whole American Church.

③ Father Davis approved of continuing the Conference. He read a resolution adopted by the last Regular Meeting in 1952 at Boston, when the view was expressed that the body should become integrated and open its membership to lay persons and to all races. Present-day problems which the body can assist in solving are the education of Negroes and getting Negro clergy and laity to participate in the conferences (diocesan, etc.) open to them.

④ Fourth speaker, Father Caution, agreed to the continuation of the Conference on these bases: (1) the need of a voice for a group of men sufficiently large to be heard; (2) as a necessary goad to people to go through doors open to them; (3) as an antidote to self-satisfaction and status quo; (4) as a clearinghouse of frank, but not rancorous, opinion, presented broadly and not directed against any one person or place.

⑤ Next to voice desire to see the body live on revised

was Father Coleman. He pointed out the Negro's need of an organ of expression apart from the national church. As such an organ the Conference should not be a last stand for segregation. Three problems pertaining to race still confront Negroes: (1) episcopacy, (2) schools, and (3) the move toward integrated parishes in some dioceses. (Father Martin had commented that integration is a spiritual thing different from mere de-segregation; that many movements are but steps to the latter.) Finally, Father Coleman added that the findings of the Conference need publicizing.

6 Father Edgar Young emphasized that many diocesan and parochial programs need the efforts of an organization like the Triennial Conference which differs from the usual diocesan and parochial conferences. This body is particularly valuable in areas where Episcopalians are few; such as, Mississippi or Louisiana.

7 The voluntary nature of the Conference from its foundation was stressed by Archdeacon Satterwhite. Furthermore he valued the body as the only means by which the colored clergy could get acquainted.

8 Having obtained the views of the panel leaders, the President next called upon three members of the audience. Fathers Myron Cochran and Herbert Banks felt that only as an integrated group could the Conference justify its continuance. Of similar opinion was Father Thomas Little from Philadelphia, the only white priest visiting, who believes in the value of special interest groups like the Conference, but wishes to see the membership broadened. (At this point Archdeacon Satterwhite stated that in reality and basically in concept the Conference has always been interracial, being an organization for those working among colored people.)

9 An interesting contrariety of view was expressed during this audience participation when Father Cochran asserted that integration (in American Life) is here now, and when, on the other hand, Father Banks called the Conference a group made necessary to continue on account of the weight of segregation in North as well as South.

10 All present favored the continuation of the Conference; and of all who wrote a response to the President's general letter over forty replied in favor with some suggesting an integrated organization.

11 Before the business continued further, someone asked if the body desired publicity, since the Church press was represented by the presence of Mr. Peter Day of the Living Church. It was moved that the Church press as represented by Mr. Day report as it should see fit. An amendment was also moved that an additional official statement from the group be made to the press (other papers and magazines) by the Committee for the Press Release appointed by the President at this meeting. Appointed were Fathers Oscar Holder, chairman, and Malcolm Dade and Mr. Lawrence Oxley.

At 12:10 P. M. those present went off into discussion groups concerning the agenda for the day. Committees and their chairmen were as follows: (1) Meeting Place of the Regular Session in 1955, Fr. H. R. Moore; (2) American Church Institute for Negroes, Fr. R. B. Martin; (3) Techniques of the Integrated Church, Fr. Robert Harris; (4) Recruiting Men for the Ministry, Fr. E. C. Young; (5) The Accelerated Program of the Roman Catholic Church, Fr. Thomas Little; (6) Financing the Conference, Mr. C. Monroe; and (7) Showing Appreciation of Clergy of Many Years' Service, No Chr.

In keeping with a suggestion of Fr. Moore the men were permitted to elect the committee that most appealed to them. The men were in a buzz session until one o' clock when the call to luncheon was made.

Part Two

The highlight of the luncheon was Mr. Peter Day's speech. Mr. Day, editor of the Living Church magazine, centered his address around the points of a questionnaire sent out to the Negro clergy on how they felt about the choice by the Boston meeting of the General Convention of Houston, Texas, as the site of that body's next assembly. Mr. Day expressed his interest in knowing further from those present how Negro churchmen feel as those to be most inconvenienced by this choice of meeting place. Over two hundred inquiries sent, fifty-eight replies were received. The reason he sent the questionnaire, he emphasized, was to get at opinion rather than fact -- opinion which would help in finding a constructive policy for the next General Convention meeting. The choice of Houston, where white business establishments of all sorts will not cater to colored patrons on the same basis as to others, raises problems of Christian teaching and the stand the Church and churchmen ought to take on racial problems.

The four questions that Mr. Day put to the clergy and the trend of their replies are as follows:

- (1) Did the Boston General Convention choose rightly? The great majority felt that it did not.
- (2) Should the Church abide by the decision of the last General Convention in this matter? Most answered affirmatively. Northern clergy voted 15-15 pro and con; Southern, 18-3.
- (3) Is the site of the General Convention still to be regarded as an open question? Most men replied negatively. In response to the sub-question here on what issues were involved, all the Negro clergy maintained that the issue was segregation, and they were all against that practice. Their unanimous opposition to segregation is an important answer to those who believe that Negroes want to be segregated.

(4) How would you advise Negro churchmen planning to go? Thirty-three would advise them to go; twenty-one, for them not to go; the remainder were undecided.

The answers to the questionnaire indicate that most Negroes planning to go are decided to put up with the situation, though disapproving of the site of the General Convention. Some replies said that God will be in action in the midst of the Convention pro and contra Church according to the rightness or wrongfulness of her actions. Some too reminded that Houston has a large Negro population which it pays Negroes of other places to visit. God and our Church have a job to do in Houston.

So ended the written replies. Now a sample of the opinion of those present was obtained during a period of questions for thought and comments.

(1) Father John Davis led, speaking of the possibility of a situation where there would be no accommodations except through some specially constructed place outside the city, in which all Convention people would be served alike. His question was How can the Church approve the site under these circumstances?

(2) Father Oscar Holder was curious to know whether or not there had been any inquiries by Episcopalians as to how the National Negro Baptist Convention was received in Miami in 1953. It seemed to him that there is no question of pioneering for white Episcopal churchmen.

(3) Father Randolph Moore wished to know what provisions had already been made for Negroes.

(4) Whether or not the Living Church would be willing to take an editorial position in this matter was asked by Father H. A. Ferrell. Mr. Day answered affirmatively, stating that all delegates must bear the cross in this situation and that here is an excellent opportunity for the dioceses to elect Negro delegates.

(5) Father Bright-Davies read a letter concerning Bishop Quinn's attitude on race. (He is Bishop of Texas.) In this letter the Bishop claimed to give no countenance to segregation, while he yet expected the attendance of the clergy at a dinner with separate, but equal, facilities. Father Bright-Davies asserted, therefore, that General Convention either was not thinking or else was hypocritical in choosing the Houston site.

Supporting Father Bright-Davies opinion of the un-Christian nature of the prelate's racial views were Fathers Charles Taylor and Dade.

(6) Mr. Lawrence Oxley stated that our men must go to Houston to be there as a living protest against racial discrimination and segregation. He cited meetings of two organizations which set an example, who do not meet except where all of their members are accommodated equally: the National Conference of Social Workers (meeting in Memphis in 1951) and the Y. W. C. A. He also cited how we may win support to influence future meetings by telling of the group who went to General Convention and got 100% support of the House of Bishops on an anti-lynching resolution. He

recalled to the group how white New Englanders once bore a burden of ridicule and malice to come and teach Negroes in the South. He exhorted his hearers to go and try to make the Church see by their sufferings that it should be Christian. He emphasized the Church's need of the Negro churchmen there to help her solve her problems.

(7) Father Moore pointed out that delegates and high officials of the Triennial Conference must go. Since the position of the General Convention on meeting in places not accomodating all members equally has been violated by this decision of the Boston meeting, Father Moore advocates protest by the Conference to the public and to the Presiding Bishop.

The priest also asked what effect the site would have on the election of non-Caucasians to go to the Houstonf Convention. Mr. Day thought that more than ever would be elected, especially lay delegates. Dioceses which had not thought of electing a Negro would now, because Houston has focused attention on what the Church is doing.

(8) Finally Father Dillard Brown admonished that charity must be in the hearts of the Negroes in all that they bear in Houston; otherwise their bearing so much will be vain. "Charity must be in our hearts if we give our bodies to burn," he said.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Peter Day concluded the luncheon session.

Part Three

The afternoon session of the Conference was devoted to the reports of the committees forming buzz groups. Their recommendations, it must be understood, are not to result in any policy or action, but are advisory; as such, they are to be presented to the Regular Meeting prior to General Convention.

(1) Meeting Place for the Regular Session

The graciousness of four churches in inviting the Triennial Conference to use their premises for the Regular Meeting necessitated a selection by this special session. The choice of the study committee, or buzz group, was All Saints Church in Saint Louis, Missouri. The entire assembly accepted this decision. Another decision made by the committee concerned the assessment of fees for the regular meeting. It was agreed that delegates should each pay a registration fee of two dollars (\$2.00) and that a general letter be drafted to congregations which are members or participants in the Triennial Conference assessing a minimal contribution of five dollars (\$5.00).

To be submitted to the executive committee is the suggestion of appeals to non-Negro parishes and churches for contributions. The idea is that a clergyman in each diocese contact others who might be willing. The contributions will be for an interracial workshop.

(2) The American Church Institute for Negroes

Father Charles Taylor gave an account of the questions and pertinent facts brought out concerning problems about the American Church Institute. They are as follows:

- A. Does the Church understand the philosophy of the Institute?
That philosophy is to assist schools and to do a job which no other group could; to supply funds and yet not dictate policies.
- B. Can the schools operate more profitably directly than through the Institute? This question is one to be tackled by the Regular Meeting, but some pertinent remarks were made calling for thought. First, it was pointed out that the fund-raising campaign "Builders for Christ" did a poor job and a distorted one in its propaganda regarding the Church Institute and schools. Second, the total contributions of the Church to schools is inadequate; so would it not be better to have fewer well equipped schools?
- C. Who judges the amount to be given school? A Board of Trustees does this job.
- D. How many persons are employed by the Institute? At one time only three: a president, secretary, and director. Presently there is only one.
- E. A competent committee is needed to study and determine the function of the Institute and its relation to several affiliated institutions.

Several questions of importance came from the floor about the American Church Institute:

- A. What effect will the Supreme Court decision on segregated education have upon the Institute? (Father Moore)
- B. In the Regular Meeting (1955) of the Triennial Conference will anything be presented on the Institute? At first the committee which held buzz session on the organization answered negatively. It was suggested, however, by some present that by 1955 Dr. Tollie Caution would be in a position to direct a panel discussion on the Institute and education. Dr. Caution accepted this responsibility, thus assuring a presentation on this vital matter.
- C. Mr. Monroe voiced concern arising from some rumors that "Builders for Christ" money would go, in some amount, to a seminary which would hardly be open to all. Fathers Ferrell and Brown quieted all fears in this regard; the one pointing out the unreliable nature of this rumor, and the other reminding that "Builders" money is all designated specifically.
- D. Our obligation as Negro individuals in this business of giving was emphasized by Father Dade.

(3) Techniques of the Integrated Church

Father Harris' buzz group on ways of integrating church membership at the parochial level reported the ensuing points:

- A. It is agreed that in the light of Gospel teaching the Church

- should be for all men.
- B. There should be some method of protecting minorities.
 - C. The Conference must be encouraged to invest in ways and means to have itself represented in the National Council in all matters pertaining to Church life.
 - D. The Conference must be petitioned to supply a representative on changing neighborhoods.
 - E. The pronouncements of the Church need to be implemented by disciplinary action.

The audience was asked to suggest men who are considered qualified to discuss integration at the 1955 Regular Meeting. Those suggested were Father Joseph Nicholson, Paul Musselman, George Bratt, and John Yamasaki.

(4) Recruiting Men for the Ministry

Dr. Young's group on recruiting future ministers gave numerous informative points on the problems facing the Church in interesting her young men in her service and her Lord's.

- A. Many bishops do not encourage Negro men to enter the ministry.
- B. Too often men of other denominations are called on for work with Episcopalians.
- C. Secular work offers more attractive pay. Young men conscious of this difficulty overlook the element of service, the sacrificial nature of the ministry, and the provisions made for ministers.
- D. Men feel that hierarchical limits exist for Negroes.
- E. Men overlook the "glamor" of parish work and of the Church.
- F. Southern men sometimes encounter scholastic difficulties in Northern seminaries.
- G. Congregations should present to the youth the idea of vocations.
- H. The whole Church is open for missions -- not just the Church in any one state or country.
- I. There is work other than the strictly parochial, as the work in colleges.
- J. The best attraction is dynamic ministry by those who are already working as ministers.

In response to the inquiry as to who could address the 1955 Regular Meeting of the Conference on the problem of our ministerial vocations, the floor gave these names: Warren Scott of Saint Philip's, New York City; and Professors Richardson, Kelly, Ness, and Kloman.

Father Caution pointed out two problems that the Church has regarding seminarians:

- A. Some schools, in which good students are enrolled, have either no philosophy department or a very poor one.
- B. Some Negro students are graduating with the idea of not wishing

to serve a colored congregation.

Dr. Caution expressed the hope that students will attend the 1955 Conference, where they may receive assurance of adequate training.

(5) Meeting the Challenge Arising from the Accelerated Program of the Roman Catholic Church

Several things, it was pointed out, have led to considerable gains by the Roman Church. Our people surely need not be weaned away because of them if we are aware and counter with programs of our own. The Roman program has included several major items:

- A. There has been a publicity program aimed at segregation. Our bishops need to point out, especially to our young people, our resolutions and stands taken by the Church.
- B. The Romans have taken up work with pre-school and kindergarten, often where we have withdrawn. It is suggested that we revive work on this level of education.
- C. Romans have exerted considerable influence in securing opportunities for employment. Our clergy must be more active in community affairs

The floor suggested that further discussion of this problem at the Regular Meeting might be led by Fathers Thomas Little and John Coleman.

(6) Showing Old Clergy Appreciation of Their Long and Faithful Service

It was agreed by the total present at this special meeting that men with service of forty-five or more years should be honored during the Regular Session in Saint Louis by a banquet.

Closing

As the special meeting drew to a close it was decided that the Triennial Conference should go on record as opposing Houston as the site for the General Convention. A committee was appointed, therefore, whose duty is to draft a statement for the press and each member of the House of Bishops. The members of the committee are Fathers Dade, Chairman, and Holder, and Mr. Oxley.

This report is respectfully submitted by the Secretary for the Special Meeting.

Hera Phyllis Morgan, Sec.