



# Emmanuel Church

8614 Euclid Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44106 • 421-0524

The Reverend Dalton D. Downs  
Rector

August 7, 1973

The Rev. Joseph Green, Jr.  
Grace Episcopal Church  
1400 E. Brambleton Ave.  
Norfolk, Virginia 23504

Dear Joe,

This acknowledges receipt of a copy of "A Position Paper of the Black Deputies to the 64th General Convention of the Episcopal Church."

As you may recall, in Detroit I shared with you certain misgivings which I had concerning the rough draft of this paper which you showed me at that time. After reading this 'final' version, I find that I cannot, in good conscience, endorse this paper.

My recollection of the action taken in Atlanta was that:

- A) A Position Paper would be written wherein 'Concerned Blacks' would state our stance on the Missionary, Evangelistic and Educational Programs of the Episcopal Church,
1. We would remind the church that we constitute the largest minority bloc in this denomination;
  2. We will not allow ourselves to be used, i.e. the politics of playing one minority group against another;
  3. We would address ourselves to the need for General Convention to seriously take into consideration the qualifications and churchmanship of persons running for elective offices (P.B., Executive Council);
  4. Facts from the Black Experience/Perspective would be provided in support of the following programs:
    - a) Empowerment (GCSP)
    - b) Black Colleges
    - c) Black Desk (General Work in Black Churches);
  5. A statement on the racism which permeates this denomination per se, and the subtle/obvious ways it manifests itself.
- B) A résumé of this Position Paper would be published in The Living Church and The Episcopalian;
- C) Copies of the Position Paper would be mailed to all Bishops and Convention Delegates.

I find it rather difficult to reconcile the above considerations with the content of the 'Paper' you mailed out. With charity and brotherly love I must state that:

- a. The present draft sounds like a sermon rather than a "Position" paper;
- b. The facts are lacking in support of the continuation of a given program or the need to initiate others, from the Black Episcopalian perspective;
- c. A stronger argument could have been presented on the missionary, educational and evangelistic work of the Church as related to Blacks;
- d. A clear statement is missing as to the qualifications and churchmanship of candidates for elective offices, particularly the office of the Presiding Bishop;
- e. The fallacy of this 'paper' rests on the assumption that the Church has been committed to 'change' and now she is on the retreat. The reality of the matter is that during the 1960's some of the leaders dragged pieces of the Church along by the ears, but the basic core of the Church's constituency never was committed to anything involving fundamental changes in society that would result, for example, in the redistribution of power and resources. It makes little sense today to say that in the 1970's the Church is beginning to suffer from a failure of nerve. That would imply that there is a large number of people in the Church who want to do something but are afraid. The reality is that most churchmen are status-quo oriented, and they're not suffering from a failure of nerve. They're doing exactly what they want to do ... and in most instances their "thing" is divorced completely from the harsh world in which our people live - suffer - and die.
- f. Finally, I do believe that the biblical quotation "Be still and know that I am God" begs the question/issue. I would go as far as to venture that such a 'position paper' is only conducive to making 'them' more comfortable and at ease in Zion. What is most urgently needed is a factual educational position paper that will enable delegates to use their talents and votes more responsible and creatively. Other biblical passages which should be considered are: St. Matt. 23: 23; St. Luke 6: 32-36; Amos 5: 21-24; Micah 6: 8; St. Matt. 25: 34-40; or St. Luke 4: 16-21.

In recent years we have seen altogether too much complacency, self-interest, irrational hatred and fear in this country and particularly in this denomination. We have not behaved like a great people. We are not the redemptive church that we ought to be. We have not lived by the values and commitments we profess to honor. And we will never get back on course until we can obtain "the re-establishment in modern times of a genuinely authentic church, cleansed of its present distortions of the Gospel so that it may be an agency of renewal in the world."

Your response to these concerns will be appreciated.

Peace and Power,

  
(The Rev) Dalton D. Downs

c.c. Black Bishops and General Convention Black Delegates