

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES:  
Conference of Church Workers Among Colored Peoples  
And  
Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity, 1960 - 1961

## INTRODUCTION

The objective of this discussion is to explore the evidence for the possibility of an alliance between the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored Peoples (Church Workers Conference) and the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) in the 1960's. Such an alliance might have furthered the objectives of the Civil Rights Movement within the Episcopal Church and in the larger society. As we shall see, the theology and goals of the two organizations were compatible although their methods differed. It is the contention of this paper that both organizations had opportunities for such an alliance, between June 1960 and September 1961, but for a variety of reasons they failed to take advantage of these possibilities.

We will first explore the history and activities of both organizations to establish their roles as the champions of justice and equality for African-American Episcopalians. Then we will examine the evidence that there was a possibility for cooperative action by ESCRU and the Church Workers Conference. Three sources will be used. The first source will be a series of unpublished letters between the Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr., former president of Church Workers Conference, 1951-62, and the Rev. John B. Morris, former executive director of ESCRU, 1960-65. Second, the minutes of the September 1961 Triennial Meeting of the Church Workers Conference will be used. The third source will be recent interviews with Morris on 10 December 1997 and with Logan on 19 December 1997 and 2 January 1998.

## THE CHURCH WORKERS CONFERENCE

Background - During its existence between 1883 and 1967, Church Workers Conference was an unofficial caucus within the Episcopal Church. It sought to champion the cause of justice and equality for African-American Episcopalians. It continually pressed the church by making recommendations and resolutions to General Convention. The Conference had a number of objectives: to develop black Episcopal leadership within the Episcopal Church, to exercise a voice and vote within all levels of governance of the church, and to ensure the equality of the status of Afro-American Episcopalians. During most of its existence the members of the Conference could not be delegates to General Convention because of their race. Therefore, members of the Conference had to convince white delegates to place resolutions before the Convention.<sup>1</sup> As an example of this process, the 1934

*Journal of the General Convention* reports:

The Bishop of Maryland presented on the First Day an Appeal for Social Justice made by the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People . . . The Rev. Mr. Jensen of Maryland presented in the House of Deputies on the Second Day the following appeal for Social Justice made by the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People in session at Baltimore, Maryland . . .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Bennett, "Black Episcopalians: A History From the Colonial Period to the Present," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 43, no. 3 (September 1974): 220; Tollie L. Caution, "Not Just a Watch-Dog," *The Living Church* 128, no. 20 (May 1954): 6; J. Carleton Hayden, "For Zion's sake I Will Not Hold My Peace: George Freeman Bragg, Jr., Priest, Pastor, and Prophet," *Linkage* 6, (October 1986): 11; Thomas LaBar and Mary S. Wright, "The Negro Episcopalian," *The Episcopalian* 127, no. 3 (March 1962): 25; Harold T. Lewis, "No Alien Race, No Foreign Shore: Toward an Historical and Theological Understanding of the Mission of Black Episcopalians" (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 1994), 137, 196-97, 201; Harold T. Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 137, 140; Edward W. Rodman, "Walk About Zion: An Overview of the dynamics Affecting Urban Ministry in the Black Episcopal Church," *Anglican Theological Review* 76, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 451; Orris G. Walker, "The Episcopal Church and the Negro" (S.T.M Thesis, General Theological Seminary, 1968), 58-59.

<sup>2</sup> *The Journal of the General Convention* (1934), 346.

Church Workers Conference was not a black only organization. The Rev. George F. Bragg, rector of St. James, Baltimore, and long time Secretary of the Conference, writes:

It was at the Conference of 1886 in St. Luke's Church Washington that it was determined to change the Conference from an exclusively Negro body to one composed of Church Workers Among Colored People, so as to include in its membership white as well as colored persons. And in the same Conference, following the change above noted, were introduced the first white members of this body . . .<sup>3</sup>

The Conference met every year from 1883 to 1919. The 1919 Cleveland meeting decided the national Conference should meet every three years before General Convention. In the intervening years, provincial conferences were to meet.<sup>4</sup> The "Report of the Committee on Provincial Conferences" states:

We recommend that the attempt be made at holding Provincial Conferences every year except the year of the General Convention, when there shall be a General Conference of Church Workers.<sup>5</sup>

**The Sewanee Canon.** The Church Workers Conference was formed in response to a proposal by a group of Southern bishops, clergy, and laymen. This group recommended the total disenfranchisement of black Episcopalians. This Southern effort was to be known as the "Sewanee Canon."<sup>6</sup>

After the Civil War, especially in the South, an increasing number of former slaves came into the Episcopal Church, and the number of black parishes grew. Southern

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<sup>3</sup> George F. Bragg, Jr., *Afro-American Church Work and Workers* (Baltimore: The Church Advocate Print, 1904), 5; George F. Bragg, Jr., *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore: The Church Advocate Press, 1922), 160-61.

<sup>4</sup> Bragg, Jr., *History*, 160, 161; Walker, 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Proceedings of the Thirty-first Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People*, 15 September 1917, by Henry B. Delany, president (Baltimore: The Church Advocate Press, 1915), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 68; Walker, 25.

churchmen therefore concluded that they had to find a solution to the "Negro problem."<sup>7</sup>

Harold Lewis, the former staff officer for the Office of Black Ministries of the Episcopal Church, states:

The Church's "Negro problem" was that it insisted upon regarding blacks in their midst as an "alien race" who were treated, despite their propinquity, as if they were upon "a foreign shore."<sup>8</sup>

Southerners attempted to bring into the church the segregating policies and practices being inaugurated in the South as a replacement for slavery. Lewis asserts that black people were not wanted in the Southern Episcopal Church. Southern churchmen did not think their church was suitable for African-Americans.<sup>9</sup>

Bishop W.M. Green of Mississippi, the senior Southern bishop and chancellor of the University of the South, wrote a letter to his brother bishops. He was concerned about the nature of the relationship of the Episcopal Church with its black members. He also had an interest in determining how best to work with them. Green proposed that a new segregationist policy be presented to the forthcoming General Convention.<sup>10</sup> The text of his letter reads:

*My Dear Brother,* - Among the many subjects that may justly claim the consideration of our approaching General Convention will, doubtless, be that of the relations of our Church to the late slave population of our States, and the best means that can be adopted for their religious benefit.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 65, 66, 68.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 131.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 70, 71.

<sup>10</sup> John Henry Edwards, "The Episcopal Church and the Black Man in the United States" (St.D. diss., McQuire Theological College, 1957), 131; Joseph Nicholson, *What is Happening to the Negro in the Protestant Episcopal Church?* (St. Louis: Ad Hoc Clergy Committee, 1968), 3; Bragg, *History*, 151; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 67-68; Walker, 21, 23.

As this subject seems to be awakening the serious attention of both the patriot and the Christian, North as well as South, it has been suggested to me, by several of our Bishops, that it would be well if all the Bishops of the late Slave States would meet in council, and, after due consultation, agree upon some plan to be laid before our General Convention for the accomplishment of that purpose.

In accordance, therefore, with that wise and timely suggestion, I hereby invite and urge your attendance at the University of the South on the last Thursday in July (being the week preceding the Commencement), for the purpose of conferring with your brother Bishops on a matter of such vital importance to the welfare of our country and the salvation of a race perishing in the midst of us for the want of right instruction.

Let me hope that nothing may prevent you from being present; and that you will bring with you some one of your Clergy who, either from much experience in instructing the negro, or from a becoming interest in his behalf, may be qualified to aid us by his counsel.<sup>11</sup>

On 28 May 1883 Bishop Green wrote another letter inviting a layman and clergyman "either from much experience in instructing the negro, or from a becoming interest in his behalf, may be qualified to aid us by his counsel."<sup>12</sup>

On 25-26 July 1883 the proposed conference of Bishops and churchmen was held on the campus of the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee.<sup>13</sup> Only white Southern

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<sup>11</sup> *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 595.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 68; *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 595.

<sup>13</sup> Bragg, *History*, 151; George F. Bragg, Jr., *The Attitude of the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People, Towards the Adaption of the Episcopate to the Needs of the Race, With a List of Ordinations of Colored Men to the Ministry of the Church* (Baltimore: The Church Advocate Print, 1904), 7; William M. Brown, *The Crucial Race Question* (Little Rock: The Arkansas Churchman's Publishing Company, 1907), XV; John Edwards, 131; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 67, 68; *Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 595; Nicholson, 3; J. R. Oldfield, *Alexander Crummell (1819-1898) and the Creation of an African-American Church in Liberia* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 141; David M. Reimer, "Negro Bishops and Diocesan Segregation in the Protestant Episcopal Church: 1870-1954," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 31, no. 3 (September 1962): 232; David M. Reimer, *White Protestantism and the Negro* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 34; Walker, 21.

Episcopalians composed the group that consisted of twelve bishops, seventeen priests, and eleven laymen.<sup>14</sup>

Orris Walker, now the bishop of the Diocese of Long Island, states that the "Sewanee Conference" considered the following subjects:

1. The Virginia Council's proposal.
2. A canon from South Carolina which proposed to separate the work of the races to the extent that "colored people" in the respective dioceses would be a missionary organization.
3. A resolution concerning the more extensive use of the office of deacon.
4. Two resolutions concerned with establishing schools of various types.<sup>15</sup>

It is the second topic, the proposed canon, that is relevant to this present discussion.

This canon permitted each diocese to establish separate, segregated, "Negro" missionary districts, supervised by the diocesan bishop.<sup>16</sup> An eyewitness account appeared in *The Churchman*:

The Conference of Southern Bishops held at this place [the University of the south] on July 25th-28th to discuss the question of the duty of the Church towards the Negro race . . . It was evident even to a stranger that the Church was deeply moved on the subject . . . It was urged as her imperative duty now to make an effort to raise the colored people to a higher religious plane. The first question settled was that whatever work was to be done should be done [within] the Church, that there should be no setting apart of another church for the colored people, nor should the negroes within the bounds of one or several dioceses be united under a [separate] missionary bishop, since in either case the unity of the diocese would be broken.

A draft of a canon prepared by Bishop Howe of South Carolina proposing that "in any diocese containing a large number of persons of color it shall be lawful for the bishop

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<sup>14</sup> George F. Bragg, Jr., *Attitude*, 7; *Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 595-96.

<sup>15</sup> Walker, 23.

<sup>16</sup> Bennett, 240; Bragg, *History*, 151; Edwards, 132; Nicholson, 3; Oldfield, 141; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 232; Reimer, *White Protestants*, 34.

and convention of the same to constitute such population into a special missionary organization under the charge of the bishop" furnished the basis of most of the discussion.<sup>17</sup>

*The Churchman* then gave a summary of the provisions of the proposed canon from the "Sewanee Conference":

1. The establishment of a missionary organization for black people under the direction of the bishop of the diocese.
2. An executive committee to be formed to assist the bishop in organizing missions for black Episcopalians and selecting African-American candidates for the ministry.
3. The appointment of Archdeacons to assist the Bishop of the Diocese in the supervision of missions for black people.
4. Each diocesan bishop having charge of missionary districts is to report on the state of the district to each General Convention.
5. The manner, method, and terms of receiving into union the black congregations and ministers of these missionary districts shall be determined by diocesan convention.<sup>18</sup>

The majority of those attending voted in favor of the proposed canon. "The Bishop of Alabama, whilst in cordial sympathy with the object of the above proposed canon, could not vote for it, because in his opinion, it involved the idea of class legislation."<sup>19</sup> A committee of six was then appointed to present the "Sewanee Canon" to the General Convention that

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<sup>17</sup> *The Churchman* 48 (1883): 205. The same conclusion not to form a separate church for black Episcopalians was reported by the "committee to which were referred sundry resolutions, bearing upon the work of the Church among the coloured people of the South . . ." *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Report of the Committee," 596-97. The "Sewanee Canon" proposing a racial missionary district is found in *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Canon," 597-98.

<sup>18</sup> *The Churchman* 48 (1883): 205.

<sup>19</sup> *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 600.

was to meet in Philadelphia the following October. This conference of Southern churchmen recommended that their proposal be enacted as canon law in the Episcopal Church.<sup>20</sup>

During the Sewanee Conference, information was received concerning a meeting of black Episcopalians scheduled for September 1883 in New York City. The Sewanee group passed several resolutions expressing support and encouragement for the forthcoming conference of African-American churchmen.<sup>21</sup> The Southerners believed that both meetings had the goal of establishing "some plan whereby the work among the coloured people may be more vigorously and intelligently prosecuted under the auspices of the General Convention." A committee of six was appointed to meet with "our coloured brethren" at their meeting in September before the "Sewanee Canon" was presented to the General Convention.<sup>22</sup>

**Reaction: The Church Workers Conference.** African-American Episcopal clergy perceived the "Sewanee Canon," as a scheme for the total disenfranchisement of black Episcopalians. If enacted by General Convention, they believed it would remove any possibility of electing a "Negro" bishop in the Episcopal Church. They wished to present a united front to prevent any "color-line" legislation. They were determined that American Anglicanism would not officially embrace a separate but unequal vision of the church envisioned by the "Sewanee Canon." They would vigorously resist any plan of segregation and differentiation based on race. Black Episcopalians desired that African-Americans would have the same status as whites in the Church.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 68; *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 600; *The Churchman* 48 (1883): 205.

<sup>21</sup> Walker, 24; *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 600.

<sup>22</sup> Walker, 25; *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883) "Appendix XI," 600.

<sup>23</sup> J. Carlton Hayden, "From Holly to Turner: Black Bishops in the American Succession,"

In order to achieve these goals and to protest the decision of the "Sewanee Conference," a group of African-American Episcopal priests met in New York City, at the Church of the Holy Communion, 12-14 September 1883. They were called together by the Rev. Dr. Alexander Crummell, rector of St. Luke's Church, Washington, D.C., and the senior black clergymen in the American Church. "The Provisional Committee to the Colored Clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America" actually issued the invitation.<sup>24</sup> The following topics were to be the focus of discussion at the meeting:

1. The increase of "Negro" churches in the North and South.
2. A reaction to the canon proposed by the Sewanee Conference.
3. Plans to increase the number of black clergy.
4. Various methods of ministry among "colored people."
5. The need for parochial schools for black children.
6. The establishment of a permanent organization.<sup>25</sup>

After some deliberations the following resolution was adopted:

*Resolved.* That we hail with thankfulness the interest which the Conference at Sewanee, last July, of our Rt. Rev. Fathers the Bishops of the Southern Dioceses, the Presbyters and Lay Delegates, has shown in the work of the Church among colored people, and we beg to express our gratification at the welcome which they give to this

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*Linkage*, 10 (December 1988): 4; Bennett, 240; Bragg, *History*, 151, 152; Edwards, 132; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 68, 72; Nicholson, 3; Oldfield, 141, 145; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 232, 234; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 35, 67; Walker, 25, 58.

<sup>24</sup> *Proceedings of the First Convocation of the Colored Clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States*, by John Peterson, chairman (Newark: Starbuck and Dunham, Book and Job Printers, 1883), Cover, 2; Edward W. Rodman, "Walk About Zion: An Overview of the dynamics Affecting Urban Ministry in the Black Episcopal Church," *Anglican Theological Review* 76, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 451; Bennett, 240; Bragg, *History*, 151, 160; Edwards, 132; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 12, 79, 68, 138; Nicholson, 3; Oldfield, 141, 145; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 35; Walker, 25.

<sup>25</sup> *Proceedings of the First Convocation*, 5.

Convocation of the Colored Clergy, convened in the interest of the same great work, and at their desire to co-operate with us in praying the General Convention to make that work prominent at its next meeting in October next.<sup>26</sup>

After a lengthy and well-balanced investigation the above [resolution was] unanimously adopted, and the Committee was discharged . . . After some remarks by Visiting (white) Clergy, it was moved and carried that the Convocation adjourn to meet at 7:30 P.M.<sup>27</sup>

They decided to form a permanent organization that would fight for equality and justice in the Episcopal Church. Its name was taken from a speech given by Alexander Crummell on Wednesday, 12 September 1883 entitled: "Church Work Among Colored People and How to do it."<sup>28</sup>

The Conference then decided to send a delegation to the General Convention for the purpose of defeating the enactment of the "Sewanee Canon."<sup>29</sup> The African-American churchmen were successful in their efforts at the 1883 General Convention. The "Sewanee Canon" was defeated.<sup>30</sup> The General Convention's Committee on Canons provided the basis for the defeat. It reported:

In the opinion of the Committee [on Canons], the difficulties attending the missionary work at the South are so peculiar a character, that any action of the Church at large concerning them would be likely to give rise to injurious complications, so that legislation intended for good might probably tend to evil. . .

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<sup>26</sup> *Proceedings of the First Convocation*, 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> *Proceedings of the First Convocation*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Edwards, 132; *Proceedings of the First Convocation*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Edwards, 132; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 68, 69, 70; Nicholson, 3; Oldfield, 141; Walker, 25.

<sup>30</sup> Bennett, 240; Bragg, *History*, 151-52; Edwards, 132; Hayden, "From Holly to Turner," 4; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 200; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 68-69, 140; *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883), 252; Nicholson, 3; Oldfield, 141; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 232; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 34; Walker, 25-26.

In the judgement of the Committee [on Canons], the Church cannot too carefully avoid the appearance of drawing lines of classification and distinction between the followers of our common Lord; and they fear that the proposed Canon, if adopted, would tend to such a result, and would produce dissensions in those portions of the Church which were chiefly meant to be benefited by it.

While the Committee are constrained, for these reasons, to report adversely to the proposed Canon, and also to the proposal to erect Missionary Bishoprics for the special charge of the coloured people, they are so deeply interested in the subject that they venture to pass beyond the ordinary routine of their duties by submitting the following resolutions for the action of the Convention . . .<sup>31</sup>

Harold Lewis feels that the General Convention was motivated by two factors. First, the Convention considered that the Episcopal Church had no business changing the "natural" social order but that the status quo should be preserved. Second, it feared that the enfranchisement of African-American Episcopalians would have a negative effect on the balance of power in the governance of the church. Lewis asserts, ". . . it would deprive whites of what they perceived as their inalienable right to exercise authority in all things spiritual and temporal."<sup>32</sup>

The Rt. Rev. William A. Guerry, bishop of North Carolina, writing in 1911 sees things differently. He believed that, because of the Civil War, the General Convention decided not to adopt the "Sewanee Canon" and therefore it officially rejected a racially segregated church. He states:

In other words, the Church took the position that as the war between the States did not result in a divided Church neither should it result in a divided Church between the races in the same section. We stood, therefore, for the great ideal of the unity of God's family.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *The Journal of the General Convention* (1883), 251-52.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 71.

<sup>33</sup> William A. Guerry, "The Black Man's Need," *Spirit of Mission* 76, no. 1 (January 1911): 56.

Although the canon proposed by the "Sewanee Conference" was defeated and the General Convention rejected a segregationist policy, the spirit of Sewanee lingered on in the Episcopal Church. The legislative defeat was the beginning of a campaign in Southern dioceses to disenfranchise black parishioners, clergy, and churches. A few years after the 1883 Convention, a number of Southern dioceses incorporated the provisions of the "Sewanee Canon" into diocesan canon law. This paralleled the "Jim Crow Laws" being enacted by many Southern legislatures of the time to keep the rights of citizenship from the liberated slaves.<sup>34</sup> Bragg analyzed the situation as follows:

It so happened that many Southern laymen who were prominent in State affairs were likewise prominent in the affairs of the Kingdom of God. Thus in a few years in a number of Southern dioceses, the proposed Sewanee legislation that failed in the national legislature of the Church, was incorporated into diocesan law.<sup>35</sup>

Several Southern dioceses refused to admit African-American delegates to local Conventions or limited their right to participate in the legislative process. The General Convention of 1889 refused to consider the matter of racial discrimination. It chose not to interfere in local diocesan affairs but rather left the issue to the discretion of the local jurisdictions.

Southern dioceses established separate "Colored Conventions" that were parallel and subordinate to the diocesan convention. These "Conventions" were denied the authority of electing their own bishops, making their own rules, or sending elected representatives to the General Convention.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the decision of the "Sewanee Conference" became the

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<sup>34</sup> Bragg, "Attitude," 7; Edwards, 132; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 68-69, 70; Nicholson, 3-4; Oldfield, 141.

<sup>35</sup> Bragg, *History*, 152.

<sup>36</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 69; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 232-33; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 34.

policy of the Southern Church from 1883 to the 1950s with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement.

*Ongoing Work of Church Workers Conference.* From 1883 until 1940 the Church Workers Conference, like clockwork, had resolutions or "memorials" presented to General Convention for its consideration.<sup>37</sup> The Rev. Dr. Thomas Logan, Sr., former national president of the Church Workers Conference, agreed that this organization was an advocacy group for black Episcopalians within the church. He asserts that it was the main voice for African-American Episcopalians because "there [was] not any other organization, while I was coming along, that was taking the work of the Church Workers Conference."<sup>38</sup> He reflected on the method the Conference used to bring its issues before General Convention:

We had no delegates, deputies to General Convention . . . The Church Workers Conference met a week before the [General Convention] . . . making resolutions that we might pull out some of our deputies, for our Dioceses, to put things into the General Convention because we were not represented.<sup>39</sup>

Although its major efforts focused internally within the Episcopal Church, it also attempted to call attention to the external condition and needs of African-Americans in the larger society. The Conference offered memorials during the 1919 and 1934 General

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<sup>37</sup> Bragg, *History*, 153-54; Edward, 132; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 200; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 6, 140; Walker, 26; M. Moran Weston, "Social Policy of the Episcopal Church in the Twentieth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1954), 231. Hereafter cited as Weston, Dissertation, and then page number; M. Moran Weston, *Social Policy of the Episcopal Church in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1964), 142. Hereafter cited as Weston, Book, and then page number.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr., interviewed by author, video tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., 19 December 1997. Hereafter cited as Logan, "Interview" (19 December). In addition Fr. Logan, Sr. has received four honorary Doctoral Degree., one of which is from The General Theological Seminary, New York City. Therefore he will be referred to as Dr. Logan.

<sup>39</sup> Logan, "Interview" (19 December).

Conventions urging the Episcopal Church to be on the side of social justice for people of color.<sup>40</sup> The 1934 "Memorial" stated:

The Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People in the Episcopal Church (a national body now fifty years old), assembled at this time in Baltimore, Maryland, would call to the attention of this country, and especially to the attention of all Christians, the dire plight of a large proportion of twelve million colored people in our country in this time of world crisis.

Cognizant of the serious conditions facing the entire world the sufferings of all people, the perplexity of governments, and the earnest endeavor of all to better the situation, this Conference would stress the fact the Negroes being a minority and comparatively helpless group suffer more intensely than any other people in this country.

It is well known that this group is the last to secure employment and the first to be dismissed of all workers in this land, and an alarming disproportionate number of Negro workers are unemployed . . .

There appears to be a determined effort on the part of many subordinate officials to discriminate in the government work given Negroes both as to the type of work and wages and as to opportunity for employment in government projects.

We would direct specific attention to the condition of tenant farmers . . . We protest the policy of permitting wage differentials in industry that affect adversely the interest of Negro workers . . .

We believe that it is the responsibility and duty of Christian forces everywhere to apply fearlessly the mind of Christ to these problems and to impress upon the consciousness of this country that the welfare of the whole demands that security and justice shall be accorded every part of the population . . .<sup>41</sup>

The Church Workers Conference was a voice of justice, crying in the wilderness of segregation and racism that existed in the Episcopal Church from its founding in 1883 until its demise in 1967. During a period when black people were being relegated to the margins of society, this unofficial group reminded the Episcopal Church to a remembrance that it must

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<sup>40</sup> *Journal of General Convention* (1919), 228; *Journal of General Convention* (1934), 346-47; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 132, 133; Weston, *Dissertation*, 271; Weston, *Book*, 163.

<sup>41</sup> *Journal of General Convention* (1934), 347. *Book*, 141; *Weston, Dissertation*, 229

be on the side of justice and equality if it was to be true to the faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was the only Episcopal advocacy group for the rights of black people until the founding of the Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity (ESCRU) in 1959.

#### Missionary District vs. Suffragan Bishop

**Introduction.** As indicated earlier, after the Civil War in the South the number of black Episcopalians and parishes grew. This inevitably led to the question of an African-American episcopate. Most blacks and some whites in the church believed that bishops "of color" could do much to evangelize people of their own race. The majority of the white Episcopalians of the late nineteenth century profoundly objected to the idea of a black person having authority over them. Black Episcopalians considered the consecration of African-American bishops as essential to insure equality in the Church. African-American Episcopalians believed their future in the church was not secure if the episcopal office was denied to them.<sup>42</sup>

There were two solutions debated at General Convention and in the Church at large for over six decades. This was the Racial Missionary District Plan and the proposal for the consecration of black Suffragan Bishops.<sup>43</sup>

**Missionary District Plan.** The Church Workers Conference had lobbied against the "Sewanee Canon" that proposed a racial missionary district within a diocese. The Conference also objected to a racial episcopate because it feared that this would ensure the

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<sup>42</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 65, 66.

<sup>43</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 67; Weston, Book, 141; Weston, Dissertation, 229.

second-class status of black people in the Episcopal Church. But, as we shall see, the conference had a change of heart.<sup>44</sup>

The "Sewanee Conference" did not originate the idea of a racial missionary district and episcopate. The Rt. Rev. William R. Whittingham, bishop of Maryland, proposed a canon at the 1874 General Convention establishing special missionary bishops and districts for different races. These districts and bishops would have the same rights and privileges as any other missionary district or bishop. Of course, these "special" districts would have bishops of the particular race with the same rights and authorities as any other bishop of the church. In particular, these racial bishops would have voice and vote at the General Convention.<sup>45</sup> He proposed that canon law be amended to authorize the establishment of a:

Special missionary jurisdiction in dioceses containing large numbers peoples of foreign race or language [and] said jurisdiction to have a special Missionary Bishop [for] the congregations of the particular race or language.<sup>46</sup>

The matter was referred to the next General Convention in 1877. That convention rejected the racial missionary district and episcopate plan. The reason for this rejection was that it was "inexpedient to take any action in regard to providing Bishops exclusively for persons of different races and tongues."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 73.

<sup>45</sup> Bragg, *Attitude*, 7; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 67; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 233; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 67; Weston, *Dissertation*, 228-29; Weston, *Book*, 140.

<sup>46</sup> *The Journal of the General Convention* (1874), 362; Weston, *Dissertation*, 228-29; Weston, *Book*, 140-41.

<sup>47</sup> *The Journal of the General Convention* (1877), 529; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 233-34; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 67.

Carlyton Hayden, the senior African-American historian of the Episcopal Church, reports that in 1890 the Church Workers Conference changed its position regarding the racial missionary district and episcopate. Hayden states:

[In 1890] Paulus S. Moort, a West Indian priest-physician ordained in the United States but serving in Liberia, called for the election of black bishops in four or five dioceses. The Conference of Church Workers switched its position completely and began to agitate for black bishops.<sup>48</sup>

George Freeman Bragg states: "In our humble judgement, the best solution of the difficulty lies in the adoption of the Canon proposed by the Bishop of Maryland in 1874."<sup>49</sup>

The members of the Conference concluded it would not be possible to elect a black bishop who had jurisdiction over white parishioners and clergy in the segregated climate existing at the time.<sup>50</sup> They believed that there were two choices:

1. Remain within the church but accept that they were an appendage to the local dioceses and under white control.
2. Be independent, freed from the control of white dioceses, but in union with the General Convention.<sup>51</sup>

The Conference chose to follow the second course - independence. They dropped their opposition to the plan of a segregated "Negro" diocese and a racial episcopate as a change in strategy. It was a strategic retreat. Their continuing goal was justice and equality for black Episcopalians. They accepted that the Episcopal Church was *de facto* segregated and that this would be the continuing reality of their lives. They reasoned that white Episcopalians tolerated black priests because they only ministered to members of their race. Likewise,

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<sup>48</sup> Hayden, "From Holly to Turner," 4.

<sup>49</sup> Bragg, *Attitude*, 7.

<sup>50</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 67;

<sup>51</sup> Edwards, 134.

"Negro" bishops might be tolerated since their episcopacy would be limited only to African-Americans if their new position was accepted.<sup>52</sup>

What were the components of this new position, this strategic retreat? George Bragg gave the "salient points of the adaptation of the Historic Episcopate to the needs of the Afro-American people."<sup>53</sup>

The adoption of a canon [was] not *mandatory*, but *permissive* embracing the following features:

- (a) That it shall be lawful for the General Convention, upon the request of two or more Diocesan Bishops contiguously situated to constitute into a missionary jurisdiction their territory, as pertaining to the colored race.
- (b) The Diocesan Bishops within the bounds of each missionary jurisdiction thus constituted to compose an Advisory Council for work among colored people in such territory.
- (c) Such jurisdictions to be absolutely independent of diocesan conventions, and represented in General Convention as that body may prescribe.
- (d) Any jurisdiction constituted under this canon to be altered, re-arranged, or terminated at the will of the General Convention.<sup>54</sup>

If this proposed canon was accepted then Southern dioceses and bishops would cede control over all black congregations within their jurisdiction to the General Convention.

These parishes would then form an autonomous missionary district that would elect its own African-American bishop. "Colored" lay people, clergy, and bishops would therefore have full representation at General Convention with the same rights and privileges as other

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<sup>52</sup> J. Carleton Hayden, "For Zion's sake I Will Not Hold My Peace: George Freeman Bragg, Jr., Priest, Pastor, and Prophet," *Linkage* 6, (October 1986): 11; Brown, XV; Hayden, "From Holly to Turner," 4; Bennett, 240; Edwards, 134; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 72; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 67.

<sup>53</sup> Bragg, *History*, 313.

<sup>54</sup> Bragg, *History*, 313; Edwards, 135.

missionary districts and missionary bishops. The goals of justice and equality for African-American Episcopalians would therefore be realized. Black Episcopalians would have a voice and a vote at all legislative levels of the church.<sup>55</sup>

The Church Workers Conference had "Memorials" submitted to General Conventions between 1904 to 1940 advocating the establishment of a racial Missionary District with the above features.<sup>56</sup> The 1907 Convention rejected this proposal because it meant separation along racial lines. Succeeding General Conventions continued in this vein<sup>57</sup> until the issue was finally put to rest at the 1940 General Convention. This Convention gave the final rejection of the proposed racial Missionary District. The proposal never was again brought before the General Convention.<sup>58</sup>

**Suffragan Bishop.** The General Convention wrestled a second proposal to address the needs of black people in the church: the consecration of African-American Suffragan Bishops. Under such a proposal the question of jurisdiction and power would be resolved since this category of bishop would supervise only clergy and people of the same race. The office of Suffragan Bishop was used sparingly in the history of the Episcopal Church. This type of bishop was an assistant to the diocesan but without the right of succession. He would sit in the House of Bishops but without the right to vote.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Bragg, *Attitude*, 8; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 72-73, 197; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234; *The Church Advocate* 22, no. 12 (April 1913): 2; Walker, 27.

<sup>56</sup> Bragg, *Attitude*, 18; Brown, XV; Hayden, "For Zion's sake," 11; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234, 235, 237; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 67, 70, 71, 124, 125; Walker, 26-27, 28-29, 30-31; Weston, Book, 144-45, 146; Weston, Dissertation, 238, 241, 242.

<sup>57</sup> Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234.

<sup>58</sup> Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 71, 125.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 66; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234.

During the 1874 General Convention the Diocese of Texas requested the Convention approve suffragan bishops to supervise freed slaves. The Missionary District Plan was also introduced at this Convention.<sup>60</sup> The proposal was referred to the next Convention.<sup>61</sup> The 1877 Convention decided against racial suffragans because it was "inexpedient to take any actions regarding providing Bishops exclusively for persons of different races and tongues."<sup>62</sup>

The proposal for racial suffragans was again presented at the 1883 Convention which took no action.<sup>63</sup> The Church Workers Conference sponsored a "Memorial" to the 1898 General Convention advocating the authorization of the election of Afro-American Suffragan Bishops. The House of Bishops dismissed the proposed legislation, but the House of Deputies voted to refer the matter to the next Convention. The 1901 General Convention took no action on the issue.<sup>64</sup>

The General Convention of 1904 received another "Memorial" from the Church Workers Conference, requesting "Colored" Suffragan Bishops. The matter received considerable attention since it was supported by a group of Southern dioceses. As a result, two commissions were established, The Joint Commission on the Memorials of the Conference of Church Workers and The Joint Commission on Suffragan Bishops. They were tasked with reporting to the 1907 General Convention.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See page 14 above.

<sup>61</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 66; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 233; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 66-67; *The Journal of General Convention* (1874), 255; Weston, Book, 140; Weston, Dissertation, 228.

<sup>62</sup> Lewis, *Yet with a Steady Beat*, 67.

<sup>63</sup> Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 67.

<sup>64</sup> Weston, Book, 142; Weston, Dissertation, 231-32.

<sup>65</sup> Bennett, 240; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 74; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 234;

The 1907 Convention, in Richmond, Virginia, decided to establish the office of suffragan bishop in the Episcopal Church. The decision became canon law at the 1910 Convention. The 1913 and 1916 General Conventions did debate the issue further, but the decision stood.<sup>66</sup> The end of the debate about black bishops in the Episcopal Church occurred with the consecrations of the Right Reverends Edward Thomas Demby, bishop suffragan of Arkansas, and Henry Beard Delany, bishop suffragan of North Carolina, in the year of our Lord, 1917.<sup>67</sup> The General Convention did not canonically specify these bishops were to be African-Americans. Establishing the office of suffragan bishop permitted the election and consecration of black priests to the episcopate. It was informally understood that "Negro" bishops would only supervise and have authority over black congregations and clergy.<sup>68</sup>

Though the 1907 General Convention voted to allow Afro-Americans to be bishops, it was not motivated by the principal of justice and equality. It decided to allow a restricted episcopate in order to keep black Episcopalians under white supervision and direction. The debate at various Conventions was not over segregation versus integration. Rather, it was a debate over what form of segregation would exist in the Episcopal Church.<sup>69</sup> Harold Lewis

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Weston, Book, 142-43; Weston, Dissertation, 232-33.

<sup>66</sup> Bragg, *History*, 154; Edwards, 135, 136; Hayden, "For Zion's Sake," 11; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 74, 76, 77; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 236-37; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 68, 69; *The Journal of the General Convention* (1907), 157, 160; Walker, 33; Weston, Book, 144, 145; Weston, Dissertation, 236, 237, 238.

<sup>67</sup> Bennett, 241; Hayden, "From Holly to Turner," 5; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 78-79; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 237; "Report of the Registrar," *The Journal of the General Convention* (1919), 535-37;

<sup>68</sup> Bennett, 240-41; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 76; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 69.

<sup>69</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 76, 77; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 236; Reimer, *White*

characterizes the decision of the 1907 Convention as a "classical Anglican compromise." He asserts that the Convention prevented the division of the church along racial lines while on the other hand deprived black bishops of the right to exercise any real authority in the general church. They could not vote at General Convention nor could they become a diocesan bishop.<sup>70</sup>

*Some Reactions of Church Workers.* Although the Church Workers Conference submitted "Memorials" supporting the establishment of a racial suffragan bishop, this support was not universal in the black Episcopal community. Bragg labeled the office of suffragan bishop as "suffering bishop."<sup>71</sup> He called these bishops "Uncle Tom" when he wrote:

But the "Uncle Tom" kind in the Episcopate can only reflect what is in them. The recipients of such feeding have long since passed to the Cemetery.<sup>72</sup>

A parishioner of Saint Mark's, Charleston, insisted that suffragan bishops would become "puppet bishops" supporting traditional black servitude.<sup>73</sup>

It would appear that the Church Workers Conference "was covering its bets." The Conference supported the Suffragan Bishop Plan when it became obvious that the General Convention "intended to use the suffragan rather than the missionary episcopate" to provide for the supervision of the ministry among African-American members.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand,

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Protestantism, 69.

<sup>70</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 77.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 76-77; *The Church Advocate*, 16 (May 1907), 2; Walker, 37.

<sup>72</sup> George F. Bragg, Jr., "A Negro in the Episcopate," *The Church Advocate* 37, no. 6 (April 1930): 1.

<sup>73</sup> *The Church Advocate* (January 1918): 1; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 77.

<sup>74</sup> Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 237.

the Conference consistently supported the racial "Missionary District Plan" over the years.<sup>75</sup> George Bragg wrote in 1922:

For many years the realization of the Missionary Episcopate for our group has been the one thing dominating the united endeavor of our conference.<sup>76</sup>

There were several reasons why black Episcopalians had problems with the decision to establish the suffragan episcopate. First, it would not end the disenfranchisement of black churchmen but would prolong their second-class status. Having a suffragan bishop would not insure the right of black people to vote at the diocesan conventions. Second, these bishops lacked the right to vote in the House of Bishops and therefore were powerless. Third, these bishops would be chosen by whites and therefore would not be free to represent the aspirations of African-American Episcopalians. Fourth, the election of suffragan bishops had all the hallmarks of paternalism rather than equality or justice.<sup>77</sup>

Summary - The Church Workers Conference was an unofficial caucus within the Episcopal Church that championed the cause of justice and equality for African-American Episcopalians. It was a voice crying in the wilderness of disenfranchisement and powerlessness. It continually pressed the church to affirm the theological position that through baptism all are initiated into the body of Christ on equal terms. There is one faith, one hope, and one baptism.

The objectives of this unofficial Episcopal advocacy group were: to develop an African-American church leadership, to gain a voice and vote in the governance of the

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<sup>75</sup> Hayden, "For Zion's Sake," 11; Reimer "Negro Bishops," 234-35; Walker, 28-29.

<sup>76</sup> George F. Bragg, Jr., *The First Negro Priest on Southern Soil* (Baltimore: The Church Advocate Print, 1909), 1.

<sup>77</sup> Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 77; Reimer, "Negro Bishops," 235; Reimer, *White Protestantism*, 68.

church, and to ensure that black Episcopalians obtained an equal status with all other members of the church. It attempted to achieve these goals even though it could not envision a non-segregated Episcopal Church. Its advocacy of the Missionary District Plan was based on the acceptance of the racist reality of the Episcopal Church of its day. The Conference believed that the way to guarantee the rights of Afro-American Episcopalians was to have racial missionary bishops possessing the same status, rights, and privileges of any other missionary bishop.

Although the majority of its efforts were directed internally within the church, it also pressed for members of the denomination to recognize the plight of African-Americans in the larger society. The Conference urged the Episcopal Church to be on the side of social justice and equality of treatment that was due to any American.

#### THE EPISCOPAL SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL AND RACIAL UNITY

Formative Environment - Harold Lewis asserts that the Episcopal Church is "a non-prophetic organization" that followed the social customs and mores of the country rather than set a moral example.<sup>78</sup> The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's made new demands on the church and jolted Episcopalians out of their complacency. The church was content to give its tacit approval to segregation as long as there was nothing to disturb black/white relationships. The Episcopal Church changed its approach to the issue of equality when it became clear that acquiescence to a segregated society could no longer be tolerated. It gradually adopted integrationist policies after the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Lewis, "No Alien Race," 208; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 147.

<sup>79</sup> John B. Morris, "ESCRU: The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity 1959-1967," (speech given at the Archives of the Episcopal Church, Austin, TX, 9 June 1995), 5; Richard D. Tholin, "Prophetic Action and Denominational Unity: The Function of Unofficial Social Action Groups in the Methodist Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church" (Ph.D.

Many white Episcopalians were motivated to "do something," to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord of all. These people of faith came to realize that members of their church had participated in the oppression and subjugation of black people. Events in the larger society, such as mob violence depicted in the media, forced them to recognize that racism existed in the midst of the Body of Christ. These Episcopalians began to affirm what the Church Workers Conference had been saying for decades. These white churchmen realized that there was a vast disparity between the catholic claims of the church and the unjust treatment of its black members. These white members reacted indignantly when they observed the hesitant steps of their church. It seemed unable to rid itself of racial discrimination with the same "deliberate speed" that was mandated by the Supreme Court of secular institutions. Into such an environment the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) was born.<sup>80</sup>

*The Beginning of ESCRU.* Prior to the 1958 General Convention, a group of Episcopalians met at Eaton Center in North Conway, New Hampshire. The meeting was organized by a staff officer from the national office of the Episcopal Church. This was the Rev. Cornelius C. Tarplee, associate secretary, Division of Christian Citizenship, Department of Christian Social Relations. Funding was provided by the North Conway Foundation through the efforts of David Works.<sup>81</sup>

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diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1967), 44; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 209, 210; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 147-48.

<sup>80</sup> Robert E. Hood, *Social Teachings in the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 1990), 117; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 210-11; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 149.

<sup>81</sup> Hood, 117; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 18; Morris, "ESCRU," 8.

The purpose of the conference was to empower the church to actively respond to the calls for justice and equality occasioned by the rise the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>82</sup> The discussion centered around how the Episcopal Church "could support the court decisions on school desegregation . . ." <sup>83</sup> and "how to more effectively make a difference in the thinking of Church leaders."<sup>84</sup>

In the summer of 1958, Fr. Tarplee had left Saint Paul's Church, Lynchburg, Virginia, as rector because of his positive stand on race relations. In his capacity as a national staff officer, he was a roving pastor of pastors, a pastoral call "for white southern clergy who stuck our necks out."<sup>85</sup> The Rev. John Morris, former executive director of ESCRU describes Tarplee's motivation for the meeting. Morris states:

He [Tarplee] thought that some of us needed to be given the opportunity to get away from the tensions that were growing in the south and in our parishes.<sup>86</sup>

During the New Hampshire meeting, the Rev. Dr. Robert Kevin made a pivotal suggestion.<sup>87</sup> Fr. Morris relates:

We had some visitors [in New Hampshire] who were summer people up there like the Rev. Dr. Robert Kevin, who was the Old Testament Professor at Virginia [Seminary].

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<sup>82</sup> John L. Kater, Jr., "The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and Its Role in the Episcopal Church, 1959-1970" (Ph.D. diss., Mc Gill University, 1973), 24, 27; David E. Sumner, "The Episcopal Church's Involvement in Civil Rights: 1943-1973" (S.T.M. thesis, University of the South, 1983), 18; Morris, "ESCRU," 8; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 213; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 151; John B. Morris, interviewed by author, video tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., 10 December 1997. Hereafter cited as Morris, "Interview."

<sup>83</sup> Morris, "Interview."

<sup>84</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 8.

<sup>85</sup> Morris, "Interview."

<sup>86</sup> Morris, "Interview."

<sup>87</sup> Morris, "Interview;" Morris, "ESCRU," 8.

... Bob Kevin had been the head [and was] very active in the Episcopal Evangelical fellowship, the low church advocacy group . . . He said what you should do is form an independent organization . . . that would be free to press the church and provide leadership. Whereas the official structures move too slowly and it was that idea I took and put into this proposal.<sup>88</sup>

This suggestion formed the founding principal of ESCRU. It was to be an "unofficial" organization within the Episcopal Church that would be able to press and confront the church in its approach to integration without waiting for official approval.<sup>89</sup> ESCRU eventually became the radical or liberal wing of the Episcopal Church. During the years of its existence this advocacy group was to play an active and sometimes confrontive role. It would be in the forefront so that the church could take a stronger stand on racial justice.<sup>90</sup>

Toward the end of 1958 John Morris put Kevin's suggestion of an "unofficial" organization into writing, *A Proposal: Formation in the Episcopal Church of a Church Society for Racial Unity*. Fr. "Neil" Tarplee agreed to have his name on the document. This gave the appearance of a semi-official endorsement of the document since he was a national staff officer of the Episcopal Church. Morris sent the Proposal to church leaders around the nation and circulated it at the 1958 Miami General Convention.<sup>91</sup> The Proposal set out the objectives and goals of this "Society:"<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Morris, "Interview."

<sup>89</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 8; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 212-13; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 150.

<sup>90</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 10, 12; Morris, "Interview;" Sumner, 19.

<sup>91</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 25, 26; Morris, "ESCRU," 8; Sumner, 19;

<sup>92</sup> John B. Morris and Cornelius C. Tarplee, *A Proposal Formation in the Episcopal Church of a Church Society for Racial Unity* (Atlanta: Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity, 1959); Lewis, "No Alien Race," 213; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 150; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 25-26; Morris, "ESCRU," 9; Sumner, 19.

It is proposed that a society of laity and clergy be formed in the Episcopal Church to promote increased acceptance and demonstration of the Church's policies of racial inclusiveness in its own life, as well as its role of providing leadership in the community and nation in establishing full opportunities for all persons, without racial discrimination, in fields such as education, housing, employment and public accommodation . . . <sup>93</sup>

This association would work cooperatively with the national and diocesan departments of Christian social relations, but would be free to affirm policy and develop program in a way that official agencies are not always able . . . <sup>94</sup>

Seeking at all levels to encourage the Church to accept and implement its own inclusive policies on race, a society could provide these and other services and generally exert its influence in the encouragement of non-discriminatory practices. From providing leadership personnel to sponsoring displays at conventions, but especially in reinforcing the commitment of its members, a society could become a significant force in helping the Church to truly be itself. <sup>95</sup>

. . . Other beneficial results can be the development of greater commitment to the Church's stand on race where it has been previously nominal or inhibited through lack of supportive influence, and the collecting together of this concern for a more significant voice at national, diocesan and parish levels and a more creative witness in the community at large. <sup>96</sup>

There was such a favorable response to the idea of establishing an Episcopal organization that would support the goals of the Civil Rights Movement that an organizational meeting was scheduled for December 1959. The founding meeting of ESCRU was held at Saint Augustine's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, 28-30 December 1959. One hundred clergy and lay people from across the nation gathered at this meeting. Three bishops were present: Marmion of Kentucky, Stokes of Massachusetts, and Stuart of Georgia. <sup>97</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Morris and Tarplee, *A Proposal*, 1.

<sup>94</sup> Morris and Tarplee, *A Proposal*, 1.

<sup>95</sup> Morris and Tarplee, *A Proposal*, 2.

<sup>96</sup> Morris and Tarplee, *A Proposal*, 1.

<sup>97</sup> Bill Andrews, "Society for Unity," *The Living Church* 140, no. 2 (10 January 1960): 6; John L. Kater, Jr., "Experiment in Freedom: The Episcopal Church and the Black Power

Walter Dennis, then on the staff of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and later bishop suffragan, Diocese of New York, suggested that the proposed "organization should be concerned with cultural as well as racial unity, and should adopt a 'basic policy . . . that race as race really doesn't matter.'" From this suggestion the name of the organization was born: The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity.<sup>98</sup>

This founding conference also established the central theme of ESCRU, that of "unity." Fr. Morris had a banner painted before the conference that read: "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."<sup>99</sup> Arthur Walmsley, of the national staff, asserted that ESCRU would work prophetically for "a non-segregated society and church." He stated:

As a fellowship of prayer and study this movement [ESCRU] of laymen and clergy will bolster support for the growing minority in the church [that] . . . are working for a non-segregated society and church. As a non-official organization for social action, the movement will stand as a prophetic judgement on the church's own life.<sup>100</sup>

The Raleigh Conference authorized the formation of a non-profit organization. At the first meeting of the ESCRU Board of Directors, 24-25 February 1960, John Morris was chosen as the first executive director of this new organization. It was later decided to locate

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Movement," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 48, no. 1 (March 1979): 73; "Society for Cultural and Racial Unity," *The Witness* 46, no. 44 (14 January 1960): 4; John W. B. Thompson, Jr., ". . . That They May All Be One," *The Church Militant*, Diocese of Massachusetts, (April 1961): 7-8; Edwards, 140; Hood, 117; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 26; LaBar and Wright, 25; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 213; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 150; Morris, "ESCRU," 8; Tholin, 44, 397.

<sup>98</sup> Andrews, 6; Kater, 26, 28; *The Witness* 46, 4.

<sup>99</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 8-9. This is the first half of Psalm 133.

<sup>100</sup> *Episcopal Press Service* (1 February 1960).

ESCRU's national office in Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>101</sup> The goals of this "prophetic" organization seems to have touched a chord with some Episcopalians. By August of 1960 ESCRU had a membership of over 1,000 and at the height of its activities had 5,000 members in 28 local chapters. Several bishops, prominent Episcopalians and delegates to the House of Deputies at General Conventions, were also enrolled as members. The Very Rev. Paul Moore, later bishop of New York, Dr. Thomas Pettigrew, and the Rev. Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., were all members of the original Board of Directors.<sup>102</sup>

This representation at General Convention was an important difference between ESCRU and the Church Workers Conference. ESCRU had direct access to all levels of power in the Episcopal Church. It had a voice and vote for its positions at General Convention through its members that Church Workers Conference could never match. It was pointed out earlier that Church Workers Conference had to rely on white delegates to present its "memorials" and wishes to General Convention. The Conference had neither voice nor vote.

**Purpose.** The Certificate of Incorporation states the purpose of ESCRU.

The particular purpose of the corporation shall be:

- [1] To promote the acceptance among all members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the principle of Unity within the Church, regardless of race, class or national origin;
- [2] To seek to instill in all of its members a fuller understanding of the principle that the Protestant Episcopal Church is an inclusive fellowship which seeks out and welcomes all persons into worship and parish life of the Congregation without distinction as to race, color, national origin or class;

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<sup>101</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 29; Morris, 9.

<sup>102</sup> Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity, *Statement of Purpose* (Atlanta: Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity, 1960); Hood, 117; Morris, "ESCRU," 9.

- [3] To work towards the elimination of all criteria based on race, color, national origin or class and toward the establishment of total participation in the Church for all persons;
- [4] To give mutual support to all who act in this ministry of reconciliation;
- [5] To work toward elimination of criteria based on race, color, national origin or class for applicants to Episcopal Church camps, conferences, schools, colleges, hospitals, or other institutions or agencies which the Protestant Episcopal Church may operate or sponsor in any way;
- [6] To foster through [prayer], discussion, research, publication and mediation that harmony among Christian peoples which is the benefit of a mutual recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.<sup>103</sup>

This Statement of Purpose emphasizes matters affecting the interior life of the Episcopal Church. There is no direct statement linking the purpose of ESCRU with the goals of the Civil Rights Movement in the secular society.

Its first published "Statement of Purpose"<sup>104</sup> in ESCRU's 1960 flyer contains both an internal and external emphasis. It read:

The purpose of this Society shall be to encourage men to respond positively to God's call for unity in the Church. The unity of God with man, and man with man, is made by God in Baptism and Holy Communion. We commit ourselves to establish total participation in the Church for all persons without regard to race, class, or national origins; to give mutual support to all who act in this ministry of reconciliation; and to

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<sup>103</sup> *Certificate of Incorporation of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity*, 20 April 1960, achieves, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta, 1-2. The numbers, the separation of each clause and capitalization of the first letter of the clause are mine.

<sup>104</sup> The one quoted below comes from a 1960 flyer. The "Statement of Purpose" in Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity, *The Total Eradication of Racism* (Atlanta: Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity, 1969) changed. It reads: "The Purpose of this Society shall be to encourage men to respond positively to God's call for unity in joyful anticipation of a community where blacks and whites, haves and have-nots, may enjoy full equality and justice. We commit ourselves to work for the total eradication of racism in the Church, the nation and the world so that true reconciliation and unity, which are the outgrowth of equality and justice, may be realized in human life."

express this concern at parish levels and in a more creative witness throughout the community at large.<sup>105</sup>

A sharp division over the nature of ESCRU's purpose and methods appeared from its very beginning.<sup>106</sup> Some were of the opinion that the group should become "an uncompromising action arm" dealing militantly with issues in the larger society, while others wanted it to act conservatively as a "strategic group" within the Episcopal Church only addressing issues directly concerning the church.<sup>107</sup> Two participants at the formative Raleigh Conference summarized these competing ideas. The Rev. Dr. Das Kelly Barnett, associate professor at the Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, and newly elected ESCRU board member, represented the "conservative" faction. He stated:

In my judgement, it became apparent that the group chose to become a protest sect instead of a strategic organization for implementing throughout the Church the official pronouncements and policies of Church councils. I define my Christian obedience in terms of the later, and therefore I resigned my position, though I recognize the need for a radical protest as one from of Christian obedience.<sup>108</sup>

Dr. Barnett later reconsidered his resignation from the board.

The Rev. John Morris, who was instrumental in bringing ESCRU into existence, represented the "militant" faction. Fr. Morris stated:

I am sorry that Dr. Barnett had resigned because I don't see the two emphases as exclusive of each other. However, if he forces me to choose, I choose to stand by the unequivocal statement of purpose.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> ESCRU, *Statement of Purpose* (1960); Edwards, 140.

<sup>106</sup> Andrews, 6; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 27, 93; Lewis, "No Alien Race," 213; Lewis, "Yet With a Steady Beat," 150-51; Morris, "ESCRU," 10; Tholin, 45.

<sup>107</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 93; Morris, "ESCRU," 10; Tholin, 45.

<sup>108</sup> Andrews, 6.

<sup>109</sup> Andrews, 6.

John Kater, in his dissertation, asserts the participants at the founding meeting of ESCRU decided to permit both approaches. It adopted a "Statement of Purpose" that opposed every form of segregation both within and without the Episcopal Church.<sup>110</sup> This was clearly articulated in the *Proposal* that Morris and Tarplee circulated. This document contained both approaches advancing the idea that ESCRU:

... promote increased acceptance and demonstration of the Church's policies of racial inclusiveness in its own life, as well as its role of providing leadership in the community and nation . . .<sup>111</sup>

This seems to be the "Statement of Purpose" to which Morris and Kater were referring. It has been pointed out earlier that the Certificate of Incorporation does not contain an "unequivocal statement of purpose" supporting militant action outside of internal church concerns.<sup>112</sup>

Despite this observation ESCRU quickly took its stand on a "militant" course of action. The first step in this direction occurred at the first ESCRU Board of Directors meeting, at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City, 24-25 February 1960.

The following statement was released to the press:

We suggest that all members of the Church question if they can appropriately participate in a Church which refuses to serve all regardless of race. We commend those citizens who express love in suffering by passive disobedience to laws or mores that separate on account of race or religion in state or commercial enterprises. We suggest that all members of this Society consider the participation in like visible objections to practices of the Church in separating on account of race in any activity or institution supported, sponsored, controlled or operated by the Church.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 27, 39.

<sup>111</sup> Morris and Tarplee, *A Proposal*, 1.

<sup>112</sup> See page 30 above.

<sup>113</sup> Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity, "Board Commends 'Visible

This statement is not proposing that ESCRU sponsor direct action, but it is a ringing endorsement of such action by its members. The next step was realized in response to the "sit-ins."

On 1 February 1960, students in Greensboro, North Carolina, "sat-in" at a lunch counter to protest the "white only" policy that existed in the South. This effort to protest segregation soon spread "throughout the South, led by black college students."<sup>114</sup> These "sit-ins" caught most of the traditional leadership of the black community by surprise. Many Afro-Americans questioned this kind of direct action that actively challenged the status quo and also broke the law. They believed that this tactic might set back the Civil Rights Movement. Many believed that the judicial process was the best method to achieve the goal of ending segregation. Breaking the law and social customs was viewed as counterproductive.<sup>115</sup>

Harold Fleming, executive director of the Southern Regional Council, a secular organization of white and black Southern liberals, suggested that ESCRU give an official statement endorsing the "sit-downs," as they were then called.<sup>116</sup> Fr. Morris reports:

Harold said to me the day after the Greensboro [sit-in] . . . "What are you going to do to support the sit-downs? Maybe you Episcopalians should have some kneel-downs." So he and I talked and I decided that I would issue a statement supporting the sit-ins . . . calling for "kneel-ins" within the church where segregated facilities prevailed. I did this [and] it got very good press chiefly because I had very good contact with the Atlanta press corps . . . and with George Dugan who was religion

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Objections," *Newsletter* (Feast of the Annunciation, 25 March 1960): 1; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 32.

<sup>114</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 10; Morris, "Interview;" Tholin, 45.

<sup>115</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 31-32.

<sup>116</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 10; Morris, "Interview."

editor with the New York Times in New York. He covered ESCRU [on] a number of occasions. He in fact had been at the Raleigh founding conference.<sup>117</sup>

The 6 March 1960 *New York Times* had headlines reading: "Episcopal Group Backs Sitdowns. Hails Negro Store Protests and Urges Similar Fight on Church Racial Bans."<sup>118</sup>

In this second step on the road to "militant" direct action, ESCRU again issued a supportive statement rather than sponsoring such direct action itself. The final step was realized in response to the "Freedom Rides."

The Prayer Pilgrimage - In its first year and a half of existence, ESCRU primarily worked internally within the Episcopal Church.<sup>119</sup> As indicated above, it did support efforts in the larger Civil Rights Movement but with published statements and not with active participation. All this changed in September 1961 with the first "direct action" of ESCRU, the Prayer Pilgrimage. This event "fixed the militant image of the ESCRU firmly in the minds of members of ESCRU, the Episcopal Church, and the nation."<sup>120</sup>

Fr. John Morris suggests that this first active participation in the Civil Rights Movement by ESCRU was prompted by a telephone conversation.

... in the late spring, [in] May of 1961, the "freedom rides" happened. A bus was burned in Amerston, Alabama. I was in Richmond . . . when I received a phone call there from a priest, [who was a] member of ESCRU in California, saying we ought to have an Episcopal Freedom Ride to support these Freedom Rides that had [gotten] started. I took that idea and talked to various ones in ESCRU . . . And we decided

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<sup>117</sup> Morris, "Interview."

<sup>118</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 10; Morris, "Interview." *Society*, 39, *Memo*, 12/30, 14; Tholin,

<sup>119</sup> Tholin, 241.

<sup>120</sup> Tholin, 46.

that we would not rush off right then to have an Episcopal Freedom Ride but we would plan what we then called a "Prayer Pilgrimage" . . .<sup>121</sup>

This became the most publicized civil rights events of any organization connected with the Episcopal Church and changed the "persona" of Episcopal clergy.<sup>122</sup> Fr. Morris continues his recollection of the early planning of the Prayer Pilgrimage:

. . . we created a name [Prayer Pilgrimage] out of whole cloth, that would [not only] show support for the Freedom Rides but would also focus on church segregation. So we planned an itinerary from New Orleans to Detroit General Convention that would stop at the Episcopal Church Day School in Metery, Louisiana, outside New Orleans; All Saints Junior College in Vicksburg, Mississippi where John Allin was then the Headmaster . . . We would go to Jackson, Mississippi and there we would seek to have an integrated group to use the bus terminal coffee shop; and we would go to Sewanee; and we would go to Dearborn, Michigan which was noted for its housing segregation up north . . . [and finally end at the Detroit General Convention.]<sup>123</sup>

When the plans and the itinerary of the Prayer Pilgrimage were announced, twenty-eight black and white Episcopal priests responded.<sup>124</sup>

The Prayer Pilgrimage had two purposes. First, it attempted to bring attention to the fact that racial barriers existed within the official policies of institutions connected with the Episcopal Church. In addition, it called for the abolition of those discriminatory practices asserting that racial based discrimination had no place in any part of the church.<sup>125</sup> This

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<sup>121</sup> Morris, "Interview." This event is also recounted in Morris *ESCRU*, 13.

<sup>122</sup> Sumner, 23; Morris, *ESCRU*, 14.

<sup>123</sup> Morris, "Interview."

<sup>124</sup> Edwards, 142; LaBar, 25; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 39; Morris, *ESCRU*, 14; Tholin, 46.

<sup>125</sup> Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity, "The Prayer Pilgrimage," *Newsletter* (General Convention, 17-29 September 1961): 2-3.

purpose was expressed clearly by the Rev. Merrill Young, a participant of the Prayer

Pilgrimage,<sup>126</sup> when he said:

We wanted to say to the white laity, to the almost despairing Negro laity, to terrorized liberals, to the segregationist state, that the church of God is not the segregated human society it so generally appears to be but rather the presence among us sinful, frightened and separated men of Christ the Lord in glory, in whom all walls of partition are broken down . . . We wanted instead to do on their behalf [Southern Churchmen] what in their parochial and pastoral circumstances they cannot do themselves: to restore the integrity of the church as the church by witnessing to this true character, so dangerously obscured in white-only parishes and segregated church institutions . . .

We were the church in microcosm. We intended simply to be a group which in its unity and in its priestliness, if not in the worthiness of its members, would be representative of the church's true nature.<sup>127</sup>

The second purpose was to support those who were advocating the abolition of racial discriminatory practices in inter-state travel. The Prayer Pilgrims intended to "defy segregated seating and terminal restrictions."<sup>128</sup>

There was danger for these Pilgrims. Fr. Morris warned those intending to participate that "no one should apply for the trip unless they are prepared to undergo a period in jail . . . through efforts to utilize terminal facilities . . ."<sup>129</sup> As it turned out, these were not misplaced concerns because on 13 September 1961 fifteen of the Prayer Pilgrims were arrested and incarcerated in Jacksonville, Mississippi. They were charged with "breach of peace," for attempting to use segregated facilities in the Trailways Bus Terminal. It is

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<sup>126</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 14, note 9 lists the name of the twenty eight Episcopal priests who participated in the Prayer Pilgrimage. Merrill Young was one of those listed.

<sup>127</sup> Merrill Orne Young, "For the Church's Sake," *The Christian Century* 78, no. 44 (1 November 1961): 1301.

<sup>128</sup> ESCRU 17-29 September 1961 Newsletter, 2; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 39; 40; Sumner, 24.

<sup>129</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 40; Sumner, 24.

interesting to note that the judge who eventually presided over the case was an Episcopalian.<sup>130</sup> Fr. Morris remembers:

We announced this itinerary and people joined, . . . [twenty-eight] clergy met in New Orleans at the Dryerd Street YMCA and [on 12 September 1961] went off on this Freedom Ride/Prayer Pilgrimage with our statement of purpose [that was] concern to support the movement and to focus on church segregation in these various stops that we would make . . . Fifteen of us went to jail as a result of not being allowed service in the coffee shop at the . . . bus terminal in Jackson. We did not have the whole group seek to do that because we wanted some to complete the journey to General Convention with the various stops focusing on church related segregation . . .<sup>131</sup>

Fr. Morris was one of those jailed. He recounts an instance where the white clergy might have been in serious danger of bodily harm. He reports:

One night [while we were in jail] I went over to the gate of our big cell where all twelve of us white clergy were [the three black clergy were held in another cell on another floor] and found that it was opened, the sliding door was unlocked. I told everybody this and we all said: "Oh my goodness . . ." But there had been bad things happening and we were not about to go walking out of there. So we slammed the door shut and making it lock. We never knew whether it had been intentionally left unlocked.<sup>132</sup>

These Prayer Pilgrims faced the possibility of putting their physical safety and even their lives on the line for their beliefs in the equality of all people. But the latter this did not prove to be necessary. Thirteen of the jailed fifteen were released on bail on 18 September 1961 after they entered a plea of *nole contendere* and flew on to the Detroit General Convention. Two members of the group remained in jail to fight what they believed were immoral laws.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ellen Naylor Bouton and Thomas F. Pettigrew, "When a Priest Made a Pilgrimage," *The Christian Century* 80, no. 12 (20 March 1963): 363; Hood, 120; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 43; Morris, "ESCRU," 13; Sumner, 24-25; Tholin, 46-47; Young, 1301.

<sup>131</sup> Morris Interview. These events are also reported by: Bouton and Pettigrew, 363; Hood, 120; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 42; Morris, "ESCRU," 13; Sumner, 24, 25; Tholin, 46-47; Young, 1300-01.

<sup>132</sup> Morris Interview.

<sup>133</sup> Sumner, 24-25; Tholin, 46-47;

The Prayer Pilgrims who were not arrested divided into two groups. One group went to the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, where seven of the Pilgrims were refused service at the Claremont Restaurant, which was owned by the University. A hunger strike was promptly proposed by the Prayer Pilgrims<sup>134</sup> but after prolonged discussions a compromise was reached that avoided this protest. The University of the South agreed that "the work already under way at Sewanee is in accord with the principles of Christian justice, and that to [hunger] strike might hinder it."<sup>135</sup> As a result of the Prayer Pilgrimage, the Board of Regents of the University of the South voted to integrate the facilities of the Sewanee Inn and the Claremont Restaurant at its 10 October 1961 meeting.<sup>136</sup>

The second group of unarrested Prayer Pilgrims continued on to Dearborn, Michigan, to pray for an end to segregated housing in that city. The Sewanee group arrived in Dearborn and the entire un-arrested group then continued on to the General Convention held in Detroit, Michigan. This was the last stop of the Prayer Pilgrimage.<sup>137</sup> Fr. Morris recounts the reception of the Pilgrims:

Being arrested there [in Jacksonville, Mississippi] had created great headlines because, among other things, Bob Pearson was the son-in-law of Nelson Rockefeller then Governor of New York State. So that "Rockefeller Heir in Jail With Fifteen Other Episcopal Clergy," was big headlines all over the country. When we were bailed out a week later and flew to Detroit we were received with great tumult in support and we kind of stole the headlines from what ever else was happening at General Convention at that time. So that then clearly was a further creation of the militancy of ESCRU.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Hood, 120; Sumner, 26-27; Tholin, 46.

<sup>135</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 42-43.

<sup>136</sup> Sumner, 27.

<sup>137</sup> Bouton and Pettigrew, 363; Hood, 120; Kater, "Episcopal Society," 40; Sumner, 27; Tholin, 47; Young, 1300-01.

<sup>138</sup> Morris "Interview."

*Reactions to the Pilgrimage.* When the Prayer Pilgrimage ended, ESCRU sponsored a dinner for those attending General Convention on 20 September 1961 at the Statler Hotel.<sup>139</sup> During the banquet the Pilgrims issued a "Joint Statement" which read, in part:

We affirm that the Gospel must be preached even when the word of God is sharp and cutting . . . We remind the laity of the South . . . that no loyalty to the secular community in which they live or its traditional way of life can rightfully oppose the just claims of their brothers in Christ.<sup>140</sup>

The General Convention, through Presiding Bishop Lichtenberger, endorsed the intentions, embodied in the "Joint Statement," of those who went on the Prayer Pilgrimage.<sup>141</sup> The Presiding Bishop commended the Pilgrim's "witness to their Christian conviction about justice for all people in this land."<sup>142</sup> He did not endorse the direct action method of the Prayer Pilgrims as they challenged the segregationists laws of the South. Bishop Lichtenberger's statement continued:

These men have chosen the Prayer Pilgrimage as a means of bringing this stated position of the Church before our people. They are doing the right as they see the right. Whether they have chosen the right way to bear witness to their convictions, time alone will tell.<sup>143</sup>

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., praised the Prayer Pilgrims as they departed from New Orleans.

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<sup>139</sup> Sumner, 27; Tholin, 47.

<sup>140</sup> "Statement from the Prayer Pilgrimage Clergy Read Before the Dinner Sponsored by ESCRU at the Statler Hotel, Detroit, Sept. 20 1961," ESCRU Archive, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta, Georgia. This statement is also quoted in Kater, "Episcopal Society," 44 and Sumner, 27-28.

<sup>141</sup> Hood, 120; Sumner, 28.

<sup>142</sup> General Convention News Release No. 11 (Detroit, 1961), 16 September 1961. Also quoted in Sumner, 28 and Hood, 120.

<sup>143</sup> *The New York Times* (19 September 1961); Convention News Release No. 11. Also quoted in Sumner, 28 and Hood, 120.

The Episcopal clergymen who will ride on this pilgrimage, using terminal facilities at the bus stations enroute, will implement the spirit of the Freedom Rides fully since they will use rest room, eating, and other facilities without regard to race. The misguided opinions of those who urge stopping the Freedom Rides because they challenge the unjust system of segregation and expose the breaking of Federal laws by merchants and officials in the South, will be shown against the absolute necessity to continue the challenge if customs, practices, people and institutions are to be changed to conform to democratic and moral principles.<sup>144</sup>

Ellen N. Bouton and Thomas F. Pettigrew conducted interviews of parishioners in a "border-city Episcopal Parish when its rector participated in the Prayer Pilgrim."<sup>145</sup> Some of the responses were as follows:

I have not changed my opinion, but I realize that such a pilgrimage forces you to face the issue and do some discussing.<sup>146</sup>

I never knew before there even existed segregation in the church.<sup>147</sup>

At first I considered freedom riders to be crackpots. After consideration, I realized the evil that existed in the U.S. at this time. Men are put in jail for eating a meal with a man of another race. The pilgrimage has awakened us to the evil of a long-standing situation which had become accepted as local custom. Many people perhaps examined their own feelings on the matter.<sup>148</sup>

Summary - The Prayer Pilgrimage had a major impact on the Episcopal Church.<sup>149</sup> It caused many of its members to reflect on the state of race relations in the United States in general and within the church in particular. Some of the Prayer Pilgrims were willing to put

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<sup>144</sup> ESCRU Newsletter (17-29 September 1961), 3-4. Also quoted in Morris, "ESCRU," 13 and Hood, 119-20.

<sup>145</sup> Bouton and Pettigrew, 363-65.

<sup>146</sup> Bouton and Pettigrew, 365.

<sup>147</sup> Bouton and Pettigrew, 365.

<sup>148</sup> Bouton and Pettigrew, 365.

<sup>149</sup> Lewis, "No Alien Race," 219; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 154; Morris, "ESCRU," 13; Tholin, 47.

their lives on the line for the cause of justice and equality for African-Americans. John Burgess, future bishop of Massachusetts, summarized the effect of the Prayer Pilgrims:

The arrival of the fifteen priests lately released from the Jackson Mississippi jail brought to focus the tragedy of the problem that divides nations, men and Churches in these days. The simplicity of their apology, the humbleness of their witness, the strength of their faith brought into stark light of reality the price that can be expected of those who take the sermons and resolutions of the [General] Convention seriously.<sup>150</sup>

ESCRU became the principal voice of the Civil Rights Movement within the Episcopal Church. John Morris characterized it as "rapid action, fast response, and a brilliant searchlight." It demanded that the church adopt a revolutionary position on race relations. Before ESCRU's efforts, the Episcopal Church was identified with the forces of repression rather than as the instrument of the divine social order. This latter role demanded supporting the equality of all people.<sup>151</sup>

This unofficial organization was a catalyst for the Episcopal Church to come to terms with its participation in the sin of racism. Because ESCRU was thought of as "militant" or radical, and because it was an unofficial organization, these factors allowed General Convention and the national staff to adopt more aggressive Civil Rights positions while at the same time appearing moderate. John W.B. Thompson, Jr., chairman of the Greater Boston Chapter of ESCRU, summarized the message of ESCRU for the Episcopal Church and the country when he wrote:

We must declare without qualification or mental reserve that the Body of Christ has no room at all for practices which condone or perpetuate such racial separation and

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<sup>150</sup> John M. Burgess, "Convention and Minority Groups," *The Witness* 46, no. 34 (26 October 1961): 11.

<sup>151</sup> Kater, "Episcopal Society," 62, 180; Morris, "ESCRU," 25; Tholin, 7.

disunity as marks our society; and positively, that the given condition of the redeemed Body is the condition of unity and charity - and human inclusiveness. Period.<sup>152</sup>

## MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

I have gone into some detail to establish that both the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored Peoples and the Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity were major advocacy groups in the Episcopal Church. Both organizations worked toward the goals of justice and equality for African-Americans. It is the contention of this paper that these two organizations had opportunities to coordinate their efforts between June of 1960 and September of 1961 but failed to take advantage of these possibilities.

If they had formed an alliance, they would have brought strengths that could have been powerful tools for achieving their mutual goals. Church Workers Conference had credibility within the Episcopal Church, long standing relationships, and direct ties to the African-American community. ESCRU had representatives in the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies; therefore, it had voice and vote at the General Convention. Church Workers Conference worked collaboratively within the church while ESCRU was pushing the institution to take more direct action. If these two organizations could have coordinated their efforts they could have been a powerful force for justice and equality within the Episcopal Church and in the nation.

The scriptural and theological basis of both organizations were compatible. Dr. Logan indicates that Isaiah 9:2, "For they that walk in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined," was the scriptural basis for the

<sup>152</sup> Logan interview (19 December 1997).

<sup>152</sup> John W. B. Thompson, Jr., ". . . That They May All Be One," *The Church Militant*, Diocese of Massachusetts, (April 1961): 7.

Church Workers Conference. He then asserted that this long standing organization within the Episcopal Church sought to bring the light of the message of justice and equality.

I think that the Black people, as they came up through the challenge . . . "No one has seen the trouble I've seen, but glory halleluia." They had seen the light of God shining in a fellowship of love among their brethren and sisters. Even though they were persecuted [and] they did not have all the rights and privileges of the church, they were still Episcopalians, striving, holding fast to the torch.<sup>153</sup>

Fr. Morris indicates that Psalm 133:1 "Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity" as the scriptural basis for the work of ESCRU.<sup>154</sup> Unity was the theological underpinning of all the activity of ESCRU, according to Morris. He asserted that this proclamation of the unity of all people in baptism was an essential character of the church.

The opening of our *Statement of Purpose* would further define our interest in Unity: "The purpose of this Society shall be to encourage men to respond positively to God's call for unity in the Church. The unity of God with man, and man with man, is made by God in Baptism and Holy Communion . . . We seek . . . That condition of harmony among peoples which is the benefit of a mutual recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, so that brothers may dwell together in unity and see Him so lifted up that He will draw all men unto Him."<sup>155</sup>

These two theologies are complementary and would have been a powerful message and witness if the two groups had joined forces. As we shall see, they had the opportunities to cooperate but such cooperation never came to pass.

#### Missed Opportunity #1 - Church Workers Conference Reaches Out to ESCRU.

Between 1 June 1960 to 1 July 1961 there was a series of letters between the Rev. John Morris, then executive director of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and the

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<sup>153</sup> Logan Interview (19 December 1997).

<sup>154</sup> Morris, "ESCRU," 9.

<sup>155</sup> Morris Interview.

Rev. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr., president of the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored Peoples.<sup>156</sup> In preparation for this paper, the author interviewed both of these priests in December 1997: Fr. Morris at his home in Atlanta, Georgia, and Dr. Logan at his home in Yeadon, Pennsylvania. Copies of their letters were provided to these civil rights leaders, and they were given an opportunity to review what they had written in 1960-61. In this correspondence Fr. Logan intended to:

See what he is going to do in his conference, because he was going to have his conference in the same city that I was having my conference, and I thought we could have some sort of dialogue because some of his black members were [also] members of my organization. But the whites were not members of my organization.

I wanted to bring unity between the liberal whites who were trying to help the black cause and . . . to see if we can't jell on our purposes.<sup>157</sup>

As we will see, this intention was not realized. He began reaching out to ESCRU in a letter dated 1 June 1960:

I was glad to read and reread your [ESCRU] newsletter but I noticed it contained nothing concerning General Convention in 1961.

Could you send me a line as to your plans as I would like to share mine [Church Workers Conference] with you? If you are in Philly or New York City maybe we could get together and discuss our two group[s] . . .<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, March 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.; Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, 1 June 1960, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta; Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, 10 June 1960, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta; Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, June 1961, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta; Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, 28 September 1960, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta; John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 16 June 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.; John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 7 July 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.; John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 1 August 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

<sup>157</sup> Logan Interview (19 December).

<sup>158</sup> Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, March 1960, private papers, The

Fr. Morris replied on 16 June 1960 with an outline of ESCRU's plans for the 1961 General Convention in Detroit. He then indicated that he was unsure to which organization Dr. Logan referred when he wrote:

Forgive my delay in replying to your letter of June 1st . . . Were you making reference to the group of Negro Churchmen which has met prior to Convention I believe? You didn't say which group you were speaking in reference to . . .

Let me know further what you had in mind about General Convention. I'll look for an opportunity in the next several months to stop in Philly to talk with you. Actually, I would like to meet with all members of the Society there to hear from them what they would propose regarding a local group there [in Philadelphia].<sup>159</sup>

In late June Dr. Logan replied: "I am coming to Atlanta for five days July 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31st. Will you be there for me to see[?]"<sup>160</sup> John Morris answered on 7 July:

First of all - I definitely shall be here July 27-31 and will look forward to seeing you. Perhaps it will be convenient for your schedule for you to have dinner at my home some evening so that we can visit leisurely. At any rate, I am sure we'll have opportunity to discuss the ensuing matters . . .

I suspect that we'll have some difficulty arranging our pre-convention meetings so that there will not be any conflict. There is only so much time before convention so we may find some duplication in schedule. I shall hope, however, to find some opportunity to attend the Church Workers Conference and hope that the same will be possible vice versa.<sup>161</sup>

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Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

<sup>159</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 16 June 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

<sup>160</sup> Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, June 1961, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta.

<sup>161</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 7 July 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

Evidently Morris and Logan met when the president of Church Workers was in Atlanta.

Evidence of this meeting is provided in a letter from Fr. Morris dated 1 August 1960: "It was good seeing you here and I hope you are now having a safe journey home."<sup>162</sup>

Dr. Logan continued his effort to reach out to ESCRU in a letter he first circulated to members of the Church Workers Conference in March 1960 and Fr. Morris received by 7 July 1960.<sup>163</sup> Logan's intention was to get feedback on his intention to form an alliance with ESCRU. He wrote:

My Dear Father Morris:

Just before the opening of every General Convention, in the city of the General Convention, workers and friends of minority groups have met to discuss policies and memorials to General Convention. Some of the sessions are devoted to fellowship and strengthening our bonds in a common task of work that was done by former Negro clergymen of the past, in honoring them at a banquet. For those who have died, a memorial service.

My concern, as I understand you plan to have a work shop on, "Racial and Cultural Unity," is how our two groups can get together. Negro clergymen of the Episcopal Church are all part of this concern in a greater or lesser degree. Our theme of this Triennial Meeting, in Detroit, Michigan, is "The City Parish."

As the President of the Church Workers Conference, I have seen Bishop Emrich, in his Diocese last year and he gladly gave me a plan for an interracial aspect of this conference in 1961. Of course this was before the formation of your new organization. Fr. Joseph Pelham, Vice President of Your Board, is working with me, with the consent of the Negro clergy of the Diocese of Michigan. Already we had been given Old Mariners Church, for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, September 13, 14 and 15 1961, to hold our meeting. Cannon Johnson, Chairman of the host convention site, has us scheduled. The Rt. Rev Burrell, Bishop of Chicago and the Rt. Rev. Bravid Harris, Bishop of Liberia, have consented to preach at the opening and closing services of our conference.

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<sup>162</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 1 August 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

<sup>163</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 7 July 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr. In this letter Morris refers to some of the replies the black clergy gave to Logan's letter.

We would be pleased to have your group [ESCRU] proceed with your work shop, giving us a two hour panel discussion period to deliberate the future of our seventy-one year old organization, in light of your "cell organization", in each Diocese of the Country.

I hope to hear from you in order to get your thinking on paper for future planning.<sup>164</sup>

Fr. Morris replied that he might be able to attend the meeting of the Church Workers Conference but he did not respond to the offer of discussing the future of both organizations. He wrote:

I suspect that we'll have some difficulty arranging our pre-convention meetings so that there will not be any conflict. There is only so much time before convention so we may find some duplication in schedule. I shall hope, however, to find some opportunity to attend the Church Workers Conference and hope that the same will be possible vice versa.<sup>165</sup>

In a letter dated 28 September 1960 Fr. Logan invited the president of ESCRU to be on the program at the Church Workers Conference Triennial Meeting in Detroit.<sup>166</sup> Fr. Morris made no mention of this invitation in his next letter to Logan dated 3 October 1960.<sup>167</sup>

The only official discussion of the efforts of Church Workers Conference to coordinate their activities with ESCRU at the 1961 General Convention took place during an ESCRU Executive Board meeting in the District of Columbia, 23-24 September 1960. At that

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<sup>164</sup> Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, March 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

<sup>165</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 7 July 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

<sup>166</sup> Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, 28 September 1960, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta.

<sup>167</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 3 October 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

meeting, information about the possible demise of Church Workers Conference was presented.

Morris wrote in a letter dated 3 October 1960:

We mentioned the Church Workers Conference at the Board meeting in Washington, and simply received as information the possibility that it might be decided in Detroit to terminate its existence. There was some hope on the part of the Board members that we would be able to work together on a thoroughly integrated basis.<sup>168</sup>

In July, 1961 Fr. Morris finally agreed to be on a panel at the Church Workers Conference meeting. Fr. Logan wrote jubilantly on 1 July 1961:

Thanks, Thanks, Thanks. You are working in the correct way to give credit to our Church Workers Conference of the past and new vision for the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity for the future. Thanks.

You will be on our afternoon panel, along with any others that you select. Questions and answers will be given by both sides.

I shall be with you on Wednesday Sept. 20 at Dinner. If you want to use me in any way, I shall be happy to serve.

Again, I thank you for assisting me to do a job for the whole church. We all should be one . . .<sup>169</sup>

This is the panel proposed by Fr. Logan in his letter, received by Morris in July 1960, where he suggested discussing the future of both organizations and the possibility of joint actions.

The potential for an alliance of these two organizations was coming near. We can only conjecture about the possibilities of these two organizations joining forces to attack racism in the Episcopal Church. There would have been a balanced attack. Church Workers Conference would have worked quietly within the structure of the church while ESCRU pushed it from the streets and jails. The former, viewed as a black organization with credibility within

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<sup>168</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 3 October 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

<sup>169</sup> Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr., letter to John B. Morris, 1 July 1961, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta.

the African-American community while the latter was making connections in the larger Civil Rights Movement.

The Panel and therefore the potential alliance never occurred because Fr. Morris was in a jail at the time of the Church Workers Conference meeting 14-15 September 1961. He was not released until 18 September. In his interview, Dr. Logan indicates that Fr. Morris did not participate at the Detroit meeting of Church Workers Conference nor did the panel discussion take place. Plans were underway for the Prayer Pilgrimage on 15 June 1961 when Fr. Morris wrote:

I am presently working on plans for an interracial group of clergy to go from New Orleans to Detroit the week before the Convention. I hope that this will not conflict too much with plans for the Church Workers's Conference, for if anyone wanted to begin the bus ride with us in New Orleans, they could probably leave the bus about half-way along and go the rest of the way by air to Detroit.<sup>170</sup>

Fr. Morris had enough time to designate a representative or representatives of ESCRU to participate in the proposed panel discussion. For an unknown reason he did not choose this option.<sup>171</sup>

This was the last communication between Church Workers Conference and ESCRU. Throughout the correspondence, there is no hint of conflict with the aims and goals of both organizations. Over and over again, the Church Workers Conference through its president attempted to reach out to ESCRU. Nothing tangible came of this effort; therefore, this is the first missed opportunity.

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<sup>170</sup> John B. Morris, letter to Thomas S. Logan, 15 June 1961, ESCRU archives, Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, Atlanta.

<sup>171</sup> Morris Interview. John Morris has no recollection of his thinking back in 1961 in regard to the invitation to participate at the Church Workers Conference meeting.

Missed Opportunity #2 - Conference Decision Not to Support Prayer Pilgrimage. On Friday, 15 September 1961, the second day of the Triennial Meeting of the Church Workers Conference convened at Saint Cyprrian's Church, Detroit, Michigan with Dr. Logan presiding.

<sup>172</sup> Sometime after 2:00 p.m. the following entry is recorded in the minutes:

At this point a motion was made by the Rev. John Davis [rector of Saint Andrews, Cleveland, Ohio] that the membership of the Workshop meet the members of the E.S.C.R.U Prayer Pilgrimage in Dearborn on the morrow [Saturday, 16 September 1961]. *The motion was lost for lack of a second.* A further suggestion was made that the Workshop show some recognition of members of the Prayer Pilgrimage. Another suggestion was made by the Rev. Joseph Nicholson that individual members of the Workshop show their recognition of the Prayer Pilgrimage members *rather than the body officially.*<sup>173</sup>

This is a remarkable report. Dr. Logan agrees that Fr. Davis's motion proposed that the primary advocacy group for the rights of African-Americans in the Episcopal Church since 1883 should officially meet with the Prayer Pilgrims. He further agrees that those present at the 15 September meeting understood that the Prayer Pilgrimage to be witness for the rights of black people in the country. Further, they understood that this action of ESCRU supported the right of people to use public transportation, regardless of race, creed, or color. This was a motion to officially endorse the Prayer Pilgrimage and it failed to carry for lack of a second.<sup>174</sup>

This meant there would be no discussion. There is no official report of what objections there may have been to the Church Workers Conference officially endorsing the Prayer Pilgrimage. The second motion, that the Church Workers Conference go on record as

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<sup>172</sup> Logan Interview (19 December).

<sup>173</sup> Minutes, Fourteenth Triennial Meeting of Episcopal Church Workers, 14-15 September, Detroit, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr. Italics are mine.

<sup>174</sup> Logan Interview (19 December).

supporting the Prayer Pilgrimage, was also not discussed. The third motion specifically prevented the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored Peoples from officially endorsing the Prayer Pilgrimage. This motion carried. The Church Workers Conference went on record not to support officially or acknowledge the Prayer Pilgrimage.

Therefore, as official policy, the Conference refused to endorse an activity that had the purpose of totally eradicating segregation in the United States and within the Episcopal Church. Dr. Logan suggests three reasons for this remarkable state of affairs.

**First: Whiteness.** ESCRU was viewed as a predominantly white organization trying to take over an area traditionally the preserve of the Church Workers Conference. There was resentment of this new organization. Dr. Logan states:

Well, that was my feeling then as I look back over the situation . . . I did not know how many of the blacks were interwoven into ESCRU. The only thing in my mind was the idea that Father Morris was trying to get me to allow him that we might participate together and if we had the same goals we might make one organization of this great fight for justice in the Episcopal Church. But as you know, the Church Workers Conference was founded about 71 years before [1961]. And it was founded out of strife, when they fought General Conventions. And the Church Workers Conference is a conference of struggle and against injustice of black people in the Episcopal Church . . .

I thought that in my mind because, you know, every black Episcopalian, from time of the ordination, going back before 1888, they knew of the Church Workers Conference. We all knew of the Church Workers Conference, and that was our vehicle. We had no one in General Convention, black delegates or Deputies or even Bishops and this is our vehicle to get justice from the General Convention . . . We got a black church, we met there and had fellowship and protested against anything that we thought was coming up . . .

They thought they could do a little better job than we could. Because they seemed to have a little more money and, as I said before, a little more prestige, because John Morris did write a great deal and he did get some of the top leaders of the Black Episcopal Church.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr., interviewed by author, audio tape recording, Yeadon, Pennsylvania, 2 January 1998. Hereafter cited as Logan, "Interview" (2 January).

They were trying to get publicity and override the Blackness of the great group that was [meeting]. We were having a successful conference in Detroit. We had settled down, got a lot done, and we went in that [General] Convention and got a lot of things done . . . <sup>176</sup>

This attitude about ESCRU was affirmed by the Rt. Rev. Quintin Primo, who was present at the 1961 Church Workers meeting. He asserted that ESCRU was trying to take over the traditional work of the Conference. <sup>177</sup>

**Second: Newness.** ESCRU was a new untried organization and there was fear that it might fold under the pressure of racist elements in the Episcopal Church and in the larger society. Dr. Logan states:

I think many of [the members of Church Workers Conference] felt that they [ESCRU] had not been tried, like the Church Workers Conference, and why would we risk the 71 years of existence, that we have been through the grime and the mill of the day and join with a new organization that hasn't been two years old. And I think they were a little reluctant. I don't think they mind going to [see] what was on in their minds. <sup>178</sup>

The Rev. Henry L. Parker, an African-American priest and member of the Conference, also expressed the above feelings when he wrote in March 1960:

[ESCRU] is not 71 years old so it has not stood the test of history. I would not give in to [easily] to any newly formed group until it has proven itself. <sup>179</sup>

Fr. Morris also believed that there might be reservation to support this new organization by the black Episcopal community when he reflected:

I do not have recollection then to being privy to any resentment against ESCRU say from black church folk. I can imagine there might have been some feeling that [this

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<sup>176</sup> Logan, "Interview" (19 December).

<sup>177</sup> Bishop Primo informed me of this by telephone shortly before his death on 2 January 1998.

<sup>178</sup> Logan, "Interview" (19 December).

<sup>179</sup> Henry L. Parker, letter to Thomas W. Logan, March 1960, private papers, The Rev. Dr. Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr.

group ESCRU] . . . suddenly springing up as if there had been no previous history or role of service within the church to challenge the status quo . . .<sup>180</sup>

*Third: Militancy.* The Prayer Pilgrimage was a radical militant action that broke the law. Dr. Logan agrees that Church Workers Conference did not support breaking the law. It was a conservative organization that was not confrontive. He further states:

We never had a confrontation with General Convention. I mean, striking, or anything like that. But later on, as we see history now, we did know that we met three years later in Saint Louis and then three years later our General Convention went to Seattle and we had elected a priest from St. James, Baltimore, as the president to succeed Dr. Nicholson. But it never met. That conference sort of stopped and that following year, of that [1967] we had the confrontation of Kenyatta going into the [General] Convention. We saw the Blacks militantly fighting within the Convention because we [now] had Black deputies marching around who had dioceses. We didn't have that before.<sup>181</sup>

It was pointed out earlier<sup>182</sup> that ESCRU developed a "militant" direct action approach to attack segregation. The Prayer Pilgrimage was the first active participation in this method of protest. The Prayer Pilgrims intentionally broke what they believed were immoral laws.

## CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this discussion was to demonstrate that the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored Peoples had several opportunities between June 1960 to September 1961 to form an alliance. It was further asserted that both groups failed to take advantage of these opportunities.

We have observed that the Church Workers Conference was a caucus within the Episcopal Church that championed the cause of justice and equality for African-American Episcopalians. It continually pressed the Church to affirm the theological position that all are

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<sup>180</sup> Morris, "Interview."

<sup>181</sup> Logan, "Interview" (2 January).

<sup>182</sup> See pages 28-35.

equal in the Body of Christ. It worked to have the church affirm and develop an African-American leadership and to ensure the equal status of black Episcopalians. The Conference lobbied the Episcopal Church to side with those forces advocating social justice and equality of treatment due to any American citizen.

We have demonstrated that the Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity became a major participant in the Civil Rights Movement within the Episcopal Church. It demanded the eradication of segregation in all facets of church life. It utilized a "militant" direct action approach to achieve its goals. The Prayer Pilgrimage was the first such action and had a major impact on the Episcopal Church. The Prayer Pilgrims were ready to put their lives on the line for the cause of justice and equality of all people.

If these two organizations had coordinated their efforts, their alliance would have been a powerful force in the Episcopal Church of the 1960's. Church Workers Conference had long years of experience in the struggle for equality. ESCRU had the enthusiasm and the willingness to challenge the *status quo*. But this alliance was not to be. Between June 1960 to september 1961 there were two opportunities for such cooperation. First, through a series of letters the Church Workers Conference attempted to reach out to ESCRU. Second, the Conference had an opportunity to support the Prayer Pilgrimage. These two chances for collaborative action were not realized. These were missed opportunities.