



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL of the EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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TO: THE RT. REV. JOHN E. HINES
THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We deplore the trend that has "set-in" in the major white denominations in reversing the financial and moral commitment made to the concepts of self-determination and empowerment of poor and powerless people, most of whom are Black. We specifically call your attention to the recent action of Executive Council in decreasing the funding capacity of the G. C. S. P., and the eventual dismantling of the entire program. The G. C. S. P. has actively and substantially aided and supported the deprived communities in our country.

We further notice that this trend of "cutting back" conspicuously parallels what is happening with federally funded programs and services throughout the country which seriously affect the survival of the poor and powerless. This trend raises a poignant question about whether there is, in fact, a separation between Church and State in this country. And also, whether the Church is, as it claims to be, the moral and ethical conscience of the nation or vice versa.

We strongly believe that the Church ought to be the conscience of the nation, and therefore lead the way and give moral leadership to a selfish and confused people, so that a portion of the wealth of this country, most of which has been gained from the sweat, labor and blood of poor people, can be effectively used in gaining political and economic self-determination.

We are tragically reminded again at this juncture in the history of Black people in this country of the words of the Black Poet-Historian, Langston Hughes, when he asked:

"What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in
the sun? Or fester like a sore
and then run? Does it stink
like rotten meat? or crust and
sugar over - like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?"

The condition of poor and powerless people in America at this time is certainly sagging and festering, and we must cry with the ancient prophets, "O Lord how long?", while the Church and State turn away and move on to internal and local concerns.

Therefore, we strongly urge the Presiding Bishop, the Executive Council, and indeed all sensitive Church people, to restore the cuts made in the G. C. S. P. 's funding capacity and perhaps even take the unpopular and bold step of increasing the funding capacity of the program, and thereby set a new precedent, rather than following the example of the State; hence, making self-determination and empowerment a continuing priority commitment.