

February 2, 1970

PROPOSAL FOR THE UNION OF BLACK CLERGY AND LAITY OF
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

This proposal is being submitted by the Union of Black Clergy and Laity of the Episcopal Church. UBCL represents an organizational effort on the part of many black Episcopalians, both clergy and lay people. This effort began two years ago in New York and has been gaining in momentum since that time.

One of the main reasons for this effort is because the racial crisis both within and without the Church remains. We realized that the stain of racism is within the Church as well as without, and it will not go away simply because many people wish it away. One of the primary consequences is that the decision-making processes of the Church are still largely controlled by racist presuppositions. In order for black churchmen to change these patterns, we realized that it was essential that we unify so that we can more effectively change these patterns.

Our analysis indicates that the racial problem in the Church is essentially the same as the problem that the larger society is facing. This problem can be summarized as the need to redistribute decision-making power so that there is definite minority participation in policy determinations. In other words, our society must learn to radically change its patterns of decision-making. Hopefully this can be done without violence and warfare. Leadership must be demonstrated to show how there can be peaceful transferral of power, and the Church now has the opportunity to exercise just such leadership. The Church can help teach our society that to give up illegitimate control over others and to enter into trusting equal relationship is the only viable road toward an effective solution to our society's racial problems.

A reality that focused was that this program could not work if we were concerned only with the interests of the Church. We can see clearly that the fate of black churchmen is inextricably related to the fate of all black people. Therefore, we are carefully seeking the involvement of secular groups, as well as being committed to a broad-based ecumenical involvement in our programmatic emphasis. UBCL intends to support and further the efforts of black people to organize their resources into a more effective working force.

Our analysis further indicates there are six needs that black churchmen feel we can begin to meet:

The first is that the activities of black churchmen within the life of the Church is fragmented and disintegrated. There are no carefully worked out goals, and there has been no plan or program into which black churchman could fit. As the decision-making of the Church has relied almost entirely on white input, the programs that have been going on have not attracted the interest or participation of black churchmen. The irony of this is that very often the people who are members of the black Church already possess the necessary skills required to develop effective programs in the problematic areas. The skills that black Episcopalians possess are essential for effective black community building, and they must be made effectively available to stimulate black unification.

The second need is that the Church has not availed herself of the black talent within her own organization. The truth of the fact that the opposite of integration is not segregation but rather could be more adequately described as disintegration, is unfortunately true about the Church. The Church seems to have accepted society's definition of the "black problem"; namely, that black people have failed to succeed and meet the requirements of this society. The truth, however, is that black people are the victims of this society. As victims, black people possess insights into the essential problems of life in America. The Church has suffered because of its inability to responsibly use black talent and insight in its own policy-making and program implementation. The Church must, in a reparational way, support black aspirations on the assumption that the planned activity of black people will be more clearly focused. The programs of those who are viewing the reality from the outside are in many instances the cause of the problem.

The third need is that the Church has not been able to avert the disaster of the urban communities of our society. The deplorable conditions of our cities is a clear reminder that the Church has been able to neither effectively stop the growth of slums, nor has the Church been able to minister to the people living under these ghastly conditions. Dr. Nicholson, a black priest in St. Louis, has identified one of the main causes of this situation in a work called Negroes in the Episcopal Church. His data indicates that the Church, in a real way was spiritually insensitive to the need of black people in our society. Therefore, it is irresponsible in the stewardship of its talents.

The fourth need is to gather and organize the ideas and style of black life into an authentic liturgical expression. It is interesting to note that a culture that has created the most authentic and exciting musical expression in the Western Hemisphere was completely omitted from the Liturgical Commission. This commission was attempting to revitalize and renew the liturgical expression of the Church. Yet, this commission did not see fit to include black input. The same is true about the educational dimension of the Church. The Seabury Series was a curriculum that in no way reflected the reality of urban life.

The fifth need is to help the Church overcome its division and paralysis. The present hostility and polarization in the Church is because, to a great extent, the racist presuppositions have been challenged. White churchmen have been told by black Americans that they are not helping. The need is for the Church to re-evaluate her presuppositions. Chiefly, we need to re-look at the whole notion of integration. This theory demands conformity of programs and presuppositions. It assumes that black people are failures who want to live like white people. What is needed is an authentic program that speaks to people where they really are. There is the need for an interdependent relationship between black and white, based on the reality of the situation that each group finds itself a part of. The Seabury Series, for instance, might legitimately meet the needs of white suburban-oriented churchmen. But we must also have an effective urban program. Then these two equal ministries could provide mandates for each other. Instead of the "lady bountiful" attitude that is so prevalent today and its counterpart; namely, the demand for an attitude of black gratefulness, what is needed is to begin to create an authentic ministry for each other. Hopefully an authentic, effective and vital ministry could mobilize white talent into an important force to end racism. At the same time the empowerment of black people could be a priority agenda for black people.

The last need that we are concerned with is the problematic fact that without a clear indication from black people, it is difficult to determine priorities. With numerous demands emerging from the black community, it is difficult for concerned people to know where to begin. Therefore, what is clearly indicated is the necessity for a carefully worked out set of priorities that legitimately represent the thinking of black people.

In view of these needs, the Union of Black Clergy and Laity proposes to achieve the following goals:

To help enable and assist black parishes to play a more significant role in coalition of black community groups.

To enable black parishes to assume their authentic and proper position in Diocesan urban affairs by both sharing in policy-making and program implementation.

To demonstrate the crucial importance of a stronger black voice in the determination of policy and the implementing of programs.

To assist black parishes with the development of more authentic liturgical expression of black style and to create a relevant program of urban Christian education.

To achieve a more tightly organized UBCL network, for instance, by working in a coordinated way with GCSP groups and other important organizational efforts in order to influence public opinions and legislation.

To help create opportunities for authentic interdependent mission cooperation between white suburban parishes and their urban counterparts.

To provide an instrument for determining the consensus of black opinion, especially concerning crucial issues facing the Church.

Our plan of action will begin with an effort to coordinate National Church efforts represented in the four sections of the Executive Council. This coordinative effort will intend to provide a means of effective cross fertilization and will also intend to avoid duplication.

Then we will design and convene regional training conferences to include those groups that the National Church effort has already reached and we will make a concerted effort to involve other groups.

We are willing to make a coalitional effort to ascertain and evaluate the most relevant resources that are available. Since much toward accomplishing this has already been done by the Executive Council Sections, we will be anticipating a working relationship between UBCL and the entire Executive Council staff.

One result of the effort would be a realistic inventory of the skills and talents that black churchmen can realistically offer toward Church renewal. This program will be administered by a full-time executive director, an administrative assistant, secretaries, community organizers and regional directors. These will all be under the direction of a duly elected board of directors. The national headquarters is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Within the framework of this organizing pattern, there is ample provision for inputs from local groups in order to guarantee the effectiveness of these efforts in different areas about which they know best. This is clearly one of our most important aspirations. We feel that our national effort will essentially be a resourceful and consultative role in relation to local groups, depending largely on local initiative.

We will be keeping careful records and will be willing to use the best evaluative methods that can be determined. This will be done on a regular basis, for instance, quarterly review is what we have in mind.

In view of this proposal we project the following minimum budget for the first year to begin March 15, 1970 through March 15, 1971.

From 1971-1972, we anticipate generating local resources to the extent that we feel we can operate for half the amount that was needed for the first year.

TRAINING BUDGET (Experimental and Specialized Services)

Regional Organizers (6 @ \$100 per wk) \$36,000

COORDINATION BUDGET (Services to Dioceses)

Communications \$ 3,000

Travel Expenses 25,000

Administrative Costs 4,000

\$37,000

March 2, 1970

UBCL Budget

The following is a budget request for operation of the Union of Black Clergy and Laity, for the year 1970. It is to be submitted to the General Convention Special Program, Services to Dioceses, Experimental and Specialized Services, and Professional Leadership Development.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET (General Convention Special Program)

Executive Director	\$15,000	
Secretary/Treasurer	8,000	
Typist/Receptionist	6,700	
5% Fringe Benefits	1,490	
		<u>\$31,190</u>
Materials	650	
Utilities	780	
		<u>1,430</u>
Rent		3,000
Office Equipment		<u>3,730</u>
TOTAL		<u>\$39,350*</u>

TRAINING BUDGET (Experimental and Specialized Services)

Regional Organizers (6 @ \$100 per wk)	\$36,000
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COORDINATION BUDGET (Services to Dioceses)

Communications	\$ 3,000	
Travel Expenses	25,000	
Administrative Costs	4,000	
		<u>\$32,000</u>

PROGRAM SUPPORT BUDGET (Professional Leadership Development)

Consultants	\$ 5,000
Overall UBCL Budget	<u>\$112,350</u>

*\$10,000 - on matching basis to be raised by dues and donations.