



The Reverend Dalton D. Downs
Rector

Emmanuel Church

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

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G. C. S. P.

August 14, 1973

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Attached you will find a copy of some observations, reflections and concerns regarding the Union of Black Episcopalians (U.B.E.).

We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned over the fact that the great potential for leadership, on the part of Black/Negro Episcopalians, will continue to remain stagnant and ineffective, and our united voice for Justice, Freedom, Equality and Power will never truly be heard until the one and only viable vehicle for action and progress, within the Church, begins to function with decisiveness and effectiveness.

With brotherly love, we share these observations, reflections and concerns with you, knowing that others have raised these issues in the past, yet realizing that no concrete and positive action has been taken. We urge you, therefore, at your earliest convenience, to respond by sharing with us any thoughts you may have about the nature and function of the Union of Black Episcopalians, and also ways and means in which we, together, may assist in making U.B.E. a more viable organization.

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours in the Struggle,

Dalton D. Downs
(The Rev.) Dalton D. Downs
Rector, Emmanuel Parish

(The Rev.) James W. Francis
(The Rev.) James W. Francis
Director, C.S.R. Diocese of Ohio

DDD/JWF:stm



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OBSERVATIONS, REFLECTIONS AND CONCERNS
REGARDING THE
UNION OF BLACK EPISCOPALIANS (U.B.E.)

1. Statement: That the black presence is needed in the Episcopal Church, is debatable, depending on your perception of the attitude and behavior of the white church toward minorities, but more specifically blacks.

But, on the other hand, that there is a need for a strong and viable Union of Black Episcopalians, is not debatable, so long as blacks remain within the life of the Episcopal Church.

2. The Problem: There are, on the part of a large number of black/negro Episcopalians, many unanswered questions and a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the Purpose, Function, Goals, Objectives, Program Activities, Structure, By-laws and relevancy of the Union. The aforementioned items have created and fostered divisions, suspicion and apathy among the rank and file of our brothers and sisters throughout the Episcopal Church. As a result, the Union of Black Episcopalians has been rendered somewhat ineffective, and thereby functions with little or no degree of regularity and continuity.

To be more specific, the following points might be helpful in amplifying some reasons for the Union's present dilemma:

1. There is a lack of clarity on the part of many Black Clergy and Laymen regarding:

- A. The Union's goals, objectives and program activities
- B. The way the Union is structured and how it functions
- C. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Union
- D. The various committees and task forces of the Union
- E. The relationship of the Union and/or its officers to the Black Colleges, Absalom Jones Institute, G.C.S.P. and the National Church Office and/or Executive Council

2. The apparent inability of the Union to adequately respond to:

- A. The needs of local chapters or assist in establishing new ones
- B. The needs of Clergy, Laymen and congregations through meaningful and personal contact
- C. The need for an organized and appropriate flow of current news and/or information from the National Office, the Church at large, local chapters, local congregations, committees, task forces and others.

3. The present operational style of the Union:

- A. Do we need an Executive Director? No -- Yes --
If yes, must the Director always be a priest? Why not an aggressive and competent layman or woman?

B. Do We Need To Create Working Task Forces?

(Working Task Forces should consist of no less than five (5) and no more than ten (10) persons, chairman or person not included. Due to geographic distance and limited finance, said task forces should be organized on a State or Regional basis, implement their program during the year, reporting to the Executive Committee and/or the Board with a final report to be prepared for the Annual Meeting).

4. The date, place and time of the Annual Meeting:

- A. Why not meet from Thursday or Friday through Saturday or Sunday?
B. Why not appoint the Annual Meeting Committee early in the year or before the close of every Annual Meeting?
1. Site and dates should be established at least six (6) months in advance.
 2. Establishment of Creative Workshops to provide facts/skills on Black Education, Black Liturgy, etc.
 3. Provide a more meaningful and creative "packet" for delegates; resources should include:
 - 1) Agenda
 - 2) Minutes of previous Annual Meeting
 - 3) Copy of Rule of Orders
 - 4) Report of the Executive Committee and/or Board
 - 5) Report of all Task Forces and Committees
 - 6) Report of the Nominating Committee
 - 7) Chapter(s) Report(s)
 - 8) Copy of U.B.E. Constitution & By-Laws
 - 9) Names and addresses of Delegates
 - 10) List of dues-paying members (with right to vote)
 - 11) Report of successful "experiments" in Black Churches
 - 12) Written copies of all issues which will be presented to membership.
- C. There is a need to define the "representation" which is expected at all Annual Meetings. Can it be stated that all dues-paying members are expected; however, encourage a representation from each Black church consisting of the priest and two (2) members?
- D. Develop a multiple-prong program wherein all Black/Negro Episcopalians can feel that they are part of the action.