THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH: POLICIES AND RATIONALE UPON WHICH SUPPORT OF ITS NEGRO COLLEGES IS PREDICATED

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CHAPTER VII

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The colleges of the American Church Institute for Negroes are facing one of the most critical periods of their history. Not only are their operational budgets inadequate to meet the increasing costs of education and high standards set by the accrediting authorities, but they are in the untenable position of competing with the more adequately financially supported state institutions for much sought after faculty members.

At the present time, there are four schools and one college center affiliated with the American Church Institute for Negroes and of these, two have been associated with the Institute from the beginning of its work:

St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, N. C., is the oldest of the Institute schools, founded in 1867 as a normal collegiate institute. It has been affiliated with ACIN since 1907. A four-year college course is offered leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. The college is accredited class "A" by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Along with St. Paul's College, it is a member of the Association of American Colleges, the American Council on Education, and the United Negro College Fund. The college property consists of about 96 acres of land and the current enrollment is 478 students. The operating budget for the academic year 1960–61 is approximately $607,475 of which $105,000.00 is contributed by ACIN. The incumbent president is Dr. James A. Boyer, a former graduate of the school. St. Augustine's Chapel, dating from 1895 and built by students from rock that was laboriously quarried on the campus, conducts regular services for both the College and the local community. The president of the Board is the Bishop of North Carolina and members are selected by the Board, although representation from the Diocese of Western North Carolina is among those present. The faculty is composed of Negroes, whites and East Indians.

St. Paul's College is the largest of the organizations affiliated with ACIN and is one of the three original institutions accepted for affiliation. It was founded in 1888 by the Rev. James Solomon Russell, who served until his retirement in 1928, and was succeeded by his son, the late Rev. J. Alvin Russell, who served until 1949. The third and current president is Dr. Earl H. McClenney. It is an accredited "A" school by the Virginia Department of Education and is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In 1957, the Board of Trustees approved the reorganization of the curriculum to include

courses leading to Bachelor of Arts degrees, as well as to Bachelor of Science degrees. It owns 860 acres of campus, timber and land. The school became affiliated with ACIN in March 1907. From its beginning as a normal and industrial school, its curriculum now includes courses leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree, as well as to the Bachelor of Science degree. By a formal resolution of the Board of Trustees, it is open to students and teachers of all denominations and races, and at the present time, the faculty has two white and three Chinese members. The enrollment for 1959–1960 was 434. As in the other ACIN schools, many religious faiths are represented among its students and faculty. The chapel plays an important role in the life of the College and also serves the locality as a mission church. The 1960–61 budget is $594,141.50 of which $90,000.00 is furnished by ACIN.

From the beginning, St. Paul's has played an important part in the life of the community. For years the College supplied the Southern Railroad, operating between Danville and Norfolk, Virginia with ice, and the town of Lawrenceville with water and electricity. Today, many buildings stand in Lawrenceville and Southside Virginia as mute testimonies to the industrial activity of Saint Paul's trades' students. The history of St. Paul's College and its development are reflected in the basic aims and the philosophy of the college as it stands today. The achievements of its graduates throughout the world give evidence of the zeal, sacrifice, and educational foresight which have characterized its workers and leaders through the years. In like manner, many fine relationships between the "gown and the town" have marked the illustrious history of each of the schools operating under the aegis of the American Church Institute for Negroes. In this respect they have justified the faith and support of the Episcopal Church.

Voorhees Junior College and High School was founded by Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, a graduate of Tuskegee Institute, in April, 1897. It became affiliated with ACIN in 1924. Its Board of Trustees is elected from the two dioceses of South Carolina of the Protestant Episcopal Church. It has a plant of 350 acres of land and a student body of 478 students. Both the junior college and high school departments are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Here again, the college chapel serves as the center of social life, and supports the local community with a spiritual life of its own. The Church is an organized mission of the Diocese of South Carolina and the bishop is the president of the Board of Trustees. The budget for 1960–61 is $285,700 of which $85,000.00 is contributed by ACIN. The current president of Voorhees is Dr. John F. Potts, who is a graduate of Benedict College.

Okolona Junior College, Okolona, Miss., founded in 1902. This school is one of eight "A" schools in the State of Mississippi, and is the only one of the ACIN schools that is not accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, as are none of the junior colleges in the State of Mississippi. It was created as a nonsectarian institute by Dr. Wallace A. Battle for normal and industrial training for young Negro men and women. In 1921, affiliation was effected with the ACIN. The bishop of the Episcopal

Diocese of Mississippi is chairman of the Board of Trustees and Okolona is one of two schools whose board of trustees opens its membership to non-Episcopalians. It may be noted here that all the boards of trustees of the schools are integrated boards. The physical plant comprises two-hundred and eighty acres and nine buildings. Accomodations for boarding students are provided with two dormitories and the current enrollment is 186 students. The educational program of the college is designed to equip its graduates to become: (1) competent elementary school teachers, (2) trained craftsmen in the vocation of their choice, or (3) college preparatory work. The graduates are eligible for a Class "C" Professional Certificate which makes them eligible to teach in the elementary schools of Mississippi and in reciprocating states. The budget of the school for 1960-61 was $128,440 of which $60,000.00 is provided by the ACIN. The president, W. Milan Davis, died in March, 1960, and at this time no successor has been selected. A full-time chaplaincy is maintained and the minister and chapel also serve the local community as a diocesan missionary church. As at all schools, chapel is compulsory and great emphasis is placed on the church-centered educational program.

In the graduating classes of 1960, there were many honor students. St. Augustine's College graduated a student who received an Atomic Energy Foundation award to attend the University of Southern California, a yearly grant of $3,500.00. A woman student received a $2,500.00 scholarship for graduate work at Tuskegee Institute. A St. Paul's College student received a National Science Award, as did a Voorhees Junior College student. Athletes from the schools have made distinguished records, and many from the junior colleges have earned scholarships to Northern universities. The basketball team at Okolona College, although not having a practice field of its own and forced to travel a twenty-eight mile round trip for gymnasium facilities, placed second in its association, and had two members named to the All Conference Team.

The choirs of St. Paul's College and St. Augustine's College perform throughout the land and are in constand demand for recitals during the Easter vacations. Although handicapped by the lack of facilities and equipment, the schools continue to set enviable records in the fields of music and arts.

The relationship between the students and the local communities is of the highest order. The college presidents command the respect of all and the schools pride themselves on the fact that there is a noticeable absence of any disciplinary problems. During the recent "sit-in" movement, the students at St. Augustine's College took part in an orderly disciplined fashion. At St. Paul's College, the Student Council voted to avoid any demonstration in the local stores, but boycotted the local movie house because of its segregated policy.

Fort Valley College Center situated in Fort Valley, Georgia, formerly affiliated as a school with the Institute in 1939, when the school was taken over by the State of Georgia, became a religious center for students at Fort Valley State College. It serves a dual purpose; it is a ministry to college

students, and it is also the Episcopal Church for the community. It promotes a Life and Work Conference, held annually, to provide guidance to college students in the choice of a life career and the value of following Christian principles. The budget for the year 1960 is $16,000.00, of which the ACIN contributes $5,000.00. The Director-Chaplain is the Rev. Odell G. Harris, Archdeacon in the Diocese of Atlanta. The Board of Trustees is mixed.

Historical Background

In 1865, under the leadership of both Northern and Southern churchmen, an effort was made at the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church to awaken the Church to its responsibility for Negroes, particularly in the South, through the organization known as "The Protestant Episcopal Freedman's Commission to Colored People." In 1866 the name was changed to the "Commission on Work Among Colored People" and later the "Commission on Negro Work." By 1900, the latter commission had received some appropriations from the Board of Missions toward its proposed work. At that time, the Negro communicants of the Episcopal Church numbered 15,000. (Present number is about 75,000).

The Episcopal Church was not satisfied with these results and the General Convention in 1904 dissolved the Commission on Negro Work and transferred its duties to the Board of Missions. The Board of Missions made a special study of the relationship, enlisting the help of churchmen both North and South. By the end of 1905, the Board reached the conclusion that to best serve the Negro population, a small autonomous body of twelve churchmen should be established to make a speciality of Negro work, to be called "The American Church Institute for Negroes."

The American Church Institute for Negroes was incorporated in 1906 by the Board of Missions "to promote the cause of education of Negroes in the South." The Episcopal Church felt that education was an essential prelude to the advancement of the Negro in citizenship and economic position, as well as religious development. Its first field agent was the late Rev. Samuel H. Bishop who was succeeded by the late Robert W. Patton, under whose long and devoted directorship, from 1914–1940, the Institute grew.

In some ways, the Institute functions like a holding company in the public utility field; it attempts to do for the educational organizations certain tasks that it is better equipped to handle than any individual school. It directs fund raising campaigns, and attempts to secure grants for the individual schools from educational and other charitable foundations. It handles the investments for a number of the schools and makes a strong effort to aid the school authorities in meeting emergencies which inevitably arise where schools have limited financial resources.

In the early years of its existence when policies were being determined, the Institute wrestled with the problem of how to assist Negro education; whether to establish one or two large schools in the South, or open schools in each of the Southern states with a large population of Negroes. After much weighty consideration, a policy was adopted to assist and strengthen

schools then already in existence. At the outset, however, limited resources made it difficult to offer more than just encouragement and advice.

It was natural that the progress of the Institute during its first ten years would be comparatively slow. Policies had to be shaped, groundwork had to be laid, and the membership of the Episcopal Church at large had to be acquainted with the purposes of the Institute and its mission. The founders of the Institute were men of courage and faith. They believed that their idea was sound and that the Episcopal Church would be awakened to a much larger sense of its responsibility to the Negro than existed at that time. Sound educational procedures had to be devised so as not to perpetuate the substandard facilities which were then available. Most important was the development of a curriculum based on Christian character. The far-sighted plan was not only to provide instruction, but also to return students to their native communities as ministers, teachers, nurses, or social workers, in order that they might work toward the goal of the betterment of local conditions.

The Schools

The Institute in its early years did a notable work, especially in ensuring that every school for Negroes to which it brought encouragement and financial assistance would be a bonafide scholastic entity, one that did well with what it had and did not pretend to do what it was not capable of doing. The emphasis was on the development of sound education and Christian character.

The following schools were among those originally supported by the American Church Institute for Negroes: St. Paul's College, Lawrenceveile, Va., St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, N. C., Voorhees Junior College, Denmark, S. C., Fort Valley College, High and Industrial School, Fort Valley, Ga., St. Agnes Hospital, Raleigh, N. C., St. Agnes School for Nurses, Raleigh, N. C., Bishop Payne Divinity School, Petersburg, Va., Gaudet Normal and Industrial School, New Orleans, La., Hoffman St. Mary's College, Mason, Tenn., St. Mark's Industrial School, Birmingham, Ala.

The last institutions to be released from ACIN were:

The Bishop Payne Divinity School, closed in 1949 and became affiliated with the Virginia Theological Seminary at Alexandria, Va.

St. Agnes Hospital was taken over by the city of Raleigh, N. C., also St. Agnes School of Nursing. Both of these institutions are about to close because the community is erecting a new hospital and nurses' training center. The property is reverting to St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, N. C.

Basic Policies

Certain basic policies have prevailed throughout the life of the Institute. In aiding in the Christian education of Negroes, certain standards had to be applied at different stages of development. Of course, the primary policy was to aid the Negro in securing an education and to see that he was able to use the skills that he developed. Over the years, an increasing part of the cost of operating the schools has been borne by the Negro group. It should be pointed out, however, that the economic class from which the Negro comes has a present annual income of $2,000.00; therefore many

of the Negro students had to be given scholarship assistance, a situation which still is prevalent.

Another policy was based on the realization that the education of the Negro was beyond that of any single agency. Thus, the Institute's task was and is a selective one and it attempted to have each school representative of its particular field, such as trade schools, agricultural schools, liberal arts schools, etc. Experimentation was considered a worthy educational enterprise.

An essential corollary of the foregoing policy was a willingness to relinquish a particular school or specialization when other agencies such as the Commonwealth were able to take over to expand and increase the work of the schools. In keeping with this principle, many of the original schools in the Institute have been relinquished to state authorities; however, in such cases careful safeguards were taken to insure that there would be real advances in these facilities, leaving the Institute in a position to sponsor or further other educational developments.

The Institute has never pursued a policy to secure direct ownership of the schools which it sponsors. Instead, the essentials of ownership are vested in the respective boards of trustees in the states and dioceses where the schools are located. Nor has it been the policy to attempt to hold direct control or absolute authority in the management of the Institute schools. Instead, the policy was to encourage the establishment of a strong board of trustees for each school made up principally of people within the state or diocese concerned, recognizing that people of the desired type do not accept such positions unless their responsibility and authority are clearly defined.

On the other hand, the Institute does take an active rôle as an advisor to the management of each school, cooperating with the management in upholding high standards in both educational matters and business and financial affairs. Such relationship is obviously that contemplated by the term "visitor" which has been the general description of the Institute's relationship to the schools from its inception. This necessitates a continual succession of visits by representatives of the Institute, consulting on the educational, spiritual, and business affairs, while constantly seeking higher standards.

The education of the Negroes who attend the Institute's schools is but a step toward the larger objective of preparing students for the rôle of leadership and increasing their economic abilities. A large part of the work of the schools lies in teacher training. Graduates are encouraged to enter the ministry and other professions, while those with lesser qualifications are trained for agricultural pursuits, and in clerical and secretarial skills. Never lost sight of is the consecrated endeavor to make good citizens of the students; to imbue them with the desire to raise the standard of living in the communities to which they revert.

The application of the Institute's policies have changed and will continue to change with the passage of time. It must be remembered that when most of the Institute's schools were first established these were the only schools available for primary and secondary education. Consequently, their first task was to provide rudimentary edu-

cation. Unfortunately, a large part of the students were in the primary or grammar grades. Recent developments have seen the task of primary education being assumed by the state authorities, and as a consequence, the Institute's schools have surrendered the lower grades and are now at the senior high school, junior college, and college level. Both in policy and application, the Institute does not seek size in schools, but is concerned with acceptable standards in the field of education.

Relationship with the National Council

The American Church Institute for Negroes is governed by a board of trustees appointed for the most part from the membership of the National Council, the executive body of the Episcopal Church. It is incorporated under the laws of the State of Virginia, but has been recently integrated in the organizational structure of the Home Department of the National Council. The Director of the ACIN is also an officer of the National Council and reports directly to the Department head. The present incumbent is Marvin C. Josephson, who succeeded the Rev. William G. Wright upon the latter's consecration as Missionary Bishop of Nevada. The secretary is the Rev. Tollie L. Caution, D.D., Executive Secretary, Racial Minorities Division, and the treasurer is Mr. Lindley M. Franklin, Jr., Treasurer of the National Council. Headquarters are located in the general offices of the National Council, at 281 Park Avenue South, New York 10, N. Y. The Rt. Rev. Arthur C. Lichtenberger, Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, is honorary president and the Rt. Rev. Daniel Corrigan, head of the Home Department, is president of the Board of Trustees. Close relationships are maintained with other bodies of the National Council, such as the Christian Social Relations Department, the Racial Minorities Division, and the Christian Education Department.

In the original charter, close association with the Episcopal Church was assured by a provision that all the trustees would be members or nominated by the Board of Missions. When the National Council was formed in 1919, the question of responsibility was raised once again and in 1920, a committee of the National Council recommended "that ACIN be continued as a separate body, to report directly to the Presiding Bishop and the Council, their appropriations and receipts, their plan of work." The director of the Institute gives a report of his work to the National Council and to the General Convention.

While the major income of the Institute comes from the National Council, invested funds pay for the entire cost of administration and also contribute toward the support of the program. The bulk of the income is used for annual appropriations to the schools. No set formula is applied, but the appropriations are based on a budget which includes provisions for emergency grants, scholarship funds, faculty study funds, etc. in addition to the regular appropriations. Apart from the travel and incidental expenses, the Institute's expenses are fixed in nature. The ACIN BUDGET for 1960 was $403,700.00, and the support given to the schools represents almost one-third of their operating budgets.

In effect, the director of ACIN is the

liaison officer between the National Council and the individual schools. As previously indicated, the board policies have been laid down by the ACIN Board of Trustees and are implemented by the director, but throughout the years there has been established a rapport between the ACIN and the schools which has been developed through fair dealing and intimate contact. Through continuing and frequent visits by the director and other concerned persons of the National Council, such as the Executive Secretary of the Racial Minorities Division, the Institute keeps intimately informed of the situation in each school. It constantly reviews the strength and weaknesses of the schools, their peculiar problems, the viewpoint of the trustees, the character and capacity of the staff, etc. The representatives attend the Trustees' meetings of the schools and in most cases, the director of ACIN is also a member of the boards of trustees of the individual schools. There are many tasks that the Institute is able to handle which are beyond the ability of the schools' administration. The Institute keeps informed of developments in the general field of education, in modern management techniques, and serves as an advisor of the local trustees and staffs on these matters and on special problems such as building programs, maintenance and equipment, etc.

Although the curricula of the school are largely determined by the requirements of the states in which they are located, every effort is made by the ACIN to alert these schools to changing concepts and modernization of program. Most of the schools have the highest rating afforded by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. It should be clearly noted that the Institute has only visitorial powers in cases where it is not represented on the board of trustees, and the representatives of the ACIN can exercise no broad administrative powers whatsoever. It owns not one stick of furniture, or any property, and is a servant of the boards of trustees of the schools. The Institute is unique in that it owns no academic plant, employs no faculty, enrolls no students, but there is no discounting its influence, since the withdrawal of its financial support would cause a catastrophic stoppage of the schools' operations. The schools, therefore, are completely autonomous and manage their own affairs without direct interference from the ACIN.

The school budgets are submitted to ACIN for review. Care is taken to see that there is a general conformity in the accounting systems of the respective schools. The schools are free to turn over their investments to the ACIN for management (without charge) on an agency arrangement. The ACIN has its own trust fund committee composed of qualified representatives of large financial institutions and banks in New York. Funds for endowment purposes are quite limited; however, securities held by the ACIN amount to $1,444,006.29.

Needless to say, the financial position of the individual schools is not at all rosy. Each school operates on an economy budget, making it difficult to secure competent faculty. Only recently, at the insistence of the director of ACIN, provisions were made for fringe benefits for faculty staff. But these benefits are contingent upon the availability of future funds, since none of the schools, except for Voorhees

Junior College, have provisions for these benefits in their budget at the present time. Also, salaries of the faculty at each school are low by comparison to the state schools and other church institutions which are fully supported by their denominations. It is estimated that more than $5,000,000.00 is required over the next five years to place the schools on a sound basis academically and to provide for maintenance and rehabilitation, modernization, and expansion of facilities. For instance, none of the schools has an adequate building for fine arts or physical education, a requirement that must be met by 1961 in order to retain accreditation in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. As one observer has said, "There is nothing wrong with these schools that money could not cure." Revenue from students' fees, as is true of the colleges in the United States today, do not nearly support the school program, and in the case of the ACIN schools, more than one-half of the students must be helped financially by scholarship assistance, work programs, or other means of support. The problem is made more acute by the fact that the alumni associations of the schools, while fervently dedicated and active, do not have the economic means to contribute significantly to the financial upkeep of the schools. Likewise, the boards of trustees of the individual schools, while for the most part dedicated and interested have not in the past provided the schools with the usual significant financial support that colleges in the United States are afforded by their trustees. This situation was recognized in part by the General Convention of the Protestant Church meeting in October, 1958, by including an increased appropriation for ACIN colleges in the general Church program for the triennium.

The Future

Although a great help, this considerable financial aid does not meet the problem. Projections made by eminent authorities indicate that by 1967, approximately six million students will be seeking entrance to college, more than twice as many as are now enrolled. All of the present institutions of higher learning and more additional units will be needed to meet this stupendous task and the ACIN schools must be ready to accept their share of the responsibility for training all qualified students who apply for admission. The ACIN schools are located in regions where 75 per cent of the college-age Negroes live. Most of the enrolled students in ACIN colleges would not be able to obtain a first-class education elsewhere. Approximately 90 per cent of them live in states where most of the secondary schools are barred to them.

There are many questions to be raised regarding the ACIN schools. As more and more Southern colleges and universities are opened to Negroes, what does the future hold for church-related colleges for Negroes? Will they close, or will they be strengthened financially to achieve comparable educational standards? If they do survive, should they integrate, or can they remain segregated?

There is no doubt that a concentrated effort has been made by state authorities to lure students with improved physical plants and equipment to campuses attractively rehabilitated and reconditioned. The church school, however, offers an academic climate of

freedom that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. It is no secret that many heads of state institutions have little freedom of movement and of choice to secure faculty on a basis of qualification, or to guide students in the troubled area of race relations. There is no doubt that there is a prominent rôle for the church-centered college, no matter what changes occur in our cultural patterns.

Traditionally, Americans have unlimited faith in education. It is universally recognized that the struggle to maintain scientific and technological supremacy depends upon the quality of education made available to the youth. Categorically, the future of ACIN schools does not depend upon whether or not there is desegregation, but rather upon meeting the requirements for first-class colleges.

A large measure of the responsibility for the future of the ACIN depends a great deal upon the attitude and policies of the Protestant Episcopal Church; whether the future holds promise for an enlarged program dedicated to enriching the opportunities for Negro education or a continuance of a token, holding effort. As the nation continues its trend toward integrated education and further efforts to ensure quality for all, the Church faces expanded opportunities for creative work in this area. First, its private institutions are free to determine their own policies, practices, and values in guiding and directing the development of students and ultimately influencing society. Secondly, there is an urgent need for training wise and compassionate leaders as teachers, sociologists, medical personnel, and clergy. Thirdly, more than ever there is a demand for colleges that stress high scholastic standards coupled with character building. Finally, there is a prevailing and crucial need in our society to replace materialistic evaluation with Christian commitment. To accomplish this, the Protestant Episcopal Church can contribute significantly:

1. Effective evangelization and the inclusion of the Negro in the total program of the Church;

2. Substantial assistance for the education of Negroes, while not tolerating substandard facilities, particularly in the schools under the auspices of the ACIN;

3. A church program generated for minority groups designed as a task-force agency to meet problems generally caused by racial discrimination or neglect.