One great fellowship of love?
Theological convictions & ecclesial realities
in the racial history of the Diocese of North Carolina

Address delivered to the Annual Convention of the Diocese
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In Christ there is no East or West, in him no South or North,
but one great fellowship of love, throughout the whole wide earth.
John Oxenham [The Hymnal 1982, #529]

Our diocesan racial history interweaves two strands. One is our proclamation that a Church claiming to be "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic" must make no room for racial exclusion; it's incompatible with who we believe Christ to be, and it violates the nature of the community he came to create. Both black and white Episcopalians have embraced that core conviction and sought to live by it.

The other strand is the willingness of white members of our church to countenance exclusionary and unjust practices, to minimize their ongoing impact, and to remain apathetic. This willingness has compromised our efforts to minister with African Americans, and left us ill-prepared to heed the call to racial justice.

All three antebellum bishops of our diocese—John Stark Ravenscroft, Levi Silliman Ives, and Thomas Atkinson—were vigorous promoters of slave evangelization, and they did not hesitate publicly to commend those members of the church, lay and clergy, who embraced this work.[1] They were especially solicitous of slaveholders who made provision for such ministrations by building plantation chapels and engaging minsters to do catechetical work with the enslaved population. In this regard, Bishop Ives' report of his 1846 visitation to New Bern

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[1] John Hope Frankin, "Negro Episcopalians in Ante-bellum North Carolina" *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* XIII.3 (September 1944) 216-234.

and Somerset Place bears quoting. Ives told the Annual Convention that he spent the 3rd Sunday in Lent in New Bern, adding:

> On the evening of Sunday, I officiated in a Chapel erected by the free persons of colour in this town, and placed under the charge of the Rev. Wm. N. Hawks, whose self-sacrificing labors in behalf of this much neglected class, deserve our acknowledgments, while they call for our imitation. . . . The question arose in my mind, and with shame for our past neglect, "What might not be done for our coloured population throughout the Diocese, if each man, who calls himself a christian Churchman, *would do his duty?"*

Bishop Ives continued:

> From this place I went, by the request of my friend, Josiah Collins, Esq., directly to the estates on Lake Scuppernong . . . Here, and in the neighboring Parish at Pettigrew's Chapel, I passed the remaining part of the season of Lent—holding daily services—delivering lectures, and commencing a new course of oral catechetical instruction to the servants. . . . The services here were of the most gratifying and encouraging character—fully justifying all that has been said and anticipated of the system of religious training hitherto pursued on these plantations. When I saw master and servants standing side by side in the holy services of Passion-week . . . and when I saw, on the blessed Easter-morn, the master with his goodly company of servants, kneeling with reverent hearts and devout thanksgivings, to take the bread of life at the same Altar, I could not but indulge the hope, that ere long, my spirit may be refreshed by such scenes in every part of my Diocese; while I could not help believing that, had some of our brethren of other lands been present, they would have been induced to change the note of their wailing over *imaginary suffering* [emphasis mine],

> into the heartfelt exclamation—"Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God."[2]

Constructing such a glowing picture of the harmonious plantation household required Ives to overlook evidence that slavery's critics refused to ignore. Within months of its publication in the diocesan journal, his account was subject to a withering critique from northern abolitionist William Jay. Writing as "A Protestant Episcopalian," Jay charged that Ives was a willing victim of a carefully orchestrated event and had conveniently omitted two salient considerations: first, that the slaves had no choice in the matter of their attendance or instruction; and second, that despite their standing as brothers and sisters in Christ, slaves had no power to renegotiate the conditions of slavery itself. Jay remonstrated Bishop Ives: "You well know, sir, that in the choice of their church and creed the slaves are passive; and that, had the … communicants been sent to auction on Easter Monday, they would each thenceforth have worshipped in the place and manner directed by 'the highest bidder.'" Indeed, Jay related the story of a fugitive slave, once content to receive the ministrations of the church, who refused to receive communion after his masters sold his brother to raise funds to purchase the communion silver.[3]

The glaring defects of our ministrations to blacks in the antebellum period were clear to all who had eyes to see. But the practice persisted and may even have borne fruit—in spite of all its shortcomings. Among the free black artisans of New

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[2] *Journal of Annual Convention 1846.* In making reference to 'our brethren of other lands' Ives had in mind the criticism of the Episcopal Church for acquiescing in slavery issued by Samuel Wilberforce, the bishop of Oxford. See Michael Malone, "Levi Silliman Ives: Priest, Bishop, Tractarian, and Roman Catholic Convert" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1970), 124.

[3] [William Jay], *A Letter to the Right Rev. L. Silliman Ives, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, Occasioned by his late Address to the Convention of his Diocese. By a Protestant Episcopalian* (Washington, D.C.: Buell and Blanchard, 1846) [7;9]. Jay reported that the "masters" were acting for the church itself.

Bern (who presumably belonged to William Hawks's congregation) was one Rigdon Green, who moved to Cleveland Ohio in 1859 but "clove to the Episcopal church, and at his death at age ninety-one, in 1887, the preacher recalled that his 'churchmanship was that of the school of the great Bishop Ravenscroft, of North Carolina, for whose memory he always expressed the most profound veneration.'"[4]

How do we account for such loyalty? Harold Lewis has suggested that black loyalty to the Episcopal Church is grounded theologically in the belief that the Episcopal Church is a catholic institution. By "catholic," Lewis explains, "black Episcopalians have understood the Church to be 'universal, that is, a church for all people, not one limited to any period, race or culture. . . . This catholicity meant that the church was pre-slavery and therefore pre-racism. Its formularies, practices and constitutions were divine and in place before racial inequality.'"[5] Ravenscroft was a high church Bishop, whose core convictions correlate precisely with the point Lewis is making. The loyalty of Rigdon Green to the Episcopal Church and his lasting regard for Bishop Ravenscroft bear that out.

In the months following the end of the Civil War, that claim to catholicity became the cornerstone of our diocesan initiatives with respect to the newly-emancipated. Bishop Atkinson led the way, noting that a church claiming catholicity could not in good conscience fail to minister to a large and vulnerable segment of the population. His call was seconded by an 1865 convention committee that called for "bold and decisive action." The committee declared that just as the political and social status of African Americans had radically changed, so there must be a corresponding change in how the Church approached its work with those who were

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[4] Catherine W. Bishir, *Crafting Lives: African American Artisans in New Bern, North Carolina, 1770-1900* (Chapel Hill: 2013) 140.
[5] Harold T. Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (Valley Forge: 1996) 4.

newly emancipated. No longer could the Church rest content with consigning them to a subordinate role in predominantly white congregations. Rather, the report called for the Church to take the lead in creating new black congregations and to invest in the cultivation and training of black vestrymen, catechists, and clergy. Moreover, the power to elect clergy for black congregations should reside with their own vestries, and the black clergy of the Episcopal Church should be welcomed to serve in North Carolina. To the committee, the very nature of the Church itself compelled such a response: "As we believe the Church to be Apostolic and Catholic, we feel bound to do all within our power to convey its holy teachings as rapidly and as potently as possible, to every soul committed to our care, whether its casket be Anglican or African."[6]

Atkinson, again citing the Church's catholic heritage, insisted that black clergy and congregations be admitted into union with convention on an equal footing. The Bishop strongly endorsed the Episcopal Church's Freedman's Commission and brought its resources to North Carolina, most particularly in the founding of St. Augustine's School in 1867. These initiatives reflected Atkinson's conviction that there must be black teachers and ministers for there to be effective ministry among the newly-emancipated.[7]

These were signal achievements. Thanks to Bishop Atkinson, ours was the only southern diocese to accept black clergy and congregations immediately into union with convention. And the investment in the founding of St. Augustine's proved to be well-placed, as the Raleigh school became-and still remains-the flagship black institution of the Episcopal Church. Our diocese was on the leading edge of

[6] *NCDJ, 49th* (1865): 36-38.
[7] *NCDJ* 50th (1866): 18,19.

ministry with African Americans within the southern Episcopal Church and among the predominantly white denominations of the state.[8]

Atkinson's successors sought to follow suit. Both Bishops Lyman and Cheshire made repeated fundraising trips to the north in support of St. Augustine's School. For example, in his 1898 report to Convention, Bishop Cheshire noted that he spent the month of January visiting Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Providence, and Pittsburgh, making 15 addresses on behalf of the Church's work among the negroes of the South.[9]

Notwithstanding its good beginning, the work among African-Americans did not achieve all that Atkinson and others had hoped. In an 1871 report to General Convention, Atkinson lamented that blacks evidently preferred "the ignorant teachers of their own race" to the ministrations being offered by the Episcopal Church.[10]

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[8] George Freeman Bragg numbered Bishop Atkinson among the "militant minority" of white men and women who "lost no opportunity to work for the best interest of all, black and white, and such have co-operated in preserving to the Church 'an open door' to the colored race." Of Atkinson, he wrote: "Bishop Atkinson . . . ere the smoke of Civil War had cleared came bravely forward in North Carolina, battling in the face of hard, bitter and unrelenting prejudice, established St. Augustine's College for the education of the colored race, organized colored parishes and had them admitted into union with his diocesan convention. And when the Standing Committee refused to pass the papers of a colored candidate for holy orders, invited two 'Yankee' Negro priests from the North to come into his diocese and admitted them to full privileges in his convention. Other Southern Bishops labored earnestly to do the same thing, but could not." George Freeman Bragg, Jr. "The Episcopal Church and the Negro Race," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church,* Vol. IV, No. 1, (March, 1935), 50, 51. The favorable comparison of the Episcopal Church in North Carolina with the efforts of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists is made by Roberta Sue Alexander, *North Carolina Faces the Freedmen: Race Relations During Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867* (Durham, 1985), 67-75.

[9] *NCDJ* 82nd (1898): 63.

[10] T. Felder Dorn has aptly characterized Atkinson's report to the General Convention of 1871 in which the quoted remarks appear: "The 1871 report to General Convention acknowledged the reality that the freed people in North Carolina generally were not responding to overtures from the Episcopal Church. The harsh language, however, seemed to reflect disappointment, if not some bitterness, at being rejected by the bulk of the black population. Attributing the rejection largely to the 'guidance of ignorant teachers' was a generalization that ignored the complex reasons for that rejection, including both white paternalism and the variety of religious options being chosen by black individuals." *Challenges on the Emmaus Road: Episcopal Bishops Confront Slavery, Civil War, and Emancipation,* 412, 413.

Dr. Anna Julia Cooper, a St. Augustine's School graduate, widow of a black priest and faculty member, and later a member of the faculty herself, found other reasons to account for the small numbers of black Episcopalians. Speaking to a group of black clergy in 1886, she declared:

> We believe in the Holy Catholic Church. We believe that however gigantic and apparently remote the consummation, the Church will go on conquering . . . till the kingdom of this world, *not excepting* the black man and the black woman . . . shall have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.[11]

Instead of black resistance to the claims of the Church, Dr. Cooper placed the patronizing attitudes of white leaders and concomitant lack of resources as the heart of the problem. She noted that "our clergy number less than two dozen priests of Negro blood and we have hardly more than one self-supporting colored congregation in the entire Southland. While the organization known as the A.M.E. Church has 14,063 ministers, 4069 self-supporting churches, with property valued at $7,772,284, raising yearly for church purposes $1,427,000. Something must be wrong. What is it?"

Dr. Cooper supplied the answer to her own rhetorical question:

> A *Black woman of the South* would beg to point out two possible oversights in this southern work. . . . The first is *not calculating for the Black man's personality;* not having respect, if I may so express it, to his manhood or deferring at all to his conceptions of the needs of his people. . . . A conference of earnest Christian men have met at regular intervals for some years past to discuss the best methods of promoting the welfare and development of colored people in this country. Yet, strange as it may seem,

[11] Anna Julia Cooper, "Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race," in *A Voice from the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 45.

> they have never invited a colored man or even intimated that one would be welcome to take part in their deliberations. . . .

The second oversight was a glaring lack of attention to raising up black women as leaders, Dr. Cooper noting that in its first 20 years of existence, St. Augustine's had only five female graduates.[12]

Anna Julia Cooper's devotion to the Episcopal Church--her love of its liturgy and ritual, her acceptance of its claims to Apostolicity and Catholicity--is clear in what she wrote, as is her deep anger and frustration at the patronizing and myopic attitudes of its white leadership. She grieved at what she saw as a persistent refusal to let black men--and even more so black women--fully realize their God-given leadership potential.

The situation decried by Dr. Cooper only deepened with the coming of Jim Crow, which circumscribed black leadership—limiting its influence to black congregations and institutions exclusively. The diocese's introduction of the convocation system in the 1890s proved at best a mixed blessing. On the one hand, there was now an Archdeacon dedicated to supporting and extending what was called "colored work." On the other hand, it became easy for whites to rationalize their lack of involvement in the furtherance of this work. It is painful to read the appeals for funds from the Archdeacons for Colored Work over a 35-year span and the consistently meager response. In the 1896 archdeacon's report we read the following: "It is a source of deep anxiety that this work is so little extended throughout the Diocese, and that so little interest is taken in it by the Clergy and people of the Diocese. If the Parishes as well as the Diocese would adopt it as their own legitimate work, which it is for their best interest to do, and

[12] Anna Julia Cooper, "Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race," in *A Voice from the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 34-44.

would look upon it as a missionary work of paramount obligation, much could and would be done. Its importance has not been adequately considered by the Diocese as a factor in its life, and until this impetus shall be given to it we cannot expect wide-spread results."[13]

That impetus was not forthcoming. The 1897 report from the same archdeacon noted that the work in Concord was being underwritten from New York; the work in Moncure and Southern Pines from Massachusetts. The new library at St. Augustine's was a gift from Mary Benson of Brooklyn.[14] That became the pattern. The Committee on the State of the Church in 1910 was simply stating the facts when it reported: "This work has been supported in this Diocese entirely by offerings from the colored people themselves and from white people outside of the Diocese." The Committee subsequently called on every congregation to take up an offering to aid in this work.[15] A year later, the same committee reported the results of its appeal: "White churches last year gave only $41.54 to our colored work, less than was given to the Jews. Our Bishop asks for $200. We recommend and urge at least an annual offering in every church in the Diocese for this work." Bishop Cheshire took up this matter in his Convention Address, declaring, "Should not each parish in the Diocese do something in aid of this work? In South Carolina the Convention has asked that the Easter Offering in every parish be devoted to the missionary work of the Diocese, one half to the white work, one-half to the black. Surely we should do something. I ask this Convention to recommend some method by which all our people may be encouraged to show their sympathy for our colored brethren, and to extend their generous assistance to our own faithful

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[13] *NCDJ* 80th (1896): 113. The Archdeacon at the time was William Walker, a white priest. He was succeeded in office in 1898 by John H.M. Pollard, who died in office in 1908, whereupon the position passed to Henry B. Delany, who held it until his death in 1928. For the last ten years of his life, Delany was listed as both Archdeacon and Bishop Suffragan.

[14] *NCDJ* 81st (1897): 111-113.

[15] *NCDJ* 94th (1910): 50,51.

colored Archdeacon [Delany] and the workers under him, in the efforts in behalf of our colored people."[16] So, what was the result of the Bishop's appeal? 1912 brought the report that less than $100 was raised through offerings from white congregations, and that received from only seven parishes.[17] Meanwhile, the black congregations continued to report their ongoing struggle to erect and maintain buildings and support program expansion. Reading the diocesan journals from the 1910s is like reading about two different churches: one where there is deep and sacrificial investment in black ministry, and one where there is almost none.

Even the symbolic unity of the races in convention was under threat, as black Episcopalians began to despair of having a black bishop unless they formed a separate missionary district under the guidance of General Convention. In the first decade of the 20th century, both Archdeacon Pollard (a black priest) and Bishop Cheshire spoke of their desire to preserve the principles of unity and catholicity. Cheshire put the matter in historical and theological context:

> The older members of the Convention remember well when slavery existed in the South, and when every congregation of white people had its proportion of slaves, attending the same church, baptized by the same minister, confirmed by the Bishop kneeling at the rail with their masters and mistresses, receiving the Holy Communion at the same altar. [Although] the abolition of slavery did not at once change this, at any rate it did not continue. . . . . But there is an important truth to be guarded and an essential principle to be conserved. The Church is One; and there must be an outward and visible expression of that Oneness. This Church, of which we are

[16] *NCDJ* 95th (1911): 47;50,51; 77. Note that a resolution requiring "every rector to bring this work before his people" on one Sunday each year was defeated, but a resolution asking every parish and organized mission to send one-third of its Easter offering to the work of the Colored Convocation passed. Also note the meager response in the report of 1912 (below).
[17] *NCDJ* 96th (1912): 42.

> members, has always maintained the obligation of outward and visible Unity, expressed in the organization and polity of the Church, and has repudiated the idea of different Churches for different classes or races of people. And so, when the results of the war and of emancipation had separated the whites and the negroes into different congregations of worshippers, the Church in North Carolina preserved the idea of Unity, and continued its testimony to that Catholic principle, by organizing the colored congregations into parishes and missions, where there seemed to be sufficient strength and intelligence, and by admitting the colored clergy and parishes into union with the Diocesan Convention.[18]

Archdeacon Pollard echoed the Bishop, declaring:

> I have given much thought to the question of work among the colored people and have not yet felt convinced that any further separation than we have now would lead to any better results. In other days negroes and whites knelt around the same family altars, joined in the same services in the church, were taught the same lessons and imbibed the same principles of morality and religion and both races were better for it. The unity of the Church of God is of far more vital importance than any temporary expediency. For one I am willing to stand or fall in struggling to maintain that "Faith once delivered to the Saints," and would far rather go and join one of the Christian denominations around than take part in making a new schism in the Church of God. . . . When I stand up and say "I believe in The Holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints," I mean it, and when I pray in that incomparable Litany: "That it may please Thee to bless and keep all Thy

[18]*NCDJ* 88th (1904): 69-72.

> people"; "'That it may please Thee to give to all nations unity, peace and concord"; . . . I mean every word of it, and have no apology to offer for my declaration of belief as stated in the Creed or my prayer as uttered in the Litany and other portions of the Book of Common Prayer. These things were taught me by some of the best people in this land, whose memories are precious in my sight, and these truths have become a part of my nature.[19]

Reluctantly, both Pollard and Cheshire subsequently agreed to promote the Missionary District Plan, though both publicly lamented the concomitant loss of bi-racial membership in diocesan convention, were the plan to be implemented on a national basis.

In 1918, as the national Church continued to debate the merits of a racial Episcopate, our Diocese was one of two to elect a black Suffragan Bishop to oversee African American congregations. Chosen was the Archdeacon for Colored Work, Henry B. Delany, who also taught on the faculty of St. Augustine's. Delany served for almost 10 years, and died in office in 1928. An important, but often overlooked facet of his work was the extension of his ministry to black congregations in the neighboring dioceses of North and South Carolina. The demands of making visitations in all these places took its toll on Delany's health and contributed to his death. It also led to an interesting exchange between Cheshire and Bishop Darst of East Carolina. In 1925, Darst suggested to Cheshire that North Carolina re-think the arrangement. Cheshire admitted that Delany's poor health might interfere with his duties, but stated categorically that he was not prepared to request Delany's retirement, thereby causing him to forfeit his

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[19] *NCDJ* 88th (1904): 130.

$2,800.00 annual salary in exchange for a $600.00 annuity. Cheshire took the position that Delany should have his annual salary for "as long as he may live."[20]

Such interchanges, along with other considerations, led to the suspension of the position of suffragan upon Delany's passing. Bishop Coadjutor Edwin Penick took up Episcopal oversight for black congregations in the diocese, and the entire convocational system was overturned in favor of a centralized administration. Henceforth all diocesan mission work would fall under the purview of a single Department of Missions that would answer to Executive (now Diocesan) Council.

Bishop Cheshire was ambivalent about the change; Bishop Penick embraced it, and fully implemented it upon becoming the Diocesan Bishop in December 1932. In 1935, Bishop Penick set forth his understanding of how the change impacted work among African Americans. He began,

> For many years, the Negro in North Carolina has been a member of the Diocesan Convention, with all its rights and privileges. He is a member of the Executive Council, not as a representative of his race, but as a representative of this Diocese, elected by this convention. . . . In others words, the North Carolina Negro Churchman is a constituent part of our Diocesan life and participates, on an equal footing, with others in legislative and administrative affairs. Within the past year, our Executive Council has eliminated the distinction between white and Negro work and has combined the parishes and missions of both races under the one designation, "Diocesan Missions." I hope that we are through talking about the "Negro Problem." So long as we refer to the Negro as problematical, he will regard himself as

[20] George H. Esser, "Rapid Growth and Financial Crisis, 1923-1941," in *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1959,* ed. Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon (Raleigh, 1987), 364-368.

such. So long as we assume that he is a dependent creature, just so long will he behave as such . . . The thoughtless, amiable white man has not been the friend to the Negro that he imagines. With a whimsical affection, he has deprived the Negro of self-reliance. The individual has done this. The Church has done this. As time goes by, and our inherited southern attitudes lost more and more of the distortion of prejudice, we find ourselves inclined to accept as fact what we have long admitted in theory, that the Church is one and catholic, and worships one God, who is no respecter of persons. . . . The time is at hand when we should stop making both white and colored people racially self-conscious by setting up differences within the family of God's children, a family where the white work is considered the normal function of the Church, and the Negro work as a kind of appendix that threatens to weaken the health of the body. What then is the policy of our Diocese towards the Negro? It is to regard him and to treat him in that spirit of comprehensiveness which has always been the genius of the Holy Catholic Church, wherein there is "neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free." To this attitude we expect the Negro for his part to respond. He has his contribution to make to the welfare of the body of Christ. Let him make his contribution with pride and self respect, and according to his natural genius and racial talents. . . . There is nothing novel about such a policy in North Carolina. It is as old as the universal Christian Church. The only novel feature about it is that we are putting into practice what we have long professed with our lips.[21]

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[21]*NCDJ* 119th (1935): 82-84.

Penick was sounding the now-familiar note of catholicity and calling once more for the church to practice what it professes. There is much to commend in this effort to normalize mission with African Americans and to do away with parallel structures (especially as we remember that this was being put forth at a time when there were still separate drinking fountains for whites and blacks across the south). As George Esser observed, this change in policy served the diocese well when it came time to desegregate in the 1960s, especially the insistence upon black representation on all governing committees and departments of Council. But in hindsight the defects of Bishop Penick's remarks are also apparent. While certainly not as egregious as Bishop Ives' claim that the sufferings of the enslaved were "imaginary", black Episcopalians must have wondered to themselves how their bishop could assert that the "distortions of prejudice" were abating, as though we were entering a new, more enlightened era in race relations in the mid-1930s. Just as white Episcopalians felt free to ignore the call to invest financially in the wellbeing of black congregations and institutions, here was another instance of a kind of obliviousness to the actual condition of race relations as it pertains to the black experience.

Glossing over the all-too-real challenges still facing black Episcopalians, meant that the church found itself ill-prepared to address the growing crisis within black congregations. In a 1959 report on the State of the Church, the committee expressed a genuine concern for our Negro Churches, declaring, "It is a tragic sight to see the Episcopal Church in North Carolina, which for some years has spearheaded work among Negro people with such bold advance steps as the establishment of St. Agnes and Good Samaritan Hospitals, the establishment of St. Augustine's College and even the election of a suffragan bishop, Bishop Delany, now to see this ministry so badly neglected. The shortage of Negro clergy is acute.

. . . The last year that a Negro clergyman graduated from the Seminary into this Diocese was 1952."[22]

A more complete review of our history would have shown that this was a presenting issue from the very beginning. It was noted by Anna Julia Cooper as far back as 1886. When we look to account for the growth of ministry among African Americans and the founding of new congregations, we can see that it owed much to the initiative of a few highly dedicated leaders, such as Bishop Delany, Archdeacon Pollard, and his son George Pollard. No provision was made to replace these men and their sacrificial service. Black representation in the councils of the church was a laudable commitment, but not an adequate response to the crisis at hand.

Moving ahead to the 1960s, we should pay tribute to diocesan efforts to desegregate and embrace the Civil Rights movement. Both Bishops Baker and Fraser called for the desegregation of public accommodations and diocesan institutions, and the latter was implemented as a matter of policy by 1965. But later in the 1960s, after the rise of the Black Power movement, the response to the "urban crisis" initiatives of 1967 and 1968 revealed the same kind of gap we saw earlier, namely, a small cadre of congregations and individuals prepared to engage the calls for black power/self-determination and a wide swath of the church's rank and file unprepared to move in this direction. As a diocese, we named the "urban crisis" our sole mission priority in 1968, but that didn't translate into robust support. Instead, there was open rebellion in the ranks over the General Convention Special Program grant to Howard Fuller and the Malcolm X Liberation University in Durham, resulting in a $165,000.00 shortfall in the acceptance of diocesan askings for 1970. On the one hand, we had George Esser and our own

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[22] *NCDJ* 143rd (1959): 155.

Urban Crisis Advisory Committee, who endorsed the grant and regarded Howard Fuller as a significant voice for racial justice; on the other hand, we had the chorus of those who saw Fuller as a threat to good order and fomenter of unrest, even violence. In the end, the diocese took recourse in a variant of Bishop Penick's position: Let's embrace black representation in our councils and call it good. Remarkably in 1973, as the Church's experiment with Black Power had nearly run its course, the Episcopalians of Winston-Salem saw their way clear to endorsing a grant to the local Black Panther Party for a medical transportation service, thus showing that the Church was still capable of taking a bold step on behalf of an underserved population.[23]

Let's stop there for now and fast-forward to the present. This overview of our two hundred-year racial history reveals two things: 1. We have aspired to be a church where black and white are embraced as equals and barriers are overcome. Our bishops have often issued the call for us to live into our catholic heritage; that catholic heritage has helped forge bonds of loyalty to the Church from black Episcopalians; we've demonstrated that we are capable of taking bold first steps. 2. But too often we've been content with symbolic gains and have neglected the deeper commitment to racial justice and equity. So, the presenting question raised by our history is this: can we close this gap between inspirational call and lackluster response, between leadership and rank & file, between profession of catholicity and practice of indifference? How might we address this longstanding challenge in response to this latest churchwide call for us to become beloved community – where racial reconciliation might be forged through prayer, teaching, engagement and action?

[23] See Brooks Graebner, "Historical Overview of the Civil Rights Era in the Diocese of North Carolina: An address delivered at St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Durham on June 3, 2017." (unpublished ms.)