

*Time's Prisoner: The Right Reverend Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter and the Civil Rights Movement in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama*

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Divinity

The General Theological Seminary  
New York, New York  
Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## Table of Contents

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Acknowledgments.....	iv
Chapter One:	
Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter: A Shoot from the Stump of Dixie.....	1
The United States: 1865-1955–Republican Progress, Then Democratic Regression	
The Tale of Two Jones–A Great-Grandfather and Grandfather of Pride	
Charles Colcock Jones, Sr.–“The Apostle to the Blacks”	
Charles Colcock Jones, Jr.–“The Macaulay of the South”	
Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter–A Great-Grandson and Grandson of the Old South	
Two Case Studies Representing the Favorable and Reactionary Views	
Case Study #1–In Support of the Favorable View	
<i>Bishop Carpenter’s Concern Regarding Alabama’s Black Clergy Shortage</i>	
Case Study #2–In Support of the Reactionary View	
<i>Bishop Carpenter and the Decision of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka</i>	
Where to From Here?	
Chapter Two:	
Bishop Carpenter and the Montgomery Campaign.....	28
The Spark that Set the Fire–The Montgomery Bus Boycott	
The Reverend Thomas Thrasher and Montgomery’s Episcopal Church of the Ascension	
The Reverend Robert DuBose, Jr. and the Montgomery Improvement Association	
The Founding of the Montgomery Improvement Association	
The Case of the Reverend Robert DuBose, Jr.	

Chapter Three:	
Bishop Carpenter and the Birmingham Campaign.....	43
Who Speaks for Birmingham?	
Fred Shuttlesworth and “Bull” Connor with Charles Carpenter In Between	
Project “C”	
“A Call for Unity” and “The Letter from Birmingham Jail”	
Chapter Four:	
Bishop Carpenter and the Selma Campaign.....	58
Bishop Carpenter vs. The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity	
Selma Episcopalians React–The Rev. T. Frank Mathews and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church	
<i>Excursus–Bishop Carpenter Does Battle Against the National Church</i>	
Jonathan Myrick Daniels–The Agitating Seminarian	
Conclusion:	
Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter: A Man of His Own Conflicts.....	75
Bibliography.....	87

## Acknowledgments

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The foundation for this thesis began in the spring of 2011 as a 25-page term paper written to fulfill the requirements of the last of three required Church history courses at The General Theological Seminary in New York, New York. From that time, the encouragement that I have received from Seminary faculty, staff, and fellow students to continue researching this topic has been a source of great motivation for me to produce this contribution to the study of the Church's history. With much appreciation and gratitude, I would like to thank my readers, Dr. Robert Bruce Mullin and the Reverend Dr. Amy Bentley Lamborn, the Reverend Andrew Kadel, Dr. Laura Moore, and Ms. Mary Robison of the Christoph Keller, Jr. Memorial Library, and my fellow classmates here at The General Theological Seminary for encouraging me in the pursuit of this study. Their insights were always helpful and remain greatly valued.

This project required four trips to Birmingham, Alabama and numerous hours of research into primary source documents. I extend my many thanks to the staff of the Archives Department of the Birmingham Public Library, for without their help, I cannot even imagine how this project could have been possible.

My appreciation also extends to the Reverends Victor L. Austin and Joel C. Daniels and the "20somethings" Group of St. Thomas Church (Fifth Avenue) in New York, for whom my talking about this project with and their comments and suggestions from such conversations contributed much to my investigation of this topic. I remain thankful for their friendship and will miss them as I prepare to transition into the life of ordained ministry back in my native Episcopal Diocese of Alabama.

It is to the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, especially the Right Reverends Henry N. Parsley, Jr. and John McKee Sloan and the Clergy and People of St. Peter's Church in Talladega, to which these acknowledgments also extend, for their affirmation of God's call to me into ordained ministry is a honor of humbling proportions. I will forever remain grateful for the confidence that they have placed in me to responsibly exercise the duties of the ordained ministry and pray that my service among them will be a reflection of God's Good News of salvation and love for all people.

Last, but most certainly not least of all, I extend my most heartfelt thanks and appreciation to my family, namely my mother, Ms. Dudley Gail Montgomery, and my father and stepmother, Dr. & Mrs. John L. Parrish, whose love, support, and many prayers throughout the course of my life have meant very much to me and have been pillars of strength in both good and bad times. I thank God for them always and am proud to call myself their son.

The General Theological Seminary  
April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
Easter Thursday

## Preface

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### *What Is This All About?*

In the fall of 2002, after having officially transferred from the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (the church of my birth) into the Episcopal Church, joining St. Peter's Church in Talladega, Alabama, I went on my first trip to the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, which had been functioning as the Cathedral of the Diocese of Alabama since 1982. The purpose for my trip was personal—an excited and new 17-year-old Episcopalian wanting to visit the Episcopal Bookstore, located on the Cathedral's bottom floor, and purchase his own personal copy of *The Book of Common Prayer*. After doing so, I took advantage of an opportunity to go inside the Cathedral and look around the 1883 Gothic-style edifice. As I walked into Clingman Commons<sup>1</sup>, the Cathedral's parish hall, portraits of its previous rectors and deans immediately surrounded me, with one particularly standing out from among the rest. An ornately framed oil portrait stretching so high and wide that it made the two others on either side look like munchkins, the figure depicted was of a very tall man, dressed in a long white robe with puffy sleeves and a sleeveless black coat-thing (which I would later learn in Confirmation class was a "rochet and chimere"<sup>2</sup>) and having hands that looked like they could engulf a person's

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<sup>1</sup> The parish hall of Birmingham, Alabama's Episcopal Cathedral Church of the Advent is named for the Right Reverend Charles Clingman, who served as the parish's rector from 1924-1936, after which he served as the Fourth Bishop of Kentucky from 1936-1954.

<sup>2</sup> Within the Anglican tradition, the rochet and chimere are vestments distinctive of the office of Bishop, together composing the episcopal choir dress. This distinctive dress is worn by Anglican Bishops during services associated with the Daily Office or Eucharistic liturgies in which they participate as clergy members of the congregation and not as concelebrants.

entire head—his left hand holding a black and silver metal staff<sup>3</sup> and his right hand holding a piece of paper. I stood in front of the grand portrait for at least five minutes. There was just something about this tall man that intrigued me; so much so that during each subsequent trip to the Cathedral after that, I could not (and still can not) help going into Clingman Commons and admiring the portrait of the tall man in all its grandeur. While telling my parish priest of this experience the immediate Sunday afterwards, I came to know the name of the man so imposingly depicted in the towering portrait. His name was Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter.

After my confirmation by the Suffragan Bishop of Alabama (now presently the incumbent Bishop of California) at St. Peter's, Talladega on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2003, I began to become more involved in the activities of the wider Diocese, attending Diocesan Convention, quiet days and retreats, and spending time at Camp McDowell, the Diocese's camp and conference center located in Nauvoo, Alabama in the "Free State of Winston."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The pastoral staff held by Bishop Carpenter in this particular portrait was presented to the Right Reverend Richard Hooker Wilmer, Second Bishop of Alabama from 1862-1900, by the clergy and people of the Diocese of Alabama in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his consecration in 1887. Bishop Wilmer's staff continues to function as the official symbol of the Bishop of Alabama's jurisdictional authority, having being passed down to every successive Diocesan Bishop since 1900.

<sup>4</sup> Winston County, Alabama is situated within the northwestern portion of the state, where the soil is shallow, which rendered the land highly unsuitable for agricultural purposes in the antebellum period. Because of this, the county's population was significantly low, with the 1860 United States Census recording only 3,453 white residents, of which only 14 were documented slave owners, and just 122 African-American slaves. With the majority being poor farmers, Winston County residents viewed the emerging Confederate States of America with suspicion, feeling that its sole purpose was to preserve the political standing of the wealthy agrarian class. When the Civil War began in 1861, Winstonians openly voiced their opposition to it and the Confederate States of America, feeling that if a state could secede from the Union, then a county could do the same from a state. At an informal gathering of pro-Union Winston County residents at Looney's Tavern on July 4<sup>th</sup>,

It was from the older and wiser “cradle” Episcopalians at these events and camp that I became more aware of whom exactly Charles C. J. Carpenter was. Whenever they spoke of him, these people of the older Alabama Episcopal generation would say that out of all the Bishops of Alabama that they knew throughout their respective lifetimes, Charles Carpenter was, by far, the greatest. For them, Bishop Carpenter was “the” Bishop, their affection for him still at a high ebb as it was years before. The overwhelming majority of older Alabama Episcopalians that I met were only small children during Bishop Carpenter’s episcopate, with one of the very first memories often recounted of the old Bishop being that of him confirming them during a parish visitation. As if it were yesterday, with a gleam in their eyes, these of the older generation recalled the Bishop’s massive hands firmly being placed upon their head and his booming voice surrounding the entire nave: “Defend, O Lord, this thy Child with thy heavenly grace; that *he* may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit MORE AND MORE, until *he* come unto thy everlasting kingdom....”<sup>5</sup> His presence was magnanimous and infectious and the admiration for him could not be noticed in any clearer way. For the older Alabama Episcopal generation, Bishop Carpenter was truly the great Bishop of their time.

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1861, a resolution was passed stating residents’ desire to be left alone to “work out our own political and financial destiny.” Even though their belief in the right of a county to secede from the state was affirmed, the resolution never officially called for Winston County’s secession from Alabama. Nevertheless, it would be from this meeting in which the county’s reputation as the “Free State of Winston” would be born, with current day Winstonians still referring to the nickname for lighthearted and tourism purposes.

<sup>5</sup> From “The Order of Confirmation Or Laying on of Hands upon Those that are Baptized, and come to Years of Discretion,” *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church According to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David* (1928 edition) (New York, New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1929), 297.

It was in the spring of 2011, as a Master of Divinity student enrolled at The General Theological Seminary in New York City, in which I read two books that caused me to learn of differing perspectives regarding Bishop Carpenter. The first was *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights*, written by the Reverend Dr. Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., priest-in-charge of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, with the second being *Blessed are the Peacemakers: Martin Luther King, Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders, and the "Letter from Birmingham Jail"*, written by Dr. S. Jonathan Bass, an assistant professor of history at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. These two volumes recount the Episcopal Church's past struggles with race, with Shattuck tackling the issue from the historical viewpoint of the national American stage and Bass doing so from that of local Alabama politics.<sup>6</sup> Both Shattuck and Bass describe Bishop Carpenter as one who was complacent with the constructs of segregation, advocating a position against civil disobedience demonstrations and for civil rights to be accomplished in time and through legal negotiation in the courts. Respectively, Shattuck describes Bishop Carpenter as a "paternalistic segregationist," the Bishop condemning racial discrimination only in general terms, having no real wish to promote positive social change, with Bass's description of the Bishop being along the lines of a "conflicted

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<sup>6</sup> Bass's volume, in particular, highlights the lives of eight Alabama Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious leaders (one of which includes the Right Reverend Charles C. J. Carpenter) who together published an April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1963 letter entitled "A Call to Unity," in which they implored the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders and demonstrators not to engage in an illegal march on Birmingham's City Hall that same day and, instead, work toward the attainment of full civil rights for African-Americans in the courtroom and not in the streets. Bass describes the process the eight ministers took in writing "A Call to Unity" and how the statement specifically led Dr. King to write the better-known "Letter from Birmingham Jail." An extensive discussion of these two statements will occur in Chapter 3.

moderate,” articulating a “middle-of-the-road” position between hardcore segregationists and militant integrationists, with his actions being the result of a well-intentioned, yet still wrong, civil rights ideology. Reading these books made me realize two things: (1) my denomination’s issues with race from a time far removed from my own, and (2) that there was much more to Bishop Carpenter beyond all that I was originally told almost a full decade ago.

*Where We Are Now*

Chapter One: Introduction—Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter: A Shoot from the Stump of Dixie

Here is where we come to the investigation at hand. In the Introduction, there will be three preliminary sections. First, there will be a look at the events that helped lay the foundation for what would become the modern Civil Rights Movement, giving a recollection of the constructs that governed the social and political infrastructure of the former Confederacy for 92 years, as well as providing the context behind Bishop Carpenter’s particular civil rights philosophy, taking into consideration the times into which he was born.

Secondly, there will be a genealogical highlight of Bishop Carpenter’s maternal family—the Jones Family of Liberty County, Georgia—specifically pinpointing his great-grandfather and grandfather, both named Charles Colcock Jones. Here, the case will be made regarding the influence that these two Joneses had upon the young Charles Carpenter, with the future Bishop inheriting his great-grandfather’s racial paternalism and his grandfather’s Old Southern sentiments, which will cause him to be held captive by the

ideals of a time vastly irrelevant to the social needs of the society in which he and all his flock would live.

The third section will begin the extensive look into Bishop Carpenter himself, with brief recollections done of his birth and childhood, his college years at Princeton University, his call to ordination and enrollment at Virginia Theological Seminary, and his priestly career in the Dioceses of Georgia and Alabama, leading up to his consecration as the Sixth Bishop of Alabama on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1938. The specifics of this section will highlight the overall good that was accomplished during the Carpenter years, showing how his tenure has lived up to its reputation of being the Diocese of Alabama's "Golden Age."

The investigation into Bishop Carpenter's moderate civil rights philosophy will then begin with two extensive case studies, aimed at representing the dualism of the Bishop's thought exhibited one way within the Church and in another within the South's secular society. The first will center on Bishop Carpenter's concern over his Diocese's shortage of African-American clergy, in which he appointed a special committee charged with finding out why the Diocese was experiencing such shortage and to produce tangible results in eliminating the problem. As will be seen, no tangible results or solutions would come from the committee's work, making the Bishop feel personally at fault and sad from the whole situation.

The second case study will be of Bishop Carpenter's statement regarding the United States Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, from which came a clear articulation of the gradual, moderate civil rights philosophy that he would advocate in his handling of Alabama's civil rights struggles during the coming

decade, as well as the highlight of comments by two of Bishop Carpenter's fellow Southern Bishops (both of whom had previously served as parish priests in Alabama under Bishop Carpenter before their own consecrations) speaking to their Dioceses about the *Brown* decision, articulating the view that the Supreme Court's decision was now the law of the land and that, no matter what was being thought about it, all needed to obey it by virtue of the obligations of American citizenship. This will show the current and subsequent disagreement that would be present between Bishop Carpenter and others throughout the Episcopal Church, with sentiment toward and involvement in the fight for African-American civil rights steadily increasing and the disagreement with Bishop Carpenter's slow, gradual pace growing more and more vocal through it.

All of this introductory information will help set up my thesis that Bishop Carpenter's gradual civil rights philosophy, formed by an admiration for a time and place no longer in synch with the current time's realities, rendered him unable to actively fight on the front lines for the racial justice and peace needed for all Alabamians. This will serve as the basis for the extensive discussions in the second, third, and fourth chapters.

Through them, I will seek to answer two questions:

- (1) Did Bishop Carpenter's civil rights philosophy make him, as Shattuck says in *Episcopalians and Race*, a "paternalistic segregationist," doing all that he could to preserve the established order and keep segregation in place for just a little while longer, or, as alluded to in Bass's *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, a "conflicted moderate," advocating a not-so-good philosophy with the purest of intentions?
- (2) Why?

At this point, we will have received a thorough briefing for the purposes intended for this investigation, being ready to examine the facts and see where they lead us. It will be an interesting journey, I can assure you.

## Chapter Two: Bishop Carpenter and the Montgomery Campaign

The second, third, and fourth chapters will each be devoted to the respective campaigns making up the modern Civil Rights Movement. Chapter Two will focus on the Montgomery Campaign, recalling the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, the establishment of the Montgomery Improvement Association and its oversight of a successful bus boycott strategy, the Alabama Council on Human Relations, and the Montgomery sit-in protests, sparked by similar protests in Greensboro, North Carolina in February 1960.

This chapter will highlight two Alabama clergymen on record as having direct involvement in the organizations and activities connected with the Montgomery Campaign. The first will be of the Reverend Thomas Thrasher, a white Episcopal priest and rector of Montgomery's Church of the Ascension, whose liberal preaching for integration produced a growing conflict between him and his conservative parishioners, eventually leading the latter to request Bishop Carpenter's removal of the former from the parish's pulpit.

The second will be of the Reverend Robert DuBose, Jr., vicar of Montgomery's all-black Good Shepherd Episcopal Mission (and the only African-American clergymen whom Bishop Carpenter would ordain throughout his entire episcopate), whose wearing of church vestments and persistent involvement in Montgomery's civil rights demonstrations, against the Bishop's admonitions not to, led to a struggle in the pastoral relationship between the priest and Bishop, with DuBose leaving the Diocese in 1961 for a place in which his civil rights involvement was both accepted and affirmed.

Both of these highlights will serve as examples of Bishop Carpenter's typical reaction to and handling of issues of clergy conflict and insubordination arising from the civil rights fight, with the Bishop's response oftentimes being encouragement to find employment in Dioceses more tolerant of clergy civil disobedience than the Diocese of Alabama.

### Chapter Three: Bishop Carpenter and the Birmingham Campaign

Chapter Three will be a more in-depth investigation into Bishop Carpenter's moderate civil rights philosophy, a position for the need for the civil rights struggle to take place within the courts and not in the streets and for gradualism in the shifting from segregation to integration. Three essential statements and their ramifications for the Civil Rights Movement will be examined.

First will be an examination of a statement entitled "An Appeal for Law and Order and Common Sense," a January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1963 open letter addressed primarily to Alabama's white citizens by Bishop Carpenter and 10 other state Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish religious leaders in reaction against the rising vigilance displayed toward issues of racial integration, fueled by Governor George Wallace's historic proclamation of "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever."

The next statement to be examined will be "A Call to Unity," an April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1963 open letter, written by Bishop Carpenter and 7 of the 10 other signatories that joined him in writing the previous statement, addressed to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders and demonstrators, encouraging them to forego plans of an

illegal march on Birmingham's City Hall and not provide an opportunity for possible violence on the streets.

The third examined statement will be of Dr. King's very well known "Letter from Birmingham Jail," through which he responded to Bishop Carpenter and his fellow white signatories with an epistle-like justification for the activities of the Civil Rights Movement, his particular reasons for being in Birmingham, and an argument explaining why the moderate civil rights philosophy of Bishop Carpenter and others like him was more frustrating than it was helpful.

#### Chapter Four: Bishop Carpenter and the Selma Campaign

The Selma Campaign was the climatic turn of the Civil Rights Movement that pitted Bishop Carpenter's gradual philosophy against the growing sentiment for immediacy of African-American rights throughout the larger Episcopal Church. Chapter Four will be an examination of how the Selma Campaign brought the Episcopal Church out from under its past racial complicity and of the swelling infestation of outside Episcopalians, ordained and lay, converging on Selma, Alabama to join in the civil rights demonstrations, blatantly ignoring Bishop Carpenter's pleas for them to stay away and not add to (white) Alabamians' continued resistance of the racial progress being worked for by state and local leaders.

In this chapter, we will specifically consider the activities of the Dallas County Voters' League and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in their work of advocating for fair voting rights and laws for all Dallas County residents; the formation of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and its role in raising the Episcopal

Church's awareness of its need to work for justice and peace for all American citizens; civil rights workers' protests of the segregation policy of Selma's St. Paul's Episcopal Church and of the "rock-and-a-hard place" position of its rector, the Reverend T. Frank Mathews; and a reflection on Episcopal seminarian Jonathan Myrick Daniels, a white Selma Campaign worker whose murder outside a Lowndes County, Alabama convenience store sparked national outrage and heightened the nation's consciousness even more of the atrocities committed by racial insensitivity, leading many to call on Congress to stop stalling the passage of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965.

*Where Will All This Take Us?*

Throughout this paper, I will attempt to explore, in extensive depth, the civil rights philosophy of Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter—a Southern Episcopal Bishop whose genteel manner made him a prisoner of his time, advocating for African-American rights to be accomplished in time and not by civil disobedient protests. This exploration will show how racial progress composed part of Bishop Carpenter's sacred responsibility, but how unfortunate it was that he failed in that particular task. In the vein of the "Epilogue" from Shattuck's *Episcopalians and Race*, it is important that Episcopalians, as well as the people of all other Christian denominations, remain conscious of the issue of race from the standpoint of total equality, not begrudging acceptance. It is my hope that this paper will be a positive contribution to the case for such consciousness throughout the Church Universal. To you, the reader, I am honored to have you join me on this journey through the annals of history.

## Chapter One

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### *Introduction—Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter: A Shoot from the Stump of Dixie*

#### The United States: 1865-1955—Republican Progress, Then Democratic Regression

1861-1865 were years of excruciating fragility and torment for the American Union. America was at war with itself: 25 Northern and border lying states against 11 Southern slave-holding states. Individual states rights, territorial integrity, and the institution of slavery threatened to forever divide a nation, which, just 85 years before, fought for its own independence from British colonial rule. Abraham Lincoln, America's first Republican president, elected on a platform of strong nationalism and opposition to slavery's expansion, was faced with a daunting task—preserving the American Union. His Emancipation Proclamation, having been made effective on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863, was a potentially crippling blow to the South's economic and social culture, having declared over 3,000,000 African-American slaves legally emancipated and provided the foundation for the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment's ratification in 1865. With the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments during the Reconstruction Era, African-Americans became the beneficiaries of rights previously not afforded them and made the (then assassinated) President's proclamation permanently binding upon all American states.

During the 12 years immediately following the Civil War, the United States Congress was faced with the task of overseeing procedures that set conditions for the reincorporation of former Confederate states into the greater American Union. These conditions largely entailed of the Southern states redrafting their respective constitutions, subjecting them to Congress's final approval, and agreeing to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, recognizing the right of African-American male suffrage. These political stipulations

imposed by the Radical Republican Congress were met with great resistance and begrudging acceptance in the former Confederate South. Although combat operations between the two regions had ceased, the political battles between the North and South were still fervent and strong, making the Reconstruction Era a highly contentious time in American politics.

By 1900, 37 years after President Lincoln's proclamation, America was finding itself on the cusp of another internal war—a war over civil rights. African-American rights had become suppressed by way of legal disfranchisement and Jim Crow legislation facilitated by Southern Bourbon Democrats. The Bourbon's aims were to establish white supremacy, disfranchise blacks, and strengthen the Democratic stronghold of their state legislatures. By 1955, 92 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, the South's realization of legitimate African-American suffrage and their inalienable rights still had not come to pass. The *Plessy vs. Ferguson* mantra of "separate but equal" was both fervently embraced by the Southern white Democratic establishment and explicitly enforced by local and state law enforcement officers and elected officials. As Justice John Marshall Harlan had predicted in his 1896 dissent, segregation stimulated aggression, aroused racial hatred, and perpetuated feelings of distrust between the races.<sup>1</sup> The South was plagued with the stain of segregation, its head being held high by Jim Crow hate.

### The Tale of Two Joneses—A Great-Grandfather and Grandfather of Pride

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<sup>1</sup> From the text of Associate Justice John Marshall Harlan's dissent in the decision of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) (<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=163&invol=537>) Web. Accessed on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Robert Manson Myers' *The Children of Pride* provides the most intimate historical picture of Charles C. J. Carpenter's maternal family—the Jones Family of Liberty County, Georgia. The future Bishop's ancestors are shown to be very well educated and possessing a position of prominence throughout Georgia's coastal region. The letters that Myers highlights, written between 1854-1868, shed light into a family that epitomized antebellum Southern society, was affected by the strains of war, and had to deal with the realities of Reconstructionist occupation. Their tight-knit relationship conveys a strong love for and allegiance to family and the Old South as a land of idealism and agrarian promise. For the modern day reader, Myers' *The Children of Pride* paints an idealized picture of the Old South, telling of what it was, how it was lost, and of one family's longing for its former glory.

A recurring topic of the Joneses' correspondence was that of religion. They were a staunchly Protestant Christian family whose strong faith in Almighty God served as one of their best-known characteristics. For the Joneses, God was the ultimate reality. Christian piety was an inherent familial trait. In times of antebellum prosperity, Civil War conflict, and Reconstruction loss, it was firm faith in God that sustained the Joneses and kept giving them the courage to persist and carry on. There is no doubt that this strong Christian permeation would have an effect on the young Charles Carpenter, becoming an inheritor of his maternal family's long, fervent devotion to Almighty God, the Christian faith being the central facet of his life and innermost thoughts.

*Charles Colcock Jones, Sr.—“The Apostle to the Blacks”*

Charles Colcock Jones, Sr. (Charles Carpenter's great-grandfather) was a Presbyterian minister with deep ties to the Georgia coast. Born on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1804 on his father's Liberty County plantation, Jones's forebears constituted a well-established line of Georgia rice planters. His education was acquired through study at Exeter Academy, Andover Theological Seminary, and Princeton Theological Seminary. He entered the ordained Presbyterian ministry and became a highly influential church leader, serving as pastor of Savannah's First Presbyterian Church from 1831-1832, teaching church history at Columbia Theological Seminary from 1835-1838 and again from 1847-1850, and serving as the corresponding secretary of the Presbyterian Church Board of Domestic Missions from 1850-1853.<sup>2</sup> In 1830, he married his first cousin, Mary Jones, with whom he had four children, three of which survived to adulthood.

It was during his academic formation in Massachusetts in which Jones began to experience an internal wrestling concerning the morality of slavery. But the society into which Jones was born and belonged was a pro-slavery one, which caused him hesitantly to continue defending slavery as the primary means of successful Southern commerce. As time went along, he was able to come to some sort of reconciliation with slavery from within the realm of Christian mission. He began to see Georgia's African-American slave population as opening an opportunity for the spread of the Christian Gospel and their eyes to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. From this, Jones began to advocate for a new attitude toward the slave—an attitude that was just, yet merciful; stern, yet compassionate; firm, yet benevolent. The internal wrestling and guilt that fueled Jones's paternalism made him

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<sup>2</sup> Randall M. Miller and John David Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1988), 379.

view the Southern white Church as having some form of responsibility for the education, treatment, and personality development of the slave.<sup>3</sup> From this view, he was able to continue defending the institution of Southern slavery through the age-old argument of the existence of authority by the greater and subordination from the lesser throughout nature.

Jones's paternalism and missionary zeal arose out of his belief in the providence of God. He felt that it was God's providence that imposed upon him, as well as upon all members of the Church in the Southern United States, the responsibility of imparting upon African-American slaves the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In his book *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, Jones posits the view that

*"It was by the permission of Almighty God, in his inscrutable providence over the affairs of men, that the Negroes were taken from Africa and transported to these shores. The inhabitants of the Colonies at their first introduction had nothing to do with the infamous traffic, and were, we may say, universally opposed to it. The iniquity of the traffic and of their first introduction, rests upon the Mother Country.*

*"Being brought here they were brought as slaves; in the providence of God we were constituted masters; superiors; and constituted their guardians. And all the laws in relation to them, civilly, socially, and religiously considered, were framed by ourselves. They thus were placed under our control, and not exclusively for our benefit but for theirs also.*

*"We could not overlook the fact that they were men: holding the same relations to God as ourselves—whose religious interests were certainly their highest and best and that our first and fundamental duty was to provide to the extent of our ability, for the perpetual security of those interests. Our relations to them and their relations to us, continue the same to the*

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<sup>3</sup> John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), viii. In 1972, Blassingame wrote this book for the purpose of providing a historically accurate depiction of antebellum Southern slavery from the view of the enslaved African-American. Blassingame's description of the "Sambo" slave character was a representation of some white slave owners' attitude toward their slaves as being childlike and seeing the responsibility to guide them along according to what was felt to be in their best interests. This form of paternalism was the kind that Charles Colcock Jones, Sr. exhibited toward his own slaves and throughout his Christian missionary efforts to all slaves.

*present hour, and the providence of God still binds upon us the great duty of imparting to them the Gospel of eternal life.”<sup>4</sup>*

His internal reconciliation and belief in the providence of God led Jones to devote himself to the work of African-American slave evangelization and for their incorporation into the life of the Church. His evangelization efforts caused him to be dubbed “the Apostle to the Blacks.”<sup>5</sup> This description was a testament to his reputation of bestowing benevolent conduct towards African-American slaves and strong commitment to instructing them in the ways of the Christian life. He founded several Presbyterian missions to the slaves, including the Dorchester Mission near Savannah (ironically, where Martin Luther King, Jr. planned the Birmingham civil rights campaign).<sup>6</sup> In addition to *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, he wrote several books that became standard reference texts on Christian slave evangelization, including *A Catechism of Scripture, Doctrine, and Practice*.<sup>7</sup>

Jones’s missionary work to the slaves became a particular passion for him. Despite having a well-known reputation for being a benevolent slave owner and missionary, he continued to feel the inward struggles of coping with the moral dilemma of slavery.

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (Savannah, Georgia: Thomas Purse, 1842), 159-160.

<sup>5</sup> Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., “Charles Colcock Jones,” *Encyclopedia of American Religious History (Third Edition)* (New York, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2009), 544.

<sup>6</sup> S. Jonathan Bass, *Blessed are the Peacemakers: Martin Luther King, Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders, and the “Letter from Birmingham Jail”* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 31-32.

<sup>7</sup> Shattuck, 544.

Because of these continuing struggles, Jones's missionary efforts did not achieve the full level of success that he had hoped for and wanted. Because of ill health, he retired from the active ordained ministry in 1853 and died 10 years later at his Liberty County plantation.

*Charles Colcock Jones, Jr.—The Macaulay of the South*

Jones's son, Charles Colcock Jones, Jr. (Charles Carpenter's grandfather and namesake) was born on his family's Liberty County plantation on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1831. Much of his early childhood was spent in Liberty County among surroundings like those of other well-to-do planters' sons of eastern Georgia. He acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1852 and went on to receive a law degree from Harvard University in 1855. After his graduation from Harvard, he returned to his native Georgia and established a successful law firm in Savannah.<sup>8</sup> He was married twice, first in 1858, which brought forth a daughter, then again (with his first wife having died) in 1863, which brought forth a son. In 1860, at the age of 29, Jones was elected mayor of Savannah and served in that position until his enlistment as a Confederate army officer in 1861.<sup>9</sup>

Having successfully regained his fortune (previously lost as a result of the Civil War) by practicing law in New York City, he returned to Georgia in 1877, settled in Augusta and reestablished his law practice. This latter part of Jones's life saw him become

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<sup>8</sup> James Calvin Bonner, "Charles Colcock Jones: The Macaulay of the South," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* (Volume 27, No. 4; December 1943), 324-325.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas M Carpenter, "A Southern Family's Path to Princeton," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (Volume 111, No. 12), Web.

one of Georgia's most knowledgeable 19<sup>th</sup> century historians. His historical skills and grand eulogies of the Old South made him a prominent figure of the Lost Cause Movement. His memorials spoke eloquently of the Old South having fought the good fight against Northern territorial aggression and for the right for states to govern themselves. Jones became celebrated and praised by fellow Southern historians for his dignified remembrances of the old Southern way. His lauding praise of what use to be helped keep the memory and vision of the Old South as a distinct land of cultural promise and agrarian fruition alive. On his deathbed on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1893, Jones died a man deeply in love with the Old South, believing that the region's new industrialization "insulted the graves of the Confederate dead" and marked an end to "true civilization in favor of barbarism."<sup>10</sup>

#### Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter—A Great-Grandson and Grandson of the Old South

The subject of this paper, a descendent of these two Joneses, was a man caught in the middle of Alabama's civil rights struggles during the 1950s and 1960s. He was a clergyman, a consecrated Bishop of the Episcopal Church, whose "moderate" civil rights position was enigmatic, to say the least. In similarity with his great-grandfather, this enigma caused him to say one thing, but act in a totally opposite direction. His ambivalence on the racial question garnered him heat from both sides—as a race traitor and liberal from segregationist whites, and a closeted, affirming segregationist from integrationist blacks. His genteel Southern manner made him a prisoner of his time, advocating for African-American rights to be accomplished "in time" and not by civil disobedient action. The culture into which he was born and reared was radically changing

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<sup>10</sup> Bass, 31.

and the effects of the modern Civil Rights Movement wreaked havoc on his love of tradition, calm, and order.

Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter was born on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1899 in Augusta, Georgia to the Rev. and Mrs. Samuel Barstow Carpenter.<sup>11</sup> During his formative years, the young Carpenter developed an attachment to the Old South, having been influenced by the letters and papers of his late maternal grandfather. In his young adult years, Carpenter grew to stand at a towering 6'4" and weigh 275 pounds. After graduating high school, he undertook his undergraduate studies at Princeton University, where he reigned as a heavyweight-wrestling champion. After graduation from Princeton, sensing a call to Holy Orders, he enrolled for graduate study at the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia, graduating in the Class of 1926. After completing seminary, Carpenter married the former Alexandra Morrison in 1928, had four children (two sons and two daughters), and served as rector of Grace Church in Waycross, Georgia (1927-1929), St. John's Church in Savannah, Georgia (1929-1936), and the Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama (1936-1938). On June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1938, at the hands of Presiding Bishop Henry St. George Tucker and Bishops Theodore Bratton of Mississippi and Henry Mikell of Atlanta, Carpenter was consecrated as the Sixth Bishop of Alabama, succeeding his very recently deceased predecessor, the Right Reverend William George McDowell.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> According to an article on page 265 of Volume 16 of George Derby and James Terry White's *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York, New York: James T. White & Company, 1918), Samuel Barstow Carpenter was rector of Augusta, Georgia's Episcopal Church of the Atonement from 1894 until his death on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1912.

<sup>12</sup> "Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter, D.D., LL.D. (406)," *The Living Church Annual* (New York, New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1939), 54.

Many of Alabama's older Episcopalians remember the late Bishop Carpenter with great warmth, admiration, and profound respect. His 30-year episcopate, from 1938-1968, were times that included the Second World War, the Second Red Scare, the Korean War, the recession of Jim Crow segregation, and the modern Civil Rights Movement. Bishop Carpenter's episcopal administration has been classified as one of the Diocese of Alabama's golden eras.

*Population Statistics for the State of Alabama from the 1930, 1940, 1950, and 1960 Censuses<sup>13</sup>*

Year	Population
1930	2,646,248
1940	2,832,961
1950	3,061,743
1960	3,266,740
<i>Total Increase</i>	<i>23.44%</i>

*Statistics of the Total Baptized Membership for the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama for the years 1938, 1953, and 1968<sup>14</sup>*

Year	Number of Total Baptized Membership
1938	16,311
1953	21,236
1968	33,393
<i>Total Increase</i>	<i>104.72%</i>

Due to the post-World War II baby boom, the Diocese experienced tremendous membership growth. During this time, Bishop Carpenter led efforts in the establishment

<sup>13</sup> Statistics are from the 1953 and 1962 editions of *The World Almanac* (New York, New York: New York World-Telegram Corporation).

<sup>14</sup> 1938, 1953, and 1968 are the years respectively marking the beginning, halfway mark, and end of Charles Carpenter's tenure as Bishop of Alabama. Statistics are from the 1939 *Living Church Annual* and from the 1954 (New York, New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co.) and 1969 (New York, New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co.) editions of *The Episcopal Church Annual*. The information contained therein reflects data from the editions' immediate preceding year.

of three parishes, five mission stations, and oversaw the process of two mission stations achieving parish status. Along with establishing new parishes and missions, Camp McDowell (named in honor of his immediate predecessor) was established, firmly marking Alabama's place in the offering of summer Christian camp opportunities for youth and young adults. "It was the best of times" for the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church in Alabama.

But of all the good that was accomplished during the Carpenter years, it was also accompanied by the challenges of social change. The most challenging experiences of these years came in the area of civil rights. Concerning civil rights, many older (white) Alabama Episcopalians insist that Bishop Carpenter held a favorable view, bringing up examples such as his hosting of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders in his office in 1963, his cordial relationship with the Diocese's African-American clergy, and the racial integration of Camp McDowell during his episcopal administration. On the other hand, there are others within the Diocese who say that Bishop Carpenter was a "paternalistic segregationist," calling his supposed middle ground view between the extremism of diehard segregationists and militant integrationists preposterous.<sup>15</sup> This group feels that Bishop Carpenter's attitude towards civil rights was more reactionary than progressive, with their examples being his signing of "A Call for Unity," asking Dr. King and other civil rights leaders to cease their civil disobedience demonstrations in Birmingham, and his harsh treatment of clergy who actively participated in such

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<sup>15</sup> Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 104.

demonstrations. As can be seen, these two opposing views compose one of the few controversial issues for a Diocese that, in overall aspect, is spiritually healthy with a firm commitment to Gospel hospitality.

## TWO CASE STUDIES REPRESENTING THE FAVORABLE AND REACTIONARY VIEWS

### Case Study #1—In Support of the Favorable View *Bishop Carpenter's Concern Regarding Alabama's Black Clergy Shortage*

During the proceedings of the 124<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, Bishop Carpenter, in his episcopal address, spoke of an immediate concern facing the Diocese—the shortage of African-American clergy. For the Bishop, the shortage was a matter of great disappointment and personal embarrassment. In reporting to his Diocese of the time's clerical situation, Bishop Carpenter had this to say:

*"To my shame I must record the fact that in the 16 years of my Episcopate I have ordained but one Negro clergyman.<sup>16</sup> I do not know where the difficulty lies, but the facts indicate a difficulty which must be discovered and overcome. We are ready and able to give to adequate young Negroes the best possible education. The field is ripe for their service. The opportunity is tremendous, but somehow we have failed to stimulate the interest of our best Negro youth, and we are faced with a growing shortage of clergy in contrast to a growing number of communicants and opportunities for the opening of new work. I present this matter for your consideration in the hope that usable suggestions may come from you."<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>16</sup> That "one Negro clergyman" was Robert Earl DuBose, Jr., a native of Fairfield, Alabama who completed his undergraduate education at Saint Augustine's College in 1950 and received his divinity degree from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in 1953. He was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Carpenter in June 1953 and to the Priesthood in December 1953 by Alabama Suffragan Bishop George M. Murray. Information is from *The Clerical Directory of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (1956 Edition)* (Wilmington, Delaware: Hambleton Company, Inc., 1956), 113.

<sup>17</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Bishop's Address to the 124<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, May 1955).

The Convention's Committee on Christian Education and Evangelism considered "the need of presenting the claim of the ministry to Negro youth" during an afternoon business session. Like the Bishop, the committee felt that the Diocese's Negro work and recruitment for the ordained ministry was much to be desired and that it demanded immediate attention. The Reverend John Cole, rector of Mobile's all-black Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, stated that part of the problem was that for the majority of Alabama's African-Americans, the Episcopal Church was a relatively unknown institution and that parochial schools would be the most effective missionary effort in attracting more blacks to the Church. He also stated that African-Americans who already were Episcopalians questioned their place within the Church and the truth of whites' acceptance of their participation in its meetings and councils. William Clark, an African-American lay delegate from Tuskegee's St. Andrew's Episcopal Mission, further described the shortage of black clergy as not only being a diocesan problem, but also a denominational problem, "a national corollary of the present situation." Clark spoke of the Episcopal Church as having "more to offer to the Negro than any other religious body, and that that fact would in time have its effects."<sup>18</sup>

From its discussions, the committee recommended to the Convention "that we dedicate our thinking anew to the problem of the shortage of Negro youth seeking to prepare for the ministry, and that we recommend to the Convention the appointment, by

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<sup>18</sup> Report of the Committee on Christian Education and Evangelism to the 124<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, May 1955).

the Bishop, of a small Diocesan Committee of qualified white and Negro communicants to study this problem, and to make specific recommendations to the next Convention....”<sup>19</sup>

With the Diocesan Convention having adopted the committee’s recommendation, the “Committee to Study the Problem of Securing Young Negro Postulants for Holy Orders,” consisting of five members, four black and one white, officially began its work on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1955.<sup>20</sup> In its discussions, the committee realized that the black clergy shortage extended way beyond that of ministry recruitment problems and included a lack of intentional missionary work among Alabama’s black population. According to the 1950 United States Census, Alabama had a population of 3,061,743, of which 979,761 were African-American.<sup>21</sup> At the time, there were four “colored”<sup>22</sup> parishes and missions affiliated with the Diocese, having the following statistics<sup>23</sup>:

Parish/Mission	Total Communicant Membership
St. Mark’s Mission, Birmingham	66
Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Mobile	146
Good Shepherd Mission, Montgomery	18
St. Andrew’s Mission, Tuskegee	225
<i>Total Black Communicant Membership</i>	<i>455</i>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1955 meeting of the Committee to Study the Problem of Securing Young Negro Postulants for Holy Orders, Charles C. J. Carpenter Papers, Archives of the Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama.

<sup>21</sup> Statistics are from the 1953 edition of *The World Almanac*.

<sup>22</sup> The Diocese’s last reference to African-American parishes and missions as “colored” was in the 1961 Diocesan Convention Journal.

<sup>23</sup> Report of the Committee to Study the Problem of Securing Young Negro Postulants for Holy Orders to the 125<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, April 1956).

With the Diocese's total black communicant membership being 2,153 times less than the state's overall black population, committee members realized that before they could begin thinking about ways to encourage young African-Americans to consider an ordained vocation, there must first be urgent efforts directed towards the development and expansion of the Diocese's current black congregations. Their plans called for the development of black congregations already established and the establishment of new black mission stations/community centers in Huntsville, Gadsden, Tuscaloosa, Dothan, Anniston, Talladega, Selma, and Opelika. Committee members viewed this plan as being a positive first step in their efforts to help grow the Episcopal Church in Alabama, as well as the fulfillment of their mandate from Bishop Carpenter to offer solutions regarding the shortage of black clergy.<sup>24</sup>

Committee Chairman William Clark, writing to Bishop Carpenter shortly before the 1956 Diocesan Convention, made clear his feelings of the committee's work as having not been completed, but rather just beginning. He wrote that the committee was being faced with tasks that "grow larger, more challenging and open new vistas with each additional approach we take." Clark told Bishop Carpenter that when the committee's report would be presented at the Diocesan Convention, it would be presented as a "commencement" action with no immediate finality in sight. Clark conveyed his hope that

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

the committee's report would be viewed as a beginning of the progress that was being sought after in the issue of black clergy shortage.<sup>25</sup>

In response to the committee's work, Bishop Carpenter said the following in 1956:

*"Last year I reported with deep concern over the fact that somehow we were failing to present adequately the Ministry as a vocation to our Negro youth, as witnessed by the fact that, while more men than ever are interested in studying for Holy Orders, we have no Negroes in preparation. A representative committee has been studying this matter and I am sure that a helpful report on this situation will be forthcoming."*<sup>26</sup>

The committee continued its work throughout 1956, going into 1957. In its report to the 1957 Diocesan Convention, the committee said that as "a year has passed, and as this Committee views the situation, it remains the same and our recommendations are the same." For their progress, they reported "a growing appreciation of this problem among the priests and communicants of the Diocese, from which, in time, we believe will come tangible results." They also reported that all other Province IV dioceses were experiencing shortages of black clergy and that they were not alone in this problem. The committee proudly boasted that out of all the Province IV dioceses, Alabama was the only one to present a "positive plan of action on the problem" at the 1956 Province IV Synod.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> William A. Clark, Letter to the Rt. Rev. Charles C. J. Carpenter (January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1957), Charles C. J. Carpenter Papers, Archives of the Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama (hereinafter referred to as "Carpenter Papers").

<sup>26</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Address to the 125<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, April 1956).

<sup>27</sup> Report of the Committee to Study the Problem of Securing Young Negro Postulants for Holy Orders to the 126<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, May 1957).

Bishop Carpenter had this to say about the black clergy situation in 1957:

*“The situation as it relates to Negro clergy is the same as last year. We have no Negro Postulants in preparation nor in sight at the present time. We are earnestly seeking the answer to this puzzle and trying to discover why with more men than ever studying for the Ministry, we have no Negroes among them. A fine committee is studying this matter and before long I am sure that we shall find and remedy the difficulty.”*<sup>28</sup>

Even though the committee had not yet produced tangible results from the goals it set two years earlier, Bishop Carpenter was still supportive of the committee’s objectives and did not want it to give up. Writing to Clark on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1957, Bishop Carpenter thanked him for his report of the committee’s work and stated that it was being sent off for immediate inclusion in the 1957 Diocesan Journal. The Bishop wrote that though the committee had not been moving rapidly in achieving progress, he believed that they were doing *some* moving and that the “growing appreciation of this problem among the priests and communicants of the Diocese” was a sign of some progress made. Because of this, Bishop Carpenter believed the Diocese to have been developing a genuine interest of the committee’s work and encouraged Clark to continue working toward more progress. The Bishop concluded his letter by reiterating his support of the committee’s objectives, stating that if there was anything that either he or any of the Diocesan staff could do to aid the committee in its work to not fail in letting them know.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Address to the 126<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, May 1957).

<sup>29</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to Dr. William A. Clark (January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1957), Carpenter Papers.

Further on into 1957, Clark became physically disabled and unable to walk. He wrote to Bishop Carpenter to alert him that he would be “completely disabled for quite a long time in the future” and suggested that the Bishop relieve him of his responsibilities as committee chairman.<sup>30</sup> Bishop Carpenter wrote back to Clark, expressing distress over Clark’s disability and hope that he would soon be restored to health. The Bishop ignored Clark’s suggestion, saying that he did not want the Tuskegee resident to give up his position as the committee’s chairman. He told Clark that “we can wait on you for a while, and you are just the right person we need in that position.” Bishop Carpenter instead suggested that things be left the way they were in the mean time and wait to see if Clark’s condition would improve.<sup>31</sup>

Further on, Bishop Carpenter referenced the minutes of the committee’s most previous meeting (included with Clark’s August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1957 letter to him), at which was discussed the idea of offering scholarships to young African-American college men discerning the possibility of seminary formation. The Bishop told Clark that he could not “agree that the idea of offering a scholarship is the way to go about this.” For his reason of why, he stated that it was normally felt that “a man is really qualified to say that he wants to study for Holy Orders until he is pretty nearly through college.” He conveyed his belief that a sophomore or junior college man was not at the point of being able to make such a decision and feared that if a scholarship was given to them at that point in their college

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<sup>30</sup> William A. Clark, Letter to the Rt. Rev. C. C. J. Carpenter (August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1957), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>31</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to Dr. William A. Clark (August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1957), Carpenter Papers.

careers, they would get into the process, then come to realize that they were not cut out for a vocation to ordained life. The Bishop said that the aid that was being offered were to men who were “on the other side of college,” who, in the Bishop’s thinking, had a chance to really mature and know, for certain, that the ordained life was the life that they were called to live. Bishop Carpenter further explained his reasoning as follows:

*“I believe our work lies more along the lines of influencing young men who, because of the wonder of the Ministry, really want that as their vocation. We really should not have men going to Seminaries unless they feel that they must enter the Ministry. If a man can keep out of the Ministry with a clear conscience it is not his calling; but when he feels that that is the one thing he wants to do, and also feels that it is the one thing God wants him to do, then he will know definitely, and having reached that point we should help him financially. But I simply do not feel that sophomores and juniors are quite matured enough to make this decision.”<sup>32</sup>*

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1958, Clark wrote back to Bishop Carpenter, reporting that due to him not achieving the physical progress that he had hoped for, it became clear that he would be unable to further carry out the responsibilities required as the committee’s chairman. He told the Bishop that he would not be present at the 1958 Diocesan Convention and that the committee would not have a report to present for consideration. Regarding the Bishop’s opinions expressed in his August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1957 letter, Clark wrote the following:

*“I agree with all the basic principles in your letter relative to our suggestion of scholarships. However, the fact stated in our first report...that ‘the Episcopal Church is not very well known among Negroes,’ kept falling before us in our discussions leading to the suggestion. As I have further contemplated, it occurs that we could have been over-eager for tangible results, despite our report last year that we intended to avoid the ‘American philosophy of immediacy.’”<sup>33</sup>*

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> William A. Clark, Letter to the Rt. Rev. C. C. J. Carpenter (January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1958), Carpenter Papers.

In his address to the 1958 Diocesan Convention, Bishop Carpenter said this:

*“I sadly report that no progress has been made in finding Negro men who desire to prepare for the Ministry. The opportunity is tremendous and the need is great, but somehow we have failed to create the desire for service in the Church among our Negro young people. Our fine committee continues to study the matter and will find an answer in due time.”*<sup>34</sup>

1958 passed and 1959 came with neither any change nor progress regarding the recruitment of prospective black clergy. The committee, once again, failed to produce any tangible results regarding its work to the Diocesan Convention. Bishop Carpenter’s 1959 episcopal address would be the last in which mention would be made regarding the Diocese’s black clergy shortage. The Bishop had this to say:

*“With sorrow I report again that we have made no progress in finding Negro men who desire to study for Holy Orders. Somehow we are failing to create the desire for service in the Church among our Negro young people...We continue to pray for guidance and wisdom in filling this need.”*<sup>35</sup>

It was evident that Bishop Carpenter felt a huge sense of sadness regarding the lack of improvement of the black clergy shortage and the nonexistence of tangible results from the committee’s work. He was virtually “crying for Negro ministers” to engage in work in Alabama.<sup>36</sup> Throughout its entire existence, the Committee to Study the Problem of Securing Young Negro Postulants for Holy Orders accomplished none of its 1955 goals.

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<sup>34</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Address to the 127<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, May 1958).

<sup>35</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Address to the 128<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, May 1959).

<sup>36</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Rt. Rev. Richard S. M. Emrich (January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1957), Carpenter Papers.

No new black mission stations or community centers had been established; no black postulants or candidates for Holy Orders were in sight; and the Diocese's overall increase of black Episcopalians was nonexistent. The most disappointing thing of all was that there was not any "healthy growth and development toward solution of the problem"<sup>37</sup> and although the Diocese's clergy and communicant membership expressed verbal support of the committee's efforts, it was not followed by much action. To have only "been able to get through one Negro man through Seminary" was both embarrassing and unacceptable for Bishop Carpenter.<sup>38</sup> He was literally wondering, "What's going on here?" "Why aren't more black men coming forward for ordained service?" Aside from the committee's failure in this endeavor, it is the author's perception that the accounts to follow in the succeeding chapters may help shed light on possible reasons of why Alabama's black clergy shortage continued. The plausibility of such perception will be up to the reader's own discernment.

Case Study #2—In Support of the Reactionary View  
*Bishop Carpenter and the Decision of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*

Like the overwhelming majority of Alabama's whites at the time, Bishop Carpenter was a staunch supporter of the Democratic Party. As such, he joined with his fellow Democrats in lambasting the United States Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, saying that prior to the decision, Alabama's blacks and whites

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<sup>37</sup> Report of the Committee to Study the Problem of Securing Young Negro Postulants for Holy Orders to the 125<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (April 1956).

<sup>38</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Rt. Rev. Richard S. M. Emrich (January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1957), Carpenter Papers. In describing the Diocese's black clergy shortage to Bishop Emrich, Bishop Carpenter wrote that "three others started, but for various reasons dropped out. At present I haven't a single Negro postulant in sight."

had been working “along pretty satisfactorily” and “making progress” in race relations.<sup>39</sup> Because of several decisions made by the Supreme Court in 1954 and 1955, segregation, a long-time standard of Southern life, culture, and law, was declared illegal, with legalities being called for to make this way of life extinct. In the Bishop’s mind, the Supreme Court’s actions “seriously retarded” race relations and led to new militancy on both sides of the issue. “We have received a severe set-back,” he added, “and at the present those of us who are deeply concerned over the situation are trying to feel our way through the maze of difficulties which beset us.”<sup>40</sup>

During his address to the 1955 Diocesan Convention, Bishop Carpenter spoke at great length of the perceived implications that would come from the *Brown* decision. The address became a very significant one, both for the Bishop and the entire Diocese. In it, he articulated a racial ideology that would play a huge part in his handling of civil disobedient activities in Alabama throughout the modern Civil Rights Movement. He outlined his moderate racial stance and spoke in a manner of trying to be a pastor to all of his diocesan flock—both for and against integration. The words that Bishop Carpenter spoke on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1955 helped begin a controversial civil rights legacy that continues to follow him 43 years after his death.

In his address, Bishop Carpenter conveyed to the Diocese that the *Brown* decision was “a...legal decision...[that] precipitated serious tensions among men.” Speaking of the South’s educational system as being one of the primary facets of its young people’s social

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<sup>39</sup> Bass, 32.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

lives, the Bishop predicted that the *Brown* decision would bring about times of serious difficulty and challenge for all of Alabama's people. He insisted that the South's "time-weathered social modes" could not be changed overnight, believing that not even the law could accomplish such a notion. Bishop Carpenter believed that the Supreme Court, through the *Brown* decision, was trying to force integration upon the Southern way of life, stating that "enforced social relationships by their very nature result in no good."<sup>41</sup>

Bishop Carpenter believed that Alabama Episcopalians had been "suddenly placed by law in a very difficult predicament." Fearing the worst, he felt that the best way to deal with the impending racial difficulties was through civility, a cool head, and wise thinking. He counseled against taking and participating in extreme measures and encouraged convention delegates to display charity towards all those who would be most affected by the *Brown* decision. The Bishop bluntly stated that the Court's mandate was going to cause conflict and that there would be strong disagreement between those who agreed and those who did not. In talking about how to best deal with the disagreement and impending circumstances, Bishop Carpenter stated that "the one must recognize the rights of the other and the honesty of the other, as both labor toward [the] answer which will best meet the needs and opportunities of all concerned." The Bishop felt that it would only be through time, reason, and honesty in which "pride and prejudice [ripened]...in the witch's brew of misunderstanding" would be controlled.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, *The Alabama Churchman* (May 1955).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

Bishop Carpenter described the *Brown* decision as mandating integration in a very sudden, abrupt, and immediate way. For him, this was building the foundation for utter chaos, which he greatly feared and became committed to combating. His proposed solution to Alabama's impending racial discord was distinctively gradual in nature. Bishop Carpenter believed that the gradual approach would be the best way forward, believing that integration's incorporation into Alabama in deliberately calm, slow, and discreet phases would bring about racial progress in a very respectable, levelheaded way. He was all about letting time do the job of achieving racial change for all of Alabama's people. The only thing that Bishop Carpenter failed to see was that time was in need of a little help.

Contrary to perceived belief, not all of Bishop Carpenter's fellow Southern Bishops agreed with his gradual stance on integration. Diocese of Atlanta Bishop Randolph Claiborne, Jr. (who served as rector of Huntsville's Episcopal Church of the Nativity from 1938-1949 and as Alabama's Suffragan Bishop from 1949-1953) addressed his Diocese's convention a little less than a month later, reiterating to Atlantans the Episcopal Church's affirmative stance on the separation of Church and State. While stating a simple fact of common sense, Bishop Claiborne also reminded convention delegates that throughout its entire existence, the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta had never had an official policy sanctioning segregation within its diocesan canons and that it "stands on the proposition that segregation on the basis of race is inconsistent with the principles of Christian religion." He spelled out the imminent dangers regarding Georgia's plan to circumvent the *Brown* decision's mandate—placing within the governor's power the prerogative to close any and/or all public schools should integration be forced upon them. Bishop Claiborne said

that by doing this, Georgia politicians created the danger of “putting into the hands of one man the power to destroy the public school system of the state.” In short, Bishop Claiborne proclaimed that segregation had no place within the life and work of his Diocese and that as long as he was the Bishop, the law was going to be followed.<sup>43</sup>

Another of Bishop Carpenter’s Southern colleagues, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Bishop William Marmion (who served as rector of Birmingham’s St. Mary’s-on-the-Highlands Episcopal Church from 1938-1950), wrote a pastoral letter to the people of his Diocese pertaining to Virginia’s “Tuition Grant Plan,” allowing for the appropriation of public funds to private schools in retaliation of the *Brown* decision.<sup>44</sup> In his letter, Bishop Marmion recognized that the *Brown* decision would produce honest differences of opinion amongst Virginians. Referencing a December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1954 statement by the Episcopal Church’s National Council that “in the light of Christian principles...the Court’s decision is just, right, and necessary,”<sup>45</sup> Bishop Marmion proclaimed that “among Christians there is no room for differences of opinion regarding the full acceptance of God’s command to love our neighbor and the obligation of each Christian diligently to seek God’s will in the expression of brotherly love.” He wrote that Virginia’s proposed solution regarding the *Brown* decision would severely inhibit its citizens from following

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<sup>43</sup> “Amid Budgets and Elections Dioceses Consider Integration,” *The Living Church* (February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1956).

<sup>44</sup> The January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1956 edition of *The Living Church* included the following statement regarding Virginia’s “Tuition Grant Plan”: “The referendum, directing Virginia’s General Assembly to call a convention to amend the constitution so that state money may be used in private, non-sectarian schools, did carry on January 9<sup>th</sup>.”

<sup>45</sup> Statement by the National Council of the Episcopal Church (December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1954).

their Christian obligation to work towards that achievement. As “loyal American citizens,” Bishop Marmion called on all Southwestern Virginia Episcopalians to defend the Supreme Court out of respect of it being the highest court in the land and against those who sought to undermine its authority. He strongly urged his Diocese to refrain from any attempt to thwart or circumvent the Supreme Court’s authority, accept the *Brown* decision, and “obey the law of the land.” He concluded that “it is the duty of the Church...to help our nation under God experience a rebirth of freedom and justice and goodwill by transforming the hearts and minds of men.”<sup>46</sup>

Unlike Bishops Claiborne and Marmion, the onset of the modern Civil Rights Movement made Bishop Carpenter struggle with the prospect of rapid change in the social order, wishing the South had simply gone along under the old system of segregation for just a little while longer. The Bishop believed that Christianity offered no definitive answers to the problems created by segregation. “If we make enough Christians, integration will take care of itself.”<sup>47</sup> Not only was this extreme wishful thinking, but naivety at its cruel worst. Just like his great-grandfather and grandfather before, Bishop Carpenter was finding himself having to deal with the radical changes being forced upon the South’s social order, with his efforts being futile in trying to stop them.

#### Where to From Here?

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<sup>46</sup> “Text of a Pastoral Letter From the Rt. Rev. William H. Marmion, Bishop of Southwestern Virginia,” *The Living Church* (January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1956).

<sup>47</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Rt. Rev. William Scarlett (December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1961), Carpenter Papers.

The study that follows is of a clergyman whose Southern admiration blinded him from fully realizing his need to strive and work for full racial justice and peace among all of Alabama's people. Bishop Carpenter was a good man whose passivity to actively fight for the rights of a people long denied contributed to nothing, allowing the time's social evils to linger for just a little while longer. Instead of being a part of a positive solution, he became an unintentional factor in an immoral problem. The turning away of his eyes from the civil protests and his unwillingness to aid those, ordained and lay, consciously compelled to fight for African-American rights produced unfortunate circumstances—for him, his diocesan flock (African-American Episcopalians in particular), and for all involved in the racial struggles of the time. Bishop Carpenter's consternation and ambivalence made the fight even harder and made some within his flock feel that their chief priest and pastor's back was literally turned on them. From the historical accounts in this study, it is the author's hope to reiterate the promises that Episcopalians are called to uphold through the Baptismal Covenant: "to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself" and "to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being."

## Chapter Two

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### *Bishop Carpenter and the Montgomery Campaign*

#### The Spark That Set the Fire—The Montgomery Bus Boycott

December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1955 was the foundation for Bishop Carpenter's direct interaction with the modern Civil Rights Movement. It was on that day in which Rosa Parks, secretary of the Montgomery Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, fatigued from a long day's work, refused to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a local transit bus. Parks was riding with 12 whites and 26 blacks, some of them standing. She occupied a seat in the center of the bus, glad to rest after a busy day as a seamstress at the Montgomery Fair Department Store. When more whites boarded the bus, the driver instructed four blacks to stand up so the new patrons could take their seats. Three of the blacks did as they were instructed. Parks did not budge. By standard recollections, her inaction and arrest resulted from a spontaneous decision, but one informed by a strong racial consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Park's courageous stand ignited the spark for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a yearlong political and social protest against the city government for its segregation of the Montgomery Bus Line. By the decision of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama in the case of *Browder vs. Gayle*, Montgomery's African-American community achieved a major victory, with the court's ruling declaring segregation of the public buses illegal and to come to an end. Not only did the Montgomery Bus Boycott

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<sup>1</sup> William Warren Rogers, et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1994), 551-552.

serve as the beginning of the modern Civil Rights Movement, but it also produced the movement's most important leader—the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>2</sup>

The Rev. Thomas Thrasher and Montgomery's Episcopal Church of the Ascension

The Rev. Thomas Thrasher, rector of Montgomery's Episcopal Church of the Ascension, was among several of the city's white racial liberals who sympathized with and supported the boycott's efforts. Before the boycott's commencement, Thrasher was a member of the Alabama Council on Human Relations and had engaged in respectful dialog with clergy and other leaders of Montgomery's black community.<sup>3</sup> Established in 1954, the ACHR was a non-partisan, interdenominational organization committed to the achievement of civil rights and equal opportunities for all Alabama citizens. By 1955, the ACHR had seven affiliated associations with some 300 members.<sup>4</sup> Thrasher was able to serve as a behind-the-scenes negotiator between the city's white and black leadership throughout the boycott's duration, mainly due to the protective shielding of one of his parishioners, William Gayle, who, at the time, was Montgomery's mayor. Encouraged by the recent strings of racial progress that had been occurring in the city, Thrasher, in the Ascension pulpit, began to call upon all Alabama Episcopalians to be welcoming of people of all races into both their homes and houses of worship. Thrasher's admonitions brought forth winds of trouble between him and the old Southern congregation.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 549.

<sup>3</sup> Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Rogers, 538.

Thrasher's liberal racial views went head-to-head against his parishioners' conservative stance and spilled into other aspects of the parish's life and ministry. In 1959, the Church of the Ascension was scheduled to host the Diocese's annual Youth Convention. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1958, at a special meeting of the Vestry, a resolution was passed requesting Bishop Carpenter "to postpone until 1962 the holding of the Diocesan Youth Convention at the Church of the Ascension."<sup>5</sup> Thrasher, himself, wrote to the Bishop and concurred with the Vestry's request, stating that it was being made "after agonizing discussions with the Vestry in which sincere difference of opinion became apparent." Thrasher felt personal responsibility for the request being made of Bishop Carpenter, stating that he was "earnestly repentant that the state of our minds and the mind of our community makes this request seem necessary."<sup>6</sup> On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1958, Bishop Carpenter sent word to Ascension Senior Warden Thomas Hill, Jr. that the 1959 Diocesan Youth Convention would be relocated to Trinity Episcopal Church in Florence and that the Church of the Ascension was relieved of that meeting.<sup>7</sup>

On came 1959 and differences of opinion continued to brew between Thrasher and his parishioners. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1959, the Vestry met to discuss several letters that were written to its attention. The letters were vehement outcries of parishioners protesting the attendance of the Rev. Robert DuBose, Jr. (one of the Diocese's three African-American

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas B. Hill, Jr. and Moreland Griffith Smith, Letter to the Right Reverend C. C. J. Carpenter (November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1958), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas R. Thrasher, Letter to the Rt. Rev. C. C. J. Carpenter (November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1958), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>7</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to Mr. Thomas B. Hill, Jr. (December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1958), Carpenter Papers.

clergy and vicar of Montgomery's all-black Good Shepherd Episcopal Mission) at the parish's early morning service on June 28<sup>th</sup>. In response, the Vestry passed a resolution restating its belief "that it is in the best interest of our Church that its character as a racially segregated congregation be preserved and maintained" and that this was "clearly and unequivocally" the policy of the Vestry. Vestry members felt that "a departure from this policy [would] jeopardize and imperil the well-being of the Church."<sup>8</sup>

For Thrasher, the Vestry's July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1959 resolution was the straw that broke the camel's back. The "combat fatigued" priest wrote to Bishop Carpenter, describing his utter disgust with his parishioners' lack of racial sensitivity and unwillingness to be on the positive side of change. Thrasher poured his heart out in desperation to the old Bishop, expressing feelings of shock, hurt, and anger regarding his parishioners' racial stubbornness. He particularly expressed not-so-kind words about his Vestry members, stating that "the silly attitude that these laymen fake, as though they and they alone stood between the Church and 'integration' makes me want to vomit." Of one specific layperson, Thrasher wrote that he was "lame brained" and had "hopped courageously on what he is sure is the bandwagon of a segregationist majority." He concluded his letter by alluding that he was on the verge of throwing his hands up in the air and being done with the Church of the Ascension, stating that whatever happened from that point on "is in God's hands."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension (Montgomery, Alabama), Excerpt from Minutes of Meeting of the Vestry [of the] Church of the Ascension—July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1959, Carpenter Papers.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas R. Thrasher, Letter to Bishop Charles C. J. Carpenter (July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1969), Carpenter Papers.

Bishop Carpenter responded to Thrasher, telling the troubled priest that he was “distressed by the content of your letter” and that it was “amazing that supposedly intelligent people can be as silly as some of the vestrymen with whom we have to deal.” He was appalled at the parish’s outcry over DuBose’s attendance at the Ascension service and of their complaining of having had to drink from the same chalice that a Negro priest drank from. Originally having decided to write a letter to the Vestry, Bishop Carpenter, on second thought, decided to stand back and not “recognize this silly situation.” Thinking that this was a temporary emotional outburst, the Bishop encouraged Thrasher to try to ignore the situation and work through the struggle. He also instructed the priest to alert him if the situation came back up, stating that “if it should raise its ugly head again I shall be most happy to come down and talk very frankly to your Vestry.”<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, tensions continued to grow between Thrasher and the Church of the Ascension. Parishioners felt that their rector had betrayed Montgomery’s Confederate heritage and lobbied Bishop Carpenter to remove him from the parish. With all hope of reconciliation between the rector and his parishioners being extinguished, the Bishop encouraged Thrasher to resign as rector of Church of the Ascension in February 1960. Very soon afterwards, Thrasher found employment in another cure in the Diocese of North Carolina, being hired as rector of the Chapel of the Holy Cross on the campus of the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill. After Thrasher’s resignation, the Church of the Ascension went without a permanent rector for 17 months.

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<sup>10</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Rev. Thomas R. Thrasher (July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1959), Carpenter Papers.

Thrasher received very little support from Bishop Carpenter. He supported Montgomery's black community and their civil rights measures, causing his parish to turn against him. The furor against Thrasher became so fervent that Bishop Carpenter did not know what else to do other than to encourage the embattled priest to resign and find employment in a more "tolerant" diocese. The Bishop's reticence to fully be on the front lines for Thrasher caused the priest to be a casualty of his moral actions, suffering unjustly for doing what he felt was right.

The Rev. Robert DuBose and the Montgomery Improvement Association

*The Founding of the Montgomery Improvement Association*

In concert with the Alabama Council on Human Relations, a crucial organization that aided in the cause of desegregating the Montgomery Bus Line was the Montgomery Improvement Association. Founded four days (December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1955) after Rosa Park's civil disobedient act and arrest, the MIA was established under the original purpose of overseeing all bus boycott efforts. Two pivotal leaders of Montgomery's African-American community steered the reigns of the organization's tactics—the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Edgar Daniel Nixon. King, then 26-years-old and pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, was elected to serve as its first president. King was admired for his eloquent speaking and calm demeanor, which the group felt were important characteristics needed in its leader. Aside from his admirable traits, he was still an unknown leader to the white community. Having come to Montgomery within the previous year, the group viewed his newcomer status as a great tactic, being that he would not be of great alarm to the city's white leadership.

Nixon, the long-time president of the Montgomery NAACP, was the city's *de facto* African-American leader. Unlike King, Nixon was already a well-known civil rights activist and had a reputation for being extremely confrontational. He was Montgomery's most fierce and outspoken campaigner for African-American rights. Nixon viewed Rosa Park's arrest as providing the necessary spark for the launch of an all-out bus boycott. He also viewed King's eloquent speaking as being just the thing needed in the continued battle for black civil rights in Montgomery. Nixon believed that King was the right person needed to lead the unification of Montgomery's black community in the civil rights fight. At its organizational meeting, the MIA elected Nixon to serve as treasurer.<sup>11</sup>

*The Case of the Rev. Robert DuBose, Jr.*

Among the supporters of the MIA was the Rev. Robert DuBose, Jr. DuBose was an African-American clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Alabama, serving as vicar of Montgomery's all-black Good Shepherd Episcopal Mission and as a chaplain at Alabama State College (now Alabama State University). During the first half of his tenure at Good Shepherd, DuBose quietly participated in the MIA's activities.<sup>12</sup> During a portion of this time, he served as a member of the organization's Executive Committee. For DuBose, in addition to serving as a mission priest, community involvement and fighting for civil rights all composed parts of his ordained ministry.

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<sup>11</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., "Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Civil Rights: An A-to-Z Reference of the Movement That Changed America* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Running Press Book Publishers, 1999), 237.

<sup>12</sup> Robert DuBose, Jr. is listed as the vicar of Good Shepherd, Montgomery in the 1957 (New York, New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co.) through 1961 (New York, New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co.) editions of *The Episcopal Church Annual*.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960, four black male students from the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina (now North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University) sat down and asked to be served at a “white’s only” lunch counter at Greensboro, North Carolina’s Woolworth’s store.<sup>13</sup> Referencing the store’s official policy that African-Americans were not to be served, the store’s manager asked them to leave. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, more than 20 black students from surrounding colleges came and joined the sit-in, being refused service by management and heckled by white patrons for their defiance of store policy.<sup>14</sup> On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, more than 60 people participated. By February 4<sup>th</sup>, the number of Greensboro sit-in participants was well on its way to reaching over 100.<sup>15</sup> The sit-ins began to take on boycott tactics, with participants pledging to boycott any Greensboro store that had policies sanctioning segregated lunch counters. Because of the negative economic impact caused by the boycotts, Greensboro storeowners did away with their segregation policies. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1960, for the first time in its history, Greensboro’s Woolworth’s store served African-American patrons at an integrated lunch counter.

Having been inspired by the Greensboro sit-ins, a group of students from Alabama State College decided to attempt their own non-violent sit-in protest in Montgomery. This event occurred in the lunchroom of the Alabama State Capitol soon after the start of the Greensboro sit-ins in February 1960. In retaliation to the student protestors, the lunchroom management closed the venue and a gang of pro-segregation mobsters

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<sup>13</sup> Appiah and Gates, 102.

<sup>14</sup> Marvin Sykes, “A&T Students Launch ‘Sit-Down’ Demand For Service at Downtown Lunch Counter,” *The Greensboro Record* (February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1960).

<sup>15</sup> “Movement By Negroes Growing,” *Greensboro Daily News* (February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1960).

physically assaulted the students as they were departing. Enraged by the incident, Governor John Patterson directed the school's president, H. Councill Trenholm, to expel any student who was found to have had any participatory role in the sit-ins. Because of intense pressure from Governor Patterson, President Trenholm expelled all students who were identified as having participated in the sit-ins. In a show of solidarity for their classmates, over a 1,000 members of the Alabama State College student body voted to boycott classes and refrain from spring quarter registration.<sup>16</sup>

In further protest of the students' expulsion, DuBose and Southern Christian Leadership Conference leader the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, pastor of Montgomery's black First Baptist Church, led a march of over 750 African-American and sympathetic white protestors to the front steps of the Alabama State Capitol on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1960.<sup>17</sup> An image of DuBose and Abernathy appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* the very next day—Abernathy dressed in coat, shirt, and tie and DuBose in cassock, surplice, stole, and biretta. The image of DuBose and Abernathy's clerical activism clearly dramatized the religious impulse behind the civil rights movement in Montgomery. For Bishop Carpenter, the image greatly disturbed him. What the Bishop found particularly disturbing and unacceptable was that DuBose was leading the protest in full priestly garb,

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<sup>16</sup> Hasan Kwame Jeffries, "Modern Civil Rights Movement in Alabama," *Encyclopedia of Alabama* (<http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1580>) Web. Accessed January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> From the third footnote in the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Address Delivered to the Montgomery Improvement Association's 'Testimonial of Love and Loyalty,'" given on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960. According to the footnote, at the time of the March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1960 protest march, the Rev. Robert E. DuBose, Jr. was serving as secretary of the Montgomery Improvement Association.

giving the impression that the Episcopal Church in Alabama was condoning the movement's civil disobedient protests. He viewed the image as showing an African-American priest engaged in conduct not befitting what the Bishop called a "good Negro."<sup>18</sup>

Before the Montgomery protests, Bishop Carpenter had always treated DuBose in a kindly, paternal manner. But with *The New York Times'* March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1960 image, his attitude radically changed. The Bishop sharply reprimanded the African-American priest for wearing the vestments of the Church while leading the protest. Although the Bishop recognized DuBose's right to participate in the march as a private citizen, he stated that DuBose's wearing of the Church's vestments conveyed the false impression that Alabama's Episcopalians were backing the demonstrations and he reprimanded the priest for conveying such an impression. Later that month, while engaged in a week of Lenten preaching at New York's St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bishop Carpenter was met in the parish's vestibule by a group of reporters after one of the weekday services, asking for further information regarding his reprimand of DuBose. Bishop Carpenter told the

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<sup>18</sup> Because the number of his white parishioners expressing disapproval regarding Fr. DuBose's activism in the March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1960 protest was of an overwhelming quantity, Bishop Carpenter had to respond with a "form" letter to those who had written him. In this letter, Carpenter states: "You were quite right in feeling as you do that the young Negro minister should not have worn the priestly vestments of the Church on such an occasion...I immediately wrote him telling him that he was in error in this and that he must not wear Church vestments on such occasions...I further advised caution and wisdom on his part and said that I did not feel that this was a time for action such as he had taken." This March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1960 letter can be found in the civil rights correspondence of the Carpenter Papers.

reporters that in his reprimand, he “advised caution and wise leadership rather than demonstrations in this whole matter of protests.”<sup>19</sup>

Not only was Bishop Carpenter being barraged with questions from the media, but he was also getting pushback from angry white parishioners back home. The negative pushback was the result of a news lead reporting that “the Episcopal Church today voiced general support of the student sit-in movement in the South, and declared that Christian doctrine supports civil disobedience in certain circumstances.” After the demand for an explanation from Bishop Carpenter, the Episcopal Church’s New York headquarters stated that it did not intend for the lead to be distributed and had it changed. But according to the Bishop, “this change was too late,” for an announcement stating the 3,444,265-member<sup>20</sup> denomination’s support of the ideals of the sit-in movement had been broadcast on radio stations throughout all of Alabama. The announcement also appeared in bold type in all of the state’s major newspapers, further adding to the furor already brewing throughout the Diocese of Alabama.<sup>21</sup>

This lead story that was generating so much drama emanated from a civil rights document that was not officially endorsed by the Episcopal Church, but was a mere position paper written by eight members of the Church’s national staff. These staff

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<sup>19</sup> “Negro Minister Is Reprimanded,” *The Mobile Register* (March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1960).

<sup>20</sup> From the “Comparative Table of Statistics of the Episcopal Church” as found in the 1961 edition of *The Episcopal Church Annual* (New York, New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co.). The information contained therein reflects data from the immediate preceding year.

<sup>21</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, “To Officers and Members of National Council” (April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1960), Carpenter Papers.

members, Bishop Carpenter learned, “had taken upon themselves the function of getting out this document to direct us in dealing with the situation, but had withheld its contents from the time the publicity was issued on Wednesday until the following Monday morning.” The Bishop was not at all happy, stating that these particular staff members’ action had caused serious hurt to many of his diocesan parishioners. In a rather restrained, yet terse letter to the Church’s National Council, he described the actions of civil disobedience as being nothing but pure lawlessness, saying that the country had enough of it as it was and that there would be those within the Church, upon hearing this announcement, who would find a good excuse to disobey the law. Bishop Carpenter reminded his readers of his inability to condone acts of civil disobedience and subtly hinted of the need to have “competent authorities” review statements coming from the Church’s headquarters before being sent out. He urged the National Council to make a complete repudiation of the staff members’ paper before things went from bad to worse.<sup>22</sup>

Bishop Carpenter’s desk at the Diocese’s Birmingham headquarters found itself completely littered with letters from angry white parishioners’ deploring DuBose’s involvement in the Montgomery civil rights protests. Just like the Bishop, many of the writers expressed great disappointment with DuBose’s choice to wear priestly vestments during the march. While expressing their disappointment, they applauded Bishop Carpenter for sternly reprimanding the young black priest. The Bishop responded to his white parishioners, stating that while “our young Negro minister in Montgomery showed very poor judgment in wearing his priestly vestments in the recent episode,” he asked them

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

to “not hold this against him, but...realize that he is a young man who was carried away under the tensions and excitement of the day” and that his decision was “an error made by a young man under tremendous tension.” The Bishop commended DuBose to the white parishioners for staying in the Diocese of Alabama, despite having been offered employment in a Northern parish.<sup>23</sup>

But according to an April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960 letter from Bishop Carpenter to DuBose, his earlier reprimand must not have been firm enough. According to the letter, DuBose was involved in a civil rights demonstration that resulted in him getting arrested. The Bishop stated his disappointment in having learned about the incident through the previous day’s newspaper and that he was thankful that a fellow diocesan priest was able to bail him out of jail. After the equivalent of pleasantries, Bishop Carpenter laid into DuBose, reminding the priest of the Bishop’s previous admonition that he was to do nothing else beyond that of his routine sacramental work at the Good Shepherd Mission. He gave explicit instructions to the priest that he was to “refrain from any meetings other than your regular routine Church services and your Confirmation class, and Vestry meetings.” The Bishop also ordered DuBose to “not eat in public places with white people, and refrain from meetings with white people other than our own Church people in Montgomery.” The Bishop hoped that DuBose understood that he was not being arbitrary in what he was saying, stating that it was all being said with the priest’s personal welfare in mind.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Charles, C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Honorable Walter B. Jones (March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1960), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Charles, C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Rev. Robert Earl DuBose, Jr. (April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960), Carpenter Papers.

The Bishop was greatly miffed by DuBose's involvement in the civil rights demonstrations and his persistent insubordination. In a letter to state Attorney General (and Episcopalian) William McQueen, Bishop Carpenter expressed continued distress over DuBose's involvement in the Montgomery demonstrations. Citing the priest's continuing health issues, the Bishop told the Attorney General that he did not think that DuBose was a well man and that he was concerned about his general health condition. Bishop Carpenter wanted to "work something out for him to get away for a while where he can think things out clearly and also regain his strength physically."<sup>25</sup> DuBose did regain his strength, but did not return to the Good Shepherd Mission or the Diocese of Alabama. In 1961, at the invitation of the Reverend Jesse Anderson, DuBose left the South and became the curate at Philadelphia's St. Thomas Episcopal Church<sup>26</sup>, being elected rector of the parish in 1977 after Anderson's death.<sup>27</sup>

A step further from Thomas Thrasher, Robert DuBose, Jr. became an early example of a priest who received virtually no support from Bishop Carpenter in the fight for civil rights. The Bishop's lack of support communicated his complete unwillingness to tolerate acts of insubordination from any priest, black or white, disobeying his orders against

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<sup>25</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Honorable William N. McQueen (April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1960), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>26</sup> From the "Parishes, Missions, and Clergy" listing for the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania in the 1962 edition of *The Episcopal Church Annual* (New York, New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co.). The information contained therein reflects data from the immediate preceding year.

<sup>27</sup> From the "Parishes, Missions, and Clergy" listing for the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania in the 1978 edition of *The Episcopal Church Annual* (New York, New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co.). The information contained therein reflects data from the immediate preceding year.

participation in civil rights protests. If DuBose had continued to be circumspect in his involvement with the Montgomery Improvement Association like he was in the late 1950s, Bishop Carpenter would have tolerated his actions and respected his views. But the young priest's conscience drove him out of complicit quietness, forcing him to do what he felt was right and unashamedly join in the fight for equal rights for all of Montgomery's citizens. For the Bishop, DuBose became part of the discord that he despised disrupting the life, ministry, and mission of the Diocese. Because of that, Bishop Carpenter willingly let DuBose think over how he could best be of service to the Church...other than in the Diocese of Alabama.

## Chapter Three

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### *Bishop Carpenter and the Birmingham Campaign*

#### Who Speaks for Birmingham?<sup>1</sup>

Historic changes already underway gained momentum during the years from 1955 to 1970. The 1960 Census was the first depicting Alabama as an urban state: nearly 52% of the population lived in incorporated communities of 2,500 residents or more. Birmingham's population actually declined from 326,000 in 1950 to 301,000 in 1970.<sup>2</sup> During this time, Birmingham's population was racially divided 60% white to 40% black. Jim Crow laws were an incorporated factor of Jefferson County civic and social life and were adamantly enforced. Because of the disfranchisement tactics of the state's 1901 Constitution, only 10% of Birmingham's African-American citizens were legally registered to vote in 1960.

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1961, CBS news commentator Howard K. Smith narrated a controversial news documentary entitled *Who Speaks for Birmingham?* The piece was produced soon after a bloody altercation had occurred between pro-segregationist whites and pro-integrationist Freedom Riders after the latter's arrival into Birmingham. In the documentary, Smith spoke with various leaders and ordinary citizens from Birmingham's black and white communities, allowing them their chance to "speak for Birmingham"

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<sup>1</sup> This heading is derived from a news documentary of the same title, narrated by CBS news commentator Howard K. Smith and aired on the national network on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Rogers, *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*, 545.

regarding the subject of civil rights and its effect on the city.<sup>3</sup> Smith's intent behind the documentary was for the interviews to show the conflicting views among Birmingham's citizenry concerning the implementation of civil rights. Smith, a Louisianan who was unashamedly committed to integration, concluded his documentary with a famous quote by Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Ending with this quote conveyed his view that segregation was an incomprehensible evil woven into the fabric of Southern society and that it came time for Birmingham's white community to put an end to their city's segregationist policies and work for equal rights for all of their fellow citizens. Because of objections raised by some of his superiors concerning his biased approach with the documentary, Smith was relieved of his duties at CBS.

On the state level, on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1963, Alabama Governor George Wallace became the standard bearer of the state's segregationist cause. A former circuit court judge and member of the Alabama House of Representatives, Wallace lost his first bid for the state's governorship in 1958 to Attorney General John Patterson, who had run on a strong segregationist platform and was endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan. Wallace, (then) a racial liberal endorsed by the NAACP, came to a necessary realization by way of his loss to Patterson. In order to be successful in Alabama politics, he had to compromise his views on race and tote the majority line. As a result, he went from being a racial liberal to a hard line segregationist, a change that helped him achieve a landslide victory in the 1962

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<sup>3</sup> Two of Birmingham's leading citizens that Smith included in his documentary were the Right Reverend Charles C. J. Carpenter, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, and the Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, pastor of Birmingham's Bethel Baptist Church and president of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights.

gubernatorial election. It was on that cold Inauguration Day on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1963 in which the new governor assumed his place in the annals of both Alabama and national American history, declaring his commitment to preserving the state's institution of racial separation and inequality: "In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod the earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever."<sup>4</sup>

Concerned over whites' rising vigilance against integration, Bishop Carpenter and 10 fellow white ministers met together at Birmingham's Tutwiler Hotel on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1963 to craft a statement, entitled "An Appeal for Law and Order and Common Sense." The purpose of this statement was to dissuade Alabama's whites from engaging in further resistance of federal law. Along with Bishop Carpenter, the statement's signatories<sup>5</sup> included the following ordained ministers:

- The Reverend J. T. Beale, Secretary-Director of the Christian Churches of Alabama
- Rabbi Eugene Blackschleger of Temple Beth-Or in Montgomery
- The Most Reverend Joseph Durick, Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Mobile-Birmingham
- The Reverend Soterios D. Gouvellis, Priest of Holy Trinity-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
- Rabbi Milton Grafman of Temple Emanu-El in Birmingham
- The Right Reverend Paul Hardin, Bishop of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the Methodist Church

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<sup>4</sup> George C. Wallace, Inaugural Address as the 45<sup>th</sup> Governor of Alabama (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1963).

<sup>5</sup> On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1963, eight of the 11 signatories followed up with another letter, entitled "A Call for Unity," published in that day's issue of *The Birmingham News* in an attempt to dissuade the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other African-American leaders and protestors from defying an injunction against a civil disobedience march on Birmingham's City Hall protesting the city's segregation laws. Their statement prompted King to respond with the now famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

- The Right Reverend Nolan Bailey Harmon, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the Methodist Church
- The Right Reverend George Mosley Murray, Bishop Coadjutor of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama
- The Reverend Edward V. Ramage, Moderator of the Synod of the Alabama Presbyterian Church in the United States
- The Reverend Earl Stallings, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Birmingham

These religious leaders shared Bishop Carpenter's concern that constant resistance of federal law by hardcore segregationists, led by Governor Wallace, would only lead to further discord and inhibit efforts to bring about a state of civility in civil rights discussions. While acknowledging that the issues surrounding segregation were not at all simple, the 11 ministers sought to provide leadership to their people on the basis of knowing that "the ultimate spirit in which all problems of human relations must be solved." In their statement, the 11 ministers directed seven points to the attention of hardcore segregationists:

- 1) That hatred and violence have no sanction in our religious and political traditions.
- 2) That there may be disagreement concerning laws and social change without advocating defiance, anarchy, and subversion.
- 3) That laws may be tested in courts or changed by legislatures, but not ignored by whims of individuals.
- 4) That constitutions may be amended or judges impeached by proper action, but our American way of life depends upon obedience to the decisions of courts of competent jurisdiction in the meantime.
- 5) That no person's freedom is safe unless every person's freedom is equally protected.
- 6) That the freedom of speech must at all costs be preserved and exercised without fear of recrimination or harassment.
- 7) That every human being is created in the image of God and is entitled to respect as a fellow human being with all basic rights, privileges, and responsibilities which belong to humanity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>J. T. Beale, et al, "An Appeal for Law and Order and Common Sense," *The Birmingham News* and *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1963).

The ministers' statement appeared in both *The Birmingham News* and *The Birmingham Post-Herald* on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1963, as well as in other major newspapers via wire services. An editorialist for the moderate *Post-Herald* described the statement as a "creed of the good citizen" and a guide for thinking and action. In a lengthy piece, an editorialist for the conservative *Birmingham News* viewed the ministers' statement with uncertainty. The state needed vocal opposition, the writer concluded, and other leaders needed to step forward and speak out. In this light, the *News* encouraged the continued exercise of free speech. Cryptically, however, the writer believed that the ministers had erred in expecting freedom of speech without retaliation and harassment from those on the other side of the issue. Anyone who spoke on racial matters, the *News* assumed, should anticipate such responses.<sup>7</sup>

For Bishop Carpenter, the retaliation predicted came exactly one week later during the January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1963 afternoon business session of the Diocese's 132<sup>nd</sup> Convention, meeting at the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Montgomery. The Convention's Committee on Christian Social Relations drafted a resolution in support of the original statement made by Bishops Carpenter and Murray and their ecumenical counterparts and recommended its adoption. After a period of debate, the Convention, instead of adopting the committee's resolution, voted to *table* it.<sup>8</sup> Neither Bishop Carpenter nor Bishop Coadjutor George Murray participated in the Convention's debate. Upon hearing of the

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<sup>7</sup> Bass, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, 20.

<sup>8</sup> From the minutes of the January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1963 afternoon business session of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *The Alabama Churchman* (Birmingham, Alabama: Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, July 1963).

Convention's vote, *The Living Church* reached out to Bishop Carpenter for a comment. He told the weekly periodical that "the resolution can be brought up again next year, but by that time it may be too late, and the need [for the resolution] be past."<sup>9</sup> That is, indeed, what the case ended up being.

This particular vote indicated the general mindset of the Diocese's majority concerning Alabama's civil rights struggles at the time. As previously discussed in the first chapter, Alabama was, by-and-large, a one-party state, with an overwhelming majority of its white population supporting the Democratic Party. The white Democratic majority (which included many among the majority of Alabama's diocesan membership) was still advocating the legitimacy of states' rights in the maintenance of Southern political and social life, resisting any kind of interference by the federal government. The majority that was gathered at the Diocese's 132<sup>nd</sup> Convention sent a strong message to Bishop Carpenter, implying that they would not submit to the encroachment of "federal tyranny" and that immediate sympathy for African-Americans in their desire for civil rights will not be achieved "at the point of a bayonet." It was the belief of many among Alabama's Episcopal majority that government existed by the consent of the people, that courts could not make law, but only interpret law, and that it was the duty of every American to question and resist statutes of dubious character.<sup>10</sup> By their vote to *table* the resolution proposed by the Committee on Christian Social Relations, convention delegates signified

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<sup>9</sup> "Alabama—After Talk, Table," *The Living Church* (February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1963).

<sup>10</sup> Norman A. Sieme, "Consent of the Governed," *The Living Church* (April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1963), 2, 17.

their support for Governor Wallace, agreeing with him that Alabama was a sovereign state that possessed the right to settle its own affairs.

But despite the committee's resolution being laid aside by vote of the majority of the Convention's white delegates, there were a small few among them that disagreed with the resolution's tabling and publicly voiced their opposition. One of them was the Reverend Furman Charles Stough, rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Sheffield (and the future Eighth Bishop of Alabama from 1971-1988). In a letter to *The Living Church*, Stough spoke of his opposition to the resolution's tabling, believing that Bishops Carpenter and Murray's call for "law and order and common sense" was what was needed amongst Alabama's whites and felt that the Convention should have adopted the two Bishops' statement. Speaking for his fellow delegates making up the minority side of the vote, the 34-year-old priest agreed "that states' rights can be a moral issue, but often times it is used as a cover for an immoral problem, segregation."<sup>11</sup> There was, indeed, a difference of opinion amongst Alabama's Episcopalians concerning civil rights. It just turned out that the difference between the two opposing sides produced a gigantic gap that would take several more years to close in and level out.

Fred Shuttlesworth and "Bull" Connor with Charles Carpenter In Between

Since its founding in 1871, racial unrest was a part of Birmingham's social order. During the 1950s and 1960s, frequent bombings of African-American churches and businesses took place, bringing about one of the city's most infamous nicknames—"Bombingham." Having reached the breaking point with Jim Crow degradation and the

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<sup>11</sup> Furman C. Stough, "The Issues," *The Living Church* (May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1963), 5.

suppression of inherent rights, Birmingham's black community began to organize itself to bring about progressive racial change. Leading them was one whose fury and "in-your-face" agitation for racial progress was felt by all who dared to encounter him. That agitator came to be no other than the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth.

Shuttlesworth was pastor of Birmingham's Bethel Baptist Church and founder of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights.<sup>12</sup> The ACMHR, established in 1954, took over the strategic planning of the Birmingham Campaign after the state's 1956 ban of the NAACP, orchestrated by Attorney General John Patterson. Shuttlesworth saw segregation as the ultimate evil and continued to battle for equality while being beaten, bombed, and arrested. Shuttlesworth was "head strong and wild for publicity." He remained a marginal figure amongst Birmingham's black religious leaders—even amongst those activists confronting segregation.<sup>13</sup>

Of Bishop Carpenter, Shuttlesworth was not a fan. He referred to the Bishop as the "great articulate segregationist." Shuttlesworth was enraged over Bishop Carpenter's view that the civil rights struggle was moving along progressively until the beginning of civil disobedient protests. He felt that the Bishop was moving at a pace that was way too slow for blacks to even bother trying to work with him. Shuttlesworth viewed Bishop Carpenter's slow pace towards racial equality as nothing but a deliberate attempt to preserve the old Southern segregationist way, which made Shuttlesworth grow incredibly disdainful of the old Bishop. If the Bishop was not willing to commit himself to being on

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<sup>12</sup> Bass, 98.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

the frontlines for positive racial change and actively join in the demonstrations, then Shuttlesworth did not have any use for him whatsoever. Needless to say, Shuttlesworth and Bishop Carpenter had a very tense working relationship throughout the Birmingham Campaign.

Not only did Shuttlesworth have disdain for Bishop Carpenter and other whites espousing the “in the courts, not in the streets” view, but also for those within Birmingham’s black middle and upper classes who agreed with them. One such person was the Rev. John Porter, pastor of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church—“the” church of Birmingham’s black middle and upper classes. Unlike Shuttlesworth, Porter had a more favorable view of Bishop Carpenter and was willing to work with him, believing that the Bishop’s particular mentality regarding racial progress was more positive than that of the majority of Birmingham’s whites. Shuttlesworth was dumbfounded that Porter actually believed that Bishop Carpenter could be trusted and, as a result, never appointed him to the ACMHR’s board of directors.<sup>14</sup> Shuttlesworth’s extreme nature in campaign activities became too much for Porter and Porter’s skepticism and trepidation of civil disobedient demonstrations enraged Shuttlesworth, with both of these factors contributing to the two ministers’ mutual disliking for each other. Despite their disagreements, Porter could not deny Shuttlesworth’s raw courage in the fight for civil rights and admired his bold tenacity. His acknowledgment of Shuttlesworth’s tenacity testifies to the importance that the

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<sup>14</sup> Andrew M. Manis, *A Fire You Can’t Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham’s Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1999), 338.

firebrand had within the Civil Rights Movement, recognizing Shuttlesworth as the instigator of “public acts that lit the fire” in Birmingham.<sup>15</sup>

As Fred Shuttlesworth was the representation for extreme integration, Theophilus Eugene “Bull” Connor represented the extreme segregationist cause. Connor was the six-term Commissioner of Public Safety, which gave him authoritative oversight over the Birmingham Police and Fire Departments. He gained local fame in 1937 as a radio announcer of Birmingham Barons baseball games. He generally opposed unions, federal housing, and any concessions to blacks. “Bull” Connor was *the* quintessential representation of the concept of prejudice.

To say that Connor was vehemently against the Civil Rights Movement would be a serious understatement. He loathed the Civil Rights Movement and did everything possible to squash any and every effort by African-Americans in their fight for equal rights. He became infamous through his command to the Birmingham Police and Fire Departments to use high-pressure water hoses and police dogs to quell civil rights demonstrations by young African-American children. Little did Connor know was that his tactics brought more national attention to the Civil Rights Movement and an increasing legitimacy for its work and goals. The national media coverage of this unscrupulous action helped raise the nation’s consciousness of its negative racial attitudes and led to condemnation of the South’s long-held racially paternal structure.

#### “Project C”

The major tactics of the Birmingham Campaign came through an initiative called “Project C.” Assuming that Connor had civil rights leaders’ phones tapped, protective

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 339.

code names were assigned to the initiative's major leaders. Martin Luther King, Jr. was "JFK". Ralph Abernathy was "Dean Rusk" (which was not much to Abernathy's liking). Wyatt Tee Walker, executive director of the Atlanta-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was "RFK." John Drew, the Birmingham insurance man in whose home King stayed while in Birmingham, was "Pope John." Fred Shuttlesworth was "Mac," in reference to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.<sup>16</sup>

It was through Project C in which Shuttlesworth issued an invitation to SCLC president Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to become involved in the Birmingham civil rights fight, feeling that his presence and participation would give the campaign the nationwide publicity that it needed (and Shuttlesworth wanted). King and others in the SCLC agreed, believing that a direct-action campaign in Alabama's largest city would provide a new image for King, restore the power of nonviolence, and bring in much needed cash.<sup>17</sup> At 12:15pm on Good Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1963, King, along with Shuttlesworth and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, led demonstrators on a march on Birmingham's City Hall in protest of the city's segregation laws. The march was an illegal one, due to Connor having obtained an injunction against it. For those who violated the injunction, Connor raised the bail amounts for release from jail. King, Abernathy, and 48 other demonstrators were arrested and placed in the Birmingham Jail.

As he did during the Montgomery Campaign, Bishop Carpenter viewed the Birmingham demonstrations as being counterproductive to the racial progress and

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<sup>16</sup> Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America In the King Years 1954-1963* (New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 690.

<sup>17</sup> Bass, 98.

negotiations that he felt were achieved under the old segregation system. He believed in social progress for Birmingham's African-Americans, but only within the calm and order that segregation provided. The Project C demonstrations greatly upset Bishop Carpenter. To him, King, Abernathy, and all other SCLC officials were unwelcomed agitators determined in wrecking the peaceful relations that had existed between the black and white races. Many of Bishop Carpenter's fellow prelates in the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops disagreed with his contradicting racial stances and handling of Alabama's racial problems. Many of them were skeptical of Bishop Carpenter's supposed want for positive racial progress and voiced such skepticism to him, both personally and in written form.<sup>18</sup>

“A Call for Unity” and “The Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Simultaneously on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1963, an open letter called “A Call for Unity” appeared in that day's edition of *The Birmingham News*. Bishop Carpenter authored the letter with seven religious leaders who had joined him in writing the earlier “Appeal for Law and Order and Common Sense.”<sup>19</sup> Along with Bishop Carpenter, these seven religious leaders shared the view that the civil rights demonstrations were providing unnecessary havoc and racial discord and that the proper venue for the civil rights fight was in the courts and not on the streets. By releasing the letter to the media and having it published on the same day of the march, the eight ministers hoped that their statement

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<sup>18</sup> Members of the House of Bishops who espoused progressive civil rights views and disagreed with Bishop Carpenter's particular stance included Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger and Diocese of California Bishop James Pike. Letters and notes to Bishop Carpenter from them on this issue can be found in the personal and civil rights correspondence of the Carpenter Papers.

<sup>19</sup> The Reverends J. T. Beale, Soterios D. Gouvellis, and Rabbi Eugene Blackschleger did not join in the writing and signing of “A Call for Unity.”

would discourage the planned demonstration and eliminate the chance of violence occurring on the Birmingham streets. They also hoped that the statement would move city officials to work towards racial progress within the confines of peaceful negotiations and nonviolent resolution. Despite these particular hopes, the march went on as planned, with arrests and media attention going along with it.

Bishop Carpenter and his fellow ministers said the following:

*“...We are now confronted by a series of demonstrations by some of our Negro citizens, directed and led in part by outsiders. We recognize the natural impatience of people who feel that their hopes are slow in being realized. But we are convinced that these demonstrations are unwise and untimely...”*

*We...strongly urge our own Negro community to withdraw support from these demonstrations, and to unite locally in working peacefully for a better Birmingham. When rights are consistently denied, a cause should be pressed in the courts and in negotiations among local leaders, and not in the streets. We appeal to both our white and Negro citizenry to observe the principles of law and order and common sense.”<sup>20</sup>*

For African-Americans, this statement made Bishop Carpenter come off as being a soft-spoken segregationist. To hardcore white segregationists, he was viewed as a race traitor and a social liberal. In the Bishop’s mind, he felt that he was advancing racial progress. Along with that, Bishop Carpenter felt that to condone civil disobedience and allow individuals to choose which laws to obey and/or disobey would only lead to further setbacks and confusion. Bishop Carpenter believed that honest and open negotiations among all citizens, black and white, would be more productive. He personally delivered

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<sup>20</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, et al, “A Call for Unity,” *The Birmingham News* (April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1963).

the ministers' statement to *The Birmingham News*' headquarters, exercising great care against interception or editorial changes.<sup>21</sup>

SCLC executive director Wyatt Walker delivered a copy of the white ministers' statement to King at the Birmingham Jail on Easter Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1963. After reading it, King became enraged. He deplored the ministers' notion of him coming to Birmingham uninvited and that he was an agitator. Not only was King highly enraged, he was greatly disappointed in the eight ministers' lack of intensified involvement in working for civil rights for Birmingham's black community. He felt that these men had directly attacked him, his theology and work and was compelled to respond. The response that evolved remains, to this day, one of the most compelling pieces of civil rights literature to survive through the generations.

The "Letter from Birmingham Jail" was King's response to Bishop Carpenter and his fellow white signatories. In the letter, King masterfully justified his work and that of the Civil Rights Movement in general. In making his argument, he used Biblical references and quoted classical and modern philosophers, theologians, Church and Western historical figures. Addressing the eight clergymen directly, King stated his disappointment with white moderates. He had reached "the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not with the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klan, but the white moderate." For King, "shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill

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<sup>21</sup> S. Jonathan Bass, "Not Time Yet: Alabama's Episcopal Bishop and the End of Segregation in the Deep South," *Anglican & Episcopal History* (Volume 63: June 1994), 240, 249.

will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.”<sup>22</sup> With the white ministers advocating to wait and let racial progress come with time, King greatly rebuked such notion, explaining in eloquent prose, how “wait...in the ear of every Negro...has almost always meant ‘Never!’” “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.”<sup>23</sup>

After reading King’s letter, Bishop Carpenter said to Bishop Murray, “This is what you get when you try to do something. You get it from both sides. George, you just have to live with that.”<sup>24</sup> He viewed King’s response as being simple criticism. He felt that King, through his response, was only contributing to the hardship of Alabama’s racial problems instead of offering peaceful and legal solutions to them. Unfortunately, not even the beaming epistolary words of Martin Luther King, Jr. proved adequate enough to move old Bishop Carpenter to a more positive racial position.

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<sup>22</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Originally published on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1963.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Bass, “Alabama’s Episcopal Bishop,” 252.

## Chapter Four

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### *Bishop Carpenter and the Selma Campaign*

As in Montgomery and Birmingham, African-Americans in the city of Selma organized themselves to confront the injustices of racial prejudice. The focus of the Selma Campaign centered on voting rights, lead primarily through the activities of the Dallas County Voters' League. A group of African-American Dallas County residents established the DCVL in the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 1962, the DCVL and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee entered into partnership and launched intensified voter registration drives. When this partnership commenced, 57% of Dallas County's population was African-American, but only 2% of them were registered to vote. County registrars insisted that they did not discriminate, but in fact they opened the registrar's office only 37 days a year and processed only 30 applications a day. Blacks who passed 6 out of the 8 questions of the literacy test could fail because of minor spelling errors. The pastor of Selma's Tabernacle Baptist Church, a University of Pittsburgh graduate, failed the test numerous times.<sup>2</sup>

#### Bishop Carpenter vs. The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity

Episcopalians concerned about Selma's racial climate voiced their concerns through membership in and the activities of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity. This organization was established during a meeting of over 100 ordained and lay Episcopalians in December 1959 at St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina. During the meeting, a statement of purpose was adopted that enumerated some of the

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers, *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*, 562.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

objectives for which the society stood: the elimination of single-race parishes; an end to racial criteria in the admission of people to schools, camps, hospitals, and other institutions affiliated with the Episcopal Church; support for Episcopalians working for integration; appreciation of the Church's "prophetic role" in overturning racial barriers in society as a whole; and the fostering of "that condition of harmony among peoples which is the benefit of a mutual recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, so that brothers may dwell together in unity." By mid-1960, over 1,000 Episcopalians had joined ESCRU.<sup>3</sup>

ESCRU members were present in Selma on Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965, a day that would evolve into the most climatic of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Civil rights demonstrators embarked on a 50-mile march to Montgomery to demand Governor George Wallace that he ensure the protection of African-American voting registrants. Close to 600 demonstrators marched along U. S. Highway 80. The march was calm and peaceful until the integrated protest group crossed over the Edmund Pettus Bridge. On the other side, a cavalcade of Alabama state troopers met the mass group. They were told to disband and go home; the group refused to comply. The armed officers shoved, knocked down, severely beat, and hurled tear gas at the unarmed, defenseless demonstrators. Images of the brutality flanked the front pages of major newspapers, lit up television sets all across the country, and raised American's awareness of and support for the need of civil rights for all their fellow citizens. March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965 became known in the annals of American history as "Bloody Sunday."

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<sup>3</sup> Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 101-102.

Afterwards, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. issued a televised call to sympathetic clergy and students to aid the SCLC and the SNCC in their efforts to achieve legal voting rights for all of Selma's citizens. Heeding Dr. King's call, ESCRU members wrote Bishop Carpenter, informing him of their intent to come to Selma to participate in campaign activities. To all who conveyed this intention, the Bishop sent back this message—"DON'T!" He stated that any outside Episcopalian who intended to come to Alabama to participate in activities of civil disobedience would receive neither his welcome or support. As was the case with the demonstrations in Montgomery and Birmingham, Bishop Carpenter felt that the Selma demonstrations were not producing rationally legal solutions to the civil rights question and that they were, instead, slowing down the progress towards successful racial integration. Instead of coming to Selma, the Bishop strongly encouraged outside Episcopalians to stay home and stated that those who were already involved in the demonstrations were wasting their time. Bishop Carpenter believed that the Selma Campaign was contributing to (white) Alabamians' ill will towards integration and that they were being counterproductive instead of productive.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> An example of Bishop Carpenter's many adamant appeals for outside Episcopalians to not come to Selma and stay home was from the article "Alabama—Action and Reaction" on page 7 of *The Living Church's* April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965 issue. In this article, Bishop Carpenter states: "I cannot be responsible for some Episcopalians from other parts of the country who have their homework so well organized that they can spend time telling us what to do in Alabama, but I hope that they will soon go home and let us get on with the progress we are trying to make in this part of the country for which we feel a special responsibility."

Being compelled by conscience, many non-Alabama Episcopalians, ordained and lay, ignored Bishop Carpenter's admonitions and came to Selma anyway.<sup>5</sup> One such person was Diocese of Michigan Suffragan Bishop Kilmer Myers, who had wired Bishop Carpenter soon after Bloody Sunday seeking permission to come to Selma and hold a service on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1965 at St. Paul's. Bishop Carpenter denied Bishop Myers' request, due to the parish's rector, the Reverend T. Frank Mathews, convalescing from health problems out of town by order of his doctor and because the planned service was already being publicly announced before Bishop Carpenter's permission was attained. Determined that the service still be held, Bishop Myers presided over a worship service attended by an interracial group at the date and time announced directly outside the front doors of St. Paul's Church.<sup>6</sup>

Another morally driven protestor was Diocese of Washington Bishop William Creighton, who, after having participated in the Selma-to-Montgomery March, backed a proposal for the United States Congress to enact legislation that would make the murders of citizens engaged in civil rights work a federal crime. Bishop Creighton publicly called on President Lyndon Johnson to grant federal protection to the people of Alabama, even to the point of declaring martial law if the need arose, and that such protection be in force

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<sup>5</sup> According to the article "Selma and South Africa" on page 7 of the April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1965 edition of *The Living Church*, members of the House of Bishops known to have actively participated in the Selma demonstrations included Presiding Bishop John Hines, Diocese of Washington Bishop William Creighton, Diocese of California Suffragan Bishop George Millard, and Diocese of Michigan Suffragan Bishop Kilmer Myers. Washington National Cathedral Dean Francis Sayre, Jr. was also known to have actively participated in the demonstrations.

<sup>6</sup> "Race Relations," *The Living Church* (April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 6.

“until voters’ rights are granted and integration of the schools, the police forces, and the government is accomplished.” He was strong in his belief that the Voting Rights Act, proposed by President Johnson and still being debated in Congress, needed to be passed immediately and without further delay. Bishop Creighton said that

*“The result of further delay may very well be the encouragement of the cowardly and murderous forces that are controlling Alabama at present. All the hearings that could possibly be held have been held, and they have been held before the whole nation. How many more murders must there be? How much longer must our people wait for justice? “If kidnaping is [a federal offense], then certainly murder in such a circumstance should also be. There should not be delay in passing such legislation....”<sup>7</sup>*

Seeking to offer a productive response in regards to the recent events in Selma, the Executive Council of the Diocese of Alabama drafted a statement and requested that Bishop Coadjutor George Murray see to its deliverance to all diocesan congregations. In their unanimous statement, the Executive Council recognized that none of the events that happened in Selma on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965 would have occurred if there had been fair voter registration laws there and in all places in Alabama in the first place. But much like Bishop Carpenter, council members felt that the most appropriate way that achievement of voting rights for African-Americans would take place would be through the passage of reasonable and fair laws, not large and civil disobedient demonstrations. Instead of endorsing the demonstrations taking place in Selma, the Executive Council encouraged all clergy and people of the Diocese to seek and persuade their state legislators to enact reasonable and fair voting legislation.<sup>8</sup> Compared to previous civil rights stances

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> “Alabama—‘Terrible Events’,” *The Living Church* (March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 6.

articulated by the Alabama Episcopal majority in the past, the Executive Council's statement represented a shifting of opinion.<sup>9</sup>

#### Jonathan Myrick Daniels—The Agitating Seminarian

One of the many Episcopalians who answered King's call was Jonathan Myrick Daniels. A second-year seminarian at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he was granted a leave of absence to work in Selma, under the sponsorship of ESCRU. Daniels moved to Selma to "encourage and uplift" local blacks by showing that someone cared enough to live and work in their community. He worked to open communication between the residents of the black and white communities. "Sometimes we confront the posse," Daniels wrote, "and sometimes we hold a child. Sometimes we must stand a little apart from them."<sup>10</sup>

While in Selma, Daniels attended Sunday services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Established in 1838, 18 years after Selma's incorporation, St. Paul's was a reflection of the city's old Southern heritage. It was a largely pro-segregation parish that found itself in the national spotlight during the course of the Selma Campaign. Its membership included the majority of Selma's white leadership and was the city's wealthiest Christian church.

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<sup>9</sup> A comparison of the Alabama Executive Council's March 1965 statement should be done against that of the vote by the Diocese's 1963 Convention to *table* a resolution endorsing a statement by Bishop Carpenter and 10 other Alabama Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish religious leaders, calling on the state's white citizens to refrain from vigilant segregationist activity and embrace "law and order and common sense" in the solving of the state's racial problems. With the 1963 Diocesan Convention essentially saying "no" to supporting the appeals of Bishop Carpenter and his counterparts and the Diocese's Executive Council appealing for the passage of fair voting laws in 1965, a reasonable conclusion can be made that the atrocities of Bloody Sunday began to shift the minds of many of Alabama's white Episcopalians on the issue of civil rights.

<sup>10</sup> Bass, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, 170.

Among Alabama Episcopalians, St. Paul's was one of the wealthiest, most powerful, and highly influential parishes.

In a June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1965 editorial report entitled "Selma Episcopalians Speak," *The Living Church* highlighted quotes from 16 of 20 anonymous responses from members of St. Paul's Church, conveying how they specifically felt about the events and controversies that were engulfing their city and parish. The idea for the report came from a want by a Northern subscriber to hear from his brother and sister Episcopalians in Selma, feeling that those accused of racial insensitivity had as much right to be heard just like the accusers. *The Living Church* approached the parish's rector, T. Frank Mathews, about the idea, with him, in turn, encouraging his parishioners to respond to the periodical freely and anonymously, allowing them the wherewithal to say what they wanted without fear of chastisement or reprisal. Carroll Simcox, the report's editor, did not offer any sort of commentary or criticism of the statements received. He made clear his intentions of allowing Selma Episcopalians the right to speak for themselves.

The 16 featured responses represented varying opinions—some supportive of the Selma demonstrations; a few more critical, both of the demonstrations and African-Americans in particular; and others describing the joys of living in white privileged society. Examples of what was expressed include the following<sup>11</sup>:

*"We Selma citizens are not living in the past. We are looking to the future, the best for all people...I feel that we have been done an injustice by our Executive Council, but our protests have been made in an orderly manner and many of us have continued attendance and fulfilled our pledge trying to keep our church the place of dignity, worship, and Christian love"*

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<sup>11</sup> Carroll E. Simcox, "Selma Episcopalians Speak—An Editorial Report," *The Living Church* (June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 7, 11-12.

*that it has been for more than a hundred years in spite of harassment to our rector and vestry and the mockery made of our services by news media and publicity seekers.”—Response #6*

*“We of the south are proud to be known as a people of tradition. ‘Our hallowed traditions’ is the theme of many editorials and is a phrase that adorns many public addresses. It is generally agreed that the preservation of ‘our way of life’ depends upon keeping our traditions strong and deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of all who love the southland...Traditions are good if they serve as anchors to keep us from drifting but they hamper progress if they serve only as chains to bind us to the dead past. God forbid that we should transgress the Commandment of God for the sake of our traditions as did the Pharisees...A great number of our neighbors here in the south have dark skins. They have other characteristics some of which we deplore, and yet they are our neighbors. If we ignore them, hate them, despise them, ridicule them, belittle them, exploit them, or embarrass them are we not transgressing the Commandment of God? It is in the church that we are brought to a test. Do we reluctantly permit them to enter and do we seat them, our neighbors, in an obscure corner where they will not contaminate ‘God’s elite’? If so, can one find God in this church, or must one seek Him elsewhere?”—Response #9*

*“I don’t think the Negroes should attend the Episcopal Church because their religion is different from ours, and they would not understand our way of worship. The Negroes like to sing and shout, and they have a mourners’ bench, and we do not worship in that manner, therefore I do not think that it would help the Negroes or the white people for Negroes to attend the Episcopal Church...”—Response #10*

*“It is ironical that in the south the Negro has always been accepted as an individual but not as a race, whereas in the north he is rejected as an individual but accepted as a race. Having lived in Cleveland, Ohio, we speak from personal knowledge.”—Response #14*

The Rev. John Morris, an ESCRU leader, encouraged Episcopalians demonstrating in Selma to focus attention on St. Paul’s. With most of its members being on the pro-segregationist side, their reputation for indifference and disdain towards Selma’s black community was very well known and despised among liberal whites. As the parish’s rector, Mathews made it explicitly clear that racially mixed demonstration groups were not, in any way, form, or fashion, invited to worship with the congregation. During the first two weeks of the Selma Campaign, racially mixed groups of worshippers were denied admittance by ushers at the parish doors, acting in accordance with local parish policy. Being dominated by the high level of pro-segregation furor, the parish’s white liberal

minority consciously struggled with its refusal of admittance of these integrated groups into worship.

Two weeks later, at a meeting of the Vestry on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1965, with Bishop Carpenter being present, a decision was reluctantly made by the majority to abide by the amended Canon 16.4, passed by the 1964 General Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. The amended canon stipulated that every Episcopalian, regardless of race, was “entitled to equal rights and status in any Parish or Mission thereof” and that they were “not to be excluded from worship or Sacraments of the Church, nor from parochial membership because of race, color, or ethnic origin.” In announcing the Vestry’s decision, Mathews stated that “they do not like to have to accept it but they love the Episcopal Church and know that the welfare of St. Paul’s and the general Church must come before their personal feelings.”<sup>12</sup> In another pastoral letter to parishioners written two days later, Mathews said:

*“As an Episcopal Church, we must abide by the Canons. And this, of course, means not just for one time but from now on. We realize that the groups who came the past two Sundays came for the purpose of “testing” us. There will be other groups in the future. Some may be “testing,” some may sincerely want to worship. Unless the group is disorderly and creating a disturbance, (in which case it is the canonical responsibility of the ushers to refuse them admittance), it is not for us to judge any man’s motives for attending church. Perhaps our motives are not always as pure as they should be; I know mine are not. But I do know that our Vestry has seen its duty and it has done it—and I am proud of them.”<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> T. Frank Mathews, Pastoral Letter to St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Selma, Alabama (March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>13</sup> T. Frank Mathews, Pastoral Letter to St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Selma, Alabama (March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

Bishop Carpenter, himself, wrote to the congregation, commending “the action of the Rector and the Vestry highly” and assuring the congregation “that I stand right with you in this action and hope that everything will be carried out in accordance with it.”<sup>14</sup> After reading of St. Paul’s action in *The New York Times*, Presiding Bishop Hines wrote to Bishop Carpenter, stating that he was personally appreciative of the parish’s decision and that he believed “the strong opinion of the majority of Church people will be one of gratitude....”<sup>15</sup> After the Vestry’s vote to comply with Canon 16.4, Daniels regularly attended St. Paul’s with several integrated groups. Bishop Carpenter wrote to Mathews, stating that “if he is hanging around causing trouble, I think I will have to write to his Bishop and tell him to take him back to Seminary, but I will be awaiting word from you as to just how he is behaving himself.”<sup>16</sup>

#### *Excursus—Bishop Carpenter Does Battle Against the National Church*

Bishop Carpenter was not at all pleased by the national media attention being flooded upon St. Paul’s in Selma. He was especially upset to be hearing and reading about ordained and lay Episcopalians from outside the Diocese participating in the Selma Campaign, disregarding his statements for them to stay away and not engage in activities of racial havoc and discord. Being up to his wit’s end, Bishop Carpenter wrote a scathing

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<sup>14</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, “Commendation on Action of the Vestry Recently Taken” (March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>15</sup> John E. Hines, Letter to the Rt. Rev. C. C. J. Carpenter (March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>16</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, Letter to the Rev. T. Frank Mathews (August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

letter to the Episcopal Church's Executive Council, complaining about denominational staff members working for the Civil Rights Movement and not for the Church, helping it to advance the Kingdom of God through evangelism, mission, and ministry like they were suppose to be.<sup>17</sup> Bishop Carpenter wrote:

*"When the people of Alabama realize that the money they are striving to give to take care of the complete amount asked from them is being used to buy free trips to Alabama for men who are not wanted there and served no purpose there and who obviously simply wanted free rides to Alabama in order to indulge in a whim to march in a parade, they will not like it.*

*"We in Alabama want to do everything we can to spread the missionary work of the Church; but when we see our money foolishly spent as above, we do not like it...I give you this illustration because things of this sort make it very difficult for us to build the enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel through the mission of the Church."<sup>18</sup>*

The Executive Council discussed Bishop Carpenter's letter "for a considerable length of time" during meetings on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1965.<sup>19</sup> Herbert Walker, a lay member from the Diocese of Los Angeles, proposed that the expenses of staff members participating in the Selma Campaign be paid back to the respective departments' budgets from the

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<sup>17</sup> The following was reported in the article "Executive Council—Breaking the Ties" on page 7 of the June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1965 issue of *The Living Church*: "Specifically, Bishop Carpenter protested the participation of five Council staff members in the Selma and Montgomery demonstrations...During the [Executive Council's] argument, which consumed more than three hours, it was established that Presiding Bishop Hines personally consulted and advised the Alabama bishop that three persons were going to participate in the demonstrations. However, in the cases of the Rev. G. H. (Jack) Woodard and the Rev. George Lee of the staff of the Home Department, only a telegram was sent to Bishop Carpenter, signed by the Rev. Canon Almon Pepper, informing him the men were joining the march into Montgomery."

<sup>18</sup> Charles C. J. Carpenter, "Control of Unnecessary Travel by Staff Members; Control of National Council of Churches in Certain Relationships" (May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>19</sup> John E. Hines, Letter to the Rt. Rev. C. C. J. Carpenter (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

Council's Church and Race Fund. The motion was defeated. After this, the Council recessed for a period of 20 minutes so that a special committee, chaired by Diocese of Chicago Bishop Gerald Burrill, could redraft the Executive Council's official reply to Bishop Carpenter. Upon reconvening, the committee recommended that the Executive Council acknowledge "with gratitude" Bishop Carpenter's letter, alerting him that they had reviewed the participation of the staff members in the Selma Campaign and had resolved the "precise understanding and meaning of the application of the phrase 'advise and consult.'" They also recommended the communication of a policy of permitting "officers and staff members to participate in such projects or events as volunteers within the limits of work-load requirements," provided that the following requirements were observed:

- 1) "Counsel first with his department head"
- 2) "Secure his permission"
- 3) "Notify the Executive Secretary of the Division of Christian Citizenship of his intentions"<sup>20</sup>

When the vote was taken, the Executive Council divided evenly on the question, with Presiding Bishop Hine's tie-breaking vote ending the deadlock and overruling Bishop Carpenter's protest.<sup>21</sup> After the vote, Presiding Bishop Hines was asked by the Executive Council to convey to Bishop Carpenter that "our conviction that officers of the Executive Council, having to act in the interests of the whole Church, deeply regret to have appeared to have added to the burden that the Church in Alabama is compelled to bear, while

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<sup>20</sup> Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, "Procedures to Govern Participation in Civil Rights Action" (May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>21</sup> Shattuck, 157.

endeavoring to support it in the bearing of that burden.”<sup>22</sup> In his letter to Bishop Carpenter, Presiding Bishop Hines said that “while the action of the Executive Council may not satisfy your expectations and hopes in the matter, I believe you will be gratified to know that your letter brought forth a full-scale discussion...both in a spirit of appreciation to you and the Diocese of Alabama for your persistent efforts in aiding the mission of the Church...The Council wishes you to know that its concern is not to burden you and others clearly and tryingly involved in sensitive areas such as those of race relations, but rather to help by devotion to the major thrust of the Church’s mission.”<sup>23</sup>

#### Jonathan Myrick Daniels—The Agitating Seminarian (Continued)

Jailed on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1965 for joining a picket line, Daniels, along with five companions, was unexpectedly released on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Aware that they were in danger, four of them walked to the Cash Store in the Lowndes County town of Hayneville. As 16-year-old Ruby Sales reached the top step of the entrance, a man with a gun appeared, cursing her. Jonathan pulled her to one side to shield her from the unexpected threats. As a result, he was killed by a blast from the 12-gauge shotgun.<sup>24</sup> The Reverend T. Frank Mathews, in a media statement, noted St. Paul’s members’ shock over Daniels’ murder and said that the Episcopal Church had “lost a most capable candidate for Holy Orders and a

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<sup>22</sup> “Executive Council—Breaking the Ties,” *The Living Church* (June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Shattuck, 157.

<sup>24</sup> “Jonathan Myrick Daniels,” *The Proper for the Lesser Feasts and Fasts (2000)* (New York, New York: The Church Pension Fund, 2001), 330.

potential leader in the field of theological education.”<sup>25</sup> When *The Living Church* approached Bishop Carpenter for a statement, he issued a two-sentence response: “[Mr.] Daniel’s death is deplorable. Another incident in the current wave of lawlessness sweeping our country.”<sup>26</sup>

On August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1965, one day after Daniels’ death, civil rights workers petitioned Mathews to allow a memorial service to be held for the slain seminarian at St. Paul’s, Selma. Their request was denied. The denial sparked outrage amongst civil rights workers and the national media, viewing the action as uncompassionate and beneath Christian dignity. Responding to the outrage, Mathews wrote an August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1965 statement, aimed at justifying his reasons for denying the request.

Mathews stated that the request “came at a time when tensions were ‘at the breaking point’ in both the Negro and white communities in Selma.” He feared that the same racial violence that had occurred within the streets of Los Angeles and Chicago just a couple of days before would happen on the very streets of Selma and that he could not risk a memorial service being the “small ‘spark’ [that] could set off a dangerous ‘conflagration.’” Mathews felt that if he had allowed a memorial service for Daniels to take place at St. Paul’s, that he would have unintentionally provided a situation stalling the current peace and progress of Selma’s racial climate that had been achieved during the few months before. At the heart of the matter was his thinking that the requested memorial service would become another civil rights demonstration, a purpose for which he stated that St.

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<sup>25</sup> “Jonathan Daniels: In the Midst of Life,” *The Episcopalian* (October 1965), 46.

<sup>26</sup> “Jonathan Daniels—Services in Keene,” *The Living Church* (September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 4.

Paul's "[does] not feel this church building should be used or the liturgy of the Church employed." Instead of a memorial service, Mathews assured critics that "special prayers would be offered at both services in St. Paul's the following day for Jonathan and his bereaved family."<sup>27</sup> Bishop Carpenter concurred with Mathews' decision and justification.

In its September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1965 issue, *The Living Church* published a special editorial in honor of Jonathan Daniels. It spoke of Daniels as one who possessed a "quiet, loving, reconciling spirit in which he did the work, which God had given him to do." The writer referred to Daniels' death as being utterly senseless and shamed those who felt that peace could be attained by the killing of men like Daniels. The writer made a tactful dig at Bishop Carpenter and others who were still failing to comprehend the need for full involvement in the fight for racial equality. The writer called them out, saying that "if there remain some Americans who still hope that the civil rights turmoil can be ended by a simple suppression of the civil rights struggle, somebody should show them what time of day it is." The writer ended his editorial in the hope that Bishop Carpenter and others like him would see the error of their ways and help all of God's people "strive for a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness."<sup>28</sup>

In late September 1965, Daniels' killer, Thomas Coleman, Sr., was put on trial at the Lowndes County Courthouse in Hayneville under charges of first-degree manslaughter. Coleman, an engineer with the Lowndes County Highway Department and a member of one of the county's oldest and most well known families, enjoyed such overwhelming

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<sup>27</sup> "Jonathan Daniels—Statement from Selma," *The Living Church* (September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 5.

<sup>28</sup> "Jonathan Daniels," *The Living Church* (September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 5.

support from local residents that the high approval level influenced County Solicitor Arthur Gamble's charge against Coleman.<sup>29</sup> Alabama Attorney General Richmond Flowers was so outraged by the lower level charge that he personally took over the prosecution, but when his office requested a postponement until after the Rev. Richard Morrisroe, a Roman Catholic priest and civil rights worker wounded by Coleman, could sufficiently recover and return from Chicago to testify at trial, the judge abruptly terminated his participation. Coleman then stood trial under proceedings well attended by klansmen and featuring an insane defense argument.<sup>30</sup> Coleman claimed self-defense, stating that Daniels had a knife and Morrisroe had a gun as they were approaching him at the Hayneville Cash Store. For those who knew both Daniels and Morrisroe personally, Coleman's self-defense claim had no credence whatsoever. After closing arguments and only a 1½-hour deliberation period, an all-white jury acquitted Coleman of manslaughter.<sup>31</sup> The verdict infuriated Attorney General Flowers, for those who wished to kill, cripple, and destroy had now been issued a license to do so. As many Alabamians had predicted, Coleman's local prominence and well-established connections helped him escape the remotest possibility of punishment.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Robert McG. Thomas, Jr., "Thomas Coleman, 86, Dies; Killed Rights Worker in '65," *The New York Times* (June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> Michael R. Belknap, *Federal Law and Southern Order: Racial Violence and Constitutional Conflict in the Post-Brown South* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 187.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas, *The New York Times* (June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1997).

<sup>32</sup> Belknap, 187.

Throughout the country, news of Coleman's acquittal sparked both outrage and vehement criticism. An editorial in *The New York Post* called the verdict "an affront to the nation, and to human dignity," stating that it "again raises the question of federal action to ensure that racist murders do not go unpunished."<sup>33</sup> Daniels' Bishop, the Right Reverend Charles Hall of New Hampshire, stated that all who knew both Daniels and Morrisroe could not, in good conscience, believe Coleman's testimony of the two civil rights workers being armed as true and expressed disappointment at how justice was easily thwarted. Presiding Bishop Hines was much more critical than Bishop Hall, stating that Coleman's acquittal was a "travesty of justice," that to even think that Daniels and Morrisroe were armed was simply inconceivable, and that at the end of the day, the memory and integrity of Jonathan Daniels would be his ultimate vindication.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to Presiding Bishop Hines' and Bishop Hall's own statements, Bishop Carpenter and Bishop Coadjutor Murray issued a joint statement telling of their disturbance at local residents' comments of the two civil rights workers having "had it coming to them" and that "they had no business being here." They said that to disagree with a person's particular actions and sins was one thing, but to use that disagreement as justification for harm and the taking of their life was wrong and beneath human dignity. But what the two Bishops said next is both interesting and puzzling. They stated that Alabamians were "in grave danger of losing further freedoms for the governing of our own affairs because of the widespread impression that there is a failure in the

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<sup>33</sup> "Alabama-Hayneville Verdict Assailed," *The Living Church* (October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 5.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 5-6.

administration of justice within our state.” This particular line could be interpreted (as it is by the author) as the two Bishops stating that even though the trial’s outcome may not have been the desired result, the principles of civil law were properly applied with the outcome being made in accordance with legal procedure. In other words, the two were saying, “It is what it is and we just have to accept it.” With that, Bishops Carpenter and Murray admonished Alabamians to not interpret Coleman’s acquittal as a license to either do harm or kill those with whom they disagreed and to keep in mind “that the importance of the Christian doctrine of the infinite worth of human life shall not be diminished...”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 5.

## Conclusion

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### *Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter—A Man of His Own Conflicts*

By the conclusion of the Selma Campaign and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, Bishop Carpenter had served as the Bishop of Alabama for 27 years. He was only 66 years old, yet Alabama's civil rights struggles had caused him to age and look much older than he actually was. The struggles made him tired. Determined to serve a tenure of 30 years, Bishop Carpenter retired as Bishop of Alabama on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1968 at the age of 69. Five months later, on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1969, Bishop Carpenter died.

Being 43 years after his death, the memory of Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter still remains fondly present within the minds and hearts of those who knew him. Older Alabama Episcopalians recall, with delight, loving memories of Bishop Carpenter making parish visitations and giving each youngster a little kangaroo, saying the words, "I induct you into the Order of the Kangaroo. Remember who you are and what you represent."<sup>1</sup> It is these memories of Bishop Carpenter that Alabama's older Episcopalians still remember, forever cherishing the memento that he so generously gave.

I began this study with the intention to show how Bishop Carpenter's failure to fully grasp the scope of racial injustice put him at odds with reality and made his moderate civil rights stance unrealistic. Throughout this journey, we saw how the old Southern order was collapsing around the Bishop and how he did not know what to do. Bishop Carpenter was not a racist, but simply a man whose social fantasies left him blind to the time's stinging racial realities. His lack of full sensitivity for racial progress was the result of his captivity by the ways of a culture long past.

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<sup>1</sup> Bass, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, 173.

Unfortunately, Bishop Carpenter was not alone in this lacking. Much of the support that he received regarding his handling of Alabama's racial problems came from the Diocese's white Episcopalians. One example of the Diocese's majority common thought on civil rights and integration can be found in a March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1960 letter to Bishop Carpenter from Montgomery County Circuit Judge Walter B. Jones, referencing the Bishop's reprimand of the Rev. Robert DuBose, Jr. for his participation in the Montgomery civil rights protests:

*"...I hasten to send you my commendation for your wise and common-sense action with reference to the part that our local Negro Episcopal minister had in the disorderly mob scene in front of the State Capitol several Sundays ago.*

*"His actions have not done our church and good and must make it increasingly difficult to work among the Negroes here in Alabama.*

*"The so-called prayer meetings which the Negroes are holding nearly every night and which they like to have in public places so the Northern magazines can take their pictures, are a pious, hypocritical fraud of the worst kind; and it is regrettable that their churches are used as nests to spawn non-Christian doctrine."<sup>2</sup>*

Another example of support can be found in an August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965 letter to Presiding Bishop John Hines from William Butterworth, III, Lay Reader of St. Michael's Church in Ozark:

*"Bishop Carpenter, during his long and fruitful tenure as our Shepherd has done more to remove friction and bitterness between the several races (including the Indian, and we don't hear much about them, do we?) than any man I know. I am sick and tired, Bishop Hines, of having him insulted by a long line of pseudo-intellectuals who know nothing of the problems here, and twice sick and twice tired that the National Body of the Church gives tacit approval to the denunciation of a priest of limited experience of a beloved Bishop of vast experience and proven accomplishments. I submit to you, Sir, that if it is your intention to*

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<sup>2</sup> Walter B. Jones, Letter to the Rt. Rev. Charles C. J. Carpenter (March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1960), Carpenter Papers.

*place a wedge between the Diocese of Alabama and the rest of the Church you are succeeding beyond your fondest hopes.”<sup>3</sup>*

Most of the criticism that Bishop Carpenter received came from Northern Episcopalians. While most of them made known their criticism by way of personal correspondence, there were some who were bold enough to publish their criticism in local periodicals, church magazines, and national newspapers. One of the harshest critical attacks that Bishop Carpenter received came from a publicized letter by the Rev. Carl Sayers, rector of Birmingham, Michigan’s St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, through which he called on the Bishop to resign from office and seek forgiveness from God for his inaction in the civil rights struggles. Sayers had this to say:

*“As bishop of Alabama, you have been to the flock of Christ, a wolf and not a shepherd; you have devoured them and not fed them, by making common cause with Gov. Wallace’s defiance of his nation and church. As the governor stood wrongly in the schoolhouse door, you have stood wrongly and symbolically in the doorway of the house of the Living God. I urge you sir, to submit your resignation to the House of Bishops and to seek from God his forgiveness for your abdication of moral and spiritual leadership in Alabama, in our nation, in the world, and in Christ’s one holy, catholic, apostolic, and reformed church.”<sup>4</sup>*

Needless to say, Bishop Carpenter did not resign, telling Sayers that “if the people of Alabama want me to resign, that’s a different thing.”<sup>5</sup>

In further response to Sayers, the Diocese’s active clergy, led by Bishop Coadjutor George Murray, published “A Declaration of Support and Loyalty to Bishop Carpenter as Our Diocesan Bishop” on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1965, through which was said the following:

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<sup>3</sup> William E. Butterworth, III, Letter to the Right Reverend John E. Hines (August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Carl Sayers, “Race Relations—Letter to a Bishop,” *The Living Church* (April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 6.

<sup>5</sup> “Race Relations,” *The Living Church* (April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1965), 6.

*“We declare that Bishop Carpenter has been a faithful shepherd to us and our people in the face of most difficult times and frequent unjust criticism for many years.*

*“In particular, at this crucial time we support and affirm his courageous stand at diocesan convention on January 19...in which he forcefully reminded all people of the Church that no member of the Episcopal Church shall ‘...be excluded from the worship and sacraments of the Church, not from parochial membership, because of race, color, or ethnic origin.’*

*“We further applaud his gentle but firm approach to the crisis with which St. Paul’s Church, Selma, has been faced—an approach which has resulted in ultimate upholding of and obedience to canon law, without the closing or splitting of the parish.*

*“May Almighty God continue to bless and guide him in his ministry in the days ahead.”<sup>6</sup>*

But of all the parties involved, the ones to feel the most heartache and sense of utter abandonment were the Diocese’s black Episcopalians. Bishop Carpenter’s sentimental attachment to the Old Southern way overshadowed his responsibility to fight for the rights of his African-American flock. He was out of touch. His detachment from the time’s reality made him a man stuck in his generation, not able or willing to be the agent for radical racial change that his African-American flock so desperately wanted and needed him to be. Bishop Carpenter was simply too slow in the fight for civil rights—a trait that was detrimental to Alabama’s black Episcopalians much more than it was helpful for them.

Luther Foster, a member of Tuskegee’s St. Andrew’s Episcopal Mission and president of Tuskegee Institute from 1953-1981, provides an example of the hurt that was being felt by Alabama’s black Episcopalians regarding their Bishop’s particular racial position:

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

*“Over a period of several years we have had friendly discussions regarding some of the growing problems in race relations as Negroes sought to find full participation in the blessings and responsibilities of their American citizenship here in Alabama.*

*“I have through these years...been distressed to note that the official position of our church in Alabama at crucial moments has been more to dampen the aspirations of Negro citizens than to help seek really meaningful solutions to our Alabama problems...*

*“I write not in animosity but with the hope—faint though it is—that Episcopalians in this state might hear a strong and clear call from you to reverse Alabama’s downward spiral and to do so promptly and dramatically. Our situation is so desperate that anything short of dramatic reversal will be totally inadequate.*

*“I only wish, Bishop Carpenter, that I might have been more effective when I was endeavoring to convey to you a sense of urgency and the need to provide a fully democratic setting for all Alabamians. Somehow, I have the feeling I have failed at a terribly crucial point of contact—with my church; and that my church has failed me.”<sup>7</sup>*

As we now come to the close of this investigation, we need to address the questions that were first posed in the Preface. The first question is whether or not Bishop Carpenter was a “paternalistic segregationist” or a “conflicted moderate.” To fully answer this question, an examination of the pros and cons of Bishop Carpenter’s thought is in order. Those who advocate Bishop Carpenter’s civil rights philosophy as being of a favorable persuasion would say that he held his views in the belief for the attempt to convert the greatest number of people possible to the ideals of racial integration through cool heads, patient understanding, and reasoned logic. Having racial integration suddenly forced upon the South (as the Bishop clearly stated his belief of the *Brown* decision as doing) would make the issue remain highly controversial among Alabama’s white citizens instead of being embraced by them as good form for the larger social order.

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<sup>7</sup> Luther H. Foster, Letter to the Right Reverend C. C. J. Carpenter (April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1965), Carpenter Papers.

To some extent, I can see the logic behind this argument. Considering where the large majority of Alabama Episcopalians stood on the race question, I can see Bishop Carpenter's admonitions for order and time being rooted in a want to sincerely bring his people "to the light" of racial integration. This would explain his firm resistance to civil disobedience demonstrations and strong objections of outside Episcopalians coming into Alabama, aiding and abetting in activities that, he felt, were doing more harm to the cause than good. He saw these activities as contributing to the ill-will that Alabamians already had towards the Civil Rights Movement and did not want to deal with issues that would make the ill-will even worse. Bishop Carpenter felt that order and time would be the most effective approach in changing the hearts and minds of Alabama Episcopalians in the area of civil rights and the demonstrations occurring within his Diocese were, to him, severe setbacks in his quest to bring about such change.

Yet for those who think of Bishop Carpenter's views as being more reactionary than favorable, his appeal for patience and time emanated from a philosophy that was counterintuitive of the precepts of the Christian Gospel. Paul says that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."<sup>8</sup> Bishop Carpenter, by virtue of his office, was a Defender of the Faith—a Faith that calls for the social unity of all God's people, regardless of skin color, ethnic origin, or any other form of human difference. His reaction to diocesan clergy disobeying his admonitions to not participate in civil rights demonstrations, as well as his "in time" rhetoric were seen as actions of complicity with segregation, done by a man too

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<sup>8</sup> Galatians 3.28 (Revised Standard Version)

stuck in his time to realize the social injustices that existed around him. In viewing his civil rights philosophy as reactionary, Bishop Carpenter is seen as someone who was latently prolonging the wrongs of segregation, failing in his promise to “maintain and set forward...quietness, love, and peace among all men....”<sup>9</sup>

So now we answer the question: What was Bishop Carpenter—“a paternalistic segregationist” or a “conflicted moderate”? After an immense amount of time reading the Bishop’s papers, analyzing the facts, and considering the circumstances behind them, it is my view that Bishop Carpenter was, indeed, a “conflicted moderate.” Why? I believe this because in reading through his personal correspondence and addresses, the notion of Bishop Carpenter being sympathetic toward segregation was never evident or even remotely hinted at. His language did not convey any impression of him believing that, as a member of the majority race, he was, in any way, racially superior to others. There are some who firmly believe that Bishop Carpenter was a closeted racist. From my reading and incessant analysis of his actual letters and speeches, I cannot, for the sake of fairness, agree with this classification.

My opinion has also been formed from an analysis of Bishop Carpenter’s civil rights philosophy. In his papers and speeches, whenever speaking of the need for civil rights itself, his language always pointed to the more positive direction. Considering the position that most Alabama whites had regarding the issue of race, with “Bull” Connor being the extreme representation of pro-segregationist whites, Bishop Carpenter’s moderate position, admittedly, was more positive for the times. “An Appeal for Law and Order and

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<sup>9</sup> “The Form of Ordaining or Consecrating a Bishop,” *The Book of Common Prayer* (1928), 545.

Common Sense” serves as a primary example of Bishop Carpenter’s philosophy being devoid of racist intentions, stating the belief “that every human being is created in the image of God and is entitled to respect as a fellow human being with all basic rights, privileges, and responsibilities which belong to humanity.” Although his gradualism in the work for integration and African-American civil rights was both frustrating and vexing for many, it is important to note that Bishop Carpenter was open to the idea of integration and generally not resistant to it. Unfortunately, it was the argument of “yes, but in time,” being resistant not of the concept of civil rights for African-Americans but of the activities, protests, and demonstrations to get them, that rendered Bishop Carpenter unable to realize the need to be on the front lines for racial change, proclaiming the truth of Galatians 3.28 by word AND action. It is in this way in which he missed the mark. In the end, it wound up being Bishop Carpenter’s moderate civil rights philosophy, however more positive it was from his fellow white citizens, that caused him to be wrong on the issue of race and on the negative side of civil rights history.

Jesus Christ was the Savior who proclaimed God’s favor for all people, with Paul speaking of God’s favor being acceptable NOW.<sup>10</sup> Not only was Jesus a Man of words, He was also a Man of action. As a Bishop entrusted with the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people in his charge, he, as well, should have been a man of both word and action, proclaiming God’s favor for African-Americans not only through sound writing and articulate speech, but also in active physical action. Bishop Carpenter should have been a man calling for racial change to occur in the then and now, not in the time to come. The thing that held Bishop Carpenter back was fear—fear of sudden change;

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<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 6.2 (Revised Standard Version)

fear of social unrest; fear of radical demonstrations. He was a man who clutched onto the old Episcopal adage of “tradition, calm, and order.” The disruption that ensued from the Civil Rights Movement sent Bishop Carpenter into “panic” mode, with him never fully recovering from the inward personal trauma that he endured throughout its duration.

Bishop Carpenter could not handle the change that was occurring around him. The cultural order that he knew and was long accustomed to was falling apart and, no matter what he did, he could not stop the destruction. It was a very unfortunate thing for Bishop Carpenter to lack the ability to conquer his own fear and be on the right side of racial justice. Like his grandfather and namesake, Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., his attachment to the past held him back. His fantasies of the Old South led him to believe in the notion that the way of life associated with that time was good enough for all times. How sad it is that he was unable to comprehend the naivety of such a notion. Tradition, calm, and order meant so much to the old Bishop that he became shackled in segregation’s sin. Racial progress for his African-American flock, as well as for all Alabamians, was his business. It is a very unfortunate thing that he failed.

A time without Jim Crow segregation was simply not possible for Bishop Carpenter. It was all that he knew. It was how he knew to live. His generation and old age were his worst enemies. They made radical and sudden change virtually impossible for him to accept or withstand. If only he could have seen the folly of his thoughts and inaction, then his civil rights legacy would be more positive. For him, I wish that he had done so. Unfortunately, the scales of his own folly and naivety were unable to fall from his

eyes, leaving him to die a man whose leadership towards racial progress will forever remain controversial.

The Right Reverend Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter, Sixth Bishop of Alabama, will forever remain a contentious figure on racial progress, left behind in a realm of unfortunate controversy. As the old Bishop rests from his labors, for his inability to clearly realize segregation's sin and actively work for an immediate halt to the havoc unfairly inflicted upon a race of God's children, may Almighty God have mercy on his soul.

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