

Paved with Good Intentions
The Road to Racial Unity in the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

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Abstract for scholarly and general audiences:

The Right Reverend William Henry Marmion was consecrated as bishop of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia on May 13, 1954, days prior to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and just over a decade after the Episcopal Church's General Convention formally opposed racial discrimination. A diocesan conference center in Hungry Mother State Park, purchased soon after his consecration, sparked a controversy that was to smolder and flame for the first decade of Marmion's 25 years as bishop. Marmion led the move to desegregate the diocesan conference center, Hemlock Haven, in 1958 and subsequently effected integration by closing three of the four black churches in the diocese and inviting members to choose a neighboring church to join. The initial integration of the diocese was a turbulent process that centered around Hemlock Haven. The diocese moved with some difficulty towards racial integration in a microcosm of what was happening in the wider Church and in the United States. Historical documents, secondary sources, interviews, and theoretical understanding of minority responses to oppression help me to describe this time of racial desegregation of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia and its implications. Critical theory gleaned from W. E. B. Du Bois and from Homi Bhabha informs my understanding of some of the implications as well as many of the actions and outcomes. Du Bois's notion of *double consciousness* and Bhabha's similar term *hybridity*, both of which acknowledge a dual locus of identity and of power, are relevant to understanding some of the interactions revealed by primary source correspondence. I will focus on Hemlock Haven as the entry point into desegregation and on the black churches in the diocese, both before and after that critical point, adding the witness of black voices to the white narrative of this history. A historical look at the trajectory of race and race relations in the Episcopal Church informs the moment of the *caesura*—an interruption—the desegregation of Hemlock Haven, and the fate of the four “black churches” in the diocese. From the point of the rupture comes identification, the emergence of a new space, a cultural reboot.

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Table of Contents

Introduction and Overview	p. 1
Chapter 1: Black Church, White America	p. 11
Chapter 2: Race and the Episcopal Church: An Archival Narrative of Four Black Churches in Southwestern Virginia:	p. 28
St. Philip's (Bedford), 1855	p. 48
Chapel of the Good Shepherd (Lynchburg), 1899	p. 75
St. Luke's (Roanoke), 1914	p. 99
St. Paul's (Martinsville), 1942	p. 106
Chapter 3: Integration: The Caesura—Hemlock Haven—1957 to 1959	p. 119
Chapter 4: Unintended Consequences	p. 149
St. Philip's, Bedford	p. 158
Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Lynchburg	p. 169
St. Luke's, Roanoke	p. 185
St. Paul's, Martinsville	p. 197
Chapter 5: Conclusion: Minding the Gap	p. 203
Appendix A: Questionnaire Results	p. 225
Appendix B: Parochial Report Data	p. 226
Appendix C: Virginia Theological Seminary <i>Journal</i>	p. 227
Appendix D: Oral Histories	p. 232
References	p. 306

Introduction and Overview

Nowhere does W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness" unwind quite so sharply as it does in regard to the African-American church experience. Double consciousness, the dual marker of identification that American blacks must bear of belonging both to a nation and to a people—and of "looking at one's self through the eyes of others"¹—creates not an enriched experience or a multivalent one, but rather one of "unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body."² A slight variation of his term "double consciousness" is Du Bois's use of the terms "double life" and "self consciousness." Brought on by a heritage of enslavement, this double life is "fatal to self confidence"³ and leads to "a peculiar wrenching of the soul, a peculiar sense of doubt and bewilderment."⁴ Du Bois makes the bold assertion that the result of the bifurcated soul of the "American Negro" afflicts religiosity in one of two ways, resulting in either radicalism or hypocrisy.⁵ These dual threads are interesting binaries to use to explore the organization of religion in America. As evidenced by the trajectory from the early role of the church in "Christianizing" slaves to Klan burnings of black churches and today's most recent example of a mass shooting at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, religion and race are inexorably intertwined. A subsequent exploration that examines these binaries and the movement away from them and from others will invite a discussion of modernity and the postmodern era, which is ultimately relevant when examining the movement of religious institutions. This dissertation aims to locate the apparatus of the *culture* in which the ensuing

¹ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903, Reprint (Oxford, MS: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6.

² *Ibid.*, 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

exploration is embedded. Theoretical looking glasses offered by Du Bois and contemporary cultural theorist Homi Bhabha,⁶ along with shifts in ideology and praxis and truths about the inherent nature of human beings, contribute to this small snapshot that is at once complex and remarkably similar to histories of integration that exist throughout America's past. Religion and race infuse American identity and are embedded in American culture.

This dissertation emerged from an interest in the controversy over racial integration in the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Born in the 1960s, I am the product of an era that was knee-deep⁷ in racial strife. As the daughter of an Episcopal bishop, I was immersed in a world that was struggling to maintain a steady moral center and edge ever closer to what America's founding fathers named as a core value—*equality*—and what the Episcopal Church claims as a tenet—*the dignity of every human being*.⁸ From a vantage point on the periphery, I was shaped and formed as one deeply committed to the quest for equality and informed by the church's intent for integrity. Figure 1 presents a watercolor painted by Kemper Dobbins, who was a parishioner at Christ Episcopal Church in Roanoke where my father was rector from 1968 to 1973.

⁶ Bhabha is Harvard's Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities.

⁷ Echoing Homi Bhabha, "On Global Memory: Thoughts on the Barbaric Transmission of Culture," Townsend Center for the Humanities' Forum on the Humanities and the Public World, *UC Berkeley*, April 2014, Audio podcast.

⁸ From the Baptismal Covenant, *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), 305.



Figure 1: Hemlock Haven, by Kemper Dobbins, 1969.⁹

Seated in the rocking chair on the porch is Bishop Marmion. My brother and I are in the foreground, peering into a fishbowl. I remember this setting well. It was here that my father played the guitar and sang with teenagers at countless youth and family conferences. We made lanyards, played softball, slept in cabins, and trekked through the woods of Hungry Mother State Park in the far western region of Virginia. What I do not remember are any discussions or controversies over race or integration. My child's gaze was focused inward, perhaps into the fishbowl that was in front of me in the painting. Or perhaps I was protected from the sharp controversies that erupted from our defining days of freedom-seeking settlers on new American soil that segued into a legacy of slavery, racial subjugation, and the violence of lynchings before morphing over the subsequent decades into the current racial strife and violence of shootings and death. This watercolor serves as an icon or a metaphor—I was on the periphery, so this story circles around me. I now peer beyond the confines of the fishbowl to see what I can discover of the broader cultural context of the time. I have found embedded in the archives of a white

⁹ Kemper Dobbins gave the painting to my parents in 1969; they gave it to me in 2003.

narrative the ghost of memory and history of black voices. This history is the history of one corner of Virginia; yet it is—in essence—the history of all of America, most assuredly the history of the South. My dissertation, then, examines closely a particular time and place as a way to pull apart some of the complexities of cultural identity.

Hemlock Haven is the nexus for this study of race and church. Bhabha's expression of the quest for identity is perhaps at the heart of my quest. Bhabha speaks of Frantz Fanon's statement from his seminal work, *Black Skin, White Masks*: "What is often called the black soul is a white man's artefact [sic]." A literature professor who is consistently fascinated with language, Bhabha is drawn in by the intelligent word play—what he calls *transference*—pointing to upheavals of identity in Fanon's statement:

This transference ["black soul is a white man's artefact"] speaks otherwise. It reveals the deep psychic uncertainty of the colonial relation itself: its split representations stage that division of body and soul that enacts the artifice of identity, a division that cuts across the fragile skin – black and white—of individual and social authority. Three conditions that underlie an understanding of the *process of identification* in the analytic of desire emerge.¹⁰

Bhabha's three conditions that pave the way for an emergence of being defy paraphrase. He expounds on each of these but at the core the conditions are as follows. I have added emphasis to the particularly relevant or resonant phrases:

First: **to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness**, its look or locus...

¹⁰ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge [1994] 2007), 63-64.

Second: **the very place of identification**, caught in the tension of demand and desire, **is a space of splitting**...

Finally, the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy—**it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image.**¹¹

Though oversimplifying the stages, it is not beyond the bounds to apply these conditions to the trajectory of race relations in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia: 1) the emergence of black churches from the post-slavery missionary work to post-Jim Crow desegregation; 2) Hemlock Haven as the “space of splitting” that created a “place of identification”¹²; and 3) the transformation that continues as identity emerges. In other words, we might use Bhabha’s theoretical model to understand the stages that the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia went through as it moved from segregated to desegregated.

Bhabha’s appropriation of the literary term *caesura*¹³ and my application to the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia’s movement from segregated to desegregated offers an additional theoretical application that illustrates change in the wake of interruption. To demonstrate *caesura*, Bhabha explains the form-follows-function meaning behind Fanon’s interrupted line: “The Negro is not. Any more than the white man.” As Bhabha says, “The awkward division that breaks his line of thought keeps alive the dramatic and enigmatic sense of change.”¹⁴ Thus, the *caesura*—the break or rupture—is essential for change. Hemlock Haven functions as such a caesura. The break is emblematic of ruptures that occur on small and large scale in our culture.

¹¹ Ibid., 63-64.

¹² Ibid., 64.

¹³ A *caesura* is a break or interruption in a line of prose or poetry.

¹⁴ Ibid., 57-58.

Ruptures offer opportunity for examining the status quo and initiating change. As illustrated in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, change came in the wake of the caesura.

In order to think about the gleanings of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia’s identity—and what the racial conflicts and walk toward resolution mean, I lean on Bhabha’s way of thinking about identity and historic events in memory. I identify with his use of literary references and influences. Because Bhabha absorbs the thinking of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Walter Benjamin, and others, they necessarily make their way into this discussion as well. Most specifically, Bhabha’s understanding of hybridity—and identity—and the “enunciative now,” the caesura, ambivalence, recognition (re-cognition), transmission and barbaric translation inform my work and coincide with Du Bois’s double consciousness and unreconciled strivings.

The painting in Figure 1 represents the moment in time from which my exploration emanates and reverberates. The painting and Hemlock Haven serve as what Bhabha, invoking Walter Benjamin, describes as an “angle of vision.”¹⁵ My exploration unfolds from what Bhabha might recognize as a moment he calls “caught between a past that refuses to die confronted by a future that will not wait to be born,”¹⁶ words he uses to describe the location of the place of an ethical witness. Mine is not a linear historical study as much as it is a concentric one—one that folds out from the central transmission or event. It is necessarily interdisciplinary.

Archival research informs most of the work. Rich troves of primary source information in the Virginia Tech archives and in the diocesan office, Evans House, in Roanoke offer fodder

¹⁵ Walter Benjamin quoted in Homi Bhabha, “On Global Memory: Thoughts on the Barbaric Transmission of Culture,” Townsend Center for the Humanities’ Forum on the Humanities and the Public World, *UC Berkeley*, April 2014, Audio podcast.

¹⁶ Bhabha, “On Global Memory.”

for a lifetime of work.¹⁷ Secondary literature offers context and reaction to what primary sources reveal, although the real work of this dissertation is with the primary sources. Early in my research, I noted an absence of black voices and so set out to collect oral histories. This dissertation seeks to re-inscribe black voices into the narrative of the black churches of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. I interviewed nine former parishioners of the four black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Each of those I interviewed has remained in the Episcopal Church.¹⁸ Those voices are included in this text by way of oral histories and in the form of letters archived in folders of correspondence. The gleanings from the folders offer glimpses into what became important enough to file, year after year, and then locate in an off-site storage facility in Blacksburg, as part of the archives of Virginia Tech's Special Collections library. A discovery as a result of listening to the black voices is their whispered chorus of what it meant to be black during a time of segregated churches and during their integration. The trajectory is, not surprisingly, different from the raucous tangles that marked the era of desegregation among whites. The inclusion of black voices helps to tease out some of the intricacies of assimilation.

The chapters of this dissertation, like history, are not linear but fold out and circle back upon themselves. At the center of my dissertation—literally and figuratively—is Hemlock Haven, the caesura. By integrating black voices into decisions of the white hierarchy, the history becomes a more inclusive history. My work offers a twofold contribution: 1) a bringing forth of black voices as contributors to a complex cacophony in the era of integration; and 2) the

¹⁷ Diocesan records and correspondence are housed at Evans House, located at 1000 1st Street SW, Roanoke, Virginia 24016. The materials are part of the diocesan records and uncatalogued. I provide titles throughout for materials when titles are available. When titles are unavailable, I provide identifying information as is available and/or relevant.

¹⁸ I did not interview any black parishioners who may have left the Episcopal Church during the era of integration. Such interviews are a worthy pursuit for future research.

application of the caesura as a conceptual model, a way of thinking about the road to racial unity as one with a series of interruptions or bumps along the way—each interruption a destabilization of the status quo that invites examination and initiates change.

Overview of the Chapters

The **Introduction** serves to set the stage by identifying the central problem or situation of the struggle over the desegregation of Hemlock Haven, the diocesan camp and conference center, and to explain what gave rise to my inquiry. Looking through the lenses of W.E.B. Du Bois and Homi Bhabha, I consider historical data as informed by their theoretical underpinning. I also raise some of their key concepts—double consciousness, hybridity, *caesura*, barbaric transmission—pertaining to our culture and how these thinkers and concepts might focus our gaze in particular ways.

Chapter 1: Black Church, White America presents a brief overview of the Black Church in America, exploring in particular the implications of Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness. After landing on a discussion of hypocrisy or radicalism as likely outcomes of living “behind the veil,” this chapter points to the ongoing impact of racial oppression in America by identifying indicators that suggest the relevance of continued study of our racialized past.

Chapter 2: Race and the Episcopal Church: An Archival Narrative of Four Black Churches in Southwestern Virginia offers an example of what I mean by folding out. Before looking closely at what happened in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, I *fold out* to offer an overview, in broad strokes, of race and the Episcopal Church. This chapter opens in 1790 with the birth of the Episcopal Church and traces the Church’s path towards racial equality up through

the era of desegregation, where the history becomes specific to the four black churches in Southwestern Virginia. The history of all but one of these churches pre-dates the existence of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, so the chapter aims both to expand beyond the time parameters of the era of desegregation and to focus more narrowly, by looking closely—almost intimately—at the inner working of the four black churches as revealed mostly by letters to and from the bishop and church stakeholders. This section of the chapter opens with a look at the oldest of the four black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, St. Philip’s, and continues through each, exploring their high and low points from their beginnings up to the time of Bishop Marmion’s election in 1954:

1. St. Philip’s (Bedford), 1855
2. Chapel of the Good Shepherd (Lynchburg), 1899
3. St. Luke’s (Roanoke), 1914
4. St. Paul’s (Martinsville), 1942

Chapter 3: Integration: The Caesura—Hemlock Haven—1957 to 1959 engages the focal point of the discussion—the caesura—and looks closely at the various threads that wove the tangled web: the interplay between the bishop and the diocese; tensions between clergy and laity; race, power, personality, and cultural shifts. Sources for this chapter include primary source materials such as diocesan records, committee notes and minutes, and correspondence as well as news coverage and secondary source recollections of the era. Oral histories contribute memories of black Episcopalians to the conversation.

Chapter 4: Unintended Consequences explores the fate of the black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. The history includes excerpts from the oral history interviews. After the unwinding of some of the key points of the church history—identified

primarily by clergy leadership—a section on Bishop Marmion and the closing of three of these churches, along with Marion’s invitation to the parishioners to choose a nearby church to join, and thus integrate, relocates the discussion in the context of the era of desegregation.

Chapter 5: Conclusions: Minding the Gap aims to put forward the key findings, many of them in the form of lines of inquiry for further study, that the previous chapters opened up. I name the unintended consequences of the racial desegregation of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia as understood through the lens of double consciousness (Du Bois) and hybridity (Bhabha) and project upcoming conversations about race, both culturally and in the church.

A word about language:

I have chosen to use the terms *black* and *white* to refer to and distinguish between people as contextually relevant. I use the term *black* because the terms *Negro* and *colored* are archaic if not offensive. I deem *African American* to be too contemporary a term to use when primarily speaking about a historical past. Additionally, there are many times when *African American* is an inaccurate term.

Chapter 1

Black Church, White America

*Man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose himself on another man in order to be recognized by him. As long as he has not been effectively recognized by the other, it is this other who remains the focus of his actions. His human worth and reality depend on this other and on his recognition by the other. It is in this other that the meaning of his life is condensed.*¹⁹

— Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Pre-Dawn of the Black Church

Religion in early America was what Peter Wallenstein calls the “twin” to state authority.²⁰ That authority, however, was reserved for men only and for white men specifically. The first Virginia Charter contained, among other charges, the aim of “propagating of Christian religion to such people, [who] as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God.”²¹ The Charter indicated that it viewed Christianity as a means of ordered living as much as it is a means of eternal salvation; the Charter expressed the hope that bringing religion to the New World “may in time bring the infidels and savages, living in those parts, to human civility, and to a settled and quiet government.”²² Religion, then, helped to establish—and the church to promulgate—that order.

The questions of equality and “personhood” that surrounded church membership were a particularly relevant topic for slave-era America. Personhood was effectively denied by a 1667 decree by the Virginia Assembly, which stated that “Baptism doth not alter the condition of a

¹⁹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 191.

²⁰ Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

²¹ “The First Virginia Charter, 1606,” *The USGenWeb Project: VaGenWeb*, <http://vagenweb.org/hening/vol01-03.htm>, 58.

²² *Ibid.*

person as to his bondage or freedom.” In his short work, *The Episcopal Church Among the Negroes of Virginia*, Episcopal priest and historiographer for the Diocese of Virginia, G. MacLaren Brydon wrote, “From the first introduction of Negro slaves into Virginia in 1619 devout masters would bring Negro children to baptism and make some efforts to teach them the rudiments of the Christian religion.”²³ Slaves who had reached adulthood upon their arrival in the New World were less likely to be baptized because of their inability to read or, in most cases, speak English. This practice became the official position in a 1698 decree in Virginia: only those children of slaves born on American soil were baptized or Christianized because of language barriers. At its founding, religion in America was essentially white male.²⁴ If the Bible was used as a means of justification for the institution of slavery, scripture was most certainly also invoked by those seeking freedom—many slave-era spirituals are rooted in the Psalms and the Old Testament. For instance, “Let My People Go” is the story of Moses leading the oppressed Hebrew people out of Egypt narrated in the Book of Exodus. Other spirituals picked up the freedom chorus, the contemporary echo undeniably relevant to the American slave, which would reverberate into the civil rights era nearly a hundred years later.

In addition to capturing themes that spoke to enslaved blacks, spirituals lent themselves to a shared experience “meant to create intense experiences of presence and unity with one another.”²⁵ The community language of song allowed for repetition to convey the stories, to share the history, and to pass along the tradition. Not all could read, so the oral tradition was in many ways a necessary method for perpetuating the collective memory. Du Bois noted that the

²³ G. MacLaren Brydon, *The Episcopal Church Among the Negroes of Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Richmond Press, Inc., 1937), 9.

²⁴ Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*.

²⁵ Catherine L. Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Publishing, 2006), 14.

“circumstances of the gathering . . . the rhythm of the songs, and the limitations of allowable thought, confined the poetry for the most part to single or double lines.”²⁶ Du Bois further observed that while the themes of the songs were largely sorrowful, they also offered hope. In what arguably comes the closest of all the segments in *The Souls of Black Folk* to being a sermon (which would later echo resoundingly and familiarly in the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s preaching) Du Bois wrote:

Through all the sorrow of the Sorrow Songs there breathes a hope—a faith in the ultimate justice of things. The minor cadences of despair change often to triumph and calm confidence. Sometimes it is faith in life, sometimes a faith in death, and sometimes assurance of boundless justice in some fair world beyond. But whichever it is, the meaning is always clear: that sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins.²⁷

It was slavery that gave birth to the Negro spirituals and hope that lifted the notes and voices to sustain an oppressed people, even, perhaps, when such hope was unwarranted.

Emergence of the Black Church

Although it was a long time in coming, religious pluralism is the dominant mark of what has emerged as the Black Church in America. After a slow start with assimilation, secession and invention became part of the story also. An Anglican church in the low country of South Carolina began a ministry to blacks by baptizing slaves in 1695.²⁸ Carter G. Woodson’s careful

²⁶ Du Bois, *Souls*, 113.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 113-114.

²⁸ “The Archives of the Episcopal Church,” *The Episcopal Church*, accessed May 6, 2011, <http://www.episcopalarchives.org>.

accounting of religious activity in America included the baptism of up to twenty black communicants—who were noted as literate as well—within ten years at Goose Creek parish. Woodson also recorded the Rev. Samuel Thomas’ work with 1000 slaves, instructing them in learning to read and in learning scripture. Difficulties occurred, perhaps predictably, when it came to communion. Woodson commented, “When these blacks approached the communion table, however, some white persons seriously objected, inquiring whether it was possible that slaves could go to heaven anyway.”²⁹ It is hard to label this baptism and instruction as anything even as weak as assimilation. What Woodson called “Christianization”³⁰ was described a decade earlier by Booker T. Washington as blacks’ access to “the fundamental things in life.”³¹ Washington’s view was that the church instilled in blacks “a desire and enthusiasm for a higher and better existence here and hereafter.”³² Of the church, Washington said, “in my opinion there is no other place in which the Negro race can to better advantage begin to learn the lessons of self direction and self control than in the Negro Church.”³³

Parochial reports³⁴ collected from Episcopal Churches throughout America in 1848 list high numbers of baptisms of “negroes” but many fewer confirmations. Over a third of all baptisms (219 of a total 564) were baptisms of blacks (190 of those baptized were children; 29 are recorded as adults). Three blacks were confirmed in the Episcopal Church in 1848.³⁵ While other denominations drew black worshippers into the fold, free blacks were most likely to be

²⁹ Carter Godwin Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1921), 7.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Booker T. Washington, *The Story of the Negro* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, [1909] 2005), 335.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ A parochial report is a method of collecting membership data from parishes.

³⁵ Brydon, *The Episcopal Church*, 6.

Methodists or Baptists. The Methodist and Baptist Churches had by far the most black members. The Episcopal Church is notable in a discussion of the history of the black church because of its early strength and prominence.

Agency or power associated with something as seemingly basic as the ability to assemble as part of a community of faith is the primary reason blacks were prohibited or blocked from early American Christian groups. In his discussion of religion in the New World, Robert Bellah invokes Alexis de Toqueville's belief in an inherent inclination to incorporate religion as part of the political governance.³⁶ Some early attempts at "Christianization" may have sought to exorcize strange or unfamiliar and seemingly "savage" vestiges of African tribal customs, and yet full access to church membership was denied or discouraged in an effort to perpetuate subjugation. Du Bois made note of this fear-driven form of oppression in his 1903 report on the Negro Church. He wrote, "[I]n 1709 a clergyman of the Established Church complains that masters will not allow their slaves to be baptized for fear that a Christian slave is by law free."³⁷

Similarly, Woodson observed:

These missionaries met with some opposition in New England among the Puritans, who had no serious objection to seeing the Negroes saved but did not care to see them incorporated into the church, which then being connected with the state would grant them political as well as religious equality.³⁸

³⁶ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967): www.robertbellah.com/articles_5.

³⁷ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "The Negro Church: Report of a Social Study made Under the Direction of Atlanta University; Together with the Proceedings of the Eighth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, Held at Atlanta University, May 26th, 1903." Atlanta University, *Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History, Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems*, 9.

³⁸ Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, 15.

And so, it seems, that an early vestige of religion in America is that it was a mechanism for power and control. Blacks were denied access to the church and to the culture.

St. Thomas in downtown Philadelphia was to become the first black Episcopal Church. St. Thomas originated as an African Church; its founding clergy, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, were creators of the Free African Society, an organization whose purpose was to offer aid to Philadelphia's black population. Jones would become an official part of the Episcopal Church in 1794 when the church was ratified.³⁹ Most sources consider Jones, who was ordained in 1804, the first black Episcopal priest, although Carter G. Woodson cited Peter Williams' 1820 ordination as the first.⁴⁰ Woodson acknowledged Jones' early role in the church and also disparagingly remarked, "The Episcopal Church . . . could hardly attract Negro churchmen of very much ambition, when it did not require very much reasoning to reach the conclusion that inasmuch as that church had too often neglected the poor whites, it would hardly be inclined to proselyte Negroes."⁴¹

St. Thomas continues today as an Episcopal Church. Richard Allen's Methodist leanings led him to become the progenitor of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church. These early black parishes are but a fraction of the range that has come to represent the Black Church. The label "Black Church" carries with it all sorts of connotations and implications. True to the definition of pluralism, one is not necessarily like the other, nor do black churches always resemble their denominational origins, but there may be certain parallels that will help us think about both race and religion through the lens of time and place in ways that are both interesting and illuminating.

³⁹ "Historic St. Thomas," *African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas*, accessed December 5, 2009, <http://www.aecst.org/home.htm>.

⁴⁰ Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, 94.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Black churches have historically served as both sources of power and independence and mechanisms for wielding power. They have served as mechanisms for structural assimilation by paving the way for black access to an institution within the dominant culture. Numbers of black leaders have emerged from the ranks of clergy, and social movements have gained momentum from black congregations. Similarly, the church has operated as a mechanism for perpetuating the status quo of oppression. We can see one example of how the church is an agent in these opposing forces with a close examination of W.E.B. Du Bois's theory of double consciousness.

Radicalism or Hypocrisy

Du Bois posited that the Negro was likely to settle into either radicalism or hypocrisy as a result of living through the veil and seeing himself through the eyes of others—a phenomenon Du Bois called *double consciousness*. Radicalism potentially resulted when anger overwhelmed. It could also represent a blatant rejection of the status quo. Marcus Garvey and Rastafarianism, the Black Jews, Timothy Drew, Farrah Mohammad (Wallace D. Fard) and the Moorish Science Temple of America, Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X, and Louis Farrakhan are all examples of leaders who might fall into the category of radicalism.⁴² Radicalism is the much more visible manifestation of a life lived as a member of a subjugated underclass. For the purposes of drawing out Du Bois's hypothesis, let it suffice to say that examples of radicalism are more readily accessible to memory or our cultural narrative. What follows is a discussion of hypocrisy, which is the less visible manifestation of the effects of double consciousness.

⁴² Albanese, *America: Religions, and Religion*, 147-150.

Hypocrisy may emerge in two possible forms: one form, a banal acceptance driven simply by a need to adhere or belong; or a second possibility, an acceptance driven by external pressures to adhere—a key example of which is integration. Harlem Renaissance luminary Langston Hughes captured an example of banal acceptance in a religious context in an anecdote from his childhood. Hughes wrote about the time he was “saved from sin when [he] was going on thirteen.” He offered a clarification saying, “But [I was] not really saved.”⁴³ Chapter Three, titled “Salvation,” in his autobiography, *The Big Sea*, told of his Auntie Reed’s devout promise of God’s love:

My aunt told me that when you were saved you saw a light, and something happened to you inside! And Jesus came into your life! And God was with you from then on! She said you could see and hear and feel Jesus in your soul.⁴⁴

And so young Langston believed, and he waited for all those things to come to pass. The church of Langston’s Auntie Reed (if we set the context around a 13-year-old Langston Hughes) was a 1915 church in Kansas. In his memoir, Langston described sitting on the mourners’ bench “with all the other young sinners who had not yet been brought to Jesus.”⁴⁵ The revival had brought new members to the church and after weeks of “much preaching, singing, praying, and shouting,”⁴⁶ this particular night had been set aside as a special altar call for young children to come and be saved. Hughes described the “wonderful rhythmical sermon, all moans and shouts and lonely cries and dire pictures of hell.”⁴⁷ When the preacher called the “young lambs”

⁴³Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (New York: Hill and Wang [1940] 1993), 19.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

forward to be saved, one by one, all the children go until only Langston and a boy named Westley remain. Langston has waited for Jesus and the light, but Westley has had enough: “Finally Westley said to me in a whisper: ‘God damn! I’m tired o’ sitting here. Let’s get up and be saved.’ So he got up and was saved.”⁴⁸ Later that night, Langston’s Auntie Reed misinterpreted Langston’s tears into his pillow and sobs heard through the bedroom wall to be joy in his newfound relationship with Christ, not bitter disappointment in the deception and a newfound conviction—a conviction that there is no Jesus.

Hughes’ autobiographical narrative illustrates the hypocrisy of banal acceptance into the church. Young Langston joined, albeit with some form of discomfort, unlike Westley and countless others who go along, sheep-like, without interrogating the reasons for the membership. Sliding into the current and being swept along becomes the impetus; resistance is a disturbance that would create notice and singularity. Individualism rankles; banal acceptance invites quiet peace—its only price is the loss of personal integrity.

Integration as Hypocrisy

Another form of hypocrisy may well manifest itself in the form of integration. One of the problems with persistent racial struggles in the church was noted in the Episcopal Bishops’ 1994 Pastoral Letter titled “The Sin of Racism,” which named the “sin” as an invitation to “become like us.”⁴⁹ This notion of integration by way of assimilation offers all kinds of ways to think about hypocrisy. First, of course, is the obvious hypocrisy of those offering the invitation: the white majority. Early efforts at integration start from a place of deep, internalized white

⁴⁸ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁹ “The Sin of Racism: A Call to Covenant,” House of Bishops Pastoral Letter, March 2006, “The Archives of the Episcopal Church,” http://www.episcopalchurch.org/3577_73047_ENG_HTML.htm.

privilege. It has only been in the decades since the civil rights movement that white privilege has been recognized and examined as among the systemic and insidious structures that contribute to the perpetuation of racism. Peggy McIntosh's seminal work "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" names and helps bring to the surface the long hidden invisibility that is inherent in racism.⁵⁰ Stephen Gould further explains how our racist roots trace back as far as the naming of peoples. Gould describes how human beings came to be classified. Originally, Carolus Linneaus created a four-group taxonomy in the 1758 taxonomy, *Systema Naturae*.⁵¹ Linneaus' student, Joann Friedrich Blumenbach, refined the classification, adding a fifth category to create a five-race classification, and in doing so, he created also a hierarchy, favoring Caucasians. Blumenbach explained:

I have allotted the first place to the Caucasians . . . which makes me esteem it the primeval one. This diverges in both directions into two, most remote and very different from each other; on the one side, namely into the Ethiopian, and on the other into the Mongolian. The remaining two occupy the intermediate positions between that primeval one and these two extreme varieties.⁵²

The ethnocentrism that led to the privileging of whites in the very naming of racial classifications is just one of the many ways the white majority has laid claim to a place of status. When the ordered status is perpetuated, a social hierarchy emerges. In his benchmark work on race, *An American Dilemma*, sociologist Gunnar Myrdal cited the church as an example of a place where blacks are often unwelcome visitors at white churches, but whites are treated as

⁵⁰ Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," (1988), in *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, ed. Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning) 2004.

⁵¹ Stephen Jay Gould, "The Geometer of Race," *Discover* 15.11 (1994): 65-9. 199.

⁵² Quoted in Gould, 202.

honored guests at black congregations.⁵³ The trajectory from ordering of racial classes to status as illustrated by Myrdal points to ways the white majority has wielded power with class and religion, perpetuating the superiority of the dominant class. The American minority has been swimming against the current since being tossed into the deep waters of the river. The other mode of hypocrisy that W.E.B. Du Bois was acknowledging when he wrote about the effects of the “double life . . . giving rise to double words and double ideals”⁵⁴ is the hypocrisy of blacks who forgo parts of themselves in order to be accepted into the dominant culture.

The Personal Costs of Hypocrisy

Segregation in order to deny blacks access to white houses of worship became illegal. Integration, however, led to further subjugation of blacks who had at once gained access to the dominant culture and again become a minority within that context. The following discussions, which bear evidence of the impact of segregation and oppression, serve to enrich the extrapolation of hypocrisy or violence in reaction to oppression as understood by Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness.

In a study that provided evidence to support the negative impact of segregation on black children, Kenneth B. Clark, a psychologist, and his wife Mamie, conducted a study in 1950 with children and dolls. Clark comes to a conclusion similar to Du Bois about segregation in his 1965 book *Dark Ghetto*. Clark argued that the way out of the ghetto, the way for blacks to achieve equality, was to fight alongside whites. He wrote, “[t]he poetic irony of American race relations

⁵³ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), 575.

⁵⁴ Du Bois, *Souls*, 89.

is that the rejected Negro must somehow also find the strength to free the privileged white.”⁵⁵

As a psychologist, Clark focused his work on the impact of various manifestations of racism on the individual. A professor at the College of the City of New York (having taught previously at his alma mater, Howard University), Clark’s long list of credentials includes research for Myrdal’s Carnegie study, which was to become *An American Dilemma*.⁵⁶

In a chapter titled “The Invisible Wall,” Clark said, “A person—or a race—who has been forced to be ashamed of his identity cannot easily accept himself simply as a human being and surrender either the supportive group identification or hostility toward those who have rejected him.”⁵⁷ Clark further spelled out the inherent dangers of the segregated community, consistent with Du Bois and others who promoted integration for the health of all, particularly the black members of the community: “The dark ghetto is institutionalized pathology; it is chronic, self-perpetuating pathology; and it is the futile attempt by those with power to confine that pathology so as to prevent the spread of its contagion to the ‘larger community.’”⁵⁸

The notion of inherent power of the subjugated is echoed in Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: “Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both.”⁵⁹ Freire’s work augments the work of Clark. While Clark’s *Dark Ghetto* considered the harm of segregation as manifested in urban America, Freire drew from his own

⁵⁵ Kenneth Bancroft Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 240; The first black PhD from Columbia University (1940), Clark combined research with his work as the lead project consultant and board chair of an organization called the Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, which was a city-funded project. His work with youth in Harlem (and subsequent report to a panel chaired by Virginia Tech alumnus and 1950 American Sociological Society President, Leonard S. Cottrell) led to the writing of *Dark Ghetto*.

⁵⁶ Kenneth Bancroft Clark, “Introduction to an Epilogue.” In *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965.)

⁵⁷ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 20.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁵⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 44.

experience in Brazil. Both, however, turn the spotlight on some common problems generated by an imbalance of power. In addition to the need for the oppressed to claw out of the oppressed state instead of waiting for a hand up, Freire and Clark both pointed to the danger of the self-perception of the oppressed.

Many claim education as the cure, and yet, it is this awakening of the mind that at once introduces the veil as characterized by Du Bois's tale from his work *The Souls of Black Folk* in which he told the story of two young men named John—one white, one black. When the black John came into his intellectual self, he awakened “to feel almost for the first time the Veil that lay between him and the white world; he first noticed now the oppression that had not seemed oppression before, differences that erstwhile seemed natural, restraints and slights that in his boyhood days had gone unnoticed or been greeted with a laugh.”⁶⁰ Later, upon returning home, John's younger sister asked if it made everyone “unhappy when they learn and study lots of things.”⁶¹ So it seems, Du Bois implied, that John and others for whom the Veil is lifted may give in to radicalism—and violence, as in John's case when, in a deadly reaction to a white assumption of power, he killed the man who assaulted his sister. To have done nothing would have been hypocrisy.

Du Bois's depiction of radicalism in his parable of the long-oppressed John illustrated one possible outcome of subjugation. The resentment that began to emerge with education built into violent and unstoppable rage. Education had made clear that helplessness was not the only option. When John saw his sister struggling in the grasp of a white man, his former playmate, he took action in the form a tree branch turned weapon. The action solved a problem that would have been unsolvable in the black and white world Du Bois was describing. Radicalism,

⁶⁰ Du Bois, *Souls*, 102.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

violence, hypocrisy, and loss of integrity are all part of the quagmire that composes the complexity of integration. The next section begins to examine the inter-racial complexities that emerge in American life.

From Modernity to Postmodernity

Gone now are the binaries of modernity—as evidenced by the softening gender and race markers. We’ve seen the trajectory that smudges these stark lines as court cases overturn laws preventing bi-racial and now same-gender marriage, and U.S. Census data reveal that those reporting multiple race identification rose in number from 6.8 million to 9 million in the span of a decade from 2000 to 2010.⁶²

Michelle Alexander writes about the prison pipeline and has dubbed the current era “The New Jim Crow.”⁶³ Data present a bleak picture. The last quarter of the twentieth century was marked by a consistent average of about one third of the African-American population living below the poverty line.⁶⁴ In other examples of inequities between blacks and whites, blacks lag behind whites in nearly every mark of social well-being:

- On any typical night, one in eight black men who fall in the 25-34 age range is in prison.⁶⁵

⁶² Peter Wallenstein, *Tell the Court I Love My Wife: Race, Marriage, and Law: An American History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); US Census.

⁶³ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. (New York: New Press, 2010).

⁶⁴ Rebecca M. Blank, “An Overview of Trends in Social and Economic Well-Being, by Race,” *America Becoming* vol. I. ed. W. J. Neil and J. Smelser (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001).

⁶⁵ Marc M. Mauer, “Race, Class, and the Development of Criminal Justice Policy,” *The Policy Studies Association*, vol. 21, no.1 (2004): 79-92.

- Black men who were born in the 1960s are about twice as likely to have prison records as college degrees or military service.⁶⁶
- The rate of black infant mortality is more than double (13.3) the white infant mortality rate (5.6).⁶⁷
- Blacks “live sicker and die younger.”⁶⁸

Schools offer arguably the most compelling Petri dish for the study of racial attitudes in America. We can look back, as Davison M. Douglas does in his comprehensive overview *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954*. In reviewing our past, we gain some of the clarity of hindsight and see our steps forward and back, as well as some missteps, such as handing down punishment on white children in late 19th century integrated schools by seating them next to black children,⁶⁹ or entrenched politicians and powerbrokers laying claim for too long to old tenets, resulting in violence.⁷⁰ Looking back also affords us the opportunity to think about our “now.” Cultural theorist Homi Bhabha explodes the concept of time by examining it from a variety of theoretical perspectives. He probes Mikhail Bakhtin’s understanding of a fixed present saying:

The narrative structure of this historical surmounting of the “ghostly” or the “double” is seen in the intensification of narrative synchrony as a graphically

⁶⁶ Becky Pettit and Bruce Western, “Mass Imprisonment and the Life Course: Race and Class Inequality in U.S. Incarceration” Vols. 69, no. 2, *American Sociological Association* (2004).

⁶⁷ Robert S. Levine, et al. “Black-White Inequalities in Mortality and Life Expectancy, 1933-1999: Implications for Healthy People 2010.” *Public Health Reports* 116.5 (2001): 474–483.

⁶⁸ Panel on Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Medical Care, “The Right to Equal Treatment” (Boston: Physicians for Human Rights, 2003), 7.

⁶⁹ Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 109.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 251-254.

visible position in space: “to grasp the most elusive course of pure historical time and fix it through unmediated contemplation.”⁷¹

History seems to be a series of eruptions along a line. The status quo is interrupted by an event that disrupts the flow and sometimes alters the trajectory. It is to these fixed points that we often return to revisit what Bhabha calls the *barbaric transmission* or the *caesura*—the (sometimes violent)—interruption. In a lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, Bhabha observed that “The life of memory exceeds the historic event.”⁷² He concludes his lecture with this statement:

It is therefore in our interest that we take a double stance. If we must step into the stream of time to feel the fast flow of progress, and at times its cleansing *technic contempronaicity*, we must also wade knee deep in the sewers of history. Feeling the tug of the dark and its traumas, the tug of the dark and the deep and in the tension in which we move, hither and thither, there will emerge a current that sustains us and a currency of creative communication that may not save us but will at least give us some chance to survive.⁷³

The aim of this dissertation is to *wade in knee deep*. I put forward Hemlock Haven as the *caesura*—a fixed point within the larger caesura of the “moment” of racial integration in the context of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. And I am attuned to Bhabha’s claim that “the life of memory exceeds the historic event.” What came before and after contribute to the life and memory of the event. The history is amplified by way of excavated and

⁷¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee, (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986), 36, quoted in Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), 295.

⁷² Bhabha, “On Global Memory.”

⁷³ *Ibid.*

discovered black voices found in the archives and invited into memory. The voices share memory in such a way as to call to the surface the cost of what Clark and Du Bois point to as the cost of integration. What remains is the remnant of identification. It is, in a post-modern understanding, not fixed in time but ongoing. Change occurs in a series of caesurae. The aim is ultimately not to apply a modernist solution to a post-modern problem, rather to find a way to crack the door open in order to let in a ray of light that might shine a way forward. History need not be merely a monument to what was; perhaps it can become a hope for what might be.

Chapter 2

Race and the Episcopal Church: An Archival

Narrative of Four Black Churches in Southwestern Virginia

This chapter opens with a brief history of race and the Episcopal Church beyond the bounds of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, from the emergence of the Episcopal Church and continuing to the present day. A narrative history⁷⁴ of each of the four black churches that existed in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia during the era of desegregation follows the snapshot of the wider Episcopal Church. The narrative history will introduce the provenance and character of St. Philip's, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, St. Luke's, and St. Paul's. This chapter locates the emergence of black churches in Virginia, narrowing to the specific identities of the four that become central to a discussion of the integration of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

A Brief History

The Episcopal Church was born in the United States a few years after the *Declaration of Independence*. In 1780, the Rev. William Smith, an Anglican priest, held a meeting at the church where he had been called to serve as rector. This meeting at Emmanuel Church in Chestertown, Maryland, marked the naming of the Episcopal Church, the American sibling of

⁷⁴At the suggestion of my dissertation committee member, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, I have named the narrative history an “archival history.” The history is an unfolding of the story of the church primarily as revealed by the archival materials in the holdings of the Special Collections Library at Virginia Tech. The histories of each of the four black churches in the diocese is augmented by diocesan documents and later, in Chapter 4, by the oral histories. These histories are not comprehensive. They reveal what was of central significance in the archives. Much material remains to be excavated. I put my eyes on most but not all of it; some was inaccessible either because the handwriting was unreadable to my eyes or it became inaccessible or unreadable during the transfer via scanning. Some materials I discovered were in folders that had been mislabeled.

the Anglican Church.⁷⁵ The name “Protestant Episcopal Church,” which began with the calling of Smith as rector of Emmanuel, became commonly used in the growing United States by 1785 and was officially adopted in 1814.⁷⁶

The first African slaves were baptized into the Anglican Church in 1624, and an Episcopal ministry to blacks in South Carolina’s low country was established in 1695.⁷⁷ Black Episcopalians are not merely a vestige of slavery; slaves who were part of the church’s evangelism or outreach or who attended the churches of their masters sat in a separate section, usually a balcony. The first black Episcopal Church was founded in 1792 by the Rev. Absalom Jones. Prior to construction of what is now St. Thomas in downtown Philadelphia, growing numbers of black parishioners began meeting in homes. Initially founded as an African Church, the church and its priest became an official part of the Episcopal Church in 1794 when St. Thomas was ratified and Jones accepted into the fledgling denomination.⁷⁸ Jones was subsequently ordained as an Episcopal priest—the first black priest to be ordained—in 1804.⁷⁹

The Episcopal Church’s actions and reactions to race in post-Civil War America mirrored those of the country. Attitudes towards blacks ran the gamut from paternalistic good will to overt declamation of the rights to inclusion. Notable events, such as the founding of black parishes and schools and black representation at General Convention (the Episcopal Church’s triennial legislative meeting) were all couched in terms of white aid to black efforts. An early such organization, the Protestant Episcopal Freedmen’s Commission, which was called into being by

⁷⁵ Tony Knapp, “The History of All Souls Episcopal Church,” *All Souls Episcopal Church*, accessed November 18, 2009. <http://www.allsouls-stonybrook.org/History.html>.

⁷⁶ “The Archives.”

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ “Historic St. Thomas,” *African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas*, accessed December 5, 2009, <http://www.aecst.org/home.htm>.

⁷⁹ “The Archives.”

the General Convention in 1865, names the morality of freed slaves as among the primary reasons for the church's involvement in setting up education:

Yet, if home, if marriage, if the nurture and tutelage of children, if the decorousness and forethought which these involve, —if those principles be not implanted with the most awful of sanctions in the negro race, what results can we expect but vagrancy and disease, and pollution, and ruin, and death? ⁸⁰

It was not until the mid-1960s that a move beyond desegregation to full inclusion emerged in the formation of “The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity” (ESCRU). Founding members of the group declared that “black and white Episcopalians could no longer in practice be separate and that full equality could only be achieved by bringing whites and blacks into a new covenant of unity.”⁸¹

The trajectory of the birth and growth of the Episcopal Church parallels the creation and institutionalization of racism. Since the awakening of our nation to the culture of racism, the Episcopal Church has committed to acknowledging and addressing systemic racism within the institution. In a 1994 letter from the House of Bishops, the hierarchical Episcopal Church, the very image of white privilege, proclaimed racism to be a sin and vowed to actively work to eradicate it. The Bishops' letter, titled “The Sin of Racism,” illustrated a clear understanding of systemic racism; its intent was to lead the Episcopal Church in institutional and social change. The Episcopal Church's history of race relations is long-standing and often one step forward, two back. The complicity of the Episcopal Church in slavery and its role during the Civil Rights era are worthy pursuits for further study. This discussion, however, explores the Episcopal

⁸⁰ Francis Wharton, LL. D. “Protestant Episcopal Freedman's Commission Occasional Paper: January, 1866,” Boston (Press of Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 3 Cornhill, 1866).

Church's awareness of and responses to institutional racism after the Civil Rights era through today.

Structure of the Episcopal Church

An irony of the Church's response to racism is that the very hierarchy that is in large measure responsible for permitting a social ill such as racism to take hold is the same one that seeks to dismantle it; yet the hierarchy may contribute to the failure of the social change within the Church as a whole. The hierarchy of the Episcopal Church reveals an imperial structure. The "episcopate" is the office of a bishop. The role of a bishop "is a ministry of oversight...the term 'episcopal' (derived from the Greek *episcopos*, "overseer") is applied to matters pertaining to bishops. An 'episcopal' church is a church governed by bishops."⁸² Accordingly, the bishop oversees the priests who guide the parishioners. The greater Episcopal Church is organized into provinces; provinces are further sub-divided into dioceses. Each diocese is a collection of parishes. Parishes are typically led by a rector, who is an ordained priest. Additional leadership of assistant ordained priests and/or deacons is also possible in many parishes. The parish is governed by a vestry, comprised of lay (non-ordained) people who are congregants (members) of the church. Members may be further distinguished into sub-categories such as communicant, baptized, or confirmed member, for purposes of measuring size and vitality.⁸³ The vestry acts as the decision-making body for the church and is led by the priest who answers to the bishop who is led by the Presiding Bishop, or head primate. For context, the Episcopal Church is one of 38

⁷⁶ "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You," *The Episcopal Church*, accessed May 6, 2011, <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/index.htm>.

⁸³ The term *communicant* becomes important in this dissertation. It is the term used to describe a person who attends but may or may not be baptized or confirmed. Similarly, baptized members may have letters of membership held by a particular church or mission but do not actually participate in worship or church activities.

provinces of the Anglican Communion and is comprised of just under 2 million Episcopalians. There are over 80 million Anglicans worldwide.

Historically, this structure called the Episcopal Church has been the source of both oppression and the claiming of freedoms. Women gained rights to ordination into the priesthood in the 1970s. The recent emphasis on full inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered, Queer (LGBTQ) persons has been fully realized in some parts of the country, particularly since the June 2015 rulings on same-sex marriage. The baptismal covenant, which is reaffirmed by Episcopalians at confirmation and each time they participate in a baptism, includes the pledge to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”⁸⁴ This language from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* reflects the intentional change from the 1928 version of the catechism, which states, “My duty towards my neighbor is To love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me.”⁸⁵ What has evolved is the definition of “all men” amidst changing ideas of who is or is not entitled to personhood. Controversy, paradox, and contradiction obscure the clear view to answers to questions about justice and rights due every human being.

The Civil Rights Era

The fight against racism during the Civil Rights era ushered in controversies and struggles, consistent with what the country as a whole was experiencing during the time. Reflective of American culture, the Church was doing a dance with issues of racial equality: one step (or two) forward, then two steps (or one) backward. A look at the actions of General

⁸⁴ *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Hymnal Corp, 1979), 305.

⁸⁵ “1928 Book of Common Prayer,” *The Anglican Domain*, accessed December 5, 2009, http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1928/End_matter_1928.pdf.

Convention indicates more steps toward racial equality than back, but much of the progress was hard won and not without controversy. While the actions of General Convention generally illustrate policies opposing racism, indicating a top-down intent to make changes, events and actions within the church upheld the segregationist attitudes the body was aiming to eradicate. For instance, at the 1952 General Convention, a resolution opposing racial discrimination was adopted. That same year, the School of Theology at Sewanee (an Episcopal seminary in Tennessee) upheld a policy denying blacks the right to admission.

Another example of the “step forward-step back” dance is the 1961 adoption at General Convention of a resolution that expressed “regret for past and present discrimination within the Church” and declared prejudice inconsistent with the Gospel.⁸⁶ The next year, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s son was denied admission on the basis of race to an Episcopal day school in Atlanta.⁸⁷ The establishment of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) in 1959 provided a watchdog that would help call racial injustice to the forefront. This unofficial arm of the Episcopal Church aimed “to promote acceptance of the Church’s policies of racial inclusiveness.”⁸⁸

The emergence of ESCRU and its strident activity throughout the decade to follow may have somewhat mitigated what sociologist Stephen Steinberg refers to as cultural “backlash” or “the liberal retreat.”⁸⁹ On the other hand, its dissolution in 1970 may possibly point to that period

⁸⁶ “Timeline: The Archives of the Episcopal Church,” *The Episcopal Church*, <http://www.episcopalarchives.org>.

⁸⁷ Gardiner H. Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 135-136.

⁸⁸ “The Archives.”

⁸⁹ Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 97.

of complacency defined by Daniel Moynihan as “benign neglect.”⁹⁰ However, ESCRU vice-president, the Rev. Barbara Harris,⁹¹ declared the disbanding a natural demise because the entity’s usefulness had come to an end.⁹² Nonetheless, the time period following the Civil Rights era is similarly marked with decisions and actions to decry racism, although at a slower pace than the decade of rampant social change of the sixties. Subsequent events of note include taking action against apartheid in South Africa, condemning the Ku Klux Klan, and implementing equal opportunity employment and affirmative action practices. Nevertheless, the trajectory was not always forward moving. Steps back or interruptions marked the decades following the 1960s. Similar movements, forward and back, follow in the Episcopal Church in Virginia and in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

The Episcopal Church in Virginia

Captain John Smith described the church in which the Eucharist was administered for the first time on Virginia soil:

When I first went to Virginia, I well remember, wee did hang an awning (which is an old saile) to three or four trees to shadow us from the Sunne, our walls were rales of wood...our Pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighboring trees...This was our Church.⁹³

⁹⁰ Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 205; Steinberg, *Turning Back*, 100.

⁹¹ Harris, an African-American woman, would later break barriers in the Episcopal Church when her 1989 election as Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts made her the first female bishop in the Episcopal Church.

⁹² Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 205.

⁹³ William Stevens Perry, *The History of the American Episcopal Church: 1587-1883*. (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1885), 45.

The date was June 21, 1607. Black Episcopal churches in Virginia emerged two centuries later. St. Stephen's in Petersburg grew out of a Sunday School for black Episcopalians and emerged in 1867.⁹⁴ St. Philip's in Richmond became the first congregation to form as a black church in Virginia in 1870.⁹⁵

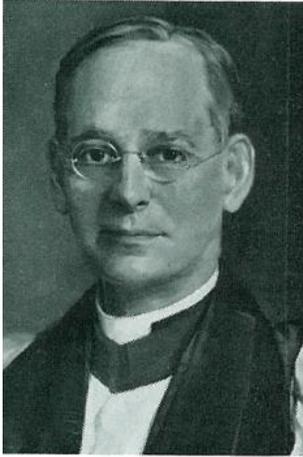
James Madison, second cousin of the fourth president of the United States, was consecrated as the first Bishop of Virginia on September 19, 1792. The Diocese of Virginia split into two dioceses in 1892 to create the Diocese of Southern Virginia. The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia was born in 1919, splitting from the Diocese of Southern Virginia. Geographically, the Diocese of Virginia represents the northern part of the state, claiming the central corridor, dipping south into Richmond to the natural border of the James River. Southern Virginia includes the Eastern Shore and all points south of the James as far west as Danville. Southwestern Virginia claims the Western tip of the state, with Bath County and Nelson County at the northern edges.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

Bishop Robert Carter Jett (1865-1950) was elected bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Southwestern Virginia in 1920, serving until 1938. Bishop Henry Disbrow Phillips (1882-1955) was bishop from 1938 to 1954. Bishop William Henry Marmion (1907-2002) served as the bishop of Southwestern Virginia from 1954 to 1979.

⁹⁴ One of the instigators of the St. Stephen's congregations, dubbed "the Mother of St. Stephen's" was Caroline Wiley Cain Bragg, whose son George Freeman Bragg, Sr., was to become one of the founders of the Niagara Movement, along with W.E.B. Du Bois. He was the 12th black man to be ordained in the Episcopal Church. Two of his sons became priests.

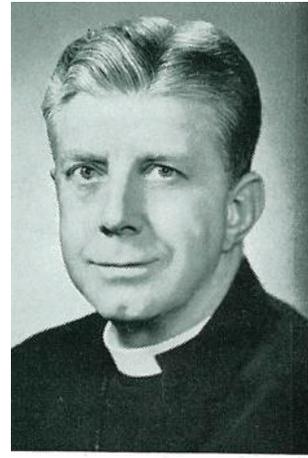
⁹⁵ G. MacLaren Brydon, *The Story of Emmanuel Church at Brook Hill in the Diocese of Virginia, 1860-1960*. (Brook Hill, Virginia: Emmanuel Church, 1960), 5; and "The Church Awakens: The Archives of the Episcopal Church."



BISHOP JETT—1920-38



BISHOP PHILLIPS—1938-54



BISHOP MARMION—1954-

Figure 2: Images reprinted with permission from the files of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

At the 1938 consecration of the Rt. Rev. Henry Disbrow Phillips⁹⁶ as the second bishop of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Bishop Edwin A. Penick of North Carolina, who was preaching at the consecration, called for emphasis on “evangelism of the Negro” and leadership of the Church in an industrialized South.⁹⁷ At that time, the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia had three black congregations and a fourth was burgeoning. St. Philip’s in Bedford County and Lynchburg’s Chapel of the Good Shepherd⁹⁸ pre-dated the twentieth century. St. Luke’s in Roanoke first emerged in 1914. The fourth, St. Paul’s in Martinsville, shares December 7, 1941 as a date of historical magnitude. On this day, the fledgling mission welcomed Bishop Phillips for an inaugural visit. Although formation of the congregation had begun in 1940, it was not until annual Council of 1945 that St. Paul’s was accepted as an organized mission.⁹⁹ In his council address in 1944, Bishop Phillips called for Inter-Racial Committees in every community.

⁹⁶ The consecration was held at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Lynchburg on September 27, 1938.

⁹⁷ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 18, no. 10 (1938): 6.

⁹⁸ Also referred to as Church of the Good Shepherd or Good Shepherd, Lynchburg.

⁹⁹ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 1, no. 22 (1942); *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 29, no. 8 (1948): 12.

The four “Negro Missions”¹⁰⁰ of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia birthed a generation of Episcopalians in central Virginia. If Bishop Phillips’ era was marked as the era of “Evangelism of the Negro,” Bishop Marmion’s time was surely marked by his determination to lead the diocese into an era of equality and desegregation. Du Bois’s notion of double consciousness and Bhabha’s twin concept of hybridity bear witness to the lived experience of early black Episcopalians as historical evidence reveals a people both *of* and *separate from* the denomination that emerged in the quest for freedom from the oppressive reign of Mother England.

Progress is a persistent motivator. In the throes of the tangle over the desegregation of the diocesan conference center, Hemlock Haven, Bishop Marmion said in a 1960 address to the Annual Diocesan Council:

It [is] inconceivable that we in Southwestern Virginia in our favorable position as far as race relations [is] concerned would turn our back on the new day and walk favorably into history. If God indeed is in this movement of His people to secure justice and equality under the law and first class citizenship in the church, would we place ourselves in the position of opposing God?¹⁰¹

Once the storm over the integration of the diocesan conference center had tempered, Bishop Marmion persisted. In his address to Council two years later, Marmion’s preface is subtitled “Increasing Life.” He pushed for continued progress, claiming the success of the recently integrated Hemlock Haven but challenging the pursuit of further work beyond the “haven” of the sequestered youth camp. The preface to his printed text offers an observance of the danger of

¹⁰⁰ Missions are typically smaller congregations that do not employ a full-time rector but rely on a clergyman from another parish or supply (part-time) clergy to provide services.

¹⁰¹ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 60, no. 7 (1960): 11.

maintaining the status quo. Marmion said, “We have the choice of staying right where we are or of ‘Increasing Life.’ If I am any judge of the temper of the diocese, I would say that our choice more and more is becoming that of Increasing Life.”¹⁰² The first of three areas Marmion addressed was “interracial understanding” (the other two were Christian education and stewardship). Marmion began the appeal by acknowledging the difficulty with which the diocese achieved concord:

Last year by God’s grace we seemed to have accomplished a break though the wall of misunderstanding and conflict that divided us over the racial issue. Tensions eased, and smiles replaced frowns, as the way was opened for clergy and laity to walk together along a path that promised a solution of our problem. Harmonious relations have resulted in the ensuing year.¹⁰³

Following the restoration of these “harmonious relations,” Bishop Marmion’s gaze turned to integrating the diocese more fully. To do so, he systematically closed the smaller black parishes, inviting them to blend with extant white congregations. Black churches were not the only small churches to close. Other smaller parishes that were facing similar challenges with finances, membership, and clergy leadership also closed at about the same time: St. John’s Ferrum in June of 1965; Emmanuel Madison Heights in January of 1967; and Emmanuel Eagle Rock, St. Stephen’s Nora, and St. Paul Grace House all in December of 1967. The “Here and There” section of the January 1968 *Southwestern Episcopalian*, included this comment:

Emmanuel Church in Eagle Rock was closed December 1, and Grace House on the Mountain, St. Paul, and St. Stephens at Nora [ceased] regular services on December 31. In the latter two cases, it is hoped that the buildings will be used as

¹⁰² *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 32, no. 6. (1962): 4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

community centers Father [Fraser] Mac Cammond says that Emmanuel is being closed because there are so few parishioners there, with average service attendance of four. St. Stephens has six boys and no adults, and Grace has two families.¹⁰⁴

The diocesan newsletter also cited “the changing social climate” as a positive reason for change in the diocese, which allowed for the closing of the black churches, St. Luke’s in Roanoke and Chapel of the Good Shepherd in Lynchburg.¹⁰⁵

Marmion led a movement that was at once progressive and detrimental. The move to integrate not only the camp and conference center, Hemlock Haven, was progressive in that it assumed segregation to be a societal ill that was remedied by winning the battle of desegregating Hemlock Haven. It was detrimental because the closing of black churches eliminated a power base for African-Americans in their communities. Though many black members could and would choose to become part of the extant white Episcopal churches in their communities, the balance of power was such that the population of black Episcopalians waned. The integration story is very much a story of what happened to the white community. Very little is made of what happened to the black community. In a twist on the famous line from T. S. Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*, Bishop Marmion, it might be argued, did the *wrong* deed for the *right* reason.

Marmion’s Bookshelf

Bishop Marmion was an advocate of desegregation and vocal in his belief that the Church’s responsibility to desegregate was consistent with Christian doctrine. In addition to exploring biblical aegis for the integration of the camp and conference center, he also read

¹⁰⁴ *Southwestern Episcopalian* (1968): January, 9.

¹⁰⁵ *Southwestern Episcopalian* (1967): April, 7.

materials available from secular resources. One of the packets among his files is labeled “Bibliography on Race Relations.” In addition to two 1957 publications of the National Council of the Episcopal Church, “Bridge Building in Race Relations—What the Episcopal Church Has Said and Done” and “The Churchman Looks at Race: A Guide for Adult Study,” Marmion’s numbered list cites nine works on race between the years of 1951 and 1958. The list includes *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955) by C. Vann Woodward and *The Desegregated Heart: A Virginian’s Stand in Time of Transition* (1964) by fellow Virginia Council on Human Relations member Sarah Patton Boyle.¹⁰⁶ In addition to this list, which Marmion apparently compiled during the late 1950s, he later commented on, noted as having read, or recommended to others Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Stride Toward Freedom* (1958), *Black Like Me* (1961) by John Howard Griffin, and *Discrimination* (1964) by Wallace Mendelson. A copy of Thomas F. Pettigrew’s¹⁰⁷ “The Myth of the Moderates” (1961)¹⁰⁸ complete with underlined passages is among the entries in one of Marmion’s sermon folders.¹⁰⁹

An excerpt from the work of Episcopal Church historian G. MacLaren Brydon became assigned reading for the Joint Commission during Bishop Marmion’s tenure as chair. Brydon’s work, titled “The Church’s Ministry to the Negroes,” was a chapter in a forthcoming publication titled *The Story of Emmanuel Church at Brook Hill in the Diocese of Virginia* (1960). Brydon

¹⁰⁶ Other books on the list are *The Kingdom Behind the Castle* (1957) by Liston Pope; *An Epitaph for Dixie* (1958) by Harry S. Ashmore; *Naught for Your Comfort* (1956) by Trevor Huddleston; *Southern School News* (1954) by Southern Education Reporting Service; *The Race Problem in the South* (1958) by John Q. Beckwith; and *On Being Negro* (1951) by J. Saunders Redding.

¹⁰⁷ At the time of this publication, Pettigrew was a psychology professor at Harvard. He served as the vice-president of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU), in 1962-63 and chaired the Presiding Bishop’s Advisory Commission on Race Relations from 1961 to 1963.

¹⁰⁸ Printed in *Christian Century*, May 24, 1961, 649-651.

¹⁰⁹ “Race Relations,” Marmion, William H. 1929-1981, Files, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

had published a wealth of previous histories and books about the Episcopal Church, starting with a 1933 publication titled *The Clergy of the Established Church in Virginia and the Revolution* and including *The Episcopal Church among the Negroes of Virginia*, published in 1937. Bishop Marmion obtained permission from the author to distribute the chapter to the Joint Commission:

This report is a copy of a chapter to be published within the Next Year of the History of Emmanuel Church, Brook Hill. Permission has been given to the Bishop to have a number of copies made for the use of the present Joint Commission.¹¹⁰

The statement of permission was signed by G. MacLaren Brydon and dated April 16, 1959. The chapter traced the history back to the initial point of American ministry to “the Negro element.”¹¹¹ Brydon detailed the trajectory of the work of the church in its effort “to minister to the Negro element in its population,” a call to ministry “born during the heat of the War Between the States.”¹¹² The chapter chronicled the historical events but also sought to offer an explanation for the dearth of black Episcopalians in the Diocese of Virginia. Citing a report from 1860 commissioned by then-bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, the Rt. Rev. Johns, Brydon pointed to the scarcity of black congregants in Episcopal churches: “272 out of eight or nine thousand attendants at our services...in the midst of a [black] population of more than five hundred thousand.”¹¹³ Brydon put forward two primary reasons for this scarcity: subjugation and style. Citing the 1860 study, he commented: “The committee stated that after investigation it was

¹¹⁰ Box 93, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹¹¹ G. MacLaren Brydon, “The Church’s Ministry to the Negroes,” *The Story of Emmanuel Church at Brook Hill in the Diocese of Virginia, 1860-1960*. Brook Hill, VA: Emmanuel Church, 1960; “The Church Awakens: The Archives of the Episcopal Church.”

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

found that in most churches a certain part of the church, usually the gallery, when there was one, was set apart for the use of Negroes. But they sat by themselves; and those who had been confirmed came together to the Holy Communion after the rest of the congregation had communed.”¹¹⁴

Of the staid liturgical style of worship and preaching, Brydon said, “The very quietness and restraint of liturgical worship that attracted and impressed men and women of a higher degree of education and culture, served as a hopeless barrier to the Negro, whose approach to religion was through the noise and confusion of a great ‘Revival.’”¹¹⁵ Thus, separation within the worshipping body and separation based on cultural and educational backgrounds led to Bishop Johns’ “strong and urgent recommendation” from the previous century that rather than persist in attempting to integrate white churches, “whenever possible, congregations [were to be] composed entirely of Negroes, having their own organization, electing their own vestrymen, and carrying on their own work.”¹¹⁶ Brydon asserted that this recommendation was “intended as a step forward, by giving Negroes within the Church a separate place of their own in which they might strengthen and bring to fuller growth and development their own life as a race within the Church.”¹¹⁷

Further, in his 1960 publication, Brydon put forward commentary on the state of contemporary race relations, observing that:

The policy of the support of institutions as a part of the development of the Negro Race is still the policy of the Episcopal Church. The fact that a group of nine men appointed for political reasons to positions of high legal power in the Supreme

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Court of the United States have turned aside from its past decisions in seeking to put into effect new and hitherto unknown rules concerning race relations, do not and cannot have authority or power to nullify the ideals of spiritual leaders who have sought for a hundred years with prayer for divine guidance to seek and follow the best and wisest plans for the development of the weaker race.¹¹⁸

Brydon noted that the 1860 policy had been implemented and in effect for nearly a century. It was, he concluded, not a success. After initial growth around the turn of the century, the black members of Episcopal churches ebbed considerably. Citing demographic data, Brydon's chapter from his book presented stark numbers to illustrate the "startlingly discouraging" result of Bishop Johns' plan:

Whereas the Report in the Council Journal of the Diocese in 1936 showed that there were in that year, fifteen congregations, large and small, of Negroes, with six active Negro clergymen and 798 communicants out of a total communicant membership of 22,380 in the Diocese; there were, according to the statistics shown in the Diocesan Council Journal for 1958, nine congregations with four active clergymen having 893 communicants out of a total membership of 37,610 in the Diocese.¹¹⁹

Brydon's chapter contended that "the Episcopal Church has not failed in its ministry to the Negro Race."¹²⁰ Rather, he argued, the Church has remained true to its aim of "the great ideal"

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 11-12.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 11.

“[develop]...the Negro race as a real race, separate and distinct from the Caucasian race.”¹²¹

Brydon stopped short of offering a specific recommendation for future action but concluded:

The Episcopal Church has stood steadily through the past century for the ideal of friendliness and sympathetic understanding between the races, and for the development of the future of each race, the White and the Negro, as separate races within the Kingdom of God. Please God, it will continue so to stand.¹²²

Strength in Separation: Two Views

Brydon’s argument that separate black churches served to strengthen black congregations was similar to Du Bois’s stance regarding both the unity of blacks and whites in the church and the role of the church in black lives. Writing over fifty years earlier, Du Bois contended that separate jurisdiction of black clergy and churches was an answer to the failed Sunday Schools and loss of Episcopal communicants to other denominations. In *The Negro Church*, Du Bois wrote, “The Episcopal Church, when its white members commanded even the bodies of their slaves, backed by all the prestige and influence of the church in Virginia, failed to any degree to get hold of the colored people.”¹²³ Quite possibly the reason the population of blacks in the Episcopal Church stayed small is because, as Du Bois observed, the church “had Negro communicants from early times, but while it helps them there is the feeling that the church wants them to keep their ‘place’ and the churches are not growing.”¹²⁴ Citing “the complete failure of ante-bellum instruction to result in church extension” in South Carolina and the decline of the

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 12.

¹²³ Du Bois, *The Negro Church*, 140.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 78.

once “large and enthusiastic ‘colored’ Sunday Schools”¹²⁵ in Maryland, Du Bois commented on the decline of the black population in the Episcopal Church following the end of slavery:

The method of special services for colored people, “colored Sunday-school,” not only failed in ante-bellum days but it has also failed in later years since the war. It is very far from us to contend that these efforts were in vain and without substantial good. Much good was the outcome of such efforts. They helped to mould and build solid characters. But they helped scarcely one iota in church extension or in making churchmen of colored people. The people got the instruction and the material help, and went off to the Baptists or Methodists.¹²⁶

What the Baptists and the Methodists had that the Episcopalians did not was strength in numbers. Du Bois reported turn of the century data that tallied over 1.6 million black Baptists and a similar number of Methodists.¹²⁷ Du Bois’s critique of the Episcopal Church was not a lack of effort but rather an attitude of paternalism: “the Episcopalians insisted on treating the Negroes as wards under age.”¹²⁸

While Brydon proposed no solution to the disappearing corpus of black Episcopalians, Du Bois did posit a solution, recommending that black Episcopalians organize and govern themselves until such time as blacks and whites could merge together. Of the Southern Episcopal Church, Du Bois said:

Meeting the issue fairly, honestly and frankly, the church should recognize the

¹²⁵ Ibid., 141.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 153; Data collected of Negro communicants 1900-1903 attributed to H.K. Carroll separates various branches of Methodists to include Union American Methodists (16,500); African Methodists (785,000); African Methodist Union Protestants (2,930); African Zion Methodists (551, 591); Congregational Methodists (319); Methodist Episcopal (245,000).

¹²⁸ Ibid.

fact that whatever may be in the future, at present it is hopelessly impossible to bring together, under one bishop, the white and colored people in Diocesan Conventions in the South. That being a fact, without crimination or recrimination, the church should practically say to the colored clergy and laity, “Organize your own jurisdictional Convention with a bishop of your own race at the head. The bishops and church people in the bounds of your jurisdictional territory are your friends, and they will help and assist you. It may be, in the distant future, when all of us on both sides have advanced more nearly to the true ideal, that this tentative arrangement may lapse, and all of us will be comprehended in one Diocesan system. Until then, although somewhat separated, let us love one another and work for the glory of God. We have confidence in you. We believe that you will accept this as a Providential opportunity and will demonstrate by your successful work in more largely and effectively reaching your race, the wisdom of the arrangement.”¹²⁹

Double consciousness—Du Bois’s articulated awareness of seeing oneself through the eyes of the other—contributes to his recommendation for separation of churches from white counterparts, with distinct leadership of black clergy and bishops. Support, but not leadership, was the recommended model until merging of the two could be made possible by an established equal footing.

Du Bois’s solution to develop strength by operating separately until the time was right for integration was remarkably in line with what seems to have been borne out by the Diocese. Half a century later, Bishop Marmion maintained separate churches for a time before deeming the

¹²⁹ Ibid., 142.

climate right for integration. Marmion's failing, by Du Bois's measure, was an inability to secure black leadership for the black churches and a misjudgment that, as Du Bois put it, "both sides [had] advanced more nearly to the true ideal." The deed of closing the black churches with the expectation of integration and without expectation of diminishing the black population was arguably well-intentioned.

The history of the four black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia illustrates the trajectory from Du Bois's prediction through the Jim Crow years and into the era of integration. As the desegregation of Hemlock Haven and the closing of the black churches will show, Bishop Marmion's study and practical experience in the Diocese led him into the course of action that essentially aligned with Du Bois's reasoning to gain strength first as separate worshippers. Absence of available black clergy, a move to fold less sustainable small congregations into larger ones, and what Marmion deemed a changed social climate led to his determination that the time was right for integration in Southwestern Virginia.

The Four Black Churches of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

Four black churches existed in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia during the era of desegregation: St. Philip's (founded in 1855), Chapel of the Good Shepherd (1899), St. Luke's (1914), and St. Paul's (1942). Understanding the provenance, role, character, and specific identity of each of these four churches is central to a discussion of the unintended consequences of decisions Marmion would make in recognition of a changed social climate.

The stories of the four black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia reveal a history of struggles and successes, not unlike accounts of white churches. The difference is the origin of a culture of paternalism and dependence on the white surrogate that the narrative

histories of the black churches reveal. Three of the churches were ultimately closed, to be absorbed into surrounding churches—the world having been deemed “changed.” Understanding the personality of each church by way of the following archival narrative—a narrative gleaned from diocesan records and correspondence in the diocesan folders preserved in the archives—gives life to the racial inequities that shaped American culture. The excavation of black voices from the diocesan archive of correspondence contributes to the public record of events within each of the churches. Here we explore the life cycle of the four churches, from inception through the time of Bishop Marmion’s election as bishop of Southwestern Virginia. The histories are interrupted soon after the time of Marmion’s election when the diocesan tangle over desegregation of the conference center takes center stage in diocesan conversations. The stories themselves continued throughout the pause over Hemlock Haven; they continue in this discussion in Chapter 4, after a discussion of the caesura. What follows offers an introduction to the unique character of each of the four black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Because the four churches opened at different times, their histories, aligned as they are here, give a comparative insight into the tone and tenor of race relations spanning a century.

St. Philip’s, Bedford: Clergy leadership, 1855-1968

1919	Robert J. Johnson
1920-22	Bernard G. Whitlock
1923-24	William N. Harper, M.D.
1925-45	Charles L. Somers
1946-47	Vacant
1948-49	Cornelius R. Dawson
1950	Vacant
1951-54	George C. Ashton
1955	Vacant
1956-57	G. William Beale (St. John’s, Bedford)
1958-61	George Barton, III (St. John’s, Bedford)
1962	Vacant

St. Philip's, the oldest of the black churches in what is now the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, began as a mission, holding services as early as 1855. The worshippers eventually settled in a building near the center of the small central Virginia town in what was once the church home of Bedford's Methodists—a brick church building built in 1838, measuring just under 40 x 60 feet. The church building was reconsecrated as St. Philip's in 1886. An 1897 edition of *The Churchman*¹³⁰ included a notice requesting “contributions of any amount from the smallest sum [to] be gratefully received by the Rev. R. A. Smith or the Rev. Dallas Tucker.”¹³¹ The funds were to support the “good work [that] must be curtailed” should the congregation be unable to raise \$450.¹³² The *Virginia Chronicle* carried news of the 1908 departure of the Rev. Dallas Tucker for Harrisonburg, Virginia, noting his twelve-year tenure as rector of St. John's in Bedford as well as his “great work among the negroes [serving] as regular pastor for them, giving them service in the afternoons and ministering to them in affliction and death.”¹³³

The Rev. Robert J. Johnson

At the time just prior to the emergence of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia from the mother diocese of Virginia, St. Philip's mission was under the care of the rector of St. John's, the Rev. T. Carter Page. The 1918 Parochial Report listed H. L. Garrett as the Church Warden and

¹³⁰ The Episcopal Church website identifies *The Churchman* as a journal of “religious humanism” in existence since 1831, with the slogan, “The Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.”

¹³¹ *The Churchman*, Nov. 13, 1897, vol. 76, 620.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Virginia Chronicle*, The Evening News, vol. 18, no. 7. 23 Oct. 1908.

Treasurer. Walter Steptoe was recorded as the registrar. A note from the Rev. Carter, included under a “remarks” section of the report, said:

The Mission is temporarily under my charge. Services are conducted by Rev. L. C. Birch, of the Elks’ National Home.¹³⁴ The Diocesan Board of Missions gives \$5.00 a month to Mr. Birch for this work and the congregation subscribes \$5.00 a month. The Rev. Robert J. Johnson, of the Diocese of West Virginia, has accepted the call to this mission and begins work March 1, 1918.¹³⁵

The placement of a black rector, who was charged with care of the St. Philip’s congregation as a primary responsibility, generated a surge of activity at St. Philip’s. The 1919 parochial report showed an increase in church members from 30 to 40. Numbers at the school increased also, growing to a student population of 27, up from 20 the previous year. The report included details of nine confirmations, two baptisms, two funerals, and four weddings.¹³⁶ Johnson’s tenure, however, was brief. The inaugural edition of the *Journal of the Annual Council, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia* (1919) listed Johnson as the rector but included a clarifying notation in parentheses, which reads “since removed.”¹³⁷ Johnson was the first of a line of black leaders to serve the Bedford congregation of St. Philip’s in the newly formed Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

¹³⁴ The Elks’ National Home, which still exists as of this writing, is a retirement home in Bedford, Virginia. In 1918, it provided care for men. It continues today and provides care to both men and women.

¹³⁵ “Twenty-Sixth Annual Council of the Diocese of Southern Virginia.” Parochial Reports. May 1918.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ *Journal of the Annual Council, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1955.*

Bernard G. Whitlock

Seminarian Bernard G. Whitlock, a Candidate for Holy Orders, came to the diocese in March 1920. Since he was still a student at the Bishop Payne Divinity School¹³⁸ (a seminary for black students in Petersburg) and not yet ordained, he was employed with the title of Lay Reader. Whitlock was to serve in the capacity of clerical leader of the church, conducting services and extending pastoral care over the three black congregations in Bedford, Lynchburg, and Roanoke.¹³⁹ Correspondence revealed a not altogether easy time during Whitlock's era.

The parish school operated under the leadership of parishioner Walter Steptoe. Steptoe was in the insurance business but contributed his time to the running of the parish school. The May 1921 *Southwestern Episcopalian* included a headline announcing "Parish School Self Supporting." The report indicated that the school at St. Philip's "has been maintained at this point without any outside help. Mr. W. P. Steptoe, at the expense of his job (insurance work) labored hard and deserves the credit." The report continued, expressing the value of the school and indicating its role in growing the congregation.¹⁴⁰

After the summer months, Steptoe wrote a letter to Bishop Jett to update him on plans for the coming school year:

Dear Bishop,

I am writing you in regards to our school. I have all of my plans outlined and it is my intention to open September 19th. While relying on the fact that you

¹³⁸ The school opened in 1878 and closed in 1949 by merging with Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia.

¹³⁹ Box 2, Folder 9, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁴⁰ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 1, no. 3 (1921): 16.

told me to go ahead and open up and call you for what we need, I feel that there are certain [things] that I should call to your attention.

We will need a teacher, as it will be next to impossible for me to do my insurance and keep up the school. And again the financial sacrifice I made was too great owing to the fact that I have a daughter in school, and her expenses amount [to] \$15.00 per month.

Now here is the proposition I laid before Rev. Whitlock. That I would give up the insurance and devote my entire time and what little talent I have to the Parish School if you would give me the same the insurance pays me [which amounts to \$16.18 weekly] and I was to assume all responsibility, and should I need help I would call in my wife as I did last year.

All children of the Church and Sunday School to be admitted free, and the children of other denominations to pay a monthly fee [\$2].

Regardless of the hardships and embarrassments under which I labored last year, I feel proud of the work done last year and signs point to a larger and more successful school this year.¹⁴¹

Step toe proposed an elevation of his responsibilities and a salary to accompany those increased duties.

Right around this same time, Whitlock wrote a letter to Bishop Jett calling Steptoe's work and character into question. Of the school, Whitlock said, "We are up against it about our school in Bedford. If we can get a woman of strong character, who can teach industrial work, I

¹⁴¹ Walter P. Steptoe to Bishop Jett, 10 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

think the school will succeed. We should offer something better than the community has.”¹⁴²

The letter concluded with a paragraph defaming Steptoe. Whitlock wrote:

Speaking very frankly and confidentially[,] Mr. Steptoe, I regret to say[,] has been drinking very heavily of late, so much so that it has become public gossip among the members and the children of the school. He had left off partly but seemingly started again in full force. Just a week ago I found him in [the] parish hall, upstairs, stretched out and not fully of himself [. The] same day he was seen in the street almost staggering. I am sorry for this. He is very anxious and interested but this habit won't mix with parish school work. I would like to know what your wishes [are] relative to the school.¹⁴³

By return post, Bishop Jett replied to Whitlock. His letter addressed the situation with the school and Whitlock's charges of drunkenness against Walter Steptoe, but the emphasis of the letter was on the bishop's dissatisfaction with Whitlock's performance. Bishop Jett opened the letter with his upcoming travel plans and noted that finding a time to meet was proving challenging. He promised, however, to “fix a time...and let you hear from me.”¹⁴⁴ Following the brief logistical communication, Bishop Jett promised to investigate Whitlock's charges against Steptoe saying, “I note what you say with regard to the school and Steptoe's habit of drinking and it shall have my attention as soon as it is possible for me to look into the matter.”¹⁴⁵ The letter then turned to the bishop's dissatisfaction with Whitlock. Bishop Jett wrote:

¹⁴² Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Bishop Jett to Bernard G. Whitlock, 13 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Frankly, I am not satisfied at all with the situation with regard to the work under your care. For fully a year now you have been in charge of the three points assigned to you. So far as I can see little or no progress has been made and I shall not provide for any further appropriations for the work in any of its departments until conditions warrant a change in my attitude.

I have been quietly and patiently informing myself in order that I might not only be kind to you but in every way just and fair. I would not, for any consideration, unjustly hurt you, but under the canons you are responsible to me as the Bishop of the Diocese.

So far as I am able to learn you have a decidedly exaggerated view of your own importance and are without that sense of responsibility to your work which is necessary to success. You have apparently neglected not only your services but you have seriously neglected your pastoral work.

I hope that you will be able to prove to me that I am mistaken. I shall be most happy to find that I am. It is my earnest desire to be your friend and to help you. I can only do this by being frank, even at the cost of wounding your feelings. It is my duty to see that the work under your charge is properly done.¹⁴⁶

As evidenced by the prompt, lengthy, and multiple letters, leadership at St. Philip's was clearly consuming much of the bishop's time in September 1921. The day after articulating a litany of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

concerns to the clergyman in charge of St. Philip's, the bishop turned to the lay leader who had assumed responsibilities for the parish school.

In a letter to Walter Steptoe, the bishop responded first to a request for diocesan support for the school: "It was my full purpose to cooperate with you in your plan for reopening the school. Since seeing you, however, developments have discouraged me. The whole situation in Bedford is unsatisfactory. I cannot now go forward until this is cleared up, even if it should become necessary to abandon the school for a year."¹⁴⁷ Bishop Jett continued his letter by setting forth the reason for his discontent as it pertained to Steptoe but without revealing the source of his information:

I have been carefully investigating all of the work among my colored people and friends. Among other things it has come to light, so far as I am able to determine at this time, that you have been drinking. I hope this will prove a mistake for I had come to have a high regard for you and I should be sorry to have this impression changed. I have appreciated very much your disposition to help me. I shall still give you a chance and shall hope that you will be able to show me that you have been misrepresented.

I do not wish to be unkind to you but it would be wrong for me, until this matter is cleared up, to put you in charge of a school.¹⁴⁸

Steptoe's subsequent response not only asserted his innocence of the charges of drinking—a serious offense given the prohibition laws of 1921—but he also named Whitlock as

¹⁴⁷ Bishop Jett to Walter P. Steptoe, 14 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13 Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

the one he assumed to be his accuser and acknowledged the difficulties between the two.¹⁴⁹ The nearly three pages of handwritten expression of dismay and proof of innocence opened with acknowledgment of receipt of the Bishop's letter, followed by the statement of Steptoe's surprise: "I am sure there is nothing that could [have] shocked me more than the statement that 'you have been drinking.'"¹⁵⁰ Addressing the matter of his accuser, Steptoe posited that the charges of drinking were "given to you either through ignorance or malice." He continued, saying "I fear through malice and if so I think I know the source yet I refrain from accusing anyone till I get it from you."¹⁵¹ Steptoe continued, articulating his desire to work on behalf of the church:

When I came off the railroad and settled down at home, I decided to devote a great portion of my ~~time~~¹⁵² life to my church and the betterment of my people, not for selfish gain nor glory, but for the sake of doing good. How far I have succeeded, time alone will tell.¹⁵³

To assert his innocence, Steptoe invited the Bishop to "consult any member of St. Philip's Church, or the Church in a body" or those associated with his work in the field of insurance to "ask if I have ever approached under the influence or with the smell of whiskey on my breath at any time or in any place." He asserted not only his sobriety but also his character, adding that the bishop should "consult any of the better class of citizens of Bedford white or colored as to

¹⁴⁹ Walter P. Steptoe to Bishop Jett, 17 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² The crossed out word replicates the handwritten text where the original letter replaces "time" with "life." Subsequent crossed out words are intended to illustrate the original text as closely as possible.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

my standing in the community.” In an addition that spoke to his awareness of social stratification in 1921 Virginia, Steptoe added:

I hope you will not consider it flattery when I say that I live in ~~an~~ a moral atmosphere far removed from most of my people (my minister excepted). Many things which they approve I condemn and doubtless this has made me a little odious in their sight but the best element of both races is with me. And I have a conscientious feeling that I am in the right.¹⁵⁴

Bishop Jett replied to Steptoe saying, “It is a great comfort to me to have you say that you can prove yourself innocent of the charge that you have been drinking.”¹⁵⁵ Although the bishop indicated in this letter that he accepted Steptoe’s word, he did request a meeting with him.

Additional correspondence followed to the Rev. W.A. Pearman, rector of St. John’s in Bedford, with requests for information about the situation at the “colored church.”

To Whitlock, the bishop wrote: “A letter from Steptoe contains an absolute denial of the charge you have preferred against him. He tells me that he is prepared to furnish any number of witnesses who will testify to his innocence in the matter. He insists that no one has ever seen him under the influence of whiskey.”¹⁵⁶ Bishop Jett assured Whitlock of confidentiality noting, “I of course have given [Steptoe] no intimation of having received a letter from you.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Bishop Jett to Walter P. Steptoe, 21 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁵⁶ Bishop Jett to Bernard G. Whitlock, 21 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

A third-party perspective confirmed inter-personal conflicts as a probable source of the controversy. The Rev. Pearman concluded that “Steptoe and Garrett are inclined to be a source of dissention in the church.”¹⁵⁸ He wrote of their complaints against Whitlock:

Replying to your verbal request for information of Whitlock’s work, will say have found some slight criticism by Steptoe and Garrett, who when pressed for definite objections found they had none except he seemed to spend too much time visiting his own people. They also complained that he was not giving them enough services in the church.¹⁵⁹

Pearman had checked with others in the community about Whitlock: “In speaking with a couple of negroes who are not members of his congregation, they gave him very good words of commendation. I believe he is morally clean, which is everything in his favor.”¹⁶⁰ Pearman suggested that the bishop could “fix a schedule of services for here and Lynchburg and Roanoke [so that] they could not complain about that part of his work,” and he concluded that the two stronghold members of St. Philip’s “would have the same complaint about any other man.”¹⁶¹

Whitlock seemed mollified by Pearman’s visit and reports in a letter dated the same day as his white colleague’s that Pearman would attend the mid-week service at St. Philip’s to “speak to our people.” Whitlock reported, “I am very glad indeed of his coming.”¹⁶² To account for the bishop’s dissatisfaction with his performance, Whitlock responded with an accounting of his

¹⁵⁸ Rev. W.A. Pearman to Bishop Jett, 22 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Bernard G. Whitlock to Bishop Jett, 22 September 1921, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

year's work saying, "my record for service and visits since Jan 1, 1921...number about seventy and visits to homes about one hundred and sixty eight"; he acknowledged, however, that he had "made some blunders in the last year."¹⁶³

The uneven career of Bernard Whitlock came to a close in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia the following spring. Although Bishop Jett offered to ordain him, he also wrote to the young man saying that he had "no other work to offer...in my diocese."¹⁶⁴ Bishop Jett inquired whether Whitlock had "written colored bishops Demby and Delany" in order to pursue a placement.¹⁶⁵ On May 26, 1922, Bishop Jett wrote to the black bishop, who served the black parishes in the Diocese of Arkansas. His letter concluded:

Mr. Whitlock has just completed his examinations for the Diaconate and was recommended to me on this date, May 26th, for ordination and I so certify. He is therefore ready for ordination and I hereby commend him to you completely prepared for the Diaconate. He showed me your letter indicating your wish that you be allowed to ordain him and declared to me that this was his desire. I am accordingly placing him in your hands. I believe he will make you a useful man. Certainly he goes with my good will, best wishes and prayers. I have talked frankly with him upon every point that I thought affected his usefulness and he

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Bishop Jett to Bernard G. Whitlock, 18 April 1922, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁶⁵ Bishop Jett to Bernard G. Whitlock, 5 April 1922, Box 2, Folder 13 Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

seems most anxious to make good. So far as I can see, there is no reason why he should not.¹⁶⁶

In an August 1922 letter to Bishop Jett, Steptoe reflected on the previous year in the school under his leadership, calling it a success but not without struggle saying, “When I consider the opposition placed in our way by our own minister and methods used to hinder or cripple us, how we succeeded so well seems a miracle.”¹⁶⁷ He further reflected on the success of the school and attributes a booming enrollment to a decision to lower tuition to \$1.00 per month.¹⁶⁸ While qualifying that he is not seeking pay or praise, Steptoe pointed out that “There was not a day we had to dismiss for lack of heat or any other necessity and in addition the school furnished most of the fuel for the church. The church spent \$1.00 for fuel last winter and nothing for janitor’s service.”¹⁶⁹ The parish school was clearly a sustaining force in the health of St. Philip’s.

Bedford was not unlike many parts of the country in its lack of educational opportunities for blacks during the 1920s. Steptoe confided his long-held hopes of adding upper-level grades to meet the needs of the area “for which the entire county school system would be a feeder [since] the county system goes only to the 6th and in some cases the 7th grade.”¹⁷⁰ He cited success already having “had three graduates . . . this year, and several applications from the

¹⁶⁶ Bishop Jett to Bishop Edward T. Demby, D.D, 26 May 1922, Box 2, Folder 9, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁶⁷ Walter P. Steptoe to Bishop Jett, 7 August 1922, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁶⁸ The letter lists enrollment at 35 with daily attendance at 22.

¹⁶⁹ Walter P. Steptoe to Bishop Jett, 7 August 1922, Box 2, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

surrounding schools.”¹⁷¹ In this same letter, Steptoe spoke of the “Brass and Concert Band” and the “band boys” who “give their services to the Church whenever wanted.”¹⁷²

After establishing the contributions of the parish school to the health of the church, Steptoe reflected:

When I look back over the achievements of the year just passed it makes me proud (pardonable I hope) and when I forecast the future I see nothing but the brightest of hope. The only thing needed is a man of progressive experience, and not afraid nor too lazy to work.¹⁷³

This statement of success and call for a hard-working forward-thinking leader prefaced Steptoe’s announcement of his departure to become chair of the mathematics department at Huntington High School in Newport News, Virginia. He cited two reasons for his decision finally to accept one of several such offers he admitted receiving during his time leading the school: first, “the strain of work” required by holding down two jobs, since his work at the church was on a volunteer basis. The second reason returned to the charges from the previous fall. Steptoe wrote:

I have never been completely reconciled to the drinking rumor that was set afloat (I claimed by Whitlock)...[and despite a willingness] to confront my accuser in an ecclesiastical, civil or any kind of court, and let me suffer if found guilty or if the rumors were false let the one who started them suffer. I was never even given the privilege of a chicken-thief that is to face my accusers nor even know their names.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

Circumstances made me believe Whitlock was the author. It seems that he had an insane hatred towards me.¹⁷⁴

The letter to the bishop closed with the information that Whitlock incurred a \$6.25 debt for rent when he left the diocese. Steptoe noted that he would leave Bedford on September 6. He did serve as chair of the mathematics department at Huntington High School and was also eventually to become a professor at St. Paul's College, a college for black students in Lawrenceville.

The Rev. William N. Harper, M.D.

The December 1922 minutes of the Executive Board of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia include this statement: "The Bishop announced that he has called the Rev. William N. Harper, M.D., now at Belhaven, N.C., to take charge of the colored work at Lynchburg, Bedford, and Roanoke, but...Dr. Harper has not yet announced his decision in the matter."¹⁷⁵ Dr. Harper accepted the call but stayed only a little more than a year, leaving the black churches under his care and the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia in June of 1924 to go to the Church of the Incarnation in Newark, New Jersey. Following Harper's departure, a letter from Thomas A. Scott, Executive Secretary of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, asked Dr. Harper to account for some discrepancies and supply added information. The tone of the letter is not negative; Scott apologized saying, "I'm awfully sorry to trouble you but I would ask if you will be so good as to give me just a little bit more information" to add to previous reports from 1923 and from the departing memo Harper sent to conclude his term at both Chapel of the Good Shepherd and St. Philip's. Both churches showed a reduction in numbers in parochial report counts but did not

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Executive Board Minutes, Dec. 15, 1922, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

indicate the reason for the loss (transfer, death, removal). Scott wrote, “[The] Report for St. Philip’s as of December 21st showed 24 communicants, and that for June 22nd shows 17. Please be so good as to let me know also what changes occurred to result in the “[p]resent number of 17 communicants.”¹⁷⁶ Scott also asked about a \$4.76 difference in the Treasurer’s Report recording a December 31, 1923 balance of \$81.76 and a January 1, 1924 balance of \$77.00. Scott acknowledged that records have probably been turned over to lay officers in the churches but hoped that Harper “may have memoranda from which you can give me the information desired.” The diocesan executive closed warmly, saying, “Trusting all is going well with you, and that your future may be happy.”¹⁷⁷ This sort of inquisition is not surprising, given the discrepancies, nor is it usual. The question is, however, whether it is the discrepancies that are unusual or the follow-up correspondence that is the departure from the 1920s norm.

The Rev. Charles L. Somers

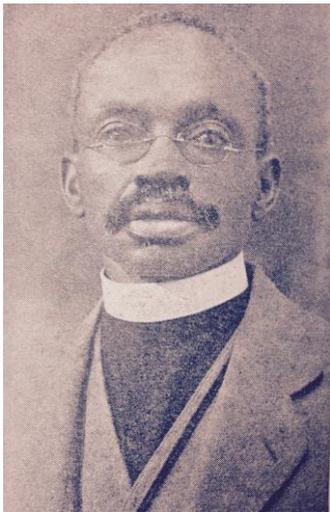


Figure 3: Image reprinted with permission from the files of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

¹⁷⁶ Box 75, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

Early in the Rev. Charles Somers' time as priest at St. Philip's and Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the bishop offered supplemental support to Somers' family. Mary Somers, the priest's daughter, attended St. Paul's, the black college in Lawrenceville, Virginia. Bishop Jett offered assistance in helping her to find a job. She was to land a teaching position in Bedford County, where Mary would "doubtless be of assistance to our mission [St. Philip's] there as well."¹⁷⁸ On September 3, 1926, the bishop wrote to Somers: "I am enclosing my check for \$10.00, and shall be glad if you will present it to your daughter, who is returning to St. Paul's, as an expression of my interest, and with the request that she use it either for her travelling expenses or in some way meeting some of the needs that she must have."¹⁷⁹

A short time after Somers arrived to serve as the priest at St. Philip's, along with his charge at Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the congregation began to experience growth and energy. In a letter to a Bedford businessman who made an offer to buy the church property, diocesan treasurer Thomas Scott replied to the purchase inquiry by J. Mott Lindsay, making clear the relative health of the burgeoning congregation, while leaving open the door for a possible sale of the property, admitting that "It is true that in times past there has been some thought of the advisability of selling this property" but noting that "We are not by any means considering the sale of the either the church or the residence at the present time, though perhaps a definite offer from you might be interesting to us." Scott closed the letter saying that "I may say that we

¹⁷⁸ Charles L. Somers to Bishop Jett, 27 August 1926, Box 15, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

are having services in the church regularly, with a minister in charge of the work there at the present time.”¹⁸⁰

Five years later, another potential buyer, W. R. Southall, a Bedford funeral director, approached the diocese about the sale of church property. Bishop Jett responded saying, “I doubt very much whether we are in a position at this time to encourage the sale of this property. The rectory has recently been rented.” The bishop added that the diocese “will be willing to consider the sale” and invited Southall to make two offers—one for the church and the rectory and one for just the rectory.¹⁸¹ Bishop Jett followed the subsequent offers to discuss the potential sale with the Rev. Somers and the St. Philip’s congregation. A follow-up letter to the potential purchaser said, “I met with the minister and congregation yesterday afternoon. We discussed the matter in detail and I am now unable to see any reason why we should sell. On the contrary our group of people there would exceedingly regret such action.”¹⁸²

During the Rev. Somers’ tenure as rector, St. Philip’s welcomed a number of visiting guests and speakers, often during community services or missionary days. The Rt. Rev. Edward Thomas Demby, Bishop of Arkansas, was among the distinguished visitors. Because Demby was the first black suffragan bishop in the Episcopal Church, the visit carried with it a not insignificant amount of importance and excitement in the black community as well as generating enthusiasm from Bishop Jett, who exchanged detailed letters with his fellow bishop. In a letter following the visit, Bishop Demby wrote to Bishop Jett as a matter of professional courtesy, reviewing the services and confirmations as well as offering the comment that, during his visit at

¹⁸⁰ Box 15, Folder 21, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁸¹ Box 34, Folder 4, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁸² Ibid.

St. Philip's, "it was a great surprise to the rector to see so many people in attendance. The people were greatly interested in my message."¹⁸³ Bishop Demby also offered his impression of Somers saying, "Somers is a splendid man, an excellent priest, a good and a hard working pastor—he is well thought of by the people in Lynchburg and Bedford—he is doing a fine piece of work."¹⁸⁴

In late fall of 1937, a Woman's Auxiliary field worker from the Diocese of Virginia spoke at St. Philip's and devoted nearly a week to visiting parishioners. During the same mission week, the Rev. Arthur E. Koch of St. Peter's in Roanoke, along with the Rev. William C. Marshall, St. John's Bedford, participated with the people of St. Philip's in worship, discussion, and visits to "the Bedford Training School, the colored Hospital, and a number of homes."¹⁸⁵

The March 1938 diocesan newsletter reported "missionary talks" and sermon outlines from an Episcopal Church publication, *Forward Movement*. Additionally, the black churches "are hoping to have our church people read more extensively the *Southwestern Episcopalian*." Of the three black churches, St. Philip's recorded the highest amount in collecting offerings, contributing \$59.67 to be used for supporting missions and speakers at the underserved churches. Good Shepherd in Lynchburg collected \$20.42, and St. Luke's in Roanoke collected \$2.00.¹⁸⁶

The pre-World War II years were marked by a time of stability for Somers and the churches under his charge. The *Southwestern Episcopalian* included an article with the headline

¹⁸³ The Rt. Rev. T. Edward Demby to the Rt. Rev. Robert Carter Jett, Box 30, Folder 33, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 18, no. 1 (1938): 8. This journal is also listed as Vol. 17, No. 7.

¹⁸⁶ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 18, no. 3 (1938): 8.

“Our Colored Churches Pay Assessment in Full,” with a further notation in the article attesting to the vitality of St. Philip’s:

Parochial reports have been completed for 1938. St. Phillip’s [sic], Bedford, paid its diocesan assessment in full. Plans are being made for the Bishop’s visitation at St. Phillip’s [sic] on February 26, at 3 p. m. Lenten mite boxes have been distributed and a number of sick people have been visited in both towns.¹⁸⁷

A subsequent edition of the *Southwestern Episcopalian* recorded news of the new bishop’s February 26, 1939 visit and confirmation of two people, noting the success of the day by commenting on “A large number [who] attended, some of whom were white friends.”¹⁸⁸ Notice of white attendance at St. Philip’s made the Parish Notes section of the diocesan newsletter later in 1939 when “a large group of white and colored people” attended the funeral of a member of the black parish.¹⁸⁹

In 1941, subjugation of a different stripe appeared. In preparation for the 1941 Diocesan Council, Somers submitted the names of his delegates who were elected to represent St. Philip’s at the annual meeting. Thomas Scott, in his role as Executive Secretary for the Diocese, responded:

Dear Charles:

I have received from you the credentials for lay delegates to the coming Council of the Diocese from St. Philip’s Church at Bedford and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Lynchburg.

¹⁸⁷ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 19, no. 3 (1939): 11.

¹⁸⁸ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 19, no. 4 (1939): 11.

¹⁸⁹ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 19, no. 9 (1939): 6.

I note that for St. Philip's Church, Bedford, the delegate elected is Miss Nellie C. Anderson, and the alternate Mrs. Florence Leftwich.

It is true that the Canons of the Diocese do not specify that only men may be elected as delegates to Council and [I] realize that in St. Philip's Church these two women seem to be far more active and useful than any man in the congregation; Miss Anderson having served faithfully as Treasurer for many years and Mrs. Leftwich being Secretary of the Church Committee and Superintendent of the Church School.

In fact, I note that of the four members of the Church Committee there are women (these two and Rosa Langhorne) and there is only one man.

However, it is so generally assumed that the members of the Council in this Diocese will be men only, that this fact is simply accepted by the people even without a definite requirement in the Canons and thus only men are elected as a matter of course.

Under these circumstances I believe you will agree with me that it would be unfortunate to precipitate a discussion of the question at this time. In quite a number of cases I am making various suggestions as to the election of delegates to Council, partly on account of my anxiety to avoid the least embarrassment to the delegates themselves and partly to promote efficiency and avoid unnecessary debate in the organization of the Council itself.

So I am sending you another form for credentials with the thought that it would be wise to have another election in St. Philip's Church and name a man as delegate and a man as alternate. And I do hope this can be done without in the

least injuring the feelings of either Miss Anderson or Mrs. Leftwich. I can't help thinking that when you show them this letter they will agree that this is the best plan after all.¹⁹⁰

The wider church had not yet recognized women as full members able to participate as leaders. Such progress was still decades away.

Repairs to the church building consumed much of 1942. The focus on the building may have been in response to Bishop Phillips' inquiry about possible confirmands for his upcoming visit to St. Philip's. Somers responded that he did not have any candidates in Bedford but he did in Lynchburg. Somers' March 16, 1942 letter also noted positive fundraising for the building campaign in the newly organized St. Paul's, Martinsville.¹⁹¹

In April, Bishop Phillips wrote to the Rev. Somers: "For some time I have thought that the fabric of St. Philip's church, Bedford, should be repaired and put into better condition."¹⁹² Bishop Phillips listed the details of the contractors' recommended repairs, both to the interior and exterior of the church building. Estimates brought the anticipated total for repairs to just over \$1000. Bishop Phillips proposed that the parishioners contribute a portion of the fee. He presented his reasoning along with the request. His disparaging tone in an odd way elevates Somers. The bishop on the one hand speaks down to those with whom Somers shared an ethnic identity; on the other hand, in speaking to Somers so candidly, Bishop Phillips elevated him to something like a peer, segregating himself and Somers as apart from the rest of the St. Paul's congregants. Phillips wrote:

¹⁹⁰ Box 64, Folder 47, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁹¹ Box 64, Folder 33, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁹² Box 64, Folder 33, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

I am willing to undertake this [repair] work and provide the funds if your congregation will get together and promise immediately to raise \$75.00. This may seem a large sum to them; it is in view of the little that they have done to support the church. But there is no reason why they should not make a sacrifice and put forth efforts to raise this amount.

If the church is made to look as a fit and suitable place for the worship of Almighty God I think they will take more interest in the work of the Church and will at the same time have more self-respect.¹⁹³

The church was no doubt in need of repairs, but the comment about the waning interest in the church along with a lack of candidates to be presented for confirmation may have spurred Bishop Phillips to action. St. Paul's success with raising building funds in Martinsville was a possible impetus for the campaign in Bedford.

Somers responded to the bishop's challenge to the Bedford congregation:

My dear Bishop,

I took up the matter with St. Phillips [sic] congregation in Bedford in regards to raising \$75.00 immediately for the purpose of having repairs made to the church which you outlined in your communication of the 17th. The congregation was delighted to know that you would undertake the work and pledged themselves to raise the amount necessary to begin the repairs to the church building.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

I will know soon the plan of collecting the required amount and will let you know promptly when the money is in hand.

Faithfully yours,

Chas. L. Somers¹⁹⁴

The next day, Bishop Phillips authorized the contractor, Mr. G.M. Overstreet, to begin work. Apparently, however, work did not begin immediately, as evidenced by a follow-up letter to the contractor from the treasurer of the diocese, Thomas Scott. Scott wrote:

Dear Mr. Overstreet:

You're as hard to catch as the Irishman's flea.

On Wednesday (April 29th) Bishop Phillips and I were passing through Bedford and I wanted to see you but we couldn't find anybody...

We just wanted to see what was the chance of your getting started right away on the colored church. So many things are being stopped for one reason or another connected with the war and we are extremely anxious for this work to go right ahead, as it is badly needed.¹⁹⁵

The work eventually began. Bishop Phillips pushed Somers for the \$75.00 commitment in a letter dated May 30, 1942. He wrote:

I am very anxious, while the men are at work, to have them finish up the job, that is to paint the woodwork inside and paint the exterior woodwork. I have not the money to complete this work until I get the \$75.00 from your congregation. Can't you hurry it along so that we can do everything in one operation?

¹⁹⁴ Box 64, Folder 33, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁹⁵ Box 64, Folder 33, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

As you know, it is hard to get workmen, and as they are on the job it is much better to get them to finish the job. But I cannot and will not go in debt. I need the \$75.00 you have pledged to complete the work. Make every effort to let me have it, so that I can authorize the contractor to finish the job.¹⁹⁶

Although it does not appear that the money was immediately forthcoming, the repairs to St. Philip's were completed, and in October the bishop wrote to thank Somers for having "measured up to what you said you would do in helping renovate the church." He offered his appreciation and gratitude, closing by saying, "I am sure that the general appearance of the church ought to stimulate you and the congregation to do other pieces of work. These I hope to hear of."¹⁹⁷ The November 1942 *Southwestern Episcopalian* included an article under the headline "Activity in our Negro Churches." The article opened with the report of the \$75.00 raised by the congregation of St. Philip's and the "very fine appearance" of the church building as well as the "deep interest in the work" on the part of the parishioners who "have given quite liberally toward the improvement of their church" along with "quite a number of ... white friends, both clergymen and laymen, [who] assisted." The article included the entire letter Bishop Phillips sent to the Rev. Somers.¹⁹⁸

Bishop Phillips reiterated his hope for growth at St. Philip's in a November 10, 1942 letter: "[I] am very happy to know that everything is in good shape at St. Philip's. I hope that the work there will develop and show some signs of growth."¹⁹⁹ Church membership, however, remained flat, with 21 members, for the remaining few years of Somers' tenure as rector.

¹⁹⁶ Box 64, Folder 33, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 22, no. 11 (1942): 2.

¹⁹⁹ Box 64, Folder 47, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Following his retirement in 1945, membership dipped to 17, where it stayed for a couple of years. The rector of St. John's, the Rev. William Marshall, assisted at St. Philip's, though perhaps not without asking to be relieved of the obligation. A letter to the Rev. Marshall from Bishop Phillips seems to be in response to Marshall's query about placing a black priest at St. Philip's. On December 23, 1946, the bishop wrote to Marshall:

Dear Chief:²⁰⁰

You have been very good and I appreciate what you have done in helping me out with St. Philip's. I have a colored clergyman but if I hope for him to do anything effective I cannot run him all over creation. He is living in Martinsville and has a long enough trip to go to Lynchburg. I hope to get these two places going. The prospect looks very good. Then I shall try to make other arrangements for other possibilities among the colored people in the Diocese.

In the meantime I hope you will be good enough to continue your work at St. Philip's.²⁰¹

The bishop then offers to begin paying him \$10 a month for his trouble. While stopping short of an authoritarian command, the bishop's directive is clear: Marshall was to continue caring for the congregation of St. Philip's.

²⁰⁰ According to Ann Vest, who grew up at St. John's, Bedford, the Rev. Marshall was called "Chief" because he showed up at the scene of every fire in town.

²⁰¹ Box 75, Folder 11, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The Rev. Cornelius R. Dawson



Figure 4: Image reprinted with permission from the files of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

A surge to 25 congregants in 1947 to 48 reflects the arrival of the Rev. Cornelius R. Dawson. Dawson had served for 10 years as vicar of Trinity, a mission in the Vinegar Hill area of Charlottesville.²⁰² Dawson's time at St. Philip's, however, was brief, and he left Bedford for Washington, D.C. in 1949.²⁰³

The Rev. George C. Ashton

The Rev. George Ashton was the last black rector to serve St. Philip's. He was rector from 1951 to 1954, serving also at Chapel of the Good Shepherd. He left Virginia for St. Monica's in Trenton, New Jersey.²⁰⁴

The excavation of voices next turns to the archival narrative of Chapel of the Good Shepherd, St. Luke's, and St. Paul's. The history of St. Philip's will resume with Bishop Marmion's tenure in Chapter 5.

²⁰² "Our History," Trinity Episcopal Church, Charlottesville, Virginia.
<http://www.trinityepiscopalville.org/about-2/about/our-history>.

²⁰³ *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

²⁰⁴ *Journal of the Annual Council, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1955*.

Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Lynchburg: Clergy leadership, 1899-1966

1919	Robert. J. Johnson
1920-22	Bernard G. Whitlock, Lay Reader
1923-24	William N. Harper, M.D.
1924	Shirley G. Sanchez
1925-45	Charles L. Somers
1945	Vacant
1946	Vacant
1947-49	Cornelius R. Dawson
1950	Vacant
1951-54	George C. Ashton
1955	Vacant
1956-59	McRae Werth (seminarian)
1960-62	John Teeter, Vicar
1962	Duke Jefferson Harrison (postulant)
1963	No vicar listed in Journal (John F. Eberman, Emmanuel and St. Luke's Pedlar Mills)
1964	John F. Eberman, Vicar, Emmanuel Madison Heights, St. Luke's Pedlar Mills, and Good Shepherd Lynchburg
1965	No vicar listed in Journal
1966	William P. Parrish and Robert J. Boyd, V.E.S., Supply Priests

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd came into being on the cusp of the new millennium. Lynchburg's Episcopal "negro church" held services from 1899 to 1966. In the late 1890s, several black residents of Lynchburg began meeting in an old warehouse, moving to homes and the St. Paul's parish house, when the summer heat made meetings in the warehouse untenable. Officially, the church became a congregation in 1901, under the leadership of Dr. John L. Lloyd, rector of nearby Grace Memorial Episcopal Church.²⁰⁵

At the time when the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia emerged as the third diocese in the Commonwealth, black clergy were scarce. In fact, for the first time since 1902, the Bishop Payne Divinity School, a Virginia seminary for black clergy, did not have any graduates to

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

launch into ministry.²⁰⁶ For a brief time, Chapel of the Good Shepherd was under the leadership of the Rev. Robert J. Johnson, who was serving at St. Philip's. Leadership shifted to a young seminarian at Bishop Payne, Bernard G. Whitlock, who, like Johnson, served both churches simultaneously. Both missions had about 30 communicants but Bedford had recently experienced growth, while Good Shepherd remained steady. Johnson also oversaw the small emerging congregation of fewer than ten at St. Luke's in Roanoke.

In May of 1922, Bishop Jett turned down an inexperienced applicant for work at Chapel of the Good Shepherd. In a letter of application to Bishop Jett from Bishop Payne Divinity School student, H. Randolph Moore, the aspiring clergyman wrote: "as much attention as is possible for the Diocese to give and more is needed at Roanoke, if it is desired that the work there would grow." Moore acknowledged the evidence of a positive "seeming position toward colored work" but suggested that "a man should be placed there regularly."²⁰⁷ While Bishop Jett clearly agreed with the young applicant's reasoning, he turned down his application in a letter dated March 8, 1922. He further described his intent to provide for full clerical support in the black churches:

I appreciate your interest in the work at Roanoke. The conditions are such at this time that I can make no immediate change, nor am I in a position in which I would be justified in asking you to do summer work among our little colored flock . . . I have plans in the making however that I trust will result in my being

²⁰⁶ Odell Greenleaf Harris, *The Bishop Payne Divinity School, Petersburg, Virginia, 1878 – 1949: A History of the Seminary: To Prepare Black Men for the Ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary, Alexandria Virginia Archives, 36.

²⁰⁷ Box 1, Folder 31, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

able to put a fully ordained clergyman in charge of the colored work in my diocese. For the present however there can be no action along this line.²⁰⁸

Bishop Jett expanded on his explanation of his decision to reject Moore's letter of application in a letter to the young postulant's bishop, the Rt. Rev. F.F. Reese, Bishop of Georgia:

My Dear Bishop Reese:--

Thank you for your letter relative to Randolph Moore. I had a letter from him asking me for work. I at once wrote Dr. Ribble,²⁰⁹ who speaks well of him, but his age and lack of experience render him unsuited for the charges I wish to provide for.

I need a man of maturity and experience. The work is a most difficult one. I do not therefore feel that I would be justified in putting upon Moore so heavy a responsibility.²¹⁰ I will however look further into the matter and will write you if I find it well to change my attitude. It would certainly be a pleasure to gratify and help you.²¹¹

The Rev. William N. Harper, M.D.

The Rev. William N. Harper, M.D. accepted the call to come to the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia early in 1923. Harper was "considered well equipped for the care of [St.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ The Rev. Frederick J. Ribble was hired at the Bishop Payne Divinity School as Professor of Dogmatic Theology in 1903. He subsequently served as Dean of the College and died while serving in this capacity in the spring semester of 1939.

²¹⁰ Moore was to graduate from Bishop Payne Divinity School in 1925 and go on to earn a MA and a MTS.

²¹¹ Box 3, Folder 31, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Philip's and Chapel of the Good Shepherd] and it is confidently expected that this work will receive a great impetus through his efforts."²¹² Bishop Jett characterized Harper as "a man of exceptional preparation, refinement, and earnestness."²¹³ The January 1923 *Southwestern Episcopalian* announced Harper's call in a brief article under the headline, "Minister for Colored Work." The article described the Chapel of the Good Shepherd: "the congregation, while small, has several enthusiastic members."²¹⁴ The article further notes the "good foundation for work at [Good Shepherd] and at St. Philip's."²¹⁵

Harper's time in the Diocese was brief. In the September 1924 edition of *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, under the headline "Work Among our Colored People," a short article lamented the departure of Dr. Harper, also commenting that "Our mother diocese of Southern Virginia is doing good work among the colored people, but this diocese has so far hardly given serious attention to this important responsibility and opportunity." A parish day school was held up as "the greatest and most urgent need."²¹⁶

Shirley G. Sanchez

Following Harper's departure, Bishop Jett wrote once again to the Rev. Ribble with the request for help locating clergy for the diocese's black churches. His letter read:

My dear Mr. Ribble;--

I need very badly a colored clergyman of more than average parts to take charge of the colored work in Lynchburg, Bedford, and Roanoke.

²¹² *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 2, no. 11 (1923): 9.

²¹³ Box 75, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²¹⁴ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 2, no. 11 (1923): 9.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 4, no. 7 (1941): 22.

I am entirely ignorant, so far as the colored clergy of the Church are concerned. I am sorry to trouble you again but I shall greatly value any help that you may give me in this matter.

The colored work in this diocese is in such a condition that my only hope...of doing anything with it lies in the discovery of an especially well fitted man as rector and pastor.

I have not met Sanchez but I am told that he is making good impressions.²¹⁷

Shirley G. Sanchez, a seminarian, subsequently arrived in Lynchburg and served for the summer months to bridge the gap between Harper's departure and the successful employment of a new rector. The idea to use a student as a stop-gap measure came from Bishop Jett. Harper and Dr. Lushington, a veterinarian, who was a member of the congregation and involved in the hiring process, approved Sanchez according to Harper's letter to Bishop Jett on June 3, 1924:

My dear Bishop,

Dr. Lushington and I discussed your suggestion, to use a student during the summer. It seems the best method for keeping the work going, and would be very acceptable, if pleasing to you.²¹⁸

Sanchez served for the summer months of 1924 before returning to Bishop Payne and subsequently graduating in 1926. His final paycheck for \$75 was mailed to his address in Petersburg.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Box 75, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Ribble apparently worked quickly to locate suitable candidates for Bishop Jett's consideration to assume leadership of Good Shepherd once Sanchez returned to seminary.

Writing on Bishop Payne Divinity School letterhead, Ribble said:

Another young man, Hamilton, of the Junior Class, promoted to the Middle, spoke to me about the place in case you did not offer it to Moore. He is one of the best men in the school and has considerable experience in church work. He is now working in the library of the General Theological Seminary, having left Petersburg immediately after commencement to take this job. I have written him to wire me if he can leave New York at once and accept the place in Lynchburg. If he can, do you want him? And if you want him, shall he report at once to the proper person in Lynchburg? If you can let me hear from you at once, I will want to answer when I hear from him.²¹⁹

On the recommendation of the Rev. James Russell, a black priest serving as an archdeacon (an administrative position) in the Diocese, Bishop Jett wrote to a black priest in the neighboring Diocese of Virginia. The October 1924 letter to the Rev. John H. Scott extended an offer of the position of rector at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and St. Philip's in Bedford. Bishop Jett mentioned the desire to expand ministry also for blacks in Roanoke commenting that "It means everything to find a really competent leader, whose views with regards to doctrine, worship and discipline of the Episcopal Church are in harmony with Virginia's traditions along those lines. No other would in my judgment succeed in guiding our colored people to a strong position in the Church in this territory." He demonstrated his confidence in Russell's recommendations adding, "Archdeacon Russell gives me assurance that I would find in [you a] very valuable helper. He is

²¹⁹ Ibid.

doing all that he can, I believe, to keep me from making a mistake.”²²⁰ Scott declined the position, keeping the search for a suitable black clergyman open.

The following month, November of 1924, Steptoe and Patteson Realtors sent notice to the diocese that it had sold the property once used as the Good Shepherd rectory. The letter stated that “The house on Wise Street the Diocese has been renting from us has been sold.” Further comment offered future options: “If you succeed in getting another rector for the Church here we will be glad to help secure another rectory for him, either for rent or for sale.”²²¹ Bishop Jett wrote Dr. Lushington on November 5, 1924 saying:

My dear Mr. Lushington:-

I send another reminder of my continued interest in you and in all of people and friends of the Church of the Good Shepherd,²²² Lynchburg. I want you all to know that so far from being indifferent to the present vacancy in the rectorship, I am constantly at work trying to find a suitable leader.

The letter continues with Bishop Jett explaining that he has recently contacted five clergy on the recommendation of the archdeacon of the diocese but “Every man, for most excellent reasons for remaining in his present charge, has declined.” Bishop Jett concluded the letter expressing his disappointment at having “thus far failed” and noting that he has contacted Dr. Russell for additional names “in order that I might persevere in my efforts to secure as soon as possible a

²²⁰ Box 75, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²²¹ Box 7, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²²² Many, including Bishop Marmion, referred to Chapel of the Good Shepherd as “Church of the Good Shepherd.”

pastor for this little congregation.” He assured Dr. Lushington that he was “honestly and earnestly interested and shall continue to do [his] best.”²²³

In his letter to Dr. Russell, Bishop Jett expressed his doubt about the future of Good Shepherd: “I must make every possible effort to get the right man, otherwise I fear I can hope to do little towards extending our Church among the colored people of my Diocese.”²²⁴ A reply from Dr. Russell expressed his disappointment saying, “Well, I shall attempt to give you the names of a few clergymen who should be able to give you entire satisfaction, although I hoped that at least one from the first list would have accepted your offer.”²²⁵ Dr. Russell then listed five possible candidates and offered a brief description of each. His descriptions included information such as the poor health of one and another whose “feet are somewhat deformed.”²²⁶ Of the Rev. Charles Somers, who was to serve Good Shepherd and the other black churches, Dr. Russell wrote the following:

The Rev. Charles L. Somers, Rectory, Virginia, received his training at the Bishop Payne Divinity School and was advanced to the Priest-hood by Bishop Gibson in 1906. Mr. Somers is small of stature, but is a pleasant speaker and generally makes a good impression. He is married and has, I think, four children: two of which are at present at St. Paul’s School.²²⁷

Dr. Russell closed with the offer to continue looking if Bishop Jett “should not select one from this group.”²²⁸

²²³ Box 7, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

The Rev. Charles L. Somers

It took close to a year for Bishop Jett to find a replacement for Harper. The Rev. Charles L. Somers assumed the role of rector of Good Shepherd and St. Philip's in June of 1925, although the initial start date was to have been sooner. Though not without some difficulties, Somers was to become the long-time and successful rector of the two churches, also adding duties in Roanoke, as Bishop Jett had hoped for, and St. Paul's, Martinsville. Despite his two decades in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, there is no file on Somers in the diocesan vault along with files of all other rectors. Files contain official documents among other materials relevant to the priests' time in the Diocese. No folders of black priests, prior to 1978, exist in the diocesan archives.

Ordained a deacon in 1904 and a priest in 1906, Somers received his seminary training at Bishop Payne Divinity School. He had also spent a year at Harvard after completing his initial schooling at St. Paul's Normal and Industrial School in Lawrenceville. He served two churches, St. Philip's in Richmond, Virginia from 1904 to 1915 and St. Mark's in Jackson, Mississippi from 1915 to 1919 before returning to Virginia in order to serve as rector at Moncure Memorial Chapel in Stafford, and to serve also as the principal of the Moncure Memorial School.

In a lengthy and detailed letter from Bishop Jett to the newly hired Somers, the bishop expressed his dismay that as of May 1, 1925, Somers had not yet moved to the rental property on Taylor Street, procured by the diocese and made available to Somers as the rectory. Bishop Jett set forth a timeline of events and quoted from Somers' previous correspondence to illustrate the missed deadlines and start dates. According to the bishop's letter, Somers accepted the call to

serve as rector of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and St. Philip's in Bedford on December 31, 1924. The bishop reminded Somers of his timeline:

Under date of December 31st you wrote as follows:

“I have considered prayerfully the call extended me, and I hereby notify you of my acceptance of the same. I shall endeavor to be in position to enter upon the duties of my new charge February 15th, in accordance with your suggestion.”²²⁹

In the same letter, the bishop then noted the agreement that Somers had brokered with the diocese to purchase some of the furniture belonging to the inhabitants of the newly purchased rectory on Taylor Street. He wrote, “On March 16th, 1925, at my request, Mr. Scott, our treasurer, sent you a check for \$150.00, to enable you to accomplish your wish in the matter of purchasing the furniture referred to, and in accordance with your suggestion.” The bishop mentioned additional points indicating an impending but as yet unrealized transition: “Under date of March 19th...you wrote me as follows: ‘I will know definitely the 27th when the present occupants will move, as I expect to be in Lynchburg on that date.’” The bishop noted further delays: “You then continued by saying: ‘I intend to move after the school term is concluded, May 11th. The salaries we are getting (my wife and myself) enable us to meet the expenses of moving.’”²³⁰

After establishing a clear timeline of delayed start dates, the bishop set forward his clear request:

²²⁹ Box 767, Folder 27, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²³⁰ Ibid.

Under all circumstances, I feel that it is right that you should proceed to Lynchburg as soon as possible. Your agreement to take the house and the purchase of the furniture in it, or allowing it to remain subject to your use, makes you liable for the rental as of the date apparently agreed upon, namely April first. I hope, therefore, to have your assurance that you are prepared to begin your work at the earliest date it may be possible for you to fix. I do not feel that it would be right for me to ask my Diocese to provide you with the rental of the house unless you propose to occupy it. Your failure to do so would, as you can see, bring many complications. Even though the contract has not been signed, morally speaking the verbal agreement will of course be binding.²³¹

The bishop closed with affirming words, saying he was certain Somers understood his position. He added firmly, “Your prompt entrance upon your work at Lynchburg will I think save us both rather serious embarrassment.”²³²

The *Southwestern Episcopalian* reported on Somers’ transition from Stafford to Lynchburg. The diocesan newsletter quoted Somers as saying, “I was able to make two visits monthly to Lynchburg and Bedford after accepting the call—an arrangement agreeable to Bishop Brown²³³ and Bishop Jett. This continued until I could move and settle in the field.”²³⁴ The question of the rental and inhabitation of the rectory was settled for the time, but it was to resurface nearly two decades later, and difficulties with finances resurfaced in 1928 to the tune of \$3,000 and again in 1934 for \$300.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ The Rt. Rev. William Cabell Brown, seventh bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. The diocesan website notes Brown’s leadership in promoting Episcopal schools in the diocese during his tenure as bishop.

²³⁴ Somers’ letter to Bishop Jett quoted in *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 5, no. 9 (1925): 23.

Once arrived, the Rev. Charles Somers proved to be successful with both the church and the parish school. In addition to reactivating the dormant Sunday School, which provided Christian education to about twenty students, Somers' leadership also oversaw the opening of a parish pre-school and kindergarten with thirty children enrolling in the fall and an expectation of more to come. Bishop Jett placed the school under the leadership of Somers' wife.²³⁵ Church members supported the fledgling school "with articles as are needed by the children."²³⁶ A choir, led by Miss Drusilla Lushington, "render[ed] valuable service."²³⁷ The 1928 *Southwestern Episcopalian* called the Chapel of the Good Shepherd's 35-member boys' choir "a distinct asset in the work there."²³⁸ The music program augmented the success of Lynchburg's black Episcopal church.

Hope for the expansion of an Episcopal presence for blacks in Roanoke persisted. The 1926 report from Diocesan Council acknowledged that the "colored work under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Somers, appears to be showing signs of development" but put forward a lament expressing "regret that we have only one colored clergyman in the diocese."²³⁹ The report from Council called upon the formation of a committee to "[look] toward the development of work among our colored people," possibly extending the Rev. Somers' duties into Roanoke as had been anticipated for the previous rector.²⁴⁰

During his two decades of service, Somers maintained regular services as well as integrating supplemental opportunities for worship. Like many of the other Episcopal churches of the diocese, Somers engaged the Chapel of the Good Shepherd in worship with other

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid., 24.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 8, no. 2 (1928): 13.

²³⁹ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 16, no. 6 (1926): 5.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

denominations. These ecumenical partnerships seemed to extend to other black churches in the Bedford area.²⁴¹ A 1933 article in the *Southwestern Episcopalian* headlined “Special Services at Colored Churches” included this description:

The Rev. Chas. L Somers, rector of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Lynchburg, St. Philip’s Church, Bedford, and St. Luke’s Church, Roanoke, has arranged a series of services for the summer months. Each Sunday afternoon at 5:30 there will be a vesper service at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd with sermons and addresses by visiting clergymen and laymen.²⁴²

City directories and public records revealed that a Methodist²⁴³ and Baptist²⁴⁴ were among the seven clergymen listed. It appears that Somers also solicited Episcopal clergymen from neighboring dioceses. As the lone black priest in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, he called upon black clergy from Lynchburg, Roanoke, and Bedford, so ecumenism was perhaps less of a driving force than was access to black clergy.²⁴⁵ One notable visit, however, was from a black Episcopal bishop, the Rt. Rev. Edward Demby, one of the first black bishops to have seat

²⁴¹ While other Episcopal churches in the diocese also engaged in intentional ecumenism, it appears as more worthy of comment or context than in the black churches. The article on visiting clergy from other denominations at Good Shepherd warrants no discussion or comment—the seven clergymen are merely listed absent any church or denominational affiliation—and yet an article in the same 1933 edition of the *Southwestern Episcopalian* points to a Presbyterian minister’s participation in a service installing the new rector of Lynchburg’s Grace Memorial Church: “An interesting feature of the service was the presence in the chancel of the Rev. James D. Paxton, D. D., pastor emeritus of the First Presbyterian Church, Lynchburg.” A second article in this same issue notes that the Rev. Devall L. Gwathmey, D.D., rector of St. John’s Church, Wytheville, preached at the Baptist Church in the opening of a series organized by the Wytheville Ministerial Association.

²⁴² *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 13, no. 2 (1933): 10-11.

²⁴³ The Rev. Albert Long.

²⁴⁴ The Rev. P. L. Harvey of Diamond Hill Baptist Church, Lynchburg.

²⁴⁵ I am unable to locate any information about the Rev. A. Reginald Fray, the clergyman listed from Bedford. I find African-Americans from the area with the same or a similar name who may be descendants.

and voice in the House of Bishops. Bishop Demby also visited St. Philip's in Bedford during his June 1930 visit.²⁴⁶

Ecumenism extended to another unique feature brought to Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Somers organized several multi-day programs called "missions," which ring of revivals popular in some other Protestant denominations but not typically common in the Episcopal Church. The organizing of the missions may have been as much a function of need for manpower as the desire for solidarity in the church family.

Records from 1934 detailed a loan that the Rev. Somers took out in 1933. In a letter to Thomas Scott, Treasurer of the Diocese, the manager of the Lynchburg Loan Society wrote:

The loan was made on May 1st, 1933 for the sum of \$300.00, since then [Somers] has made no curtailment, but paid the interest on June 28th. This loan is a renewal of several previous loans running over a period of several years. In other words, when he renewed his loan on May 1st, he owed a balance of \$255.00 on the old loan, therefore, the renewal enable[d] him to draw \$45.00.²⁴⁷

In a letter to Bishop Phillips, the treasurer observed that Somers' debt was "somewhat of a shock, but perhaps the situation can be resolved in some way."²⁴⁸ An August 16, 1933 letter from the treasurer to Samuel H. Williams enlisted the help of this Lynchburg attorney. Scott opened the letter saying: "My dear Sam;--I wonder if as a good Episcopalian you will be willing

²⁴⁶ Box 30, Folder 33, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁴⁷ Box 42, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

to help me out about a matter.”²⁴⁹ The letter continued, outlining the details of Somers’ \$300 debt and including some relevant background:

Until the end of 1932 Somers’ salary was \$1,200.00 a year and rectory.

At the beginning of 1933 all salaries were reduced and his came down to \$850.00 and rectory.²⁵⁰

A number of years ago he got into financial difficulties and needed help and, at the request of the Bishop, the Rev. Thos. M. Broome and Mayo C. Brown served as a sort of committee, took a great deal of interest in his situation and got him fairly straightened out I think.²⁵¹

Scott added, “Though you doubtless know him, I should have said in the beginning of this letter that he is rector of the two colored churches at Lynchburg and Bedford.”²⁵² The letter concluded with a description of Somers’ prevarication about the loan—he claimed only to have cashed a check at the Lynchburg Loan Society; thus the reason for Scott’s request that Williams inquire about the debts. Choosing an Episcopalian to request information appears to have been put forward as a favor, not a business transaction or formal accusation of any sort. It also does not

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ White rectors of small congregations in the diocese, for comparison: The Rev. John Wellford, rector of two small churches in Abingdon and Saltville earned a salary of \$2,500 plus rectory in 1932, reduced to \$2,250 and rectory in 1933. The Rev. John Rideout was offered a position at St. Peter’s Altavista and Good Shepherd Evington for the salary of \$1,500 and rectory. The Rev. W. Francis Allison offered a position at St. Mary’s Bluefield, and Tazwell, Richlands, and Lebanon: \$1,800 plus “very nice stone rectory.” The Rev. C. F. Magee, St. Andrews Clifton Forge and Emmanuel Eagle Rock—\$2,400 in 1932. Diocesan contributions dropped from \$800 to \$750 in 1932. Parishes paid a portion of the clergy salaries; the diocese contributed more for most churches—not missions.

²⁵¹ Box 42, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁵² Ibid.

appear that this sort of financial scrutiny was typical.²⁵³ Somers was subsequently tasked with repaying an interest-free loan to the Diocese at the rate of \$5.00 per month, which was taken directly from his salary. Bishop Jett followed with a letter requesting a follow-up visit. Bishop Jett wrote to Somers saying:

Your financial situation, as I now have it before me, gives me very serious concern. Frankly, I am somewhat surprised that when you were in my office recently proposing an advancement on your salary, you did not make known to me your financial condition. In view of our past experience, in an effort to help you discharge an indebtedness of some \$3,000, a full report of which is not yet in my hands, I consider it exceedingly important that you should see me at an early date.

I should like to see you in my office on Friday morning, September 1st, at 11:30.

We shall then talk this matter over and see whether the situation can in any way be improved.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Other church folders in 1933 show some financial record-keeping: e.g. letter of \$0.33 overpayment, refunded in stamps (layperson, Miss Brightsie Savage); \$100 loan to purchase a car for travel from Emmanuel Bristol to Christ, Marion for two services a month. A letter from the Rev. Frank Mezick of Nelson speaks to the independent wealth that may have been a mark of clergy in the diocese at the time:

“My dear Mr. Scott:

This is to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th informing me of the reduction in my salary by the Diocesan Board. This information, while not pleasant, is not unexpected. I am sorry for fellows who are entirely dependent on their salaries for their support. I am also sorry that this parish, by not keeping up its subscriptions as heretofore, is in part the cause of this action. It was impossible for us to do so.

With kindest regards,

Faithfully yours, Frank Mezick”

²⁵⁴ Jett to Somers, 28 August 1933, Box 42, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

In a September note to Bishop Jett, Somers said: "I am deeply grateful for all your generous help towards settling my financial obligations."²⁵⁵

Over the course of the next several months, inquiries and eventually full payment of the loan by the Diocese, took place. On February 16th, 1934, Somers wrote to thank Scott:

Dear Mr. Scott:--

I thank you for your kind letter relative to the matter of my obligation to the Lynchburg Loan Society. The plan for my reimbursing the diocese the \$300 paid is very favorable. I am deeply grateful for this kindness.

I shall avoid hereafter becoming involved with said society or any other such organization.

Faithfully yours,

Chas. L. Somers²⁵⁶

The question of the use of the rectory resurfaced late in 1942. Concerns about repairs to both the church and the rectory led to an extended exchange of letters, primarily between Somers and Thomas Scott. In a January 2, 1943 letter from Scott to Hampden Steptoe, the Lynchburg realtor who worked with the diocese, Scott wrote:

The property at No. 1708 Taylor Street in Lynchburg, is supposed to be the rectory of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the colored church at 14th and Wise Streets....In actual fact the Rev. Charles Somers lives elsewhere and in this house he simply uses one room as a study and probably he could just as well use a

²⁵⁵ Somers to Jett, 19 September 1933, Box 42, Folder 28, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

room at the church. I understand that at present, his son and daughter in law are making use of the rest of the house or part of it.

From our point of view the present situation in relation to the house is unfortunate and we are considering a change and so I am coming to you for advice as I have come on various occasions heretofore.²⁵⁷

Scott asked for estimates on repairs and on sale price as well as an opinion about the suggested rate and likelihood of renting the repaired property “to some good, reliable family, necessarily colored people of course.”²⁵⁸ On January 7, 1943, Bishop Jett’s successor, the Rt. Rev. Henry Disbrow Phillips entered into the discussion when he wrote Somers saying:

My dear Somers:

From Mr. Tom Scott, with whom you have talked, I learned that you do not use the rectory as a residence and that you could just as well find space in the church for your office. I understand this is the only purpose for church [for which] you use the rectory.

The rectory needs repairs...if the rectory is freed from your use I can borrow enough money to repair it...but by renting the rectory I can [pay for repairs].²⁵⁹

Somers replied in a letter dated January 11, 1943 to say that he planned to move his study by the end of the month to an office at the church. Of the adjustment that would be necessary, he wrote, “I shall have to make some improvement in the room I am planning to use at the Chapel [of the

²⁵⁷ Box 67, Folder 27, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

Good Shepherd]. I hope to do this by the end of the month, and move my office equipment to the Church. The rectory will then be free to have such repairs as needed.”²⁶⁰

On September 7, 1943, Bishop Phillips wrote to say that he would be coming to Good Shepherd the following Sunday (September 12) for a visit. Bishop Phillips wrote:

If there is no confirmation class that need not affect my coming. I should like to see your church and congregation and what kind of progress is being made.

I am sending this by special delivery so that you will have time to let me know and make any necessary arrangements.²⁶¹

Somers replied by postcard that he was glad to learn of the bishop’s visit and said that he would “notify the members accordingly.” In a letter following the visit, the bishop wrote:

I was very glad to be with your congregation Sunday and was encouraged to see signs of more interest than at times I have felt was being shown by the congregation. I hope that they will keep up the good work and will carry through some of the projects that we talked of after the service.

Questions about finances continued to surface into his final months, including correspondence that called into question Somers’ practice of running church finances through his personal bank account and a treasurer whose role seemed more in title than in application.²⁶² His tenure as rector of the black missions in the Diocese was celebrated and marked by a

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Correspondence with Bishop Phillips, Thomas Scott, Edna R. Evans, Preston Rosser, Box 72, Folder 17, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

“testimonial program” in his honor. The event was held at Rivermont Baptist Church a month into his retirement, on May 31, 1945. The *Southwestern Episcopalian* reported that the event:

in recognition of the services of the retiring minister of the colored missions of the diocese [was attended by] the Rev. Robert A. Magill, D. D. [rector of St. John’s Lynchburg], the colored ministers [of other denominations] of Lynchburg and Bedford and two laymen . . . of Martinsville, and the executive secretary of the Hunton Branch Y.M.C.A.

The Rev. J. T. Harris addressed the meeting, and presented to the retiring minister a substantial contribution which was gratefully received by him with the expression of hope that he may still be of service to the people in his field.²⁶³

Somers was not in good health at the time of his retirement. After Somers suffered a stroke in 1946, the rector of Grace Memorial in Lynchburg visited him and reported to the bishop that while “he has no use of either his left arm or leg and the left side of his body is numb . . . his mind has not been affected and neither has his speech.”²⁶⁴ He was reportedly, however, “bearing his affliction as a Christian with a cheerful frame of mind [and requested only] prayer and the Holy Communion” when asked what he needed in the way of support.²⁶⁵ Somers died on May 30, 1948 in Richmond.

The congregation was without clergy leadership for several years following Somers’ retirement. In a June 22, 1945 letter to a parishioner, Bishop Phillips wrote:

²⁶³ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 25, no. 4 (1945): 2.

²⁶⁴ The Rev. A. Hume Cox to The Rt. Rev. Henry Phillips, 26 October 1946, Box 75, Folder 34, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

I am anxious to get a first-class man to take over our colored work. It is going to be difficult for us to find the type of man that both you and I want, but I am making the effort. I can get a certain amount [of money for a salary] from the Diocese, but you realize that he ought to receive as much support as possible by his churches. I would like to see us have at least \$200.00 or more pledged for a minister's salary by the Good Shepherd, for I must provide a living salary and one that would make a man of promise and ambition feel that he would be justified in accepting.²⁶⁶

The Rev. Cornelius R. Dawson

In the summer of 1946, Drucilla Moultrie replied to an inquiry from Bishop Phillips about the Rev. Cornelius Dawson's recent visit to Chapel of the Good Shepherd. In a letter dated July 14, 1946, Mrs. Moultrie wrote:

Dear Bishop Phillips,

In the absence of Mr. Moultrie, I hereby make reply to your recent letter. Rev. Cornelius Dawson held services at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd as scheduled on July 7. A short conference took place after the services.

As a result of the same, the members of the church expressed themselves as being very favorably impressed with Mr. Dawson. They likewise felt that he [would be] a great asset to the work. In case full time service [as rector] might not be available, the suggestion was made that . . . arrangements be made for occasional assistance at his convenience.

²⁶⁶ Bishop Phillips to Miss Lettie Charlton, 22 June 1945, Box 72, Folder 17, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

Drucilla L Moultrie

(Mrs. J.C.)²⁶⁷

The Rev. Cornelius Dawson did accept the call to move from Charlottesville and serve the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, but his primary post was with a church plant, St. Paul's, in the burgeoning factory town of Martinsville, over two hours away. A letter to J. C. Moultrie from Bishop Phillips discussed the terms of Dawson's employment and included acknowledgement of his feelings and an explanation:

I know it is a disappointment to you that [Dawson] is not to live in Lynchburg but it seemed under the circumstances the only thing for him to do was to live in Martinsville, where the Church is not only developing fast but where he is receiving quite a portion of his support, with the promise of the people doing more.²⁶⁸

Bishop Phillips indicated that his hope was to place "another colored clergyman" at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, but he was clear about expecting financial support from the parishioners for the clergyman. In response to the information that Good Shepherd would contribute \$250 to Dawson's salary, Bishop Phillips commented that "what Good Shepherd does [to offer financial support to Dawson] will determine when I make the effort to get the clergyman."²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ Box 75, Folder 34, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Box 75, Folder 34, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

By late 1949, the congregation of Chapel of the Good Shepherd had rallied to Bishop Phillips' challenge. The secretary of Negro work for the wider Episcopal Church, the Rev. Dr. Tollie LeRoy Caution, came to Lynchburg from his office in New York to meet with the Good Shepherd congregation. The Episcopal Church had subsidized Dawson's salary to support the work in Martinsville. Good Shepherd congregants hoped to gain support for a clergyman of their own with similar supplementation. Lay leader Dr. R. C. Wesley reported the favorable outcome of the 1950 meeting with Dr. Caution to Bishop Phillips in a letter dated January 4, 1950:

Dear Bishop Phillips,

Our meeting with the Rev. Caution was to our minds quite fruitful. Father Caution read us the agreement which you reached, and the members of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd felt so encouraged that on the following Sunday a business meeting was held at which \$635.00 was pledged by those present toward our share of the minister's salary and other expenses at the church. We feel certain that with our other efforts we can raise the approximately \$350.00 additional which will make up our budget for the year. We are planning a benefit movie and other affair in the near future.

We hope to be able soon to start the necessary repairs on the church with the idea of having a more presentable structure when the minister arrives.

We truly appreciate your cooperation and assure you we shall do our share to rebuild Good Shepherd.

Very respectfully yours,

R. C. W.²⁷⁰

Bishop Phillips' reply indicated his support. He responded to Wesley by return post in his letter dated January 6, 1950:

Dear Doctor Wesley:

I was very glad to receive this morning your letter of January 4th.

I congratulate you and members of your congregation upon what you have done. I shall notify Doctor Caution that you have now made your pledge and that I am ready to receive from him any nominations of clergy he may know of whom he could recommend for our work at Lynchburg.²⁷¹

The Rev. George C. Ashton

Negotiations with the Rev. George C. Ashton began in fall of 1950. He accepted a call to Good Shepherd and agreed also to serve St. Philip's in Bedford. Ashton and his wife took residence in the newly purchased rectory in the Rivermont Avenue area of Lynchburg in late November of 1950. The Ashtons' daughter was away at Fisk University in Nashville. Ashton had graduated from Storer College in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia and Western Seminary in Pittsburgh. Before moving to Lynchburg from his post as vicar of the Church of the Redeemer in Oklahoma City, Ashton had served at churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Box 82, Folder 62, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Newspaper clipping in file, Box 82, Folder 62, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Treasurer Tom Scott informed the Rev. Caution of Ashton's eminent arrival and restated the terms of the diocese's agreement with the church offices in New York:

The Bishop requests me to ask you to arrange with the treasurer of the National Council . . . to make payment to me as Treasurer of the Diocese of the monthly installments at the rate of \$1,000.00 a year, which you agreed to give the Bishop towards the salary of the clergyman at Lynchburg. After the first year this will be subject to some kind of reduction, to be mutually agreed upon.²⁷³

The Rev. Ashton was to stay in Lynchburg for three years. In accordance with the agreement with Dr. Caution, subsidies from the Office of Negro Work were reduced each year. In the 1954 parochial report filed by the Rev. Ashton, Chapel of the Good Shepherd logged an "Amount of Indebtedness" of \$172.44 and a notation under "Rector's Salary" indicates that the "pension premium[s] are not paid to date."²⁷⁴ Ashton left Virginia for the parish of St. Monica's in New Jersey in late 1954. The congregants were without clergy leadership the following year and Ashton was to be their last black priest.

The story of St. Luke's, from its inception through the time of Bishop Marmion's arrival in the diocese, follows.

St. Luke's, Roanoke: Clergy leadership, 1914-1966

1918-19	Robert J. Johnson
1921	Bernard G. Whitlock
1923-29	Period of dormancy
1930-45	Charles L. Somers
1945	Vacant

²⁷³ Letter, 8 November 1950, Box 82, Folder 61, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁷⁴ Box 88, Folder 47, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

1946	Vacant
1947-49	Cornelius R. Dawson
1950-52	Vacant
1953-54	Richard R. Beasley, D.D. (St. John's Roanoke)
1955	Vacant
1956	Turner Wesley Morris
1957-61	Vacant
1962-63	Thomas O. Edmunds, Vicar St. James' Roanoke, and St. Luke's Roanoke James Welsh
1964	James Welsh
1965	Duke Harrison, Lay Minister

The Rev. Robert Johnson

The congregation that became known as St. Luke's first emerged in 1914. Initially, the mission took the form of a large Sunday School, which was followed by mid-afternoon services conducted by clergy from neighboring white Episcopal churches. In both 1918 and 1919 parochial records recorded eight communicants, fifteen baptized persons, three Sunday School teachers, and thirty-five Sunday School students. The Rev. Robert Johnson, who also had charge of Chapel of the Good Shepherd, oversaw the small congregation with the aid of lay leadership. Services stalled within a few years of their beginning but resumed around 1921, under the fledgling leadership of the soon-to-be-ordained Bernard G. Whitlock.

Bernard G. Whitlock

At the time Whitlock stepped into leadership, the black congregation assembled as St. Luke's began holding services at Coleman's Hall, the space dedicated to Sunday School at the nearby Presbyterian church. Of this arrangement, Whitlock said, "A very unique condition exists here—an Episcopalian chapel in a Presbyterian church. Such generosity is not easily found. The [Presbyterian] Rev. Dr. Downing has been a friend to us and our work. A chapel is needed here

and Roanoke is the most fertile field in the diocese.”²⁷⁵ Occasional services sustained the congregants along with leadership from Whitlock. Sunday was well attended and deemed successful.²⁷⁶ Following Whitlock’s departure, however, activity and interest waned.

The Rev. Charles L. Somers

After a six-year period of inactivity, St. Luke’s reemerged under the leadership of the Rev. Charles L. Somers, who was also rector of the two black churches in Bedford and Lynchburg. In conversation with black residents of Roanoke and Salem, Somers and Bishop Jett set into motion a plan to restart the dormant parish. A parishioner’s home was the location of the first service to be held since 1923. The following week, August 25, 1929, the parish welcomed its newest member with the baptism of a baby. Two weeks later, the congregation worshiped in the new location, a rented hall located at 137 Patton Avenue, N. W.²⁷⁷

The September 1929 *Southwestern Episcopalian* reported that “Thirty persons have signed cards indicating their interest in the work, eleven of these having already been confirmed. Three teachers and fifteen children have been listed for baptism in the near future. One member of the new congregation has already pledged \$100.00 to aid in the movement.” The optimism for the rebirth of the parish was evident.

The congregation celebrated a Parish Day, July 30, 1933 but interest appeared to be ebbing in the ensuing years. Then in the fall of 1937, the *Southwestern Episcopalian* reported “regular services” but “no attempt at extra programs.”²⁷⁸ Services continued in local residences.

²⁷⁵ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 1, no. 3 (1921): 16.

²⁷⁶ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 2, no. 11 (1923): 9; *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 29, no. 8 (1938): 12.

²⁷⁷ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 9, no. 7 (1929): 11.

²⁷⁸ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 17, no. 6 (1937): 10.

In 1938, *the Southwestern Episcopalian* indicated that “The third Sunday in June the rector visited St. Luke’s in Roanoke and celebrated the Holy Communion. Some twenty persons were assembled at the residence of Mr. Joseph Hutsona. Some candidates are waiting confirmation at that mission.”²⁷⁹ Miss Jane Byrd Pendleton and Mrs. Baker, members of nearby Christ Church, met with members of St. Luke’s to plan a branch of the Woman’s Auxiliary at the black parish. The meeting was held at the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the Y.W.C.A. and “[t]he rector is endeavoring to secure a permanent place” for the auxiliary.²⁸⁰ In 1939, Walter Steptoe, a professor at St. Paul’s in Lawrenceville and former lay leader at St. Philip’s visited some of the communicants of St. Luke’s while in the area to speak at St. Philip’s and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.²⁸¹

From a financial standpoint, St. Luke’s was not yet showing signs of life. In 1940, of 59 pledges in the diocese totaling \$28,973, the largest “missionary quota” was \$5,000 from St. John’s Roanoke. The smallest was \$10 from Emmanuel Eagle Rock. The median pledge was \$125. Among the black churches, the Chapel of the Good Shepherd contributed \$75; St. Philip’s pledge amounted to \$50. St. Luke’s was not listed among those who contributed to the diocesan coffers.²⁸² Somers was busy with all three parishes and active in the region as well, serving as a delegate to the Summer School of Religious Education held at St. Paul’s College in Lawrenceville. The congregation did hold homecoming services in September 1940.²⁸³

On November 29, 1942, representatives from the three black churches in the diocese along with local musicians helped to celebrate St. Luke’s 28th anniversary. The rector of

²⁷⁹ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 18, no. 8 (1938): 7.

²⁸⁰ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 18, no. 12 (1938): 6.

²⁸¹ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 19, no. 9 (1939): 6.

²⁸² *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 20, no. 10 (1940): 10.

²⁸³ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 20, no. 10 (1940): 10-11.

neighboring Christ Church, the Rev. John W.F. Field, was the speaker at the celebration, which took place at 4:30 p.m. at the home of lay leader, Y. Hutsona, who also served as Master of Ceremonies.²⁸⁴

In the early days of 1943, Hutsona began the quest in earnest for the purchase of a building to house the congregation of St. Luke's. In his proposal to Bishop Phillips, Hutsona wrote:

Dear Sir:

May the Lord guide you in reading this letter with great interest. Bishop Phillips, St. Luke Protestant Episcopal Church Mission has been in existence about twenty-eight years. I, Y. Hutsona, came to Roanoke about twenty years ago and reorganized the mission under the care of the Bishop C. Jett, D. D., and my family and I have been trying to keep the mission alive, having services at my home, cottage services, and at different churches of different denominations.²⁸⁵

Hutsona continued building a case for the purchase of a church structure and added with conviction if not actual evidence, "I believe this City of Roanoke is the only city in the United States this size that does not have a colored Episcopalian church building." Hutsona concluded his proposal with a pledge to raise the \$4,000 necessary to purchase a suitable building.

During a February 1, 1943 meeting to discuss Hutsona's proposal, the Rev. Somers noted that thirteen of those who constituted the current congregation of St. Luke's were members of Hutsona's family. Hutsona's response was that there were a number of "substantial colored people" who would return to or join the Episcopal Church if there were an actual church to

²⁸⁴ Box 67, Folder 32, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

join.²⁸⁶ The Executive Board and the bishop considered the building purchase, ultimately determining to pursue a location but stopping short of acting immediately. On May 1, 1943, Bishop Phillips wrote to Hutsona saying, “You must realize that the beginning of a real work among the colored people in Roanoke involves a great deal more than simply buying a piece of property on which there is a church.” The action taken by the Executive Board and bishop was to call for a survey to determine interest as a way forward. The bishop wrote:

My own feeling in the matter is that the Diocese is interested in the work among the colored people. I am personally convinced that there is no use to undertake to do any work among the colored people unless there is a desire on their part to respond and to actively carry a responsibility. Services have been held in Roanoke from time to time over a number of years. Until there is an interest on the part of colored people who are willing to undergo preparation and training to be received into the Episcopal Church I do not believe it would be wise to launch upon any scheme or plan which would require an outlay of money.²⁸⁷

The March/April 1945 edition of the *Southwestern Episcopalian* reported that three members from the Diocese of Virginia had transferred to St. Luke’s. The next edition issued news of the Rev. Somers’ retirement on May 1, 1945. Following Somers’ retirement, lay leaders took charge in Lynchburg and Bedford, with assistance from neighboring clergy, including the retired but ill Somers. There is no mention of continuing services at St. Luke’s during this period.

²⁸⁶ Thomas A. Scott, Meeting Minutes, Box 78, Folder 57, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁸⁷ Box 78, Folder 57, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The Rev. Cornelius B. Dawson

By 1947, new leadership renewed the activities of the parish. The Rev. Cornelius B. Dawson resumed services on March 30, 1947, which was Palm Sunday. Dawson was to be assisted by the lay leadership of Dr. Maurice Johnson. The *Southwestern Episcopalian* reported that “[s]everal projects have been sponsored by the Mission with minor success” including a win in the “B” city basketball championship.²⁸⁸ Later that year, however, Dr. Johnson sent a schedule for October, November, and December to the Rev. Dawson. Dawson was slated to lead services on the second Sunday of each month. The remaining dates showed no leadership, with the exception of the Rev. Norman Slater scheduled on October 26, but his name was followed by question marks and he indicated that the date was tentative “as he expects a Youth Conference to meet in Roanoke that week-end.”²⁸⁹ Johnson, as the lay reader, licensed by the bishop to conduct services,²⁹⁰ also indicated that he would be away for two Sundays in October and one in November. Johnson concluded his letter with a three-pronged lament and a request:

Without (1) a regular schedule; (2) an ordained man on the ground; (3) a church; it is hard for a Layman to increase the membership or to hold those already interested.

The Congregation requests that you appear with the Committee to present this pitiable situation and outline a workable program for St. Luke’s.²⁹¹

Parochial reports listed St. Luke’s as vacant from 1950 to 1952. The 1953-54 parochial reports listed the rector of neighboring St. John’s, the Rev. Richard R. Beasley, D.D., as the priest.

²⁸⁸ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 29, no. 8 (1948): 12-13.

²⁸⁹ Box 78, Folder 57, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

²⁹⁰ Lay leaders can lead Morning Prayer but may not preside over the Holy Eucharist.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

During this time, members determined to find a church home in order to secure their future. To begin raising funds for a church building, the members of St. Luke's held a fundraiser in early 1954. The event, a performance of *The Mikado*, grossed \$1,885.35 and netted \$1,219.78 to augment the St. Luke's building fund.²⁹²

St. Paul's, Martinsville: Clergy leadership, 1942-1968

1942-44	Charles L. Somers
1945-46	Vacant
1947-49	The Rev. Cornelius R. Dawson
1950-51	Vacant
1952-56	Turner Wesley Morris
1957-62	Vacant
1963-64	William D. Henderson, Priest-in-Charge
1965	Duke Harrison, Lay Minister
1966	Carlos A. Loop, Priest-in-Charge
1967	Vacant
1968	Arthur A. Brown, Supply Priest

St. Paul's stands as an exception to the norm in the realm of black Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia for two reasons: 1) its reason for coming into existence; and 2) its continued existence today. St. Paul's, as it stands today, was consecrated on April 17, 1955, but the church was initiated in 1940 when Dr. L. A. Vickers, a Martinsville dentist, put in a formal request for an Episcopal Church plant in the black community. The signatures of 14 other leaders in the black community substantiated Dr. Vickers' request. What makes this request notable is that unlike the other churches in Southwestern Virginia, and indeed in other dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church, is that Dr. Vickers was requesting a church that would afford opportunities to members of the black community—the church was not a mere act of beneficence on the part of a parent white church. Like the black congregations in Bedford,

²⁹² Box 87, Folder 36, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Lynchburg, and Roanoke, the congregation in Martinsville had a number of highly educated members and those in white collar professions such as teachers, insurance agents, and those in the medical field.²⁹³ The 1942 *Southwestern Episcopalian* recounts Dr. Vickers' request and reports that when Bishop Phillips asked why "the colored people" wanted a separate church of their own, the response was "that they had come to the conclusion that the church would give them the kind of leadership which they needed and were not receiving."²⁹⁴

Vickers, a graduate of Tufts, had come to the thriving tobacco town of Martinsville from Boston to establish his dental practice some ten years prior to his request to Bishop Phillips. Originally from Barbados, Vickers' association with the Episcopal Church began when the newly immigrated Vickers family, which included the eleven-year-old Vickers, found their way to a nearby Episcopal Church, thus creating in him a lifelong affinity for a way of worship. Once established in Martinsville, and now a professional man, married and with a family of his own, Vickers "having been accustomed to the Episcopal service, ... wasn't as pleased with the services that he saw in the other churches [...so] he decided to go to the Diocese."²⁹⁵

Bishop Phillips responded to the petition by meeting with potential organizers. At this meeting in the fall of 1940, "Bishop Phillips made it perfectly plain that if a mission was to be established there the members must plan as far as possible to be independent in the matter of finances." The bishop also called upon the group to spend a year studying the Bible and the Episcopal Church as a way of preparing, and ostensibly demonstrating their commitment to the church plant. Of the three-fold financial, intellectual, and spiritual commitment, Bishop Phillips

²⁹³ William Vickers, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, February 12, 2015, Martinsville, Virginia; Notes and transcripts of interviews included in Appendix D: Oral Histories.

²⁹⁴ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 22, no. 1 (1942): 9.

²⁹⁵ Vickers, interview.

said, “You must be self-respecting, and you cannot be self-respecting if you do not put forth your best efforts in giving all that you can toward your own self support and are not interested in the general missionary work of the Church.”²⁹⁶

The year’s study commenced under the leadership of the black school principal and Dr. Vickers, with the principal in charge of Bible class and Vickers, aided by the rector of Christ Church, taking the lead with introduction to the Episcopal Church. St. Paul’s history shares December 7, 1941 as a date of great importance. It was on this night that Bishop Phillips honored his promise and returned to the steadfast group, along with the Rev. Charles Somers, the only black priest in the diocese, as well as members from Martinsville’s Christ Church and the Christ Church organist, who provided the music.²⁹⁷ The *Southwestern Episcopalian* reports that “A full evening was rendered, with a vested choir, and the congregation, in addition to those who were to be confirmed, [and] had been rehearsed in the service.”²⁹⁸ The burgeoning congregation had pledged to raise \$1,000 to begin a church building fund as well as contributing more than \$200 for the operation of the church in the coming year. Bishop Phillips confirmed fifteen adults, described in the *Southwestern Episcopalian* as “a most interesting class...all adults—ten men and five women, all representing the highest type of their race in the community: seven teachers, a physician, and others substantially identified with business of various kinds.”²⁹⁹ In addition to the fifteen confirmed, a second class was formed to begin preparations for the next confirmation. The bishop named the Rev. Somers as rector, placing him in charge of all four of the black congregations as the lone black priest in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. The newly formed congregation elected wardens and a treasurer. The name of St. Paul’s Mission

²⁹⁶ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 22, no. 1 (1942): 9.

²⁹⁷ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 22, no. 1 (1942): 9; Vickers.

²⁹⁸ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 22, no. 1 (1942): 9.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

“was given to the church as expressing the missionary interest of the layman who was so active in making the organization possible.”³⁰⁰ The report of the January 1942 *Southwestern Episcopalian*, headlined “Colored Mission a Self Starter,” concluded with the observation that “there is every indication that this new congregation has begun its work on a solid basis and will make steady and successful progress.”³⁰¹ A not-quite post script that concludes the article seems to pronounce the certainty of success with this dress-for-success assurance: “And—the people have had a tailor take the measurements of their minister so they can present him with a new clerical suit at Christmas.”

By May 1942, the *Southwestern Episcopalian* reported “splendid results of the Baby Contest at St. Paul’s Mission,” a fundraiser, which netted around \$150 to add to the building fund, bringing the total collected to about \$200. Parishioners contributed \$100 to monthly expenses. The report observed that “communicants are very zealous at this time.”³⁰²

A number of communicants were officially added to the church’s roster of confirmed persons during the bishop’s visit on January 2, 1944. The *Southwestern Episcopalian* included the following:

[New members were] Mrs. Lethia Vickers, wife of Dr. L. A. Vickers, Mrs. Evelyn Screen, wife of Robert L. Screen, Doctor R. L. Screen, and Miss Ethel Eaton. Also added to the membership was Mrs. Lloyd Alexander, whose husband is an Episcopalian minister at present a chaplain in the armed forces.

³⁰⁰ Ibid

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 22, no. 5 (1942): 2.

These constitute a very substantial growth from the mission. The membership is very active and paid their assessment and Field pledge in full.³⁰³ Parochial reports substantiated the claim of growth, indicating a move from 16 to 27 confirmed persons between the years of 1943 and 1945.³⁰⁴

A year later, Vickers wrote to the diocesan treasurer, reminding him that “at the time the mission was inaugurated the Bishop made the observation that for the first year the mission would be spared the burden of the Diocesan and field expense assessment [as long as] we looked after the Priest’s salary and living expense and the Church Pension Fund account.” Vickers continued noting that “Of the fifteen (15) persons confirmed we have lost to the Army, National Defense, and colleges ten (10)” but closed on the optimistic note that St. Luke’s “intended to carry on as long as one or two remain.”³⁰⁵

Illness sent the Rev. Somers into retirement in 1945, the same spring that St. Paul’s was officially recognized as an organized mission in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Lay leadership took charge of church activities. The Rev. Somers contributed to the occasional rotation of clergy who led Sunday services, as did Army chaplain, the Rev. Lloyd Alexander, whose wife was among the first of those confirmed at St. Paul’s in 1940.

Despite St. Paul’s lack of a rector, the congregants continued to meet weekly in the home of Mrs. Mary E. McDaniel, who served as the treasurer from the first election in 1942 until 1947. The emerging congregation at St. Paul’s represented an engaged and active number of participants, many of whom were active members of the community and counted among their

³⁰³ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 24, no. 2 (1944): 2, 10.

³⁰⁴ *Journal of Diocese: Southwestern Virginia*. Parochial Reports, 1942, 1944.

³⁰⁵ L. A. Vickers to Thomas A. Scott, 19 January 194, Box 67, Folder 30, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

numbers respected teachers, doctors, dentists, and businessmen, all of whom were “taking deep interest in the church work, and making fine progress in meeting their expenses and obligations.”³⁰⁶ Focus continued on a church building and in early 1945, St. Paul’s purchased a lot and began to prepare for the construction of a church building.

The Rev. Cornelius Dawson

Dawson took some time determining his decision to leave his post in Charlottesville. Initial inquiries began before the summer months and concluded after visits to Martinsville and Lynchburg, where he met with lay leaders, supporting clergy of nearby white parishes, and the bishop. On August 16, 1946, Dawson wrote Bishop Phillips with the news of his acceptance:

My dear Bishop Phillips;

Thanks for the offer you made me sometime ago and I can see that it is a great challenge for me for Christ. I have talked with Bishop Mason [suffragan bishop of Virginia] about it who states to me that when I am sure only then will he say “go”.

Here we have a plant:--church, hall and home for minister as against holding evening prayer in Mrs. McDaniel’s home on Sunday August 11. I joyed in the holding of the service under such conditions as I have done before but, as you said, it must not be for the few.

What plan can we present to the people that something might be started as not to be too long in our ingathering of the people? We want to get away from the idea that it is for the select few which idea might easily hold if we continue to

³⁰⁶ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 25, no. 4 (1942): 2.

have our meetings under such conditions as are now in existence. We do hope you see our point in what might seem a too pointed question to you.

I was happy to have talked at length with Mr. Fishburne who offered his help to the mission.

I have secured through Mr. Muse and Dr. Vickers quarters for living.

I am making plans for the first Sunday in November but would like to have some hope for a hall on the lot so as to house our church life as well as our social life.

Praying God's richest blessing upon our undertaking, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Cornelius R. Dawson³⁰⁷

In November of 1946, the Rev. Cornelius Dawson became the priest-in-charge at St. Paul's. By the close of the year, the bishop had requested support from the National Council of the Episcopal Church. In his request, dated December 30, 1946, the bishop submitted the following request:

I am writing to you now to ascertain if it would be at all possible for you to consider making a grant of a few thousand dollars to a most promising Negro work in Martinsville, Virginia. The Negroes petitioned me a short time before the war to authorize the starting of Episcopal work among them. This I did. It was one of the most unusual things of my own personal experience or even knowledge

³⁰⁷ Box 75, Folder 39, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

the way this work was started and carried on by very high toned Negro lay men and lay women.³⁰⁸

The December 30, 1946 letter from Bishop Phillips to Dr. Lewis Franklin, Treasurer of the National Council, contained eight paragraphs. Much of the content described the congregants. The bishop used the word “unusual” three times. He detailed the commitment of the congregation, noting that “One of the young men became an aviator and went out with the first squadron from Tuskegee and served with distinction on the Mediterranean Theatre. Before leaving the States, he gave \$500.00 from his pay to the Episcopal Church.” Bishop Phillips continued to describe the body as a whole:

This is one of the most unusual situations, as I have said before, that I have known of in work among the colored people. In the congregation are doctors with college education; teachers and business men, and there is no disposition to make this a “snooty” Negro church. They are interested in the uplift of their race. They attend to their affairs in a businesslike way and move with dispatch and aggressiveness.³⁰⁹

Bishop Phillips closed the letter with an acknowledgement of his own attitude and a revelation about his character: “I do not want to seem to be fulsome in my remarks but you know I am not inclined too much ‘to go out on a limb’ so if you can help me with this matter I believe it will be the means of getting some Negro work started not only in Martinsville but elsewhere in the Diocese on a firm basis.”³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Box 78, Folder 46, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

Lewis Franklin responded to the Bishop's request acknowledging that "This certainly looks like an interesting piece of work" and complimented "the splendid way in which these people have started to provide for their own needs."³¹¹ Dr. Franklin redirected the bishop to Dr. Weiland and the Rev. Dr. Caution, who received "all requests for Negro work in the U.S.A."³¹² The formal request that emerged with a date of February 10, 1947, follows:

RESOLVED: That the sum of Five Thousand (5000) Dollars be allocated from the Reconstruction and Advance Fund to assist the congregation of St. Paul's Church at Martinsville, Virginia, in the erection of a new church building.

EXPLANATION

This situation is unique. A few years ago a group of Negro people in Martinsville petitioned the Bishop for the establishment of a Mission. This was not a pampered group, but one which had to prove its sincerity and worth to the Bishop. The present number of communicants is 24.

The local congregation has raised \$3,100 and has purchased a very well located lot for \$1,100. There is not (since November) a priest in charge. The Diocese is investing \$5,000 in this project—the local people approximately the same amount. The asking from us is for \$5,000.

Bishop Phillips expects this work to become self supporting in the near future. An excellent use of Reconstruction and Advance Funds.³¹³

³¹¹ Lewis Franklin to Bishop Phillips, 2 January 1947, Box 78, Folder 46, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

By way of a letter dated February 13, 1947, the bishop received news that the National Council “heartily approved the project.”³¹⁴

The group persisted in plans for a church building. At one point, the diocese considered purchasing a pre-existing chapel and was contacted by the War Assets Administration Office with notice of two chapels for sale at Camp Patrick Henry in Warwick County, Virginia. The chapels were to be “sold intact for removal from the land on which they are located” within thirty days of purchase.³¹⁵ Plans to build, however, were underway by February. In a letter dated February 22, 1947, the bishop wrote Dr. Wieland to say, “Architects’ sketches are about complete and we will soon have an estimate by contractors.”³¹⁶ He further observed: “This is a terrible time to build but the circumstances are such that we will have to complete or partially complete this building if possible or else we will stand a chance of losing ground.”³¹⁷

Smithey & Boynton Architects and Engineers in Roanoke completed and revised sketches. In mid-March, the firm sent “revised preliminary sketch plans and exterior of the proposed colored Episcopal Church in Martinsville” along with plans to enlist contractors B. F. Parrott & Co. to begin building.³¹⁸

Bishop Phillips eventually settled on building the church in two stages, beginning with the parish house, which was constructed in what would become the lower level of the church. In October of 1947, the bishop explains the two-step process in a letter to the Rev. Wieland in New York:

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Letter from H. Edward Briel, Chief, Non-Industrial Real Property Division, War Assets Administration, Box 78, Folder 46, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

³¹⁶ Box 78, Folder 46, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

The best bid that I have been able to get from reliable contractors is \$41,000.00. I can build just the parish house for \$24,000.00 but because of the lay of the ground it will not make too imposing a structure with a temporary roof, which would be a few feet above the street level.³¹⁹

Building ensued soon after, though only of the lower level. In his note dated November 14, 1947 to Mr. H. B. Muse, the treasurer of St. Paul's, the bishop wrote: "I went by our lot on my way from the meeting of the House of Bishops in Winston-Salem, and was very happy to see how vigorously the contractor was going to work upon our church building."³²⁰ This church building was completed in 1948 and would become known, for a time, as the Flat-top Church.³²¹

Dawson left Martinsville for Washington, D.C. in 1949. His final service was on November 27. In a letter to a moving company on his behalf, treasurer Tom Scott includes this postscript in a request for moving services to George Johnston of Mayflower Transit Co., with a copy of the letter to Dawson:

Dear George: This is a Negro clergyman, which explains his not having more furniture, etc. No, that's wrong. He just had a small apartment in Martinsville. I believe he said most of his things are stored in Philadelphia. He of course will arrange with you about the cost. I am just writing him for you.³²²

Scott also suggested that the move take place with some expedience, noting that Dawson "certainly ought to be at home and untroubled on Saturday December 3rd so he can get up a splendid sermon for Sunday [at his new church]." Dawson replied by postcard with his thanks

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Vickers, interview.

³²² Box 81, Folder 59, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

but said he had already lined up another mover. He included “many thanks for the kindness” and signed the letter “Grateful to you.”³²³

While the relationship between the diocese and Dawson seemed friendly, if paternalistic, a letter from the St. Paul’s Senior Warden to the Bishop nearly a year and a half after Dawson’s departure revealed tensions at the level of the congregation. On May 19, 1951, the warden wrote: “A faithful few [at St. Paul’s] have striven to overcome the great damage which the lazy and irresponsible Dawson left behind.”³²⁴ He further cited Dawson’s tenure at St. Paul’s as one of twin blows dealt to the young congregation but expressed hope in what lay ahead:

Bishop, we have had two trying experiences since our building was erected—first the sojourn of Dawson, and second, the death of Vickers. Both have served to test the strength and foundation on which we exist. We are weathering the storm and are confident of our future.³²⁵

The arrival of the Rev. Turner Wesley Morris from South Carolina and the completion of the church structure in 1955 would give enduring life to St. Paul’s.

On the Cusp

The building tide in Southwestern Virginia, swelled by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Bishop Marmion’s election, the cultural turn, and the plans for diocesan summer camps, crested in 1957. To this point, as evidenced by the history and proclaimed by the archival narratives of St. Philip’s, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, St. Luke’s, and St. Paul’s, the black churches were small and often struggling—for members, for leadership, for financial

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Box 84, Folder 77, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

³²⁵ Ibid.

stability. Finding black clergy to lead the black churches was a challenge, and yet black priests—though by all indications held to an educational standard equal to that of white peers—were not considered equal. A kind but paternalistic tone pervades the correspondence from both Bishops Jett and Phillips (and also from diocesan treasurer Thomas Scott) to the black clergy. The tone to other clergy varies in degrees of formality. Also glaring, as noted in this chapter, is the absence of records or folders in the diocese. It is possible that such records existed at some point, although there is no evidence pointing to such records. In either event—an absence of records or the subsequent disposal of them—the omission of folders containing records for any black priest who served under the first three bishops of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia leaves a gaping hole in the diocesan history.

As we leave the four black churches here at the very perimeter of Bishop Marion's entrance into the diocese, we leave a time that will be disrupted. The trajectory of these four churches will continue after a discussion of the interruption of Hemlock Haven. It is at this juncture that the status quo will become upended. The time of separate white churches led by white priests and black churches led by black priests has very nearly come to a close. A new place, what Bhabha calls "the place of splitting," is in sight.

Chapter 3

Integration

The Caesura—Hemlock Haven—1957 to 1959

The interruption—the caesura—in the trajectory of the road to racial unity in the diocese is the clanging cymbal of discord that erupted around the desegregation of the diocesan conference center, Hemlock Haven. The controversy over Hemlock Haven marked a shift in time—and in thinking—that viewed retrospectively makes it a clear demarcation of a *before* and *after*. It is what Bhabha calls, in his description of the process of identification, the “space of splitting.”³²⁶ In his introduction to *Location of Culture*, Bhabha suggests that “[t]he social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation.”³²⁷ The caesura of Hemlock Haven unfolds as a conflict in the white world. As this chapter will reveal, Hemlock Haven’s *persistence* in history as claimed from the white perspective, together with the *absence* of black voices and memories of the conflict, contribute to the complicity of the moment in the race-relations quagmire of the diocese. Bhabha calls upon Fanon to tease apart the underpinnings of the pre- and post-segregation era hegemony in a way that may be useful in understanding the Hemlock Haven caesura: “Fanon uses the fact of blackness, of belatedness, to destroy the binary structure of power and identity: the imperative that ‘the Black man must be Black; he must be Black in relation to the white man.’”³²⁸ In some sense, Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness becomes magnified in the context of this liminal space of splitting. Blacks, once marginalized into quadrants of actual geography or in margins on a page,

³²⁶ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge [1994] 2007), 63.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 340.

segmented apart from mainstream, are newly thrust into shared space where difference (Derrida's "différance") sharpens the imbalance in the stark contrast of bas relief—in close proximity, the contours all the more palpable. Bhabha, again citing Fanon, recognizes “the white man as universal, normative” and says of the other: “the black man refuses to occupy the past of which the white man is the future.”³²⁹ Hemlock Haven and the integration of the diocese are a history of the white future into which blacks entered. The controversy is the caesura marking the point from which time henceforth would reverberate. It is the enunciative *now*, the moment of transference, of transformation, of identity.

Integration

A year into his episcopacy, during the 1955 Diocesan Council, Bishop Marmion announced plans for a camp and conference center and for a “Unit of Research—Study for Southwestern Virginia,” which he said would be “popularly called the Diocesan Survey.”³³⁰ Marmion set out to gain an understanding of the diocese in his care by commissioning a comprehensive study of the congregations and localities in his charge. The result was a voluminous report, housed in five three-inch binders, reporting extensive data for each of the representative counties and metropolitan areas in the geographic third of the state of Virginia, along with the detailed information on each of the approximately 70 congregations in the Diocese.³³¹

³²⁹ Ibid., 341.

³³⁰ *Journal of the Annual Council, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 195.*, 6.

³³¹ *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

In his address at Council, Marmion said that the study would “reveal more clearly to us our whole diocesan situation and give documented facts on which to build our program for the future.” In the same address, Marmion also commented on race relations.

The segment of his address that dealt with race revealed a careful rhetorical strategy. Marmion opened the segment with information of a recent resolution from the Anglican Congress, a gathering of the larger body of Christians in which Episcopalians claim membership. The resolution put forward to the worldwide Anglican Communion (of which the Episcopal Church represents a small percentage) was “to the effect that people of all races and cultures should be welcome to attend any service of any church in the Anglican Communion.”³³² After marshaling the power of some 40 million Anglicans, Bishop Marmion invoked the House of Bishops, General Convention, and the Provincial Synod—three governing bodies in the Episcopal Church, in descending order of ecclesiastical heft. Marmion reminded the clergy and lay leaders at Council of the collective “stand against racial discrimination.” He also invoked God (“All of us stand under God’s judgment”) and the Supreme Court of the United States (“which establish[ed] the illegality of segregation in our public schools”). With the secure foundation of the position of God, the Supreme Court, the church in the context of region (province), nation (General Convention), and world (Anglican Communion), Marmion put forth the problem saying, “Obviously, we have much to do by way of implementing these sentiments on the diocesan and local levels.” Bishop Marmion’s dictum was clear: “The official policy of the diocese ... is to make no distinction because of race or color.”³³³ The careful strategy of Marmion’s address pointed to his awareness of possible—even probable—resistance to the church’s movement into an era of integration.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

Although the “Unit of Research” Marmion introduced in his 1955 Address to Council had a broad scope that went beyond race relations, the topic was clearly relevant. That same year, Marmion was named to the Board of Directors of the newly formed Virginia Council on Human Relations, a non-profit organization whose aim it was “to bring wisdom, light, and understanding to bear on the multiplying problems of adjustment in matters of race.”³³⁴ The ambitious undertaking of the diocesan study involved a great many people in the diocese, as evidenced by the introduction and acknowledgments of the published study results. The introduction opened with the acknowledgment that “information has been gathered in the Study...and is the result of cooperation from the Bishop, many of the clergy, and the teams of laymen and lay women who worked together to accomplish a study of all of the parishes and missions of the Diocese.”³³⁵ In addition to listing Bishop Marmion; the Rev. Willis C. Henderson, Administrative Assistant; and Mr. Thomas Martin, Chairman of the Survey, the acknowledgements included a listing of 20 District Commissioners and “especial mention...[of] the contribution of the working staff of the Unit of Research,” a list of 17, bearing titles such as secretary, statistician, and production chief.³³⁶ In scope, the research included detailed information on each of the counties and municipalities in the diocese and on each of the nearly 70 parishes and missions, organized by convocation or region. For example, Section I of the Roanoke County segment opened with a description of the area’s parishes and missions. This section title was similar the other section titles: “Location, Growth, or Loss of the Episcopal Churches in the Metropolitan Area of Roanoke.” The largest of the areas was Roanoke County,

³³⁴ Letter from W. Carroll Brooke, Box 88, Folder 99, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

³³⁵ *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

³³⁶ Ibid.

which had at this time three parishes and two missions, one of which was St. Luke's. Lynchburg, home to Chapel of the Good Shepherd, was the second largest area. It had two parishes and two missions. Both Bedford and Martinsville had one parish and one mission.³³⁷

Each report extrapolated data and made recommendations for every parish or mission. All sections opened with "General Data on the County" and "Summary of the County." The six areas covered for every parish and mission in the diocese were:

1. The Church, Neighborhood, and Congregation
2. Summary of the Self Survey Report
3. Church School Report
4. Membership Distribution and Vital Statistics
5. Data on the Congregation
6. Recommendations³³⁸

The collected data, the existence of the four black churches in Bedford, Lynchburg, Roanoke, and Martinsville, and the nature of the recommendations perpetuated the assumption of separate worship facilities for blacks and whites in 1956 in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

Demographic data illustrated potential for growth. The collected data in Table 1 shows the reported demographics of non-whites and whites in the areas of the Diocese's four black churches. Table 2 records the numbers of Episcopalians in each area. Baptized members are those who were recorded as recipients of the sacrament of baptism, either in infancy or at an older age, regardless of church attendance. Communicants are understood as those who were affiliated with a church by attendance, regardless of recorded record of baptism. The category of Church School records those who attended for educational purposes either during the week or on

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

Sundays. Table 3 shows the number of communicants in the four black churches. All reports show increases in the number of both white and non-white Episcopalians from 1950 to 1955, but the two older churches, St. Philip's and Chapel of the Good Shepherd, both were described as weak congregations, whereas St. Luke's and St. Paul's were described primarily in terms of their potential. The latter two had in their favor a growing black community as indicated in Table 1. St. Luke's and St. Paul's also had more sustained energy from a priest, who was serving both parishes at the time of the survey.

Table 1. Demographic Data for Black Churches and their Localities, 1940 and 1950

Reported number of non-whites	1940	1950	% change		Reported number of whites	1940	1950	% change
Bedford County ³³⁹	6,348	5,624	-11.4%		Bedford County	29,687	29,627	-0.2%
Town of Bedford ³⁴⁰ (St. Philip's)	922	773	-16.1%		Town of Bedford	3,051	3,288	7.8%
Metropolitan Lynchburg ³⁴¹	10,236	10,480	2.4%		Metropolitan Lynchburg	34,305	37,247	8.6%
Immediate Community ³⁴² (Good Shepherd)	6,724	6,846	1.8%		Immediate Community	Not reported	Not reported	NR: (Not included in report)
City of Roanoke ³⁴³ (St. Luke's)	12,815	14,592	13.9%		City of Roanoke	69,287	91,921	32.7%
Henry County ³⁴⁴ (Including Martinsville)	9,201	12,615	37.1%		Henry County (including Martinsville)	36,561	48,470	32.6%

³³⁹ *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956, 288.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 297.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 383.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 389.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 726.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 589.

Table 2. Episcopalians by Area

Reported number of Episcopalians	1930	1940	1950	1955	Percent change from 1930 to 1955	Percent change from 1950 to 1955
Bedford ³⁴⁵						
baptized members	324	371	408	468	44.4%	14.7%
communicants	288	230	283	288	--	1.8%
church school	122	94	88	130	6.6%	47.7%
Lynchburg ³⁴⁶						
baptized members	1,511	1,782	1,800	2,067	36.8%	14.8%
communicants	1,187	1,353	1,422	1,543	30%	8.5%
church school	726	683	675	831	14.5%	23.1%
Roanoke Co. ³⁴⁷						
baptized members	2,234	2,346	3,174	3,105	39%	[-2.17] ³⁴⁸
communicants	1,722	1,724	2,199	2,489	42%	[13.18]
church school	736	706	695	1,289	[75.13]	[85.46]
Henry Co. ³⁴⁹						
baptized members	125	200	387	530	324%	37%
communicants	98	163	318	354	261.2%	11.3%
church school	62	50	168	250	303.2%	48.8%

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 287.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 314.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 724.

³⁴⁸ Percentages in brackets not provided but calculated based on available figures.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 588.

Table 3. Membership of Black Churches, 1935 to 1955

Number of baptized members	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
St. Philip's ³⁵⁰	21	19	17	8	15
Good Shepherd ³⁵¹	40	50	56	28	40
St. Luke's ³⁵²	12	14	10 ³⁵³	10	36
St. Paul's ³⁵⁴	NA	NA	27	37	56

Recommendations for the Future

The outlook for St. Philip's was bleak. According to the Unit of Research Report, Bedford recorded a 2.2% increase in overall population between 1940 and 1950 (3,973 to 4,061) but a 16.1% decrease in the non-white population. The report tallied 15 members of St. Philip's at the time of the report and commented that there was no longer a Church School, although in 1930, 36 children were enrolled, with a slight increase in 1940 (See Table 2). In 1956, St. Philip's was being served by the Rev. Beale, rector of neighboring St. John's. The recommendation of the study group opened with the following statement:

St. Philip's has very little strength. This is partly due to the declining non-white population in Bedford and also due to the depressed economic circumstances of

³⁵⁰ *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956, 317.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 396.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 789.

³⁵³ The Study Report records numbers from 1930, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955. The report records "N.R." for 1945 but my research of parochial reports (see Appendix B) lists 10 baptized members in 1945.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 621.

the non-white population in Bedford. However, another factor has been that of neglect by the stronger churches and by the Diocese.³⁵⁵

The recommendations continued to suggest that the neighboring parish of St. John's take on St. Philip's as a "parochial mission" and its rector formally assume duties as priest-in-charge. The parish of St. John's was called upon to "do everything possible to aid the organizational development of St. Philip's." The recommendation further commented on the evangelical benefit of this action, noting that "this type of cooperation can become a good witness for the Episcopal Church in this area."³⁵⁶ The final recommendation was to make use of support from Lynchburg, "if and when the Diocese places a non-white clergyman" in the neighboring town.

The St. John's report similarly included mention of aid to St. Philip's in its list of recommendations. The report observed that it "is not a sign of spiritual strength when St. Philip's Church is so weak in the same community with a church as strong as St. John's." In addition to aid, "[w]henver possible, joint meetings should be held and the strength within St. John's should be brought to bear upon the problems at St. Philip's Church." Although at this point in 1956 no mention was made of combining the congregations, the St. John's recommendations suggested that "[t]he two churches working together must form a united witness in Bedford Town and in the county."³⁵⁷

The Unit of Research report deemed Chapel of the Good Shepherd in Lynchburg unstable and offered recommendations for improvement. The "weak congregation" was the result of a membership that had been in decline despite a small (1.8%) increase in the non-white population between 1940 and 1950. According to the report, the non-white community may have peaked

³⁵⁵ "St. Philip's," *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956, 319.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 309.

“[u]nless socioeconomic factors in Lynchburg change.”³⁵⁸ Membership at Good Shepherd reached a high point around 1945, with 56 members, and had dropped steeply in subsequent years. By the time of the report, the number of baptized members had rebounded to 40 (See Table 3). The report set forth four recommendations, prefaced by an overall assessment: “This is a very weak congregation. The membership has been declining here for a number of years and at the present time the Church of the Good Shepherd needs a great deal of help from outside sources.”³⁵⁹ The recommendations were to move forward with plans to improve the church building; to study community needs with particular emphasis on programming for youth; and for the diocese to place a priest at the church to serve the congregation and wider community.³⁶⁰

St. Luke’s in Roanoke was noted as being in a prime location for growth. The report described the area near St. Luke’s as one that was “becoming one of the best residential sections of the city for non-whites.”³⁶¹ The growth rate was rapid, tripling since 1935. The number of parishioners at the time of the report was 36, a marked increase over the 10 parishioners recorded in 1950 (See Table 3). The recommendations included attention to programming, especially for “young people and families in this neighborhood area” and an adequate parish house and accoutrements, such as prayer books, to accommodate programs for all ages. The report also called for work in the wider community to expand the reach of the Episcopal Church ministries, as well as a residential clergy person, rather than a shared priest-in-charge.³⁶²

³⁵⁸ “Chapel of the Good Shepherd,” *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 398.

³⁶¹ “Roanoke County,” *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

³⁶² “St. Luke’s Church,” *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

War efforts brought a DuPont nylon manufacturing plant to the factory town of Martinsville in 1941, leading to increases in the white and non-white populations at the remarkable rates of 71.1% and 150.8%, respectively.³⁶³ Similarly high increases were noted in the parish numbers at St. Paul's, with a 107% increase from the 27 baptized members in 1945 to 56 members in 1955 (See Table 3). Recommendations began with the suggestion of a Parish Study Group. The Study Group could then be tasked with overseeing program development, including calling a resident priest "trained in group work so that he can aid in the development and direction of a weekday and evening program for children and families"; expansion of the nursery to a full-time program; acquisition of equipment, such as a piano, a stove, playground equipment, a blackboard, and tables and chairs. The final recommendation was that St. Paul's and neighboring Christ Church partner to develop programs in the Martinsville community consistent with the needs of the people.³⁶⁴

The Unit of Research reports established a clear precedent at the beginning of Bishop Marmion's episcopacy to strengthen and sustain the four black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Within a decade, however, all but one would close. The years following the legal proclamation of integration, in tandem with a fiscal tendency to eliminate the non-fruit bearing branches, led to the seemingly progressive move of closing the black churches in order that "all might be one" in worship and as fellow parishioners. Of interest was the split narrative of white congregations still struggling with desegregation and black parishioners for whom the closing of their churches was seemingly understood only in terms of sustainability—not as racial reconciliation. The time was a step into the process of identification but perhaps unrecognizable

³⁶³ "Saint Paul's Church," *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

³⁶⁴ "Saint Paul's Church," *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 1956.

and unnamable by members of either the black or the white congregations. Arguably, both congregations experienced a sort of trauma: black congregations because their church homes were closing and they were shifting from a place of majority to being once again marginalized as minorities within the larger white populations; trauma to the white congregations came not at the arrival of the black members but at the divisiveness integration brought to the diocese and in many cases to their churches. Such moments in time, as conceptualized by Bhabha, defy enunciation, not because of a failure of memory but because of an inability to articulate the actuality of barbarism:

It's not that it is the unconscious inarticulacy of trauma...It is the conscious production of a form of speech, which at one level knows exactly the history, has the cause and explanation, but at another level almost cannot articulate it...Almost as if not the proposition but the positionality, the space of enunciation, resists making that statement.³⁶⁵

Thus, a critical piece in the life cycle of the black churches—and of the diocese—is the struggle over the racial integration of Hemlock Haven. It is this interruption that leads to growth and a movement—both backward and forward (or hither and thither)—in the history of racial integration of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

³⁶⁵ Bhabha, “On Global Memory”; Bhabha cites Claude Lanzmann’s documentary on the Holocaust and Giorgio Agamben’s work on witnessing.

The Caesura: Hemlock Haven

In 1957, the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia purchased a property near Marion to be used as a diocesan camp and conference center.³⁶⁶ Bishop Marmion issued the following statement at the May 15-17, 1958 Diocesan Council that expressed his intent for the integration of the conference center:

Many of us would prefer not to use the term integration in connection with our Church Conferences. That word in the minds of some people has the connotation of forced interracial mixing of large numbers of persons in public places. One can easily see that this is not the case when members of our diocesan family, young and old, meet together in the normal life and work of the Church.

Technically, however, this is integration and our people should know that there is not a diocesan council in the Episcopal Church that is not integrated. More and more of our Woman's Auxiliary and Laymen's meetings on various levels draw no color line.³⁶⁷

Pushback against desegregated use of the conference center ensued, and as a result of discussions and a failed resolution at the May Diocesan Council, a study commission was elected to explore the matter further. The commission was composed of 17 elected members, which included one woman and two black members, who were appointed by Bishop Marmion. The 19 members were charged with the study of the conference center's attendance policies. The appointment letter to committee members was dated June 3, 1958, a little over two weeks after the close of Council. Bishop Marmion's letter read as follows:

³⁶⁶ Box 90, Folder 31, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

³⁶⁷ *Journal of the Annual Council, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1959.*

To Members of the Study Commission

Dear Friends:

The Council of the Diocese meeting in Roanoke on May 15, 16, and 17, 1958, passed a resolution setting up a Commission to study the enrollment policy of our youth conferences and to make a report not later than February 1, 1959.

Pursuant to this resolution I am calling a meeting of this Commission to be held at Evans House in Roanoke on Wednesday, June 25, at 2:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting will be to elect a chairman and to decide how to carry out Council's directive.

Please let me know if you cannot attend. I hope everyone can be present. It is essential that at least a quorum be on hand.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Marmion³⁶⁸

The file of Dr. Dabney S. Lancaster contained the committee's correspondence. It reflects a great deal of lobbying for the position of chair. In those various letters of nomination, support, and wrangling, it was clear that the Commission represented people with varying viewpoints. Those opposed to integrated youth conferences clearly hoped for a candidate in the seat of power; those who were not opposed to integrating the conference center also positioned for a favorable candidate. For example, a letter from one committee member to another put forward two names and said: "I am advised that these gentlemen are already committed to Mr. Francis T.

³⁶⁸ Papers of Dr. Dabney S. Lancaster; I received a file folder from Dr. Lancaster's granddaughter, Elizabeth Lipscomb, PhD. Dr. Lipscomb is married to an Episcopal priest, the Rev. Lloyd Lipscomb. She went to high school with my father and was my freshman English professor at Randolph-Macon Woman's College.

West, who seems to be doing some campaigning for the chairmanship...[We] do not feel that Mr. West is suited for the chairmanship, which we would like to see filled without any division of the laymen.”³⁶⁹ Also in the folder are letters from people around the diocese speaking for or against the issue. As a brief example, in a letter dated June 17, 1958, one woman from Roanoke wrote:

We realize this topic brings forth honest differences of opinion, but we feel there is no human problem which cannot be solved by a Christian approach with a sincere desire to find a solution. In our own particular case, we have concluded that the position our Bishop and Clergy have taken is the one most acceptable to our Lord. As lay people we feel we should commend them and give them our support.³⁷⁰

The Commission Takes Action

By the beginning of July 1958, the Commission had assigned teams. Each of the “approximately 75 missions and parishes” in the diocese would receive a visit from one of the teams.³⁷¹ By mid-July, neighboring dioceses had been contacted in preparation for the distribution of a questionnaire, which sought to establish common practices regarding integration. The commission was interested in learning about attitudes toward integration according to ages and—importantly—gender. The questionnaire also asked about attendance figures. The questionnaire explained that the diocese had recently purchased a conference center

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

and was inquiring about policies for integration. The letter posed the following six questions to dioceses in adjacent states:

1. Does your diocese operate a summer camp?
2. Is your camp operated on a completely non-segregated basis?
3. What problems, if any, have you encountered?
4. If [your camp is not segregated] is there some segregation at different age levels?

If so, at what age levels?

5. Is there segregation on a sex basis? If so, at what age levels?

We would like to know the total number of white and of Negro communicants in your diocese. If the camp is integrated please indicate the attendance of whites and of Negroes at each age level. We would like to have the attendance figures for each of the past several years.³⁷²

Questionnaires went out quickly and responses from dioceses in Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, and Kentucky came steadily back. The visits to parishes were postponed until the fall, once the committee determined that the summer months would not be the ideal time to visit.

Parish visits, the results of the survey, and notes on conversations at the October 1958 General Convention in Miami informed the work of the Commission. When it came time for the members to prepare their report and make a recommendation to Council, as charged, they were deadlocked. The final resolution put forward in a memo dated March 16, 1959 read as follows:

³⁷² Ibid.

WHEREAS, this Commission has not been able to find any solution to the operation of Hemlock Haven which we feel would be acceptable to the majority of both the Laity and the Clergy,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That Hemlock Haven operate in 1959 as it was in 1958, and

Be it further resolved that a new Commission similar to the '58 Commission and elected in the same way continue to study the problem of race relations in the Diocese with emphasis on Hemlock Haven Conference Center and report to the 1960 Council thru the Executive Board.³⁷³

The March 18, 1959 Executive Board minutes include Minter Patterson and Walter Stephenson in attendance as representatives of the Study Commission. After presenting the proposed resolution to the Executive Board, the minutes report that “Mr. Patterson added that the Resolution offers no solution to the problem, but that the Study Commission feels it has done about all it can do.”³⁷⁴ According to the minutes, Stephenson also spoke, noting that the resolution “had two disadvantages: 1- set up no use-plan of Hemlock Haven for youth conferences[;] 2- puts off any settling of the issue and two advantages: 1-may help avoid an impasse in Council[;] 2- will give time for work toward a better solution.” The minutes then record the following comments, which were described as Stephenson’s “personal observations”:

[Because] neither side, in the Commission, seemed ready to compromise what each felt to be a matter of principle, that no real meeting of the minds appeared to be forthcoming; that perhaps we need what Bishop Goodwin of the Diocese of

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Executive Board minutes April 1954 to December 1958. Vault. Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

Virginia has described as a “period of reconciliation”; that no proposal for integration will get through Council; that no proposal for segregation will get through Council; that perhaps the Resolution as submitted by the Commission would get through Council without too much difficulty.³⁷⁵

The Executive Board spent some time in discussion over whether or not to establish a new Commission and how effective that would be given the “stalemate” of the original members. As chairman of the original Commission,

Patterson expressed confidence in the membership of the present Commission [commenting] that as a group they had been asked to solve a problem, in a year, that has never been solved [and] that a new Commission is not, automatically, going to come up with a solution which will be satisfactory to all concerned.³⁷⁶

Diocesan Chancellor³⁷⁷ C. Francis Cocke requested that “we do not continue to use this problem as a wedge which only stands to drive our people further apart” and suggested a “cooling-off period” as was being modeled in the Diocese of Virginia.³⁷⁸ Diocesan Missioner-Educator, B. Clifton Reardon, was asked to comment about the views of the youth in the diocese as they pertained to Hemlock Haven. Reardon conveyed the information that “in a straw-vote some 20-30 of them indicated they would be in favor of attending integrated conferences.”³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ Executive Board Minutes April 1954 to December 1958. Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia, 2.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

³⁷⁷ In this context, a chancellor is an attorney who handles legal concerns of the diocese and maintains the Canons and Constitution as governing documents.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

The minutes show that discussion ensued until a “a break for Lunch was declared at 1:00 p.m.”³⁸⁰ The Commission report was the second item of business; the first item was presentation and adoption of the proposed budget to put before Diocesan Council. The meeting began at 10:30 a.m. and concluded at 3:45 p.m., making it the longest running Executive Board meeting of 1959.³⁸¹ The presentation and discussion resulted in a slight adjustment to the Commission’s initial report. It included the inability of the Commission to come to a consensus, or even a majority rule, prompting a “majority report” in which the controversy was excavated in some detail. In his April 17, 1959 address to Council, Bishop Marmion said:

The tortuous path along which we have wound our way this past year has caused much soul searching and agony of spirit. Men’s hearts have failed them for fear; but others have been strangely warmed and strengthened. Under the devoted leadership of Mr. Minter Patterson the Diocesan Study Commission has wrestled with a knotty problem and honestly admitted their inability to solve it. But remember, man’s extremity is God’s opportunity. Perhaps we are at a point where we are ready for that light which comes only to the godly and for that guidance in judgment which only the meek can receive.³⁸²

Bishop Marmion continued with words of concern, interspersed with hope. Before concluding his Council address with a prayer, he offered this insight: “Nevertheless, brethren, I say to you that we must learn to live with the tension of these times which try men’s souls. No one person

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Papers; *Journal of the Annual Council, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1959.*

or group has brought this tension about. It is part of our inheritance from the past. It is inescapable.”³⁸³

The Final Poison

Hemlock Haven stands as an aptly named point of opposition. In the end, the conference center operated youth camps that were racially integrated but separated by age and gender (e.g. a camp for senior boys and a separate one for senior girls, etc.) This ruling on “integrated but separated by age and gender” followed a 1962 Special Council meeting at St. John’s in Roanoke.³⁸⁴ The decision in 1962 followed almost five years of wrangling in nearly every venue of diocesan conversation and consumed much time and energy of the clergy and laity. The 1960 Diocesan Council saw a total of 10 resolutions concerning integration at Hemlock Haven come to the floor for discussion, only to fail.

In her history of St. John’s,³⁸⁵ Clare White described the toll the controversy took on the diocese:

In the many debates . . . clergy and lay delegates found themselves always at odds, thus preventing any action as the canons of the church require a majority in both branches for any resolution to take place. The operation of Hemlock Haven’s youth activities took center stage at Diocesan Councils for [several] years with debate often acrimonious and taking up more and more time at the meetings.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Clare White, *St. John's Episcopal Church, Roanoke, Virginia*. Roanoke, Virginia: The Church, 1992, 143-144; and *Bishop William H. Marmion Papers*.

³⁸⁵ St. John’s Roanoke is the largest church in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

³⁸⁶ White, *St. John's*, 143.

It was, of course, the fixed point under which lay the larger layer of the entire construct of race and power. In the “violence” of the emerging controversy between 1959 and 1962, Hemlock Haven becomes what Bhabha describes as a *caesura*, an interruption. It has transcended its place in time so that it is no longer merely place, but also symbol, signifier, “chapati” (to borrow Bhabha’s image from Ranajit Guha). Hemlock Haven is the “enunciative now”—the boundary differentiating the past from the present. The diocesan conference center—a proposed place of community and fellowship—became the symbolically violent battlefield of a waged war, a symptom of a larger ill.

A central fear, as it turned out, was really one of miscegenation. The real cause of the controversy did not come to light until several years beyond the initial point of friction: “Only in 1962 was the underlying fear of the laity brought into the open: the lay delegates voiced their primary objection as the chance of intermarriage.”³⁸⁷

Two Sides, One Voice

From the outset of the introduction of the question, clergy and laity sorted themselves, for the most part, into opposing sides. Certainly there were exceptions on both sides, but for the most part, the men in collars (and they were all men in the 1950s and 60s) supported integration and the men in the pews (men were the only ones to vote at Diocesan Council) were opposed to it.

At issue was whether or not whites wanted to integrate the diocesan conference center. The historical representation of the controversy offers two clear viewpoints: those for integration and those opposed to it. Contained within these two points of view are multiple and far-reaching

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

subtexts. While the diocesan struggle was deemed newsworthy, the subaltern narrative is largely silent in the numerous newspaper accounts and two televised news stories of the controversy as well as in diocesan accounts and records. In this unusual place of what Bhabha would describe as cultural anomie, the “disjunctive narrative” is one belonging to whites only.³⁸⁸

In the context of the historical moment, black voices are present in limited form. The initial Commission elected and charged with the study of the question of whether or not to integrate included two black representatives appointed by the Bishop. Thus, there was at least black representation on the Commission, if not actual *voice*.

A second place black voices emerge is in the results of the parish balloting conducted by the Commission. Each parish or mission was asked to respond to the following questions. Of the 9,557 communicants in the diocese in 1957, a total of 1,829 (17%) returned the response cards.³⁸⁹ The responses to the following questions were tallied, collected, and analyzed:

1. Do you wish completely racially desegregated youth conferences at Hemlock Haven Conference Center? Yes _____ No _____
2. Do you wish racial desegregation as proposed by the Department of Christian Education (composed of 12 Clergymen, 1 Deaconess, 6 Laywomen, 4 Laymen)?
 - a. Racially segregated senior conferences (high school sophomore, juniors and seniors) with the elimination of certain features such as round dancing?
Yes _____ No _____
 - b. And junior conferences racially desegregated by sex? Yes _____ No _____

³⁸⁸ Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (London: Routledge [1994] 2007), 232.

³⁸⁹ “Analysis of Questionnaire on Hemlock Haven,” Papers of Dabney S. Lancaster.

3. Do you wish a conference for white youth only and a separate conference for Negro youth only? Yes_____ No_____
4. Do you wish youth conferences desegregated racially by sex? Yes_____ No_____
5. Are you opposed to all racially desegregated youth conferences? Yes___ No__
6. Are you familiar with the policies of the Episcopal Church, as stated at various General Conventions, regarding the matter of desegregation of races?
Yes_____ No_____ ³⁹⁰

The black missions showed unanimous support for integration of the youth conferences at Hemlock Haven. *Segregation (SEG)* as defined by the survey meant “opposed to any form of integration” while *Integration (INT)* was stipulated as “willing to consider some form of integration.”³⁹¹ The black voices are muted; in the “results” section, which is a distillation and overview of the tallied questionnaires, two of the black congregations are omitted in the alphabetical listing and appear separately, along with the other two black parishes and seven white churches whose members voted in the majority to integrate. The four black parishes are denoted with an asterisk.³⁹² As illustrated in the excerpt from the results below, the eleven churches appear at the very bottom of the listing and fall into the “0-19% opposed [to segregation]” listing. (For full results, see Appendix A: Questionnaire Results).

³⁹⁰ Papers of Dr. Dabney S. Lancaster; These questions are followed by demographic questions about the respondent’s parish, age, marital status and ages/sexes of children and grandchildren in the diocese.

³⁹¹ “Analysis of Questionnaire on Hemlock Haven,” Papers of Dabney S. Lancaster.

³⁹² Ibid.

Results, excerpted from questionnaire tally:

Pocahontas, Christ	35	14	40	14	0	100	0	Rocky Mount
Pulaski, Christ	151	30	20	22	8	73	27	Staunton: Trinity
Radford, Grace	232	22	9	14	5	64	24	Waynesboro
Richlands, Trinity	50	2	4	2	0	100	0	6. <u>40-49% opposed:</u>
Roanoke, St. Elizabeth	48	19	40	5	14	26	74	Bedford <u>3%</u>
Roanoke, St. James	154	29	18	19	10	65	25	Evington
Roanoke, Christ	762	33	4	19	14	57	43	Norton
Roanoke, St. Johns	1297	190	15	162	31	85	14	Staunton: Emmannel
Rocky Mount, Trinity	120	38	32	23	15	60	40	7. <u>30-39% opposed:</u>
St. Paul, Grace & St. Mark	87	28	32	3	25	11	89	Brookneal <u>5%</u>
Salem, St. Pauls	338	56	17	51	5	91	9	Christiansburg
Saltville, St. Pauls	37	11	30	8	2	73	20	Lexington
Sedalia, St. Thomas	27	17	63	13	3	78	32	8. <u>20-29% opposed:</u>
Staunton, Emmanuel	182	32	12	16	16	50	50	Marion <u>2%</u>
Staunton, Trinity	448	78	18	46	31	59	40	Roanoke: St. Eliz.
Tazewell, Stras Memorial	71	10	14	8	2	80	20	9. <u>0-19% opposed: 2%</u>
Verona, Emmanuel	21	2	10	0	2	0	100	*Bedford, St. Philip
Waynesboro, St. Johns	325	95	29	54	41	57	43	Hot Springs
Wytheville, St. Johns	234	70	29	53	15	76	21	*Lynchburg: Good Shep
MISCELLANEOUS (No church given)	24		10	4	80	16		Nora: St. Stephens
								*Roanoke: St. Luke
								*Martinsville: St.P.
								St. Paul: Grace&StM
								Verona: Emmannel

Figure 5. Reprinted with permission from the files of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

The questionnaire indicates the beginning of a demographic shift in attitudes. The analysis included this paragraph:

If we look for trends, the only obvious one is that opposition to integration is in almost direct ratio to age. Another interesting indication of the figures is that the bulk of those replying were in the older age brackets . . . over 60% of those voting were over 50, or childless, or both. Probably most of those having children of, or approaching, conference age would be in the age bracket from 40-50. In these brackets, between 40-50 favored segregation about 3 to 1, while those in the 20-40 bracket were divided 50-50.³⁹³

³⁹³ Ibid.

The report does not mention but it is interesting to note also the trend of clergy to favor integration as indicated by diocesan votes on the resolutions leading up to the Hemlock Haven controversy.

While Hemlock Haven consumed diocesan conversations and created controversies throughout many of the white churches, the objectified subjects of the unrest seem to have been for the most part unaware or perhaps inured to the conversation. Rhetta Watkins, whose family members belonged to St. Philip's, was too young to go to the summer conferences for the teenagers but in an interview in February 2015 she said, "I do recall my cousins going to Hemlock Haven. Everything looked happy, and they still have strong bonds. My cousin, when she comes to visit [from Long Island, NY] she visits [a white friend] Karen Nichols."³⁹⁴ Like Watkins, Bill Vickers from St. Paul's in Martinsville had no first-hand knowledge of the camp and conference center but remembered that his younger sister attended in the early 1960s. Vickers' said, "[My sister] went to some of the conferences and some of the things they had that previously there was no variety in ethnicity, but the thing that took place I think some people in the diocese were not in favor of it being opened on an integrated basis. And I think that changed for the better."³⁹⁵

Watkins and Vickers both seemed to know about the controversies surrounding integration but neither had strong recollections of the anxieties that by all accounts must have been swirling around them at that point in time. Watkins would have been a young child, while Vickers was in his late teens at the time of the initial purchase.³⁹⁶ Watkins attributed her lack of

³⁹⁴ Rhetta Watkins, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, February 13, 2015, Bedford Middle School, Bedford, Virginia; Notes and transcripts of interviews included in Appendix D: Oral Histories.

³⁹⁵ Vickers, interview.

³⁹⁶ Watkins was born in 1953; Vickers was born in 1940.

memory or awareness of any bitterness surrounding issues of integration in the church or in the community to her young age saying, “I don’t recall a lot of the conversations [about desegregation and the closing of St. Philip’s]. At the time when I grew up children were seen and not heard and if adults were talking and if was about adult subjects, we weren’t a part of those conversations.” She also acknowledged that “I was young and I was naïve and just didn’t pick up on those cues.”³⁹⁷ Vickers had memories of the time but stopped short of acknowledging the difficulty or tensions of the time: “The thing that I have a greater recall for [than any tensions] is to be able to observe I think positive evolution. Some of the individuals who were totally in favor of segregation to see some of them turn the corner, and this is black *and* white, and when some of the individuals, some admitted that that wasn’t the way they should be thinking and some never said but they showed by action that they’d had a change of heart and mind.”³⁹⁸

Patricia Dabney said to the four other members of Chapel of the Good Shepherd who joined me for a conversation about their church: “I don’t remember a lot of this Hemlock Haven stuff. I’m trying to remember it, but I don’t. Was there some confusion about the camp itself?” Gloria Cannady, who was to attend one of the camps at Hemlock Haven replied, “I just picked up what I picked up from being a child and just sensing it, but I didn’t know what the whole story was.” Delores Haythe, mother of Gay, who went with Gloria to Hemlock Haven commented to Patricia, “When you and my brother Bobby were coming along, there was a

³⁹⁷ Watkins, interview.

³⁹⁸ Vickers, interview.

Hemlock Haven but it wasn't for the black kids. You couldn't go there."³⁹⁹ Gloria Cannady from Chapel of the Good Shepherd did attend Hemlock Haven. She said,

[The Rev. John F. Eberman]⁴⁰⁰ got my mother and father involved in sending me there . . . Gay and I went [to Hemlock Haven] together, and I knew that it was of importance that we go, but I didn't realize exactly why. And the feelings that we got—we were the only two black kids there that summer. I don't remember [the year] right now. It was different and it wasn't welcoming. I didn't have a welcoming feeling; I think Gay and I just kind of hung around together. I remember staying in a cabin with other kids my age. One girl in particular, I'm not sure if her family went to St. Paul or St. John—Cathy Price. Do you know that name? My middle brother and I were the first two to integrate Perrymont Elementary School, and I remember Cathy from third or fourth grade from over there, and she was always friendly and nice, so when I ran into her in the church setting, it didn't surprise me that she was exactly the same. She went to Hemlock Haven that same year that Gay and I went. And so she was friendly, but nobody else, not even the counselors, were.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ Gloria Cannady, Helen Witt, Gloria Cardwell, Delores Haythe, Patricia Dabney, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, April 24, 2015, Home of Ann van de Graaf, Lynchburg, Virginia; Notes and transcripts of interviews included in Appendix D: Oral Histories; This interview was the only interview in which multiple participants were able to speak not only to me but also to one another. The group conversation seemed to generate additional memories for each of the participants, who were able to feed off of each other's experiences and recollections. It seemed to alter the dynamic, perhaps galvanizing the group to speak more frankly than they might have if speaking only to me, a white interviewer. The groups seemed slightly more willing that individual participants to offer any remembrances of racism.

⁴⁰⁰ The Rev. Eberman, who was white, served at Emmanuel Madison Heights, St. Luke's Pedlar Mills, and Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lynchburg.

⁴⁰¹ Gloria Cannady, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, April 24, 2015, Home of Ann van de Graaf, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Delores Haythe remembered her daughter's experience: "I know Gay said, I don't care what you say or what you do, I'm not going back anymore. Frances, [another daughter] didn't want to go. Frances wasn't as outgoing as Gay, so I knew [there] wasn't any need of me insisting that she would go."⁴⁰²

While battles were won, or lost, depending on tightly held convictions of those on both sides of the integration issue, teenagers at the center endured and keep no memories of anger. Some, however, fared better than others. What is striking is that while the way of life was disrupted for both whites and blacks, it was the white status quo that seems to have experienced the place of splitting—the encounter with the other and the rupture that marks, according to Bhabha's process of identification, the transformation of identity. Discussions about the desegregation of Hemlock Haven consumed the better part of two years of diocesan energy and spilled over into Councils well beyond 1958 and 1959. The acrimonious discussions warranted dozens of newspaper articles and made the evening news on two occasions. It seems surprising that the black memories are muted, like their voices once were. Is it possible that a white interviewer is unable to gain access to these stories? I asked that question of Rhetta Watkins who kindly assured me that she was telling me all that she knew or recalled. In a subsequent interview with her aunt, she even took the role of the questioner from time to time in an effort to gain true (not veiled or polite) responses. The collective voice failed to acknowledge or recall the high level of bitterness and anxiety that white voices document in the moment of the racial integration of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Is it possible that the black status quo was already one of such trauma, in such a state of perpetual oppression, that the period

⁴⁰² Ibid.

marked as a disruption in the lives of a white majority being forced into change was just more of the same for the marginalized black Episcopalians?

Chapter 4

Unintended Consequences

Early in his episcopacy, it would not have occurred to Bishop Marmion to alter the status quo of the existing four black churches in the diocese; however, in the wake of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling, integration of some of the white churches was a possibility. In 1955, Marmion wrote the Rev. William MacBeth, rector of St. John's in Waynesboro. The Bishop commended MacBeth for the development of an interracial study group saying, "It is so important for our Church to face this issue realistically and prayerfully."⁴⁰³ The bishop expounded on his thoughts saying:

One matter facing using several of our white congregations is that of admitting Negro Episcopalians to communicant status. It seems to me that as Christians we have no choice but to do so. However, only the leaders and members of the congregations can really make these people feel at home and "integrate" them into the parish life. It involves careful handling by the rector and vestry of a delicate situation and a positive public relations job with Church members and local citizens.⁴⁰⁴

In 1958, during the fifth year of his episcopacy, Bishop Marmion shared the results of the diocesan *Unit of Research* study and his assessment of the overall health and prognosis of the diocese. He likened the diocese to "a family of congregations bound together under the head of the Bishop who is the Father in God."⁴⁰⁵ In addition to increasing emphasis on young people and

⁴⁰³ "The Church and the Supreme Court Decision on Segregation," Folder, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ "Diocesan Survey Findings and Recommendations," Files, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. 1958.

on expanding ministries in metropolitan areas, Bishop Marmion identified “Negro Work” as an area of emphasis for growth. His handwritten notes include some demographic data:

Total population of dio—

1,030,000

Negro pop—

98,000

[total Negro] communicants c. 125⁴⁰⁶

The bishop included growth of the four existing black parishes in his vision for growth of the diocese. He listed the four churches and wrote:

No racial problem—

[no] pressure of numbers

Only a real opportunity

12,000 Negroes in Ro[anoke]

6,000 Lynch[burg]

3000 Martins[ville]

[left blank] Staunton

In a notation, the same hand added, presumably later: “1959 proposal budget originally had items for two clergy, one for St. Luke’s, Roanoke, & one for St. Paul’s Martinsville—but was pruned & cut in half—Ro. and Martinsville must share 1 man between them.”⁴⁰⁷ The struggle for the health of black churches involved money and manpower in addition to fighting the uphill battle for desegregation. For Marmion, the easy part, it seemed, was understanding the moral mandate. In his 1962 address at Annual Council, Marmion proclaimed:

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 7.

The recognition of the essential dignity and worth of all of God's children is a consummation devoutly to be desired and secured. God wills it, Christ taught it, the Church proclaims it and ultimately we must accept it or lose our birthright as members of that fellowship in which our Redeemer has broken down the middle wall of partition and made us one.⁴⁰⁸

While Marmion called for unity and also commented in this same address that "we . . . have accomplished a break through the wall of misunderstanding and conflict that divided us over the racial issue" and "have come a long way"⁴⁰⁹ the 1962 Council failed to pass a budget, pointing to continued dissent and conflict. Diocesan struggles were noted in local news media, warranting both newspaper and television coverage. *The Living Church*, a weekly church magazine, then in its eighth decade of publication, took note of the controversy. A layman in the diocese was quoted in the magazine as saying that "[Hemlock Haven] is the malignancy that is sapping the strength of the diocese of Southwestern Virginia, and until we rid ourselves of this cancer we cannot begin to recover from its effects."⁴¹⁰ Marmion's reasoning around the issue of integration, however, continued to hearken the diocese to a unified goal. Marmion's stance and the struggles in Southwestern Virginia spilled over into the wider bounds of the church and country.

National Involvement

In the wake of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s arrest at Birmingham, Bishop Marmion corresponded with the Episcopal bishop in Alabama saying, in part:

⁴⁰⁸ *Southwestern Episcopalian*, 32, no. 6. (1962): 4.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ "Effects of Hemlock," *The Living Church* 145, no. 1 (1962).

I had hoped that the Negro leaders would wait just awhile longer to see if Albert Boutwell would cooperate with *them* in bringing about needed reforms.

Apparently, they have been put off too long and felt they could no longer rely on promises. This is the way I figure it, and if it is correct, I understand it and sympathize with it. I've got too much **documentary evidence** in my files and too many **vivid remembrances** to do otherwise. **God's judgment**, as we know full well, rests upon the best of us as well as the worst. I see his judgment falling on my good friends and I recoil in pain. These people were too good and too intelligent to allow what happened. But the consequences of their long neglect could not be put off...I would hope that the forces of the liberals and moderates who at long last ousted Bull Connor and his cohorts will ultimately prevail and bring the city and state into line with other southern cities and states which have profited from an enlightened policy.⁴¹¹

In this letter to his counterpart in Alabama, Bishop Marmion named the contributing factors to his understanding of race and race relations, emphasized here by my added bold font: secondary evidence, first-hand observations, and divine mandate.

Bishop Marmion's clear stance against segregation and his interest in race relations landed him on a national committee as the co-chair of the church-wide 18-member Advisory Committee on Intergroup Relations. According to a July 15, 1963 press release issued by the Episcopal Church, as asked by the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, "the committee will seek to advise the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Arthur

⁴¹¹ Box 36, Folder 2, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Bold added for emphasis.

Lichtenberger, and National Council officers on direct action involvement in combating racial discrimination.”⁴¹² Among other actions, in the summer months of 1963, the Committee recommended that “Episcopalians—bishops, clergy, laymen and women—consider the possibility of joining Negro action groups-sponsored march on Congress, tentatively set for August 28.”⁴¹³ As the date of the now-famous March on Washington approached, members of the clergy and laity wrote to Bishop Marmion either to offer support or convey dismay at the committee’s request to “consider the possibility of joining” the March. The story was picked up by newspapers in Lynchburg and Roanoke—the two central cities of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia—and a series of articles detailed various responses to the Bishop’s leadership of the national committee as well as viewpoints on the upcoming March. A July 23, 1963 letter from a vocal opponent of the desegregation of Hemlock Haven wrote to remind Bishop Marmion of the recent strain on the diocese wrought by the integration topic:

Dear Bishop Marmion:

I was genuinely distressed to read in the morning paper a few mornings ago that you had under consideration participating in the proposed march on Washington by a group of negro citizens. I hope before you lend your presence to such a demonstration that you will think twice of what your action will mean to the people of our Diocese.

I am sure that you remember how much sorrow and strained feelings this integration question has brought our Diocese. By a compromise action of our Council, we have had some rest from this troublesome subject. If you participate

⁴¹² Box 36, Folder 1, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

in this demonstration, you will gain some unpleasant publicity for our Diocese and maybe some personal satisfaction for yourself. Balanced against this, you will open old wounds that have cut deep and this difficult problem will boil up again and where it will lead this time no one knows.

Several of your warm supporters and leading laymen in Roanoke have talked with me and suggested that I write this letter and urge you not to bring our Diocese into print again which will bring sorrow to thousands of your people.

Sincerely yours,

C. Francis Cocke⁴¹⁴

Marmion's calm response included also some materials, including a pamphlet on the Episcopal Church's views on race relations, along with an offer of further conversation. Marmion wrote, "I shall be glad to talk with you and our mutual friends when I return to Roanoke...Meanwhile, be assured that I will attempt to act in the best interests of our Diocese as well as those of the General Church."⁴¹⁵

Although there is no indication that Bishop Marmion participated in the August 28, 1963 March on Washington, he was once again back in the news following the bombings in Birmingham that resulted in the deaths of four black girls. A September 19, 1963 headline in the *Roanoke World-News* proclaimed "Bishop Joins Bomb Protest in Capital." The article described Marmion as "the only Southern church leader included in the group" that assembled as an ecumenical representative body to speak with, among others, Attorney General Robert Kennedy and House speaker John McCormack. The group issued a statement detailing expressions of dismay over the loss of life in Birmingham and calling for prayer and for action to include, but

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

not be limited to a Sabbath silence and encouragement of letters to congressmen “urging immediate passage of relevant and effective legislation.” The group stated its purpose as an opportunity to “register our convictions as religious leaders . . . [W]e feel that the hour has now come when more than the leadership of the churches and synagogues must act. The whole religious community—and that means each and every one of its members—must make their presence felt in Washington.”⁴¹⁶ In a letter to the clergy of the diocese, also dated September 19, 1963, Bishop Marmion called for a “period of silence, prayer, and petition at your church services next Sunday, September 22, in memory of the . . . Negro [children who died] in Birmingham, Alabama.”⁴¹⁷ He requested that “Even if you are unwilling to ask your people at the end of the silence to write their congressman . . . at least you should encourage them to make some resolution toward constructive action as Christian citizens.”⁴¹⁸

Bishop Marmion received significant backlash for this request. Letters from individuals suggested that he was “moving too fast . . . in efforts to solve the racial crisis of this country”⁴¹⁹ and that he was “doing harm to our church by creating animosities.”⁴²⁰ Some members of the Vestry of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Roanoke—the largest church in the diocese—issued a statement that expressed dismay over the Bishop’s request and the inclusion of the moment of

⁴¹⁶ Clipping from *The Roanoke World News*, 19 September 1963, Box 36, Folder 2, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴¹⁷ Box 36, Folder 2, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ Letter from Robert T. Field dated November 12, 1963. Box 36, Folder 2, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴²⁰ Box 36, Folder 2, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

silence during Sunday, September 22 services. *The Washington Post*⁴²¹ made note of the troubles in an article headlined “‘Free Pulpit’ Question is Raised in Virginia.”⁴²² The article opened with the question: “Should a clergyman, a public figure, express social and political opinions at variance with those held by the men who hired him?” The statement of the turmoil in Roanoke followed the opening question: “Fifteen vestrymen of a prominent Roanoke church have strongly criticized the Right Rev. William H. Marmion of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia for what they believe is too deep an involvement in the civil rights question.”⁴²³

A letter to Bishop Marmion from a parishioner at Emmanuel, a mission in Madison Heights, which was among several small churches that would be closed in the 1960s, placed the blame for racial strife at the feet of national enemies, claiming that the 1963 bombings in Birmingham were “what could be expected when the veneer of civilization is deteriorating after prolonged warfare” and noting that there “is no peace yet and there is great fear.” The parishioner continued with a view on racial strife, positing that “Many sincerely believe the present racial strife trouble in America has been instigated and supported by the communists to achieve their desire.”⁴²⁴

⁴²¹ A photocopy of the article is included in the archives, cited in the endnotes. The photocopy does not include a date, but it was with a letter from the Very Rev. Francis B. Sayre, Jr., Dean of the Washington National Cathedral, along with a comment, within the context of a longer letter, that said, “I enclose a clipping which appeared in the Saturday edition of the *Washington Post* which only reflects the constant battle that I know you are fighting in Southwestern Virginia.” Sayre’s letter was dated December 29, 1963. Presumably, the article is from December 21, 1963.

⁴²² Box 36, Folder 2, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴²³ *The Washington Post*. December 21, 1963, (see footnote 421).

⁴²⁴ Bertha M. Banton to Bishop Marmion, 28 September 1963, Box 32, Folder 1, Bishop William H. Marmion Papers, 1932-1981, Ms1986-013, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

A year later, Marmion contributed to a report to the joint session of the National Council of the Episcopal Church. Before reporting “in the areas of race, poverty, Church-State relations, world relief and peace,” Bishop Marmion opened the report saying, “The Christian Church would no longer be Christian if it gave up its concern for human welfare.”⁴²⁵ In closing the section on race, Marmion drew upon the words of the Presiding Bishop, Arthur C. Lichtenberger who said, “The gravity of the present situation in American race relations demands far more than the silence of passive compliance. We must commit ourselves without reservations to the full support of civil rights.”⁴²⁶ Marmion concluded his report with an epilogue, which said, in part:

The social revolution which our ancestors have bequeathed us will probably remain for years to come. No one can escape it. We must learn to accept it, with all its possibilities for good and evil, and do the best we can for the things all of us believe in. We believe in truth, justice and liberty. We seek by understanding, patience and reconciliation to deal with the tensions created by involvement in the social struggle.⁴²⁷

The fate of the four black churches in Marmion’s diocese was to be determined based on the data collected in the “Unit of Research” diocesan study and guided by his understanding of the shifting social climate. Decisions were not entered into hastily or uniformly. Integration was on the horizon.

⁴²⁵ William H. Marmion, “National Council Report to General Convention,” draft dated September 24, 1964, Executive Board Minutes, May 14, 1964-November 18, 1965.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

The Fate of the Four Black Churches

The archival narrative of the four black churches resumes here during the Marmion years and into the era of integration. As the following histories unfold, the cultural tide is beginning to turn towards integration. Of note is the first move to place white clergy in the black churches. Bishop Marmion's era began on the cusp of an integrated South. While correspondence in Bishop Marmion's files indicates that he had hopes of placing black priests at the altars of the diocese's black churches, he did not devote the all-out energy of his predecessors to locate qualified black leadership. The Bishop Payne Divinity School merged with Virginia Theological Seminary in 1953, and the wellspring, such as it was, of black seminarians ceased. Thus, a lack of resources along with white clergy who were interested in promoting desegregation from within the context of a black church marked the new era and the transition from small and separate black congregations to integrated parishes. Three of the black churches were ultimately closed. Parishioners were invited to visit neighboring Episcopal churches and choose one to attend. The interruption—the caesura—of Hemlock Haven served as the boundary marker during which time the conversations turned, shaping the fate of the black churches.

St. Philip's, Bedford

1951-54	George C. Ashton
1955	Vacant
1956-57	G. William Beale (St. John's, Bedford)
1958-61	George Barton, III (St. John's, Bedford)
1962	Vacant
1963-65	John H. Sivley (St. John's, Bedford)

The last black clergyman to serve St. Philip's was the Rev. George C. Ashton. He came to the Bedford mission by way of Chapel of the Good Shepherd in Lynchburg, where he was

called and supported by subsidy of the Episcopal Church's Office of Negro Work. Diocesan records are housed for former clergy in the vault at the diocesan offices, even if those clergy served for only a short time. Ashton was in the diocese for three years, before accepting a call in New Jersey at St. Monica's Episcopal Church, but no records exist for him.⁴²⁸ In fact, no records exist for any of the black clergy, including the Rev. Somers who was in the diocese for twenty years.

Following Ashton's tenure at St. Philip's, parochial reports listed a year of vacancy, followed by the Rev. George William Beale, rector of St. John's Bedford, as priest-in-charge of the black parish. Beale was the first of three St. John's rectors to fill the post of vicar or priest-in-charge of the black parish. The Rev. Beale was only in Bedford for a short time before moving to Kentucky to serve on the diocesan staff as Director of Christian Education for Bishop Marmion's brother, the Rt. Rev. Gresham Marmion, who was bishop of Kentucky. The two brother bishops were Beale's son's godfathers and present at the January 26, 1958 baptism at St. Paul's in Louisville, Kentucky. Evidence of Beale's success with St. Philip's comes in the form of Bishop Marmion's notes, which indicated an intention to put him in charge of the black parish at Martinsville upon his return to the diocese a decade later. In a letter dated April 10, 1969, Beale wrote to Marmion expressing his family's desire to "dig our roots in good old mountain soil once again" and asking his former bishop to consider him "whenever you have an opening that you feel we can fill."⁴²⁹ Marmion subsequently hired Beale. In a memo to the archdeacon and the program director of the diocese, Bishop Marmion wrote, "Bill would be wonderful if we could put him at St. Peter's Callaway as vicar and director of the Phoebe Needles Education

⁴²⁸ *Journal of the Annual Council, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1955.*

⁴²⁹ George W. Beale, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: : Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

Center. If possible I would also want him to take over St. Paul's Church Martinsville."⁴³⁰ The letter of call issued to Beale by the bishop did not, however, include St. Paul's.

In 1958, the Rev. George Barton, III, served St. John's and St. Philip's between chaplaincies at Virginia Episcopal School and Woodberry Forest. His departure left a vacancy until the Rev. John Sivley began serving in 1963.

The Rev. Sivley's time at St. John's was not without controversy, some of it over the integration of St. John's. Some felt that Sivley did not embrace the opportunity to welcome the black congregants. A notation in Bishop Marmion's hand recalled details from a phone conversation in which Sivley reportedly omitted the name of a "Negro acolyte" alongside the names of other acolytes in a printed listing.⁴³¹ Alternately, others in the parish who were apparently unhappy about integration held Sivley responsible for the integration. This general dissatisfaction may point to a failure of leadership or quite possibly to the trauma of integration.

The period of integration at St. John's revealed a time of what Bhabha describes as a condition in the process of identification. In this first condition of existing, of "called into being in relation to an otherness,"⁴³² the congregations of St. John's and St. Philip's intersect. A consistency among the black memories is a shared recollection of the time of integration as smooth or uneventful. The common chorus was that people were welcoming.⁴³³

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ John H. Sivley, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴³² Homi Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (London: Routledge [1994] 2007), 44.

⁴³³ Interviews aimed to collect only a sampling, not a majority. Those interviewed spoke only to their memories or experiences, yet the individual interviewees shared reactions and observations.

Rhetta Watkins⁴³⁴ attended St. Philip's in Bedford. The Episcopal Church was part of her family's religious tradition. She explained:

My family on my mother's side are Episcopalians. My mother became an Episcopalian later on in life. She attended school in Newport News for the Deaf and Blind so she didn't actually grow up in [Bedford], but her siblings did. Because I was raised by my aunt, I went to church with her [at] St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

Watkins was born in Newport News. She moved to Bedford as a young child and recalled attending St. Philip's:

Probably my most vivid memory is kneeling on the little stool, the little cushioned stool. I detested kneeling on the little cushioned stool. It was so uncomfortable. As a little kid, I think I was probably 12 or 13 years old, I always felt like I was going to fall. Everyone else seemed to kneel okay, but I thought how do they do this? That's one of my vivid memories at that time.

Watkins remembered family members and several others who attended the church over the years. By the time the church was facing closure in 1966, Watkins recalled that just a few members of the congregation were in regular attendance:

I do remember Rev. Sivley being the minister at that time, and my aunt, who at that time was Tempy Barksdale, played the organ from time to time. It was a very, very small congregation. James Kyle, who used to be the Director of Instruction for Bedford County Schools was a member; he and his wife were members of St. Philip's. And there was another family with two young daughters.

⁴³⁴ Watkins, interview.

Primarily what I remember [is that] there weren't more than three or four families that attended church.

At the time of the closing of St. Philip's, Watkins said: "When the changeover actually happened, I don't really recall the year, I just remember my aunt saying that we were going to a different church. I remember them being sad that St. Philip's was no longer going to be open to them."⁴³⁵ Her aunt, Tempy Davis,⁴³⁶ recalled the time that the St. Philip's congregation began attending St. John's:

It was St. John that opened the doors for us. But I'll never forget that day we walked into St. John's. When we walked in, it was nice because we were all up to point about where we would be going. And see, once you are Episcopalian,...you are always Episcopalian. St. John had the same thing that we had. We had the same reading and everything, so it was not new to us. The first day...it was open-armed for us.

Rhetta Watkins was younger at the time of St. Philip's closure. Her memory coincided with her aunt's. She remembered feeling welcome:

Going to St. John's we were welcomed, very much a part of the congregation. We were invited to participate in a lot of the programs. My cousins Sheila Barksdale and Vincent Barksdale were very involved in the Youth Group. Sheila sang in the choir. I remember their being very active and very involved.

The decision to close St. Philip's was not handled hastily. In the eight years following the Diocesan Study recommendation that St. John's assume greater responsibility for the smaller

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Tempy Davis, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, April 8, 2015, The Summit Retirement Home, Forest, Virginia; Notes and transcripts of interviews included in Appendix D: Oral Histories.

parish, the two churches had shared clergy and lay readers. Johnson, a long-time member of St. Philip's, remembered that in the absence of a priest, St. John's often stepped in to cover the gaps: "During the time it looked like it was a break between the ministers, St. John's would participate [in] whatever we had there and would join in."

The September 22, 1966 Executive Board recorded the following entry as item #3 under the "Missions" heading:

3. St. Phillip's [sic] and St. John's Bedford. After considerable discussion, MR. TYREE MOVED SECONDED BY MR. LOWE, THAT THE MATTER OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF ST. JOHN'S AND ST. PHILLIPS [sic] BEDFORD, BE TABLED. Motion carried.⁴³⁷

On September 23, 1966, the Rev. Richard D. Tyree, then serving as Chair of the Department of Missions, wrote to the Rev. John Sivley, the rector of St. John's in Bedford: "Dear John: As you know, Bishop Marmion referred your letter about the possibility of St. John's taking over St. Phillip's [sic] as a parish mission to the Department of Missions."⁴³⁸ The letter to the Rev. Sivley continued, repeating the motion as presented to the Executive Board and listing questions that the Executive Board had, resulting in a tabling of the debate pending further investigation. Tyree wrote:

Let me tell you some of the questions that were voiced by the various members of the Executive Board that probably should be answered before any final action on this.

⁴³⁷ Executive Board minutes June 1964 to January 1968, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴³⁸ "St. Philip's," Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

1. Are the people of both St. John's and St. Phillip's [sic] favorable to such an arrangement?
2. Is there a possibility or likelihood of this resulting in a complete merger of the two congregations?
3. If so, what would be the status of the property now owned by St. Phillip's? In other words, if the property were sold, who would get the money?
4. Is the concern of St. John's for the total spiritual and material well-being of St. Phillip's or just for the handling of their business affairs?⁴³⁹

Tyree offered the assurance that the Executive Board was inclined to "look favorably upon a petition to establish St. Philip's as a Parochial Mission of St. John's." The letter concluded with the invitation to "leave the timing to your discretion" and avoid "rush[ing] into this right now" as well as the offer of further help.⁴⁴⁰ Taking over as a mission and closing the church are two separate issues.

St. Philip's closed in the summer of 1968. The closing, which was facilitated by the Rev. Sivley and the Vestry of St. John's, was accepted by the people of St. Philip's with the understanding that they would become part of the St. John's congregation. A letter signed by the vestry of St. John's announced the news to the St. John's parishioners. The letter cited small membership, lack of growth, and building repairs as reasons for the closing. The letter added:

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

The people of St. Philip's have felt for some time that they have been fighting a losing battle to hold on to their Church. They likewise wish to stay in the Episcopal Church as they have been lifelong, dedicated Episcopalians.

Your Vestry is inviting the communicants of St. Philip's to transfer their membership to St. John's, effective June 16, 1968. We feel the people of St. John's will make our new communicants feel welcome and help them get established in their new Church.⁴⁴¹

Within a week of the announcement of St. Philip's closing, St. John's junior warden, Hugh Overstreet, resigned, signaling his dissatisfaction. The lay leader cited his inability to "render his wholehearted support to the Rector." He elaborates saying, "While I feel that the spiritual fiber of our church is rapidly deteriorating, I am not in the position to council desertion or insurrection; nor can I promise hope for the future of St. John's."⁴⁴²

While the junior warden's resignation might have suggested dissatisfaction at Sivley's support for integration, Overstreet was also a member of a group assembled to lodge complaints against Sivley, which included charges of being both pro-integration and racist. The memo of the meeting, which followed in the wake of the St. Philip's closing opened with the following statement:

⁴⁴¹ John H. Sivley, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁴² Hugh G. Overstreet to Freeman W. Jenrette, May 27, 1968, John H. Sivley, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

We are meeting with you because we are concerned. We are concerned because the spiritual being of St. Phillips' [sic] Church in Bedford has been destroyed, and that of St. John's is being threatened.⁴⁴³

The memo detailed six points describing the "heartless treatment of the members of St. Phillips' [sic] Church." The points attributed the following actions to Sivley:

- a. Made a statement to some of the members of St. Phillips' that St. John's had lost...\$7000 in pledges when Miss Colley (a colored school teacher) attended St. John's.
- b. Advised that they would be received coldly, even rudely, if they came to St. John's.
- c. Interjected the subject of racial problems being a prime reason for closing St. Phillips'[sic].
- d. Pushed for a closing date for St. Phillips' [sic] while failing to provide the much needed leadership to help them make a comfortable transition to St. John's.
- e. Members of St. Phillips' felt they had no true spiritual leadership, that they were served by the Rector only because he had to serve them.
- f. He was short tempered and impatient with the members of the congregation to the point of being cruel.⁴⁴⁴

Grievances regarding the St. John's parishioners included, among other things, hurt feelings, "snide remarks," breeches in confidence, and lack of pastoral care. The memo from "eight

⁴⁴³ John H. Sivley, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

interested parties [who] represent the feelings of many more” stated that “the situation has deteriorated to such a point that we were compelled, no obligated, to come forth.”⁴⁴⁵

In correspondence around the time of Sivley’s departure from the diocese, which was precipitated by the St. John’s vestry’s desire to have him leave, Marmion writes of the time of the parish’s integration saying:

The mantle of Prince Edward County, Virginia has fallen on Bedford County. It is extremely conservative and reactionary. John [Sivley] has been there during the period of the racial crisis and...has had to take a lot of flak. He has also presided over the affairs of the Church in Bedford during the period when St. Philip’s Church, the mission for Negroes in downtown Bedford just a few blocks from St. John’s, was integrated with St. John’s. This was done with a minimum of friction, but the recalcitrants have not made it easy for the Rector.⁴⁴⁶

Similarly, a lay leader wrote to the rector of the church that was considering a call to the Rev. Sivley. Dr. F. W. Jenrette wrote:

During my 2 years as Senior Warden, we integrated our church. The first and only one in Bedford to do so. It was a diplomatic and touchy situation at the time, but when it was done, we lost only two families and two singles. The two singles have returned and one family has returned. In addition, we have added 13 blacks to our congregation. I think this speaks for John’s leadership at a difficult time.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Letter to The Rt. Rev. William J. Cox, June 27, 1963, John H. Sivley, Clergy Folder, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁴⁷ April 11, 1973, John H. Sivley, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

Sivley's leadership was marked by some turbulence and not all of it racially charged. The white members of St. John's put forward a number of opinions about him. Interviews with parishioners at St. Philip's, however, made less mention of any awareness of unpleasantness. Tempy Davis recalled that integration was a topic of discussion:

It was discussed but there was no hesitation about what we would be doing, going into the white congregation. We were the ones who said that we had to close the church. Nobody there but just us and then with the money coming there it was different. We didn't have a minister. We went a long time without a minister [of our own].⁴⁴⁸

Davis remembered the time without bitterness, noting that the small membership meant that the church could not sustain itself. She said, "And then with the integration we moved to St. John. It was too small a membership and attendance and keeping up the church or whatever it was. It was the reason they got rid of St. Philip." She did not remember any difficulty or controversy surrounding the integration of St. John's:

If they did make slurs or comments, whatever it is, it never did get close to us. We felt welcome. We didn't see no difference in our service at St. Philip. The service was the same. That's the way it was. The minister was Rev. Sivley. I didn't hear no comments or discussion of this like or anything like that with us.

The only thing I know that we were such a small members and our church wasn't growing that we had to close the church or do something. You know, there was

⁴⁴⁸ Davis, interview.

nobody else that was there. It was no problem. We had to do something.

Something had to be done. It was that really sad we had to close.⁴⁴⁹

When asked about the social climate and the struggles that were pervasive in the Civil Rights' era South, Rhetta Watkins added to her aunt's memories and shared her experiences at St.

John's:

If you didn't want to be around me it would be real clear to me. It would be real clear in your actions and maybe the words you would use or how you would respond to me. If there were those who were not comfortable with us being there and they were just standoffish, in my eyes they were just standoffish. I just never perceived it as you're standoffish because I'm here. That's just who you are. And that may be because I was young and I was naïve and just didn't pick up on those cues. But what I recall is my family was happy to go and they went to church. They didn't come home and talk about this person or that person or how someone made them feel or someone was upset with them. I just never heard that. If that happened, I was never aware of it. It may have happened. I just was not aware of it.⁴⁵⁰

Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Lynchburg

1951-54	George C. Ashton
1955	Vacant
1956-59	McRae Werth (seminarian)
1960-62	John Teeter, Vicar
1962	Duke Jefferson Harrison (postulant)
1963	No vicar listed in Journal (John F. Eberman, Emmanuel and St. Luke's Pedlar Mills)

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Watkins, interview.

1964	John F. Eberman, Vicar, Emmanuel Madison Heights, St. Luke's Pedlar Mills, and Good Shepherd Lynchburg
1965	No vicar listed in Journal
1966	William P. Parrish and Robert J. Boyd, V.E.S., Supply Priests

The Rev. McRae Werth, a former City Attorney of Waynesboro, took on leadership at Chapel of the Good Shepherd during the summer of 1956 while still a seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary. By mid-summer, Bishop Marmion was thinking ahead to the possibility of securing Werth for clerical leadership following his ordination. In a letter to a property manager authorizing the sale of one of the two rectories owned by the diocese in support of Good Shepherd, Marmion wrote:

Incidentally, I would be interested in your opinion as to whether or not McRae Werth would like to be sent to his present cure [Good Shepherd] after he graduates from the Seminary and whether that would be the wise thing to do. He volunteered for this work for the summer, and he may have become interested enough in it to want to continue after graduation. In that case we could do everything we could to keep things going until he graduated, and he might even be able to come down from time to time—keep his oar in so to speak.⁴⁵¹

Marmion continued in the letter, describing other possible resources for leadership at Chapel of the Good Shepherd, saying, “I don’t think it is going to be easy to get anybody in that set-up, particularly the right kind of leadership such as McRae has been giving.”⁴⁵² Bishop Marmion subsequently endorsed Werth’s leadership in a memo to the Executive Board, the purpose of

⁴⁵¹ Bishop Marmion to H. E. Steptoe, Box 89, Folder 90, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

which was to recommend repairs and improvements to the church. In the memo, the Bishop wrote:

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd has made unusual progress this summer under the leadership of Mr. Werth, and the prospects seem good for the future. 25 or 30 children are attending three classes on Sunday morning and congregations have increased materially too. The outreach of the Chapel has been greater recently than at any time within the past five years, and the members show a considerable amount of enthusiasm about the future. This is, of course, a Negro parish, and we believe a promising missionary endeavor. However, unless we provide a safe building and some additional facilities this enthusiasm will not continue.⁴⁵³

The bishop's positive review of Werth is echoed in a letter to Bishop Marmion from a Good Shepherd parishioner. Owen J. Duncan, Jr. wrote:

I have been particularly pleased in the manner [Werth] has drawn the parish together and has it all working towards a common goal. I have been of the opinion that there are fine possibilities in the parish if we could get the leadership, and Mr. Werth and his enthusiasm have certainly confirmed this opinion...this is also apparent in the action of other members.⁴⁵⁴

A handwritten notation saying "call McRae Werth" at the bottom of the typed letter indicated the Bishop's decision to accept the recommendation. Werth accepted after negotiating his terms, carefully outlining expectations of time and travel expenses from the seminary in Alexandria and

⁴⁵³ Box 89, Folder 90, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁵⁴ Letter, July 28, 1956, Box 89, Folder 90, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

working to ensure both protection for himself and care for the churches that were to be in his charge. By the time the summer of 1956 was drawing to a close, arrangements had been made for Werth to continue serving Chapel of the Good Shepherd, along with the two small white parishes, Emmanuel Madison Heights and St. Luke's Pedlar Mills, also under his summer care.

Following his graduation from the seminary and ordination into the diaconate, Werth wrote a letter to the bishop requesting that the formal period of service as a deacon be shortened from the standard one year to six months. In his letter to the president of the Standing Committee,⁴⁵⁵ Marmion enclosed Werth's request and endorsed it. Werth's four-page, detailed request explored the canons of the church in both letter and intent. His primary purpose for requesting a shortened diaconate period was that "the particular situation is such that not having a priest injures the whole church more that shortening the period would."⁴⁵⁶ To the president of the Standing Committee, the bishop wrote, "McRae Werth's letter is a classic document and a priceless one. Please don't lose it. When you have read it and are through with it I would appreciate your returning it to me for my files."⁴⁵⁷

Also included in his letter requesting a shortened path to ordination to the priesthood was Werth's extrapolation of the plight of black Episcopalians. He underscored the complexities of the two white missions and the one black mission that were under his charge within the context of the social climate of 1956:

[S]ince neither the Diocese nor parish clergy are willing to welcome the non white at all levels, it seems a little unfair to helpless missions like St. Luke's and

⁴⁵⁵ Diocesan body charged with oversight of clergy and seminarians

⁴⁵⁶ McRae Werth, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

Emmanuel to participate jointly. Hence the great days of the Church⁴⁵⁸ must go unnoticed in some way at one or the other missions...St. Luke's and Emmanuel can readily go to other Episcopal Churches for participation at all levels, but Good Shepherd cannot do so...Yes, they could go, and in some ways they should go, to present to the parish priest and his congregations the opportunity of considering their failure. But it is unfair to ask them to. In addition, there is no non white mission which at present is receiving the ministrations of a priest on an equal basis with white missions...In view of the fact that there are no non white clergy in this diocese and non Uncle Tomish ones are hardly available, I think it is fitting that at least one of the non white missions have a priest who is giving it equal attention with white ones. Our non white work is weak, almost sick unto death, and the little work we have ought to [be] given every possible strength.⁴⁵⁹

The number of communicants increased from 33 in 1956 to 52 in 1959 during Werth's three years at Good Shepherd (See Appendix B: Parochial Report Data). In 1958, at one service attended by Bishop Marmion, ten were baptized and thirteen confirmed.⁴⁶⁰

In a letter to the bishop of Massachusetts, Marmion responded to his fellow bishop's request for a job reference with candid information describing Werth's "very strong convictions on the subject of race relations" as "both his strength and his weakness."⁴⁶¹ Bishop Marmion

⁴⁵⁸ Feast days such as Christmas and Easter.

⁴⁵⁹ McRae Werth, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁶⁰ Bishop Marmion to the Rt. Rev. Robert McConnell Hatch, DD, (Mass.), January 23 1959, Box 92, Folder 24, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

commended Werth's abilities and observed that "Under the proper circumstances he should serve you well, because he is a very able clergyman." He added:

Mr. Werth has zeal with knowledge but apparently no restraint and not much balance. He champions the cause of the Negro people as he should, but with little imagination, no humor and an alarming spirit of bitterness which definitely vitiates his witness and jeopardizes our whole cause. Mr. Werth has much to give but will not be heard by the white people because he makes an issue of everything and apparently has no sense of strategy.⁴⁶²

Marmion further commented on Werth's lost sense of perspective saying that while he would "like to keep him in the diocese" he was uncertain of "what the future holds for Mr. Werth," adding that "He is unpredictable on the race issue and is perfectly capable of throwing a monkey wrench into the machinery of our diocesan life at the very moment when we may be able to get it functioning again with some social gains."⁴⁶³ Marmion observed that as "[i]mportant as is the battle for integration, there is more to the priesthood than that."⁴⁶⁴

Four months later, Werth announced his resignation, effective June 30, 1959, to the vestry at Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Four members of the Good Shepherd Vestry expressed concern to Bishop Marmion:

Most Reverend and dear Sir:

We are certain you are aware that the Rev. Mr. Werth tendered his resignation as of June 30, 1959, and plans to leave as of June 1, 1959.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Either Werth intended to depart before his term officially concluded or the letter contains a typo and June 1 should be July 1.

This we regret, and comes as a jolt to us and our program at this particular time. We are very much aware that it holds serious implications of calamity—this absence of leadership.

This committee has been appointed by the Vestry Committee to make an appeal to you for the immediate replacement of the Rev. Mr. Werth. It is now important that we not lose the momentum for growth, now in progress, through the absence of a leader to coordinate the movements. We feel strongly the necessity for leadership commencing [sic] with that we are losing.

We greatly appreciate the interest you have shown in our mission since you have been here, and are proud of the progress it has made. They give us hope that you will find a solution for our problem of leadership in the immediate future.

With best wishes for your continued success in your work in our Diocese and our Mission in particular.⁴⁶⁶

In a second letter dated the same day as the request for speedy replacement of Werth, the Vestry Committee also submitted a formal request for consideration of “the Rev. Mr. John Teeter of Rocky Mount, Virginia to succeed the Rev. Mr. McRae Werth as Priest in charge of the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church.”⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁶ Letter from Owen J. Duncan, Jr., Senior Warden and Chairman of Committee; Dr. R. C. Wesley; Mrs. Natalie Jackson; Mrs. Irene R. Mitchell, Secretary, Vestry Committee, 18 May 1959, Box 92, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁶⁷ Letter from Dr. R. C. Wesley and Mrs. Natalie Jackson, 18 May 1959, Box 92, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

A follow-up letter from a parishioner at Good Shepherd urged expediency in replacing Werth. Duke Harrison⁴⁶⁸ wrote:

I am writing this letter as an appeal for the quick appointment of a priest to our mission.

The Good Shepherd needs a priest for three reasons: first, to bring the fullness of the Holy Communion to the communicants. While Father Werth was here, he went to the sick administering Holy Communion and had it at church every saint's day. Thus practice of Holy Communion was new to a lot of the communicants, but as time passed they felt the greatness of the Sacrament. Father Werth has also been invited to administer the Sacrament to other people who are not members of our church; second, to teach the communicants the meaning of the church. Our mission is composed of people from many denominations who are very weak on points of the church. It is hard for a layman to teach the doctrine of our church when he has only read a few books on the subject; third, to counsel the communicants who have insurmountable problems. The time in which we are now living is very confusing. Often we need to talk to someone who can give us Christian guidance. We have communicants today whose togetherness is there only because of long, frank counseling.

The announcement Father Werth made on Ascension Day of his resignation left me very empty because I knew our mission would be without its Trinity. The Trinity of this mission is Sacrament, ritual, and counseling. Without these, we will have our famine.

⁴⁶⁸ Duke Harrison later studied to become an Episcopal priest and served Good Shepherd as a postulant in 1962. While a seminary student, he served at St. Paul's and St. Luke's.

Yours truly,

Duke Harrison⁴⁶⁹

The Vestry Committee closed the chapter on McRae Werth with a May 30, 1959 letter to their departing clergyman. Signed by the members of the Vestry, the letter thanked Werth for “the great service you have rendered to the Church, as well as to the community and Diocese.”⁴⁷⁰

The letter commended Werth for his leadership to the church and credited him for increasing membership, a healthier budget, and an improved church facility. Furthermore, the Vestry Committee noted “the tremendous improvement in morale” commenting that “there has been an improvement in ‘The Spirit.’”⁴⁷¹

The Rev. John Teeter



Figure 6: Image reprinted with permission from the files of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

⁴⁶⁹ Letter from Duke Harrison, 20 May 1959, Box 92, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁷⁰ Letter from Owen J. Duncan, Jr., Senior Warden; Walter Jones, Junior Warden; R. C. Wesley; Lynn Knapp; J. C. Moultrie; Carl F. Pinn; Mrs. Irene Mitchell, Secretary; Mrs. Betty Jones, Treasurer, 20 May 1959, Box 92, Folder 24, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

Just a month before Werth's resignation from Good Shepherd, the Rev. John "Jack" Teeter resigned his post as priest-in-charge at Trinity Rocky Mount in protest over his vestry's mandate that Council delegates oppose the integration of Hemlock Haven. Teeter's statement opposed both the stance and the heavy-handedness of a vestry that "would refuse to let a fellow Christian vote as his prayers and conscience direct him to."⁴⁷² Teeter's actions made the news in Rocky Mount and also caught the attention of the wider church.⁴⁷³ Teeter stepped quickly into the void left by McRae Werth. Another white proponent of racial equality, Teeter was to encounter some of the same triumphs and challenges experienced by Werth. Marmion was to say of him: "Jack Teeter made a real contribution to this diocese...his Christian witness in the field of race relations has been courageous and, I believe, responsible. He is not an unthinking extremist, and I have tried to back him in every way possible."⁴⁷⁴

Although not labeled an extremist by the bishop, he was willing to put himself in the path of extreme action. While in his leadership role at Good Shepherd, Teeter invested himself fully in the community. Refusing to enter any segregated space and staging a sit-in along with fellow Lynchburg pastor and activist the Rev. Virgil Wood, Teeter catapulted to Civil Rights' notoriety when he found himself arrested and publicized for his choice of courtroom seating. Teeter's insistence that he be seated with friends in the black section of the courtroom during a hearing for Lynchburg's arrested drug-store sit-in protesters landed him in jail and in newspapers, which

⁴⁷² "Vicar's Resignation Investigated," *The Franklin News Post*, Rocky Mount, VA, 14 April 1959.

⁴⁷³ Among those to comment was the Rev. Cornelius Tarplee, a former Lynchburg rector who had left the diocese for an administrative post with the Episcopal Church, based in New York. In his role as Associate Executive Secretary of the Division of Citizenship of the Episcopal Church, Tarplee had the ear of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Rev. Arthur Lichtenberger.

⁴⁷⁴ Bishop Marmion to the Rev. Alden D. Kelley, Bexley Hall, October 23, 1961, John H. Teeter, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

carried the story of the Episcopal clergyman's insurrection. Of his time in Lynchburg he was later to recall that it was a time "of great pain and of great joy. It was of great pain because of simply finding myself so isolated from my fellow white citizens, being so cut off and what my wife and children had to undergo simply as a result of my role of being a white man in a black church . . . [but] I experienced a great deal of kindness and acceptance far beyond what I expected to find."⁴⁷⁵

Former members of Chapel of the Good Shepherd recall him positively. Delores Haythe remembered Teeter and recalled her parents' feelings about him: "My mother loved [Rev.] Teeter. She thought he was the best thing . . . My Dad loved [him] also. When Teeter got arrested, he said, "I told him not to go down there!"⁴⁷⁶

Teeter, his wife and four children attended the church and brought other white members to Chapel of the Good Shepherd. His effectiveness in the black community was mitigated by his inability to function well in the wider white city of Lynchburg. Reflecting on his time in Lynchburg, Teeter said:

[I]t became harder and harder to function in the community, in the white community. I never had hostile relations in the black community that I was aware of. I experienced a great deal of kindness and acceptance far beyond what I expected to find, I think, and it was when I left here four years later in 1963 it was leaving something that was very hard to do in many ways.⁴⁷⁷

In addition to having the respect of the black community, Teeter earned the respect of his bishop.

A year before Teeter was to leave Lynchburg, Bishop Marmion wrote:

⁴⁷⁵ Gloria W. Cannady, "'Til Justice Rolls Down," WSET Special Broadcast, 2000.

⁴⁷⁶ Delores Haythe, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, April 24, 2015, Ann van de Graaf's home, Rivermont Avenue, Lynchburg, Virginia.

⁴⁷⁷ Cannady, "'Til Justice Rolls Down."

The Church of the Good Shepherd is an integrated⁴⁷⁸ congregation in a very conservative community. Jack is the Vice President of the local chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. Because of his activities on behalf of the Negro members of his congregation and to the community, he has been subject to a good deal of unfortunate publicity and is persona non grata in many places. However, he is smart, able, and courageous.⁴⁷⁹

Teeter's departure in 1963 marked the end of a full-time priest for Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

The Rev. John Eberman added duties at Chapel of the Good Shepherd to his assignment at Emmanuel in Madison Heights and St. Luke's in Pedlar Mills, small communities across the James River from Lynchburg. Eberman's appointment lasted about a year, beginning in October of 1963, before he accepted a call in fall of 1964 to serve as assistant rector at the largest church in the diocese, St. John's Roanoke.⁴⁸⁰

A series of intermittent supply priests and lay leaders kept the doors open for the remaining years. Concerning the series of priests who led the Lynchburg church, former parishioner Patricia Dabney had this to say:

They seemed to want to be there on Sundays, and I don't think that any of them felt that "I've got to go to this black church. I need to put on a good face." It was always the ones seemed to want to be at the church on Sunday. Now, it may not have been that case but sometimes you can go to a church and if there's a priest

⁴⁷⁸ Teeter's family and several of his friends began attending Good Shepherd when he arrived in Lynchburg.

⁴⁷⁹ Bishop Marmion to the Rev. William B. Spofford, Sr., December 31, 1962, John H. Teeter, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁸⁰ Eberman filled the vacancy left by my father, the Rev. Frank Vest, who left a curacy at St. John's to become rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Radford.

there who's made to come to that church to do services for that church you can almost tell that they don't really want to be there [by] listening to the sermon that he's going to give that Sunday. Our priests seemed to—and not all of them were young—I don't think they all were in their 30s back then or 40s, some of them were older and they seemed to want to be at that church to do the services.⁴⁸¹

Helen Witt was not a member of Good Shepherd, but her husband and five children were. Since they were all members, Witt “had to go to that church because I had to take the kids every Sunday.”⁴⁸² Witt’s recollections are in line with Smith’s⁴⁸³:

The people that Bishop Marmion chose to come and do Good Shepherd Church seemed to be the most likeable people, their families and everything. All of them that I met there seemed to have been likeable people. They weren't just there putting on a show trying to pretend that they liked blacks. I think they were genuine.⁴⁸⁴

The September 22, 1966 Executive Board minutes included the closing of Chapel of the Good Shepherd: “The Bishop announced that the consensus of the Vicar and the Committeemen of Good Shepherd, Lynchburg, is that negotiations to discontinue services there should begin.”⁴⁸⁵

The November 17 Executive Board minutes reported that “Good Shepherd Lynchburg has been closed, and [its] members are attending other Lynchburg churches.” The minutes also included a

⁴⁸¹ Patricia Dabney, interview, by Nina V. Salmon, Video, April 24, 2015, Ann van de Graaf's home, Rivermont Avenue, Lynchburg, Virginia.

⁴⁸² Helen Witt, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, April 24, 2015, Ann van de Graaf's home, Rivermont Avenue, Lynchburg, Virginia.

⁴⁸³ I interviewed Dabney and Witt along with Gloria Cannady, Gloria Cardwell, and Delores Hayth.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ 1964-68 Executive Board minutes 6-7-64 through 1-20-68, 1-2, Robert Copenhaver, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

tabled discussion over the closing of St. Philip's in Bedford, merging the church population with nearby St. John's. Aligned with this report is news that the future of another small mission church, Emmanuel Madison Heights, "is under discussion."⁴⁸⁶ The closing of small churches was not limited to the black churches in the diocese. Desegregation, it seems, allowed black members to worship in any church, thus maintaining a separate mission church was deemed unnecessary. According to the January 1967 minutes: "The Rev. Mr. Tyree reported that three missions had been closed in 1966; that the job of the department is not to reduce the missionary work of the Church and that we should review the areas of population growth and be alert to new opportunity. The three missions closed were due to change in social climate and population shift." The closed missions were St. Philip's, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, and Emmanuel Madison Heights, a white congregation in a community adjacent to Lynchburg. The "change in social climate" points to the black churches and the assumption that desegregation allowed for integrated worship. The reference to the population shift is the declining non-white population in Bedford noted in the Unit of Research. The minutes also observed that the "people in Madison Heights are within easy driving distances of the Lynchburg churches."⁴⁸⁷

The property formerly housing Chapel of the Good Shepherd was listed as leased with a purchase option for \$8,000 to another Lynchburg church in the November Executive Board minutes. The terms were "\$200.00 deposit with rent payable at \$60.00 a month for 8 months."⁴⁸⁸ Thus, Chapel of the Good Shepherd ceased to exist. Witt recalled the closing as a question of sustainability:

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ 1964-68 Executive Board minutes 6-7-64 through 1-20-68, 1-2, Robert Copenhaver, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

We were told that all small churches in the diocese were being closed because they did not have the proper amount of rectors to place everywhere, and they also were not getting enough finance from the little churches for the diocese to hire new people. That's what we were told. I had no voice in that, but my husband said, "What must be, must be" but he wasn't happy about it.⁴⁸⁹

History allows us what Bhabha might describe as the "mirror" of memory. One such memory comes from long after the actual event. The following account of Daisey Coles, one-time member of Chapel of the Good Shepherd, was recorded by a former rector⁴⁹⁰ of St. Paul's Episcopal Church:

As I began the sermon in the Maundy Thursday evening service at St. Paul's Lynchburg Virginia in 1970, I was surprised to see someone sitting alone in the dark, unused balcony. It was an elderly black woman appearing very fragile as she peered at me from the shadows.

At the end of the service, she slipped out before I got to the door. It was after Easter that I finally met Daisey Coles living alone in a very modest home a few blocks from St. Paul's. The Lord Jesus had spoken to Daisey and told her that he didn't want her prejudice toward white people to keep her from his table when the Last Supper was celebrated that evening before Good Friday.

She'd had many experiences over her long life that fueled her bias against whites, but the closing down of her church was one of the most difficult to understand. Prior to my coming to St. Paul's in 1969, a sacrifice had been made to speed integration in the Episcopal Church in the area. The all-black parish that

⁴⁸⁹ Witt, interview.

⁴⁹⁰ The Rev. Irv Brown.

Daisey attended was closed and the members were expected to choose one of the all white parishes. Most of them had come to St. Paul's. The majority of the congregation lived nearby. Some, like Daisey, lived within walking distance.

But Daisey was angry and didn't go along with the idea. How could a white Bishop think it was a good idea for an old parish to be closed down? For many years, a devout congregation had worshipped there and much of their history was woven into its traditions and customs. Social as well as religious life was continually nourished there. It was their spiritual home where they developed their relationships with the Lord Jesus and with each other. How could it be good to close down such a place? If folks wanted to "integrate," why did it mean *her* parish had to be closed down? She stopped attending church.⁴⁹¹

Gayatri Spivak famously describes the marginalized voice as muted. Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* helps unfold the necessity of the narrative and its role in creating identity. This silence of the black voice speaks to the ambivalence of the historical artifact. Hybridity contributes to understanding the unintended consequences—the erasure of the black presence in the space that was intended to be created for it. What is interesting about this sermon and the account of Daisey Coles' anger is that no where else is such intense anger documented. Other interviewees expressed either no anger or no memory of anger or only anger revealed in hindsight that was more irritation than anger. The anger is revealed only by way of a white voice telling Daisey's story. The five members of Chapel of the Good Shepherd who together told the story of the closing of their church to me do not share or recall this anger over integration, nor do Vickers, Watkins, or Johnson. Terry raised questions about the need for closing the black

⁴⁹¹ PDF of sermon emailed to me from the Rev. Todd Vie, current rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

church, but the tone was not one of anger. Possibly, white guilt supplied the anger that was added by the voice telling Daisey Coles' story.

St. Luke's, Roanoke

In late 1954, Bishop Marmion contracted with the Rev. Turner W. Morris, who was rector at St. Paul's in Martinsville, to assume the leadership at St. Luke's. In a letter dated November 26, 1954, Bishop Marmion wrote to offer a job, along with a monthly salary of \$500 "to be used for salary and car expense."⁴⁹² To make clear his expectations, Bishop Marmion added:

I think you should arrange to stay in Roanoke each Sunday evening and spend Monday visiting and cultivating the congregation here. That is the only basis on which I think we are justified in making this arrangement. It is being made primarily in the hopes that with your initiative and enthusiasm you can make the congregation grow and provide them with leadership.⁴⁹³

Marmion closed the letter saying, "There seems to be a fertile field here. If you sow the seed you should reap the reward of the harvest."⁴⁹⁴

On January 1, 1955, the Rev. Turner W. Morris was appointed to serve the congregation at St. Luke's in Roanoke, which was still without a permanent home. A few months into Morris's tenure as priest in charge at St. Luke's, Bishop Marmion wrote to the Junior Warden, Woodrow W. Gaitor, with note of a copy to the Rev. Morris, conveying the news of a purchase

⁴⁹² Box 89, Folder 18, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

that would serve as the site for the future St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The letter from Marmion said, in part:

Dear Mr. Gaitor:

This is to say that at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Trustees of the Diocese held today, approval was given for the purchase of the two lots located on the southwest corner of Eleventh Street and Grayson Avenue Northwest in Roanoke for a future St. Luke's church, at a cost of \$3,000.00. ... It is understood that St. Luke's Church will contribute \$1,464.45, the amount you had on hand on March 12, 1955, toward the purchase price and that you will pay off the balance, interest free, as soon as possible.⁴⁹⁵

Subsequent discussions about the property show that the owner raised the purchase price to \$3,150 "on account of some expenses...in connection with the lot" and because "we have no written contract with him I guess we can't help that and Gaitor [who brokered the purchase arrangement] is willing to add the \$150.00."⁴⁹⁶ By November, the burgeoning congregation had determined to purchase an adjacent lot as well because "according to one architect...the lot is not quite large enough for the type of building we want to construct."⁴⁹⁷ The lot housed a small cottage, which "could probably be used as a combined church and parish house."⁴⁹⁸

A meeting with Bishop Marmion and year-end parochial reports indicated an increase in membership; augmenting the budget from a 1955 total of \$1,000 to an anticipated \$1,630 for 1956 in apparent expectation of increased contributions based on the strength of the membership.

⁴⁹⁵ Box 89, Folder 18, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

The 1957 parochial report was the first year the 1114 Grayson Avenue, N.W. address appeared under the St. Luke's listing.

Former St. Luke's parishioner, Michael Terry⁴⁹⁹ recalled the days of the Grayson Avenue church as bustling, healthy, happy days. He remembered that there were "about 30 children in the neighborhood who came for Sunday School lessons." Terry added that the church leaders and Sunday School teachers "kind of tricked us by making it fun." He said that the church "made sure that the kids always felt welcome," serving hot chocolate alongside coffee. It was a neighborhood Cub Scout troop that initially brought Terry and many of his friends to St. Luke's. Terry remembered Bishop Marmion's visits to St. Luke's:

Bishop Marmion came to us like we were his own children or grandchildren and never made any inference or made any distinction between us and anybody else because he said "God loves all children" and he say, now you all doing a wonderful thing here. We were kind of ambassadors of church for the neighborhood.

Leadership challenges, however, persisted and created difficulties for the membership and the momentum of the newly housed church congregation. Notes in what appears to be Bishop Marmion's handwriting on a memo pad dated 8-21-56 indicated that "Mr. Ragsdale called re: Morris."⁵⁰⁰ The notes offered warning that all is not well at St. Luke's indicating that "Attendance has been very poor for the past several months." Explanations, presumably from Mr. Ragsdale followed:

⁴⁹⁹ Michael Terry, interview by Nina V. Salmon, Video, February 13, 2015, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia; Notes and transcripts of interviews included in Appendix D: Oral Histories.

⁵⁰⁰ Douglas N. Ragsdale was a lay leader at St. Luke's; Box 90, Folder 17, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Leadership—Inadequate

Need a driver. Mr. Morris

not getting around

....

Problem—clergyman

He just doesn't have it.

Not his fault.

Somewhere along the line...school let him get by

He's had a fair chance.

Baptized people don't come back.⁵⁰¹

At the close of 1956, after barely two years serving the congregation at St. Luke's in addition to clerical leadership at St. Paul's in Martinsville, the Vestry requested that the Rev. Morris be "relieved of his charge at St. Luke's." The vestry memo offered this explanation for the request: "under the present arrangements Mr. Turner Morris has not been able to fill the bill due to the distance he has to cover."⁵⁰² Subsequent notes indicated that St. Luke's congregants would "Be glad to have a white person as long as he is in Roanoke."⁵⁰³

Morris resigned from the Diocese, effective March 31, 1957, leaving for the Diocese of Upper South Carolina. The bishop sent him off with the assurance of "appreciation of the work you have done in Martinsville and in Roanoke and of your contributions to the life of the Diocese" adding that he was "aware of the many difficulties" Morris has encountered and the

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Notes attributed to conversation with Woodrow Gaitor, a policeman who was serving as junior warden. Box 90, Folder 117, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

realization that “they will have to be dealt with also by your successor, whoever that may be.”⁵⁰⁴ The bishop’s addition to an otherwise obligatorily polite send off acknowledged the complexity of the leadership challenges faced by the St. Luke’s (and St. Paul’s) congregations. While a bishop’s penultimate charge is care of the congregations in the diocese, a primary call is, as indicated by the office of the episcopate, care for the priests under his or her charge. Marmion seemed willing to make necessary adjustments to leadership, yet, as the correspondence with Morris supported, the bishop’s pattern was to be unwilling to settle blame solely with his clergyman.

By 1960, the Treasurer’s report for the first quarter recorded gross income of \$286.74. The report included a note from Woodrow Gaitor, the treasurer, saying, “expenses were greater than our income. No business could operate under similar conditions—neither can St. Luke’s. We are indebted to the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia for 1959—\$370.00.”⁵⁰⁵ In a diocesan questionnaire dated December 18, 1960, St. Luke’s indicated that the average pledge was \$1 per Sunday, with no “large contributors” among the parishioners. The number of pledges had fallen from 31 in the previous year to 25 in 1960. The church listed no rector but indicated that the congregation was “being served by the Rev. Tom Edmunds.”⁵⁰⁶

The lack of a rector was understood to be a cause of the decline in pledges and parishioners at St. Luke’s. Earlier that year, Bishop Marmion wrote of his hope to place a black priest at St. Luke’s in an office memo stating, “I would like to call a Negro clergyman to St. Luke’s and St. Paul’s. However since we are running short on money it occurred to me that I

⁵⁰⁴ Box 90, Folder 16, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵⁰⁵ Box 93, Folder 73, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

should wait and see how the canvass comes out this fall.” Marmion’s archdeacon, the Venerable B. Clifton Reardon, replied:

We have an accumulated balance of some \$8,000.00 in Reserve for Missions. Both of these Congregations have done without Clergy for a long time and the money so allocated has been used to begin other Missions and secure other Clergy. I feel strongly that you should call a Clergyman and let all of us take our chances together in regard to the Canvass. I still believe we will not meet with failure.⁵⁰⁷

An October 1960 report on St. Luke’s Church, submitted by Peter Fulghum, included an overview and assessment of the following areas: Property, Budget, Program, and Social Needs. The property was described as “adequate for about sixty members. It has all the proper alter [sic] pieces and cloths etc. It has a few choir robes for servers and Lay readers. It has a sacristy room, a lavatory, and combination vesting room and kitchen with a stove and sink.” The report further commented on the lot on which the church was situated: “The newly acquired land that extends to the corner has recently been filled and leveled by the people of the church. This makes a valuable piece of property for a future building site.”⁵⁰⁸

The report noted that the church program “is now dormant for lack of a vicar,” but pointed to enough interest among several church members who “secure[d] Clergy for Holy Communion” and held Church School for “more than a few children.” Additionally, St. Luke’s continued with “occasional vestry meetings and a Bible study group of adults [gathering] on Thursday evenings.”⁵⁰⁹ From the persistence of programming in spite of a lack of clergy

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

leadership, Fulghum concluded that “these people are interested in a church, and the congregation seems to think that with a vicar and an active program, the church would grow considerably.” He pointed to the location of St. Luke’s “in a growing negro community [with] permanent homes . . . and not tenements of changing population.” Fulgham observed that the existing population of St. Luke’s was comprised of “leaders of the negro community who want to see their community enriched by Christian Churches.”⁵¹⁰

Woodrow Gaitor, long-time lay leader of St. Luke’s, moved away from Roanoke to Connecticut. In 1963, Bishop Marmion wrote a letter to Gaitor, with the purpose of conveying gratitude for Gaitor and his wife Blanch’s participation in the church. Marmion wrote: “I did not want you to get away from us without telling you how much both of you have meant in the life of the Episcopal Church in Roanoke and in the entire Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. You have served us well on the local level and in the area of the diocese, and we shall never forget the contribution you have made.”⁵¹¹ Gaitor’s participation at St. Luke’s had, in fact, been so significant that his role as lay reader during the years following the departure of the last black clergyman, the Rev. Turner Morris, had been perceived by Michael Terry as clergy leadership. Terry observed that Gaitor and the Rev. Edmunds or the Rev. Beasley, who helped on occasional Sundays “took turns.” Terry recalled what life was like in Roanoke during this time of segregation:

That was the time they had what you call white and colored water fountains...Downtown we had a lunch counter where African-Americans couldn’t sit. You could order your food to go and pay for it with real American dollars but

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Box 93, Folder 5, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

you couldn't sit there and have lunch. That was Roanoke in the 1960s. Also the city bus system, they had a sign, which was a city ordinance, on the bus that said "Whites to the front, colored to the rear."⁵¹²

In the midst of the segregated city, integration was a weekly reality in some of the churches, like St. Luke's: "Everybody drank out of the same chalice," said Terry. "This was 1960. There were mostly African-Americans but there were white families, too."⁵¹³ Terry remembered that students from Hollins College were among those who attended St. Luke's for Sunday worship. Of the shared white and black leadership, Terry commented, "When [Woodrow] Gaitor preached, we had as many whites as blacks, and when the other preacher preached we had as many blacks as whites, so we weren't thinking, 'Oh, this is black week or this is white week.'"⁵¹⁴ As involved as Gaitor was, however, he was not an ordained priest.⁵¹⁵ He moved from the role as warden to lay reader in order to anchor the leadership following Morris' departure.

Clergy leadership returned to St. Luke's in the summer of 1963. A letter from Bishop Marmion to the Senior Warden of St. Luke's opened with the statement, "As of this date, I have appointed the Rev. James C. Welsh Vicar of St. Luke's Church, Roanoke, with the

⁵¹² Terry, interview.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Terry, Interview.

⁵¹⁵ Woodrow Wilson Gaitor (1918-2000) graduated from Florida A&M University and before that, St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia. He left Roanoke for Hartford, Connecticut where he worked for the city, first in the recreation department. His career culminated with a four-year stint (1980-84) as the city's first African-American city manager. On Dec. 23, 2000, Eric M. Weiss, staff writer for the *Hartford Courant* includes this accolade among others, in the announcement of his death: "One of [Gaitor's] most notable achievements was just surviving as Hartford city manager for four years and leaving the job voluntarily, a fate shared by few who have served in that position. It would take another 13 years before a Hartford manager equaled his length of service."

understanding that he will devote himself full time to this work during the summer months.”⁵¹⁶ The letter detailed the intent to extend a call for full-time employment, if all parties were amenable and if the bishop deemed the progress at St. Luke’s to have been sufficient. Bishop Marmion included the possibility of coupling the congregation with St. Paul’s in the agreement if full-time work was not warranted at St. Luke’s.⁵¹⁷ Separate pages of handwritten notes indicated that the July 8 letter was actually dictated on July 17, with the date altered to reflect an earlier telephone conversation and earlier situate the employment agreement.⁵¹⁸ The notes also contained details of the terms of employment as specified in the letter: salary-\$4,600; travel-\$400 per year, plus 2.5 cents per mileage; pension-transfer from Milwaukee. Another notation stipulates the goal: “Trial basis for a reasonable length of time—Go all out meanwhile.” At the top of the page of notes was this statement: “Today the world is trying to erase once and for all the inequalities of race & color.”⁵¹⁹ The bishop seemed to be reconciling his inability to locate black leadership for the congregation in Roanoke by making such a note that called for erasure of distinctions between black and white boundaries.

Welsh, a white clergyman, had been interested in St. Luke’s since before his time in seminary. As a newly admitted postulant who was soon to begin seminary, Welsh wrote in an April 3, 1951 letter to Bishop Phillips: “I wish we were doing more for those people of St. Luke’s. They are so wonderful, and so faithful in their attendance, and so small. I have come to

⁵¹⁶ Bishop Marmion to George Coleman, 8 July 1963, Box 92, Folder 73, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ In a post-script, Bishop Marmion wrote, “Dear Jim: I am sorry I was late in getting this letter written. I meant for you to relay our telephone conversation to Mrs. Eversole the day it took place.”

⁵¹⁹ Box 92, Folder 73, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

feel very close to them.” He continued saying, “in a way I am sorry for them—being so near the edge of the Church but still loving it as if they were in the midst of the Church’s care.” He spoke of their devotion: “They have a spirit there that must be more than mere habit” and offered a hope for the future: “I hope someday there is a St. Luke’s Church. But then, we all do.” Welsh concluded his letter asking, in a way that names without naming Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness but recognizing precisely the difficulty Du Bois articulated: “Tell me, Sir, are all Missions that way? Seemingly in the sidewash, yet being the Church all the time.”⁵²⁰

Of Welsh, the Bishop had written to the Dean of Virginia Theological Seminary, “He has been considering the ministry for some time. He is a man who, after receiving his Bachelor’s degree, has worked for the past year. He is a person of composure and unusually alert mentally, and gives promise of considerable development.”⁵²¹

Welsh had spent time at several other parishes in the diocese in the nearly ten years between his ordination to the priesthood and his appointment to St. Luke’s. He also served congregations in the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky and Milwaukee.⁵²²

In August of 1963, Welsh led four parish meetings at St. Luke’s. The stated purpose of those meetings was “to deepen understanding of sense of Mission and to think of program for St. Luke’s in light of this new understanding.”⁵²³ The four meetings explored the work of the

⁵²⁰ Jim Welsh, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Welsh was ordained to the diaconate on July 14, 1954. His ordination to the priesthood was delayed because of some deficiencies in his knowledge of the Canons as letters in his folder at the diocesan headquarters reveal. These deficiencies and recommendation for additional study were reported to the newly elected bishop, William Marmion. Welsh was subsequently ordained to the priesthood at Grace Episcopal Church, Massies Mill on Friday, June 10, 1955.

⁵²³ Box 93, Folder 73, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

church and of St. Luke's in particular. The visioning session concluded with a list of nine action items:

1. door-to-door calling
2. calling of former students of St. Paul's School
3. newsletters
4. week night services
5. Sunday adult classes
6. revise community youth program
7. creat[e] youth program for Episcopal children
8. invite diocesan leaders to help train us
9. a project to raise money to redecorate sanctuary⁵²⁴

In a letter dated September 16, 1963, Bishop Marmion extended a call to Welsh "to become Vicar of St. Luke's Roanoke." Marmion closed the invitation for employment saying: "I was greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm shown for your work by the Vestry and the response they have made to your leadership during the past summer, and I look forward with great expectations to the future with you in charge of the congregation."⁵²⁵ Welsh's personal life was in turmoil. Letters between the bishop and Welsh's wife, Georgetta Abbott Welsh ("Abbie"), began in November, two months after Welsh began work at St. Luke's. A separation from his wife had put his authority as a priest in precarious position, a fact noted by Abbie, in one of her letters to

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

Bishop Marmion. On Wednesday, April 22, 1964 she wrote: “I know that you will be, at best, given a lot of trouble because of us.”⁵²⁶

By 1965, the couple had reconciled. Abbie returned to Virginia with their young daughter Hannah. Welsh was to leave his post to become director of Hemlock Haven. In his April 25, 1965 resignation letter to the bishop, Welsh wrote:

It is with a certain amount of sadness that I submit my resignation as Priest-in-Charge of St. Luke’s and St. Paul’s. The association with these two congregations has been a happy one—renewing my ties from college days with St. Luke’s and getting acquainted with the fine folk at St. Paul’s. The man who takes my place will find people capable of much loyalty to their church and to him. I hope that he has a vision of the possibilities before them, and the endurance to bring a portion of it into reality.⁵²⁷

A black lay leader closed out the life of St. Luke’s. Duke Harrison, who was on a path to ordained ministry, was listed as lay leader in 1965 diocesan records. St. Luke’s officially discontinued services on January 31, 1966. News of the closure of St. Luke’s appeared in the Roanoke newspaper. The reporter described the transfer of families from St. Luke’s to nearby Episcopal Churches as “bringing about the first general desegregated congregations in Protestant churches in this area.”⁵²⁸ The article reported that the Rev. James Welsh, the last priest assigned

⁵²⁶ Jim Welsh, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Frances Stebbins. “Episcopal Diocese Ends Services At Negro Church.” *The Roanoke World-News*. Wed. Feb. 16, 1966.

to part-time work at the parish, had begun work for the diocese, overseeing Christian education, college work, and social relations.⁵²⁹

Small congregation size (and budgets) and the long history of difficulty in finding clergy leadership led to the closure of these small churches. The missions had provided services for blacks when access to white congregations was not possible. The 1967 diocesan journal article, headlined “...And New Directions For Missions,” stated:

As a nation, we are engaged in a struggle to realize the ideal we have always proclaimed of the equality of all men before the law. As a church, we are engaged in a parallel struggle to realize in our common life the ideal of the unity of all men in Christ. In the context of these twin movements, it was possible to close these missions and invite their members to attend an Episcopal church of their choice in those cities.⁵³⁰

Twin movements indeed indicate both problem (a dearth of black leadership) and problem solved (folding struggling black congregations into more viable white bodies) from the viewpoint of the bishop for whom race relations was a justice issue to which he was bound on the basis of moral, legal, and divine authority.⁵³¹

St. Paul's, Martinsville

1952-56	Turner Wesley Morris
1957-62	Vacant
1963-64	William D. Henderson, Priest-in-Charge
1965	Duke Harrison, Lay Minister
1966	Carlos A. Loop, Priest-in-Charge
1967	Vacant
1968	Arthur A. Brown, Supply Priest

⁵²⁹ “Social Relations” is the term used to describe racial relations.

⁵³⁰ *Southwestern Episcopalian* (1967): April, 7.

⁵³¹ See footnote 411.

The Rev. Turner W. Morris began his service as rector at St. Paul's on November 1, 1951. As the lone black clergyman in the diocese, he reportedly offered prayers for the missions at noon during the 1953 Council. Bishop Marmion consecrated the St. Paul's Church building on October 30, 1955, six months after its official completion.⁵³² Parishioner Bill Vickers recalled Morris's time as the priest at St. Paul's:

Martinsville did not have a swimming pool that blacks could attend at that time. He would offer to take us to Danville where they did have a swimming pool that blacks could attend. And we all looked forward to that. I think he was the first to stay in a house that was secured by the church, the rectory.⁵³³

Several years into his time at St. Paul's, Morris took on part-time leadership of St. Luke's, the black parish in Roanoke. Morris was not eager to split his time, but an apparent financial shortfall at St. Paul's contributed to his decision. Correspondence revealed a lapse in St. Paul's contributions to the Church Pension Fund.⁵³⁴ The shortfall seemed to have led to the financial solution of sharing Morris. In a letter to the bishop, Morris said of his new post at St. Luke's:

This seems to be what the members of the Vestry want. It is not my desire, but for such people of that kind, there is nothing that we can do but give this plan a

⁵³² "Saint Paul's Church," *Unit of Research: Study of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia. 1956.

⁵³³ Vickers, interview.

⁵³⁴ Parishes are canonically required to make retirement contributions to clergy pension fund accounts.

try. They believe we can build up membership [at St. Paul's] and then take a new look at the situation.⁵³⁵

The situation at neither parish improved. Handwritten notes in the bishop's hand recorded key points from the perspective of both parishes. Notations under the heading "1st meeting with Martinsville Vestry" included jottings such as "better off a year ago," "arrangement with St. Luke's but no improvement," and "attitude among both groups."⁵³⁶

Morris resigned from both churches effective March 31, 1957, requesting that Bishop Marmion send his Letters Dimissory to the Diocese of Upper South Carolina.⁵³⁷ Letters of support for Morris pointed to a schism at St. Paul's. One parishioner wrote: "We regret very much that Father Morris is leaving us. I say we because I am expressing the sentiments of three fourths of Fathers [sic] membership or rather St. Paul's membership."⁵³⁸ The letter referenced the "five devils" of the parish, one of whom "even went so far in a Church meeting as to say he [Morris] should resign. She has also remarked that he is not her Priest." On the fourth page of the seven-page handwritten letter, the following passage was underlined, presumably by the recipient: "I honestly hope that no other Priest steps into St. Paul's until they feel he can be respected and treated as one."⁵³⁹ Another letter of support stated:

⁵³⁵ Turner W. Morris to Bishop Marmion, Box 90, Folder 16, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵³⁶ Box 90, Folder 16, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵³⁷ Turner W. Morris to Bishop Marmion, 1 February 1957, Box 90, Folder 16, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵³⁸ Mrs. Robert G. Dodson to Bishop Marmion, 17 March 1957, Box 90, Folder 16, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

I am well aware of the fact that [Morris] is leaving a congregation which is enmeshed on a background of schism and personality conflict; however, I am sure that his efforts notwithstanding impediments inherent in the nature of things prevalent among his parishioners, cannot be construed as deprecatory. For in turbulent times such as these, when the inviolate right of freedom of religious conscience is being rapaciously attacked, he has nobly expended himself in pursuit of the total aspirations of the goals for better living here in Martinsville.⁵⁴⁰

It would be several years before another priest would serve in a regular capacity at St. Paul's, though no more black clergy would be assigned for many years. Diocesan records list the clergy position as vacant from 1957 to 1962. From spring of 1963 to fall of 1964, a retired engineer-turned-priest served St. Paul's. The Rev. William D. Henderson was ordained a priest at age 69 on March 22, 1959.⁵⁴¹ As required by church canons, the Rev. Henderson had retired from full-time ministry at age 72. Once retired from full-time ministry, he served several churches in the western part of the diocese, including St. Peter's Callaway, St. John's Ferrum, and Christ Church Big Stone Gap, in a part-time capacity at several of these smaller parishes until Bishop Marmion requested his assistance at St. Paul's in Martinsville. Henderson's handwritten resume included a description of his tenure at St. Paul's as "an enjoyable collateral assignment."⁵⁴²

⁵⁴⁰ Gregory H. Swanson to Bishop Marmion, 19 March 1957, Box 90, Folder 16, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia, 1905-1990, Ms1985-004, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁵⁴¹ Henderson's file contains numerous notes of appreciation as well as acknowledgment of his 100th birthday. Henderson, who was born in 1890, died on April 25, 1994 at the age of 103.

⁵⁴² William D. Henderson, Clergy Folder, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

Following Henderson's time at St. Paul's, the congregation once more fell to lay leadership, vacancy, and supply clergy. Duke Harrison, a black seminarian from Chapel of the Good Shepherd was placed in charge for a time, followed by the Rev. Carlos Arbra Loop, a PhD in Latin and Romance languages, and then the ecumenically minded Rev. Arthur Henry Brown, another academic, trained at both the Moravian Seminary and at Princeton. Brown had served at Peakland Baptist Church in Lynchburg before seeking ordination in the Episcopal Church.

Although the town of Martinsville showed promise for an ever-increasing membership in the black Episcopal Church, the post-World War II boom in industry and population that warranted Bishop Marmion's decision to keep the small black church open in hopes of future growth was never fully realized. The textile industry that brought much of the post-war population surge to Martinsville in the 1940s and 50s peaked in the early 1970s, falling off sharply by the new millennium. St. Paul's stands alone in the diocese of Southwestern Virginia as a historically black church whose doors remain open today. The Martinsville church is included in the Episcopal Church's Directory of Black Congregations by Diocese, which includes 323 churches.⁵⁴³ The parochial report lists the number of congregants at 13.

Post Caesura

The years of controversy and the struggles in the diocese forever changed the direction of the black churches in Southwestern Virginia. A battle fought and ostensibly won, a victory that claimed space for blacks and whites alongside one another in all places, created on the one hand freedoms, but on the other, an odd inversion of freedoms in an assumption that led, in part, to the closing of three of the black churches in Southwestern Virginia. With full rights and access

⁵⁴³ "Directory of Black Congregations by Diocese," *Episcopal Church*, April 2014, <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/document/directory-black-congregations-diocese>.

afforded to black members, along with difficulty finding clergy to staff small churches, particularly black clergy, and the struggles of small congregations to remain viable, closing the black churches and inviting congregants to join neighboring white congregations must have seemed a logical step to the white leadership. With the claiming of freedoms, nonetheless, came the closing of St. Philip's, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, and St. Luke's.

Chapter 5

Minding the Gap

The life of memory exceeds the historic event by keeping alive the traces of images and words. Cultural memory, however, is only partially a mirror, cracked and encrusted, that sheds its light on the dark places of the present, waking a witness here, quickening a hidden fact there, bringing you face to face with that anxious and impossible temporality, the recognition of the now.

— *Homi Bhabha, On Global Memory*

Various social and cultural theories can help explain why the mere merging of black and white churches did not resolve the problem of racial inequities. Bishop William Marmion reacted to the injustice of the Jim Crow era of forced separation of blacks and whites into a dual-standard system that favored whites. He read, thought, studied, and prayed over the diminished dignity experienced by blacks in American society and, as evidenced in his public addresses and private writing, determined that dismantling oppressive systems in the church that perpetuated segregation was the clear, just, and right action. Bishop Marmion's focus on halting the oppressive system became mired in the immediacy of the controversy—the moment of implementation, assuming a binary system, and, as a result, failed to anticipate the “hither and thither”⁵⁴⁴ of integration. While in many ways the black churches in the diocese had come to represent cultural pluralism—places where black identity emerged from the midst of the dominant white surrounding culture—in so many other ways, they remained remnants of the paternalism that built them. As the one church in the diocese that was initially formed as a black church and allowed to remain open, St. Paul's stands as the lone exception. It is exceptional, too,

⁵⁴⁴ I am fascinated that both DuBois and Bhabha use this term. Bhabha explains it to mean a going backward and forward, and so I think of it as moving on either side of that fixed point in a historical moment to look around at what that moment will come to mean—the “enunciative now” that Bhabha talks about.

in that it was created and formed from the energy and hopes of a group of black Episcopalians seeking a church, not an extant white population seeking a place to “do mission” unto black townspeople. Du Bois and Bhabha help us to understand some of the implications of integration but this exploration and in particular the raised voices of black members of St. Philip’s, Good Shepherd, St. Luke’s, and St. Paul’s, highlight the gaps and evoke many more questions that invite further study. Such study might look more closely at demographic trends and parochial reports, possibly in comparisons to other dioceses. Continued excavation of black voices will certainly enrich the history of racial integration.

“The Race Issue” in Southwestern Virginia

Hindsight reveals the moment of integration in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia to us almost as a fixed point in time. Possibly it seemed that way to the bishop, clergy, and people of the diocese, too. The fixed point was the first summer youth camp in 1957 at the newly purchased diocesan conference center—Hemlock Haven. The diocese delayed opening the camp after purchasing the conference center in order to study “the race issue.” A committee was elected, and lay people and clergy from neighboring dioceses and across the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia were surveyed and interviewed. The energy that began to swirl around the diocese focused on the single central point: integration. It became, perhaps, a bifurcated issue, not a multivalent one. The fixed point was really a series of events surrounding the diocesan youth camps and the integration of churches in the diocese.

Du Bois's Double Consciousness

W. E. B. Du Bois offers a place to start in the attempt to understand the gaps that contributed to the unintended consequence of Bishop Marmion's leadership in desegregating the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Du Bois's articulation of double consciousness and of the veil illustrate and augment much of what Derrida points to with his concept of "différance." Similar also is Stuart Hall's awareness of "belongingness" as a central human tendency or aim.⁵⁴⁵ Double consciousness here applies specifically to the integration of black Episcopalians into white churches in the diocese. Of the four black parishes in the diocese, three were shut down and the congregations invited to choose a neighboring white church. Thus, Episcopalians, who were black and who previously worshipped and gathered in community at a particular parish, were at once told to embrace their Episcopal identity in a new worshipping community, thus bearing the double identity of being Episcopalians and being black—and in every case coming into an extant white majority. Michael Terry, former member of St. Luke's, had this to say:

It was an interesting time because there never was a bump in the road for us at St. Luke's and when they closed the church, I think, I don't want to say necessarily disband the church but a lot of people just felt disjointed and they never felt that they fit into the other churches, the St. James, the St. Elizabeth's, St. John's, some people St. Paul's and [the church] gets fragmented... The church just got fragmented. That was to me a big blow.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁵ Stuart Hall, "Who Needs Identity?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage Publications, [1996] 2011), 1-17.

⁵⁴⁶ Terry, Interview.

Terry experienced the loss of his church and expressed awareness of feeling marginalized, and yet the comment was verbalized matter-of-factly and with a laugh. His articulation was not really with an expectation that the reversal of the situation would have actually occurred, and as discussed previously, he showed no anger.

Double consciousness as it is explained by Du Bois is as relevant to blacks in the mid 20th century as it had been 50 years earlier. The inherent danger of double consciousness is the growing awareness of a “dead-weight of social poverty.”⁵⁴⁷ What the blacks of Du Bois’s time endured as well as those in the Jim Crow south was “the facing of so vast a prejudice [which] could not but bring the inevitable self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals which ever accompany repression and breed an atmosphere of contempt and hate.”⁵⁴⁸ Blacks who were enfolded into a white church must have then faced not only the awareness of prejudice in the community that surrounded them but in the community that invited them inside as well. The invitation bears within it the paternalism that suggests also admittance into an integrated body. Because the movement to close the black churches came at the direction of the white hierarchy of the church, the structural assimilation effectively became a backward step mitigating black agency. As we peer into the “cracked mirror” of the past, we can glimpse three black churches once segregated in oppressive conditions of the antebellum and Jim Crow south. In what we might consider an unintentional but ironic twist, members of those three churches were denied an opportunity for cultural pluralism by being thrust into the minority of the wider white population once again, upon the forced closing of their churches. The white power, arguably aiming to right the wrong of segregation, took majority status from the members of the small black church and placed them, albeit lovingly, into the context of minority once again.

⁵⁴⁷ Du Bois, *Souls*, 8.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Before the integration of the churches, Du Bois's concept of double consciousness was brought to bear on black members of the black Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia only inasmuch as the congregants were Americans and were also black. Du Bois describes the feeling as "a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."⁵⁴⁹ Once the churches were integrated, double consciousness was perhaps heightened or given a new dimension as black members wrangled with the added identifier of *Episcopalian*—and yet rather than giving them any access or agency, it is possible that this signifier served to heighten the difficulties. Du Bois suggested that radicalism and hypocrisy were two possible results of double consciousness.⁵⁵⁰ If we apply Du Bois's double consciousness to those blacks who were folded into the white churches, we see that those members were suddenly faced with identifying themselves as blacks, Americans, *and* Episcopalians—and as black Episcopalians worshipping in a white congregation. This complexity must have contributed to what Du Bois describes as "the inevitable self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals which ever accompany repression and breed in an atmosphere of contempt and hate."⁵⁵¹ Michael Terry had this to say:

[W]e've already got to conform. Why not bring people over to us instead of we going over to the other people. Because once you fragment that church, that body, you never get it back together again . . . And I think some people, and if you give them an opportunity . . . then they'll come to St. Luke's and say, "Wow, it's a nice church." [St. Luke's] was a small church. And I guess that was a thing

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 90.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 8.

you look at, too. But the bigness of the building doesn't necessarily make the place it's going to be any warmer and it doesn't make it any better religious experience because we had a wonderful religious experience in that church we had. Why we got to cross over all the time? Somebody should cross over to us, you know . . . You won't get the same as the St. Luke's experience. You maybe see one or two people that you know. But then you kind of go, "All I see is white people. I don't see any black people." People feel comfortable in their own skin.⁵⁵²

Not Just in Virginia

At the time when these churches were desegregating, schools and public places were facing their own struggles to move gracefully, or at least as smoothly as possibly, into the new landscape of America's interracial reality. Many of the schools, which had begun to slog past the "deliberate-ness" of the "all deliberate speed" mandate in the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling, were slowly being desegregated, though it was creeping up on being nearly a decade since the initial 1954 ruling.⁵⁵³ Nationally, after establishing some footing, desegregation, the civil rights movement, and an emerging effort to claim black pride moved at a new pace:

"Events moved so fast in the 1960s, and with such force, that the new realities could appear in

⁵⁵² Terry, interview.

⁵⁵³ Wallenstein, *Cradle*, 344-359.

the blink of an eye.”⁵⁵⁴ The beginnings of Black Power movements were starting to erupt, and demonstrators, both peaceful and of the agitating sort, were a mark of this radical era.⁵⁵⁵

Episcopal Church Two-Stepping Forward and Back

In the Episcopal Church, the dance continued: one step forward; two steps back. The 1961 General Convention adopted a resolution that expressed “regret for past and present discrimination within the Church” and declared prejudice to be inconsistent with the Gospel.⁵⁵⁶ It was soon after this forward-moving resolution that Dr. Martin Luther King’s son was denied admission on the basis of race at Lovett, an Episcopal day school in Atlanta.⁵⁵⁷ The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) was formed and functioned as a watchdog for racial concerns in the Episcopal Church. ESCRU landed on the principle that Episcopalians, regardless of color, would cease acting as separate worshipping communities, positing that “Full equality [would] only be achieved by bringing whites and blacks into a new covenant of unity.”⁵⁵⁸ The Episcopal Church archives note that ESCRU set forward “a radical message of Christian social gospel” requiring “a conversion of the heart.”⁵⁵⁹ As testimony to its

⁵⁵⁴ Jason Sokol. *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006, 215.

⁵⁵⁵ Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. New York: Random House, 2013; Steinberg.

⁵⁵⁶ “Acts of Convention: Resolution,” *The Archives of the Episcopal Church*. http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution.

⁵⁵⁷ Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, 135; “The Archives.”

⁵⁵⁸ “The Archives.”

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

effectiveness, the Archives contend that “ESCRU’s message was a bold and daring confrontation at the time, and it did, indeed, open the eyes of the power structure of the Church.”⁵⁶⁰

ESCRU participated with Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in protests in Georgia in 1961, and, several years later, King spoke at the ESCRU banquet during the 1964 General Convention in St. Louis. He also addressed the House of Deputies, urging Episcopal participation in the fight for racial equity in the South.⁵⁶¹ Among those in the House of Deputies was Thurgood Marshall, who in 1964 was a New York federal appeals court judge. Although King was honored by the House of Deputies during his visit (which was the day before he was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize), “a few white deputies refused either to stand or to applaud,” and a resolution was defeated that called for support of the right to disobey laws that were unjust, a core principle of King’s.⁵⁶² Marshall “stormed out of the meeting hall and left the convention.”⁵⁶³

The question of protest and civil disobedience, however, carried with it more than just questions of race and possibly complicated matters with the political baggage. Nonetheless, the Presiding Bishop, the Most Reverend Arthur Lichtenberger, preached about Christian values and beliefs, calling upon members of the church to take up the fight for justice and involve themselves in political maneuverings. Lichtenberger said, “I am quite weary of listening to statements of principle given with the evident intent of putting off any action on such

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid; Although it is beyond the purview of this particular project, I will note that when ESCRU dissolved in 1970, some said it was because there was no longer a need for a watchdog; others would recognize it as the backsliding borne of complacency.

⁵⁶¹ Shattuck, 145; General Convention is the legislative body of the Episcopal Church. It meets every three years and is a bicameral body, composed of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. Elected lay (4) and clergy (4) deputies plus alternates in each order from each diocese compose the House of Deputies. In 1964, there were close to 100 dioceses.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

principles.”⁵⁶⁴ He anchored his text theologically, commenting that “God so loved the world—the *world*—that He gave his only begotten son, Jesus Christ.”⁵⁶⁵

Other Denominations

The conversations in the Episcopal Church reflected the wider culture. The pressure to maintain the status quo grated against the tug to oppose oppressive structures. In the Baptist Church, for example, a similar tug of war placed scripture at the center, each side invoking it as evidence. The segregationists wielded, among other passages, this one from the Book of Acts used by the Reverend Carey Daniel in a sermon titled “God the Original Segregationist” delivered at the First Baptist Church of West Dallas, Texas: “And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”⁵⁶⁶ Counter Daniel with black Baptist preacher Ralph Abernathy who posited, in a sermon titled “Accepting the Challenge of this Age,” that “God had chosen black people to save the soul of America.”⁵⁶⁷ Abernathy’s biblical evidence included three passages from Isaiah: “If we will accept the challenge, then ‘every valley will be exalted’ . . . and not only will black and white people live together, but ‘the lion will lie down with the lamb’ . . . and men will ‘study war no more.’”⁵⁶⁸

In the Methodist Church, the back and forth tug was no less evident. In 1952, the Rev. Edgar A. Love called for “local churches, colleges, universities, theological schools, hospitals and homes [to] take steps immediately to open their doors to all people alike, without distinction

⁵⁶⁴ “The Archives.”

⁵⁶⁵ Shattuck, 144.

⁵⁶⁶ Andrew M. Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict: Black and White Baptists and Civil Rights, 1947-1957*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987. 94.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

as to race, creed or color.”⁵⁶⁹ Charles C. Parlin, a layman, voiced the dissenting opinion, claiming that the passage of Love’s resolution would “require reharmonizing the whole *Discipline*.”⁵⁷⁰

In many ways, the denominational struggles hearkened back to an earlier time when slaves and free blacks were brought in various ways and by multiple methods into the different denominations. Some churches (like the South Carolina missions of 1695) baptized slaves; others allowed separate churches to spring up for black members. Some called for blacks and whites worshipping together; as early as the 18th century, though, Charles Irons observes that evangelical churches embraced slaves so “they could supervise them.”⁵⁷¹ Critical Race theorist Derrick Bell might find this evidence for integration “converge[ing] with the interests of whites.”⁵⁷² No doubt, the motivations were varied, some more about dignity and others about power, fear, capital, or control. Yet, it was the hesitant step forward, two steps back that characterized the Episcopal Church and the similar tug of war in other mainline denominations that led King to express his disappointment with the “white moderate.” King pointed to the shortcomings of those whom he called “more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice.”⁵⁷³ With rhetorical mastery to pound his point home, King offered his lament:

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I

⁵⁶⁹Peter C. Murray, *Methodists and the Crucible of Race, 1930-1975*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. 67.

⁵⁷⁰ *Discipline* refers to the book that outlines the canons and doctrines of the Methodist Church.

⁵⁷¹ Irons, “Origins of Proslavery Christianity,” 184.

⁵⁷² Derrick A. Bell, Jr. “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma.” *Harvard Law Review*. Harvard Law Review Association: 1980, 523.

⁵⁷³ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” 16 April 1963, para. 19.

had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality.⁵⁷⁴

King noted that it was the white moderate, the church, and his “fellow clergymen,” who caused harm by lagging. Inaction was harmful. Though the approaches vary, one embracing non-violence, the other seeing violence as a necessary means, King and Fanon stand on similar ground here:

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was “well timed” in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word “Wait!” It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity.⁵⁷⁵

King’s urgency and frustration give voice to the controversy swirling around much of the South. S. Jonathan Bass offers a glimpse into the white point of view in his article about Alabama’s Episcopal bishop, the Rt. Rev. Charles Colcock Jones Carpenter, one of the recipients of King’s letter. According to Carpenter’s son, “[Bishop Carpenter] was trying to hold the diocese together, hold Birmingham together and move forward.”⁵⁷⁶ Bass offers his analysis: “King . . .

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., para. 20.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., para. 11.

⁵⁷⁶ S. Jonathan Bass, “Not Time Yet: Alabama’s Episcopal Bishop and the End of Segregation in the Deep South.” *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 1994, 248.

had a consistent and clear vision for the future. Carpenter, whose ideals were being challenged, lacked a clear vision of what should replace the old order.”⁵⁷⁷

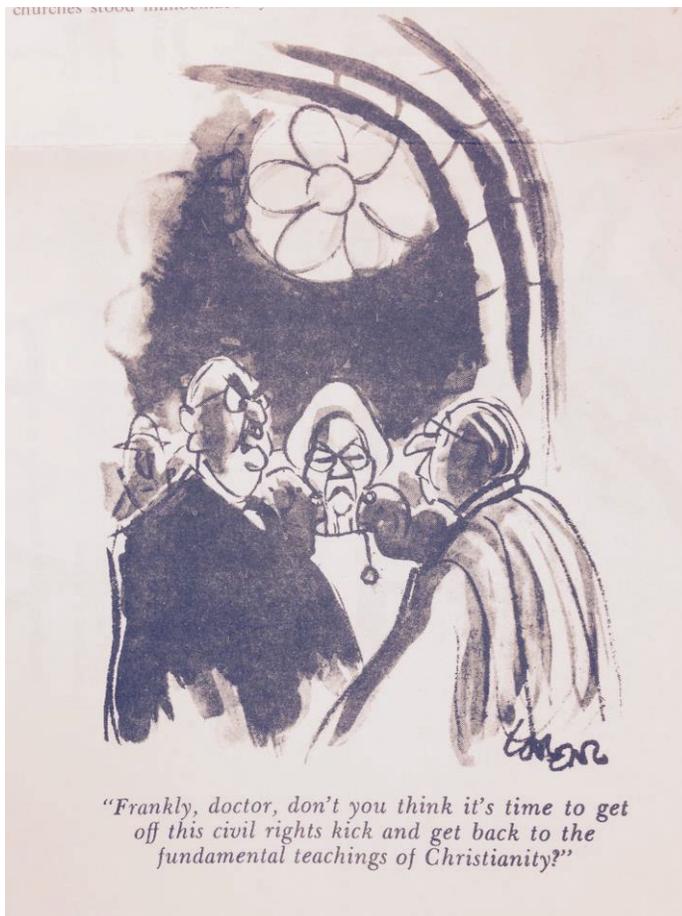


Figure 6: *New Focus*, May-June 1971⁵⁷⁸

Bishop Marmion

While it is impossible to know fully what drove or motivated Bishop Marmion, evidence supports a reasoned conclusion that he was operating as a man of faith who adhered deeply to an understanding of racial segregation as oppositional to Christian teachings. As a first year seminarian, the then twenty-three year old Marmion made a list of nine “rules for living.” He

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 248.

⁵⁷⁸ Clipping found in Bishop Marmion’s files at Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

recorded this list in his daily journal with this explanation: “One night not long ago I became very pensive & put down in writing some of the thoughts that came into my mind. Though evidencing, I think, a great lack of spirituality, I am writing them here for what they mean to me.”⁵⁷⁹ Many of those guidelines were of a practical nature, dealing with such things as time management and self-discipline. Among the items on his list, however, is this self-mandate: “Never seek praise or esteem of men for its own sake. Follow your own conviction after due thought & allowance. Put away the opinion of others if it makes you stifle your highest inner feelings.”⁵⁸⁰ Subsequent writings support the conclusion that Bishop Marmion was a widely read man of thoughtful deliberation and conviction. In a sermon that Marmion preached during his days during the 1940s as rector of St. Mary’s in Birmingham, Alabama, he included references to H. G. Wells, Langston Hughes, and Booker T. Washington. In his sermon titled, “Our Sharpened Race Problem,” Marmion said, “[r]ace prejudice today destroys national unity, hinders our country’s cause, retards human progress and puts a stumbling block in the road to God’s Kingdom.” To support his position, he quoted Wells as saying that “there is no more evil thing in this present world than that of racial prejudice.”⁵⁸¹ Marmion’s notes cited data from a *Survey Graphic Magazine* on the condition of blacks in America (e.g. demographic data, life expectancy, education, economic status). He extrapolated an argument in which he set forth the bleak picture of a poor stratum of society that represented “a spiritual problem [with] political, economic, and social angles.”⁵⁸² Marmion then included in its entirety Langston Hughes’ poem

⁵⁷⁹ William H. Marmion 1929-1981, Files, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ “Race Relations Today,” sermon packet, William H. Marmion, 1929-1981, Files, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

“How About It, Dixie?” which trumpets to war-time America the following claim in its final verse:

Freedom’s not just
to be won Over There
It means Freedom at home, too—
Now—right here!⁵⁸³

Marmion stated that the race problem “won’t be solved...until we bring our religion to play upon it.” The sermon included a litany of listings. He offered six reasons, in addition to the war, that the racial situation is “seriously aggravated”: ideological, military, international, industrial, political, social.⁵⁸⁴ He also listed four possible courses of action: the first two offered with satirical flair: deport or shoot “all Negroes”; the third option, with national appeal to the war effort if not to human compassion: “Keep Negroes in subjection as Hitler has done the Jews”; and the final option, with considerable expansion upon the suggestion: “Learn to live with the Negroes as brothers.” This last, Marmion suggested, was “the Christian solution” and the rightful offering for “equity and justice for all racial groups.”⁵⁸⁵ Marmion concluded with a four-point action plan for the church that intended to 1) claim the solution as a Christian one; 2) seek information about race relations, pointing out “specific evils wherever they exist”; 3) pursue “mutual understanding, good will, and cooperation among people of different races [and] interracial membership in groups, forums, and discussions”; and 4) put forward worship and education in a peaceful atmosphere, working “to bring new life out of death.”⁵⁸⁶ These lists were

⁵⁸³ Marmion cited the October 20, 1942 *New Masses*.

⁵⁸⁴ “Race Relations Today,” sermon packet, *Marmion, William H. 1929-1981, Files, Evans House, Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*, Roanoke, Virginia, 3-6.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

steps Marmion deemed to be concrete ways to enact his moral, philosophical, and theological guiding principles.

In 1945, Marmion's public stance on race in Birmingham landed him a spot on a Citizens Forum titled "What is Prejudice?" on WBRC, a Birmingham television station, along with a Catholic priest, Father John Fox, Rabbi Milton Grafman, and Miss Marjorie Rank, Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Dr. Douglas Hunt of Birmingham Southern College was the discussion moderator. Each panelist was invited to speak.

Themes of war and peace, morality, and race permeated Marmion's culture and his own intellectual pursuits. His private papers, which are currently housed at Evans House, the diocesan headquarters, include hundreds of packets of sermons and other collections, labeled by title, and usually topic, along with places and dates he delivered the sermon or talk. One packet is labeled "Race Relations" and titled "Questions and Answers: Our Sharpened Racial Problem." The packet includes the following listing as just a small sampling:

1. Missionary Society – V.T.S.⁵⁸⁷ – Alexandria, Va – Dec. 5, 1961
2. Roanoke Chapter – V. C. H. R. – Roanoke, Va – Dec. 11, 1961
3. The Seminary Journal (V.T.S.) Alexandria, Va – March, 1962
4. St. Peter's – Spotswood, N. J. – March 22, 1962
5. St. Paul's School for Girls – Brooklandville, Md – Mar. 28, 1962
6. Canterbury Assn. – Wm & Mary – Williamsburg, Va – Oct. 27, 1963
7. Church of the Holy Saviour – Waterloo, Ontario, Canada – Feb. 6, 1966

The packet includes the basic typed text of an address, presumably delivered at the above places. It also contains correspondence and notes relevant to both the venues and the topic. For

⁵⁸⁷ V.T.S. stands for Virginia Theological Seminary.

example, one letter seems to be the original invitation that initiated the original address. The letter from Jim Stampes of the Missionary Society at Virginia Theological Seminary is dated November 29, 1961 and opens with an invitation: “I was really pleased when Neil Tarplee called this morning and said that you will be able to speak at our Convocation Hour next Tuesday.” The letter concludes by saying, “Tomorrow I hope to write a longer letter and tell you something of the current student questions about the race issue—studies left time for only this short note tonight.”⁵⁸⁸ No further correspondence from Stampes is included in the packet, but paper-clipped to the typed address are seven 3 ¼” x 8” strips of paper with questions and answer guides enumerated:

1. Why did the clergy suddenly endorse integration? Why did they wait for the Supreme Court decision? Does this mean that our good Bishops and priests before 1954 were un-Christian?

Answer

cf. Letter to Ben Thornhill⁵⁸⁹

2. But isn't this sudden insistence on integration causing a breakdown in race relations?

Answer

cf. Letter to Bill Lea

3. Aren't we trying to move too fast?

answer – cf Council Ad. 58

cf. Notes re Penick⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. is an abbreviation that invites a comparison or reference to that which is noted; from the Latin, *conferre*: to bring together; to set in opposition.

4. But won't all this racial mixing lead to intermarriage?

Answer

cf. My letter to Mr. _____ of Richmond

5. But why do certain churches press the issue & why do only a few individuals speak out? In other words – why keep on agitating the issue? Why not let it alone & let it solve itself?

Answer

cf. 1. Fact that all major denominations have come out in flat opposition to racial discrimination in church & state

2. cf. Letter to Frank Rogers

3. Letter to Henry Smiley

4. Passage of time is not synonymous with progress. Situations deteriorate as well as improve. Issues are decided by what we do with the time we have. As our president has said: "Time is not always our friend".

6. Why should we be concerned with minority groups in America?

Aren't they treated better here than anywhere in the world?

Answer

Every group at one time or another is a minority group. If we want to be treated justly when we are in the minority we must deal justly with other groups when they are in the minority. On a global scale the white race is in the minority.

⁵⁹⁰ Presumably the Rt. Rev. Edwin A. Penick, Bishop Coadjutor of North Carolina 1922-32; Bishop of North Carolina 1932-1959.

Furthermore, in our treatment of our minority groups in America we are judged not by their status relative to similar groups in other nations but by the gap between our pretensions and our practices.⁵⁹¹

Following the list of six questions and answers, Marmion includes a list labeled “Alternatives.” He subsequently lists ten of his sermons by title or topic that apparently would suffice. It seems, however, that Marmion opted to draft a new address, despite the short time frame of one week between invitation on November 29 and delivery on December 5.

The address that Bishop Marmion delivered to the students in the seminary’s Missionary Society stands as a position statement on race and racial justice (for full text, see Appendix C: *Virginia Theological Seminary Journal*). The address Marmion sketched out in a week’s time offers a reflection on the previous four-year struggle within the diocese.

Beyond the Moment

If the issue of integrating Hemlock Haven is a caesura, it is the rupture, the barbaric moment, or perhaps a boundary. Surrounding this rupture are events folding backward and forward, stretching across the boundary of the moment in time. A postmodern view that lets loose of the binaries and constraints of modernity’s metanarratives will help to explode the multiple voices and the intricacies that create the assembled chorus. Central to the discussions surrounding integration in the Episcopal Church are, of course, the inherent theological views. The race issue tossed those skilled at making teleological arguments into the ring with others whose moral imperative sought grounding in historicism. Not all clergy were for integration and not all lay people against it; however, all diocesan legislation and the Commission set to study

⁵⁹¹ Papers, Vault, Evans House: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

integration certainly polarized in this way. Grace Church in Radford offers interesting insight into the expectation some lay people place on clergy:

Mr. Vest [who would become rector of Grace Church] told the story about one member of the search committee who said to him, “You know that I am not an intergrationalist?” Where upon Mr. Vest asked “Then why on Earth would you want me for your rector?” The man replied, “Because I would not want the rector to agree with me on that issue.”⁵⁹²

Strong pro-integration leadership at Trinity Church in Staunton led to a statement issued by the youth of the parish, which stated, “We are in favor of an integrated Hemlock Haven. We have attended and taken part in integrated conferences and have found that they have proven very successful.”⁵⁹³ Similarly, the Rev. John Shelby Spong attributes his call to St. John’s Church in Lynchburg as a result of the parish’s desire for “a face-saving way to come out of its siege mentality [as opponents to Bishop Marmion and integration] and rejoin the diocese.”⁵⁹⁴

An additional example of the leadership towards integration is a General Convention resolution, co-authored by the deputations of Southwestern Virginia, Southern Virginia, and Virginia, which includes this final resolve:

⁵⁹² Betsy Naff Davis. *History of the Episcopal Church in Radford, Virginia: Grace Episcopal Church Centennial, 1992*. Radford, Va.: Grace Episcopal Church, 1992, 26.

⁵⁹³ Nancy T. Sorrells, Katharine L. Brown, and Susanne Simmons. *Conformable to the Doctrine and Discipline: The History of Trinity Church, Augusta Parish, Staunton, Virginia, 1746-1996* (Staunton, VA: Lot’s Wife Publishing, 1996), 188.

⁵⁹⁴ The previous rector had been in the running for bishop and lost the election to Bishop Marmion. He became “the clergy rallying point” for laity opposed to integration. Spong notes a game of Twister as an ice-breaker to break down hostilities, to which Marmion quipped, “Once this church beat me up emotionally. Now they are doing it physically” (133) and upon being gifted with a red chimere (vestment), Marmion said, “I have been dressed down by this congregation many times... Now I am being dressed up” (134); John Shelby Spong, *Here I Stand: My Struggle for a Christianity of Integrity, Love, and Equality* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000), 129-134.

Resolved, The House of Bishops concurring, that we call first upon our fellow Churchmen by God's grace to cleanse themselves of all spirit of racial discrimination; and then upon all persons, especially the members of our Church, to work together, in charity and forbearance, towards the establishment of equal opportunities in fields such as education, housing, employment, and public accommodations.⁵⁹⁵

In the End

The concepts of mimicry and hybridity, articulated by Bhabha, describe ways in which oppressed peoples claim “space” or access power within an oppressive structure. These multiple lenses have much to offer in the way of clarifying or bringing into focus the moment of “barbaric transmission,” the fixed moment of time that marked the deliberations over the integration of Hemlock Haven. In listening to the collective voice that “sings the same song” or tells the same story it is possible to discern dis-harmony. Perhaps cultural change occurs in moments of dis-harmony—when something disrupts the harmony or when a voice rasps against the chorus. This is not unlike what happens in individual lives. Often, we glide along until we are jolted into a new way of being—an illness, job change, a move. Sometimes even bad events can have positive outcomes. We are forced to changed patterns, to take stock, and sometimes what emerges, phoenix-like, is preferable to the former status quo—like innumerable biblical passages referencing what is old being made new again. The caesurae allow opportunity for what Bhabha terms re-cognition—the chance to see again. Each interruption is an opportunity and must be treated as such. Our historical trajectory is a series of such interruptions—such

⁵⁹⁵ Papers of Dr. Dabney S. Lancaster.

opportunities—to re-see our way to cultural identity, to wholeness and reconciliation, to becoming. The law of inertia offers one way of thinking about our path towards racial unity: that which is at rest shall remain at rest. The status quo is just that, until a disruption jolts us into a state of unrest. Change happens in that moment. (That *moment* as I am thinking of it here can be a minute or a month or a year or a decade.) Our history, then, is a sequence of lived oppression disrupted by moments of barbaric transmission: slavery, interrupted by the Civil War; freedmen, interrupted by Jim Crow; legal equalities and the “post-racial society” interrupted by today’s prison pipeline and racial profiling. The recently elected Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church—and the first African-American to hold the position—the Most Reverend Michael Curry, said in a recent address to the Press Club: “Race is the doorway or the gateway into a cluster of dilemmas and issues that have bedeviled us as a society.”⁵⁹⁶ The “cluster of dilemmas” raise numerous questions and entry points for further research.

Post-colonial studies might offer a useful theoretical lens for future exploration. Also interesting would be a comparison between the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia and a diocese such as Southern Virginia or North Carolina that has multiple remaining black churches, or similarly, a larger black demographic.⁵⁹⁷ Another interesting comparison would be a correlate set of interviews with white members of the churches that integrated. Of course any study of adjacent communities and the parallel stories of integration in schools, civic, or social venues would be worthy avenues of exploration. The one black church that was allowed to persist in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia is St. Paul’s in Martinsville. In his descriptions to National Council of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Phillips repeatedly referred to the congregation as

⁵⁹⁶ Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. Address to the National Press Club. February 8, 2016. Washington, D.C.

⁵⁹⁷ Southern Virginia has 13 existing black parishes; North Carolina has 11; Episcopal Church, “Directory of Black Congregations.”

“unusual.” A look at integration and the Episcopal Church using class as a lens would add an interesting layer to the complexity of the questions.⁵⁹⁸ Future work, both conceptual and empirical, will expand and enrich the work of this dissertation. The complexity of our racialized past positions such studies to be relevant and important to the work of reconciliation and awareness of our culture.

Fanon observed that “any form of integration in a racist society will be inherently racist.” This unequivocal tendency described by Fanon of whites in power (colonists) to oppress has significant implications for examining integration, race, and racism. As Bhabha speaks of the “barbaric transmission,” he invokes Walter Benjamin: “Construction proposes destruction.”⁵⁹⁹ When I first peered into the fishbowl that was the racial integration of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, I was in my first year of the ASPECT doctoral program at Virginia Tech. We were one year into Barack Obama’s presidency and many were claiming ours to be a post-racial society. In the wake of Trayvon Martin, and Mother Emanuel, and the Confederate Flag, and burned black churches, our culture has emerged into a new caesura. This time is a barbaric transmission. Apathy is perhaps not as violent, but it is surely as insidious and potentially as deadly if we consider the long-term effects of systemic structural racism. The current caesura is barbaric—it is equally a time for change and for hope.

⁵⁹⁸ My Dissertation Committee Chair Brian Britt initially raised the question of class early in my exploration. I placed this question to one side, knowing that it would open up far more than I was able to explore in the scope of my already expansive inquiry. Committee member Elizabeth Struthers Malbon also asked about class disparities in her comments on my first draft saying, “I’m sure you’ve noted the class distinctions between the one black church that survived and the three that did not. Will you comment on that?” I do not comment fully because I do not engage questions of class with the other three churches. It is, however, an important question and well worth future exploration.

⁵⁹⁹ Homi Bhabha, “On Global Memory: Thoughts on the Barbaric Transmission of Culture.” Townsend Center for the Humanities’ Forum on the Humanities and the Public World. *UC Berkeley*. April 2014. Audio podcast.

Appendix A: Questionnaire Results

Communicants	No. returned	% of Commun- cants	Segregate	Integrate	% for SEG.	% for INT.	
Abington, St. Thomas	112	5	4	3	1	60	20
Alta Vista, St. Peter	53	19	36	18	1	94	3
Anherst, Ascension	160	45	28	38	7	84	16
Bedford, St. Johns	210	15	7	7	5	46	33
Big Stone Gap, Christ	92	17	18	13	4	80	20
Blacksburg, Christ	188	33	16	20	13	61	39
Bluefield, St. Mary's	74	15	20	8	7	63	47
Boonsboro, Trinity	25	14	56	12	2	89	11
Brockneal, Christ	15	11	70	4	7	36	64
Bristol, Emmanuel	320	30	9	19	11	63	37
Buchanan, Grace & Trinity	32	7	22	5	2	71	29
Buena Vista, Christ	50	21	42	11	10	52	48
Christiansburg, St. Thomas	79	21	27	8	13	38	62
Clifford, St. Marks	69	7	10	7	0	100	0
Clifton Forge, St. Andrews	63	4	6	4	0	100	0
Covington, Emmanuel	217	48	22	35	13	73	27
Evington, Good Shepherd	11	4	36	2	1	50	25
Fincastle, St. Marks	30	18	60	15	3	83	17
Forest, St. Stephen's	60	25	41	17	8	68	32
Glasgow, St. Johns	84	21	25	15	6	71	29
Hot Springs, St. Lukes	88	1	1	0	1	0	100
Lexington, R. E. Lee Mem.	366	58	16	17	38	39	68
Lynchburg, Grace	238	50	21	42	8	84	16
Lynchburg, St. Johns	756	216	29	174	36	80	17
Lynchburg, St. Pauls	500	65	13	56	7	86	13
Lynchburg, Good Shepherd	32	2	6	0	2	0	100
Madison Heights, Emmanuel	50	16	32	13	3	81	19
Marion, Christ	88	24	27	6	17	25	74
Martinsville, Christ	358	131	37	87	44	67	31
Martinsville, St. Pauls	37	3	8	0	3	0	100
Nelson: N'wood, Arr'ton,	124	33	26	28	5	82	18
Nora, St. Stephens <u>(N.Mill)</u>	17	5	30	0	5	0	100
Norton, All Saints	67	13	19	6	6	46	46
Pearisburg, Christ	105	19	18	16	3	84	16
Padlar's Mills, St. Luke	7	1	14	1	0	100	0
Pocahontas, Christ	35	14	40	14	0	100	0
Pulaski, Christ	151	30	20	22	8	73	27
Radford, Grace	232	22	9	14	5	64	24
Richlands, Trinity	50	2	4	2	0	100	0
Roanoke, St. Elizabeth	48	19	40	5	14	26	74
Roanoke, St. James	154	29	18	19	10	65	25
Roanoke, Christ	762	33	4	19	14	57	43
Roanoke, St. Johns	1297	190	15	162	31	85	14
Rocky Mount, Trinity	120	34	32	23	15	60	40
St. Paul, Grace & St. Mark	87	28	32	3	25	11	89
Salem, St. Pauls	338	56	17	51	5	92	9
Saltville, St. Pauls	37	11	30	8	2	73	20
Sedalia, St. Thomas	27	17	63	13	3	78	32
Staunton, Emmanuel	182	32	12	16	16	50	50
Staunton, Trinity	448	78	18	46	31	59	40
Tazewell, Stras Memorial	71	10	14	8	2	80	20
Verona, Emmanuel	21	2	10	0	2	0	100
Waynesboro, St. Johns	325	95	29	54	41	57	43
Wytheville, St. Johns	234	70	29	53	15	76	21
MISCELLANEOUS (No church given)	24		10	4	80	16	

1. 90-100% opposed:
4% of vote

Alta Vista
Clifford
Clifton Forge
Padlar's Mills
Pocahontas
Richlands
Salem

2. 80-89% opposed:
25% of vote

Anherst
Boonsboro
Fincastle
Lynchburg: Grace
St. Pauls
Madison Heights
Nelson County
Pearisburg
Roanoke, St. Johns

3. 70-79% opposed:

Big Stone Gap 24%
Buchanan
Covington
Glasgow
Lynchburg: St. Johns
Pulaski
Saltville
Sedalia
Tazewell
Wytheville

4. 60-69% opposed:

Blacksburg 15%
Bristol
Forest
Martinsville
Radford
Roanoke, St. James

5. 50-59% opposed:

Abington 1%
Bluefield
Buena Vista: Christ
Roanoke: Christ
Rocky Mount
Staunton: Trinity
Waynesboro

6. 40-49% opposed:

Bedford 3%
Evington
Norton
Staunton: Emmanuel

7. 30-39% opposed:

Brockneal 5%
Christiansburg
Lexington

8. 20-29% opposed:

Marion 2%
Roanoke: St. Elia.

9. 0-19% opposed: 2%

*Bedford, St. Philip
Hot Springs
*Lynchburg: Good Shep
Nora: St. Stephens
*Roanoke: St. Luke
*Martinsville: St. P.
St. Paul: Grace & St. M.
Verona: Emmanuel

Appendix B: Parochial Report Data

	1918	1919	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Bedford, St. Phillip's(colored)*																
Communicants	28	37	16	18	16	9	12	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Chapel of the Good Shepherd (colored)*																
Communicants	31	31	35	44	51	29	37	59	62	57	55	36	36			
St. Luke's, Roanoke																
Communicants	8	8	12	13	10	14	24	25	26	28			26	17		
St. Paul's Martinsville																
Communicants					24	28	44	37	37	37	37	35	39	40	no report	39
								1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2003	2010	2015
								46	41	41	43	43	NR	24	18	16



William H. Marmion

Our Sharpened Racial Problem

by

THE RT. REV. WILLIAM H. MARMION
Bishop of Southwestern Virginia

An Address Delivered to the Student Body at Convocation Hour.

Scientific progress has caused our world to shrink to the size of a neighborhood. It is too dangerous for it not to become a brotherhood. In our jet-missile-space age, people of all nations, races and creeds are being thrown together willy-nilly.

Maybe we did not choose this intermingling. But we did choose the technological advance of which, in the field of transportation, freedom of movement in a free country is the inevitable consequence. In some cases this has amounted to a mass migration, as witness the movement of Negro people to the North, so that today not more than 50% of Negroes in our country live south of the Mason and Dixon line.

We did choose a form of government whose constitution was designed to secure the blessings of liberty to all the people. Our democratic heritage, faith and principles demand that everyone, regardless of race, be allowed to advance to the fullest extent of his ability without any artificial barriers being put in his way.

We did choose an economic system that affects every part of our country and much of the planet, itself. The American South, as well as underdeveloped countries of the world is being gathered up in a vast industrial development and is being integrated into the whole American economy. Economically, any poorly educated, low-income group is a drag on the rest of the community, and the purchasing power of any such group must be discounted. Economists are saying that further economic growth in the South depends on changing old patterns. It will come after, not before, we have altered ancient customs.

The whole world has become a part of a massive communications network. With radio, television, magazines and newspapers practically everywhere, cultural unification is taking place at a rapid rate.

Maybe we did not choose this intermingling, but we did choose what has come to pass, mentioned above, and we did choose a religion whose ethical teachings demand a respect for the least of God's people everywhere. The Hebrew-Christian tradition, upon which our Western civili-

zation is built, supports our concepts of freedom and equality. Something is lacking in the religious education of every person until he can say as the Apostle Peter said: "Unto me hath God shown that I should call no man common or unclean."

Now this mixing of all kinds of people can be a bane or blessing, depending on whether or not we adjust to it quickly and harmoniously. America has been called the melting pot. The United States has successfully assimilated wave after wave of immigrants and shared with them our priceless heritage of freedom and opportunity. In his book, *Only in America*, Harry Golden predicts the extension of this process to our largest minority group, namely, America's tenth man, the Negro. His prediction is coming true, and it is coming true to our credit and honor.

Today before our very eyes we are seeing the dream of a better world — and we pray of a brother world — rising to birth. China, India, Africa are on the march. Can America stand still? Or continue to move at a snail's pace? The great question is — will progress come by external, dictatorial compulsion or by internal, voluntary consent? Yes, we are eye-witnesses to history — to a world being made over in response to the legitimate aspirations of millions of people.

Furthermore, the world is watching to see how we in America handle our twentieth century revolution in human relations. The world wants to know whether we live up to our pretensions — to see how fast we close the gap between our principles and our practices.

The problem at heart is a spiritual problem, and that is why church people above all must be concerned with it and work and pray, as we do in the Prayer for our Country (Prayer Book, page 36) that God will "defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues."

The ways in which our people become united will be many and varied. They need involve no invasion of our private rights. They will, however, represent a greater extension of civil liberties to formerly submerged segments of the population, primarily our colored people. Color is still the unfinished business of democracy. It comes close to being our number one problem today.

In the last few years, I have received numerous letters about this subject asking serious questions that deserve honest answers. I should like to devote the rest of this address to a discussion of these questions.

I

One of the first questions people ask is, Why did the clergy suddenly endorse integration? Why did they wait for the Supreme Court decision? Does this mean that clergy and laity before 1954 were unjust or unchristian?

Actually, the Supreme Court decision encouraged many clergy and laity to say publicly what they had felt in their hearts for a long time.

The Church in the modern period has been making pronouncements on the subject of race relations for over half a century, and the Bible is full

of the subject. In 1943 the National Council of the Episcopal Church adopted a statement of guiding principles designed to govern the Church's Negro work. In 1947 the presiding Bishop sent a copy of this statement to the vestries of all the parishes of our Church with a covering letter stressing the urgent need for improvement in race relations in this country and expressing the hope that "your vestry will recognize the importance of this problem and bring it to the attention of the congregation." I would ask my people, in how many congregations was this done? If it was not done, who is to blame? If it was done, what constructive, creative actions were taken as a consequence? You see, it may be that under the tensions of today these statements of yesterday have been forgotten.

It does no good to sit in judgment on past generations. We do not know how they would handle the problems today. Each succeeding generation must wrestle with the issues of its own time and make its own response to them in the light that they have.

John Thompson, who sent his son, Gregory in to McDonogh School No. 19 in New Orleans, made this statement according to the press: "I was raised as a segregationist, but I've a mind of my own. I know integration has got to come, and there's no use trying to live like a hundred years ago."

Also, according to the newspapers, Bill Hendrix, grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan's Southern-Northern knights for several years is quitting because, said he, "I see no way to stop racial integration and it looks to me like the best thing to do is to accept it." He told the Associated Press. "I cannot agree to go outside the law to maintain segregation."

II

But isn't this sudden insistence on integration causing a breakdown in communication? Hasn't understanding between the races been retarded as a result?

The answer depends on how you look at it. Without question, in many areas, feeling runs high, and communication has broken down. This is a set-back. However, it may be that the situation must get worse before it can get better. White Southerners are being alienated by actions of Negroes and others in the fight against racial discrimination. But such action may be necessary in order to bring the legitimate needs and aspirations of the Negro people before the public in a dramatic manner that will be heard and understood. I don't think white people are hearing the Negro people, and this has caused the Negroes to adopt radical means of making themselves heard. In some places this is enabling Negro groups to secure rights they have not enjoyed in the past. Perhaps the immediate result is to damage understanding between the races, but the ultimate result may be a much better understanding.

III

Aren't we trying to move too fast? Why press the issue? Why not let it alone and let it solve itself?

The answer is that passage of time is not synonymous with progress. Situations deteriorate as well as improve. Issues are decided by what we

do with the time we have. As President Kennedy has said: "Time is not always our friend." Sensible men know that solutions take time and that we must be patient. But this argument loses its force in face of the realities of our situation. The realities are that we have deprived the Negro of all kinds of advantages and then judged him because he is not the kind of person which those advantages might have produced. This is like children murdering their parents and then pleading extenuating circumstances on the grounds that they are orphans.

Qualified Negro students waited years to get into college. If this is moving too fast what would standing still be? At the rate we are going qualified Negro men and women and boys and girls will be deprived for years of rights that make for decency and dignity. This is a stupid waste of human resources.

I know that love is a better way than law. But the law still may be the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and His love.

It is a terrible indictment of the Church and our sense of fair play in both North and South, that progress in securing the civil rights of our Negro brothers during the last fifteen or twenty years has come primarily because of legal enactment. We may deplore resort to the courts, but we cannot advise against it.

We have not faced honestly and frankly the fact of human inertia, pride and sin in our situation. In Virginia integration was viewed by the general assembly as a cancer on the body politic. The idea was that it must not be allowed to start anywhere, even among people who were ready for it and wanted it. Massive resistance collapsed against the majesty of law. It fell because, at last, Church people and others took a stand for our schools and spoke the truth in love, patience and understanding but with firmness.

IV

But won't all this racial mixing lead to intermarriage?

As my answer I should like to give the following statement made in a Southern Regional Council publication in reply to the question: "Do mixed' schools lead to 'mixed' marriages":

"This is perhaps the most common argument advanced against integrated schools — just as it was advanced against Negro voting in the Democratic Primary, integration in higher education, and the other gains in race relations during the last 25 years. Yet, there is little evidence to sustain such an argument. Even in states where there has never been legal segregation — in schools or otherwise — intermarriage is extremely rare. In the South, where intermarriage is opposed by both law and custom, integration in schools or other public institutions is hardly likely to change the existing pattern. The fear of intermarriage is largely irrational, since their can never be a law or a court decision forcing persons to marry against their will. Marriage is and will remain a matter of personal choice, as are all purely social relationships."

V

One of the important questions has to do with the invasion of private rights (which I mentioned a moment ago). Do I not have a right to choose my own friends and associates, people ask. In answer let me first quote from the report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, published in 1947.

"The Committee is not convinced that an end to segregation in education or in the enjoyment of public services essential to people in a modern society would mean an intrusion upon the private life of the individual. In a democracy, each individual must have freedom to choose his friends and to control the pattern of his personal and family life. But we see nothing inconsistent between this freedom and a recognition of the truth that democracy also means that in going to school, working, participating in the political process, serving in the armed forces, enjoying government services in such fields as health and recreation, making use of transportation and other public accommodation facilities, and living in specific communities and neighborhoods, distinctions of race, color, and creed have no place." So said the President's Committee on Civil Rights which was composed of our most prominent citizens from both North and South.

These sentiments for the most part, have earned the endorsement of the American people as a whole. The conscience of the free world is behind them. Increasingly, they are being embodied in one court decision after another and upheld by the highest tribunal of the land. The sentiments challenge every man's concepts of justice, human rights, democracy and religion. How big is our idea of America? Of man's relationship to man? How big is our God? On our answer to these questions will depend the extent and significance of whatever real union of the meeting of hearts, minds and souls, we shall achieve in this great republic and in the world.

Church and State unite in upholding American freedoms. However, there is one freedom which we simply do not have, unless self-imposed, namely the freedom not to mix and mingle with our fellow citizens in public places. The constitution of this country guarantees to all its citizens the same civil rights. No one can abridge them with impunity. But we must distinguish between the privileges we have in our homes and those we have in our communities.

The same distinction holds in the Church. We have the right to join a church or not as we see fit. We do not have the right to refuse to associate with fellow members in the Household of God. Our American democracy allows, as it should, private clubs and organizations. Social cleavages exist in all groups. Negroes can be just as exclusive in their social arrangements as white people, and many of them are. But a private club is not a public institution. It is not a Jewish Synagogue. And it is certainly not the Body of Christ.

Brethren, we have feared man and failed God. We must learn again to walk in trust. We must put our hands in God's hand and let Him lead us where He will. Artificial barriers to justice are falling everywhere. Be not afraid. Rather, rejoice. When the obstacles of segregation are at last removed from American life we will wonder why we ever feared at all.

Appendix D: **Oral Histories**

IRB Forms received for all participants.

Oral histories are transcribed here, omitting some information that does not deal specifically with the subject of this dissertation. I have lightly edited the transcripts to omit words such as “uh” and “um,” and I have supplied words in square brackets for clarification or sentence completion. In some places, I have omitted segments. Omissions are usually but not always indicated with an ellipsis. I have not altered or manipulated the meaning or, to the best of my knowledge, the intent of any of the speakers. Omissions were intended to maintain focus. The complete video oral history interviews are available to individuals upon request. All but the interview with Rhetta Watkins are available in the archives at Virginia Tech and the archives at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Rhetta Watkins (St. Philip’s) completed February 21, 2015

Tempy Davis (St. Philip’s) completed April 8, 2015

Five parishioners (Chapel of the Good Shepherd) completed April 24, 2015

Gloria Wesley Cannady

Helen Witt

Gloria Mosby Cardwell

Delores Haythe

Patricia Dabney

Michael Terry (St. Luke’s) completed January 2, 2015

Bill Vickers (St. Paul’s) completed February 12, 2015

St. Philip's, Bedford
Rhetta Watkins



Biographical information:

Rhetta Watkins was born in Newport News but she and her sister moved to Bedford when Rhetta was in the 4th grade to live with her aunt and uncle. She attended Bedford Elementary, Bedford Science and the Technology Center with all the 8th graders, and attended Liberty High School. Rhetta graduated from Hampton University and earned a Master's Degree from Lynchburg College while teaching in Bedford County Schools. She was Bedford County's Teacher of the Year in 1994. She moved to her role in administration as assistant principal at Forest Middle School. Rhetta Watkins is now the principal at Bedford Middle School.

Transcript

Nina Salmon: I'm interested in your whole story, but I am most interested in the Episcopal Church and your experiences as an Episcopalian. I'm interested in what you can tell me about the black Episcopal experience and particularly integration in Bedford.

Rhetta Watkins: My family on my mother's side are Episcopalians. [It was] a small group of African-American worshippers in Bedford. My aunt that raised my sister and [me], her two brothers, my uncle Walter Lazenby, Richard Lazenby, my aunt Tempy, who is still living, Tempy Davis, they were all Episcopalians. My mother became an Episcopalian later on in life. She attended school in Newport News for the Deaf and Blind, so she didn't actually grow up in this area but her siblings did. Because I was raised by my aunt, I went to church with her [at] St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

Probably my most vivid memory is kneeling on the little stool, the little cushioned stool. I detested kneeling on the little cushioned stool. It was so uncomfortable. As a little kid, I think I was probably 12 or 13 years old, I always felt like I was going to fall. Everyone else seemed to kneel okay, but I thought, how do they do this? That's one of my vivid memories at that time.

I do remember the Rev. Sivley being the minister at that time, and my aunt, Tempy Barksdale, played the organ from time to time. It was a very, very small congregation. James Kyle, who used to be the Director of Instruction for Bedford County Schools, was a member. He and his wife were members of St. Philip's. There was another family with two young daughters. Primarily what I remember [is that] there weren't more than three or four families that attended church.

....

The prayer book, I remember holding that and following through, not really understanding all the prayers. We didn't have a Sunday School; there weren't many little children, I think it was just my sister and I that were the youngest. My aunt's children are older, about five or six years older. The teaching of the Episcopal Church really for me did not start until I started attending St. John's Episcopal Church.

When the changeover actually happened, I don't really recall the year, I just remember my aunt saying that we were going to a different church. I remember them being sad that St. Philip's was no longer going to be open to them. But I don't recall a lot of the conversations. At the time when I grew up, children were seen and not heard, and if adults were talking, and it was about adult subjects, we weren't a part of those conversations.

Going to St. John's we were welcomed, very much a part of the congregation. We were invited to participate in a lot of the programs. My cousins Sheila Barksdale and Vincent Barksdale were very involved in the Youth Group. In fact, when Sheila attended there—Sheila has a melodious voice—she performed in plays at Liberty High school and she also sang in the choir. I remember their being very active and very involved.

Youth group (EYC) seemed to go in waves with the youth group; you'd have years where it was very, very progressive and youth were very, very active, and I think when my sister and I came along it just sort of fizzled out. And that depended on who was in charge and who was still around because as you know with any church, people come and go and some are there for a long time, but if they are there for a long time they grow tired, and they pass the baton onto someone else. So when my sister and I were of that age, it wasn't as active, and so we weren't as involved in a lot of the activities, but going to church was very, very important and it was expected that we go.

My uncle Walter [Barksdale] was very active at St. John's. He was on the Vestry. [He and] Hume Dortch [who was white] were best of friends. He would often work behind the scenes, any painting or cleaning or whatever the men would get together to do. You could just see he was just really, really excited and happy to do that. When my uncle passed away, I remember for several years, I remember—both uncles were veterans—at the time when they

passed away he did not have a headstone. Mr. Dortch would come to me every time he would see me in church and say, “You need to get that headstone. You need to get that headstone.” He really did facilitate getting that headstone. Good memories with my uncle and my aunt through the church.

....

My aunt was Episcopalian; my uncle was Baptist. We went to both churches. They had the fortune of being able to be in the Episcopal Church and to also visit the Baptist church. But they really were more involved in the Episcopal Church. They really didn’t have the same connectedness or the same opportunities to be around projects where you’re giving back and working in the community because that was really the focus [in the Episcopal Church]. We met at each other’s homes. Of course they had the fun activities, too. You really didn’t see a racial divide at all. You don’t always see that in a lot of churches. Churches are probably the most segregated institutions. [The Baptist Church was mostly black members. St. Philip’s was black. St. John’s was mostly white except for Rhetta’s family and two other families.]

....

[Rhetta does not recall the reason for the closing of the church.] I just know that they were sad that the church was closing. I think it had something to do with finance because it was a very small congregation, and sometimes it was just our family.

Nina Salmon: Was desegregation was a part of the conversation?

Rhetta Watkins: Not that I recall.

....

Nina Salmon: There were four black churches in the diocese and only St. Paul’s still exists. The others were all closed...One of my hypotheses is that Bishop Marmion was progressive and

right-minded, but he couldn't know what he didn't know, and he went about integration by closing the black churches and saying, "Come into the white churches." The buildings were typically larger and the structures more able to incorporate the numbers. The existing churches were financially healthier. In doing that, the unintended consequence was to eradicate the African-American population.

....

Rhetta Watkins: The difference probably now is that you see in your larger churches more of a blending of all types... There aren't separate groups, there are just a lot of different races involved... The Episcopal faith is either blended a little or not at all.

Nina Salmon: There's a rich history of black Episcopalians. Today is Absalom Jones' day.

....

Rhetta Watkins: [Rhetta felt welcomed into St. John's.] I do recall my cousins going to Hemlock Haven. Everything looked happy, and they still have strong bonds. My cousin, when she comes to visit [from Long Island, NY] she visits Karen Nichols [who is white and was in the youth group and choir with Sheila.]

[If there was controversy] it may be that they were able to keep it inside and we just weren't aware. There are those who will come and greet and hug and love all the time, and then there are those who will just acknowledge with a nod and keep going. But I think you will see that sometimes in any place that you go. You don't know if it's because that's just their way or if it's because they're not real comfortable with you being there. It comes from your own perspective and how you were raised. I wasn't raised to be suspicious of another race's perception of me. If you didn't want to be around me it would be real clear to me. It would be real clear in your actions and maybe the words you would use or how you would respond to me.

If there were those who were not comfortable with us being there and they were just standoffish, in my eyes they were just standoffish. I just never perceived it as you're standoffish because I'm here. That's just who you are. And that may be because I was young and I was naïve and just didn't pick up on those cues. But what I recall is my family was happy to go and they went to church. They didn't come home and talk about this person or that person or how someone made them feel or someone was upset with them. I just never heard that. If that happened, I was never aware of it. It may have happened. I just was not aware of it.

There were many members who were very outgoing who would come and visit my aunt. My aunt died of cancer. In her final few years, she wasn't able to go to church. There were those that would come and visit. There was one lady in particular, Miss Ivy Lattery, and she moved her from New York. She was Episcopalian. Her sisters were Episcopalian, and they didn't know anyone else but they loved my aunt. They would come and visit her and have her come to their home. They were just wonderful. That is my memory.

St. Philip's, Bedford
Tempy Davis



Transcript:

I do recall there one time was a black minister, he lived in Roanoke. We walked through the snow with my sister. My sister Lettie was older than I was. We would walk to St. Philip [sic] Church. And sometimes we would have our service early in the morning at 8:00 at St. Philip Church and then we had to change service in the afternoon to 4:00. St. Philip it was a very strong church when it first started. At St. Philip Church, we always had a good Christmas program during the Christmas season. During the time it looked like it was a break between the ministers, St. John's [white Episcopal church in Bedford] would participate [in] whatever we had there and would join in. During that time [1950s] there was right much of a membership. It was because first there was the diocese. We agreed to close because there was nobody there but us. I think. That's when St. John took over. Wasn't nobody there but just us. When St. Philip closed, that's how we started going to St. John [sic]. St. John stepped in immediately. Because some of them would still come over.

...

I was playing the organ there. I was a musician there. That's what they like about it because we was a little up to date with things then. And then with the integration we moved to St. John. It was too small a membership and attendance and keeping up the church or whatever it was. It was the reason they got rid of St. Philip.

At St. John, I sang on [sic] the choir. We were happy growing up and going to church. Vincent and Sheila were [in the youth group at St. John's]. They were all raised up together.

Rhetta Watkins: They had a really strong youth group.

Tempy Davis: It was a larger group and they were outgoing. I did a little bit of everything, come to service Sunday and a meal we used to do over there. Now they have teams that they work with. It's much better [at St. John's.]

Rhetta Watkins: Walter was very active with the men when it came to maintenance.

Tempy Davis: Him and Jim Vest were just like this. Hume [Dortch] wasn't quite as [involved as] Vest. See Vest was very active in the church and then when they had those Council meetings, that's when Walter used to go all the time when they had those Council meetings. We [white and black] were a lively group.

[Rhetta asked if St. John's was welcoming "when St. Philip's members joined St. John's."]

Tempy Davis: With me I didn't see no different because they accepted us with open arms and I was out there on the choir, and it made it wonderful. John Sykes because I'm really surprised that he passed. His wife is still active in Bedford with the food service. There's one lady, I can't place her right now, she was a Jackson or something at St. John. She's very active now. But that's how it was with me. Right now I'm old, I don't know anything now.

[In response to a question about Bishop Marmion.] Marmion? Oh, Bishop Marmion! That's when they used to go up to the camp [Hemlock Haven] when Marmion would be there.

That's been a good little while, that's a long time ago. When the children would be up with Bishop Marmion and when he came on his yearly visit. Everybody liked [Bishop Marmion.] Nobody disliked Bishop Marmion. He came [to St. Philip's] one time—was it him or was it the other before him? I don't think they liked him too well, the one before him. I think the members just didn't like him, whoever he was. Marmion was very good and he had an open mind dealing with people with small membership. He know how to speak to them and could talk to them and hopefully the church would still have more members to come in. ... [At St. John's] everybody was wonderful. Anne Green and Ted Green and all of them. We were really happy and spiritually happy during the time. Your mind was really wide open and it was nice.

....

[Integration] was talked about. It was discussed but there was no hesitation about what we would be doing, going into the white congregation. We were the ones who said that we had to close the church. Nobody there but just us and then with the money coming there it was different. We didn't have a minister. We went a long time without a minister. They had other churches they had to go to. Went to Washington Street one or two times because we did have the organ there in that church. Washington Street, I think we would go to integrate the church or would St. John integrate? Integration of the church was very open-minded when we did close over the race or whatever it was. St. John did not hesitate to help us. I was happy. Knew a lot of them [at St. John's]. Our service at St. Philip was the same thing and so the only thing the children was involved with the children at St. John. Me being in the school system, I was already involved with quite a few of the churches and all. If they did make slurs or comments, whatever it is, it never did get close to us. We felt welcome. We didn't see no difference in our service at St. Philip. The service was the same. That's the way it was.

The minister was Rev. Sivley. I didn't hear no comments or discussion of this like or anything like that with us. Because during that particular time there was some members of St. John's mad knowing what was going to take place and someone had already come to the church and worship with us. We was a little strong members there. I was the youngest one but with my brother and my sister Lettie...and [cousin] Clarence [Lazenby]. St. John's had it so well planned it was like we'd been there all along. That's the way it was, I mean really. To us, it just was no problem even with the people that are at St. John, maybe 'cause they know what we were doing. It was radical if your father was working at a shoe place, I was working at a beauty shop place. Because we said something had to be done because it was just us and we wasn't getting no members coming in to the church.

The church was well built. If they showed some disappointment it was...because they didn't lose no membership. They had a lot of discussion about the church joining. They did have, the media. The only thing I know that we were such a small members and our church wasn't growing that we had to close the church or do something. You know, there was nobody else that was there. It was no problem. We had to do something. Something had to be done. It was that really sad we had to close. It was St. John that opened the doors for us. But I'll never forget that day we walked into St. John's. When we walked in, it was nice because we were all up to point about where we would be going. And see, once you are Episcopalian,...you are always Episcopalian. St. John had the same thing that we had. We had the same reading and everything, so it was not new to us. The first day...it was open-armed for us. I would say that. That we had to go, at that particular time.

Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Lynchburg
Home of Hans and Ann van de Graaf, Rivermont Avenue, Lynchburg, Virginia
April 24, 2015

Seated left to right: Gloria Cannady, Helen Witt, Gloria Cardwell, Delores Haythe, Patricia Dabney



Biographical information:

Gloria Cannady attended Virginia Union University and worked at Lynchburg's television station, WSET.

Helen Witt played on the tennis and basketball teams with Althea Gibson for a short time at Florida A & M College. She then received an associate degree at the UVa branch in Lynchburg, and a BA, MA and honorary doctorate from Lynchburg College. She was Lynchburg College's first African-American graduate in 1967. Witt taught kindergarten in Lynchburg School system for 27 years.

Gloria Cardwell received a BA Degree in English from Virginia State College and a Master's Degree in Education from Lynchburg College. She served for 35 years as a teacher, reading specialist, federal programs supervisor, assistant principal, and principal, in the Lynchburg area.

Delores Haythe graduated from Campbell County Schools and attended the Stokes School of Cosmetology. In addition to working as a beautician and a seamstress, she worked as a home healthcare provider.

Patricia Dabney attended St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia and worked at General Electric and for the Lynchburg City Schools.

Ann van de Graaf is a graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman's College who was born in South Africa. She is a community activist and a long-time advocate for Civil Rights.

Transcript:

Gloria Cannady: My name is Gloria Cannady. I attended Good Shepherd Episcopal Church. I was Gloria Anne Wesley.

Helen Witt: I'm Helen Mundy Witt. I was not a member of Good Shepherd Church, but my husband decided to join it and he and all five of our kids were baptized together the same day, and so I had to go to that church because I had to take the kids every Sunday. I worked with them quite a bit in the church, but I didn't join the Episcopal Church until we moved later. [The baptisms took place] close to 1960.

Gloria Cardwell: My name is Gloria Cardwell. When I came to Lynchburg in 1963, I was Gloria Elaine Mosby. I attended Good Shepherd until it closed.

Delores Haythe: My name is Delores Johnson Haythe, and I can't really remember what year we joined Good Shepherd but Gloria's father [Dr. Wesley] was really instrumental in getting us to start coming to Good Shepherd. My mother, my two brothers, and all three of my children joined. My father did not join but he was instrumental in working and doing whatever needed help to be done at Good Shepherd.

Patricia Dabney: My name is Patricia Parrish Dabney, and when I attended the Church of the Good Shepherd, I was Patricia Lee Parrish. I was the *only* member of my family who attended the Episcopal Church. All the others were Baptist and of course we lived in Diamond Hill, and they all attended Diamond Hill Baptist Church.

Gloria Cannady: I was born into Good Shepherd Episcopal Church. I don't remember the dates that my mother and father started going there, and I have two older brothers, but I have pictures showing that I was christened at Good Shepherd. I was christened probably in 1953 because I was a very small baby from what the pictures say. I went to Sunday School from Sunday School-age on up. There were other ministers but the only minister I really remember and knew closely was the Rev. John Teeter and his family. I believe he was there maybe starting in 1957. He left in 1963, so I was 10 years old when he left, but he made a big impression on me, he and his family. I was also confirmed at Good Shepherd. I don't remember the date but probably it was before Rev. Teeter left.

Gloria Cardwell: When I came to Lynchburg, I came from Richmond, Virginia and St. Philip's Episcopal Church where I was born and raised and christened and confirmed. There were a couple of supply priests at Good Shepherd when I came, one of which was Bill Parrish. I think he was probably there until they closed. I came here in '63 and that's the year I started going because I lived right down the street from it, and I said "Oh good, I have an Episcopal Church right here at my doorstep, and then they closed. I'm not sure of the year but I was thinking that it was a couple of years after I got here that they closed the doors. It was a small congregation, and I wasn't surprised when it was closed because it was so small and that was what I thought at first was the reason for it being closed, but then we were told that the bishop was trying to integrate. I heard it later again from my current priest, who is Cathy Montgomery, and when we were doing the history of the church and we went around to all of the churches, all of the spaces or places where the churches had been in Lynchburg—Episcopal Churches—and that was one of the things she stated in talking about Good Shepherd. [This was] in the past maybe five years ago.

Delores Haythe: We started going to Good Shepherd because my baby brother got sick and so Dr. Wesley had just—well he'd been in Lynchburg for awhile, my mother started taking him there. Bobby really didn't like going to the Baptist Church because when he was small, they had communion and of course when they served communion, they passed the bread and the wine, and he got real disgusted because he couldn't have Kool-Aid and sandwiches when they had communion. We tried to make him understand but he couldn't. He just said he wasn't going back anymore. Dr. Wesley talked to my mom. I was used to going to the Catholic Church during the summers in Baltimore, and I really did like it. My brother went to St. Emma's in Richmond, a private Catholic School. Daddy would bring us to the Catholic Church on Sunday mornings for the service there. Dr. Wesley told my mom, well you don't have to go to the Catholic Church, we have a black Episcopal Church and the services are basically the same, almost. Why not come and go with us to church? And so we did. We started coming to church there. My mother whose name was Frances, she was confirmed first and then I was confirmed and my youngest brother, of course, he was confirmed along with my mother and I. Then I guess around the time Gloria was confirmed, my children were confirmed, baptized—christened and confirmed at the same time. Because I know everybody had these little white dresses and ribbons in their hair. My other brother, he finally joined. His fiancé joined also because they were married there. His name was Teacher Johnson, and her name was Helen Shaw Johnson. They were married there.

Patricia Dabney: Like a lot of Baptist young teenagers, the Sunday School through church is a very long time. When I was about 13, maybe 12 or 13, I decided that attending church on Sunday all day was something that I just didn't want to do. I had heard that there was a church up on Wise Street that you were in and out. I decided that since it was in walking distance from

where I lived, and I lived on 15th Street, that I could just walk to that church and be a part of that service, and I would be home before most of my friends got out of Sunday School at Diamond Hill [Baptist Church]. That is how I got started attending the Church of the Good Shepherd. I did not get confirmed until December 1960, so of course I was 18 at the time. Left and went to college, and when I came back, they were closing. At the time I came back, they were closing the church. I was sort of told that the congregation had gotten so very small and most of the [small] parishes at that time were going to be closed, regardless. I then decided to visit a couple of churches around. Settled at St. Paul's because they were so very friendly there, and decided to attend the 8:00 service since I was probably the only African American actually there at 8:00, so I decided I would stay there at 8:00. In at 8, out at about 8:45. When you're young, you don't really want to stay at church all the time. That is really how I got started in the Episcopal Church. Just a time thing for me! Loved the Church of the Good Shepherd. The only person from my family there, so they adopted me as one of theirs. Every family in that church was a friend. I was sort of their child. I love the Witts and have been with the Witts ever since then because we all transferred to St. Paul's. There were the Owens, the Thaxtons, I remember Drusilla Moultrie. Dr. Jackson, Dr. Wesley. Everybody was sort of family in the church. It was a family church. There were a few people that came in from up on Wise [Street]. A couple of teenagers that came in periodically, but not all the time. To me it was just a wonderful small family church. And of course, Father Teeter, as I called him, did do my confirmation in December 1960.

Ann van de Graaf (white friend of those interviewed; off camera): Now Father Teeter was very active in Civil Rights in Lynchburg. I think he was hauled off to jail once. He was arrested one time. I think it was at the sit in. The student sit-in at Patteson Drug Store. All of that is included

on the DVD [about Civil Rights]. Wasn't he thrown off the steps of Jones Memorial Library when some people were trying to integrate the library. He was with them and protesting. But it didn't affect your services?

Delores Haythe: No, we had a good service. He was good. Everybody loved him. Everybody hated when he left. It was a sad time. [If] we could have tied him and kept him here, I think we would have. He was just down to earth. Everybody was all just together there. My father was not a member there, but I guess you could say he was an adopted trustee because whatever had to be done financially, or anything, he was always right in sync with Dr. Wesley and Mr. Moultrie and another gentleman named Charlie Everett. Daddy was a Baptist and so was Charlie, but as much as they attended and as much as they did there and helped out there, people thought that they were dual members of Good Shepherd, which in a way of speaking they were. They were because they would come to us with church and then when service was over there, like Pat said, you could get back in town and go to the Baptist church. The kids would say, "Daddy, are you going with us?" "Yeah I'm going with you but now you've got to go back with me." But you know we went early and then they were able to get home and go with him to Sunday School and then go to another Baptist church out there in the community to church with their friends.

Helen Witt: My husband grew up in Pocahontas, Virginia in the coal mining area. His mother belonged to a Baptist Church, and they were raised in the Baptist church but he didn't like the Baptist church because they begged money too much. He hated the idea of begging money. He said the members should support their own church. When we moved about four doors up the street from Good Shepherd Church, right across from the Millers, his sister had met someone at Good Shepherd. I don't know if she ever joined, Rosetta Well. My husband found out about it, and he decided he'd go down and check it out. And so he fell in love with it. We had five

children. Five children. And so he started going, and then of course I had to go and take the five children and stretch them across the front row of the church. So everybody knew me and thought that I was also a member, but at first he was just going, and I was going with him, but then he decided to be baptized and all five children along with him, so they had quite a big baptism that day. I still did not join because I belonged to my family church. I also went to Diamond Hill Church a lot because my daddy was a custodian of Diamond Hill Church. We cleaned it, helped him clean, we knew every inch of Diamond Hill Church. I had no desire at the time to change churches. I always was down there at Good Shepherd because my whole family was there. After he moved to Good Shepherd when the church was closing, I knew pretty much everything that he knew that was going on with Good Shepherd. He was very unhappy that they wanted to close it. We were never told that they were closing to integrate. We were told that all small churches in the diocese were being closed because they did not have the proper amount of rectors to place everywhere, and they also were not getting enough finance from the little churches for the diocese to hire new people. That's what we were told. I had no voice in that, but my husband said, "What must be, must be" but he wasn't happy about it.

Good Shepherd Church was a real friendly church. [...] I knew practically everybody there. Mrs. Moultrie had been one of my teachers when I was in elementary school. I knew Mrs. Johnson who lived out there past Mrs. Moultrie. She lived next door to Mrs. Moultrie. She was an avid member of the church. One of my best friends, Natalie Jackson, was a real sweetheart. I loved her dearly, so I loved everybody, and I didn't mind participating at Good Shepherd Church, even though it took me a while to learn the difference in what goes on there and what went on in the Baptist Church.

When they decided to close the church, Bishop Marmion, whom I loved dearly, and his wife, and my husband spent lots of nights in Bishop Marmion's house in Roanoke because when they had the conventions, and they went as delegates, Hotel Roanoke would not let allow them to stay there. Bishop Marmion opened his house and had them come and stay at his house. I thought that was truly a step forward, although integration was not a problem for me because my father's white and my mother is African American. They married even though the law [said] they couldn't intermarry. They married and they had two girls. [parents: Joseph Hamlet Mundy, Annie Eliza Harris Atkins Mundy] I never knew the exact year that they married, but they had been married a couple of years before my sister was born in 1930 and I was born in 1932. Integration was not upsetting for me because my Dad carried us—my sister and me—everywhere he went. We sat in white barber shops while he got a haircut. We went everywhere. We went to Miller Park, even though other African Americans could not go to Miller Park. Anywhere that my daddy could go, my sister and I went with him. We were used to being involved. Bishop Marmion had the Rev. Robert Smith, who was an interim pastor at St. Paul's, come to all of our houses—well I know that he came to ours. We knew that the ministers of the big churches were told by Bishop Marmion that they had to visit people's houses and invite them, and people who were closer to their church and they were closer to Grace.

Gloria Cannady: My parents visited all of the churches. They were closest to Grace, but they decided to go to St. Paul. They were at St. John's for a little while, but I think my mother preferred St. Paul for whatever her reasons were, and she went there from the time they joined, right after Good Shepherd closed until she died.

Delores Haythe: When my oldest [daughter] died, she was in a car accident with my Mom, and of course, it was a large funeral, so we were able to have the service at St. Paul's. Also when

Mrs. Francina Pinn passed, she was a member of Good Shepherd also. And by teaching school [...] but her husband was the coach at Dunbar [the black high school in Lynchburg] at that particular time, so everybody knew them, so they had the service at St. Paul's also. And this was before they really integrated. It was probably '63 or '62. There was going to be such a crowd there. They couldn't have gotten everybody [in the church]. They'd have had to close Wise Street off. Not everybody could've gotten in there because Good Shepherd was so small. We were a close family. The Elliots, and when my kids were confirmed, Dr. and Mrs. Wesley were there, godfather and godmother.

Nina Salmon: Do you recall that the population had declined around the time that it was closed? That that was the reason? Did it make sense to you?

Gloria Cannady: It didn't make sense to me. As a child, it didn't make sense to me. I didn't understand why.

Helen Witt: My husband wasn't real happy about that.

Delores Haythe: The older members weren't real happy about it closing, either, but we were told that we weren't able to support it, that we weren't self-sufficient, we could not support ourselves. And with integration, not only our church, we were told that they were going to close all small churches that were not self-sufficient and could not support themselves.

Helen Witt: They closed one right out in Madison Heights. I knew some people who went to that church, and they got closed. I was told or I understood that Bishop Marmion was closing all small churches. It was never mentioned to us that the idea for closing was integrate.

Delores Haythe: [Small churches were closed] if a larger church was close by. Now places like Altavista and Ascension up in Amherst, where it wasn't one [a larger Episcopal Church] real, real close that was my understanding.

Ann van de Graaf: Did any of your children go to Hemlock Haven, to the camp that Episcopal Diocese had?

Gloria Cannady: Was there a Rev. Eberben? I can't think of his name but he was after Dr. Teeter, anyway. There was this other minister who got my mother and father involved in sending me there.

Delores Haythe: When we first started going there, we had a black priest there with Father Ashton. When I first started. It had to be '55? It had to be '56, '57, somewhere like that.

Patricia Dabney: I was thinking the same thing but I could not remember what his name was. He wasn't there every Sunday. We had a priest maybe one—two Sundays a month back in that day. I did not know what his name was because I was young then and just attending the church. That was an African-American priest there.

Delores Haythe: They would send a deacon from St. Paul's. This lawyer was named Ernest Frost. He would come and do what deacons do, that part of the service.

Gloria Cannady: When was Rev. Parrish there?

Gloria Cardwell: He was a supply there when I was there.

Patricia Dabney: Bill Parrish, yes. He wasn't there all the time.

Gloria Cannady: Do you remember Culbertson? Tom Culbertson.

Patricia Dabney: Oh yes!

Helen Witt: Rev. Parrish or one of the ministers had three churches that they went to. Dr. Parrish.

Patricia Dabney: Oh yes!

Delores Haythe: We had a choice. He told us, we had a meeting. [Dr. Parrish] had said he had to have on service at 9:00 on Sunday morning, then he would go somewhere else either to

Amherst or Altavista at 11:00, and then one at 3:00. But he gave us the choice of having the first one. So we picked 9:00—that's how everybody there decided to go, [be]cause we'd go to church, at 9:00, have service at 9:00, and then Sunday School after service. Then he would go to Amherst and he would go to Altavista would be at 3:00 on Sunday afternoons.

Helen Witt: Well, see at that time they had the church in Madison Heights right down near the river. He may have gone to that because Amherst had kept their church open.

Delores Haythe: Well it might have been down in there, but I know it was over in Amherst County. We took the 9:00. Then when they told us that they were going to close... They had a church meeting... They made an announcement that we would be having a meeting after service one Sunday. I'm not sure when it was. I remember we had this meeting and most everybody was there. I really can't remember who told us but I know we were told that they would be closing us, and the reason was because we were not able to sustain our own self.

Helen Witt: When Rev. Smith came, I guess before he came to our house, he called and asked could he come, and when he came to our house and even before he came, he explained that the churches were being closed, and he explained that Bishop Marmion was closing all small churches because of the two reasons. We weren't self-sufficient, I say *we* but the church was not self sufficient, and they didn't have the rectors to place at the church. Not once did we ever hear anything about integration [as a reason].

Nina Salmon: Were you aware of the struggles in the diocese over the issue of integration, particularly around Hemlock Haven?

Helen Witt: I was aware of the fact that there were many people at all of the churches that didn't want us to come. And we used to have to go to meetings and so forth. One of the guys at St. Paul's was in the State Senate or something, and he made it perfectly clear that he didn't

particularly like to sit next to black people in meetings and things. So we knew that they weren't going to be happy about it. My husband hoped that since we had a family of children that the people with children our [children's] ages would be receptive to us. We were told to visit first. We got there and it was the older people. I guess Mrs. Putnam Kyle was probably close to 70 at that time, and people her age welcomed us in. The people who had children my children's ages did not make any efforts to say we're glad you're here or we do thus and so with the children if you want your children to attend. As my kids got older they joined the youth group. Whenever they were planning something it was, "Well we're going skiing Sunday, what are you people going to do?"

Delores Haythe: Gay was at one of the meetings and they asked her what were you people going to do and Gay said, "We people are going to do the same thing that you people are going to do."

Helen Witt: Which I wish my kids had been smart enough to say.

Gloria Cannady: Didn't Gay go to Hemlock Haven?

Delores Haythe: She went to Hemlock Haven one year.

Gloria Cannady: I think we were there the same time.

Delores Haythe: Gay also went to Ecuador with Charlie Elliott and that group. When they had that accident down there.⁶⁰⁰ She was down there with that group.

Ann van de Graaf: Didn't Jack Spong lead that group?

All: Yes!

Gloria Cannady: I recently got an email from Bishop Spong. We've been communicating, especially since my mother was real sick, over the years. He was in Richmond at St. Paul's

⁶⁰⁰ The group from Southwestern Virginia was involved in a mudslide in Ecuador. One of the teenagers, a parishioner from Roanoke, was killed.

Episcopal in Richmond for Easter week, so I emailed him, and he emailed me back. I always loved him, too.

Delores Haythe: He was really nice, too.

Helen Witt: Despite the fact that my children did not enjoy being part of the youth group but they knew to please their Daddy, they would go ahead and attend, all five of them were confirmed at St. Paul's Church [Lynchburg], and all four of my daughters got married at St. Paul's Church. But then after that other than going for certain activities they had no real desire because they didn't get to know the youth and everything because it was "you people" and "we're going to do such a thing, what are you people going to do?" With having five kids, you don't have money to send your kids on a skiing trip very often. We would have probably found the money somewhere if they had said they wanted to go, but they didn't like the idea of being "you people" and "we're going to do thus and so" but you're going to be kind of left out regardless of if you go, you still would be left out.

Gloria Cannady: I know that Gay and I went [to Hemlock Haven] together, and I knew that it was of importance that we go, but I didn't realize exactly why. And the feelings that we got—we were the only two black kids there that summer. I don't remember [the year] right now. It was different and it wasn't welcoming. I didn't have a welcoming feeling. I think Gay and I just kind of hung around together.

Delores Haythe: I know Gay said, I don't care what you say or what you do, I'm not going back anymore. Frances, she didn't want to go. Frances wasn't as outgoing as Gay, so I knew wasn't any need of me insisting that she would go. My Dad and Dr. Wesley could talk Gay into doing most anything. So she went, and even when she went to Ecuador, she wasn't too happy about going there. But that little group was a little bit better because they did carwashes and things

together. I guess they'd gotten a little bit older. Gay really had a good time in Ecuador. She said she enjoyed it. She always had hopes of going back there but she never did make it back.

Gloria Cardwell: That was a sad time, though, for us at Grace Church, because one of our youth members died at that time in that slide.

Delores Haythe: Gay said it was sad for them down there, too. [...] I know they come to work and got me to tell me.

Helen Witt: I think one of the reasons why my children didn't fit in with the St. Paul children was because they didn't know anybody. My children went to Amherst County schools, almost everybody else went to E.C. Glass. And so the E.C. Glass people I guess kept to themselves and they just kind of didn't know my kids so they just didn't bother with them. But I tell you, I was in one of the best Sunday School classes—Mrs. Putnam Kyle, Mrs. Mary Davis. Mrs. Kyle started me going to that class, and I ended up being almost the second in command. Mrs. Davis taught but when she wasn't there, they always would ask me because I think they thought I was smart. I wasn't as smart as they thought I was, but I could read rather fast. I enjoyed that Bible class, and I went every Sunday. I was confirmed at St. Paul's, and so I became a full member. It was the older people who welcomed us.

Delores Haythe: It was the older people who welcomed us at the 8:00 service that we went to.

Patricia Dabney: It was everybody because it wasn't very many people at the 8:00 service.

Delores Haythe: Most of them were the older people because the younger people that had children, they didn't come as much. It was the older people like the Bowens, and the Frosts, and Jean Jones. I still talk to her every now and then. It was a nice service. Very seldom missed a Sunday unless it was a real bad Sunday. I still very seldom miss a Sunday.

Ann van de Graaf: I'm a member of St. John's, and I'm interested that you all went to St. Paul's. Even Dr. Wesley and his family came to St. John's for a while but left. I'd like some honest opinions.

Gloria Cannady: Honestly, not being part of the conversation but one with big ears, I've heard it being discussed as far as the difference between St. Paul and St. John that the congregation was a lot more welcoming at St. Paul.

Patricia Dabney: That is exactly right. At St. Paul's. I attended St. John's a couple of times, and it was like I wasn't there, like maybe if we don't say anything she won't come back next Sunday. Of course, I was single and young. And when you are single and young, and you walk into that situation, you probably won't go back. Going to St. Paul's, it was always that they were welcoming. I don't know whether I had the same experience that you did because I got married at St. Paul's young. My children were raised at St. John's, young. And they didn't have the same experiences that your kids probably had, but they attended E.C. Glass, well [one] attended the Villa and then Holy Cross [Catholic Schools]. They knew the other students that were there so they didn't have the same problem that your children had being in Amherst and trying to associate with the Lynchburg City kids.

Delores Haythe: Probably by the time your kids came along it was truly integrated by then.

Helen Witt: Because your daughter and my granddaughter went to school and graduated together. It makes a big difference by then. It was a different time.

Gloria Cardwell: I went to St. Paul's for a year, every Sunday. Only the usher as I was leaving at the end of the service says, "Thank you for coming—for visiting." That was it. And then one day, I was coming out of the service and a lady came up to me and said, do you sing alto? And I said yes. She said you must be the one my mother was talking about. I'm the organist at Grace

Church, and I need an alto badly, could you come join our choir? And I said, well, might as well. Nobody had asked me that! I've been singing the same alto in that church for years, and if that lady could tell her daughter, why didn't she tell her own organist or say something? So that's where I went and that's where I settled. I felt very at home at Grace.

Helen Witt: Well one young man I think had a real good experience at St. Paul's, Barksdale. Ricky Barksdale. Ricky's one of these people who will have a good experience anywhere because Ricky's going to get involved and he's going to do things. He and Peggy, my youngest girl, were the only two African Americans in that group. Peggy was a shy kid; Ricky was an outgoing kid. The two of them became friends, and he even asks about her right now. People used to think they might marry. It would have been nice because she would have had more money to work with. [laughter] Ricky is head of the children's hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. He was the head surgeon at that children's hospital. Even her husband says that she should have married Ricky because she would've had more money to spend. [laughter] She went but she wasn't happy, but do you know she's still in an Episcopal Church? She took me to an Episcopal Church in Raleigh, NC where she attends a lot. Most of my kids either joined Baptist churches after they left Lynchburg. The two that stayed here, one of them has joined the Baptist Church, but Peggy still is involved in the Episcopal Church.

Nina Salmon: Why do you think they joined the Baptist Churches?

Helen Witt: I don't know, I think they just felt more relaxed. Their friends went the Baptist churches and for them it was...

Nina Salmon: Are they predominantly African American congregations?

Helen Witt: Predominately? Totally.

Nina Salmon: Do you all know the name of a woman, Daisey Coles? Does that name ring a bell? [The Rev.] Todd Vie [rector of St. Paul's] gave me a sermon that one of the previous rectors had preached, and he talked a bout a woman named Daisey Coles.

Patricia Dabney: Yes. Daisey Coles. Little teeny lady? That used to be in church? Little teeny, weeny lady, you think? She left a lot of money to St. Paul's. I'm thinking that was the one.

Nina Salmon: The story in the sermon is that the rector noticed a small black woman on Good Friday, I think. She was not happy with the closing of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Patricia Dabney: She was very, very fair. Do you remember her? Tiny lady. Teeny, weeny little lady, who was very, very fair. You may have thought she was white. Everyone thought she was dirt poor.

Helen Witt: She used to live in the house next to Hutcherson Funeral Home.

Patricia Dabney: Everyone thought she was dirt poor.

Helen Witt: Yeah. I remember her.

Delores Haythe: We all just called her Mrs. Coles. I remember her.

Patricia Dabney: She was an old lady. She lived to be old.

Helen Witt: When St. Paul's put in that new organ and everything, she gave a considerable amount of money to the organ. I remember that part of it, and I used to remember seeing her.

Patricia Dabney: I didn't know her name was Daisey, though, because you're right we [just] called her Mrs. Coles.

Helen Witt: We never knew her first name.

Delores Haythe: She was at church all the time.

Helen Witt: Every Sunday. She just kind of stayed to herself.

Nina Salmon: According to the sermon, and I'll share it with you at some point, she didn't come to the church [St. Paul's] for a period of time after Chapel of the Good Shepherd closed.

[End of first video; Start of second video]

Delores Haythe: I can remember this little lady coming in [to Chapel of the Good Shepherd] but she'd always come in...but she would get out of there before anybody could say anything to her. You know, we said, hm, she doesn't want to talk.

Nina Salmon: Do you remember her, then, later at St. Paul's?

Patricia Dabney: She came to 8:00.

Delores Haythe: At 8:00. Come to the 8:00 service. She's sit over there over on the side

Nina Salmon: She was angry.

Delores Haythe: Because we, my kids and I—I had Frances, Gay, and myself—we always would sit up almost to the very front behind his name was Marshall Frost, he was a lawyer. We'd sit up there right behind him and his wife, and some more people. She would be sitting over to herself, and she get up and [after] communion, she'd just skip right on out. And when you get outside you wouldn't even see her. I never knew where she really lived

Helen Witt: I think she lived right up next to Hutcherson Funeral Home. There was a house going up the street on the left. You'd see Hutcherson Funeral Home, then there was Polk Street.

I think she lived in the house right next to it.

Delores Haythe: I can remember seeing her. [The people at St. Paul's] were very friendly to us. When we started going, everybody welcomed us.

Nina Salmon: I think the trouble was before. The trouble was in the years prior to it. And it was at Hemlock Haven. I'd love to hear more about who you remember from Hemlock Haven. Do you remember staying in a cabin with other teenagers?

Gloria Cannady: I remember staying in a cabin with other kids my age. One girl in particular, I'm not sure if her family went to St. Paul or St. John. Cathy Price. Do you know that name? My middle brother and I were the first two to integrate Perrymont Elementary School, and I remember Cathy from third or fourth grade from over there, and she was always friendly and nice, so when I ran into her in the church setting, it didn't surprise me that she was exactly the same. She went to Hemlock Haven that same year that Gay and I went. And so she was friendly, but nobody else, not even the counselors were.

Nina Salmon: Do you remember the counselors' names or any of the people who were on staff or any of the clergy? Do you remember Bishop Marmion being there?

Gloria Cannady: I remember mention of him being there but I couldn't say I had any interaction with him at all. And as far as, Ann, what you were asking about the difference between St. Paul and St. John, now Rev. Spong [of St. John's] was very welcoming. The head man himself was very welcoming so I could never say anything. He reached out to my mother and father; they became close friends. As an overall church, the people at St. Paul were—I don't know why—I don't know what the difference was because a lot of the people who went to St. John lived in the same areas of town that the people of St. Paul lived in as well. There was always a difference for some reason. It started off like that and it lasted. I can remember taking my mother to St. Paul maybe three years before she passed when she was still walking but she needed help. She wanted to take communion. We went down the right side aisle, she had her communion, and we were coming up the middle aisle. It dawned on me that everybody was smiling at her, even the babies. That's just the feeling that I always got from being at St. Paul.

Ann van de Graaf: You all stayed at St. John's for a while I remember.

Gloria Cannady: I had moved to Richmond by that time. And then Daddy got sick not too long after that.

Ann van de Graaf: I remember from St. John's view, we had a women's group that met in each other's homes. Once the word got out, that integration was coming to be, they changed and met only at the church. And I'm sure that your mother must have felt that.

Gloria Cannady: I didn't know that story.

....

Helen Witt: I got invited to a lot of people's homes. I went into some fabulous Rivermont mansions. From St. Paul's.

Gloria Cardwell: At that time when I was talking about changing churches, St. John's was considered the rich folks' parish and that was the new-money church, and St. Paul's was the old-money church because there was more older people in the rich class going there. Grace, we were hard-working middle.

Gloria Cannady: I go to Grace now. I go to 8:00 service. Grace is like a neighborhood church. It kind of reminds me of Good Shepherd because it sits there on the corner. It's a pretty little chapel-like church. It's not big and massive like St. Paul's or St. John's, so I like Grace.

Helen Witt: I remember when Mrs. Moultrie died. I went to her funeral out there. She had just had her 100th birthday. They did the chimes 100 times. We sat there very quietly while they did 100 chimes of the outside bell in her honor. I thought that was really very nice. My husband didn't live that long but he would've wanted that.

....

Nina Salmon: Anything that you'd like to add?

Gloria Cardwell: Growing up at home in Richmond, I was in church with all of my teachers all through the years, and you had to be on your best behavior. Beside the fact that mother was up in the choir, and we had to sit on the opposite side so she could see us and if we got the eye we knew we were in trouble. But when I came here and started going to Good Shepherd, my principal, whom I taught for, was a member of the church, so I still had to be on my best behavior. My principal was Mr. Duncan. I was an English teacher at his school down in Campbell County, and I had to be on my best behavior still. [Campbell County High School.]

Helen Witt: I'd like to make a statement that the people that Bishop Marmion chose to come and do Good Shepherd Church seemed to be the most likeable people their families and everything. Even though I wasn't a member of the church, I would go to Father Teeter's house and help [Mrs. Teeter] do things and when the preachers were all going to be there for lunch I'd go over and help her serve lunch. I was always welcome in their homes. As far as Dr. Parrish was concerned, I went to Lynchburg College, but even before that, I taught his son so I got to know them on a personal basis. I just thought [Bishop Marmion] sent wonderful rectors to Good Shepherd Church. I don't know if he hand-picked them or what, but all of them that I met there seemed to have been likeable people. They weren't just there putting on a show trying to pretend that they liked blacks. I think they were genuine.

Patricia Dabney: That's what I was getting ready to say. They seemed to want to be there on Sundays, and I don't think that any of them felt that "I've got to go to this black church. I need to put on a good face." It was always the ones seemed to want to be at the church on Sunday. Now, it may not have been that case but sometimes you can go to a church and if there's a priest there who's made to come to that church to do services for that church you can almost tell that they don't really want to be there [by] listening to the sermon that he's going to give that

Sunday. Our priests seemed to—and not all of them were young—I don't think they all were in their 30s back then or 40s some of them were older, and they seemed to want to be at that church to do the services.

Helen Witt: And they seemed to love the people that they were in charge of. I think that word love says it all for them. There was genuine love there.

Delores Haythe: We lived out on [Route] 501, we called it “out in the country.” Every one of them that was there. They would come to my Mom and Dad's home; they were always very sincere. We come to see what's going on, but they were all very friendly. My mother loved [Rev.] Teeter. She thought he was the best thing. She loved them all. My Dad loved all of them also. When Teeter got arrested [following the sit-ins], he said, “I told him not to go down there!” They showed us that they wanted to be where they were and that they were really called to the job that they were doing.

Helen Witt: I believe that all of this stemmed from the fact that Bishop Marmion himself seemed to be a person who loved people it didn't matter what color you were. He showed this in the way he handled things. When he was integrating the churches, that never came out [that] he was getting rid of all the small churches. He never made us feel like that this was to get us into the white churches and made us feel like all the little churches were being closed, so we weren't given any special preference.

Patricia Dabney: We were told to visit the churches. We weren't told, “This church is going to close and all the parishioners here must attend St. Paul's.” You were asked to visit ALL of the Episcopal Churches and make your own decision.

Delores Haythe: Because there was St. Barnabas, and we were told that there were churches in Altavista. We were told [to] just go visit all of them. Make up your own mind where you want to go.

Helen Witt: And I think the people spread out to all of the churches, at least for awhile.

....

Patricia Dabney: I don't remember a lot of this Hemlock Haven stuff. I'm trying to remember it but I don't. Was there some confusion about the camp itself?

Gloria Cannady: I just picked up what I picked up from being a child and just sensing it but I didn't know what the whole story was.

Delores Haythe: When you and my brother Bobby were coming along, there was a Hemlock Haven but it wasn't for the black kids. You couldn't go there.

Nina Salmon: They closed the conference center for two years rather than integrate it. It caused a great deal of discussion among the Diocese. The clergy and the bishop were in favor of integration, largely. And the laity were largely against it...It was a cause of controversy at Diocesan Council and it was in the news...But you were unaware?

....

Gloria Cannady: I just knew that something wasn't kosher there. It wasn't right. It didn't have a good feeling.

Delores Haythe: I think they just more or less picked you and Gay for some reason.

Gloria Cannady: I had the feeling that I wasn't going there because I really wanted to. I was going there for a reason.

Nina Salmon: You were convinced by a church member, is that right?

Gloria Cannady: My mother and father.

Delores Haythe: Kids nowadays, they say, “I don’t want to go,” but when Gloria and my kids were coming along, whatever her mother told her and her father said and my kids more or less whatever, we lived at home with my mother and dad...Whatever they got together and decided it was best, and my mother and Dad said it was good for Gay to go, and said, “You’re going to be with Gloria,” and so there these two little girls with pigtails go off together.

Nina Salmon: Do you think that someone asked your parents to convince your daughter to go? Do you recall any of that? You said you felt like they were picked.

Delores Haythe: I do. They didn’t have many black kids to pick from.

Nina Salmon: Do you have a memory of somebody saying that [it would] really be important for Gay to go to this.

Delores Haythe: My Dad said it. And Mr. Frost. Mr. Frost said it would be good if Gay goes to this. He was a member of St. Paul’s. Marshall Frost. He told my Dad, because he knew that we were there, said, “yeah, she needs to go.” I don’t know what they told Dr. and Mrs. Wesley, but I know that they did go.

Gloria Cannady: It would be a good thing for justice and integration and everything. You need to go.

Patricia Dabney: So this must have been when it reopened. It closed in the late 50s and reopened.

Nina Salmon: It never really opened, because they bought it and then before they opened it, there was the controversy and then it closed. Bishop Marmion was consecrated as the bishop of the diocese within a week of the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954. So he came into this diocese with integration very much on his conscience and he studied it. He was a very deliberate, careful, loving man and studied it carefully and decided that it was a Gospel mandate.

Gloria Cardwell: He would kiss me on the cheek every time he came to Grace Church. He was very friendly. Very open, friendly man.

Helen Witt: I don't know what happened to candidates from predominately African-American churches, but I know whenever they had the big conventions, the guys from St. Paul's always stayed had his house. My husband loved that.

Nina Salmon: Are you aware of any of the other African-American churches? There was St. Philip's in Bedford?

Helen Witt: I didn't know about any.

Nina Salmon: St. Luke's in Roanoke? St. Paul's in Martinsville? St. Paul's still exists.

Helen Witt: I've been to St. Paul's in Martinsville. My daughter joined there when she first moved to Martinsville, and I've been to that church a lot. They are still predominately black. They were the last time I was there. I don't know that they have any white members.

Nina Salmon: They do have some white members. Did you have any white members at Church of the Good Shepherd?

Helen Witt: The rectors.

Gloria Cannady: Their wives and families.

Nina Salmon: Do you recall any other visitors from St. Paul's or any of the other churches?

Delores Haythe: The only time I recall any visitors coming was when we didn't have a supply minister there and somebody would have to come to do the service. A deacon would have to come to do the service whenever we didn't have anybody. Sometimes their wives would come but most of the times they would come by themselves.

Helen Witt: One of the guys at Good Shepherd loved the church, and he was one who stayed at Bishop Marmion's house with my husband, ended up becoming an Episcopal priest. What was his name?

Patricia Dabney: African American?

Helen Witt: You don't remember him? His wife went to school with me.

Patricia Dabney: Duke Harrison.

Helen Witt: He was a member of Church of the Good Shepherd. He was one of those who went with my husband to a lot of the meetings and all of them went and stayed at Bishop Marmion's house. He became an Episcopal priest after that. He was a teacher.

Patricia Dabney: I think he's the reason that I ended up attending St. Paul's College. He recommended that I attend St. Paul's College and that's where I ended up. An Episcopal college.

Nina Salmon: You all have been lovely, just perfect. Thank you so much for your stories.

St. Luke's, Roanoke
Michael Terry



Transcript:

My name is Michael Terry. Born in Roanoke, Virginia, November 17, 1949.

We first moved to Roanoke, Virginia in 1955. My parents wanted us to make sure that we had a sound religious background. My daddy had us baptized at a very early age. We were basically going to his church, the Baptist Church. My dad was Baptist, my mother was Methodist. My parents let us decide what we wanted to be. Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian never came into the picture.

I met a gentleman by the name of Milton Jordan. Milton Jordan lived about a block or so down the street from us, and he was involved in the Episcopal Church. Well, the Episcopal Church was right behind my house, I mean literally about 20 steps behind my house. The way I got involved was that he started a cub scout troop. I was actually about a year too young to get in the cub scout troop but he knew that all my little friends and pub mates were a year older than myself, so he knew that if they got in the cub scouts and I didn't get in there was going to be some trouble in the neighborhood. So, he came and talked to my parents and he didn't know

them and he said that he wanted me to get actively involved in the scout troop, but he also wanted me involved in the Episcopal Church. After some dissertation, my mother and father kind of relented and said, okay, as long as he's going to church....We enjoyed it because he had a lot of interesting things for us to do. And the scout troop was kind of the intro to it. He introduced us to the church and introduced us to the different parts of the church...There was a good education in that. It was his way of getting us in the church. We were 7, 8, 9 years old, just rambunctious enough to do stuff. He told us, "Children are going to do something—whether it's good, bad, or indifferent. Children are going to do something."

He got us involved in the scout troops. Those were some of the best times. We had a den mother. Her name was Dottie Logan. Mrs. Logan was the wife of our family dentist...We came there one Sunday. [We] had our little shorts on and little cub scout uniforms. He introduced us to the church family. I was really impressed because there were prominent people in the African-American community. There were several doctors, an attorney, several school teachers, vice principals, and people who just were upstanding in the community, and I didn't know they were members of the church. The thing that impressed me, and kind of surprised me, too, we had a white priest and a black priest. I don't think that had happened in Roanoke, Virginia.

Nina Salmon: Do you remember their names?

Michael Terry: Woodrow Gaitor was the layreader, then he got to be a priest. I cannot remember the other priest's name. This was in 1960. Then the following Sunday, Bishop Marmion came to the church and was telling people in the neighborhood about the church. Well, he not only included the young men for cub scouts, but he included the girls, too. And the older sister who wanted to go to church. By us going and getting involved, some of the girls in the

neighborhood wanted to go to church too. But he made Sunday School so much fun. He kind of tricked us by making it fun.

We had about 30 children in the neighborhood that went through all the different steps and lessons. He talked to our parents about it. Dad said, “you been baptized already but if they sprinkle you, that’s okay.” We went through the confirmation lessons and everything. [Milton Jordan] showed us the books of the Bible. He said, “You know how the Bible is broken down?” Some people did, some people didn’t. I said, “I know it’s the Old Testament and New Testament.” He took us through each book of the Bible. We had lessons every week on the Bible. He made it interesting because if you answered the most questions that week before Sunday School, you got a prize. Sometimes that prize was a box of M&Ms—a whole box of them, or a whole box of tootsie rolls or bags of candy. Being children, that’s probably what piqued our interest. He said, I want y’all to be acolytes...He showed us the duties. These are the duties of the acolytes.

The thing that most churches didn’t do was drink real wine. And it was interesting, and surprising too everybody drank out of the same chalice. This was 1960. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had come to Roanoke. When I first saw the congregation, they were mostly African Americans, but there were white families, too. Hollins College had a group of women that would come there to work with us and teach Sunday School, and they actually were members. They came every Sunday without fail. That was interesting because that was the time when there were white and colored water fountains. We had a lunch counter where African Americans couldn’t sit. You could order your food to go and pay for it with real American dollars but you couldn’t sit there and have lunch. That was Roanoke in the 1960s. The city bus system, had a sign, which was a city ordinance, on the bus that said “White to the front; Colored to the rear.”

When I was six years old, and I could read. My Mom and Dad always liked us to be adventuresome, especially me. I wanted to ride the bus. My parents fortunately had vehicles, but I wanted to ride the bus. I said I wanted to go downtown. My Mom said, “If you want to ride the bus, I’ll let you ride the bus.” The deal was, my Dad was going to meet me downtown. I got on the bus...I put the token in the slot. I was just barely big enough to climb on the seat right behind the driver. I was so small that my feet were straight out. This little Caucasian lady looked at me [with] snow white hair looked at me, and she kind of smiled at me when the bus driver was looking in the mirror and said, “Sonny, you can’t sit right there.” I said, “Didn’t I put enough tokens in there?” He said, “No, it’s a city ordinance,” and he pointed to it. I read, “White to the front, color red to the rear.” The little lady said, “Leave him alone. He’s just a baby. Just leave him alone. Let him sit right there.” I didn’t know at that point that he could’ve been fired because it was a city ordinance. Well, I rode downtown, and she helped me off the seat because I was so small. I said, Thank you, M’am.” She said, “You’re welcome, honey.” My Dad met me down there and he said, “How was the bus ride?” and I said, “It was good.” So, that was my first adventure on the Roanoke County bus system.

...

We’d take people to church with us, and they were amazed and surprised that there were white people at the church, too. Milton Jordan was our godfather, and Mrs. Jordan. He was a lay reader and also the senior warden at the church. The Ragsdales, Mr. and Mrs. Ragsdale were one of the families. Mrs. Farris and Dottie Logan. Dr. Logan was our dentist. There was a guy by the name of Stickhorse, James Washington. He was about 6’8”—he was one of the tallest people I’d ever seen. Wilber and Matilda Lightfoot. They were members of the church. Gertie Coleman and George Coleman, her husband. He was the vice-principal of the high school. Mr.

Edwin Phillips and his wife, and he was the principal of the high school. They both were from New Orleans and Creole. So they were brought up in the staunch Catholic Church in the parishes of Louisiana. They accepted the Episcopal Church because people used to call Episcopalians, rich Catholics. I never thought anything about it but a lot of Episcopalians are prominent.

Bishop Marmion came to us like we were his own children or grandchildren and never made any inference or made any distinction between us and anybody else because he said, "God loves all children" and he said, "Now y'all doing a wonderful thing here." We were kind of ambassadors of church for the neighborhood. Because almost all the children [came to the church.] The neighborhood was a mixed neighborhood. We had Italian, we had Polish, we had Syrian, we had Greek, African American, we had Caucasian. I wouldn't have taken anything for that neighborhood because we had one of the best hodgepodge of people. We had all kinds of people, all kinds of ethnic groups. Some people came there because they wanted a small congregation. Some people felt like they got lost in the big congregations. St. Andrews [Catholic] had a big congregation and people felt like they were getting lost there. People felt like the priest didn't know them and they weren't that close knit. At the church we'd always have coffee, and they'd have hot chocolate and marshmallows and donuts for the kids, so they made sure that the kids always felt welcome and wanted to come back. They'd always talk and tell us their life history and their stories at church.

....

[Michael recalled friends, neighbors, and the eclectic community of his 1960s childhood and the sense of community that spilled over into St. Luke's. On Sunday, Terry recalled, there were big contests about "who's going to know the most," so Saturday nights were saved for preparing for

Sunday's lessons. He describes his neighborhood jobs, his family chores, going to the movies in Roanoke, and some life lessons imparted from his father.]

....

[During the late '50s and early '60s], it was good times, bad times. People for the most part got along. It transcended the race barrier, racial lines, and racial divides. Some places we didn't go because we got called the names...People came to our neighborhoods sometimes and called [us names.] That was the wrong thing to do... That was one of the few times we had any racial divide because our neighborhood was totally [racially] integrated. We had as many Caucasians as we had anything else. Some of those people there, honestly, they felt like they were stuck...I was their newspaper boy for many years. On my birthday, Christmas, holidays, they'd give me extra money or gifts. It was a good time, bad time. Good time because of the way we were treated in our own neighborhood. Bad times because of the way we were treated outside our neighborhoods. The church was our respite, was our place we could always go.

Nina Salmon: What about school. Where did you go to school?

Michael Terry: I went to a school called Loudon School on Loudon Avenue. There was no busing at the time. I went there 1-6 [grades]...We had several black schools we could go to. One was Loudon School, Harrison School, Gilmore School, Gainsborough, and Lincoln Terrace. They were all in black neighborhoods. I went to Loudon. It was a beautiful school, beautiful white school building. One of the cleanest buildings you've ever been in. The biggest thing for us was walking to school because there were no buses....The black kids [from the county] were bused to black schools...They would go right past the white school, sometimes three or four miles away to the black school. I was cognizant of that because I'm thinking, "Why can't we go to that school?" My parents said, "Well, because black and white don't mix." I said, "Well,

Jimmy is my friend, and he's not black." That always [leads] us to the thought, you put 10 kids in a room...those kids will find a common interest. They'll find a ball or a truck. Or when they fight, they'll be wanting the same toy. They don't look at the color of skin. Like Martin Luther King said, content of the character...Kids, you can learn a valuable lesson from them. They don't care about color. Parents are the ones who can influence them. [Parents say,] "Don't touch them, don't go with them, don't play with them." [Children] want to know why. Can't come up with a viable [reason] other than to say they were a different color. They were saying for years, that the color would rub off.

Our respite was the church. We went to scouting jamborees. We were supposed to go to one in Denver, Colorado. The National Boy Scout Association let us know too late—kind of convenient. Our neighborhood would rally behind us. Whatever we needed, we wanted to go to a jamboree—we would sell cookies, tins of cookies. Krispy Kreme donut was probably the supreme sponsor...We'd raise about 30 cents per donut...We would sell Krispy Kreme donuts to the neighborhood...That was our neighborhood. That was our community.

....

[The neighborhood was multi-ethnic.] Come on in, you can come to our church. When they came there, they saw white, black, Greek, Italian. We drink out of a chalice. A silver chalice. Everybody drinks out of the same cup...It's real wine, it's not grape juice. It's real wine.

....

Our neighborhood was just the epitome of what neighborhoods should be and how they should function. Our neighborhood came together as a neighborhood.

Nina Salmon: You said the church was in your backyard?

Michael Terry: Right behind me. The only thing that divided the church from me was an alley. I could walk right across the alley, and I was on the church grounds.

....

We had a basketball goal out there. We played football. It took me three minutes to get to church. Mom said, I don't care how late you stay out, you got to go to church.

....

Nina Salmon: Michael, tell me a little bit about what you may recall about the integration and the closing of St. Luke's, if you recall that time.

Michael Terry: I do because they told us that the church would be closing and that we would be absorbed to the other churches. I was a little reticent about that. I was but I wasn't. They encouraged us to go visit other Episcopal Churches. And they mentioned churches: St. John's, St. Elizabeth's, St. Paul's in Salem, all the sister churches in the diocese. They said, to see what church you think you like, which church was closest to you. The thing that I always liked about the church was that my sister was in the hospital many years ago for a minor surgery, well people found out that she was in the hospital and they came to visit her, brought her flowers, brought her fruit basket, and she said "I don't know these people," and I said "but they knew you were an Episcopalian." And she said, "As soon as I get out of the hospital, I'm going to visit the church." So she went to St. James because she found out the people who brought the fruit baskets and brought the flowers were from St. James Church. And I was thinking, "Where's St. James Church?" Because I'd gone to St. Elizabeth's and went there for about 15 years. Went to St. John's a couple times, and you know I always felt like I didn't necessarily feel uncomfortable there but I didn't feel the most comfortable there. But St. John's, it was really touted as the "money church" because all the prominent business leaders, matter fact the CEO of Norfolk

Southern, Norfolk Western, at that time, he and his executive vice president went there. A lot of business people in Roanoke went to St. John's. People say when they pass the plate around if you don't put \$1000 in the collection plate you can't be a member. So, you know, I heard those wives' tales. So I went to St. Elizabeth's for a number of years, and I ran into an old friend by the name of Tom Mustard. He was a rector then and we started talking and I [I felt] that kinship right away... Then I went to another church in North Carolina and stayed gone and then I'd come back I'd felt like I'd never been gone a long time at all so I start going and I start visiting other churches and I went to visit St. James with my sister and lo and behold Tom Mustard was there. ...[I]t was closer to my community where I live, and I had old friends. And some of the people I didn't know but some of the people were there who brought the fruit baskets and brought the cards and flowers to my sister, unbeknownst to them, all they knew was that she was an Episcopalian, not a member of their church but just in the same diocese and I thought that was awesome.

Nina Salmon: What year was it you were doing this?

Michael Terry: It was probably about '85, '86.

Nina Salmon: Okay, so long after integration.

Michael Terry: Yeah, but you know the thing I thought about, too, was our congregation's been integrated for years. The ladies from Hollins who came over and who participated in our church just gave me a kind of sense of "hey, you know" and the thing about it, we didn't try that but we talked amongst ourselves in the congregation of St. Luke's: "Where're you going to go to church?" My godfather, Mr. Jordan, ended up going to St. Elizabeth's, and he was a junior warden there. And so when he asked me when I got out of college, he said, "Mike, you still going to an Episcopal church?" I said, "Yeah, when I go." Because at that time I think I had

gotten married, and my wife was Baptist, but I'd always go to an Episcopal church first and then you know, then we'd go to the church with her.

I think the Episcopal Church, especially in Roanoke, St. Luke's, they led the forefront in integration back when it wasn't chic, it wasn't vogue to integrate. They said, between eleven and twelve o'clock on Sundays was the most segregated hour of the week. I believe that because, you know, it was white people go to white churches and black people go to black churches. Some people said that they wanted the "black experience." They wanted the fire and brimstone preaching. They wanted the shouting. They wanted the good music. I said, "Now, you're not going to get all that music, the banging on the piano and all that, you'll get some music but it'll be something you've probably never heard of...But there's a meaning to it. You can't change people's upbringing, but you can introduce them to different things.

....

Roanoke kind of led the forefront because When MLK came here, ...he heard about St. Luke's...[H]e heard about St. Luke's and they integrated clergy and integrated the congregation. That was not even heard of, that was almost taboo. The people who were [integrated] said, "Hey, we're all God's children." I believe that from a long, long time ago.

Nina Salmon: So did he come to St. Luke's?

Michael Terry: He did! He did!

Nina Salmon: Do you remember it?

Michael Terry: I do. We sat down on the floor and we just sat there and talked to him. We all kind of gathered around...we were talking about different things and he was talking about the Montgomery Boycotts and how people had fought for equality. He said, "This is what people are fighting for...You all have achieved what people are fighting for. We all have to come

together. We all have to come to that great awakening, that great day because we're all God's children." I said, we said that a long time ago.

Nina Salmon: Do you remember what year this was?

Michael Terry: Don't remember which year it was. I'd have to Google it to see which year he was here. Because that was during the time they had the Freedom Riders when they were going through the South to try and make people say—you have to wake people up, just don't take anymore. You see a wrong, you see something that's an atrocity. Speak up, speak for it...If you won't stand for something, you'll fall for anything. People lost their lives. It was a scary time.

Nina Salmon: Do you remember who the priest was at that time?

Michael Terry: Woodrow Gaitor was the black priest. Took turns with a white preacher. They took turns and when Rev. Gaitor preached, we had as many whites as blacks, and when the other preacher preached we had as many blacks as whites, so we weren't thinking, "Oh, this is black week or this is white week."

Nina Salmon: Why did Bishop Marmion close St. Luke's?

Michael Terry: I don't know. Because I think we had the families. [My sense of it is that there were] about 100 in church on Sundays. It was full. Same people came all the time with their kids and their grandkids...We participated. It was interesting and fun. If you missed church, you felt like you missed something. They kept it short and sweet. And people were in and out that's what that all liked about the Episcopal Church even today, in and out within 45 min to an hour, even with communion.

....

One time my godfather (Milton Jordan) and I had been cleaning up a building late at night and we had our work clothes on. I said, I can't go to church like this." He said, "God'll take you just like you are."

It was an interesting time because there never was a bump in the road for us at St. Luke's and when they closed the church, I think, I don't want to say necessarily disband the church but a lot of people just felt disjointed and they never felt that they fit into the other churches, the St. James, the St. Elizabeth's, St. John's, some people St. Paul's, and gets fragmented...The church just got fragmented. That was to me a big blow. I was a teenager. I never did find out why.

....

Nina Salmon: What about Hemlock Haven? Do you have any memories of Hemlock Haven?

Michael Terry: I went there once. Went to Phoebe Needles once. I went to Hemlock Haven. But that was a long time ago. The experience was okay, but again, it was like anything. You see familiar faces. It's like putting on an old shoe. That's what makes you feel acclimated and feel like they're home again. Seeing one person that they've seen.

Nina Salmon: Did you have that experience at Hemlock Haven?

Michael Terry: No I didn't. I saw people that I knew, but I didn't see anybody that was like—. It was different. It was fun.

Nina Salmon: Did you go for summer camp, do you remember?

Michael Terry: No, we were up there to visit. For a day. It was in the woods.

Nina Salmon: Yeah, it is in the deep woods! Did you go with church group, with youth group?

Michael Terry: I went with youth group, church group [from] St. Luke's. Quite a few of [us teenagers] went. Must have been about 10 of us. One of the girls got scared because she saw a snake. And she did see a snake, too!

Nina Salmon: So you didn't go up for like a dance or something?

Michael Terry: No, we went up and just kind of visited. Because we had heard about Hemlock Haven we used to ride our bikes over there to go fishing. There's a big lake over there. One of the guys said that's a deep lake, don't go swimming over there.

Nina Salmon: What year did you visit, do you remember?

Michael Terry: Had to be in the early 60s because I was in high school in the '60s.

Nina Salmon: Where'd you go to high school?

Michael Terry: Lucy Addison High School.

Nina Salmon: And where'd you go to junior high?

Michael Terry: Booker T! Booker T. Washington, which is right down the street from Douglas Avenue.

Nina Salmon: So you went from St. Luke's when it closed and they just came in and said St. Luke's is closes and pick another church? And you went to St. Elizabeth's and stayed there for fifteen years? And did you go off to college?

Michael Terry: I was a member of St. Elizabeth's when I went off to college [Norfolk State]... There was not an Episcopal church close to me. There was a Catholic church not too far from where I lived. I didn't have a car when I went down there because freshmen couldn't have a car. Then I got a car my second year, but then I lived out in Virginia Beach in an apartment, which was about 20 miles, 30 miles from where I was. I went to a Catholic Church... We could follow the church, and follow the services and everything. Then I didn't go for a while, didn't go until I came home. Then after that I came back home and went to St. Elizabeth's some more.

....

I wouldn't want to be anything but Episcopalian, not just once or twice. All churches kind of the same except it's kind of the experience you get. I always felt closer to God. People watch you, you know you bless your food. Do you know what it means? I do with these three fingers: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. [I know] the Stations of the Cross. That early introduction to not only the church but to religion. I took philosophy of religion when I was in college. And my professor said, "Where'd you get all this information?" I said, "I came up in the Episcopal Church." "Oh, that explains it. You're catholic." I said, "Well the Catholic diocese you know that's different from the Episcopal diocese but were all the same in there." He said, "because Dr. Bretts"- he was a major PhD, post doctorate in religion. He understood Latin, too, he would just say wow. He said one thing in Latin: *cogito ergo sum*. "Can anybody tell me what that means?" "I think therefore I am." And he said, "Wow, Mr. Terry I know you know that. I said but you know, part of the Episcopal service used to be in Latin. That's part of the reason, the service used to be in Latin. They'd go from Latin to English. I used tot sit there and listen to it and people say "Do you understand it?" And I'd say, most of the time I do."

Nina Salmon: "And you learned it in those confirmation classes."

Michael Terry: I did! In the confirmation classes, I said when you get confirmed you know what you know. That just transcends religion, because the church, you probably found some ministers that have probably been in churches for years and you ask them about the stations of the cross and they say huh. So it was that experience you can't take away from [me].

My sister was taking bible study classes because she actually joined another church before she passed last July. And she was kind of teaching the class. The minister was doing the teaching, trying to teach them. And she didn't tell him but she said it to herself, "stuff I already learned when I was 8 or 9 years old." And you practice it every week. So then you learn things

about how to be an acolyte. How to light the candles, how to snuff the candles, and sing the Peter's Basilica. Some people call [them] altar boys. And I said that's a job because that's a highly religious comparison. And what they do kind of dictates what the priest does because they're preaching, yeah, you have to go through training. We should say we could be an altar boy. We don't call them altar boy we call them acolyte because it could be an altar girl. And then they [made everyone] keenly aware of the church and how it impacts everybody. And then how people have taken religions and beat people across the head with it. And then how people have taken religion in and just kind of succumb to it.

But it's interesting how people let you choose your own religious being and how you transcend that later on in life because some people just fall away from the church...My son is in law enforcement, federal law enforcement. One of the things they were doing a background check. I asked him what they did and he said they asked him, "Do you go to church?" "I don't care what people think about me," I said "Yes, you do." Cause when they did a background check for me and my sister. My sister was in federal law enforcement, the FBI, they want to know what kind of person she was. Is she this, is she that, the other. They asked my godmother [in a] two-hour interview. "Michael. What kind of guy was he, is he this is he that?" And they asked people in the neighborhood who you thought you didn't know but they know you and say, "Oh yeah he was a good little guy, he would cut my grass, he was this, he was that, and the other," or "he was a hell raiser."

So that is something that is kind of with you all your life, even to the end when people say, did he or she go to church? Some people don't go to church and they have to have a funeral in the chapel. They have like a preacher or layreader who staffs it to say okay, she didn't go to church. To me that's always been big, and my dad was always big on that because you see you

need to have an affiliation, as long as you have one. As long as you get baptized and as long as you have one.

Nina Salmon: Let me ask you a question, that goes back to that when you first started going to St. Luke's, they wanted you to be baptized and your father said well you've already been baptized. So were you baptized again in the Episcopal Church?

Michael Terry: I got sprinkled.

Nina Salmon: Did they call it, what did they call it? Did they acknowledge that you'd already been baptized?

Nina Salmon: How's being sprinkled different? Tell me that.

Michael Terry: Well baptism, they actually dunk you in the water, and you're baptized. Now in the Episcopal church, when they say you sprinkle, for women, they actually put a little cloth on their head and they sprinkle some of the holy water on you and make the sign of the cross. I guess things are being baptized because they're always saying in the Book of Common Prayer, one baptism. Because if you're baptized you're Christ's own for life. So I didn't know if I'd been baptized. Dad said you and your sister both were baptized...So I didn't want to get unbaptized. My Dad told them [we] had been baptized.

I never saw anyone in the Episcopal Church get dunked in the water, so they always were sprinkled. My dad [said] when you're a little kid you don't know what's going to happen to you, but I was so young I didn't even remember it. Because it was actually in the creek. My older cousin told me. I was never able to get details because my father passed but my older cousin said, "Oh, I was there." We both got baptized. I said oh wow I didn't know that.

Nina Salmon: And they wanted to baptize you again anyway?

Michael Terry: I guess that was their formation of a baptism.

Nina Salmon: Was it in the Baptist religion that you were baptized?

Michael Terry: Mhm.

Nina Salmon: And how soon after that were you confirmed?

Michael Terry: It was probably shortly after that because we had gone through all the confirmation classes, and we had just learned so much about the Episcopal church in general. Some of the people don't know a lot about the church because they'll just sit there and wonder and say yeah church is church, God is God. But if you know the different things about the church it makes you want to go deeper into religion. And then you start learning passages of the Bible, and you kind of use those the rest of your life. Some people don't know where to go for solace.

....

Nina Salmon: Any last thoughts about Bishop Marmion and are there and other African American peers from St. Luke's who are still around that I might want to talk to?

Michael Terry: Bishop Marmion came to us with open arms and an open heart. I guess we were kind of guinea pigs, kind an experiment. In Southwest Virginia, in Virginia, in Roanoke, in particular, because that hadn't happened, even though people didn't fight and fuss [there was just a] kind or unspoken racism...but the bishop was I guess trying to institute some change...God said we're all one church.

....

Michael Terry: One person [you might talk to] lives here. She works for the City of Roanoke. She was pretty involved in the church but then she kind of drifted off. She ended up joining a Baptist Church.

Nina Salmon: So she left the Episcopal Church and joined the Baptist Church after St. Luke's was closed. I might be interested in talking with someone who didn't stay with the Episcopal Church. What was her name?

Michael Terry: Andrea Hailey. She was Andrea Galloway.

....

I hated that that happened the way it did because then I find out it was because of integration. I just thought the church was a lot of times the church was not financially astute so they say well okay well let's close this one because it's not meeting this function as well, but I know that there're some people there who gave, you know, nice sums of money. But I hate that because of that because it's like, you know, as I was saying, we've already got to conform. Why not bring people over to us instead of we going over to the other people. Because once you fragment that church, that body, you never get it back together again. And I think some people, and if you give them an opportunity, just like the Hollins students there, then they'll come to St. Luke's and say, "Wow, it's a nice church." The church was a small church. And I guess that was a thing you look at, too. But the bigness of the building doesn't necessarily make the place it's going to be any warmer and it doesn't make it any better religious experience because we had a wonderful religious experience in that church we had. Why we got to cross over all the time? Somebody should cross over to us, you know. . . You won't get the same as the St. Luke's experience. You maybe see one or two people that you know. But then you kind of go, "All I see is white people. I don't see any black people." People feel comfortable in their own skin.

St. Paul's Martinsville
Bill Vickers



Biographical information: Bill Vickers was born in Martinsville on October 6, 1940. His father was a dentist who died in 1950. Bill taught science at Albert C. Harris High School (all-black school in Martinsville) beginning in 1964.

Transcript:

I'm an Episcopalian primarily today because my father was very, very infatuated with the Episcopal Church. When he came to the United States, he came from Richton, Barbados. When the family settled in Boston Massachusetts, I think the Episcopal Church was very, very cordial to the family, and as a result of that I think that is the church they visited and they chose to stick with. He came to America when he was about 11 years old, so that was about in 1911 or 12 [that] he and his family came to Boston.

....

[My father] grew up an Episcopalian. When he came to Martinsville to set up his practice—I'm thinking that would have been in the late 20's or early 30's—the churches of course were segregated at that particular time. Having been accustomed to the Episcopal service, he wasn't as pleased with the services that he saw in the other churches, and he decided to go to the Diocese in Southwest[ern] Virginia. Bishop Phillips was the bishop at that particular time. He told Bishop Phillips that he was interested in an Episcopal Church being in Martinsville. The Bishop gave him permission to start a study session. People who had the same inclination that my dad had were invited to come and participate in the study of the Episcopal traditions and history and so forth. I think they started working from homes.

In the very beginning, my first memory of being in a church service was at Mrs. Mary McDaniel's house in east Martinsville. For several years, we had Sunday morning worship at her house. My dad eventually encouraged more people to come to the services and the numbers increased. It's my understanding that the first confirmation they had was December 7, 1941. Eventually, they started trying to raise funds to build the church. A lot was available on Fayette Street. My Dad found out about it—it was in walking distance of our home. It was such that people in that neighborhood could walk to church if they wanted to. Now there were still people in other parts of town who would have to drive because of the distance.

After the lot was purchased, the bishop authorized them to start on the foundation of the church. For several years, we had service[s] in the basement of the church. Actually, one could hardly know it was a church there because the lot sloped down and the top of the church was almost level with the highway. People used to refer to it as the flat-top church. In 1955, they were given permission to complete the structure.

The church was completed in '55. We used the basement of the church to establish a pre-school. There were people in the community who were interested in working even if it was part of the day or all day, but there were no pre-schools in west Martinsville at that time. The church was able to get Mrs. Bessie Woodward, who had retired from the Martinsville School system as an elementary teacher. She was the teacher and then many of the parents in that community were glad to have a place they could leave the children while they earned a few hours working. I think from about 8 until 12 or something like that, the pre-school was in operation. It grew, and many children from all over town ended up coming.

Nina Salmon: Both black children and white children?

Bill Vickers: At that time, the white children already had pre-schools. At this particular time, it was people in the neighborhood, primarily, and the neighborhoods were very segregated at that time. These were black children that came, however if someone had interest in enrolling a white child, that certainly would not have been a problem with the members of St. Paul's. It was noted that those children who got that early training and that early familiarity with letter formations, writing, learning to read and spell, seemed to have had an advantage once they got into the public school. It was well noted and well documented that it made a difference for these children to be trained as early as possible. Somebody did a study years later, after the children had even gone through high school, and it was revealed that those children who got that early start seemed to have been well prepared, and they seemed to have scored better and their academic performance seemed to have been better than children who did not come to the pre-school. As a matter of fact, that pattern followed right on through to high school and even in college.

Nina Salmon: What years did the pre-school operate, do you remember?

Bill Vickers: I think the pre-school probably started around 1946 or '47. I know my two younger sisters attended. I was already in school in that time.

Nina Salmon: You said the church started at Mrs. McDaniels' home. Do you recall what year that would have been?

Bill Vickers: I'm thinking that would have been in the early '40s. I'm thinking probably 1941, '42, '43. I can remember going out to church with my dad. I can remember stopping at an apartment where the pianist lived, and he would pick her up because she would play the piano at Mrs. McDaniel's house, and later she would play at the church. I'm thinking in the early '40s, the pre-school started and it was well on the way by the mid-'40s and '50s.

Nina Salmon: Did the pre-school continue once the church was up and running? Did the pre-school continue as a function of the church?

Bill Vickers: It did go well into the '50s. When Mrs. Woodward decided to retire...another lady took over the pre-school when Mrs. Woodward retired, and that was Mrs. Miriam Allen. She came in and she picked up where Mrs. Woodward left off. And Mrs. Allen had been a former teacher also.

Nina Salmon: What do you remember about the troublesome years of integration in Martinsville and the bishop and what Bishop Marmion wanted to do with integrating the black church and the white church in Martinsville, and why did St. Paul's maintain its identity in Martinsville as separate from Christ Church?

Bill Vickers: Well, at that particular time, I don't think I knew of any churches in Martinsville that were integrated. I don't really know if some of the members would have been welcome at any of the white churches at that time, but I do remember that several of the members of Christ Church would come to St. Paul's Church to lay read. One was John Schultz, who owned the

radio station in Martinsville and one was Paul Zimmerman, who worked at the radio station as well. Ever since I can remember, there have been individuals from Christ Church who would come down to St. Paul's Church to lay read and usually to help with anything we asked them to help with or if they saw something that needed to be done and if they felt they could be of service.

Nina Salmon: Did members of St. Paul's go to Christ Church for any purposes or was it just people from Christ Church coming to St. Paul's?

Bill Vickers: Well, the people who were coming from Christ Church to St. Paul's were working in a lay reading capacity. I don't think we had families that were visiting in the '40s and '50s. Not because I think people held hostility for each other, it's just something that, you know, the water fountains were segregated, the buses were segregated, the lunch counters were segregated. Segregation was so entrenched that at that particular time I'm not sure many people in West End [Martinsville] gave much consideration to going to Christ Church, and I don't think many people at Christ Church gave much consideration to come to St. Paul's Church. But they did come there when they were asked to come down and lay read and be a part of the service.

Nina Salmon: Why would they be asked to lay read?

Bill Vickers: Sometimes if we had a problem and one of the lay readers at St. Paul's couldn't be there, if we needed an extra lay reader or if the regular lay readers were out of town or couldn't function in that capacity.

Nina Salmon: So was St. Paul's a smaller congregation than Christ Church?

Bill Vickers: Absolutely. The type of service that takes place in the Episcopal Church was not one that most of the black people were familiar with. They dealt with a more charismatic type service with clapping and shouting. Some of the gestures and activities that the Episcopal

Church did, it was a more calm type service and that didn't have as much appeal to some of the people who had always been brought up in an apostolic type church. And there were some people who were members of the Episcopal Church who didn't subscribe to the type of service that took place in some of the apostolic churches. Just a difference of preference as well as desire.

...

The Bishop [had] a gentleman named Rev. Somers [who] came from Lynchburg. He would come down, and I can remember him preaching. I think he probably went to churches in maybe Chatham and Lynchburg where they were beginning to maybe start an Episcopal church there or may have been that a church already existed there and he was serving as a supply minister.

Later Rev. Cornelius Dawson came, and he actually moved to Martinsville. I think he came from South Carolina. He moved to Martinsville. At first he stayed at an apartment on Barton Street. Later the church was able to secure a house on I think it was 4th street—that was in the neighborhood not far from the church. So, he was actually part of the community as well.

Nina Salmon: Did he have a family?

Bill Vickers: Yes, but his daughters were young women. He didn't have any children our age. I suppose when he came to Martinsville, his daughters were in their twenties. [I was] probably 6 or 7.

....

Rev. Morris came after Somers. Somers never lived in Martinsville, he traveled I think from Lynchburg or somewhere to Martinsville to serve as a supply minister for us. Eventually, Bishop Phillips sent Rev. Dawson to us. After Rev. Dawson we had Rev. Morris and we had

Rev. Morris for several years. I have forgotten exactly when Rev. Morris left but that would have been in the late '50s. I remember being probably in high school when he left because on Sundays, Martinsville did not have a swimming pool blacks could attend at that time. He would offer to take us, especially the young men who came to the church, he would offer to take us to Danville where they did have a swimming pool where blacks could swim. We all looked forward to that. We have fond memories of Rev. Morris during that time. I think he was the first to stay in a house secured by the church, that was our first rectory, well really our only rectory. Eventually the church ended up selling the rectory.

....

I think I was christened at Mrs. McDaniel's house. I believe by the time I was confirmed, we were at our church on Fayette Street . . . My father passed when I was nine years old so I was too young to have been confirmed in 1950. But I do remember Bishop Phillips coming to St. Paul's because he did my father's funeral. [My father] was a dentist in town.

....

I think [the people at St. Paul's] kind of covered the spectrum. I think a lot of the people who initially came to St. Paul's [were people] that my dad was very close to. One was a realtor Bill Muse. He dealt with real estate, and he also ran an insurance agency. He was a very prominent member and was part of the early group that worked to get the church going. Tommy Johnson worked with the newspaper, the *Bulletin*. Tommy Johnson was very instrumental in getting the church started and he was very supportive. If I'm not mistaken, I think the first altar we had might've been built by Tommy Johnson. And George and Jean Hairston, Jean was a nurse and George was an insurance agent. He was very prominent in the early development of the church. And of course the McDaniels were. Mrs. McDaniel was a teacher. I guess she was

glad to have us get our own place because every Sunday we would be in her living room, but she never seemed to have mind[ed] that at all, she was very accommodating. There were a lot of children in the neighborhood who were friends of my family, and they were invited to church and many of them came to Sunday school and then eventually to church as well. It was an interesting time. Even though what we had was very humble, many of us didn't know of the fine structures that some of these other churches had that had been in existence for years before anybody ever thought about an Episcopal church in the black community.

Nina Salmon: Can you talk a little bit about your memories of the time of integration? Do you remember that as a time that was fraught or anxiety ridden?

Bill Vickers: There were many things, before the school integration, that led up to that. For example, in West End, when I was very young there were no paved streets and no sidewalks and no curb and gutter. My father was very instrumental in getting curb and gutter in West End. [West End] was the neighborhood where the church was but was also where blacks were more concentrated because everything was tremendously segregated in the '40s and the '50s and so forth. One thing that was an issue, when my father came he was very adamant about individuals registering and voting. I think when he came I don't think there were more than about a dozen registered voters in the black community. And in his practice and in his socialization, he encouraged more people to go up and to register, which they did. Of course that was very helpful. I think you have some voice when you have a vote. If you don't have a vote, you accept what you get. I remember when they put sidewalks in front of our house in West End as well as the paved streets. I can remember when at our back door, 3rd Street was a dirt road. When it would rain, children would be walking to school and so forth in the mud. My father didn't really appreciate the fact that his children and their contemporaries were dealing with conditions that

were more primitive than what he grew up with as a child. He did a lot to make a lot of changes in terms of, not just bringing more people into the church, but also supporting voter registration and having the city to do more in terms of curb and gutter and paved streets and so forth. And also to have it so that buses could come and pick up children in West End to take them to school. When I started school they didn't have buses. And then people, especially after they started voting and after they got more politically involved and so forth, some changes came about for the better. But this business of everything being segregated, it was something that people had gotten accustomed to and they just figured this is the way it's supposed to be. And I think it took some people who came from different places to let them understand, no this not the way it's supposed to be; this is the way it is but this is not the way it's supposed to be. They started to become more aggressive about voting and asking for accommodations that were conspicuous by their absence.

This continued for a long time, but I think some of my proudest moments of Martinsville came in 1968. I finished high school in 1958, and at that time all of the schools were segregated and that was just a way of life that's just the way it was. In 1968, the city decided to build a new high school. There was a lot of discussion as to whether or not this would be an integrated high school or a segregated high school. Since Martinsville High School prior to 1968 was a building that was starting to age, it was considerably better than Albert Harris [High School] was at that particular time, but the high school was really expected to be just a new Martinsville high school with the same practices in force. The people in West End said, "Well, we're paying taxes, too." I think there was a lot of encouragement from a number of people that this would just be a new high school, but it would be a white school—just a newer rendition of the old. There was some conversation back and forth, and so forth. Towards the end, the powers that be in the city decided

that it would be a freedom of choice. I think the expectation [was] that they knew that the white students would choose the new high school, and I think that many thought that the black children who had always been in a segregated situation would be a part of Albert Harris. But when they finished looking at the votes, they just had a handful of people in the black community that with freedom of choice, voted to stay at Albert Harris and that is the high school aspect of it. Now Albert Harris did have [an] elementary school that was not too old, but the high school—when I graduated—it was the same building that had been there in the '30s and so forth. Once the votes were counted, they only had a handful of blacks that said they wanted to be in the old Albert Harris building. Many people were very apprehensive about bringing black and white students together. Some of the individuals in the black community and in the white community and many of the ministers got together and formed a Human Relations committee.

One of the individuals who really took a leading role in trying to work with some of the students before they actually got over to the high school was a member of Christ Church, and she's a member over there now. She changed her membership from Baptist to the Episcopal church. Anna Wells [is] a most exceptional person. The thing that I always liked about her was that you didn't have to worry about who was going to show up. She was an independent thinker and you didn't have to wonder about what she's thinking because if she thought it, she said it. She meant what she said and said what she meant. She along with some of the other ministers from different churches actually got a core of students together. It allowed some of these students to have some type of communications and associations with each other before they walked into the high school for the first time.

So, once the children got over to Martinsville High School, because of the intervention of Anna Bowe Wells and... a pastor at another church, and several of the churches got together—

well the ministers got together. And I think they had some discussions with these children, some black and some white, and one of the most miraculous things happened. When many schools all around Martinsville were going up in flames by bringing the black kids and the white kids together, the kids at Martinsville from the black community and the white community came in and from the look of things one would've thought, "well they've been here all the time." But some of the adults who formed a human relations group, I think were able to talk to a lot of the young people. Some of these children already had some relationship with each other before they got there. Once they got to the high school, the administrators at the high school knew that one of the things that could cause things to go up in flames—you have to have student council officers, you have to have class officers, you have cheerleaders, and majorettes—and these in many instances, and especially at that time, were voted on by the student body. The black students were at a minority in terms of voting, but when the kids came in and voted for student council officers they had a very healthy representation of ethnicity. When they voted for class officers and student council representatives, people could see that it was a mix group of individuals. Even when the cheerleaders were voted on, there were black and white cheerleaders. If it had been just the opposite, if it had been a situation where there was a heavy concentration of one group or the other, that would have caused, I think, great concern. But the children voted, and they voted very wisely, and they were liberal in terms of their votes.

Nina Salmon: And you know what you're talking about don't you because you spent your career, would you like to talk about that for a moment for me, as an educator?

Bill Vickers: Well, I started in a segregated school, Albert Harris, just as about any school I knew of at the time, (I started in 1964), and at that time most all of the schools especially in this area were segregated.

Nina Salmon: When you say you started, you started teaching?

Bill Vickers: I started teaching in 1964 at an all black school. And in '68 when we combined the two schools, I was asked to be one of the student council advisors. I work[ed with] Mary Jane Powell, who was a teacher there, and later, Denise Morrison and Barbara Epperly. We felt that we needed a human relations council, and on the student council, we had a human relations committee. These children would meet and we would discuss ways that we could facilitate the activities and the course of action of the students. The children were very mature in terms of how to do these things. This was a human relations committee from the student council and then we thought, well we need a human relations committee where people don't have to be voted in, so we started another humans relations committee in addition to the one we already had. We called it Project Understanding—where anyone in the school could come in and be a part of that particular group.

I had a pretty good size room because I taught science. In the first part of the room we had desks, and in the back of the room we had tables and stools and so forth, so the science rooms were larger than the average room there. When we announced we were going to have a human relations group that any of the students could be a part of who wanted to be a part of the human relations group, we just about filled the room up. And that was a good situation because the kids got a chance to know each other better, and I think some bonding took place. It was a case where the white students could say, "Well why is it you all so such and such a thing" and the black student could said, "well this is how that happens" or "this is why we do such and such a thing." Then they would reverse it. The white children would ask about certain things and the black children would ask about certain things, and I think they got a chance to understand each other better. And then when we had different activities with the student council and the student

population, kids would be working who ordinarily wouldn't be working together. For example we had paper drives where we would collect newspapers and bundle them and put them in a trailer and they would go off to be recycled. Then we would do glass drives where people would bring glass in and we would get the glass. Some times we had instruments where we had to stand up and we had to crunch. We had protection, there would be long handles and the glass would be way below. But it was a situation where the kids were safe but the glass could be taken off to be recycled. But in addition to human relations we were teaching them something about ecology as well. One of the blessings that we had also, I mentioned Anna Bowe Wells, who was always a person who was interested in equity and interested in what's right and what's Christian. Her daughter Natalie was in that first group as well. Natalie inherited a lot of her mother's concerns, and Natalie was very good at working with different people—it didn't matter what religion, what ethnicity, what economic [class]; she could work with everybody, too. And then we had an individual who had a very, very important role to fulfill. And I think he might've a member of Christ Church at the time and his name was Bradley Johnson and he was in charge of the election committee. He would work to make sure people were registered to vote and when you came to vote, you voted properly, and that it wouldn't be a situation where somebody could vote more than once. Once the ballots were placed into the box, it was a locked box, and he had a key to it and I had a key to it. So much of that has contributed to his organization and his savvy in terms of how it should be done. Bradley is a good friend even today. Today, he has children in the Martinsville school system, and he's an attorney.

Nina Salmon: I'm interested in two things: I want to know your memories of Bishop Marmion, and I'm interested in any discussions that may have occurred at the church about possible mergers between St. Paul's and Christ Church or discussions about integration that may have

occurred and then tangentially, discussions at the conference center, Hemlock Haven, that you might recall from the early sixties.

Bill Vickers: I remember at a very early age, my younger sister's being in attendance at Hemlock Haven. And I think that was encouraged and I think that was supported.

Nina Salmon: Do you remember what year that would've been?

Bill Vickers: Well she graduated in 1965, so it would've been prior too 1965.

Nina Salmon: How much prior to 1965?

Bill Vickers: I would think in the early sixties.

Nina Salmon: So she would've been a teenager?

Bill Vickers: Yes. And she went to some of the conferences and some of the things they had that previously there was no variety and ethnicity. But the thing that took place, I think that some people in the diocese were not in favor of it being open on an integrated basis. And I think that changed for the better.

Nina Salmon: Do you have any memory of why that changed or how that changed? I think my research bears you out that it absolutely was a controversy in the diocese and a struggle. I'm interested in hearing your views on that.

Bill Vickers: Well, I think that where there were a lot of conservative people in the diocese there were also a lot of individuals that were very liberal. And I believe that the thing that took place, some of the people that had been so very, very conservative eventually started to change. I think one individual who had been very, very adamant about it being opened on a segregated basis later ended up telling the church and maybe people in the diocese that he'd made a mistake.

Nina Salmon: Do you remember who that was?

Bill Vickers: I think it was Francis West. But it was very refreshing to see that he had changed his mind and had said publicly that that was a mistake.

Nina Salmon: What are your memories of what was going on during that time in Martinsville? I know you have a historical memory of it now; we've heard the stories of Francis West and his public apology. We know about that. And you know some of the historical transition that occurred, but do you remember any of that in the moment? Do you remember being aware of it at the time?

Bill Vickers: The thing that I have a greater recall for is to be able to observe I think positive evolution. Some of the individuals who were totally in favor of segregation, to see some of them turn the corner—and this is black and white—when some of the individuals admitted that that wasn't the way they should be thinking, and some never said, but they show by action that they had a change of heart and mind. The thing that stands out so much in my mind right now, I remember *Look* magazine coming to Martinsville, and they made several observations of what was taking place in Martinsville. They even came to the schools, and when they came to the schools they saw children going to school and working together and getting along and they knew that these kids had come from totally segregated societies. And they interviewed teachers, they interviewed principals, and they interviewed students. They let us know they were very impressed.

Nina Salmon: What year was this?

Bill Vickers: I'd had to check that to make sure.

Nina Salmon: Late sixties?

Bill Vickers: No it was later than that because soon after they left, Martinsville was noted as an all American city. I'm not saying all this happened because of the positive integration in the high school, but I'm sure it didn't hurt either.

Nina Salmon: In other parts of the diocese, Bishop Marmion, who I think was widely in favor of integration, to promote integration closed small black Episcopal churches and encouraged the congregants to become members of the larger white Episcopal churches. Why do you think he did not close St. Paul's and encourage the congregated to become members of Christ?

Bill Vickers: I really don't know exactly what influenced his thinking on that, but I think he probably felt that in certain populations if there was dwindling populations in both churches that it would make sense to have the congregations combine. I never had a discussion with him in regards to that, but one of the things as it related to St. Paul's church, St. Paul's has for such a long time always had a number of activities that took place in West End that probably may not have been able to materialize if it hadn't been there. It was the meeting place for a long time for the boy scouts, it was a meeting place for the girl scouts, it was a meeting place for a learning center. Some of the kids in West End didn't have as much parental support as they might've had in other sections of town. When a learning center was created, kids could come in and they could get help with their homework; they could get help in their reading and math skills. And that might have been part of his thinking and I think he was aware of the community activities St. Paul's was involved in. And some people could walk to St. Paul's from their homes where walking from St. Paul's over to Christ Church may have been difficult.

Nina Salmon: Do you think members of St. Paul's would've been welcome at Christ Church?

Bill Vickers: I'm sure they would've been welcomed by many at Christ Church. I know that whenever I have been over there, I have always been treated very cordially.

Nina Salmon: In the 1960's would this have been the case?

Bill Vickers: I think there may have been more conservative people and their ideas at the time may have been more conservative but the thing that has happened since school integration, many people from the black community and the white community have had opportunities to work together on certain things, whether it's a community function or something else. But they've had the chance to enjoy and know each other through the job situation and other things that have brought people together. A lot of times people are prejudiced against and are apprehensive about things they don't know, but once they find out and get to know people better, their attitude changes.

Nina Salmon: Sounds like the schools in Martinsville were a real leader of shaping the attitudes towards integration.

Bill Vickers: I think so, I think there were people on both sides who found people in the opposite ethnicity, that once they got to know certain people they found that "wait a minute, I've got more in common with so and so than I do with somebody of my own ethnicity." And it gives people a change to really get to know each other as opposed to just saying that person is white or that person is black, they have to think a certain way or whatever."

Nina Salmon: What about Bishop Marmion, did you know him well?

Bill Vickers: "Yes, I knew Bishop Marmion. Actually, I go all the way back to Bishop Phillips, I was young but I remember him preaching my father's funeral."

Nina Salmon: Can you tell me any specific memories of Bishop Marmion that you might have, and I've got about 5 to 10 minutes before we have to stop, but anything that you can recall about Bishop Marmion?

Bill Vickers: “I think Bishop Marmion was always supportive of St. Paul’s church. He was very cordial, and I think we could talk to him about anything that we needed more clarification on and he was involved in sending some ministers to us who were a good fit.”

Nina Salmon: For instance?

Bill Vickers: It starts to run together a little bit, you know we’ve had several. But I don’t remember any bad ministers we’ve had that any of the bishops have sent. I think sometimes one can remember a positive gesture and as years go by you have to remember, “Now who did that, was it Bishop Marmion or Bishop Light?” There have been some tremendous ministers who have come to us. Well, the Bishop sent us Rev. Carroll Brooke, and Carroll Brooke was an exception individual. Along with him, [was] his wife, Mrs. Brooke, who was an outstanding musician. I think the Brookes were responsible for the piano we have in the church now. Mrs. Brooke was a concert pianist. And Jim Welsh came down, and Jim Welsh was a good fit with us. And then Linwood Wells was a good fit with us. I remember from one of his sermons he mentioned sometimes when things get hard, sometimes you can take on a little more responsibility and the load gets lighter. He said when he was a youngster, they had to transport water either from the spring or from the well up to the house. He noticed that when he filled the bucket up to the brim, when he got to the house about half of it he had lost through spillage. He noticed when he’d start filling up two buckets it provided better equilibrium, and he could carry twice as much water with less spillage when he carried both.

Nina Salmon: That appealed to the science teacher in you.

Bill Vickers: Well that did. And I think I mentioned this earlier, Linwood lost his son just about the same time I was losing my wife. But just a few hours before she actually passed, he was up in the hospital room trying to comfort us and praying for Beverly.

Nina Salmon: That's remarkable, that really is.

Bill Vickers: Just an exceptional person. And with both of them departing about the same time, I remember him showing up at the door one day and saying, "Bill, let's go over to the hospital." They were having grief sessions. They had individuals who were trained to help people with the lost of a loved one.

Nina Salmon: And the two of you went together?

Bill Vickers: We went together. And we met somebody else over there whose wife actually taught with me at the high school, and he was over there, and I think all of us benefited from that training.

Nina Salmon: We are at our time limit so I'm going to stop. Is there anything else I haven't asked that you'd like to add?

Bill Vickers: I would just like to make it perfectly clear even though we have two churches here, I think for the most part the people who come from Christ Church sometimes and worship with us, I think they feel welcome. And I've always felt welcome over there. And sometimes we do Loaves and Fishes together, I haven't been over to Loaves and Fishes this year much because there's a lot going on. I've had a few deaths and illnesses in my family and so fourth. But when I go over to Loaves and Fishes, I see so many of my former students. I see a lot of people coming in to get a meal that I knew from the high school, but also I have a chance to work with when we're over there serving the people who come in, it's a chance for me to have kind of a reunion with many of my old students, many of them who are members of Christ Church and who are there helping as well.

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