

The Church Awakens: African American and the Struggle for Justice Index

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Topic Summary	Reference
<p>Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People The Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People (CCWACP), a largely black organization, began to press the General Convention for full inclusion shortly after its establishment in 1886. Originally organized by John Peterson, a teacher and deacon at St. Philip's Church in Harlem, and Alexander Crummell as the Convocation of the Colored Clergy in 1882, the CCWACP included clergy and lay persons, seeking to fully integrate black Episcopalians into the life of the Church.</p>	<p>Link</p>
<p>General Convention Special Program The 1969 Special General Convention was a moment of self-recognition when the Episcopal Church confronted its place in public life and tested the theological understanding of the baptismal covenant and the true meaning of catholicity in the diversity of God's creation. "General Convention II," as it was first known, was an unusual event in the Church's history: only one other Convention, that of 1821, had been called outside of the regular triennial period, and it spotlighted the Church at a time of extreme turmoil, division, and dramatic confrontation with the past. After an eye-opening tour of Harlem with activists of African descent, Presiding Bishop John Hines pushed through the regularly convened General Convention of 1967 a "Special Program" (GCSP).</p>	<p>Link</p>
<p>The Reverend Peter Williams Jr., 1786-1840 The first black Episcopal Priest in New York. The African Catechetical Institution, which met in a room of the African Free School in 1809, was formed by New Yorkers of African descent. That same year they approached the Diocese of New York asking that they be allowed to have one of their own ordained. He was Williams, who was ordained a deacon in 1820 and a priest in 1826. In 1813 Peter Williams, Jr. emerged as a spokesman for the African Catechetical Institution, where he again petitioned the Convention to allow African Americans to form their own Church and to be ordained. The church was erected in 1819 and consecrated by Bishop John Henry Hobart and is the legacy of the congregation of St. Philip's Church in Harlem.</p>	<p>Link</p>
<p>The Reverend Alexander Crummell 1819-1898 In 1845, Reverend Alexander Crummell was transferred from the Diocese of Pennsylvania to New York City to minister to the Church of the Messiah. This congregation, established in 1836, was the second black congregation in the Episcopal Diocese of New York, closing in 1858. Rev. Crummell led the Church of the Messiah from 1845 to 1848. He then spent 5 years in England, where he studied and raised funds for the Church of the Messiah congregation prior to his 20 years plus of missionary work in West Africa. Rev. Crummell was born in NYC and attended St. Philip's Church in Harlem. He later attributed his calling to the priesthood to the inspiration of St. Philip's rector the Rev. Peter Williams Jr. Priest, missionary and educator, Crummell also founded the American Negro Academy, the first major American black scholarly society, in 1897. As a religious leader and intellectual, Crummell advocated for educational opportunities and leadership among young black Americans.</p>	<p>Link</p>
<p>The Reverend Dr. Tollie LeRoy Caution, Sr., 1902-1985 Dr. Caution was active in the civil rights movement. A lifelong member of the NAACP, Caution also chaired on the National Council of Churches Work Among Migrants, served as secretary of the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People, served on the Joint Committee on Indian Work and the Joint Committee on Race, and was a charter member of the Union of Black Episcopalians. Caution was president of the New York Clericus from 1965 to 1968. Upon his retirement in 1968, Caution served as consultant to the Presiding Bishop on pastoral affairs until 1970. He was instituted as Canon Emeritus of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York in 1976.</p>	<p>Link</p>
<p>Thurgood Marshal, 1908-1993 Justice Thurgood Marshall is best known as the first black person to serve on the Supreme Court and an early advocate for pressing the nation's courts in matters of civil rights and acclaimed for the success of the 1954 U. S. Supreme Court case, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>. A lifelong Episcopalian, Marshall became a very active member of St. Philip's Church in Harlem, serving on the Vestry and as</p>	<p>Link</p>

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<p>Senior Warden and Deputy to the 1964 General Convention. He is listed among the Saints and Commemorations of the Episcopal Church-May 17th.</p>	
<p>The Reverend Pauli Murray, 1910-1985 Pauli Murray is the first black woman priest. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and raised in Durham, North Carolina. Murray graduated from Hunter College in 1933, and from Howard University Law School in 1944. Her senior thesis at Howard challenged the separate-but-equal principle behind segregation. It was used by lawyers in the 1954 U. S. Supreme Court case, Brown v. Board of Education. She also earned a master's degree at the University of California School of Law in 1945. After teaching at the University of Ghana Law School in West Africa, she returned to the United States where she earned a Doctor of Juridical Science degree from the Yale Law School in 1965. Murray joined the faculty of Brandeis University in 1968. She resigned to matriculate at the General Theological Seminary in 1973, where she earned a Master of Divinity degree in 1976. She was ordained deacon on June 9, 1976 and on Jan. 8, 1977 she was ordained as a priest. While residing in New York she attended St. Marks-in-the-Bowery Church. She is listed among the Saints and Commemorations of the Episcopal Church July 1st.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Link</p>
<p>The Reverend M. Moran Weston, Jr., 1910-2002 In 1957, Dr. M. Moran Weston became the sixth rector of St. Philip's Church in Harlem. During the next 25 years, he continued the tradition of social activism. He further expanded the church's role in providing affordable housing by opening non-profit developments such as St. Philips on the Park (St. Nicholas Avenue and 134th Street), and Senior House (133rd Street between Adam Clayton Powell and Fredrick Douglass Boulevards). He also led the redevelopment of St. Philip's Community Center/Parish House Complex.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Link</p>
<p>The Right Reverend Quintin Ebenezer Primo, Jr., 1913-1998 Son of a priest from Guyana (formerly British Guiana), Quintin Ebenezer Primo, Quintin Ebenezer Primo, Jr. was the first black bishop elected in the dioceses of Chicago and Delaware. As an advocate for the advancement of minorities in the church and American society, Primo championed the equal treatment of black clergy and the inclusion of all racial minorities within congregations. His outspoken support of women's ordination led him to become the first bishop to ordain women as priests in Chicago. He is one of the 5 signers of the original incorporation papers for the Union of Black Clergy and Laity which changed its name to Union of Black Episcopalians. The national organization was founded in St. Philip's Church in Harlem February 8, 1968</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Link</p>
<p>Dr. Charles Radford Lawrence, II, 1915-1986 A long time Church leader, social activist, and educator. His active involvement in the Church began in 1952, when he became the vestryman and senior warden for Saint Paul's in Spring Valley, New York. Sixteen years later, he became the first black senior warden for New York's historic Trinity Parish. At the Diocese of New York, he was on the Diocesan Council and the Interparish Council. The diocese awarded him the Bishop's Cross for Distinguished Lay Service in 1963.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Link</p>
<p>Joyce Philip Austin 1923-2016 Rt. Bishop Paul Moore Jr. remarked in 1983, while awarding her The Bishop's Cross, that she "gives so generously of her time when asked to serve her Church that the unwitting might be led to underestimate the role that Joyce Phillips Austin plays in the social welfare structure of our metropolitan area. She was a faithful and active member of St. Philip's Church in Harlem for decades. Joyce Austin also became the first woman elected to the vestry of New York's historic Trinity Parish, where she was instrumental in urging the parish to divest from companies that supported apartheid in South Africa, and helped to administer the Trinity Grants Program.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Link</p>
<p>The Reverend Dr. Nathan Wright Jr., 1923-2005 Dr. Nathan Wright was both an Episcopal minister and a scholar. A prominent advocate of black power, Wright shared the ideology of Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. He was both a participant and chronicler of the first Freedom Ride. In his retirement he was associated with St. Philip's Church in Harlem and Christ Church Riverdale in the latter part of the 20th century.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Link</p>

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<p>The Right Reverend John Thomas Walker, 1927-1989 During his lifetime, Bishop Walker was distinguished for his boundless support of social activism and his pursuit of interdenominational dialogue. His ministerial career began with a temporary position at St. Mary's Church in Detroit and ended as the nation's black diocesan bishop for the Diocese of Washington. He is one of the 5 signers of the original incorporation papers for the Union of Black Clergy and Laity which changed its name to Union of Black Episcopalians. The national organization was founded in St. Philip's Church in Harlem February 8, 1968.</p>	<p>Link</p>
<p>The Right Reverend Walter Dennis, 1932-2003 Bishop Dennis was ordained a deacon in 1956 with his first appointment as curate at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York; he was the first black American hired as clergy on the Cathedral's staff. From 1956 to 1960 he assisted the Reverend Tollie Caution, Secretary of Negro Work, in developing a series of conferences on race relations. He returned to St. John's as a Canon Residentiary in 1965. He was also one of seventeen priests who met at St. Philip's Church, Harlem and founded the Union of Black Episcopalians in 1968. This organization, originally named Union of Black Clergy and Laity, was established to remove racism from the Church and society and to stimulate the growth of black membership. In 1979 he was elected Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of New York in 1979.</p>	<p>Link</p>
<p>The Reverend Canon Frederick Boyd Williams, 1939-2006 Frederick Boyd Williams was a prominent black Episcopal priest who worked internationally on behalf of Civil Rights and social justice movements, advocated for Africa and the African Diaspora within the Anglican Communion, and served tirelessly to improve the social, political, and artistic life of his parish, the Harlem community, and New York City. In 1973, Williams became the Vicar for the Church of the Intercession. Originally established in the nineteenth century and later a Chapel of Trinity Church in New York City, the Church of the Intercession was a prominent part of religious and cultural life in Harlem. Williams became its first African American rector in 1976, the same year that the congregation became an independent parish of the Diocese of New York. He is one of five signers of the original incorporation papers for the Union of Black Clergy and Laity which changed its name to Union of Black Episcopalians. The national organization was founded in St. Philip's Church in Harlem February 8, 1968.</p>	<p>Link</p>