

His Rightful Place in History: A Portrait of Bishop Henry Beard Delany (1858-1928)

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In his 2010 address to diocesan convention, Bishop Michael Curry talked about his decision to rearrange the bishop portraits at Diocesan House in Raleigh and to restore Bishop Henry Beard Delany's portrait to its rightful place. Instead of consigning all the suffragan bishop portraits to one wing of the building, which is the way they had previously been arranged, Bishop Curry insisted that the portraits be hung in order of their consecration. He declared:

Today at the Diocesan House in Raleigh, the portraits of the Bishops of North Carolina are arranged in order of their service to Jesus and in succession to the apostles. Now they stand in the Gospel lineage of Simon Peter, Augustine of Canterbury, and Samuel Seabury, and not in the order of Jim Crow.

Bishop Curry was keenly aware of how Bishop Delany had been forced into the role of suffragan bishop by action of the 1916 General Convention, which refused to make any other provision for an African American priest to serve in the episcopate in this country. Moreover, he was aware of how Jim Crow attitudes shaped the office of suffragan bishop in the 1910s, limiting the suffragans' authority and giving them no vote in the House of Bishops. But Bishop Curry wanted to ensure that Delany no longer be relegated to this subservient status and instead be allowed to stand side by side with the other bishops of North Carolina.¹

Bishop Curry's action was an important symbolic step toward according Bishop Delany the honor which should rightfully be his. But more can be done in this regard. Delany's life and ministry need to be better known and more fully appreciated.

Henry Beard Delany was born into slavery in southern Georgia, but before the close of the Civil War, his family fled to Fernandina, Florida to come under the protection of the Union Army; the family remained in Florida thereafter. As a young man, Delany apprenticed as a mason, a skill he would later put to use in various building projects. And he was befriended by an Episcopal

¹ *Journal of the 194th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina* (2010): 164. Hereinafter abbreviated *NCDJ*.

priest, Owen P. Thackara, who paid Delany's way to attend St. Augustine's School in Raleigh, NC.

Delany enrolled at St. Augustine's in 1881, graduating in 1885. Upon graduation, he was immediately offered a position at the school as the vocal music instructor, while he continued his studies in the theology department and prepared for Holy Orders. Within a year, he was given charge of the School's primary (preparatory) department as well. In 1886, Delany married Nanny Logan, herself a graduate of St. Augustine's and valedictorian of her class. Starting in 1888, Nanny Logan Delany was named Matron (a position somewhat akin to being Dean of Women), and so both the Delanys were employed at St. Augustine's. Nanny Logan Delany would later become the cooking instructor in addition to her other duties.

Upon completion of his theological studies in 1889, Delany was ordained to the diaconate, and he was made an instructor in the normal (that is, teacher training) curriculum, a faculty position he would continue to hold throughout his tenure at St. Augustine's. Over the course of the next decade, Delany was given the additional responsibilities of Chaplain and Vice-Principal, overseeing the administration of the school in the Principal's absence. Moreover, he put his early training as a mason to use on various campus construction projects, including the School Chapel and the St. Agnes Hospital. Clearly Delany made an invaluable place for himself at St. Augustine's School.²

But Delany's work in the 1890s extended well beyond St. Augustine's. Ordained a priest in 1892, Delany was asked by the Archdeacon then overseeing diocesan ministry among African-Americans, the Ven. William Walker, to take charge of work in both Warrenton and Louisburg, committing one Sunday a month to each.

In Warrenton, Delany was nurturing a well-established black Episcopal community that dated back to the antebellum period. Warrenton was home to the first black Episcopal priest to ever attend one of the church's seminaries, the Rev. William Alston, who graduated from Bexley Hall

² *Annual Catalogue of St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute* (Raleigh, 1882-1899). Published digitally by the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center (Wilson Library, Chapel Hill). Brien Laing, "Henry Beard Delany and Emma Beard Delaney: Two African-Americans who rose from the obscurity of an enslaved family to achieve distinguished success in their individual lives" (Ph.D. project, Union Institute Graduate College, Amelia Island, Florida, 2002) 17; 77-87. Sarah and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth, *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years* (New York: Kondasha International, 1993) 23-27.

before the Civil War and went on to serve at both St. Thomas', Philadelphia, and St. Philip's, New York. Warrenton was also home to Caroline Bragg (1804-1890), who moved to Petersburg, Virginia and helped to found the black Episcopal church there, St. Stephen's. Two of Caroline Bragg's grandsons, both born in Warrenton, would become notable priests of the Church: The Rev. George Freeman Bragg (1863-1940) and the Rev. Thomas White Cain (d. 1900). Prior to 1893, blacks and whites both worshiped at Emmanuel Church in Warrenton, but in 1893, with the encouragement of Archdeacon Walker and the support provided by Delany, the black members of the congregation became a separate mission, All Saints', and soon thereafter launched a parochial school for the black community of Warrenton.³

In Louisburg, however, Delany did not have a nucleus of black Episcopalians upon which to draw. There was only one black communicant in the town, the aged former sexton of St. Paul's church.

After receiving this assignment, Delany spent December of 1892 and January of 1893 simply going from house to house in the black section of Louisburg, "visiting the sick and reading and praying with the aged of all denominations." In February, he secured the use of the Courthouse and held his first public service. In April, he baptized eight persons, and in May he presented diocesan Bishop Theodore B. Lyman with a confirmation class of twenty-two members. Delany then turned his attention to securing a church building and a school house, which he did in partnership with notable black publisher and politician, John H. Williamson. By the time Delany concluded his tenure in Louisburg in 1896, the black mission, now named St. Matthias', had a flourishing school with three teachers, a large congregation, and a communicant list of thirty-six persons. But Delany remained first and foremost a pastor, and throughout his years in Louisburg, he continued to make regular home visitations.⁴

In late 1896, Delany was given a new assignment. Diocesan Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire, Lyman's successor, had been approached by a delegation from the Satterwhite community of northern Granville county, who asked the bishop to help organize a congregation there. He sent them Delany. This, too, was a new mission field. Yet within a few months, Delany reported he

³ George Freeman Bragg, "North Carolina the Mother of Colored Church Work in Virginia," reprinted in *The Carolina Churchman* (August, 1914) 13; *NCDJ*, 77th (1893) 140, 148. Henry B. Delany, "All Saints' Mission, Warrenton, N.C.," *The Carolina Churchman* (February, 1912) 19.

⁴ George C. Pollard, "St. Matthias Church, Louisburg, N.C.," *The Carolina Churchman* (February, 1912), 16.

had started a worshipping community and baptized seven children. By November, he presented the bishop with a confirmation class of twenty members. Among those Delany prepared and presented was James K. Satterwhite, who would later attend St. Augustine's School and subsequently become a priest and protégé of Delany's.⁵

By 1897, the sheer range of Delany's ministry is worth noting. He entered the following account in the parochial report he submitted to diocesan convention in May. Stating that he had recently been relieved of the care of St. Matthias' Mission in Louisburg in order to give more time to his work at St. Augustine's School, he went on to report:

In addition to the work at Warrenton, I have, under the direction of the Bishop, organized a Mission at Satterwhite, Granville County, where I preached three times, and baptized seven children. At Louisburg I preached eleven times, celebrated holy Communion five times, and buried one child. At Pittsboro I preached two sermons and celebrated once. At St. Ambrose, Raleigh, I have preached eleven sermons, celebrated twice in public, and ten times in private. I continue to make monthly visitations to the Work-house, where I give instruction to the prisoners in both the white and colored wards. At St. Augustine's school, where I am actively engaged in teaching, I either conduct or assist in conducting daily morning and evening prayers. I have preached there thirty-six times, celebrated eighteen times, baptized nineteen children and six adults, and buried one.⁶

Here was a teacher accustomed to the classroom and the prison; a priest ministering to congregations both urban and rural across five counties; a church planter helping new congregations grow to the point of undertaking mission schools and building programs. Here was a man skilled in both music and masonry; a chaplain and an administrator.

Delany continued in his various capacities as priest and professor for the next decade and might well have been content to remain at St. Augustine's School for the remainder of his active ministry. But in 1908, Bishop Cheshire prevailed upon Delany to resign from his duties at St. Augustine's and instead accept the position of Archdeacon for diocesan work among African

⁵ *NCDJ*, 81st (1897) 54, 105; *NCDJ*, 82nd (1898) 57, 110; [Henry B. Delany,] "St. Simeon, Satterwhite, N.C.," *The Carolina Churchman* (February, 1912) 17.

⁶ *NCDJ*, 81st (1897) 105, 106.

Americans. The previous Archdeacon, the Ven. John H. M. Pollard, had died in office, after serving in that capacity for a decade.

In naming Delany as Archdeacon, Bishop Cheshire was choosing someone with whom he already had a long-standing relationship and a high degree of personal confidence. Cheshire had been diocesan bishop almost as long as Delany had been a priest, and the bishop knew first-hand how effective Delany could be working in a variety of settings and assignments. Moreover, Delany brought to this new position a considerable familiarity with the other black clergy and congregations, and an extensive network of contacts through his 27-year affiliation with St. Augustine's School.

Delany was not being asked to rebuild a ministry that had fallen into disrepair. By all accounts, Pollard had been an effective Archdeacon during his decade in office, enjoying the support of Bishop Cheshire while overseeing a considerable expansion of the ministry under his care. In the ten years that Pollard served as Archdeacon, the number of black baptized persons had more than doubled; the number of black communicants had risen from 487 to 741; the value of property had gone from \$20,000 to \$37,000, and new missions had been started in Oxford, Statesville, and Winston-Salem.

As Archdeacon, Delany was also expected to maintain the existing organizational structure in place for supporting diocesan black ministry. Starting in 1901, the diocese was divided into three missionary convocations, each with its own archdeacon: The Convocations of Charlotte, Raleigh, and the so-called "Colored Convocation." Pollard was already Archdeacon for all the black congregations, but from 1901 onward, he was charged with conducting an annual convocational gathering, bringing together all the clergy serving black congregations, along with lay representatives (treasurers) from each of the churches. This two-day event provided an occasion for nurturing mutual support among the clergy and congregations and for addressing shared concerns among the convocation members.⁷

⁷ *NCDJ* 82nd (1898) 118; *NCDJ* 85th (1901) 47-49; *NCDJ* 92nd (1908); 126-128; *NCDJ* 93rd, (1909) 53, 54; 64. Available evidence suggests that Delany gave much more prominence to the Convocation than did Pollard. Delany always made a point of referring to the Convocation in his annual reports, and he publicized the annual gatherings in *The Carolina Churchman*.

Delany's task, then, as Archdeacon, was to build upon the work that Pollard had done and where possible seek to strengthen and extend it. Delany threw himself into the work, and quickly embarked upon an ambitious schedule of visitations, preaching missions, and ministrations. For the next decade, Delany would average 70 visitations, 120 services, and travel over 5,000 miles annually in fulfillment of his duties.⁸

Delany also moved quickly to establish new congregations in towns where there was no active black mission. In Durham, there had been efforts to minister in the Hayti neighborhood in the 1880s, but the work was suspended in the mid-1890s and was not revived during Pollard's time as archdeacon. Delany set out to change that. In July, 1909 he assigned a newly-ordained deacon, Robert J. Johnson, to Durham; the first service took place on Sunday, July 4. Within nine months, Johnson could report nineteen communicants and plans underway to erect a church building. To understand how this work, left floundering for fifteen years, could be resumed in a matter of months, it is important to note that the nucleus of the congregation comprised graduates of St. Augustine's, former students and close friends of Delany's, including Kate Truman, Sallie Fitzgerald, and Pauline Fitzgerald Dame. Likewise, the Rev. Robert J. Johnson, was a St. Augustine's graduate and someone Delany could feel confident assigning to this particular post. The relational bonds upon which the new St. Titus', Durham mission was built were actually years in the making, and had been forged at St. Augustine's.⁹

Developing a new mission in Greensboro followed much the same pattern. Here Delany had a long-standing relationship with William T. Wallace, who had attended St. Augustine's in the 1890s and taught carpentry there. In June 1909 Delany held a service in the A.&M. College chapel and baptized Wallace's daughter. Apart from Wallace and his family, however, there were not many black Episcopalians in Greensboro. So, Delany adopted the same mission strategy he had earlier applied in Louisburg and Satterwhite. He assigned a student from St. Augustine's, Joseph McDonald, to spend the summer in Greensboro, making daily visitations in the homes of black residents. The results of McDonald's labor were such that Delany could report:

⁸ See the Archdeacon Reports in *NCDJ* for 1909-1918; for the summary of a typical year, see *NCDJ* 96th (1912) 121.

⁹ *NCDJ* 94th (1910) 89, 127; Robert J. Johnson, "St. Titus Chapel" *The Carolina Churchman* (May, 1912) 11.

When the Rev. James K. Satterwhite took Deacon's Orders, and went to that field in the fall of 1909, he found the nucleus of a congregation to welcome him. This procedure was not an accident, but in keeping with a pre-conceived plan which I have employed, with some modifications, in every place where I have attempted the founding of a new mission station.¹⁰

Delany wasn't through; he also started a mission in Rocky Mount in 1909 and one in Henderson the following year.¹¹ Once again, Delany drew on his connections at St. Augustine's to form congregations and to deploy students and graduates for mission work.

By far the most ambitious of Delany's projects as Archdeacon was the building of a new church in Warrenton. Delany had served the All Saints' Mission from its inception in 1892 until Archdeacon Pollard assumed that role in 1904. Upon becoming Archdeacon in 1908, Delany once again took charge of the work in Warrenton, where plans for a new church building had been under consideration for years, but nothing had materialized.

The presenting issue in Warrenton was siting the new church. The land on which the All Saints' congregation proposed to build, and which they already owned, was deemed inappropriate by "white citizens" and in particular by John Graham, the Principal of Warrenton High School. A letter in the *Warren Record* dated July 21, 1905, stated the matter bluntly:

In our opinion colored churches should be built where the colored people live and the good white citizens will give their hearty support to those who are sensible enough to see that fact. But we have heard enough to quite convince us that our colored friends will get little or no help if they insist on putting themselves where they are not wanted. On the whole we do not believe that the colored men of the church will persist in disregarding the wishes of their white neighbors and other citizens who have so positively said that the church must be removed. We are already burdened with one Negro school and church in Warrenton where they ought not to be, and don't think that our people will tamely submit

¹⁰ H.B. Delany, "An Appeal" *The Carolina Churchman* (March, 1916) 12. James K. Satterwhite, "The Church of the Redeemer, Greensboro: A New Church and Parish School" *The Carolina Churchman* (February, 1912) 15, 16.

Note: A.&M. College was the early name for the school now known as NC State A&T University in Greensboro.

¹¹ *NCDJ* 94th (1910) 127; *NCDJ* 95th (1911) 128; *The Carolina Churchman* (September, 1915) 14.

to the one referred to. I am sure the above meets the hearty approval of all the white citizens who live adjacent to the intended building.

There the matter languished for the remainder of Pollard's tenure as Archdeacon and Priest-in-charge in Warrenton. Once Delany took charge of All Saints', however, he renewed the quest for an acceptable building site. By 1911, Delany could report euphemistically that the old property was sold and "a new place better situated for our work" purchased for \$700. By 1912, Delany was hoping to commence building.¹²

But the building Delany envisioned for Warrenton was not simply intended to serve the needs of the All Saints' Mission. Delany also wanted the building to be a fitting memorial for the Rev. Thomas White Cain, a Warrenton native and Episcopal priest who perished along with his family in Galveston, Texas in the great storm of 1900.

Archdeacon Pollard had proposed such a designation back in 1901. That he would do so is scarcely surprising: Pollard and Cain were the first two black candidates for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Virginia, and they studied together in the late 1870s under the tutelage of Giles Buckner Cooke at what would later become the Bishop Payne Divinity School. Cain was ordained in 1881 and served St. Philip's, Richmond VA, until 1887, when he moved to St. Augustine's Parish, Galveston, Texas. During his time in Texas, Cain was an outspoken advocate for civil rights, and in 1893 he successfully sued the railroad for denying him a sleeping berth for which he had already paid. Most notably, the Diocese of Texas elected him to serve as a Deputy to the 1889 General Convention, the first (and for many subsequent years, only) black priest to be accorded seat and voice.

Archdeacon Pollard not only wished to see a fitting memorial to a beloved fellow-priest, but he also wanted to enlist all black Episcopalians in this effort. At the 1903 gathering of the diocesan Convocation of black clergy and congregations, Pollard issued the following notice: "I appeal to colored Churchmen throughout the country to give me \$1,000 for the building of a chapel at Warrenton, to be known as *All Saints Memorial*, in memory of the Rev. Thomas White Cain, who perished in the great flood at Galveston in 1900." The following year, Pollard's appeal was

¹² *The Warren Record* (July 21, 1905); *NCDJ 95th* (1911) 117,118; *NCDJ 96th* (1912) 110.

printed in *The Churchman*, and contributions were received from former teacher Giles B. Cooke, Dr. William Reed Huntington, and Bishop Charles Henry Brent.¹³

When Delany became Archdeacon and Priest in Charge in Warrenton in 1908, he not only revived Pollard's vision of constructing All Saints' as a suitable memorial to Thomas White Cain, but he also renewed Pollard's call for all black Episcopalians to contribute to the effort. Thus, we read in the 1912 minutes of the annual meeting of the Colored District of the Women's Auxiliary, that "Archdeacon H. B. Delany spoke in interest of the Cain Memorial Church to be built at Warrenton, N.C. He spoke of the life and work of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Cain and asked that the Auxiliaries pledge toward the erection of this church. Pledges were made by several of the branches represented."

Like Pollard, Delany published his financial appeals beyond the diocese. In 1911 and again in 1912, he approached the annual gathering of black clergy from across the country, sharing with them his plans for the Cain Memorial and enlisting their support. The organizational framework for this annual gathering was called The Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People (CCWACP, or simply CCW). In addition to holding an annual gathering, The Conference also produced a monthly newsletter, *The Church Advocate*, compiled by the long-time Secretary and Historiographer of the organization, the Rev. George Freeman Bragg.¹⁴

By 1912, plans for the church building were taking definite form. Delany hoped to have material in hand and begin working on the basement walls before the end of the year but had to postpone work on account of cold weather. Instead, Holy Thursday of the following year was appointed for the beginning of construction, and a service was held in the excavated pit to mark the occasion.¹⁵ By July, 1913, the basement walls were completed.

¹³ J. H. M. Pollard, "Appeal" *Diocese of North Carolina 2nd Annual Convocation of Colored Clergy and Congregations, St. Ambrose Church, Raleigh, August 12 and 13, 1903*. Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC. *The Churchman* 89 (March 26, 1904) 390.

¹⁴ Jas. K. Satterwhite, "The Thomas Cain Memorial Church, Warrenton, N.C.," *The Carolina Churchman* (August, 1913) 12. Satterwhite refers to Delany having laid before the CCW the prospectus of the plan for the Cain Memorial at assemblies in Cleveland, Ohio and Orange, N.J. Those are the annual meetings for 1911 and 1912. On the CCWACP and Bragg's role as Secretary, Historiographer, and Editor of the *Church Advocate*, see George Freeman Bragg, *History of the Afro American Group in the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore, 1922) 161-167. For the minutes of the Colored District of the Women's Auxiliary, see Archives of the Diocese of North Carolina, Raleigh.

¹⁵ *The Carolina Churchman* (December, 1912) 13; *The Carolina Churchman* (June, 1913) 12.

The building itself was to consist of solid concrete blocks, and Delany saw this as a perfect fundraising opportunity. He penned the following letter to the members of the CCW, proposing that Sunday School children be urged to contribute twenty-five cents apiece, the cost of one block:

Notwithstanding the liberal spirit of the Conference to pledge assistance, we have resolved to go as far as we could with funds in hand, and have thus far succeeded in completing the basement walls of a beautiful church, to be built of concrete, and cruciform in shape, the sub-floors of which are already laid. The walls from this point are to be built of concrete blocks, and we have thought first of appealing through you to the children of your Sunday School, and give them the opportunity of being the first contributors from the outside. We have calculated that the blocks, *to make and lay them*, will cost about twenty-five (25) cents apiece, and ask each child of your Sunday School to purchase a block. The names of the children to be forwarded to me as soon as possible, and the money for these blocks to be sent, through you, by September 15 next. As a mark of appreciation, each child who purchases a block will have his name made of wire and imbedded in the material; [the] list of each of these young contributors will also be placed in the cornerstone.

I shall be glad if you ask an offering also of your congregation, to aid us in this worthy cause. As the blocks are to made this season, an early reply will be greatly appreciated.

Delany anticipated making the blocks that fall and having the church built in time for the annual gathering of diocesan black clergy and congregations the following August.¹⁶

Delany's timetable proved to be overly ambitious. By the summer of 1914, the walls were only partially complete, and work had to be halted for insufficiency of funds. Delany wrote an article for the July edition of *The Carolina Churchman* under the title, "Shall We Be Permitted to Finish It?" continuing to express the hope that it might still be completed by August. Delany noted the strong support that George Freeman Bragg was giving to the nationwide appeal to black Episcopalians:

¹⁶ *The Carolina Churchman* (August, 1913) 12; *The Carolina Churchman* (September, 1913) 11.

The Rev. Dr. Bragg, editor and publisher of the *Church Advocate*, in giving a sketch of the life and works of the late Rev. Thomas Cain, has made a pertinent suggestion to the colored congregations throughout the country: one, that if heeded, would relieve our necessities, and make certain the completion of this church. It is hoped that they will begin now to fulfill the obligations made and renewed at several of our Conferences. Dr Bragg writes thus: “Every colored Sunday School in the country ought to esteem it a great privilege to contribute a number of ‘blocks’ in the construction of the ‘Cain Memorial Church’ in Warrenton; and they will so think and act, if the colored clergy of the Church will tell them the story, and give them the opportunity to show forth their love in this matter. And what is true of the Sunday Schools would be equally true of all our congregations, if we could find some way to interest the colored clergy in the matter. In the meantime, let all those who have it in their hearts to make some offering in perpetuating the memory of one of the bravest, ablest, and cleanest men that have ever adorned the Afro-American priesthood, send what they have to offer to Archdeacon Henry B. Delany, Raleigh, N.C.” Brethren, shall we be permitted to finish it? If each one of you will do your duty toward us, we shall. Hopefully yours, H.B. Delany

Delany’s hopes for an early completion were not met; nevertheless, the Colored Convocation did gather in early September in the basement of the new building, and Bishop Cheshire laid the cornerstone of the Church. The Convocation also made a substantial subscription to the remaining work.¹⁷

But even if Delany wasn’t accomplishing everything he hoped for in terms of fundraising for the church in Warrenton, the fact that George Freeman Bragg was lending his public support to the effort was notable in several respects. For one, it reflected Bragg’s keen personal interest in the project. Bragg and Cain were first cousins, both Warrenton natives, and among the earliest black Episcopal priests in Virginia. For another, it spoke to Bragg’s close working relationship with Delany in the CCW.

In 1913, Delany had assumed the presidency of the CCW, a position he would continue to hold through 1916. Bragg was the long-standing Secretary and Historiographer of the organization,

¹⁷ *The Carolina Churchman* (July, 1914) 13; *The Carolina Churchman* (October, 1914) 15.

and in many ways its leading spokesman, since he published its monthly newsletter. So, the Warrenton church building project was just one of the common objectives the two men shared in the mid-1910s.

Of paramount import to the CCW was the matter of a Racial Episcopate: that is, the provision of a black bishop for black Episcopalians. After the Civil War, white Episcopalians across the South resisted admitting black clergy and congregations into their diocesan councils (conventions). Indeed, the only diocese which did grant full representation to black clergy and congregations was North Carolina. Instead, Southern bishops proposed placing black congregations into segregated missionary organizations within each diocese, under the supervision of the diocesan bishop and his appointees. Black clergy resisted having this racial segregation enshrined in the canons of the church, and the effort to block the creation of separate racial missionary organizations by General Convention actually led to the creation of the CCW in the 1880s. But southern dioceses made such provisions regardless. And by 1900, the strict racial segregation of Jim Crow had become the settled law of the land across the South.

Facing the realization that blacks were not going to be accorded equal status in southern dioceses, the Conference now proposed that General Convention authorize the creation of separate black missionary districts in the South and accord such districts the same provisions as other missionary districts, namely, the appointment of a missionary bishop to sit in the House of Bishops and representatives to sit in the House of Deputies.¹⁸

At the 1904 General Convention, this matter was discussed and a committee appointed to study it and bring back recommendations to the 1907 General Convention. Here in North Carolina, Bishop Cheshire and Archdeacon Pollard initially declined to support the Missionary District Plan, preferring to uphold the long-standing diocesan practice of seating blacks and whites as equal members of the same annual convention.¹⁹ By 1907, however, Cheshire had rethought the

¹⁸ Harold T. Lewis, *Yet With A Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (Valley Forge, 1996) 65-76; Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *Episcopalians & Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington, 2000) 13-22; George F. Bragg, "The Whittingham Canon." *The Birth and History of the Missionary District Plan* (Baltimore, 1913) 2-11.

¹⁹ *NCDJ 88th* (1904) 69-72; 130.

matter. He now became an advocate for the Missionary District Plan, believing that under current conditions of racial segregation in the South it afforded blacks the best opportunity to have a place and voice in the corporate legislative life of the church.²⁰ But Cheshire's was a minority vote in the House of Bishops. Most of his fellow bishops preferred what was called the Suffragan Bishop plan, whereby white diocesan bishops would continue to exercise jurisdiction over black congregations and supervise black assistant (suffragan) bishops chosen by the southern dioceses themselves. In theory this preserved the territorial unity of the church, but it also enshrined permanent subordinate status to black bishops. And in a further effort to consign black bishops to inferior status, the suffragan bishops were to be given no vote in the House of Bishops. In the end, General Convention failed to adopt either scheme, and the matter was continued until the next Convention.

The question of the Racial Episcopate was still unresolved in 1913, when it came time for another General Convention. Once again, the CCW put forward a resolution in favor of the Missionary District Plan. This time, they appointed President Delany and Secretary Bragg to be their official representatives at General Convention to present their case.²¹ To bolster the case, Bragg published an extensive essay, detailing the history of the Missionary District Plan.²²

Delany also was actively engaged in advocating for the Missionary District Plan. He spoke on its behalf at the October, 1912 gathering of the 4th Missionary Department (later, the 4th Province). *The Carolina Churchman* carried this glowing account of his address: "The most applauded speaker for the morning was the Ven. Henry B. Delany (colored), Archdeacon of the Colored Work in the Diocese of North Carolina, who in a speech which combined delicacy of humor, sound sense, manly humility and tact, advocated in a clear and forcible way the cause of the negro and a missionary jurisdiction for the negroes under the General Convention."²³

²⁰ *Journal of the General Convention, 1907*, Appendix IX; *NCDJ 91st* (1907) 74.

²¹ *The Minutes of the 29th Annual Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People; Lawrenceville, Va., Sep. 2-5, 1913*, 5. At the same session which appointed Delany and Bragg as delegates to General Convention, James K. Satterwhite "requested the hearty co-operation of the Conference" with respect to the Cain Memorial Church, and James Solomon Russell promised aid from the Convocation of the Diocese of Southern Virginia.

²² Bragg, "The Whittingham Canon."

²³ *The Carolina Churchman* (November, 1912) 6,7.

Moreover, Delany was not content to go to General Convention simply as a spokesman for the CCW. He and the Executive Committee of the diocesan Colored Convocation presented their own memorial (resolution), calling on the annual convention of the Diocese of North Carolina to endorse the Missionary District Plan and direct the North Carolina deputation to support it. Additionally, the Convocation's resolution contended that should the plan be approved, the diocese would work to see it implemented here in North Carolina and surrounding dioceses. The convention concurred.²⁴ Delany then traveled to Wilmington and presented the Missionary District Plan to the Convocation of East Carolina, where they, too, unanimously adopted the resolution put forward in this diocese.²⁵

The 1913 General Convention failed to adopt the Missionary District Plan. But for the first time, it actually passed in the House of Bishops. Delany, therefore, could offer a hopeful account of what had transpired, when he issued this report to the diocese:

Our effort in behalf of a Racial Bishop was received with more sympathy, and solicited more friends to it, this time, than ever before. It is the belief of some of our most enthusiastic friends that if the question could have been gotten before the Convention sooner it would have passed; and, notwithstanding an adverse report of the committee to whom it was referred, the question passed the House of Bishops favorably; and the House of Deputies were asked by the House of Bishops to reconsider their vote previously taken, and to concur with the House of Bishops in their decision. There were many warm friends in the House of Deputies who were grieved, with us, to have this important matter delayed further for want of time; but to have the approval of the House of Bishops, the college of the Apostles, in our behalf is considered by many of us as a vindication of the justness of our cause; and unless there is a radical change with regard to the treatment of the Negro Churchman in this country, the time is not far distant when in spite of the opposition of those who fail to understand him, or of those who would crush his ambition, an opportunity will be granted him, through the providence of God to develop

²⁴ *NCDJ 97th* (1913) 34-38; 47.

²⁵ *The Carolina Churchman* (August, 1913) 12.

all that is highest and best in him through the restraining influences of our Mother, the Church.²⁶

Delany was confident that in three years' time, General Convention would at last adopt the Missionary District Plan.

In preparation for the 1916 General Convention, the CCW again adopted a resolution in support of the Missionary District Plan. The black clergy of North Carolina likewise presented a new resolution in favor of the Missionary District Plan to diocesan convention, and the convention again concurred, even going so far as to circulate their resolution in the dioceses throughout the Sewanee Province in hopes of garnering additional support. Professor Charles H. Boyer of St. Augustine's declared, "The Diocese of North Carolina has taken a brave stand for fairness and Christian equity in this matter. May its members this year draw new and staunch supporters to the cause, that it may succeed at the General Convention next October."²⁷

But it was not to be: the 1916 General Convention adopted the Suffragan Bishop Plan instead. In the aftermath of defeat, Delany did not mince words, declaring to the 1917 diocesan convention: "A severe blow was given the hopes and aspirations of your Colored Convocation in the defeat of the Missionary Jurisdiction Plan." Nevertheless, Delany expressed his hope "for the speedy application of the plan which the Church in her wisdom has been pleased to adopt."

In his address to the same convention, Bishop Cheshire made a similar assessment, noting, "Our preference has been for a Racial Missionary district to include the colored clergy and congregations of contiguous dioceses, with a negro Missionary Bishop, under provisions as to government and representation similar to those now applying to our territorial Missionary Districts." But the bishop went on to request the diocese consider implementing the Suffragan Bishop plan, and he appointed a committee to study the matter and report back the following year.²⁸

Speaking for the black clergy of the diocese, the Rev. James K. Satterwhite also endorsed moving forward with the Suffragan Plan, stating: "We believe that if the plan proposed be given

²⁶ *The Carolina Churchman* (January, 1914) 12.

²⁷ *NCDJ 99th* (1915) 31-33; *NCDJ 100th* (1916) 54; *The Carolina Churchman* (June-July, 1916) 15.

²⁸ *NCDJ 101st* (1917) 43; 77,78; 157

a fair and impartial trial, much success will follow. And, if in a diocese like North Carolina, where equal treatment has always been accorded the colored constituency, it be operated, it *will* result in a just and sympathetic arrangement.”²⁹ Satterwhite reasoned that if North Carolina was the best place to implement the Missionary District Plan, it was also the best place to implement the Suffragan Plan.

Meanwhile, work on the Cain Memorial Church in Warrenton continued to lag. As a temporary provision, the All Saints’ congregation was using the basement of the church as their place of assembly, but Delany feared that unless the building were properly roofed, the work already done on the walls and the floor would be jeopardized. Delany repeatedly tried to interest the white congregations of the diocese in helping with this project, but to little avail. When asked to enumerate the needs of the black churches in North Carolina, he always placed the completion of the church in Warrenton as the highest priority.³⁰

And so, in 1917 Delany turned once again to the CCW for the necessary funds to complete the Thomas Cain Memorial. He reported the successful results of that appeal to the 1918 Diocesan Convention:

A trip to Baltimore last October to attend the session of the Colored Conference proved helpful to the Convocation, for the Conference being in sympathy with our struggles for the completion of the Thomas Cain Memorial Church, pledged \$500 towards its completion; and nearly 50 per cent of the amount of these pledges have already been paid. In behalf of the Colored Convocation, I am glad to tell the Convention that had it not been for the [wartime] embargo placed on building materials this church would have been finished. And as it is, the walls have been completed, the building enclosed, the roof covered with asbestos shingles, and sufficient funds are now in hand for its completion. When finished, it will be one of the most substantial as well as imposing churches of the Convocation.³¹

²⁹ James K. Satterwhite, “Suffragan Episcopate,” *The Carolina Churchman* (March, 1917) 10.

³⁰ H.B. Delany, “To all the Clergy of the Diocese,” *The Carolina Churchman* (March, 1913) 11; “Archdeacon Delany Calls for Help,” *The Carolina Churchman* (March, 1914), 11. *NCDJ 99th* (1915) 130; “All Saints’ Mission: Appeal for Completion of New Church at Warrenton, N.C.” *The Carolina Churchman* (October, 1916) 14; *The Carolina Churchman* (April, 1917) 14.

³¹ *NCDJ 102nd* (1918) 128.

The willingness of the CCW to see to the completion of the Cain Memorial in Warrenton reflected the continuing significance of this project to black Episcopalians across the country. Especially in the aftermath of the bitter defeat of the Missionary District Plan, the opportunity to lift up the legacy of a black priest who once sat as an equal in the councils of the church became even more precious. It was also a sign of the respect afforded Delany within the CCW and the unflagging support of George Freeman Bragg for this project.³²

The same diocesan convention of May 1918 where Delany announced the near-completion of the church in Warrenton was the convention which elected him bishop. Bishop Cheshire, in this as in all matters which directly affected black ministry, consulted the black clergy of the diocese and afforded them the privilege of making a nomination for suffragan bishop. They unanimously put forward Delany's name. The convention, with one voice, ratified their decision. Bishop Cheshire entered the following note in his personal journal for May 15, 1918: "At 3 p.m. [in St. Luke's Church, Salisbury] the Special Order was the election of a Suffragan Bishop for the Negro Work. In a wonderfully harmonious and impressive session the Rev. Henry Beard Delany, Archdeacon of the Colored Convocation, was elected unanimously on the first ballot. The same thing happened in this same church 95 years ago at the election of Bishop Ravenscroft."³³

Delany's consecration six months later marked a fitting culmination to almost thirty years in ordained ministry. The service took place in the Chapel of St. Augustine's School, the institution where Delany had entered as a student in 1881 and where he had gone on to serve as teacher, Chaplain, and Vice-Principal. It took place in a church building that he had helped to build with his own hands. It took place during the annual gathering of the CCW, an organization he had helped to lead during the final years of the struggle for black bishops in the Episcopal Church. Delany's choice of date and place was deliberate; he wrote to Bishop Cheshire:

³² At the 1914 diocesan convention, Delany was selected as a clergy representative from North Carolina to the inaugural meeting of the Sewanee Provincial Synod. Although certainly not as significant as Cain's selection as a deputy to General Convention, Delany did note that he was the only negro delegate in the Province, and possibly the only negro delegate at any provincial meeting in the country: *NCDJ 98th* (1914) 50; *The Carolina Churchman* (January 1915) 10.

³³ Joseph B. Cheshire, Jr., Personal Journal. Archives of the Diocesan of North Carolina, Raleigh.

I have elected the date of consecration for the 18th of October as the Conference of Church Workers will then be in session at St. Augustine's School; and we should hope, with the assistance of the school and the visiting clergy including those engaged in the consecration, to have one of the most solemn, yet inspiring services that has ever been witnessed by Churchmen of the South. Thanking you, dear Bishop, for your interest and prayers in my behalf, I am obediently yours. Henry B. Delany

The date was subsequently moved to November 21, because the Conference had to be postponed a month due to the influenza outbreak.³⁴

Among those especially pleased at the prospect of Delany's consecration and gratified by the choice of setting was George Freeman Bragg. He wrote to thank Delany for voicing appreciation for all that Bragg had done on behalf of black leadership in the Episcopal Church and to offer Delany words of encouragement and support:

My Dear Dr. Delany,

So seldom, indeed, do I get words from the brethren of encouragement, that your kindly expressions reach the depths. I have had a long warfare, and now I am so glad that I am well-nigh at the end. Through my vigorous fight colored archdeacons were appointed, instead of white ones. But few of those who have occupied the office have ever indicated appreciation for the man at the guns.

You have ever been my friend and I am glad that you are about to enter into the fruits of my labor for the Episcopate. The occupant of that office should be the man that the colored clergy and laity of the diocese desire in the office. There cannot be the least doubt that the colored churchmen of North Carolina desire you as their Bishop. . . .

You have the very best wishes of my heart, and it will always be a genuine pleasure for me to aid you and your work in any way I can. . . .

I am glad the consecration will take place during the meeting of the Conference. I hope to be with you during that joyous occasion.

³⁴ Laing, "Henry Beard Delany," 102. Original in the Archives of St. Augustine's University, Raleigh; *The Carolina Churchman* (November-December, 1918) 11.

[Signed] g.f.bg³⁵

Bragg had worked tirelessly to secure black bishops for the benefit of black Episcopalians, and he saw in Delany's consecration the fruits of his own larger efforts, as well as a validation of Delany's ministry in the Diocese of North Carolina.

What is more, Delany's consecration took place just as the Thomas Cain Memorial Church in Warrenton was at last being readied. Delany made Warrenton his inaugural visitation outside Raleigh in order that he might conduct the first service of public worship in the nearly-completed Thomas Cain Memorial Chapel on the first Sunday of a new Church Year. The following notice appeared in the *Warren Record* for November 29, 1918:

Thomas Cain Memorial Church Opens

First Sunday in Advent, December the first, at eleven o'clock a.m., All Saints Church will formally open for public worship. It is unfinished as yet, but from now on the congregation will worship regularly in the new church. We invite our friends of Warrenton to attend the opening service. The Right Rev. Henry Beard Delany, D.D., the suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, will be the special preacher. The Consecration of Bishop Delany a few days ago marks a great epoch in the life of the American Episcopate.³⁶

Clearly the people of the All Saints' congregation were justly proud of the priest who had served them for over twenty years and who was now one of the first two black bishops serving in the United States.

The one aspect of Delany's consecration that was less than fitting, of course, was his being compelled to serve under the provisions for suffragan bishop, rather than missionary bishop. Delany had lobbied for the Missionary District Plan at two General Conventions; his diocese and his bishop had joined him in that effort, and all had expressed their disappointment when the plan was not adopted. That Delany was elected as suffragan bishop instead, was a result of the terms which General Convention set for authorizing black bishops, and not a reflection of how Delany, Bishop Cheshire, and the Diocese of North Carolina hoped it would be.

³⁵Laing, "Henry Beard Delany," 106. Original letter in the Archives of St. Augustine's University, Raleigh.

³⁶*The Warren Record*, (November 29, 1918).

The chief criticism leveled at the Suffragan Bishop Plan, by Bragg and others, was that it left the selection of black bishops to white southern dioceses and it left the oversight of black bishops to white southern bishops. Black Episcopalians would have no real say in the selection of their own bishops and the black bishops so chosen would have no genuine authority with regard to the conduct of their office.³⁷

Mindful of these concerns, Bishop Cheshire did everything he could to retain the spirit of the Missionary District Plan while adhering to the requirements of the Suffragan Plan. Bragg took cognizance of how North Carolina was seeking to implement the Suffragan Plan, and he issued the following editorial commending Bishop Cheshire in the December, 1920 issue of *The Church Advocate*:

As much as it was possible, under the present canonical relations, the Bishop of North Carolina . . . has granted the request of the CCW, as related to North Carolina. Whatever may be the success or failure of our work in that diocese, the blame or praise cannot justly rest upon the Bishop of North Carolina.

We do not think that we overstate the matter when we assert that Bishop Delany, so far as the control and management of the work of the Colored people, in that diocese, is in full and complete control. If ever a man possessed a free and unhindered opportunity to interpret his own plans, and extend the kingdom according to his own resourcefulness, and experience, that man in Bishop Delany. Thus Negro Churchmen of North Carolina have now no ground for complaint. . . . They have the leadership of their own selection, and of their race; and that leadership is unhampered. . . .

Our people everywhere should pray most earnestly for Bishop Delany and his clergy, that they may wisely interpret, and fulfill the expectations of the Church. At any rate, Bishop Cheshire has delivered his soul, and let us not be slow in recognizing the greatness of the opportunity he has given his black brethren. Bishop Delany, and his clergy, must not fail to vindicate the wisdom and magnanimity of the Bishop of North Carolina.³⁸

Bragg recognized that Bishop Delany, albeit a suffragan, enjoyed the full respect and support not only of his fellow black clergy in North Carolina, but also of his diocesan bishop. His

³⁷ Shattuck, *Episcopalians & Race*, 24.

³⁸ Laing, "Henry Beard Delany," 108. Original in the Archives of St. Augustine's University, Raleigh.

reservations about the Suffragan Plan itself notwithstanding, Bragg was prepared to commend Delany to the prayers and support of all black Episcopalians.

What Bragg did not mention, however, was the full extent of Delany's responsibilities as bishop, which now reached beyond the diocese of North Carolina to include all the black Episcopal congregations of East Carolina and South Carolina. Under the terms of the agreement worked out among Bishop Cheshire, Bishop Darst of East Carolina, and Bishop Guerry of South Carolina, a portion of Delany's salary and expenses would be underwritten by the other dioceses in return for Delany devoting three months annually to work in South Carolina and two months annually to work in East Carolina. Within a few years, Delany was asked to incorporate the Missionary District of Asheville into his schedule of visitations as well.³⁹

As bishop, Delany maintained his now-customary vigorous schedule of visitations and services, continuing to preach and conduct over 120 services annually. But now his schedule required much more travel, and it left much less time to spend here in the Diocese of North Carolina, where Delany continued to retain all his responsibilities as archdeacon. In 1922, Delany reported that for the past year, he actually spent only one-seventh of his time in his own diocese.⁴⁰ The kind of personal time and attention Delany had given to the building of the Thomas Cain Memorial in Warrenton, or to the founding of new missions, was no longer possible.

Being bishop made other demands upon Delany besides increased travel. Shortly after his consecration, Delany had to watch as his family was consigned to the balcony of Christ Church, Raleigh, and refused the opportunity to receive Communion. His daughters, Sadie and Bessie, commented on the incident in their book *Having Our Say*, and remarked:

When Papa became bishop in 1918, people were mighty impressed. His accomplishment was so extraordinary, I still wonder how he did it. He put up with a lot to get where he got. One time, not long after Papa was consecrated to the bishopric, he did a service at Christ Church in Raleigh. It was a white, segregated church. Our family attended, and do you know what happened? We had to sit in the balcony, which was built for slaves!

³⁹ Lawrence Foushee London, "The Diocese in the First Decades of the Twentieth Century, 1901-1922," in Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, eds., *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1959* (Raleigh, 1987) 327, 328; *NCDJ 105th* (1921) 125.

⁴⁰ *NCDJ 106th* (1922) 163.

And we were not given the privilege of Communion. Ooooooh, that makes Bessie mad. At the time, she wanted to make a fuss, but she did not, because she did not want to embarrass Papa.

Somehow, Papa always endured this kind of degradation. He saw the hypocrisy, but he felt that gently, slowly, he was making true progress for himself and his people, and he was at peace with that. I learned a lot from my Papa about coping with institutionalized racism. The way to succeed was simple: You had to be better at what you did than any of your white competition. That was the main thing. But you couldn't be too smug about it, or white folks would feel threatened.⁴¹

Being a bishop did not mean Delany and his family experienced less racial prejudice than before; only that it now required even greater self-restraint to maintain the dignity of high office.

Delany faced other daunting challenges as well. One was the migration of African Americans from the South to the North in the years following the First World War. As Delany noted in 1922, "It is hard for statistics to reveal the truth of the position [that prospects remain encouraging for black ministry here in North Carolina], because of the almost constant migration of the most prosperous of my people: even in my own family, with the advantages and protection that is offered my children, I find that six out of the ten, are now in the North."⁴²

Another was an acute shortage of funds. Black ministry in North Carolina, and indeed throughout the South, was always dependent upon the financial support of whites. When the Episcopal Church launched its Nation-Wide Campaign in 1919 to generate money for mission and ministry across the whole of the church, Delany rallied the black congregations of North Carolina to contribute generously, in the belief that this new initiative would result in additional funds for mission work. Under the banner "Our Colored Brethren Leading the Way," the February 1920 edition of *The Carolina Churchman* reported that black congregations "are paying up, and even overpaying, in the Nation-Wide Campaign, in a fashion that the white churches might envy. . . . And it should be stated that they accepted their apportionments without

⁴¹ Sarah and A. Elizabeth Delany, *Having Our Say*, 116.

⁴² *NCDJ 106th* (1922) 164.

a single objection, and set to work to do more than was expected of them.” In the end, fifteen of the eighteen black congregations met or exceeded their quotas.⁴³

Nevertheless, the overall shortfall in the 1921 Nation-Wide Campaign left Delany with only half the funds he requested for black ministry throughout the diocese. Delany told the readers of *The Carolina Churchman*, “Our hopes for the development of our colored work were centered in the results of the Nation-wide Campaign.” Then he added: “The plan of the Campaign as executed in this Diocese is not generally understood, and rather than proving helpful to the colored convocation it has deprived it, to an extent, of the help, if not the sympathy, that has been formerly given by the stronger portion of the Diocese.” Delany had requested a budget of \$18,200 for diocesan black ministry; he received only \$10,000. Thus, he could only pay his priests in this diocese about \$650 annually, whereas black clergy in East Carolina received \$1,200 and in South Carolina \$1,000.

The inability to offer a living wage resulted in Delany losing two priests, James K. Satterwhite and John Small, to other dioceses.⁴⁴ Although Delany generally managed to fill the clergy openings in his diocese, he no longer enjoyed the same kind of collegial working relationships that he had cultivated in earlier years. Then, in 1927, the National Council of the Episcopal Church reduced its support for black ministry in North Carolina from \$12,000 to \$9,500, necessitating the closing of all the black parochial schools in the diocese at the end of the spring term. Delany regarded these schools as the chief vehicle for church extension, and lamented their loss.⁴⁵

Delany always tried to put the best possible construction on his ministry, and in his annual reports to diocesan convention, he invariably found reasons for gratitude and grounds for hope. In 1927, he paid special attention to the work of the Women’s Auxiliary. But that would be his final report to Convention; he died the following spring, on April 14, 1928.

In truth, Delany did not enjoy good health for much of his time as bishop. As early as 1925, Bishop Cheshire acknowledged to Bishop Darst of East Carolina that Delany’s health condition

⁴³ *The Carolina Churchman*, (February, 1920) 6; London, “The First Decades of the Twentieth Century,” 339.

⁴⁴ H.B. Delany, “The Colored Convocation; Its Hopes; Its Perplexities,” *The Carolina Churchman*, (May, 1921) 15.

⁴⁵ *NCDJ 111th* (1927) 114,115. Although Delany reported that all the mission schools were ordered closed, the school in Louisburg remained open; it finally closed in 1949, at the death of headmaster George Pollard.

would likely interfere with his ability to carry out his responsibilities in neighboring dioceses. In June of 1927, Delany confessed to his youngest son, Hubert, that he was now nearly blind.⁴⁶

Yet even as Bishop Delany lay on his deathbed, his ministry continued. In her autobiography, Pauli Murray recounted returning home to Durham from New York and being taken by her Aunt Pauline Fitzgerald Dame to visit Bishop Delany in Raleigh before he died. She wrote:

[The Bishop] was confined to bed and very weak, but he seemed overjoyed to see us, and before we left we had prayers with him. During his prayers he blessed me, and later he said to me, “You are a child of destiny.” Those words were to have a lasting impact on my life. As long as she lived, Aunt Pauline reminded me that I had been blessed by a bishop on his deathbed. The solemnity of this act and the prophetic quality of Bishop Delany’s words would follow me through the years.⁴⁷

This incident underscores the centrality to Delany’s life and work of the deep relationships which he forged as pastor and friend. Pauline Fitzgerald Dame and Henry Beard Delany had known each other since they both were students at St. Augustine’s in 1881. At his urging, she had gone to teach in the All Saints’ Mission School in Warrenton in the mid-1890s, when he was priest-in-charge. As Archdeacon, he had reciprocated by seeing to the founding of St. Titus’ in Durham in 1909. Now he gave his episcopal blessing to her niece and namesake, the woman who would one day become the first female African American priest in the Episcopal Church.

By 1928, the General Convention was once again in the process of evaluating how best to provide for Episcopal ministrations to black congregations. Bishop Cheshire, therefore, suggested to diocesan convention that North Carolina postpone any action with respect to finding a successor to Bishop Delany. That postponement became permanent, and Bishop Delany became both the first and the last black suffragan bishop in the Diocese of North Carolina.

Because the Suffragan Bishop Plan was not continued, historians have tended to regard it a failed experiment, and they have traced its demise to the lack of support for the plan, and the two

⁴⁶ George H. Esser, “Rapid Growth and Financial Crisis, 1923-1941,” in London and Lemmon, *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina*, 365, 366; Laing, “Henry Beard Delany,” 116. Original correspondence in the Archives of St. Augustine’s University, Raleigh.

⁴⁷ Pauli Murray, *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (New York, 1987) 70.

bishops involved, on the part of black clergy and the CCW.⁴⁸ There can be no doubt that black clergy would have greatly preferred the Missionary District Plan. And some black leaders, such as W.E.B. DuBois, would have preferred for Delany to be more confrontational.⁴⁹

But there is scant evidence that Delany himself suffered from a broad lack of black clergy support. He was a past-president of the CCW; he was a known advocate for the Missionary District Plan, and he worked closely with George Freeman Bragg throughout the 1910s.⁵⁰ Rather, a review of Delany's life and ministry suggests that he engendered considerable affection and respect from those who knew him well, both black and white. If his tenure as bishop was not marked with the same level of achievement as his time as priest and archdeacon, the reasons can be found in the harsh realities of the "separate but unequal" Jim Crow Era which forced him to contend with a chronic disparity between great responsibilities and meager resources, coupled with the fact that he was made bishop at age sixty and did not enjoy good health for the last decade of his life.

So, as we consider the portrait of Bishop Henry Beard Delany, here are aspects worth noting:

First, to admire the range of his knowledge and competence. Delany could teach music and he could supervise masonry projects; he could preach in school chapels and in prisons.

Second, to survey the breadth of the responsibilities he willingly assumed. He cared for black congregations that were geographically dispersed and chronically under-resourced, while simultaneously being a teacher, chaplain, and school administrator. He worked tirelessly.

Third, to behold what a friend and pastor he was; how he cultivated relationships of long-standing, and how he engendered loyalty and trust; how he was able to attract people to himself

⁴⁸ Shattuck, *Episcopalians & Race*, 25; Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 79. Note that both Shattuck and Lewis maintain these attitudes apply to both of the black suffragan bishops consecrated in 1918, Delany and Demby.

⁴⁹ Sarah and A. Elizabeth Delany, *Having Our Say*, 140, 141. Bessie Delany quotes her father, Bishop Delany, as saying about DuBois: "We need leaders like him, he is good for our people. But we can't all be like him." She then relates that DuBois thought her father was not aggressive enough. Bessie Delany does not say whether this was a public disagreement; she does say DuBois' criticisms of her father were unfair. Evidently DuBois remained a family friend.

⁵⁰ This was in sharp contrast to Bishop Demby, who was chosen by an all-white Arkansas convention, and who had little involvement with the CCW. Bragg's efforts to block Demby's consecration, as well as resistance to Demby's election by black congregations in the Southwest, are detailed in Michael J. Beary, *Black Bishop: Edward T. Demby and the Struggle for Racial Equality in the Episcopal Church* (Urbana, 2001) 110-115.

and to the Episcopal Church, and to build congregations through the effectiveness of his pastoral visitations.

Fourth, to examine how persistently he worked, never relinquishing his vision for the Thomas Cain Memorial in Warrenton, in spite of repeated discouragements, until it was realized at last; and how he mobilized support for this project from George Freeman Bragg and the CCW.

Fifth, to glimpse how much more Delany might have realized, had he been afforded the opportunity to do all of which he was capable; had he been given the opportunity to serve as a missionary bishop; had he been provided the resources to do his work most effectively.

Above all, remember this when looking at Bishop Delany: He always strove to do the work he was given to do, conducting himself with unfailing diligence and dignity. May he take his rightful place in the succession of the apostles.