

**The Report Committee for Caroline Booth Pinkston  
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:**

**The Gospel of Justice: Community, Faith, and the Integration of St.  
Andrew's Episcopal School**

**APPROVED BY  
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

**Supervisor:**

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Julia Mickenberg

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Richard Reddick

**The Gospel of Justice: Community, Faith, and the Integration of St.  
Andrew's Episcopal School**

**by**

**Caroline Booth Pinkston, B.A.; M.S. Ed**

**Report**

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*Perhaps one day this too will be pleasant to remember.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From Virgil's *Aeneid*, as quoted by Charles Alan Wright in "A Salute to Tom Gee," in the *Texas Law Review*, 69.1, 1990. Wright quotes the Latin, and provides the translation – which I have quoted here – in

## **Preface**

This study focuses on St. Andrew's Episcopal School, a small private institution in Austin, Texas, where I myself was a student from 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and where, at the time of this writing, I have taught 12<sup>th</sup> grade English and worked in the Diversity Office for four years. My relationship to the community is central to this study: I chose to write about this school because I know it well, and I therefore had access to individuals and materials I would not otherwise have been aware of. Most of all, however, I care about this community and consider the school's history to be deeply intertwined with my own. This report was written with the awareness and support of school administrators, who granted me full access to archival materials and encouraged me to pursue the story, wherever it took me.

## **Abstract**

### **The Gospel of Justice: Community, Faith, and the Integration of St. Andrew's Episcopal School**

Caroline Booth Pinkston, M.A.

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Supervisor: Julia Mickenberg

This study focuses on the struggle to integrate St. Andrew's Episcopal School, a small private school in Austin, Texas. A close examination of the history of this community sheds light on how privileged whites navigated questions of integration, especially in Christian communities. Pro-integration whites in these communities utilized their faith, understanding of community, and a rhetoric of respectability to move the school towards desegregation, forging a "middle way" through Civil Rights that achieved the goal of integration without damaging white interests in the community. Following St. Andrew's through the 1970's and 1980's, this study moves beyond the implementation of official integration policies to trace how the school wrestled with questions of minority enrollment, white flight, and the relationship between private communities and the public sphere. Over the course of three decades, St. Andrew's increased minority enrollment but adopted a narrower and more inward-focused understanding of community, becoming a more diverse space but not fundamentally questioning the nature of a private school in times of public crisis.

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## INTRODUCTION: AN INTER-EPISCOPALIAN SQUABBLE

In April of 1961, a small group of protestors gathered outside the front entrance of St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Austin, Texas. Reverend Louis Buck, priest-in-charge at St. James Episcopal Church, had planned the protest, accompanied by a few other Episcopalians and several young African-American students at the University of Texas. The small group carried signs that read, "This is a protest of the segregation action of the St. Andrew's Episcopal School Board – Do not support segregation," and "The segregation policy of St. Andrew's Episcopal School is unfair to Negro Episcopalians." Founded in 1952, St. Andrew's had opened its doors only a few years before Austin embarked on the process of desegregating its public schools following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* ruling. Since 1960, the private school, not legally required to integrate, had voted twice to remain segregated; the second of these votes had prompted Buck's protest. The picket lasted several days, and local newspapers covered the event, although with some degree of amusement: *The Texas Observer* described the incident as a "novel turn" in school integration, and classified the confrontation between Buck and the school as "an inter-Episcopalian squabble."<sup>2</sup>

A quarrel between a local Episcopal priest and a private Episcopal school may have seemed to many observers in 1961 something of a sideshow to the desegregation of the public schools, both in Texas and around the country. The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision and the 1955 *Brown II* decision, calling on school districts to

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<sup>2</sup> Keith Stanford, "Picketing An Episcopal School," *The Texas Observer* (Austin, TX), 25 April 1961. AF Church Schools – St. Andrew's C300, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

desegregate “with all deliberate speed,” promised to usher in a new era in American history. Civil rights advocates at the time “believed with an almost religious passion that the *Brown* decision was the equivalent of the Holy Grail of racial justice.”<sup>3</sup> The sheer scale of the task was incredible: historian James Patterson notes that *Brown* promised to integrate 11.5 million black and white school-age children in 11,173 school districts in the segregated states, or nearly 39 percent of America’s public school students.<sup>4</sup> But the logistics, at first, could not detract from the importance of the decision, which advocates believed would “cut through the dark years of segregation with laserlike intensity.”<sup>5</sup>

Simultaneously, the decisions sparked “massive resistance” across much of the South, leading to what historian Francis Lisa Baer has called “one of the most significant constitutional crises in United States history.”<sup>6</sup> This crisis manifested itself legally, rhetorically, and physically. Southern politicians scrambled for legal justifications to disregard or overturn the law and, when this failed, sought every avenue to delay its implementation. Historian Clive Webb notes that “one of the most aggressive forms of defense by white southerners was their use or misuse of the laws intended to obstruct the already sluggish implementation of school desegregation.”<sup>7</sup> While many supporters of segregation were overtly racist, others worked to articulate rhetorical strategies that would allow them to “portray themselves as patriotic defenders of not only the ‘Southern Way of

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<sup>3</sup> Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3

<sup>4</sup> James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. xvi.

<sup>5</sup> Bell, *Silent Covenants*, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Frances Lisa Baer, *Resistance to Public School Desegregation: Little Rock, Arkansas, and Beyond* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2008), p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Clive Webb, “Introduction,” in *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 6.



Life,' but of the American system of government as originally conceived by the Founding Fathers.”<sup>8</sup> Beneath this rhetoric, however, lurked the very real threat of violence. The murder of Emmett Till in 1955 was only one marker of a new surge in white violence in the South in response to Civil Rights: James Patterson notes 210 recorded acts of white violence against black Southerners between 1954 and 1959 alone.<sup>9</sup>

Against this backdrop of violence, a series of dramatic confrontations on the front steps of schoolhouses around the country captured national attention from the late 1950’s onward. The 1956 standoff at Mansfield High in Texas, the attempt to integrate the University of Alabama in the same year, the 1957 crisis at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the crisis of New Orleans schools in 1960 were only a few examples of the chaotic and frightening clashes occurring across the country.<sup>10</sup> These conflicts taught conflicting messages to observers: that the potential for violence could be used as a justification for Southern politicians to avoid desegregation, that the federal government was willing to intervene to enforce integration in some situations, that the depth of white resentment and bitterness was greater than previously imagined, and that even very young children were not immune from white wrath. These key conflicts had also provided a national

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<sup>8</sup> Baer, *Resistance to Public School Desegregation*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, p. 89.

<sup>10</sup> In 1956, Texas Governor Allan Shivers called in the Texas Rangers to halt the desegregation of a high school in Mansfield, Texas, citing the danger of violence and arguing that his duty was to keep the peace. The same year, Autherine Lucy attempted to integrate the University of Alabama as a graduate student, but was prevented by rowdy crowds of up to 1,000 people. Lucy was expelled. In 1957, hostilities surrounding the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas famously required President Eisenhower to call in national troops to ensure compliance with the law and to protect the nine black students attempting to integrate. In New Orleans, desegregation led to riots and massive withdrawals by white families from the public school system into private academies. Six-year-old Ruby Bridges, the first African-American student to integrate her local elementary school, became the only student in her class after white parents removed their children. For an overview of these and other integration crises, see James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

audience with vivid images of federal troops and angry white mobs surrounding children like six-year-old Ruby Bridges in New Orleans, Dorothy Counts in North Carolina, and the Little Rock Nine in Arkansas. In comparison to these dramatic confrontations, desegregation in Austin was proceeding quietly. AISD had taken the first step towards integration in 1955, and was scheduled to complete its “stairstep” desegregation policy – extending official desegregation a few grades at a time – in 1963.<sup>11</sup> But tensions ran high in Austin as elsewhere, and few observers were unaware of the saga unfolding in the public schools. “It was the ongoing conversation in Austin,” Episcopal priest Ed Hartwell remembers.<sup>12</sup>

At the core of the conversation on both sides of the argument was the role of public schools in society. James Patterson writes that advocates of desegregation focused primarily on schools because of a belief that “racially mixed schools, more than any other institutions, would facilitate the cherished American dream of equal opportunity.” For Patterson, this belief reflected “long-standing assumptions about the powerful role of education in life.”<sup>13</sup> For opponents of integration, too, the schools represented an “extraordinarily problematic matter for many white parents, and for emotionally powerful reasons: they wanted the very best education for their children and they worried about social mixing, dating, and even marriage.”<sup>14</sup> The public schools, in this debate, held incredible potential for change, and historians have accordingly focused much of their attention on this arena, especially as they

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<sup>11</sup> “Chronology of Desegregation Events in Austin.” *The Austin American-Statesman*, 14 May 1976. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>12</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

<sup>13</sup> Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

look for explanations for the shortcomings of *Brown v. Board* and the resegregation of American schools in the 1990's and onward.

Private educational institutions have fit into the historical literature only peripherally, and primarily as vehicles of white resistance and white flight. More recent literature has begun to investigate white resistance in more depth, in both the North and the South. This literature has broken down several key assumptions about white resistance: first, that white resistance was uniform or uniformly racist; and second, that white resistance was primarily driven by a radical “redneck” contingency. Rather, James Patterson reminds us, patterns of resistance varied across the country. In some regions of the South with a small African-American population, integration preceded without much incident. And while some whites were deeply opposed to integration and willing to stop it at whatever cost, many other whites were “moderates,” Patterson argues: “Although they did not consider segregation to be morally wrong, they were law-abiding and concerned more about the quality of their children’s schools than about defending all aspects of segregation.”<sup>15</sup> While white resistance may not have been uniform, however, it was widespread: Clive Webb asserts that “the mobs that threatened black students ... were not composed simply of the white, rural laboring class, or ‘rednecks,’ but included people drawn from a broad cross-section of the community.”<sup>16</sup> Southern liberals, however, “almost everywhere remained weak and on the defensive.”<sup>17</sup>

As the literature on white Southerners during the Civil Rights Movement deepens, two aspects in particular of southern communities are worthy of more exploration. First,

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<sup>15</sup> Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> Webb, “Introduction,” in *Massive Resistance*, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Patterson, p. 90.

while some literature has focused on the role of religion for white Southerners in both supporting and resisting integration, relatively little attention has been paid to religious schools. Religious schools were not necessarily merely segregationist academies or havens for white flight, although they did often serve both of these roles. They were also, however, sites of conflict between multiple identities and loyalties during desegregation, especially as most mainstream churches articulated a strong Christian obligation to support integration.<sup>18</sup> What did it mean to be both a Christian and a private school during desegregation? What responsibilities did Christian schools have to the wider community, both in terms of their own integration, and in terms of their relationship to white flight? How did the definition of a Christian school shift over the course of the 1960's and 1970's?

Secondly, studies of whites during integration have only just begun to elucidate the complicated class dynamics at play during the Civil Rights Movement. James Patterson notes that many struggles over desegregation and especially busing threw working-class whites into conflict with “limousine liberals,” often theoretically in favor of integration but able to escape its inconveniences through flight to the suburbs or private institutions.<sup>19</sup> Ronald Formisano, focusing especially on the conflicts over busing in Boston, warns against simplifying antibusing sentiment to a “neat dialectic of class conflict,” arguing instead that such sentiments “arose from the interplay of race and class, in admixture with ethnicity and place, or ‘turf.’”<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Formisano highlights the role that privilege plays in

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Watras, *Politics, Race, and Schools: Racial Integration, 1954-1994* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), p. xvi. Watras notes that by 1956, most major religious denominations in the U.S. had adopted resolutions opposing segregation.

<sup>19</sup> Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, p. 173.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. xi.

determining who is affected by desegregation, who is classified as racist, and who benefits from both processes. When desegregation was imposed primarily on the lower classes, Formisano writes, these groups tended to react in ways that garnered national attention:

“This allows the rest of society, particularly middle-class liberals, to feel morally superior to the ‘racists’ in South Boston. It’s not a new dynamic, but an old story hanging from an enduring hoary myth. I am referring to the distorting lens of what I call the ‘redneck myth,’ which served elite defenders of southern segregation so well for so long. One historian of the South recently dubbed this the ‘grit thesis,’ namely, the persisting myth perpetrated by and convenient to the upper classes that racial extremism and especially violence is caused by the lower classes and runs against the wishes of the elite. The grit thesis was never true except in fragments. The upper class had no more sympathy for blacks than the lower class, but expressed racism in a very different style.”<sup>21</sup>

Part of this style involved the retreat to private, secluded spaces. Historian Kevin M. Kruse writes about this process in Atlanta: “As public spaces desegregated, whites abandoned them, effectively resegregating those places in the process. In the end, court-ordered desegregation of public spaces brought about not actual racial integration, but instead a new division in which the public world was increasingly abandoned to blacks and a new private one was created for whites.”<sup>22</sup> While scholars like Formisano and others have primarily focused on working-class and middle-class whites, however, more attention needs to be paid to the rhetoric and strategies employed by the upper classes, especially those that considered themselves progressive and supported integration in their own institutions. How did these communities interpret themselves as progressive while often reaping the benefits of white flight? How did the sincere intentions of progressive whites manage to effect so little

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<sup>21</sup> Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*, p. 233.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 106.

change? And how can an exploration of their strategies and motivations shed light on the resegregation and privatization of schools today?

In light of these questions, schools like St. Andrew's are worthy of a closer look. A number of important aspects of desegregation intersect in private, religious, educational spaces. Not legally obligated to desegregate, the debates around integration in these communities took on a different tone: especially in religious schools, Christian identities clashed with the interests of white supremacy as community members debated their moral responsibilities towards the issue of race. Examining the desegregation of religious schools like St. Andrew's provides a lens into how Christian whites navigated these conflicting identities, and how they mobilized their communities in support of or in resistance to integration. Second, a close examination of private educational spaces highlights questions of class and privilege in desegregation struggles, laying bare the patterns, rhetorical strategies, and ideologies that allowed white communities to integrate while disengaging from the public system and working to differentiate themselves from middle and working class whites. These patterns, writ large, undermined meaningful integration in communities like St. Andrew's, while leaving the rhetoric of diversity, multiculturalism, and community service intact.

Following St. Andrew's from its founding in the 1950's until the 1980's, I pay particular attention to two aspects of the school's desegregation struggles. First, I turn my attention to the process of official integration at St. Andrew's, from failed attempts to integrate the school in the early 1960's to the school's successful change of policy in 1963. In this section, I focus predominately on the role of several key figures in the history of integration at St. Andrew's: Charles Alan Wright, Louis Buck, and Edward Hartwell. Each

of these figures pushed for integration in their own way; some are considered heroic in the history of the school, while others have been almost entirely forgotten. Focusing on these leaders of integration at St. Andrew's illuminates the rifts in the white community, and highlights the importance of religious rhetoric and respectability in the struggle for integration. Pro-integration leaders at St. Andrew's – with the support of other Episcopal leaders, especially Bishop John Hines – used their religious values and their social standing to forge a “middle way” with regards to integration that emphasized civility and privacy in the white, Episcopal community, while pushing out those who advocated for different tactics. These strategies achieved success where others failed – but perhaps at the expense of a more radical vision of integration.

In Part II of this study, I turn my attention to the relationship between St. Andrew's and the broader Austin community in the 1970's, as AISD became enveloped in an increasingly bitter and controversial struggle with the federal government over meaningful – rather than token – desegregation of its schools. Looking at St. Andrew's in the context of other Austin-area private schools reveals how these secluded spaces articulated their relationship to the public sphere, navigated white flight, and defined themselves as progressive and pro-diversity without achieving significant minority enrollment in their student bodies. Doing so entailed erasing memories of conflict and redefining what it meant to be a private, Episcopal school.

That the central figures of this study are primarily white men is no coincidence: a focus on these leaders highlights their sincere and sustained efforts for integration, but also serves as a reminder that the dialogue between whites over integration often elided black interests and voices. This dynamic would ultimately have major ramifications for the success

of desegregation, both at the local and the national level. Additionally, the central position of white women in desegregation should not be overlooked – white women played an important role on both sides of the struggle, and the specter of white femininity was an enormously powerful tool for segregationists in particular. That the voices here are primarily male says more about the sort of records preserved in archives and the locus of institutional power in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century than it does about the role of women in pushing for – or against – integration. A focus on pro-integrationist, privileged men, however, allows a glimpse into how these individuals constructed an identity as white Southern gentlemen that emphasized respect, privacy, faith, and family while struggling for desegregation. The construction and maintenance of this identity was crucial to the successful integration of St. Andrew's, but also key to how St. Andrew's would define itself as a community in the 1970's and today.

Looking at the history of integration at St. Andrew's from 1960 to 1988 illuminates the malleability of the rhetoric of community in education. Community, as the term is mobilized on both sides of the desegregation struggle, can be inclusive or exclusive, outward-facing and expansive or narrow and inward-focused. The boundaries of community can shift to limit entry on the basis of race, religion, or privilege. Throughout the struggle over integration at St. Andrew's, the definition of community was fluid; for pro-integration leaders, an Episcopal school like St. Andrew's had broad responsibilities to a wider community, both as part of the Episcopal Church, and as part of Austin. For these leaders, this private school had a moral obligation to involve itself with public issues – to engage with rather than close its doors against the questions and debates enveloping the Austin community and the nation. At the same time, however, even for these leaders the question of integration was essentially a private one, to be settled internally, quietly, and respectfully.



The continued effort to keep peace and respect privacy within the St. Andrew's community would ultimately supersede the attempt to significantly alter who could be included within that community. As the desegregation struggle in AISD intensified, moreover, the interests of the St. Andrew's community came to eclipse these public obligations – and, increasingly, the rhetoric of “community” and “family” as utilized by St. Andrew's leadership regained its narrower, more inward-focused implications. Over the course of the 1960's and 1970's, the difference between St. Andrew's as a Christian school and St. Andrew's as a private school narrowed and then disappeared. Looking at the arc of desegregation from 1960 to 1988 demonstrates clearly how schools like St. Andrew's allowed their boundaries to become slightly more porous, but left the larger questions raised by desegregation about private spaces and their relationship to the public sphere untouched.

Engaging with these questions today requires a rethinking of community memory: an opening of memory towards a confrontation with the conflicts, sometimes uncomfortable and difficult, that are buried in places like St. Andrew's. Even before the struggle for desegregation at St. Andrew's had ended, the most painful and divisive aspects of this history were being forgotten – sometimes passively, and sometimes quite actively. This forgetting is partially a consequence of the emphasis on decorum and respectability so prevalent in the school's history; it is partially a result of an advertising push by the school intended to attract a more diverse group of students; and finally, it is an understandable impulse of a community wanting to close the door on an uncomfortable chapter of its past. In the epilogue of this study, I examine the ways in which desegregation and broader questions of race and social justice are examined at St. Andrew's today. The ways in which the history of desegregation is taught to students while the school's own history is forgotten highlights a broader national

process in which memories of painful struggles over race and justice are elided in triumphant, multicultural narratives. Looking at this process in communities like St. Andrew's raises questions about collective memory in cities like Austin, where a self-image of progressive politics and racial harmony exists only through the erasure of painful conflicts that lie at the very foundations of our communities.

## PART 1: INTEGRATING ST. ANDREW’S IN THE 1960’S

### The School with the Plus: The St. Andrew’s Community

Founded in 1952, Saint Andrew’s was explicitly created to be a school for Austin’s Episcopal community. Three local Episcopal Churches – St. David’s, All Saints, and Good Shepherd – collaborated in the creation of the school, which would supplement St. Stephen’s (which served only 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades) as the cornerstones of private Episcopal education in Austin. Originally serving grades 1-3, the school expanded until it became necessary to move into larger facilities in 1957, when the school graduated its first sixth grade class.<sup>23</sup> Advertising for the school focused on small class sizes, high-quality education, and a strong sense of community. An early history of the school, originally written by board member R. W. Byram and revised by numerous others over the coming years, notes that “for at least the first dozen years in the life of Saint Andrew’s School, our students were generally the children of those people who were either intimately involved with the origins of the School...[or] the friends of those who were.”<sup>24</sup> Many families at Saint Andrew’s knew each other and had a strong sense of ownership of the school. The sense of community extended into the classroom, as well. In a 1961 *American-Statesman* article describing a day in the life of the school, the Secretary of the Board explained, “We are a close-knit group because of our small classes and there’s a closeness between teacher and pupils that enables the teacher

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<sup>23</sup> Lucy Collins Nazro and Mary Ann Frishman, *Saint Andrew’s Episcopal School: A Gift to Our Children* (Austin: St. Andrew’s Episcopal School Development Office, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> R. W. Byram with additions from Rev. John Logan, “The Origin and Present Nature of Saint Andrew’s School, Or ‘How we Got to Be, What We are Today,’” revised version of Byram’s “Brief Background of St. Andrew’s School,” originally written for distribution on 10 October 1966. Records of St. Andrew’s Episcopal School.

to see and encourage a student's good points and to detect and help correct his bad ones."<sup>25</sup> Being at Saint Andrew's, these proponents of the school claimed, meant being part of a family.

From the founding of Saint Andrew's, the school's Episcopal identity was a point of pride and of advertising. Byram's history quotes the opening section of the school's Constitution, which lays out the school's core principles: "The object of this organization (Saint Andrew's School) shall be to establish and maintain a non-profit Episcopal Day School with a definite religious foundation and character, whose pupils will receive instruction in the Christian religion according to the teachings of the Episcopal Church."<sup>26</sup> An early promotional booklet for Saint Andrew's calls it "the School with the PLUS:" Saint Andrew's, the booklet proclaims, "carries the identical curriculum as the Austin elementary schools," but in addition, "and most important, this curriculum is anchored within the Christian framework, aided by the experience of Christian worship."<sup>27</sup> Students attended regular chapel, and curriculum and instruction was said to reflect and strengthen Christian values. From the school's inception, moreover, the majority of seats on the school board were reserved for clergymen from Austin's Episcopal churches, to ensure that the school's leadership remained grounded in the Episcopal faith. Despite this continued emphasis on Episcopal foundations, however, Byram's school history claims that "it was never conceived that Saint Andrew's would be a kind of Anglican enclave for Episcopal Church children."

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<sup>25</sup> Ernestine Wheelock, "A Day at St. Andrew's," *The Austin-American*, 22 October 1961. Records of St. Andrew's Episcopal School.

<sup>26</sup> R. W. Byram, "Brief Background of St. Andrews School," Written for distribution on 10/5/66, Records of St. Andrew's Episcopal School.

<sup>27</sup> "An Elementary School for Your Child: St. Andrew's Episcopal School, 2100 Pearl," Promotional Booklet, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, 1953. Records of St. Andrew's Episcopal School.

Rather, the history continues, “it was hoped that there would be others – many – in the community who would welcome the opportunity to have their children share in this experience.”<sup>28</sup>

Of course, in reality, the number of families whose children could share in the experience of Saint Andrew’s was quite limited. Beyond their predominately Episcopal background, most families in the school shared financial privilege. The school’s reputation as a haven for Austin’s elite would only grow over time: by the late 1960’s, *Texas Monthly* confidently claimed, “Most St. Andrew’s students come from the upper levels of Austin society.”<sup>29</sup> Moreover, in the early 1960’s, the doors of Saint Andrew’s were firmly closed to African-American families, and St. James’ Episcopal Church, the only African-American congregation in town, was not represented on the school’s board.<sup>30</sup> In the 1950’s, the school was able to passively protect these borders. Neither the school’s Constitution nor any of its promotional materials explicitly excluded students of color – there was no need to, as the structures of segregation did this work for the school. Former board member William Gammon doesn’t remember any “proscribed policy in terms of admission,” but noted the expensive tuition at St. Andrew’s – as at other private schools – served to limit the number of applications.<sup>31</sup>

By 1960, however, the boundaries of community needed to be actively policed, and the school would be required to take direct and intentional action as it decided who was

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<sup>28</sup> Byram and Logan, “The Origin and Present Nature of Saint Andrew’s School.”

<sup>29</sup> “TexasMonthly’s Guide to Private Schools.” *Texas Monthly*. N.D. Records of St. Andrew’s Episcopal School.

<sup>30</sup> Alice Lee McKenna. *The Gift and the Blessing: A History of St. Andrew’s Episcopal School*, 1992, p. 17. Box 671, Folder 4, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas, Austin.

<sup>31</sup> William Gammon, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

welcome at the school, and who was not. St. Andrew's did not make these decisions in a vacuum, but rather in the context of the Episcopal Church and the broader Austin community, both of which were also grappling with how to respond to the changes brought by *Brown v. Board*.

### **Laissez Faire Desegregation: Austin and Integration, 1955-1964**

Despite its contemporary reputation as a progressive city, Austin's response to the Civil Rights Movement was complex. "As the state capital and home of the University of Texas," writes education scholar Anna Victoria Wilson, "Austin wore a thin coat of liberalism. Its reputation hid a deeply conservative city in desperate need to thwart desegregation of its public schools."<sup>32</sup> This should not imply, however, that Austin was simply uninvolved in the struggle for Civil Rights. On the contrary, Austin's position as a university town meant that the city was the site of significant activism. In *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*, Doug Rossinow describes the city as "the largest center of new left activism in the American South, one of the biggest in the United States and probably the most important in all the vast spaces east of Berkeley, west of Morningside Heights, and south of Chicago."<sup>33</sup> Austin was host to a progressive core, built in particular around students and members of the religious community, and these activists worked tirelessly to integrate the university as well as Austin's businesses

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<sup>32</sup> Anna Victoria Wilson and William E. Segall, *Oh, Do I Remember!: Experiences of Teachers During the Desegregation of Austin's Schools, 1964-1971* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 37.

<sup>33</sup> Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 9.

and public spaces. In doing so, they constituted a distinctive branch of new left politics, forged from liberal Christianity.

But the city's response to the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision made clear that support for Civil Rights was far from universal -- and even amongst supporters of desegregation, not everyone was prone to activism. One St. Andrew's parent and Board member remembers the Austin response to Civil Rights as "laissez faire."<sup>34</sup> At first glance, this description belies the intensity and consistency of protest in Austin among those dedicated to the cause of integration. But "laissez faire" may be an apt description for many of Austin's white upper classes, who may have read about integration struggles in the paper but found their lives, for the most part, unaffected. And, across the board, Austin's response to Civil Rights -- especially in the early years of desegregation -- was comparatively moderate; the city was not prone to the sort of intense confrontations that had drawn national attention to places like Little Rock, and civil rights leaders "perceived Texas's whites as less hard-nosed than other southern whites about granting African Americans their rights."<sup>35</sup> This is not to say, however, that the community was necessarily supportive of or even indifferent to integration. Rather, Clive Webb asserts, "the political inertia of many people should not be interpreted as a sign of their equivocation over segregation."<sup>36</sup> Rather, many opponents of Austin took a passive approach to resistance, integrating in the manner that would come to be known as "with all

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<sup>34</sup> William Gammon, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

<sup>35</sup> Dwonna Goldstone, *Integrating the 40 Acres: The Fifty-Year Struggle for Racial Equality at the University of Texas* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Clive Webb, *Massive Resistance*, p. 5.

deliberate slowness.”<sup>37</sup> This response to Civil Rights would set the stage for the more significant confrontations and controversies of the 1970’s.

At first glance, however, Austin responded to desegregation orders with small but deliberate action, meeting relatively little public pushback. In the immediate aftermath of the *Brown II* decision in May of 1955, the Austin School Board took action. In August of the same year, the School Board ordered the removal of racial barriers at the high school level – students could now legally attend the high school nearest their home.<sup>38</sup> This relatively swift action garnered the disapproval of Texas Governor Allan Shivers who, seeking a statewide delay on desegregation, threatened the Austin Independent School District (AISD) with the loss of funds if they moved to dismantle segregation.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, AISD moved forward. At the start of the 1955-1956 school year, 13 African-American students enrolled in three white high schools. Starting in 1958, AISD continued the implementation of this “freedom of choice” plan in a “stair-step” method, requiring the integration of additional grade levels per year, starting with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 1958 and ending with the integration of the lower elementary grades in 1963.<sup>40</sup>

Against the backdrop of massive resistance, AISD seemed to be taking action – but the school district’s tactics amounted to what historian John A. Kirk calls “minimum

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<sup>37</sup> Larry Cuban, *As Good As It Gets: What School Reform Brought to Austin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 45.

<sup>38</sup> “Chronology of Desegregation Events in Austin.” *The Austin American-Statesman*, 14 May 1976. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>39</sup> “Five Decades of Social Change: A Timeline.” Desegregation in Austin. Austin History Center. [www.austinlibrary.com](http://www.austinlibrary.com)

<sup>40</sup> “Chronology of Desegregation Events in Austin.” *The Austin American-Statesman*. 14 May 1976. Although some school districts around the country reversed this process – starting with elementary grades and working up – it was not uncommon to begin with older students, in part because school districts, on the whole, have fewer high schools than elementary schools, and in part because high school students were considered less likely to transfer schools under freedom of choice plans.



compliance,” involving token concessions to *Brown v. Board* but avoiding any significant integration.<sup>41</sup> James Patterson writes that Southern whites often utilized “freedom of choice” plans, like the one put into place in AISD. “On paper these seemed fair,” Patterson writes, “for they permitted parents to send their children to schools of their choice. In practice, however, virtually no white children applied to black schools. And black parents who considered sending their children to white schools had to...combat a range of bureaucratic obstacles.”<sup>42</sup> Such strategies are crucial in the broader narrative of desegregation. Kirk argues that minimum compliance deserves far greater attention from historians: “With its defiant rhetoric and radical stance, massive resistance grabbed more headlines than minimum compliance, but it was precisely the latter’s low-key and surreptitious approach to school desegregation that made it far more effective in undermining the *Brown* decision in the long run.”<sup>43</sup> Kirk quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr., who wrote in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” that “the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate...Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John A. Kirk, “Massive Resistance and Minimum Compliance,” in *Massive Resistance*.

<sup>42</sup> Patterson, 100.

<sup>43</sup> Kirk, “Massive Resistance and Minimum Compliance,” in *Massive Resistance*, p. 76.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Kirk, “Massive Resistance and Minimum Compliance,” p. 76.

## **The Law of Grace and the Law of the Law: The Episcopal Church and Desegregation**

While the leadership at St. Andrew's was paying attention to the changes in the public system, they were even more attuned to the direction taken by the Episcopal Church. After *Brown v. Board*, most major religious denominations in the United States responded with a "flurry of resolutions and promises to work for an integrated society and eradicate discrimination within their own household of faith."<sup>45</sup> But these resolutions, frequently made at the level of national organizations, did not necessarily equate to clear paths of action for clergy and laymen – even for those personally committed to integration. Scholar Michael B. Friedland notes that across denominations, the activism of white Christians during Civil Rights was deeply influenced by questions of church hierarchy and the particularities of their parishioners. "The likelihood of a clergyman becoming involved in social activism depended on several factors," Friedland writes, "including his own conception of his duties; how the laity perceived his role; the issue in question; support (or lack of it) from a religious hierarchy, if one existed; and his position on the hierarchical ladder within the denomination."<sup>46</sup> Likewise, Friedland notes, sharp divisions often existed between church leadership and congregations: "those in the pews were often considerably more conservative and prejudiced than those who faced them from the altars," Friedland argues, and accordingly, clergy could face serious consequences for taking a political stand contrary to the leanings of their congregation. Accordingly, the most activist members of the clergy

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<sup>45</sup> Michael Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice Like a Trumpet: White Clergy and the Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements, 1954-1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 74-75.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

tended to be “young, new to the community, and thus more willing to risk a position in which they had not spent much time.”<sup>47</sup>

These patterns were clearly at play in the Episcopal Church, which by 1955 had officially taken a stance in support of the *Brown v. Board* decision, declaring that “unjust discrimination and segregation are contrary to the mind of Christ and the will of God.” But as religious historian Gardiner Shattuck points out in *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights*, “such sanguine statements notwithstanding, Episcopalians were actually far from unanimous in their opinions about desegregation.”<sup>48</sup> As in other denominations, the Church’s official stance masked deep divisions that existed within the Episcopal community – divisions that can be traced back to well before the Civil Rights Movement. During the Civil War, the Episcopal Church had washed their hands of the issue of slavery, arguing that such political questions should be kept separate from Church business. And after the end of the war, clergy developed a system that “reaffirmed the comfortable old pattern of the antebellum period: African Americans remained in a distinctly subordinate position in the same church with whites.” As a result, the Episcopal Church faced an exodus of African-American constituents following the Civil War, and in the 1950’s was still struggling to earn the trust of the African-American community.<sup>49</sup> In the Civil Rights era, the same issues bubbled to the surface: would the Church again privilege the political convenience of neutrality over the opportunity to take a leadership position on a moral issue?

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<sup>47</sup> Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice Like a Trumpet*, pp. 7, 46.

<sup>48</sup> Gardiner H. Shattuck, *Episcopalians & Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), pp. 67-68.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 14, 8.

The Church's 1955 official proclamation was only one example of efforts by national leadership and individual clergymen to take a stand on segregation. In the coming years, the Church would reaffirm its original stance, calling again in 1958 for Episcopalians to fall in line behind the Supreme Court's decision.<sup>50</sup> These public pronouncements came to life in the active involvement of church members in both national and local desegregation struggles, including efforts to desegregate Episcopal institutions such as the University of the South (Sewanee). But the Church's position was far from uncontroversial. For some, the Church's desired pace of change was simply too slow and too moderate, especially as the tension and violence surrounding Civil Rights increased. And, of course, the Church's official pro-integration stance infuriated many Southern constituents. The 1958 resolution in support of desegregation, for only one example, passed by a vote of 73 to 58 but was "sharply opposed by some Southern bishops."<sup>51</sup> Likewise, the Texan Diocesan Council voted in 1959 to partially integrate its summer camps: the proposal passed, but only "after heated debate and the only roll-call vote in the modern history of the Diocese of Texas."<sup>52</sup> A number of Southern Episcopalians went so far as to publish *Essays on Segregation* (1960), a collection that articulated an interpretation of Christian morality by which Episcopalians could oppose *Brown* and support continued segregation.<sup>53</sup> For these Episcopalians, the Church had betrayed their ties to their Southern brethren, letting the politics of a few dictate policy for the whole community.

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<sup>50</sup> George W. Cornell, "Episcopal Bishops Call on Members to Obey Court Desegregation Orders," *The Washington Post and Times Herald* (1954-1959). 15 October 1958. Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>51</sup> Cornell, "Episcopal Bishops Call on Members," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 1958.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Alan Wright, "Minority Enrollment," Report filed 1981, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>53</sup> Shattuck, *Episcopalians & Race*, p. 117.

Such national divisions among the Episcopal community could be seen and felt most clearly at the local level, where community infighting took on a more personal tone. In Texas, the center of controversy rested in the figure of John E. Hines, Bishop of the Diocese of Texas, and later, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. For Hines, the path was clear: Civil Rights was the defining moral issue of the nation, and he “made Civil Rights his hallmark...insist[ing] that what impelled the church to integrate lay not in adherence to court decisions but in the demands of the Gospel.”<sup>54</sup> In 1970, John Hines elaborated in an interview on the response of the Church to the “racial crisis:”

“[The Church must] be aware of the sin of racism which infects again every human institution in a largely white-powered, white-dominated structure such as is true of the United States today...When we face this kind of situation and begin to understand its corruptions, and begin to see the injustice in which these corruptions issue, then the church must be as sure as it possibly can be that its gospel of justice and equality and mercy is worked out in the individual lives of people...”<sup>55</sup>

Hines would go on to lead the Episcopal Church at a national level through the tumultuous 1960s, and his commitment to human rights and social justice never wavered: he would later spearhead the Episcopal Church’s efforts to help dismantle apartheid in South Africa. For Hines, this clear stance on moral issues stemmed from an equally clear perspective on the appropriate role of the Church in national life and a definitive vision of Episcopal identity. Asked in 1965 if the Church should speak on controversial issues, Hines replied, “If they don’t, who will? ... I think that Christians, religious people, are obligated to speak out in the interests of welfare and justice for all human kind.”<sup>56</sup> While Hines served as Presiding Bishop

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<sup>54</sup> Kenneth Kesselus. “‘Awake, thou Spirit of the watchmen:’ John E. Hines’s Challenge to the Episcopal Church,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 64.3 (September 1995), p. 305.

<sup>55</sup> John E. Hines, Interview, 1970. [www.episcopalarchives.org](http://www.episcopalarchives.org)

<sup>56</sup> Hines, John E. Interview. 14 July 1965. “The Church Awakens: African Americans and the Struggle for Justice. The Archives of the Episcopal Church. [www.episcopalarchives.org](http://www.episcopalarchives.org)

of the Diocese of Texas, this philosophy guided his decision to call in 1958 for racial integration in every aspect of the Episcopal community: including local congregations, summer camps, and Episcopal schools.<sup>57</sup>

Although conflict over desegregation at St. Andrew's was particularly vivid and prolonged, the process of integration was contentious in all Austin-area Episcopal schools. Bishop Hines founded St. Stephen's Episcopal School in 1949: the school, which served grades 7-12, was the other cornerstone of Episcopal education in Austin. St. Stephen's, in sharp contrast to St. Andrew's, officially desegregated almost immediately after Hines' 1958 call to do so.<sup>58</sup> The actual process at St. Stephen's, however, was not easy: the school's website acknowledges that integration proceeded amidst "harsh resistance and dissension among some parents, many of whom withdrew their students from the school."<sup>59</sup> Charles Alan Wright, personally involved in the struggle to integrate St. Stephen's elaborates: "Race as a criterion for admission at St. Stephen's Episcopal School was an annual cause of controversy at Council meetings, and it was not until 1960 that Council [sic] approved the decision of the St. Stephen's trustees to open the day division only of the school to all races beginning in the fall of 1961."<sup>60</sup> Ken Clark, former vicar of St. Michael's Church remembers this time period as a contentious one among the local Episcopal community: "On a diocesan level, much tension was created by such things as attempts to allow women to serve on vestries and bishop's committees and the integration of diocesan institutions... I supported all

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<sup>57</sup> "Five Decades of Social Change: A Timeline." Desegregation in Austin. Austin History Center. [www.austinlibrary.com](http://www.austinlibrary.com)

<sup>58</sup> "Five Decades of Social Change: A Timeline." Desegregation in Austin. Austin History Center. [www.austinlibrary.com](http://www.austinlibrary.com)

<sup>59</sup> "The Transformative Legacy of John E. Hines." St. Stephen's Episcopal School. [www.sstx.org](http://www.sstx.org)

<sup>60</sup> Charles Alan Wright, "Minority Enrollment," Report filed 1981, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

of these with, I believe, the encouragement of most of the flock. But, not all agreed and we lost several members.”<sup>61</sup>

Michael Friedland writes, “Religious bodies have always been concerned equally with institutional self-preservation and with their mission in the world, and generally have avoided antagonizing those who tithed or filled the collection plate.” Following through with the official Church stance on integration, however, required some antagonizing. Friedland notes that “such conflicting desires often put the individual minister in an awkward position.”<sup>62</sup> This pattern of conflicting desires between community preservation and moral obligation played out in local churches and, of course, in Episcopal schools: and those who fought to integrate these spaces struggled to do so in a way that might avoid significant damage to the community.

### **A Gentleman’s Dispute: Charles Alan Wright and Early Struggles for Integration**

The figure of Charles Alan Wright looms large in Texas mythology outside the sphere of Episcopal schools: a renowned University of Texas law professor for forty-five years, Wright was well-respected in the UT community and beyond. Wright is remembered by those who knew him as an old-school gentleman with an eccentric streak, both an “all around cowboy kind of guy” and a formal, impeccably dressed scholar.<sup>63</sup> One old colleague of Wright remembers: “[Charlie] once said he drinks beer for breakfast on vacation and watches three football games on Sunday afternoons, and I believe him, but I sometimes wonder if he wears

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<sup>61</sup> “About Us: A Brief History of St. Michael’s Church in Celebration of its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1955-2005.” St. Michael’s Episcopal Church. [www.st-michaels.org](http://www.st-michaels.org)

<sup>62</sup> Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice Like a Trumpet*, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> William Gammon, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

a suit while he does these things.”<sup>64</sup> At the University of Texas, Wright was a popular teacher, known for his incredible memory and his somewhat unusual tactics -- teaching a Supreme Court Seminar, for example, “open to exactly nine students, each of whom was assigned to assume the persona of one Supreme Court Justice for the semester, and to speak, vote, and write opinions in actual pending cases as he or she believed that Justice would speak, vote, and write.”<sup>65</sup> He was perhaps equally beloved as the head coach for forty-five years of the Legal Eagles, the Law School’s intramural football team, which won 330 games during his tenure as coach.<sup>66</sup>

Beyond these escapades, however, Wright was also renowned as an authority on constitutional law, authoring an incredible number of works on the topic – including a 57-volume treatise, *Federal Practice and Procedure*, which has been cited more than 50,000 times, leading one friend of Wright’s to assert that the Professor may be “the most-cited human ever to write about the law in English.”<sup>67</sup> His own career as a lawyer is equally impressive: Wright argued thirteen cases before the Supreme Court, and represented clients as well known (and difficult) as Richard Nixon.<sup>68</sup> Wright’s professional history highlights a key component of his complex legacy in Austin: he was a Republican, a staunch defender of

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<sup>64</sup> Douglas Laycock, “Charles Alan Wright and The University of Texas Law School,” *Texas International Law Journal* (Summer 1997): p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> “In Memoriam: Charles Alan Wright,” *The University of Texas at Austin*, 2 March 2001, <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2000-2001/memorials/Wright/wright.html>

<sup>66</sup> “About the Legal Eagles,” *The University of Texas School of Law*, [http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/exhibits/legal\\_eagles/](http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/exhibits/legal_eagles/) Wright’s years as coach of this intramural team are well documented, including his practice of holding pre-season practice four times a week because “winning was more fun than losing.”

<sup>67</sup> “In Memoriam: Charles Alan Wright,” *The University of Texas at Austin*, 2 March 2001, <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2000-2001/memorials/Wright/wright.html>

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*



individual liberty, and a true believer in limited government. A memorial from the University of Texas describes his position:

“Express civil liberties, federalism, and separation of powers were all means of protecting liberty. His clients might or might not use their liberty wisely, but power concentrated in Congress or any other central body might not be used wisely either, and centralized blunders and abuses were more dangerous than decentralized blunders and abuses. So whether he was defending the free speech rights of a street protestor, the self-incrimination rights of a professional gambler, a state’s right to decide for itself about the death penalty or the minimum wage, or even a President’s right to keep secrets from Congress and the public, he saw himself as defending the limitation and dispersal of government powers, and thus in the broadest sense, defending the liberties of the American people.”

While these political beliefs could have aligned him with many Southern segregationists, however, Wright was a strong advocate for integration, a position that sprung in part from his religious convictions: Wright was a lifelong Episcopalian and an active member of the Episcopal community in Austin. One acquaintance described him as having a “really firm grasp of the Episcopalian view, this sort of middle way that we always like to practice – a sort of interface between opposing forces.”<sup>69</sup> Whether or not Wright would have described the “Episcopal view” in this manner, the “middle way” is a useful framework for understanding Wright’s work on Civil Rights and, later, gay rights within the Church. William Gammon remembers attending a dialogue on gay rights led by Wright, at which the law professor closed with a prayer that Wright “had heard John Hines use in regard to race:” *Lord, help us not to make much of matters which cannot matter much to thee.*<sup>70</sup>

Wright acted on his convictions: he worked in support of desegregation across Austin. At the University of Texas, he helped to found the University of Texas Faculty Club with the understanding that it would not be segregated. When the operators failed to honor

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<sup>69</sup> William Gammon, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

their commitment, Wright organized a faculty boycott of the club.<sup>71</sup> Wright is likewise widely credited with helping to desegregate Austin's Episcopal schools. He was involved with both St. Stephen's, where he served on the committee that pushed the school to integrate its dormitories, and St. Andrew's.<sup>72</sup> Wright emerged as a pivotal figure in the desegregation of St. Andrew's beginning in the early 1960's and continuing through the early 1980's. Often working in the background, he leveraged his considerable influence at the school to place continual pressure on the community to work towards meaningful integration.

Wright first became a significant player in the desegregation of St. Andrew's in 1960, when the school faced its first major challenge to its policy of segregation. In August of 1960, A.F. Vickland, then chairman of the Board of Trustees, received a letter from Cora Eiland Hicks. Hicks, an African-American woman and a member of St. James' Episcopal Church, was writing in order to request that her two sons be considered for admission to St. Andrew's. In her letter, Hicks stresses the academic excellence of her two sons, aged nine and eight, as well as the Christian values of her entire family (she notes that she and Mr. Hicks are both regular attenders at St. James and that both boys were baptized and confirmed there), and the value she and her husband place on a religious education. Hicks carefully avoids framing her appeal in a political context: "We are motivated," she writes, "solely by wanting the best academic and religious training for our children." She closes the letter with a

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<sup>71</sup> "In Memoriam: Charles Alan Wright," *The University of Texas at Austin*, 2 March 2001, <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2000-2001/memorials/Wright/wright.html>

<sup>72</sup> Mary Ann Roser, "Raising the Bar," *The Austin American-Statesman*, 21 June 1998.

Christian appeal, hoping that as the Board members consider her request, they will “be guided by those Christian ideals that we as Christians profess.”<sup>73</sup>

With this letter, the Board simultaneously received an appeal from James C. Billingsley, the white priest in charge at St. James’, where he served an African-American congregation. Billingsley attests to the outstanding character of all members of the Hicks families, and reiterates that the application should not be seen as a “trumped-up ‘test case.’” The boys’ former parochial school closed, Billingsley explains, and the Hicks family simply seeks another Christian institution, preferably Episcopalian. In the same breath, however, Billingsley expounds on the tensions surrounding race in the Austin Episcopal community – and he stresses that for Episcopalians, the notion of *community* is particularly important: “Now, if our church government were of the same type as the Baptists (for example), that is, congregational, there would not be much of a problem. But ours is not like the Baptists: ours is an Episcopal form of government. And because it is, we do a great many things together, as congregations...so, whenever a segment of Episcopalians is excluded from full participation in such joint activities, the injustice thus done is different and much greater...” Accordingly, Billingsley closes, the school should not, in making their decision, reflect “solely on what seems to be good now for St. Andrew’s,” but rather, “what is good for the whole effort of the Episcopal church in Austin, on the larger consideration of what is good for the Diocese, and in prayerful consideration of what is Christ’s will for you in this situation...”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Cora Eiland Hicks, letter to A. F. Vickland, 11 August 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>74</sup> James C. Billingsley, letter to the Board of Trustees, St. Andrew’s School, 12 August 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

As a succinct letter to Mrs. Hicks makes clear, the St. Andrew's Board voted – “after full and open discussion” – to deny admission to the two boys, and to “continue the operation of the school on a segregated basis.”<sup>75</sup> The surviving minutes from the Board meeting of August 17, 1960, are incomplete, but they do shed light on the core of the conflict. After being reminded of the absence of a legal requirement to desegregate, the Board heard from Reverend Sumners, who reiterated that the Church “recognizes no difference in people,” and asserted that this decision amounted to a “time of testing our Christian ideals.” The specter of withdrawal loomed in the background: as Reverend Sumners couched the conflict, “We could afford to two people the benefits of St. Andrew's School and by the same action deny these same benefits to others who might withdraw.”<sup>76</sup> The Board was additionally reminded of the precedent set by St. Stephen's, where the two boys ultimately landed.<sup>77</sup>

While the Board may have feared the withdrawal of pro-segregation families, however, they received ample pushback from parents and community members in support of integration. *The Austin Statesman* reported that a parents' group “brought the matter to public attention by passing out leaflets which urged the integration of the school.”<sup>78</sup> Three families

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<sup>75</sup> A. F. Vickland, letter to Cora Hicks, 31 August 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes, St. Andrew's Board Meeting, 7 August 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>77</sup> In the interim years, the two boys may have attended St. Austin's Roman Catholic School which, as Billingsley notes in his letter, had already offered them a place. For the purposes of completing his report on Minority Enrollment in the 1980's, Charles Alan Wright looked into what became of the Hicks boys. He pointedly notes in his report that after graduating from St. Stephen's, one of the sons went on to Yale, became a Rhodes Scholar, and then attended the University of Texas Law School. The other son attended Oberlin and became a concert violinist.

<sup>78</sup> “St. Andrew's to Integrate.” *The Austin Statesman*. 3 July 1963. Records of St. Andrew's School.

withdrew their children from the school in protest after the Board reached their decision.<sup>79</sup> James Billingsley, who had condemned the decision (as well as the slow process of the Episcopal Church on integration more generally) in a sermon at St. James,<sup>80</sup> made an appearance at the next board meeting, along with three St. Andrew's parents. Tom Gee, a St. Andrew's parent who spoke on behalf of the visitors, made clear the "disturbance" the decision had caused among parents, and warned of potential further withdrawals. The parents, Gee asserted, demanded to know whether the Board's response to the Hicks' family should be interpreted as the school's permanent policy, or solely a reaction to a singular incident. Before any permanent policy could be set down, Gee requested the opportunity for community members to share their views, and – in true Episcopalian style – urged the formation of a committee to study the matter further. The Board conceded, appointing two committees, one of Board members and one of parents, to investigate the question of integration.

The pro-integration parents, under the leadership of Tom Gee and Charles Alan Wright, would spend most of the next year mobilizing support for their position, through surveying the community, negotiating with the Board members, and appealing to Church leadership. The two men gathered a group of approximately twenty likeminded parents, who

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<sup>79</sup> Minutes, St. Andrew's Board Meeting. September 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law. This number did not yet include the children of Tom Gee and Charles Alan Wright, who would later temporarily withdraw their families from the school. In a letter dated 4 October 1960, Wright reports that Bishop Hines had urged him not to withdraw his children yet.

<sup>80</sup>Jake Billingsley, "Black History Month: A White Minister Speaks Against Segregation – 1960," Facebook, 20 February 2011.

met several times to discuss tactics,<sup>81</sup> and the group successfully convinced the Board to hold an open meeting for parents in the community to give voice to their opinion on the matter.<sup>82</sup> Charles Alan Wright was also in regular communication with John Hines, and the correspondence of these two men sheds light both on the importance of Church leadership in providing support to integrationists, and on the emphasis both men placed on decorum and respectability. In a letter to Hines dated October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1960, Wright keeps the Bishop apprised of developments at St. Andrew's, adding that he feels unsure how much of his conversations with Hines can be made public to his peers: "You said specifically that your own financial support of the school, and what you propose to do about it, was between us, and so of course I have not repeated that...I [also] have not quoted publicly your comments on personalities."<sup>83</sup> Wright ultimately requested permission to quote the Bishop's support for integration at St. Andrew's, particularly in response to a disturbing rumor from another parent, who claimed to have met with Hines and to have learned that the Bishop felt "indifferent as to what course the Board took." While Wright dismissed such rumors as a misunderstanding, the possibility that he might not count on Hines' full support clearly alarmed him. "There was an evident feeling of puzzlement [in the parents' group] as to why we should battle for the teachings of the Church if the Bishop did not care one way or

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<sup>81</sup> Charles Alan Wright, Letter to John Hines, 4 October 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes, St. Andrew's Board Meeting, 17 October 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>83</sup> Charles Alan Wright, Letter to John Hines, 4 October 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

another.”<sup>84</sup> In this light, Wright continued, he felt justified in reassuring his peers by sharing some of his own communications with the Bishop.

Hines quickly clarified for Wright which elements of their correspondence could be made public (“Excepting in the matter of comments on personality or personalities, you are certainly free to use any information you might have derived from your conversation the other day,” he writes), and he reassured the law professor that the situation at St. Andrew’s was “of definite concern” to him.<sup>85</sup> This clear statement of support from the Bishop would prove useful to Wright, who would quote directly from Hines’ letter at the open forum for parents. Perhaps even more importantly, however, the tone of civility and mutual respect between the two men is striking. For Austin’s elite, this was a conflict to be handled like gentlemen, in a manner appropriate to individuals of their standing. This tone sets the debate at St. Andrew’s apart from the more violent conflicts unfolding around other parts of the country. The insistence on decorum, however, was not without a hint of elitism, which made itself apparent from time to time throughout these letters. Arguing that St. Andrew’s would benefit from the recruitment of more children from the University of Texas community, Wright asserts that “those of us who teach at the university or at one of the seminaries are especially likely to demand excellence in our children’s education, and the prospects are very great, if heredity counts for anything.”<sup>86</sup>

The emphasis on respectability was most apparent at the meeting for parents, held on November 16, 1960, and publicized to all parents through a letter from the Parents Group.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> John Hines, letter to to Charles Alan Wright, 5 October 1960. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>86</sup> Charles Alan Wright, Letter to Sam Baxter, 22 November 1960, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

After the meeting, Wright wrote to Hines, Sam Baxter (a member of the Board), and others reflecting on what had taken place. In his letter, Wright identifies 33 families “who are known to me to support, with varying degrees of intensity, integration,” 28 families “believed by us to support segregation,” and 51 families who “do not care or have kept their views to themselves.”<sup>87</sup> Wright himself spoke at the meeting, quoting from Hines’ message; he later wrote to Hines that his ability to do so proved “most useful.”<sup>88</sup> Wright considered the meeting a success, if only because the pro-integration parents “startled the Board,” who he asserts “simply had no notion that there were many people who believe in integration.”<sup>89</sup> His reflections on the meeting illuminate several key aspects of the conflict. First, Wright points to a clear division between the Board and the parents at the school, and between the lay members of the Board and the clergy. By Wright’s calculation, more than one third of the families in the school supported integration. By contrast, he notes, “if there is a single lay member of the Board who believes in integration, it is the best-kept secret of the fall.” Secondly, the tone of civility and decorum remained consistent even in the presumably tense atmosphere of an open forum on the issue of integration. Wright notes that he was “impressed” by the “temperateness and the absence of rancor at the meeting. Plainly integration is an issue on which decent people take different positions, but I do not expect to stop loving my neighbor because he disagrees with me on this, nor do I think many others

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<sup>87</sup> Wright, Letter to Sam Baxter, 22 November 1960. It is worth noting that Hines, Gee, and the rest of their parents group seem to have arrived at these numbers prior to the meeting, using methods at that were presumably less than scientific.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Alan Wright, letter to John Hines, 22 November 1960, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



will.”<sup>90</sup> Wright even describes the primary advocates of continued segregation at the school as “able and reasonable.”<sup>91</sup>

While this atmosphere of mutual respect and civility may be partially colored by Wright’s perspective, the law professor’s interpretation is backed up both by the official minutes from the event, which make no mention of any disruption or unpleasantness, and by the account of Tom Gee, who reflected on the night in a letter to the Board. Gee’s letter – like every piece of correspondence between Board members, parents, and Church leadership – is impeccably polite. Gee stresses that he is “certainly not trying to sit in judgment on anyone’s views or to say that mine are better or ‘holier’ than those of anybody else.” In fact, Gee writes, he has “never stated my purely personal views about this matter to anyone; I feel them to be as irrelevant as they might be surprising.” Gee also notes the absence of explicitly racist sentiment at the meeting. Of the six families who spoke in support of segregation at the meeting, Gee reports, five grounded their concerns in the school’s financial situation.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, money takes center stage in much of the correspondence about the meeting. Charles Alan Wright reports having uncovered several “appalling” facts about the “shoestring nature of the school’s finances.”<sup>93</sup> Struggling with heavy debt incurred in the school’s move to larger facilities, St. Andrew’s nevertheless kept tuition low (Wright notes, “I fear I spend more each month for liquor than I do for the private education of three children.”) and made

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<sup>90</sup> Charles Alan Wright, Letter to Sam Baxter, 22 November 1960, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Tom Gee, Letter to the St. Andrew’s Board of Trustees, 23 November 1960, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>93</sup> Charles Alan Wright, Letter to Sam Baxter, 22 November 1960, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

relatively few formal requests for donations.<sup>94</sup> As a result, the school faced a quite serious financial situation. Whether money was, in fact, the root cause of concern for pro-segregation community members or merely a convenient screen, the school's finances became the primary non-racial justification for putting off integration. Community members utilizing this argument suggested that the school simply could not afford to lose families who might withdraw their children should St. Andrew's decide to integrate.

These fears may have been genuine, but the threat seems to have been less so. Reflecting on the parents' meeting, Wright asks, "We have heard all along of the hordes of people who will withdraw their children if the school adopts a policy of integration. Where were they?" He goes on to note that "not a single person said he would withdraw his children from an integrated school."<sup>95</sup> Highlighting again the sense of decorum prevalent in this debate, Wright admits that there may be more pro-segregation sentiment at the school than the meeting suggests, as "the arguments for segregation are so threadbare that I can well understand the reluctance of the respectable people who make up the St. Andrew's constituency to voice them in public." Nevertheless, Wright suggests that anyone who felt so strongly about integration as to withdraw his children from the school would likely have made his feelings known. This threat, for Wright, seems overblown; moreover, several pro-integration families had explicitly indicated their intention to withdraw if the school did not move towards integration. Tom Gee comes to a similar conclusion in his letter to the Board:

"It may be said that there were those who were for segregation who did not speak. However, I am inclined to think that if they did not speak, they will not act either – or

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. CAW's points about the schools finances are supported by minutes from the Board over the course of the next decade, which recount the Board's near constant concern over the financial stability of the school.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

at any rate will not act in a harmful way to the school if the Board takes a courageous stand and gives a strong lead in this matter. Moreover, I fear that if it does not, many will think, in view of the outcome of the meeting, that the financial questions raised are not the real basis of the decision.”<sup>96</sup>

At the April Board meeting, the different strands of thought regarding segregation made themselves apparent. The Board’s Admissions Committee presented the results of their study of the integration question, and made a motion (based on a vote of the majority of the 5 member committee) that the school remain segregated for the 1961-1962 school year. The Reverend Scott Field Bailey, chairman of the committee, presented a “minority report,” putting forward a motion to follow AISD in its stairstep desegregation plan<sup>97</sup> – this moderate, proposal had the support of both Charles Alan Wright and Tom Gee, as well. Almost immediately, a third, more radical motion was put on the table – that the school desegregate at all grade levels at the start of the next school year. These three motions highlight the deep divisions in the Board in regards to the appropriate pace of change. Additionally, the minutes indicate that the Board was aware even in 1961 that to publicly stand behind segregation constituted a potential threat to one’s reputation: before voting, one Board member put forward a motion that the minutes from the meeting should record only the tally of the votes – not the individual vote of each member. The majority proposal of the Admissions Committee – to remain segregated -- was carried “by majority vote.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Tom Gee, Letter to the St. Andrew’s Board of Trustees, 23 November 1960, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>97</sup> AISD had, at this time, completed its official desegregation of high schools and middle schools, and was preparing to integrate the upper elementary grades. Falling in step with this plan would therefore mean beginning to integrate, but at a slower pace.

<sup>98</sup> Minutes, St. Andrew’s Board Meeting, 17 April 1961. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

The school's 1961 decision to remain segregated brought about a temporary end to attempts to integrate the school through respectful negotiation. Shortly after the vote, the Reverend James C. Billingsley – who had been elected to the Board after the Hicks' application in an attempt to integrate the school – resigned his post in protest,<sup>99</sup> along with another Episcopal seminary member.<sup>100</sup> Charles Alan Wright and Tom Gee both withdrew their children from the school, and did not return them until 1963.<sup>101</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the school's decision brought unwanted, and perhaps unforeseen, attention. Within three days, the school would find itself picketed by Louis Buck, an Episcopal priest at St. James – a novel enough turn to land the school in the paper. Buck's protest would represent both a new stage in the struggle to integrate St. Andrew's and more of the same: his use of direct action tactics and his frustration with the slow and courteous discussions of the previous two years greatly increased the pressure on the school to desegregate, and made it clear that not all Episcopalians subscribed to the "middle way." And yet, the response to Buck from the school and Church leadership only highlights the strength of these existing pathways for change, and serves as a reminder of the consequences for those who attempted to buck the hierarchy.

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<sup>99</sup> Minutes, St. Andrew's Board Meeting, 2 July 1963, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>100</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

<sup>101</sup> See Charles Alan Wright, "A Salute to Tom Gee," in the *Texas Law Review* (69 Tex. L. Rev. i. 1990-1991) and "Raising the Bar" in the *Austin-American Statesman*, 21 June 1998.

## **A Protest Group of One: Louis Buck and the Picketing of St. Andrew's**

In late April of 1961, Reverend Louis Buck entered the fray over desegregation at St. Andrew's. Buck, who had worked as a veterinarian for many years before entering the priesthood, stood out in the Austin Episcopal Community.<sup>102</sup> A large man ("a 350lb veterinarian," one friend described him)<sup>103</sup>, Buck habitually wore sandals – "mimicking Jesus or something," fellow Episcopal priest Ed Hartwell remembers. In the memories of those who knew him, Buck emerges as a man of deep conviction, headstrong in his pursuit of justice, sometimes rash, and undeterred by the potential consequences of his actions. "He was a very interesting person," remembers Ed Hartwell, "but he was not very easy to work with. He did some good things, but it's the way he went about it."<sup>104</sup> Hartwell remembers Buck breaking into a vestry meeting, brandishing papers he wanted the reverend to sign. When Hartwell refused to sign before having read the papers, Buck "walked off in a big huff, and I was the bad guy," Hartwell remembers.<sup>105</sup> In David Richards's memoir *Once Upon a Time in Texas: A Liberal in the Lone Star State*, Richards recalls the following story about Buck's original position as a priest in Killeen, Texas:

"Killeen was the home of Fort Hood, the nation's largest army mechanized post and a town rife with war fever. After a few weeks, Louis was back in the garden [Sholz Garten, a bar in Austin] recounting his success as a fledgling minister. When asked the size of the congregation, he explained that it was 230 on his first Sunday, when he preached on the evils of war. After his third Sunday, when his sermon revealed that the makers of war could not be received into heaven, the flock had dwindled to 88. We expressed concern about the decline in attendance, but Louis was unfazed. He explained that the Book of Common Prayer urged the necessity of purifying the congregation, and he felt that he was well on the way to achieving that goal. The

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<sup>102</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>103</sup> Richards, David. *Once Upon a Time in Texas: A Liberal in the Lone Star State*, 83.

<sup>104</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>105</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

church hierarchy did not share Louis's view, however, and he was shortly thereafter moved on to other pastures."<sup>106</sup>

Buck's protest at St. Andrew's was likewise grounded in firm convictions around Episcopal identity and social justice, and demonstrated a similar lack of concern about pushing buttons. Buck had only very recently succeeded Reverend Billingsley as priest-in-charge at St. James', the same African-American Episcopal congregation that had been home to the Hicks' family. Three days after the school's vote to remain integrated, Buck began picketing, to the great consternation of the newly elected Chairman of the Board, R. W. Byram. Buck showed little regard for the niceties practiced by Charles Alan Wright, Tom Gee, and others – and his directness seems to have brought out a less gentlemanly side in some of the St. Andrew's Board members, as well. Of course, angrier confrontations made for better news, and the picketing of the school received significant coverage in *The Texas Observer*. The paper relishes the details of the confrontation between Buck and R. W. Byram who, "obviously disturbed" at the news of the unexpected protest, arrived at full speed, "whipping his car into the curb so fast and close that Buck felt compelled to dodge onto the curb..." When the chairman "demanded an explanation," however, Buck's response was clear, unwavering, and grounded in a Christian perspective: "all God's children have equal rights before him," he informed Byram, and "every Christian must answer to God." Byram, reportedly, responded that Buck would "have to answer to some people around here, too."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> David Richards, *Once Upon a Time in Texas: A Liberal in the Lone Star State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), p. 83.

<sup>107</sup> Keith Stanford, "Picketing An Episcopal School," *The Texas Observer* (Austin, TX), 25 April 1961. AF Church Schools – St. Andrew's C300, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

Buck's picket would be brief: the protest lasted for a few days in the spring of 1961, and Buck reappeared on the first day of school in August to distribute flyers.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, Bryam's words would prove prescient. Some other clergy and laymen in the St. James' community were staunch supporters of integration and, in some cases, involved in the protest of St. Andrew's; Buck, additionally, was accompanied by several African-American students from the University of Texas. Nevertheless, Buck has been preserved in community memory as the instigator of the event, and he would suffer for it. "He was a protest group of one," St. Andrew's parent and former Board member William Gammon remembers, "but it takes leadership."<sup>109</sup> Certainly, Buck took the lead in pushing the Episcopal Church towards more decisive action on integration – further and faster than Church leadership was willing to go.<sup>110</sup> His protest seems to have angered just about everyone on both sides of the conflict. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1963, Chairman R. W. Byram met with a larger group of Episcopalians, including Buck, Bishop Hines, the ever-present Charles Alan Wright and Tom Gee, and Board member Sam Baxter to discuss the picketing. A clear emphasis on privacy, family, and decorum runs throughout Byram's notes from the meeting. Byram appears particularly peeved at the presence of reporters, although Buck denied calling the press; Byram likewise "expressed the opinion that this was not the proper way to solve family problems." Charles Alan Wright and

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<sup>108</sup> Minutes, St. Andrew's Board Meeting, 2 July 1963, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>109</sup> William Gammon, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

<sup>110</sup> Jake Billingsley, son of St. James' priest James Billingsley, recalls that the Buck family had crosses burned on their lawn as the result of Reverend Buck's stance on integration. See Jake Billingsley, 'Black History Month: A White Minister Speaks Against Segregation – 1960.' Facebook. 20 February 2011.

Tom Gee appeared to second this perspective, as they both “expressed the view that picketing had harmed rather than helped the cause.”<sup>111</sup>

While Hines refused to condemn Buck (who claimed to have the approval of the Bishop’s Committee before appearing) at the meeting, the reverend’s actions had clearly put Church leadership in a difficult position. Hines later wrote Byram expressing his “sympathy for the complexities facing St. Andrew’s School,” and explaining that he discouraged the sort of picketing employed by Buck. Nevertheless, Hines writes, “I have not forbidden such picketing and I do not think I would forbid it,” as such protest “lies within such a precious area of freedom of expression...”<sup>112</sup> Byram was hardly satisfied, responding that he felt St. James’ had been “subjected to irresponsible leadership.” He continues, “The leader individually is the one I feel that you have the authority to restrain since he is an employee of the Diocese. I feel that everyone who accepts employment owes the duty of loyalty to his employer and I feel that this precept has not been followed in this instance.”<sup>113</sup> Buck was not immediately removed – he remained priest-in-charge at St. James’ until 1963. But whether in response to the protest at St. Andrew’s, or a more general reflection of Buck’s practices, the Reverend was eventually removed from his position. As Richards remembers it in *A Liberal in the Lone Star State*, “[Buck] became embroiled in a rancorous dispute with the Episcopal

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<sup>111</sup> R. W. Byram, Memorandum to St. Andrew’s Board of Trustees, May 1, 1961. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>112</sup> John Hines, letter to R.W. Byram, 30 May 1961, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>113</sup> R.W. Byram, letter to John Hines, 31 May 1961, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law. Buck certainly did not seem to have a great deal of respect for the established Church hierarchy. Jake Billingsley remembers that after the protest at St. Andrew’s, Buck wrote a letter to Bishop Hines accusing the clergy of “wearing lace on their panties.”



Bishop of Texas [Hines] over some free-speech issue, and his card was jerked.”<sup>114</sup> Ed Hartwell puts it more succinctly: “he was finally deposed.”<sup>115</sup>

Buck returned to life as a veterinarian, and his push to integrate St. Andrew’s wouldn’t bear fruit for another several years. His protest reveals deep rifts in the Episcopal community about tactics – rifts that are present in the memory of these events even fifty years later – and whatever it did not accomplish, it forced the Episcopal community in Austin to consider more deeply its stance on the issue of integration. Buck’s protest threw into sharp relief the passive action of local Episcopal leaders, and this, perhaps, provided some impetus for the changing position of the Episcopal community in Austin. While controversy surrounding integration was far from over, St. Andrew’s would find itself increasingly isolated in its policy of segregation as the rest of the Episcopal community came to articulate more clearly its support of desegregation.

### **You’ve Got Nothing to Lose: Ed Hartwell and Official Integration**

In the years following Buck’s protest, the push to integrate St. Andrew’s did not disappear, but the tactics changed, as did the leadership. After an additional year without a shift in the school’s policy, Reverend Ed Hartwell stepped into the position of Chairman of the Board in 1963. Hartwell represented a new approach to the question of integration, and while he met with more success than Buck, he likewise suffered for his activism.

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<sup>114</sup> Richards, *Once Upon a Time in Texas: A Liberal in the Lone Star State*, 83.

<sup>115</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

Hartwell arrived in Austin in 1960 to take a position as the rector of St. George's Episcopal Church. Bringing with him experience in education from his time in Jasper and Beaumont, Hartwell – like both Hines and Buck – had clear views on the question of integration. Hartwell's experiences in the navy from 1943 to 1946 had opened his eyes to imperialism, in both its explicit and subtle varieties. In the Philippines, Hartwell fell in love with the diversity of culture and language of the local populations. He was also aware of the effects of American colonialism on the area. "Everything I saw overseas, I gave the colonialists a very low mark," Hartwell said of his time in the service. "There was no sense of a Christian perspective – love your neighbor."<sup>116</sup> Looking back on these experiences, Hartwell interpreted his response to his years in the navy through the lens of his baptismal promises: "There are five of them," he said. "The others are kind of sweet – you know, you do this, that, and the other, support your parish, be nice to people. And the final one: I will strive for justice and peace and for the reception of dignity for every human being."<sup>117</sup>

Hartwell's time in the navy also forced him to confront racial divides in the service: "I saw how the blacks were treated aboard my ship," he said. "Here they were drafted, risked their lives to save their country, but were still considered by many to be second class citizens." By the time Hartwell came to Austin, moreover, he had gathered some first-hand experience with integration struggles. His own seminary in Virginia had integrated in the mid-1950's, and at the Texas Diocesan Council of Churches, when the Diocese had officially integrated its summer camps, Hartwell stood up and voted for integration. "That made it very difficult for me from that point on," Hartwell claims, as many in the diocese were opposed to

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<sup>116</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

<sup>117</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

integration. These experiences had shown Hartwell first hand the conflict around integration among Episcopal clergy in Texas. But it had also proven to him that he had support from key players in the community – most especially John Hines, whom Hartwell knew well. Hines had ordained Hartwell into the priesthood, and Hartwell thought of the Bishop as a mentor. While Hines was “trying to do his best with this [integration] across the Diocese,” the way Hartwell saw it, “the senior clergy in Austin were not yet committed.”<sup>118</sup>

Hartwell was aware, then, of the climate in the Episcopal Church at large when he moved to Austin. Although he served on the Board for a time before becoming Chairman, Hartwell became deeply involved with St. Andrew’s in the immediate aftermath of Buck’s protest when, as Hartwell describes it, “things had already gotten real sticky.”<sup>119</sup> But Hartwell felt that integration was “the crux of what I was there for,”<sup>120</sup> and he was determined to see it through. At St. Andrew’s, Hartwell felt, the issue was clear. Hartwell emphasizes the difference between a *church school* and a *private school* – a distinction that would come to have a great deal more significance in the coming decade: “We were a church school, supported by the Episcopal Church through the Diocese of Texas, and here we’re not following a Christian perspective about what’s right and wrong about integration.”<sup>121</sup> For Hartwell, as for Hines and other Episcopalians, the question of segregation was intimately related to faith and Episcopal identity. The two could not be separated.

However, as Chairman, Hartwell found himself in a difficult position. Hartwell’s role as Dean of the Convocation for the Diocese of Texas made him a leader among Episcopal

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<sup>118</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>119</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

<sup>120</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>121</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

clergy in the Austin metropolitan area. Through this position, Hartwell was privy to the wide range of viewpoints in the Episcopal community on the issue. Some clergy members were staunchly opposed to integration; some just wanted to stop talking about the issue, like one Dean of the Seminary who, according to Hines, once complained, “I wish we could go on and get St. Andrew’s integrated – then we wouldn’t have to have all these meetings.” Others, of course, were not only in support of integration but were impatient for movement on the issue. Hartwell describes receiving repeated phone calls demanding to know what sort of action he intended to take: “Well, right now I’m eating my supper,” Hartwell remembers responding, “but I’m doing the best I can.”<sup>122</sup>

Hartwell describes himself as “caught in the middle,” and although he did not share Buck’s flair for the dramatic, he simply refused to let the issue drop. “I kept bringing it up,” Hartwell remembers of his year as Chairman of the Board, “[and saying] we’re not gonna get off the hook until we get this thing resolved.”<sup>123</sup> Hartwell was not alone – several members of the Board, he remembered, including several laymen, were staunchly in support of integration. But some of the strongest advocates for integration had resigned in protest after the last vote on the issue had failed to overturn the policy of segregation, and from Hartwell’s perspective, these resignations only made his position more difficult, as the vacancies on the board were filled with “hardliners.”<sup>124</sup> Many of these hardliners, additionally, had support in their respective congregations – some of which Hartwell describes as being hooked into a “John Birch Society” mentality. Moreover, even Hartwell’s insistence on revisiting

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<sup>122</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

integration did not sit well with all members of the Board. After one Board meeting, Hartwell remembered, one of the senior rectors asked him to stay behind to talk. “Ed,” the rector told him, “I had felt that you had a good future in the diocese at Texas, but given your position on this, I think you can forget it.”<sup>125</sup>

In this climate, Hartwell found himself struggling to make headway – and might have continued to do so, if not for two key factors. Firstly, Hartwell knew he had the support of senior leadership in the Texas Diocese – and while the official position of the Church was nothing new, Texas leadership was beginning to articulate this position with more clarity, frequency, and urgency. Arthur Lichtenberger, Presiding Bishop, had circulated a Whitsuntide Message<sup>126</sup> articulating a “strong sense of the urgency of the racial crisis in our country and the necessity of the Church to act.” The slow response of the white community to the Civil Rights movement, Lichtenberger wrote, was no longer sufficient:

“I would urge you to take action. Discrimination within the Body of the Church itself is an intolerable scandal. Every congregation has a continuing need to examine its own life and to renew those efforts necessary to insure its inclusiveness fully. Diocesan and church-related agencies, schools and other institutions also have a considerable distance to go in bringing their practices up to the standard of the clear position of the Church on race.”<sup>127</sup>

Lichtenberger’s position reflected that of Bishop Hines, whose support for integration was well known. Because of his personal relationship with Hines, moreover, Hartwell was able to tap into this support quite directly. Following his threatening conversation with the senior rector, Hartwell set up a meeting with Hines, in which he described the “tough time” they

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Whitsuntide, or Pentecost, begins seven weeks after Easter in the Christian calendar.

<sup>127</sup> Arthur Lichtenberger, Whitsuntide Message, 2 June 1963. Records of St. Andrew’s School.

were having.<sup>128</sup> Hines, in response, wrote a letter to the school board. The letter, dated June 24, 1963, echoes the same messages that Hines had already articulated in other forums. Here, however, Hines addresses St. Andrew's directly, making his frustration with the school board clear:

“I have been hopeful all along that the Trustees of a School, which bears the name ‘Episcopal’, and bears relationship to congregations of this Church, would have arrived much earlier than this at conclusions drawn from the Christian Gospel and this Church’s official pronouncements in the matter of race relations, to have dropped race totally from any admissions criteria.”<sup>129</sup>

Hines emphasizes here the obligations of an *Episcopal* school towards the broader Church community and, of course, towards the “official pronouncements” of Church leaders. While the letter is not a direct command, Hines wishes could hardly be misinterpreted. At three separate points in the letter, Hines requests that the Board take decisive action, and soon. For Hines, moreover, there is only one appropriate course of action: “it is my firm conviction,” he writes, “that the Board of a Church sponsored and Church related School has no viable other [sic] than to make this witness, come what may.” The letter also gently emphasizes that Hines is keeping himself informed of the details of the Board’s proceedings: “The Board has been good enough to keep me informed concerning actions recorded in the minutes of their meetings,” Hines writes. “I realize that this matter to which I refer has been before the Board at one time or another, and I understand that the latest presentation was only this past week.”

From Hartwell’s perspective, this letter was a game-changer, in part because of the hierarchy of the Episcopal Church. While Hines’ position on integration was no secret, this letter was a direct intervention in the proceedings of the Board at St. Andrew’s, and an

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<sup>128</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>129</sup> John Hines, letter to Ed Hartwell, June 24 1963, records of St. Andrew’s School.

indication that the Bishop was paying close attention to the Board's next steps. While Hines urged the school to reflect on the nature of their relationship to the Episcopal Church and to their obligations as a Christian community, the politics of Church leadership surely weighed on the recipients of the letter as well. Hartwell believes that many of the clergy on the board were willing to cross their Chairman, but not their Bishop.

By 1963, additionally, the landscape of the local Church community was changing: St. Andrew's was increasingly isolated, diverging not only from Church leadership but from other churches and schools. By the 1963-64 academic year, the Austin Independent School District would complete its official integration of all grades. For the first time, AISD would be officially integrated at the elementary level – the same grades that St. Andrew's served. In fact, by 1963, local newspapers identified St. Andrew's as the last segregated holdout among schools in the Austin area, at least in terms of official policy.<sup>130</sup> St. Stephens had moved towards integration in 1958, but in 1963 it reiterated and extended those first steps, expanding the decision to desegregate to the boarding portion of the school. John Hines, in his "Decision On St. Stephen's Hill" explained the decision as a moral one: "As an independent (though not 'private') school, St. Stephen's is not legally subject to the law of the land in this matter of race and admissions as are the public schools. St. Stephen's is subject to the 'law of grace' rather than the 'law of the law.' This law of grace places a more severe constraint upon the conscience of Christians than any constitutional interpretation possibly could."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> "St. Andrew's to Integrate," *The Austin Statesman*, 3 July 1963, Records of St. Andrew's School.

<sup>131</sup> John Hines, "Decision on St. Stephen's Hill," 1963, Records of St. Andrew's School.

This interpretation was increasingly prevalent among local churches, as well – including those that had helped to found the school. Although divisions still existed among congregations, an official stance against integration was becoming increasingly untenable, and local churches were accordingly making their position against St. Andrew’s clear. St. David’s, one of the founding parishes of the school, pressured St. Andrew’s to desegregate through a letter from its rector, Charles A. Sumners (also a member of the Saint Andrew’s Board).<sup>132</sup> On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1963, the Vestry of All Saints’ Parish did the same, officially petitioning the Board of St. Andrew’s to “follow the integration policies of the Austin Public School System effective this September 1963.” In a letter addressed to the Board of Trustees, the All Saints’ Vestry explained its position in both moral terms and as a matter of obedience to Church leadership.

“As vestryman of the Parish instrumental in founding the School, we feel keenly and have acted unanimously in our hope and desire that St. Andrews’ Episcopal School be mindful of its nature as a church school.

We feel that the letter recently published by the Presiding Bishop sets forth for all Christians, precepts and policies to be followed with regard to integration of any school or agency connected with the Church. Consequently, as a vestry of laymen, we emphatically feel, individually and corporately, that this should be done immediately.”<sup>133</sup>

The theme of Episcopal identity spans these messages from Church leadership and local parishes alike. As the Austin Episcopal community solidified its official stance on integration, these letters imply, St. Andrew’s would either have to sever its ties with the Episcopal Church, or fall in line. In his letter urging the board to desegregate, Charles Sumners points out the improbability of the school following through on the former option:

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<sup>132</sup> “St. Andrew’s to Integrate,” *The Austin Statesman*, 3 July 1963, Records of St. Andrew’s School.

<sup>133</sup> Vestry of All Saints’ Episcopal Church, letter to St. Andrew’s Board of Trustees, 20 June 1963, Records of St. Andrew’s School.



“It is conceivable that the Board by formal action could endeavor to disassociate the school from the Episcopal Church,” he writes, but it would be difficult, and he notes, contrary to the original intention of the school’s founding.<sup>134</sup> In a letter to the Board dated June 25, 1963, Ed Hartwell called a meeting “to discuss and take action to resolve two issues:” (1) the relation of this school to the Episcopal Church, and (2) the desegregation of the school.<sup>135</sup> In his phrasing of these objectives alone, Hartwell emphasizes the relationship between the two: unless St. Andrew’s was willing to radically change its nature as a church school, the Board would have to vote to desegregate.

Remarkably, even this groundswell of pressure from every direction did not make the integration of St. Andrew’s a foregone conclusion. Hartwell, in his final letter to the Board in advance of the meeting, attempted to bolster his case. With his letter, he included the presiding bishop’s Whitsuntide message, along with an editorial from Hines published in *The Texas Churchman* and Hines’ letter to the Board. Beyond these supporting documents, Hartwell’s letter reads as a final push in a struggle that has all but exhausted itself:

“I do not imply any coercion in getting you to decide one way or another, you know where I stand on both of these issues to be discussed. You must press for what you believe to be right, just as I must do the same. If the words of our presiding bishop and the bishop of our own diocese are not persuasive, then I can hardly expect to change your mind in these matters. All I do ask is that you carefully and prayerfully consider these things and honestly accept the full consequences of the options before us.”<sup>136</sup>

Hartwell certainly saw the meeting as his final effort as Chairman: he had already decided to resign his position if the Board did not vote in favor of integrating. In order to

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<sup>134</sup> Charles A. Summers, Letter to the St. Andrew’s School Board, 27 June 1963, Box 671 Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>135</sup> Ed Hartwell, Letter to the St. Andrew’s Board, 25 June 1963, Records of St. Andrew’s School.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

avoid what he saw as the mistakes of former pro-integration Board members, he did not intend to resign from the Board altogether. “But I would resign as president of the board,” he explained, “because I did not want to represent a school board that was not in keeping with the whole Christian milieu of God loves everybody.”<sup>137</sup> Despite this willingness for more decisive action, Hartwell’s final effort to integrate the Board demonstrate the same emphasis on decorum that Wright and Gee had emphasized two years earlier: no matter how frustrating the conflict became, Hartwell would remain careful and respectful in his efforts to persuade his fellow Board members. There would be no “coercion,” and certainly no more picketing – instead, under Hartwell’s tenure, there would be negotiation and individual soul-searching.

The final push to integrate the school, however, clearly strained the bonds of community among Board members. Charles Sumners’ letter hints at tensions, reprimanding the Board for “showing very little spiritual maturity” in their recent debates: “Here we are,” he writes, “all of old enough to know better, sitting as responsible Christians yet refusing to listen to one another.” Sumners states clearly his belief that being a Christian school involves obligations to a broader community: as the school debates integration, he writes, Board members must consider “our status as responsible citizens of the community in which we live.” But community, in Sumners’ letter, also takes on a narrower definition, as he articulates a need to tend to the health of St. Andrew’s. “I claim that it is more important for the progress of St. Andrew’s School and the whole movement of the Christian Faith,” Sumners writes, “for me really to understand the other members of the Board – understand and accept every single member as a person of honor and integrity – than it is for the Board

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<sup>137</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

to accept or deny desegregation.”<sup>138</sup> Sumners’ personal convictions on the matter of integration were clear, but his message here reiterates the importance of civility and mutual respect in the integration proceedings, and he privileges the needs of the internal St. Andrew’s community over their obligation to the broader Austin community. His words foreshadow the course St. Andrew’s would take: efforts to heal rifts in the community would ultimately foreclose more radical action on integration.

However, this moderate, respectful middle tactic did bear fruit: at the meeting on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1963, the St. Andrew’s board voted to integrate. Hartwell remembers little of the details of the meeting – “I was too durned busy getting through [it],” he explained.<sup>139</sup> In fact, the minutes suggest that there is relatively little to remember – the vote was cast quickly and by secret ballot, again indicating the Board’s awareness of the potential repercussions of being associated with a pro-segregation vote. Nevertheless, a few final dissenting voices do emerge from the minutes: R. W. Byram made one last suggestion that he “did not feel that having the admissions policy of the school made comparable to the Austin public schools or any other organization would be an advantage.” And before any vote could be cast, another Board member “questioned the advisability of voting on any motion that had not received a recommendation from any of the committees of the Board.” Nevertheless, the vote went forward, and with 18 members present, the motion to eliminate racial bars to the school passed 11 to 7.<sup>140</sup> Immediately afterwards, the Board became concerned with the question of publicity, voting *not* to officially notify parents of the decision, a move that indicates

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<sup>138</sup> Charles A. Sumners, Letter to the St. Andrew’s School Board, 27 June 1963, Box 671 Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>139</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

<sup>140</sup> Minutes of Special Meeting of St. Andrews Board, 2 July 1963, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

continued fears that families would leave the school in potentially large numbers. Byram also stated “that he also felt Bishop Hines should be asked not to publicize this action of the Board in any of his publications.”<sup>141</sup>

In his year as Chairman of the Board, Hartwell had managed to accomplish something that Buck’s more direct protest had failed to do. Ultimately, however, he would face similar consequences: Hartwell’s push to integrate came at a cost. “When that decision was made, I don’t know that I went to another meeting,” Hartwell remembers.<sup>142</sup> He did not continue to serve on the Board – nor, in fact, did he stay involved in the school. While not formally asked to leave, Hartwell felt that any political capital he held within the community had been expended in the struggle for integration. “I realized I was just not gonna be able to do much there,” Hartwell says.

Although he remained active in the Austin community until 1968, Hartwell’s career continued to suffer from his activism around integration. Hartwell helped to integrate the church school associated with St. George’s, where he was rector – a move that did not sit well with everyone in the congregation, he remembers. Hartwell was petitioned to resign as rector, but refused, with the support of the Bishop.<sup>143</sup> The “business at St. George’s” died down, but controversy surrounding Civil Rights was far from over. In 1967, Mayor Roy Akin asked the Austin Council of Churches to try to garner support for his Fair Housing Ordinance. Hartwell remembers calling a friend who he expected to support the ordinance. “Well Ed,” he was told, “my church is divided right down the middle.” Hartwell replied that

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

<sup>143</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview by Nathan Michaud, October 2013, audio recording.

his own congregation was divided, as well. “Yes, Ed,” his friend replied, “but you’ve got nothing to lose.” After a second, similar conversation, Hartwell concluded that he was “damaged goods” in the community. As to the assertion that he had “nothing to lose,” Hartwell remembers an indignant response: “I said, ‘Like hell I don’t – if I haven’t got the guts to stand up for what I believe in, I’ve got a lot to lose.’” But that, he remembers, “was not persuasive.”<sup>144</sup>

In 1968, Hartwell resigned his position at St. George’s, and left Austin to work in other communities and in different capacities. Today, he lives in Austin and is involved with St. James’, the former home of Louis Buck. He retains a clear vision of the moral imperatives stemming from a Christian identity. “I just can’t understand,” he says of both the 1960’s and of continued struggles for equality today. “People call themselves Christian – but [then say] God doesn’t really love everyone. How dumb can we be? How could we come up with an idea like that?”<sup>145</sup>

### **Interlude: The End of Desegregation**

The *Austin Statesman* article on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1963, announcing the integration of St. Andrew’s, struck a triumphant chord. “Announcement of the integration of St. Andrew’s makes 100 per cent the desegregation of Austin schools – public and church related,” the newspaper proclaims. The final paragraph of the article echoes the sense of closure in this narrative, reminding readers that “[t]he Austin School Board voted last month to remove all racial bars in the public schools. All but the four lower grades of the public schools had been removed

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<sup>144</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>145</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

earlier.”<sup>146</sup> The Austin Independent School District was sounding a similar note in its own press releases and communications to families. In a letter to parents dated May 10, 1966, Superintendent of Austin schools Irby C. Carruth wrote, “Our community adopted a school desegregation plan in 1955 which was completed in 1964. We no longer have separate schools for children of different races.”<sup>147</sup> Desegregation was over, Austinites were told, and it had been a success. Schools were integrated.

Such statements belie how little had actually been accomplished by official integration policies. The results of AISD’s “desegregation” were minimal: in 1964, only 14% of African-American students were enrolled in formerly all-white schools, and “most of Austin’s White schools remained untouched by these feeble unidirectional desegregation efforts.”<sup>148</sup> The comparatively quiet early 1960’s were, in reality, only a preface; Austin’s struggle to integrate was just beginning. In 1967, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) declared AISD in noncompliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, citing a failure to eliminate a dual school structure and to provide equal educational opportunities for minority students.<sup>149</sup> This declaration marked the start of what would ultimately be over a decade of a contentious back-and-forth struggle between the Austin Independent School District, the federal government, and the Austin community. Meaningful integration would be a longer and more controversial process than anyone had anticipated.

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<sup>146</sup> “St. Andrew’s to Integrate,” *The Austin Statesman*, 3 July 1963, Records of St. Andrew’s School.

<sup>147</sup> Irby Carruth, Letter to Parents, 10 May 1966. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center.

<sup>148</sup> Anna Victoria Wilson, *Oh, Do I Remember!*, p. 54.

<sup>149</sup> “Chronology of Desegregation Events in Austin.” *The Austin American-Statesman*, 14 May 1976. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

For Austin's private schools, similarly, an official policy of integration ultimately created remarkably little change – difficult though even this step had proven to be. The decision to change the admission policies of these private institutions did not necessarily correlate with any change at all in the student body. After the vote to integrate at St. Andrew's, one pro-integration Board member noted, perhaps intending to strike a conciliatory note, that “those who did not favor integration...should [not] be too concerned because probably only a few negroes would ever attend St. Andrews.”<sup>150</sup> He was not entirely wrong. It was three years before the first African-American student to enroll in the school, Kathy Norwood, entered the first grade, in the fall of 1966.<sup>151</sup> The official integration of the school, while an important milestone, proved to be a highly limited victory: the school had carved out a “middle way” with regards to race, one that allowed for integration without significant disruption to the community. As AISD descended into an increasingly drawn-out and contentious battle with the federal government, moreover, private schools like St. Andrew's were in a position to reap the benefits.

The controversy surrounding integration in the public schools – particularly as AISD implemented a steadily more comprehensive busing plan – radically altered the relationship of Austin's private schools to the question of desegregation. In the early 60's, private and church schools were, certainly, used by some families seeking to avoid integrating public schools. In these early years, however, integration simply had little impact on most white families in AISD. As this began to change in the 1970's with the advent of more disruptive

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<sup>150</sup> Minutes of Special Meeting of St. Andrews Board, 2 July 1963, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>151</sup> Lucy Nazro, letter to Charles Alan Wright, undated. Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

integration plans, white flight correspondingly increased. Accordingly, Austin's private schools would have to do more than revise their own admission policies; they would have to consider the nature of their obligation to the broader Austin community, their potential responses to white flight, and what differences – if any – existed between a church school and a private school.

In the 1960's, being a private school such as St. Stephen's or St. Andrew's meant responding to integration from a moral, rather than a legal, standpoint. As we have seen with the struggle to integrate St. Andrew's, whether or not a church school was living up to its name in 1963 was largely a question of official policy in regards to race. In the coming decades, however, the responsibilities of a Christian, private school to the community at large became much more complex.



## **PART 2: REDEFINING COMMUNITY IN THE ERA OF WHITE FLIGHT**

### **With All Deliberate Slowness: AISD in the 1970's**

The 1967 declaration by the Department of Health, Education, and Wellness that Austin was not in compliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act proved to be the opening salvo of a new stage in the struggle to integrate Austin. No longer concerned only with “freedom of choice” plans that implemented change only at a surface level, federal officials turned their attention to dismantling a dual structure of education in Austin. Over the course of the 1968-1969 school year, HEW repeatedly pushed for significant changes from the city. Austin officials hedged, resisting the adoption of federal recommendations, and instead submitted and resubmitted plans to HEW in which the district made only marginal changes and continued to insist on “voluntary integration.” AISD did extend its “freedom of choice” plan slightly – giving all black students in predominantly black areas the right to attend any school in district<sup>152</sup> -- and focused its efforts on teacher desegregation, setting a goal to have one white teacher for every black teacher in previously all-black schools.<sup>153</sup> While these goals met with limited success, the larger patterns of segregation in Austin remained unchanged. In July of 1969, HEW rejected AISD’s desegregation proposal for a third time, writing that “the amendments to the plan do not fulfill the Board’s affirmative legal duty to desegregate those

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<sup>152</sup> “Chronology of Desegregation Events in Austin.” *The Austin American-Statesman*, 14 May 1976. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>153</sup> “Five Decades of Social Change: A Timeline.” Desegregation in Austin. Austin History Center. [www.austinlibrary.com](http://www.austinlibrary.com)

schools which constitute visible vestiges of the dual school structure.”<sup>154</sup> Unless the school district made significant changes, HEW wrote, federal funds would be withheld. In 1970, the federal government filed suit against AISD.

The ensuing mess of lawsuits, court orders, and appeals that consumed the Austin Independent School District over the next decade highlighted the central points of contention in the desegregation debate in Austin. Austin ISD, the federal government, and Austin residents debated *what* Austin owed to its minority communities (and, in fact, which groups should be considered minorities),<sup>155</sup> how best to achieve desegregation, and who should have to bear the cost of the process. Early integration efforts placed most of the burden for desegregating on the African-American community; attempts to do otherwise met with fierce resistance from whites. In 1970, under court order, AISD implemented a new plan calling for the transfer of over 300 white and Latino students into L.C. Anderson High School, which served an African-American student body. Protest from the white community was immediate and widespread: amid scrambles to transfer, students submitting false home addresses, and parents threatening to keep students home or move them into private schools, only a small number of the new students zoned into Anderson actually showed up on the first day of school. The ensuing chaos caused U.S. District Judge Jack Roberts to renege on the order by September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1970, allowing students to return to their original school.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Leon Panetta, Letter to Austin Independent School District, published in *The Austin-American*, 14 July 1969. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>155</sup> The status of Latino students in Texas became incredibly contentious in the 1970's, as did their role in desegregation. For more on this, see Larry Cuban's *As Good as It Gets: What School Reform Brought to Austin*.

<sup>156</sup> "Integration Plan Here Scrapped," *American Statesman* 5 September 1970. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

In 1971, trying a new tactic, the Austin School Board voted to close three predominately black schools, including L.C. Anderson. The closure of Anderson, historically high-performing and a beloved pillar of the African-American community in Austin, provoked fierce resistance from African-American residents, but to no avail. In the same year, a busing plan for the district was implemented, primarily designed to transport these newly displaced African-American students into white and Latino schools. Busing began in August of 1971, and while a few “student confrontations” caused concern in the first few weeks (briefly causing the cancellation of classes at McCallum High School for an afternoon),<sup>157</sup> disturbances were not as severe or long-lasting as the community had feared. Nevertheless, alarm in the white community was widespread over even this minimal disruption.

Limited busing, however, was not enough to accomplish the desegregation of Austin schools. In the following years, a dizzying array of plans passed back and forth between AISD and the government. In this period, a clear pattern emerged: the Austin School Board attempted to make changes that would satisfy HEW without significantly disrupting life as it had been for white Austinites, while HEW – along with African-American and Mexican-American community groups in Austin – pushed for exactly this sort of disruption of the status quo. New high schools were proposed, argued over, and built. School districts were drawn and redrawn. 6<sup>th</sup> grade learning centers were opened and then closed. In 1979 – after nearly a decade of litigation -- the Austin Independent School District filed a “consent decree” with the federal government, capitulating to many of its requirements. Among other

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<sup>157</sup> “Chronology of Desegregation Events in Austin.” *The Austin American-Statesman*, 14 May 1976. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

measures, the agreement called for significant and widespread two-way busing.<sup>158</sup> Despite an uproar from the white community, the busing plan was implemented in August of 1980, signaling the beginning of the end for Austin’s legal battle with the government. In 1986, twenty years after Irby Carruth declared Austin schools integrated, and over thirty years after the *Brown v. Board* decision, AISD became a “unitary district,” meaning it was “free of any legal traces of discrimination.”<sup>159</sup>

This decades-long struggle to achieve integration, however, came at a high price. The African-American community had lost schools – L.C. Anderson, in particular – that were cornerstones of the community, in order to send their children into educational environments that were often discriminatory and hostile. The Austin Independent School District, moreover, like other districts around the country, experienced white flight, as white families fled in fear of both integration and of a public school system that appeared to be in chaos. In Austin, whites moved north and northwest – or, into private schools. In her examination of cross-over teachers during integration in Austin, education scholar Anna Wilson locates the beginning of significant white flight in 1971, the year that Austin ISD began minimal busing: “White Austinites reacted to the federal court order by following a pattern developed in other parts of the South. Bluntly, unable to accept the reality that their children could learn as well in integrated classrooms as in White classrooms, White began a process of urban emigration.”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Cuban, *As Good as It Gets*, p. 42.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, p. 44

<sup>160</sup> Wilson, *Oh, Do I Remember!*, p. 112.

## Church and State: Private Schools and White Flight

The beginnings of white flight in Austin are visible as early as 1970, when AISD attempted – and ultimately failed -- to integrate white students into L.C. Anderson High School. Newspaper articles gathering reactions to the plan contained interviews with residents like Dan Killen of Maplewood, who “said there was some talk in his community about parents sending their children to private schools.”<sup>161</sup> Other residents reported rumors “that parents are moving out, renting apartments elsewhere, and sending the children to other schools like Holy Cross, St. Stephens, and even setting up a private academy.”<sup>162</sup> Jan Miller of Norwood Road confirmed these rumors: “We find it very disappointing because economically it will be very hard on us,” Miller said in response to the plan. “We have our three children registered in private school. All of our neighbors, with the exception of two who cannot pay for this, have done the same.”<sup>163</sup> By 1971, concern over white flight was high enough for AISD’s assistant superintendent to issue a statement claiming that “desegregation problems apparently have not yet caused flight from Austin schools to private or nearby schools” --- although the official, in nearly the same breath, admitted that enrollment in private elementary schools was on the rise.<sup>164</sup>

These early movements towards private schools expanded into a full-blown trend by the late 1970’s. One 1976 article reported that “parents nervous about educational quality or future busing in the Austin school district have besieged area parochial schools with

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<sup>161</sup> “Residents Ponder Plan’s Effects,” *American-Statesman* 30 August 1970. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>162</sup> “Integration Plan,” *American-Statesman* 29 August 1970. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> “No ‘Flight’ yet by Pupils Here,” *The Austin American*, 11 November 1971, AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

registration requests and, in less than a month, nearly filled two new private schools opening in the fall.”<sup>165</sup> By 1977, School Board administrators were hopeful that white flight had “at least slowed and maybe even stabilized.”<sup>166</sup> In 1977-78, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported, AISD had seen a 1 percent decline in Anglo enrollment,” which was “about half of the drop experienced [the year before].” Between 1975 and 1976, the district lost 1,202 white students, “the largest single loss experienced in 20 years [in Austin].” While the 1977-78 numbers, according to AISD, were “relatively slight,” they did clearly indicate “a five to six year trend toward fewer Anglo students.”<sup>167</sup>

In response to these trends, Austin-area private schools went on the defensive. “Private school leaders deny existence of ‘white flight’ academies,” the *Austin American Statesman* reported in 1978, when a proposed IRS ruling that would eliminate tax-exempt status for segregated schools had private school principals scrambling to justify their demographics. In particular danger were schools that, while officially integrated, could produce only token minority enrollment, such as the Christian Heritage Academy, founded in 1975 by the Austin Bible Church. In 1978, the Academy had no minority students amongst its 30-member student body; in 1977, the school had one African-American student enrolled.<sup>168</sup> Tom Sicola, principal of Allandale Christian School, likewise struggled to explain his school’s enrollment: “although he agrees that his minority representation of one black and one Mexican American in an enrollment of 130 appears to be tokenism,” the *Austin*

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<sup>165</sup> Kathy Hayworth, “The Rush to Private Schools,” Newspaper unknown, 2 August 1976, AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>166</sup> Becky Brown, *The Austin American-Statesman*, 31 October 1977, AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Lee Kelly, “Private school leaders deny existence of ‘white flight’ academies,” *The Austin American-Statesman*, 17 December 1978. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

*American-Statesman* reported, “he denies that it is.” Sicola echoed the arguments of many private schools when he claimed that “they [minorities] have the choice to come, but we don’t have recruiting programs for anyone.” Many private school principals, likewise, formulated a new spin on an old argument when they suggested that “the fundamental issue raised by the IRS proposal is the separation of church and state rather than the furtherance of integration.”<sup>169</sup>

In the 1970’s, many church schools turned to a seemingly easy explanation for their boosts in enrollment: students turned to private schools not to avoid integration, but to seek out a Christian education that was simply unavailable in the public schools. Ann Grant, principal of Allandale Christian School in 1976, made just such an argument: “Not one of these parents has expressed any fear of busing,’ she said of the rapid enrollment in the new school. “These parents want their children in a school which stresses basic skills, and provides discipline and a Christian atmosphere.”<sup>170</sup> What it meant to provide a Christian education in this context, however, was an increasingly complicated question – one that prompted radically different responses from different school leaders. At stake was not just how private Christian schools lived out their values in their own enrollment figures, but what obligation they felt to support desegregation in the Austin community at large - and, accordingly, what kind of community they intended to be.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Hayworth, “The Rush to Private Schools,” Newspaper unknown, 2 August 1976.

### **A Matter of Convenience: St. Andrew's Expands**

Since the 1963 decision to integrate St. Andrew's, the school's institutional memory of the controversy surrounding desegregation had quickly disappeared. A list of "rules and procedures" for St. Andrew's dated September 1963, outlining the school's admissions procedures, makes no explicit mention of race, although it does articulate the school's right to "refuse admission to and to demand the immediate withdrawal of any student whose presence is considered detrimental either to the student or the school's best interest."<sup>171</sup> Early histories of the school make only passing references to any sort of trouble: "the school still has problems," a 1966 history of the school notes, "and probably will continue to have them. These are not financial problems alone. In a changing world a school, like we ourselves, must adjust to change. New ideas are advanced, new policies advocated." The history adopts a cautionary note in acknowledging these changes: "Some of these are good, some need more testing before they are adopted...The board and the staff are always open to consideration of these changes. What seems best today may not be wisest next year."<sup>172</sup> Beyond such fuzzy statements about changing times, the Board's records indicate little awareness of or preoccupation with the changing racial landscape in Austin or the school's own history in regards to those changes.

Part of this may have been a genuine sense that that the turmoil over integration was no longer a matter of great concern. The school's racial make-up had hardly changed.

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<sup>171</sup> "St. Andrew's Episcopal School: Rules and Procedures." September 1963. AF – Church Schools – C3200

<sup>172</sup> R. W. Byram with additions from Rev. John Logan, "The Origin and Present Nature of Saint Andrew's School, Or 'How we Got to Be, What We are Today,'" revised version of Byram's "Brief Background of St. Andrew's School," originally written for distribution on 10 October 1966. Records of St. Andrew's Episcopal School.



Ed Hartwell remembers that even at the height of controversy over the school's admission policies, he felt very few ripples at the level of daily school life. "The school was going well," Hartwell remembers, "it was the Board that was off-base." Hartwell does not remember discussing integration with families or teachers who, as far as he was aware, "did not get into the politics of the thing."<sup>173</sup> Hartwell's statements are interesting given the significant involvement of parents in 1960 and 1961; that he considered the faculty and parents uninvolved by 1963 suggests, perhaps, and intentional effort on the part of the Board to disengage from the broader community on the topic. Certainly, the Board was interested in making the controversy, as much as possible, a private matter – and in maintaining a public image of a serene community. A newspaper article published in 1961, in the midst of the controversy surrounding the school's segregated status, reinforces this perception. The article, entitled "A Day at St. Andrew's," describes a serene day in a community blissfully unaware of – or unconcerned with – the larger social issues in the Austin community:

"Mothers call a 'Happy Day' to their carpool children as they leave them at the front door; pupils visit in the corridor; a little blonde girl drops her armload of books, picks them up and drops them again; another greets her teacher with a bouquet."<sup>174</sup>

Whether or not St. Andrew's was, in fact, so untroubled by the question of integration, the school presented itself in both public and internal documents as distanced from the conflicts in the public system. A 1966 advertisement for the school in the *St. David's Messenger* goes so far as to promote a healthy and happy relationship with the local public schools: "Gladly admitting the excellence of our public school systems," the advertisement reads, "especially

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<sup>173</sup> Ed Hartwell, interview with author, Spring 2014, audio recording.

<sup>174</sup> Ernestine Wheelock, "A Day at St. Andrew's," *The American-Statesman*, 22 October 1961, Records of St. Andrew's Episcopal School.

in Austin, we yet may accept the values to be found in schools like St. Andrew's in which instruction in the Christian Faith is a part of the daily schedule..."<sup>175</sup> In such advertisements, St. Andrew's can be read as a harmonious counterpart to the public school system, not as a form of competition, and certainly not as an escape route for white families.

But as the public school system became increasingly embroiled in controversy, St. Andrew's, like many other Austin –area private schools, reaped the benefits. Enrollment at the school skyrocketed throughout the late 1960's and into the 1970's. In 1966, the school had 130 students. By 1974, the student body had nearly doubled – in the early 70's, the school boasted a "record enrollment" each year.<sup>176</sup> The growth occurred so suddenly that the school board struggled to accommodate the number of students. In 1971, with the families of 50 first graders interested in 25 second grade spots, the school expanded, adding a second section for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. In a letter sent out to parents explaining the decision, the school made no promises for future years, explaining, "We do not know if the demand for the first grade this year is a one-time phenomenon or represents an increased interest in private education with a religious foundation."<sup>177</sup> The boost in enrollment remained steady, and the school expanded to multiple sections of each grade over the coming years.

In its reflections on these record enrollment numbers, the School Board remained consistently vague about where these families were coming from, and why – but the school was highly aware of the potential for growth. In 1969, one board member spoke of "Austin's growth and the increased demand this placed on our schools," pointing out that "St.

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<sup>175</sup> "St. Andrew's." *St. David's Messenger*. 13 October 1966. Records of St. Andrew's School.

<sup>176</sup> Fundraising letter from the Board of St. Andrew's, 30 November 1974, Records of St. Andrew's School.

<sup>177</sup> Letter to Parents. 1971. Records of St. Andrew's School.

Andrew's will be affected and will have to meet these demands in one of several ways: 1) enlarge, or 2) limit enrollment by raising tuition or raising entrance requirements.”<sup>178</sup> In a report on this growth, written by none other than Charles Alan Wright, public schools are mentioned, but only in terms of structural changes: “The public schools are now moving away from the traditional junior high school concept in the direction of including 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the high schools and, ultimately, of ‘middle schools’ covering the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. It is possible that this plan would create sufficient demand to fill a 7<sup>th</sup> and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Andrew’s...”<sup>179</sup> These shifts in the public system were directly related to desegregation – AISD tinkered repeatedly with the structure of middle schools as part of the district’s efforts to reach a desegregation agreement with HEW – but the tinkering, in Wright’s report, is divorced from the desegregation. That the bump in enrollment might be only the temporary result of present circumstances, however, was clearly on the mind of board members. Wright’s report recommends delaying any expansion to a middle school, cautioning that “[n]o one can say with any assurance whether the heightened interest in St. Andrew’s is a permanent phenomenon or whether it will pass away.”<sup>180</sup>

Wright’s 1971 Report of the Special Committee on Future Development of St. Andrew’s School ends with a warning: “a permanent expansion of the school would alter the basic character of the school. Such a change should not be made until the demand for it is

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<sup>178</sup> Notes from St. Andrew’s Parent Group Meeting, 6 October 1969, Records of St. Andrew’s School.

<sup>179</sup> Report of the Special Committee on Future Development of St. Andrew’s School, 4 October 1971, Records of St. Andrew’s School.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

better established than it presently is.”<sup>181</sup> And as the school continued to grow, in fact, the character of the school did face pressure. William Gammon, a St. Andrew’s parent at the time, remembers the growth that accompanied court-ordered busing. “The school grew enormously during that period and has never really retraced from that,” Gammon recalls. Many of the families that joined the school were West Austin families, living close to the school. “So you could say it was a matter of convenience, but it had always been a matter of convenience,” Gammon recalls. “It just never mattered until busing began.” Of the influx of new families joining St. Andrew’s, Gammon remembers a bit of a shift in school culture. “We were looking for an Episcopal education, daily chapel, a certain ethos...” he argued. “The motivation on the part of [the new] parents was different.”<sup>182</sup> Whether these parents joined the school as a direct attempt to avoid integration, or out of a broader concern about the stability of the public school system, they were not necessarily invested in a Christian education. Gammon remembers “some pushback on daily chapel, on worship, on teaching styles...there were social outcomes because of that.”<sup>183</sup> While the growth of St. Andrew’s likely would have engendered changes in the school community regardless of timing, the fact that this growth was interconnected with desegregation indicates a larger shift in the school’s sense of self and its relationship to the Austin community.

To flatly condemn St. Andrew’s for capitalizing on the growth of the 1970’s would be an oversimplification. St. Andrew’s had good reason to accept these new families: as Wright had noted in the early 60’s, the school faced longstanding financial difficulties. A

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<sup>181</sup> Report of the Special Committee on Future Development of St. Andrew’s School, 4 October 1971, Records of St. Andrew’s School.

<sup>182</sup> William Gammon, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

growing student body meant the solution to these troubles; moreover, the possibility of expanding in size and even, one day, adding a middle school was clearly a genuinely exciting possibility for the Board. Likewise, the motivation of the families leaving the public school system shouldn't necessarily be attributed solely to racism. Even a quick review of newspaper coverage of AISD in the 1970's produces a sense of a school system in chaos. As in other parts of the country, many white parents had a complex response to the available educational options for their children in the context of widespread busing. Writing of the busing protests in Boston, Ronald Formisano notes that many of those affected were "average people [who] were caught in a no man's land, struggling with the dictates of common decency, common sense, and uncommon demands on their concern for their own self-interest and the well-being of their children."<sup>184</sup> Widespread busing, moreover, was controversial across the racial and political spectrum; the moral response to busing was never as clear-cut for most Americans as the need to integrate. Formisano notes that since World War II, "the American public has moved increasingly towards acceptance in principle of an integrated society, ...[But] as the busing controversy heated up, support for specific policies to implement school desegregation dropped sharply..."<sup>185</sup> Keeping these complexities in mind does not discount the role of racism in anti-busing sentiment; however, the controversy surrounding busing made it possible for schools like St. Andrew's to interpret white flight as a logistical, rather than a moral issue.

However, growth was not the only option for St. Andrew's. In contrast, a number of Austin Catholic schools responded quite differently to the turmoil in the public schools. A

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<sup>184</sup> Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*, p. xii.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

1976 letter to the Catholic parents of Austin from the Austin Bishop articulated a clear message in support of integration. “Change of whatever kind is never easy,” the letter states. “...We realize that we will all have to adjust, possibly at great personal inconvenience. Justice through the courts demands such a conversion from all of us, and its demands are immediate.”<sup>186</sup> In response to this sort of message from Church leadership, schools like St. Ignatius froze enrollment temporarily. In an interview with *The Austin American-Statesman*, principal Wayne Bose explained his position: “‘We got hundreds of calls,’ Bose said, from parents who wanted to transfer their children out of public schools into St. Ignatius, ‘and we told them the reasons why (their youngsters were refused admittance). Christian schools should be leaders in promoting integration.’”<sup>187</sup> In 1979, the Roman Catholic Diocese took more comprehensive action, freezing enrollment in five Austin schools “to ensure they don’t become havens for white flight.”<sup>188</sup>

If any such action was ever considered by Austin Episcopal schools, no record of it exists. But the response by the Catholic Diocese of Austin calls to mind a message from John Hines in the previous decade. In his “Decision on St. Stephen’s Hill,” Hines insisted on the difference between a private school and a church school:

“Even though a school like St. Stephen’s, anchored in the Judeo-Christian historical revelation, is independent of certain legal coercion, it is not a ‘private’ school because there is nothing private about Creation in God’s name, nothing private about the Incarnation, nothing private about the Cross and the Resurrection. And to help boys and girls equip themselves intellectually and spiritually to live in the world where this

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<sup>186</sup> Letter from the Bishop of Austin, 15 July 1976, . AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>187</sup> “Private school leaders deny existence of ‘white flight’ academies,” *Austin American-Statesman*, 17 Dec 1978. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

<sup>188</sup> Lee Kelly, “Catholics freeze enrollment of schools,” *American-Statesman*, 19 December 1979. AF Segregation S1700, Austin History Center, Austin, TX.

is true is the high privilege and rewarding responsibility of Trustees, parents, and others of the Christian-concerned alike.”<sup>189</sup>

Hines’ statement emphasizes the public responsibilities of a Christian ethic of living – an ethic that requires obligations to the community, and obligations to Christian morality. The growth of St. Andrew’s in the 1970’s required respecting the private decisions of individual families leaving the public system, and a privileging of the school’s duty to its own interests over their ties to the Austin community at large. In contrast to Hines’ vision of Christian schools with a radically public vision, St. Andrew’s increasingly defined itself as a community that looked inward: the sweeping moral debates of the 1960’s had been replaced by primarily logistical and financial concerns.

The school had not completely turned its back on the decision to integrate. Rather, since the enrollment of the first African-American student in 1966, St. Andrew’s continued to take slow and hesitating steps towards increased integration. In 1972, the school officially crafted its first statement on admissions policy, formally articulating that race would not be considered a factor. In the late 70’s, the Board revised its financial aid and scholarship policies to increase the school’s ability to recruit low-income and minority students; several scholarships were specifically created for minority students. Between 1975 and 1981, the school graduated one black student in every year save two.<sup>190</sup> These low numbers contributed to the school’s reputation even in the private school community: *A Texas Monthly* Guide to Private Schools from the late 70’s notes that at St. Andrew’s, “minority students are accepted, but their numbers are insignificant.” In contrast, in its profile of St. Stephen’s, the

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<sup>189</sup> John Hines, “Decision on St. Stephen’s Hill,” 1963, Records of St. Andrew’s School.

<sup>190</sup> Charles Alan Wright, “Minority Enrollment,” Report filed 1981, Box 671, Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

magazine reports that minority students make up 10% of the school's 240 students, and that "the school actively seeks minority and disadvantaged students and gives them full scholarships."<sup>191</sup>

Paul O'Neal Miles, one of the first African-American students to attend the school, entered 1<sup>st</sup> grade in 1972 and graduated 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 1979 before continuing on to St. Stephen's. Miles' mother, raised in New Orleans, had attended private schools and pushed for her son to have the same education. Miles' mother belonged to St. James' Episcopal Church, the African-American congregation that had picketed St. Andrew's 10 years before, and the home of the Hicks, the first African-American family to attempt to integrate the school. The decision of Miles' family to enroll their son in the school perhaps indicates that the tension between the two communities was forgotten, although simple logistics might have driven the decision, as well – St. Andrew's was still the only Episcopal elementary school in town. Certainly, Miles' experience indicates that St. Andrew's had changed since the early 1960's: his years at St. Andrew's were, as he remembers them, relatively unremarkable. Despite a sense of geographic isolation – Miles grew up in east Austin, and the commute to school was sometimes difficult -- he had friends in school, and he remembers no incidents surrounding his race. Race, rather, was simply not talked about: "It wasn't like today where you talk about your background or anything like that," he says. "That just wasn't done."<sup>192</sup>

Even if Miles had experienced difficulty as one of the few African-Americans in the school, he believes, he would have been encouraged by his family to stick with St. Andrew's. Miles' father, one of the first students to integrate the University of Texas, had faced what

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<sup>191</sup> "TexasMonthly's Guide to Private Schools." *Texas Monthly*. N.D. Records of St. Andrew's Episcopal School.

<sup>192</sup> Paul Miles, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.



Miles calls “genuinely bad experiences,” and Miles had learned lessons from his father’s history: “There was a sense at the time that ‘this is natural, this is what we’re going through, and you’ll get through it,’” Miles remembers. After all, he asserted, “Austin is not Little Rock – as bad as it was going to be, once you’re in the door, people tended to be ok.” In Miles’ experience, this proved true. St. Andrew’s in the 1970’s might not have been a very diverse place, but neither was it turbulent -- conversations around race and racial justice had simply disappeared. This was especially true at St. Andrew’s. Miles remembers that at St. Stephen’s, in contrast, there was “more of a discussion of race,” although he suggests that this could be attributed to the changing times or to the fact that such discussions were more age-appropriate for a middle school student.<sup>193</sup>

On the part of the Board, the most heated discussions around race came only in the context of the proposed IRS rulings, which would require them to justify their minority enrollment numbers. In 1978, the Board agreed to abide by IRS guidelines for dealing with minority enrollment. The minutes note, “Although the Board did not feel that the school had practiced racial discrimination, it should make every effort to avoid the appearance of discrimination and to come into compliance with the spirit of the proposed guidelines.”<sup>194</sup> This incredibly limited vision of integration fits into a national narrative of retreat from the more expansive goals of the Civil Rights era by the end of the 1970’s. Interestingly, some of the heroes of St. Andrew’s integration were also the architects of this weakening of federally mandated desegregation. In 1973, Charles Alan Wright successfully defended San Antonio before the Supreme Court in *San Antonio v. Rodriguez*. At the heart of the case lay what

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Minutes of the St. Andrew’s Board meeting, 24 October 197, Box 672 Folder 1, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas Law School.

James Patterson calls “a fundamentally inegalitarian aspect of American educational practice: public schools were supported primarily by local property taxes and therefore differed greatly in the levels of their financing.”<sup>195</sup> Wright successfully argued that while the inequalities in spending in San Antonio were surely unjust, they were a matter of local control and could not be mediated by the federal government. Patterson calls this decision “the key constitutional test on the issue [of equality of opportunity of education].” After *San Antonio v. Rodriguez*, Patterson continues, the Supreme Court “avoided judicial activism on racial and educational matters.”<sup>196</sup>

Charles Alan Wright’s role on this case is consistent with his beliefs about the limits of federal government. In his legal work as well as his involvement at St. Andrew’s, Wright consistently opposed what he saw as federal oversteps into matters of local control and individual conscience; that he would therefore fight federal control of school funding, despite his personal convictions on issues of educational inequality, should come as no surprise. But the complex role of Wright in the narrative of desegregation helps to illuminate some of the contradictions in the history of St. Andrew’s. Wright’s personal moral convictions about minority enrollment never waned, but he seemed to find little contradiction between these beliefs and the growth of the school in the 1970’s. Perhaps more importantly, at the end of the 1970’s, the fire was gone from the fight in the broader community, which preferred to heal its own wounds and avoid further trouble with the law. At the end of the decade, St. Andrew’s had become a private school with marginally higher minority enrollment, rather than a school that engaged meaningfully with issues of racial equality, or that grappled

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<sup>195</sup> James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, p. 177.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

sincerely with what it meant to be part of the Austin community during a period of such turmoil.

### **Our Job is Seed Planting: St. Andrew's in the 1980's**

In late 1980, Charles Alan Wright agreed to put together a report on minority enrollment at St. Andrew's. Since his involvement in the integration struggles of the early 1960's, Wright had served on the Board of the school in various capacities, including two terms as Chairman in 1973-74 and 1979-80. Accepting the request to complete the report, Wright wrote a letter to Lucy Nazro, incoming head of the school, along with Bob Vaden, outgoing head, and Dean Towner, head of St. Stephen's. The letter makes clear his continued dedication to integration as well as his continued belief in local government. In 1980, the legal impetus to care about desegregation, Wright admits, was "fading," as the IRS proposal to remove tax-exempt status from private schools with token minority enrollment seemed increasingly less likely. "I am pleased about that," Wright notes in the letter, "and not just for St. Andrew's. I too would like to get at the schools that really are 'segregation academies,' but I think that settling public policy in a difficult and sensitive area such as that is for the people we have elected to make laws for us and not for the bureaucrats at the Internal Revenue System." The easing of legal pressures, however, only highlighted the moral necessity of continued attention to the question of integration for Wright. He continues:

"No election...can change my commitment – and the commitment of St. Andrew's Episcopal School – to the notion that racial separation is a great evil and that a school

that exists only to serve Christ has a special responsibility to minister to all his children of whatever color.”<sup>197</sup>

Wright’s incredibly detailed report, submitted in 1981, spans the history of the school, the current state of minority enrollment, strategies employed by other private schools in the region, recommendations from the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), and finally, Wright’s own recommendations moving forward for St. Andrew’s. Perhaps most tellingly, Wright includes a section entitled “Why Should St. Andrew’s Care?” After once again dismissing the threat from the IRS, Wright stresses the educational importance – for students of all races – of exposure to diversity. His closing argument, however, rests in Episcopal identity. “[St. Andrew’s] is not the West Austin Day School; it is St. Andrew’s Episcopal School,” Wright asserts. He then repeats the sentence included in his letter to the Nazro, Vaden, and Towner: “A school that exists only to serve Christ has a special responsibility to minister to all His children of whatever color.”<sup>198</sup> Having reiterated an Episcopal school’s fundamental obligation to the broader community, Wright lays out several direct recommendations for action: the Board should reaffirm its commitment to racial diversity, and actively prioritize race in admissions; the school should seek out minority adults as teachers, administrators, and trustees;<sup>199</sup> and finally, the school should be “sensitive to see that minority students are not merely admitted but fully accepted.” As part of this effort, Wright notes, the school must not act “as if only a single culture is important. Black

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<sup>197</sup> Charles Alan Wright, letter to Lucy Nazro, Bob Vaden, and Dean Towner, 12 November 1980, Box 671 Folder 6, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>198</sup> Wright, Minority Enrollment Report.

<sup>199</sup> Interestingly, Wright adds a complication to this recommendation, pointing out that the “problem of minority teachers is particularly troubling, since a good case can be made that so long as the number of qualified teachers is limited, they can have greater influence in the public schools than at a private school.”

and brown history, art, music, and the like should take a place along with those from the white experience.”<sup>200</sup>

These recommendations go far beyond the limited definition of integration accepted by the Board in the 1970’s – and that the report was commissioned at all demonstrates the school’s renewed commitment to diversifying its student body. Over the course of the 1980’s, indeed, the school would make a significant shift in its commitment to diversity and in its rhetoric about multiculturalism. A school document from 1987 entitled “State of School” lays out a comparison between St. Andrew’s in 1980 and 1987. In 1980, at the height of busing in AISD, St. Andrew’s had an enrollment of 298 students in grades 1-6. Of these, 7 students are listed as “minority.” 14 scholarships were awarded, for a grand total of \$8,000. In 1987, by contrast, the school served 364 students in grades 1-8, counted a minority enrollment of 24, and awarded 40 scholarships amounting to \$53,000.<sup>201</sup> In the interim years, the school came under new leadership in the form of Lucy Nazro, who became head of school in 1980 and would remain in this position until 2012. Under Nazro, St. Andrew’s expanded to include a middle school and, in the early 2000’s, a high school. While continuing the school’s growth, Nazro also steered a new course with regards to minority enrollment. She is credited with developing a more expansive recruitment network for minority students through tapping into a wider range of local parishes.<sup>202</sup> While the increased number of minority students in the school between 1980 and 1987 is notable, an even starker contrast lies in the change in the school’s message on the topic of diversity.

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<sup>200</sup> Charles Alan Wright, Minority Enrollment Report.

<sup>201</sup> “State of School – 1987,” St. Andrew’s Episcopal School, AF – Church Schools – C3200, Austin History Center, Austin, Texas.

<sup>202</sup> William Gammon, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

A 1987 National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES) brochure for St. Andrew's paints a radically different picture than the school's early advertisements. The front cover of the brochure bears the message "Episcopal Schools Bring Children to God and God's Love to Children" below an image of a group of smiling, multiracial children. The contents of the brochure highlight the progress of St. Andrew's in regard to minority enrollment. "We believe that we are enriched by the diversity of our student body and have actively recruited minority students for the school," the brochure proclaims. Even more strongly, this document highlights the relationship between St. Andrew's and the broader community, both religious and secular. "Our job is seed planting," the brochure states. "We are planting a seed that someday will flourish in your churches." Furthermore, "[b]ecause we truly believe that we cannot teach the Gospel without living it, community and school service is an integral part of the curriculum at St. Andrew's. This includes regular trips to nursing, homes, day-care centers, and food banks."<sup>203</sup>

These documents highlight a newly invigorated interest in diversity, seen by the early 1980's as a crucial component of any competitive independent school. Furthermore, these new messages coming from St. Andrew's are rooted in a definition of a church school as a space that lives out its Gospel through its relationship with the community. Certainly, St. Andrew's was entering a new era – an era that, in part, required confronting the school's history in the broader community. In 1988, St. Andrew's commissioned the Report of 35, a wide-ranging reflection on the school and its priorities moving forward. The report acknowledged that "St. Andrew's has enjoyed unusually great demand for admission during

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<sup>203</sup> Episcopal Schools Bring Children to God and God's Love to Children." NAES advertising brochure. 1987, AF – Church Schools – C3200, Austin History Center, Austin, Texas.

the past ten years, some of which has surely been due to instability in AISD. With the current economic downtrend, and the return by AISD to the concept of neighborhood schools, St. Andrew's is looking at a time when it must do a better job of selling itself." The report further acknowledges the school's "image problem," noting that the school has been labeled "elitist." In regards to diversity, the report sets an ambitious goal: by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school's founding, the report strives to be a school that "reflects the diversity of the Austin community."<sup>204</sup>

The renewed interest in the broader Austin community and in minority enrollment by the late 1980's seems to strike a celebratory note— but set against a local and national backdrop, the narrative is less heartening. In his study of school reform in Austin, Larry Cuban notes that in Austin public schools, any reduction in segregation quickly began to reverse itself after 1986, when court-ordered busing ended. "After 1986, boards and superintendents continued to make rhetorical commitments to ethnic and racial diversity in schools," Cuban writes, but the focus of policy had now shifted towards achieving excellence within neighborhood schools, often with high levels of segregation.<sup>205</sup> According to one study, in 1986 six schools in AISD enrolled more than 80% minority students; in 1987, after the district adopted a new race-blind student assignment plan, the number rose to 19. Between 1987 and 2000, this study asserts, white-black segregation in AISD increased by 50%.<sup>206</sup> Nationwide, the trends are even starker. In *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of*

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<sup>204</sup> Report of 35, 10 September 1988, Box 671, Folder 1, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law.

<sup>205</sup> Larry Cuban, *As Good As It Gets*, pp. 45-47.

<sup>206</sup> Sean Reardon, and John Yun, "Integrating Neighborhoods, Segregating Schools," in *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* edited by John Charles Boger and Gary Orfield (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), p. 64.

*Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*, Derrick Bell cites a 2003 Harvard Civil Rights Project study which found that as of the 2000-2001 school year, white students, on average, attended schools where 80 percent of the student body was white. Minority students, meanwhile, “were increasingly attending schools that were virtually nonwhite. Quite often, devastating poverty, limited resources, and various social and health problems are concentrated in these schools. The nation’s largest city schools are, almost without exception, overwhelmingly nonwhite.”<sup>207</sup>

For some historians, the long-term failings of *Brown* to address segregation are cause to question the efficacy of the court decision itself, and in some cases, to rethink the goal of integration in education. Revisionist historians Derrick Bell and Michael Klarman, for example, have argued that *Brown v. Board*’s limited successes can be attributed not to the court decision itself but to the backlash it caused among southern communities – which, in turn, sparked its own backlash of liberal, pro-integration sentiment.<sup>208</sup> For Klarman and Bell, *Brown* and *Brown II* may have hampered real success in desegregation and distracted the nation from other ways of achieving equality in education. Others, such as Tony Badger, continue to argue that while “it is right to question the glib celebrations of the *Brown* decision, ... there is a danger in downplaying the significance of *Brown*.” Racial change in the South, Badger argues, did not come about voluntarily but because of pressure on southern

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<sup>207</sup> Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants*, p. 127.

<sup>208</sup> See Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants*, or Michael Klarman’s essay “Why Massive Resistance?” in Clive Webb’s *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction* (Oxford University Press, 2005).



society from within and without – in helping to create that pressure, Badger asserts, *Brown* was “crucial.”<sup>209</sup>

Both sides of the debate, however, agree that a large part of the resegregation of the school system in the wake of the Civil Rights era can be attributed to two causes: white retreat to the suburbs and to private spaces, and an intransigent system of white privilege rooted far more deeply in the structures of American society than many Civil Rights activists had first assumed. Derrick Bell asks, “What are the motivations, the invisible forces, that move both individuals and groups to function so predictably across time and a wide variety of conditions as to ensure a subordinate role for all but a fortunate few of those Americans who are not white? ... The symbols change and the society sometimes even accepts standards such as ‘equal opportunity’ that civil rights advocates have urged on it, but somehow in practice such standards serve to strengthen not weaken the subordinate status of African Americans.”<sup>210</sup>

Schools like St. Andrew’s opened their doors to students of color, but through the same process, they solidified their borders as exclusive, private spaces, inaccessible to most and fundamentally distinct from the public system. Now officially integrated and actively seeking increased diversity, these schools receive fewer questions about the deeper structures of privilege and seclusion they maintain: “the protection accorded to the affluent is simply assumed in American society,” writes Ronald Formisano, “as if it is part of the natural order.”<sup>211</sup> Indeed, St. Andrew’s – at the time that I attended the school, and as it stands today

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<sup>209</sup> Tony Badger, “Brown and Backlash,” in *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction*, p. 52.

<sup>210</sup> Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants*, p. 77.

<sup>211</sup> Ronald Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*, p. 238

– is a testament to Formisano’s words. The school is a close-knit community, full of and caring adults and bright students. The insularity of this community, however, remains unquestioned. Students connect to the broader Austin community periodically through sports or community service; there is little sense, however, of a shared world – and even less of a shared history.

## EPILOGUE: DESEGREGATION IN ST. ANDREW'S MEMORY

Fifty years after the St. Andrew's Board voted to desegregate, the school spans two campuses, serving nearly 900 students in grades 1-12. Tuition costs up to \$22,000. The school boasts a student body that is 24% diverse (the school does not publicly break down the number beyond this figure, which broadly represents non-white students) and continually identifies the recruitment and retention of an increasingly diverse student body and faculty as a priority in its strategic plan.<sup>212</sup> As part of these efforts, the school employs a full time Director of Diversity, and implements a variety of diversity-related initiatives with students, parents, and faculty. The school actively seeks a relationship with the larger Austin community, although that relationship is largely built on service: "Service to the greater community is at the heart of everything we do," the school's website proclaims. "It is just the nature of our community and it is at the center of being an Episcopal school – *we guide and challenge all who attend our schools to build lives of genuine meaning, purpose, and service in the world they will inherit.*"<sup>213</sup> Diversity, moral development, and service to the wider community are at the center of the St. Andrew's definition of what it means to be an Episcopal school today. And especially since a major conflict in the school over issues of gay rights,<sup>214</sup> the school has gained a reputation as a comparatively progressive space in the private schools of Texas.

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<sup>212</sup> "Diversity," St. Andrew's Episcopal School, [www.sasaustin.org](http://www.sasaustin.org).

<sup>213</sup> "Scholar – Artist – Athlete – Servant.," S. Andrew's Episcopal School, [www.sasaustin.org](http://www.sasaustin.org).

<sup>214</sup> In 2005, St. Andrew's experienced a significant conflict sparked by the inclusion of *Brokeback Mountain* in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade English curriculum, a text which a group of conservative parents took issue with because of its frank depiction of gay sex. The controversy grew into a larger conflict over the school's messages about homosexuality – which some parents found to be too liberal – and, once again, raised the

And yet, as R.W. Byram's early history of the school states, "we learn a lot about who we are today, as we study the past out of which we sprang."<sup>215</sup> The core principles of St. Andrew's today exist in a historical vacuum: there is little sense of where these values came from, or how they developed. Little narrative exists at all in community memory at St. Andrew's of the school as a historical institution, developing in a particular social and historical context in ways that have shaped both the school and its relationship to Austin more broadly, and minority communities in particular. In some cases, the more unpleasant parts of this history have been written out altogether. In 1992, Alice Lee McKenna, a longtime member of the St. Andrew's community, wrote a short history of the school, *The Gift and the Blessing*. Drawing heavily from Charles Alan Wright's Minority Enrollment Report, McKenna devotes a short but frank chapter to integration. The chapter ends on a triumphant note – "Since 1966, St. Andrew's has actively sought minority students by visiting kindergartens, by promoting scholarships, and by personal recruitment efforts by the Board and parents" – but acknowledges the school's historical failings on the issue of race.<sup>216</sup> A 2013 school history written by former headmistress Lucy Nazro makes little mention of racial controversies, although the book does briefly acknowledge that "one of the first

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question of what it means to be a Christian school. Lucy Nazro, head of the school at the time, defended the school's curriculum and the school's message on homosexuality. As a result, several conservative families withdrew their students from the school. For more on this conflict, see John Spong's article, "The Good Book and the Bad Book," in *Texas Monthly*, September 2006.

<sup>215</sup> R. W. Byram with additions from Rev. John Logan, "The Origin and Present Nature of Saint Andrew's School, Or 'How we Got to Be, What We are Today,'" revised version of Byram's "Brief Background of St. Andrew's School," 10 October 1966. Records of St. Andrew's Episcopal School.

<sup>216</sup> Alice Lee McKenna. *The Gift and the Blessing: A History of St. Andrew's Episcopal School*, 1992, Box 671, Folder 4, Charles Alan Wright Papers, Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas, Austin.

difficult decisions facing the school was integration.”<sup>217</sup> In contrast, the more palatable history of St. Stephen’s is part of student lore – or was, at least, when Paul Miles attended the school. Miles attests that the “myth of the school” – that St. Stephen’s “was committed early and always had been committed to integration” – is something you “learn by being there.”<sup>218</sup>

St. Andrew’s students do, of course, learn a history of desegregation in their school curriculum. Themes from the Civil Rights era are introduced in the elementary school; more rigorous study starts in the middle school. Students take U.S. history in seventh and eighth grades, and again in eleventh grade. In their junior year, students examine the *Brown v. Board* ruling and the Little Rock Nine crisis in depth. History teachers focus on social movements and on legal history, devoting entire lessons to the study of the *Brown v. Board* court cases or the implications of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The story is a national one, dipping into Little Rock only momentarily as a case study. Teachers do, however, work to create curriculum that will pull students in to this history, crafting lessons and questions that ask students to confront their own, personal relationship to larger historical narratives. They share their own experiences with segregation, ask students to make connections between the past and the present, and try to bring to life the individuals behind major cases like *Brown v. Board*. Eleventh grade history teacher Courtney Itson uses GoogleEarth with her students to trace the distance of the school commutes that sparked the *Brown v. Board* decision, discusses her experiences going to school in Memphis with students, and asks them to

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<sup>217</sup> Lucy Collins Nazro and Mary Ann Frishman, *Saint Andrew’s Episcopal School: A Gift to Our Children* (Austin: St. Andrew’s Episcopal School Development Office, 2013).

<sup>218</sup> Paul Miles, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

discuss present-day segregation in Austin.<sup>219</sup> History teacher Todd Stephenson shares his own stories of raising kids in Louisville, under heavy desegregation orders at the time.<sup>220</sup>

Themes from the history curriculum are reinforced in English classes, where students delve into questions of race, justice, and morality, and explore a more personal, less abstract version of history. The eleventh grade year is built around a humanities model – literature in English is intended to correspond to lessons in History. Students confront race directly at several points in the curriculum, including a unit on *The Bluest Eye*. As they study the Civil Rights Era, students read James Baldwin’s *Notes on a Native Son*, excerpts from the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Eudora Welty’s “Where is the Voice Coming From,” a short story about the assassination of Medgar Evers, narrated by the assassin. Eleventh grade English teacher John Works reports, “I tell them at the beginning of the year, history is sort of abstract – you know, 97 children were killed. And literature is about *one* of the children who were killed, and this is about *one* murder that took place in all those years of bloodshed that should be etched in their memory.”<sup>221</sup> Eighth grade students read *To Kill a Mockingbird* as part of a year-long unit on questions of justice and morality, and are explicitly encouraged to consider individual responsibility in the face of evil. A quote on the board of the classroom reminds students of this theme: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.”<sup>222</sup>

In general, teachers report the difficulty of asking St. Andrew’s students to engage deeply in thinking about something they have so little experience with. Despite the school’s

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<sup>219</sup> Courtney Itson, interview with author, Spring 2014. Transcribed.

<sup>220</sup> Todd Stephenson, interview with author, Spring 2014, transcribed.

<sup>221</sup> John Works, Interview with Author, Spring 2014, Transcribed.

<sup>222</sup> Elizabeth Marten, Interview with Author, Spring 2014, Transcribed.

drastically improved diversity statistics, the majority of students in an eleventh grade History or English classroom are still white and wealthy. These demographics are, of course, the products of the school's history, too. One teacher of eleventh grade History wondered if students would feel connected to the school's own history, if they learned it, or if the St. Andrew's of fifty years ago would feel as foreign as Little Rock to today's students.<sup>223</sup> An eleventh grade English teacher, likewise, suggested that there are real limits to students' ability to engage with curriculum around race given the institutional and social structures they have grown up in. "[T]hey don't think of themselves as racist," he says, "and they don't think of their world as anything but the normal world."<sup>224</sup> Teachers are also aware of the limits of their own knowledge. "I don't think they get it," one eleventh grade History teacher concluded. "I don't think *I* get it. You know? I went to Hockaday in Dallas. What do I know?"<sup>225</sup>

In particular, students struggle to imagine history's villains. Eleventh grade History teacher Gustavo Garza reports, "What the kids respond to more isn't the civil rights leaders or the advocates; they're always more stunned by the people who are protesting against them."<sup>226</sup> Eighth grade English teacher Elizabeth Martens sees similar patterns in her classroom: "for each generation ... they get farther and father removed from any kind of understanding... I mean, my boys, they just [ask], 'Why would anyone look at a black person differently?' – I mean, they just don't get it." Maybe, Martens suggests, this bewilderment

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<sup>223</sup> Todd Stephenson, Interview with author, Spring 2014, Transcribed.

<sup>224</sup> John Works, Interview with author, Spring 2014, Transcribed.

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Courtney Itson. Hockaday, in Dallas, is a prestigious private girls' school, founded in 1913.

<sup>226</sup> Gustavo Garza, Interview with author, Spring 2014, Transcribed.

has everything to do with the insular lives her students have led. Private school children are “increasingly removed from any idea about hatred based on race,” Martens suggests, because they are increasingly removed from race altogether. “They’ve never had to think about it.”<sup>227</sup>

Accordingly, students at St. Andrew’s learn about desegregation history without learning that this history has much to do with the individual students sitting in the room. But, of course, this history has everything to do with those students, whose school was shaped in meaningful and complex ways by the very historical forces they study at work elsewhere, in Little Rock or Washington, D.C. Their individual lives intersect with this history in surprising ways, as when students participate in the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day March at the University of Texas, or when they volunteer in the afterschool programs at St. James’ Episcopal School: a school that Paul Miles’ mother helped to found, connected to St. James’ Episcopal Church, the church of the Hicks’ family and Louis Buck. Would it be possible to teach a version of desegregation at St. Andrew’s that prompted students to feel some connection to – or ownership of – this history? No one at St. Andrew’s currently teaches a local version of desegregation for reasons familiar to any teacher: a need to cover vast amounts of material, a sense of obligation to prepare students for AP exams, a reliance on textbooks and primary documents that point in other directions, a desire to highlight national themes and patterns. Additionally, many teachers are unfamiliar with the story of desegregation in Austin themselves, having grown up elsewhere – and even for those raised in Austin, the details of the city’s desegregation history are hardly well-known. But as many St. Andrew’s teachers reported, even altering the curriculum might not be enough to combat the sense of insulation students experience within such a privileged sphere.

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<sup>227</sup> Elizabeth Martens, Interview with author, Spring 2014, Transcribed.



These questions have ramifications beyond St. Andrew's. They point to issues of memory in Austin more broadly, a city that prefers not to discuss its troubled racial past, and a place where segregation has re-entrenched itself since 1986, when the school district was declared free of discrimination. In his history of school reform in Austin, Larry Cuban argues that "most policy entrepreneurs and elite leaders are ahistorical in their thinking about school reform." However, Cuban argues, "History leaves distinct footprints that can be observed in the present. The consequences of Jim Crow practices for blacks and Hispanic immigrants since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century remain noticeable in Austin's schools a half-century after the *Brown* decision."<sup>228</sup> Likewise, the structures of race and privilege that form the foundations of St. Andrew's have consequences in the school today, both in its ongoing conversations about diversity, and its relationship with the community at large.

Episcopal identity remains a core value at St. Andrew's. *Saint Andrew's Episcopal School: A Gift to Our Children* – the history of the school written for its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary – contains a sermon from former head of school Lucy Nazro on what it means to be an Episcopal school. Episcopal schools are "comprehensive and inclusive," she writes. "An Episcopal school is expected not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or nation origin and is expected to seek out actively faculty and students of diverse backgrounds and traditions in the belief that they bring something to be valued." Moreover, she continues, "Episcopal schools are concerned with the well-being of society. The Episcopal Church is committed to being involved in and helping shape society, to help transform it, not to be

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<sup>228</sup> Larry Cuban, *As Good as It Gets*, p. 185.

rescued from it. This was especially evident in this country in the 1960's in efforts for racial equality and justice, work for the poor, and world peace. This same work continues today.”<sup>229</sup>

The book and the school's website equally stress the notion of community, listed as one of the core values of the school: community, the website states, is “based on trust, traditions, communication, appreciation, and support.”<sup>230</sup> The inward-focus of this community is felt even in the architecture. Writing about the Upper School in the early 2000's, reporter John Spong noted the design of the campus:

“Buildings stretch from the towers in a quadrangle layout – ‘like the great college campuses,’ as the architects noted – and inside the compound, the prevailing aim is to unite the community. Small windows on the classrooms’ perimeter walls are high off the ground and serve only to let in light; the larger windows are on walls that face into the grounds... Green spaces spill from the classrooms into a huge grassy commons: the Nazro Green, a place for students to congregate that’s meant to emphasize responsible land stewardship.”<sup>231</sup>

Everything about the school's design, from the buildings to the structure of classes and advisories, emphasizes this sense of a close-knit family: a community that cares for its own, that fosters its own growth, that is a gift to “our” children. As a former student and teacher at the school, I can attest to the value of this community for the students raised within it. And I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the school's belief that being a religious school requires a connection to the well-being of society: the school demonstrates this belief in its community service programs and its partnerships with other community organizations. But as the school's history makes abundantly clear, some fundamental tensions exist between these twin pillars of community and Episcopal identity – not just for St. Andrew's, but for private

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<sup>229</sup> Lucy Collins Nazro, “Episcopal Identity,” in Lucy Collins Nazro and Mary Ann Frishman, *Saint Andrew's Episcopal School: A Gift to Our Children* (Austin: St. Andrew's Episcopal School Development Office, 2013).

<sup>230</sup> “Mission and Accreditation,” St. Andrew's Episcopal School, [www.sasaustin.org](http://www.sasaustin.org).

<sup>231</sup> John Spong, “The Good Book and the Bad Book,” *Texas Monthly*, September 2006.

schools and private spaces around the country, as they grapple with their relationship to a broader public.

In “Collective Memory and the Actual Past,” Steven Knapp interrogates the assumption that the past “has a necessary or intrinsic relevance to ethical and political action in the present.” The “intriguing question raised,” Knapp writes, is “why social events in the distant past should matter to us at all.” Ultimately, Knapp concludes, we hold individuals and communities accountable to their past because of a belief about the future: “It is what we want to imagine about the future, and not a debt owed to the past as such, that justifies, if anything does, our sense that an agent’s present ethical status may properly be affected by discoveries about the actual content of her own or a collective past... The ethical relevance of the actual collective past depends on an agent’s disposition to identify with an imagined collective future.”<sup>232</sup> It’s hard to know what exactly it might look like for communities like St. Andrew’s to acknowledge the past: and the question extends beyond St. Andrew’s to encompass not only private schools but communities like Austin, that wish to align their present sense of self with a progressive history. Is a brief nod to a troubled past enough? A sustained engagement with local history in the curriculum we teach to our children? Or do we need a more fundamental rethinking of what “our children” means? At the least, a sincere engagement with such questions is necessary if private spaces like St. Andrew’s imagine a future in which they are fundamentally tied to, rather than increasingly distinct from, the public sphere.

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<sup>232</sup> Steven Knapp, “Collective Memory and the Actual Past,” *Representations* No. 26 (Spring, 1989), p. 141.

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