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Bishop William Rollinson Whittingham: Growth in the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland, 1840-1850

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BISHOP WILLIAM ROLLINSON WHITTINGHAM: GROWTH IN

THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MARYLAND, 1840-1850

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
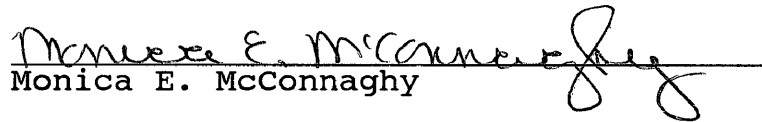
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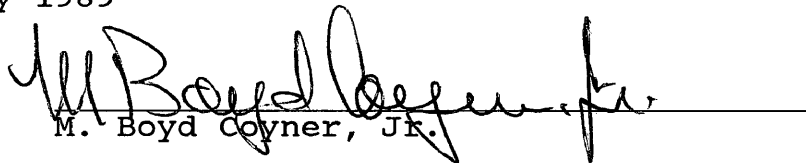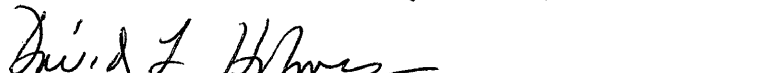by

Monica E. McConnaghy

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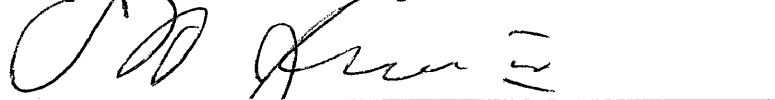
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Monica E. McConnaghy

Approved, May 1989

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To my brother Alex
for his unending encouragement and love

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On completion of this thesis I find that I am indebted to Professor David L. Holmes for taking the time and having the patience to guide me through an area that was relatively new to me. Also, I want to thank Dr. M. Boyd Coyner, Jr. for many helpful suggestions, as well as helping me finalize the paper, and Dr. Ludwell H. Johnson, III for taking the time to read it. Sincere thanks to Mr. F. Garner Ranney of the Maryland Diocesan Archives, in Baltimore, for introducing me to the Bishop, answering all my questions, and leading me by the hand through the collection.

So many friends gave me encouragement, and I thank them all, especially Wade who helped me think, offered many suggestions, and continued to have complete confidence in me.

ABSTRACT

After the American Revolution and the break with England,
those belonging to the Church of England decided to organize
as a separate institution, in no way tied to the new
government. Although different factions in the Church had
different ideas concerning the correct way to organize, all
agreed that some form of government was needed to ensure that
the different churches adopted the same measures so the
Anglican tradition could continue in America. They chose to
organize under an episcopacy, but limited the role of bishops
to protect the virtual autonomy the vestries in the colonies
had achieved, and to reflect the ideas of the new republic--
lay representation and a limitation of power.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland was one of
the first dioceses to organize, and with the election of their
first bishop in 1792, was plagued by the differences among the
church parties. The parties developed at the time of the
Elizabethan Settlement in 1559. The "high" church party
believed that the best spiritual life could be obtained
through a gradual growth within the discipline of the church
and through the sacraments. The "low" church stressed the
fundamental truths of the gospel, rather than church doctrine.
To them, the church was not a divine institution, but man-made
and thus dispensable.

The first three bishops in Maryland did not achieve
enormous success because of party problems, because the first
bishop was not entirely trusted, the second was not thoroughly
committed to the entire diocese, and the third was often ill.

Bishop William Rollinson Whittingham, the fourth bishop
of the diocese, was successful as evidenced by the
achievements of his first ten years. Beset by party problems,
he overcame them by being a strong leader who asserted his
rights, totally committed to the entire diocese, diligent in
reminding communicants of their duties, and by serving with
a zeal that inspired others.

BISHOP WILLIAM ROLLINSON WHITTINGHAM: 1840-1850

INTRODUCTION

During the American Revolution the disestablishment of the Church of England in many of the colonies prompted the church to reorganize into an independent institution. Church organizers felt that the best structure for the new church would be an episcopacy with secured bishops. Problems quickly followed from the new organization. Mistrust and suspicion mounted over the early episcopacy, fueled by two reasons: first, the bishops in England had poor reputations because of their strong ties to the British government; second, there had never been a bishop in America and people were concerned about losing the relative independence of the vestries.

The problems and conditions the bishops confronted can be illustrated by examining the episcopacy in Maryland. Between 1792 and 1840 the episcopacy experienced problems and continued to struggle because the first bishop was not entirely trusted, the second was not committed enough to the entire diocese, and the third was often ill. All three had to deal with the high and low church parties that fought to gain control of the diocese, and with the shortage of clergy due to insufficient support from the laity.

William Rollinson Whittingham, elected the fourth bishop in 1840, faced these problems and many others. However, he was strong, assertive and totally committed to the diocese, and was therefore able to assume a position of leadership that enabled him to realize the growth his predecessors had begun but could not make effective. Before looking at the first ten years of Whittingham's episcopacy and examining how he faced these problems, the establishment of country's first bishops will be discussed, followed by a brief description of the organization of the Diocese of Maryland, its first three bishops, and a short account of the background of William R. Whittingham.

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

When the Church of England was originally brought to the North American colonies with the first English settlers, it came with its religious and political ties between church and state largely intact. It eventually became the established church in Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, New York, and North Carolina, supported by taxes, but subject to the colonial governments.

The parish vestries in the Church of England handled temporal affairs of the parishes, and that practice continued once the Church started in the colonies. Vestries consisted of anywhere from six to twelve men, selected from all freeholders of the parish, and they worked with the churchwardens to handle the duties of the parish.

Duties to the government varied from colony to colony. In all colonies the parishes' responsibilities included maintaining and managing church property and finances, and watching the morals of the parishioners. In Virginia, where the Church was established early, the parishes selected their own ministers and had responsibility for welfare of the poor, road maintenance, keeping track of tobacco production, and

informing parishioners of legal and political matters. In Maryland, where establishment came late, in 1702, county systems had been put in place to handle more of the secular matters so the Church did not have those duties. Also, the Anglican Church in Maryland differed from those in the rest of the colonies because the parishes could neither select their own ministers nor discharge them, which caused a good deal of trouble with discipline throughout the eighteenth century. In the colonies where the Church had not been established, the parishes had no ties to the government and the vestries concerned themselves with running their parishes the best that they could.

All the colonial parishes fell under the control of the Bishop of London, who had general supervision of all overseas churches and missions. He licensed all the clergy and supposedly exercised influence over their conduct, which meant the vestries corresponded with him seeking clergy or discipline for clergy.

Distance from the colonies limited the Bishop's ability to carry out those duties, and for a time London appointed commissaries to the colonies in an attempt to remedy the situation. The commissary system was weak, however, and by the mid-eighteenth century the Bishop of London stopped sending commissaries and "took little interest in supervising

the American Church."[1] As a result the vestries acquired a strong voice and came to have virtual autonomy over their respective churches and strengthened their position over the clergy, who depended on them for support.

Movements to acquire a resident bishop for the colonies started, but failed to gain enough support in the colonies. The neglect of colonial churches by the Bishop of London, the belief that bishops were "selected for their political views, family connections, or at best their intellectual attainments," which caused respect for bishops to wane, and the fact that the vestries and laity refused to give up the power they had gained in the colonial church, all contributed to the non-support of a resident colonial bishop.[2]

The colonies severed political ties to England with the outbreak of the American Revolution, and since the Church of England was a political entity the Church was disestablished. Rather than seek establishment under the new American government, the church decided instead to unite as an independent institution free from all civil powers. Two movements to unify the Anglican churches began, independent from each other. One was centered in the middle colonies, the

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[1]Borden W. Painter, Jr., "The Anglican Vestry in Colonial America" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1965), p. 2.

[2]Frederick V. Mills, Sr., Bishops By Ballot: An Eighteenth Century Ecclesiastical Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 295.

other in Connecticut, and each was led by one of the church parties.

Since the Elizabethan Settlement in 1559, the Episcopal Church had consisted of two parties. The "high" church party believed that the church "diverged too far from medieval Catholicism," while the "low" church party held that the church "failed to go far enough toward continental Protestantism."[3] The high church party stressed the apostolic succession of the episcopacy, the three-fold ministry, the sacraments, and claimed to be a distinct branch of the Catholic Church. Their philosophy stated that the best spiritual life could be obtained through a gradual growth within the discipline of the church and through the use of sacraments. It was a high churchman's duty "to lay a good deal of emphasis upon the exclusive claim of the church to be the institution through which the Gospel promises would be realized."[4]

To high churchmen the Book of Common Prayer provided the liturgy that "exhibits the whole system of . . . doctrine with

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[3]Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, eds. Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), s.v. "The Anglican Tradition and the Episcopal Church," by David L. Holmes, vol. 1, p. 392.

[4]William Manross, A History of the American Episcopal Church (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1950), p. 217.

unrivalled simplicity, strength and clearness."[5]   Thus, the
majority of the clergy did not include any extemporaneous
prayer and often preached from prepared sermons.

The low church included the Evangelical party within the
Episcopal Church that had resulted from the Great Awakening,
they stressed the importance of the Scripture over the Church,
had a lower regard for the episcopacy, ministry and sacraments
than high churchmen, and made less use of symbolic acts during
worship. Like the Puritans, they claimed the necessity of a
personal conversion and of a conscious acceptance of
submission to Christ. Most evangelicals rejected the doctrine
of predestination, believing instead that anyone could be
converted. Low churchmen felt that it was the "duty of the
pastor to do everything in his power to make people seek it
[conversion] and to bring them to the state of mind in which
they would be most likely to receive it."[6] To that end, low
churchmen offered prayer meetings and Bible classes during the
week to inspire and instruct, and their emotional preachers
seldom used prepared sermons. Most believed the extempore

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[5]E. Clowes Chorley, Men and Movements in the American
Episcopal Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946),
p. 191.

[6]Manross, American Episcopal Church, p. 215.

method provided a "better opportunity to the Holy Spirit to inspire their utterance."[7]

Evangelicals stressed the fundamental truths of the gospel, as they understood them, rather than the doctrine of the Church. To them, the church was not a divine institution, but man-made and thus dispensable. A person could be saved apart from the church, and adherence to the church was "merely a token of his devotion to the Lord."[8]

Thus, one of the main contentions between the two parties concerned the episcopacy. The high church advocates felt that the church would lose authority if the ministry were changed. As Bishop John Henry Hobart said in 1807 in a defense of the episcopacy:

> Change the ministry, place the power of ordination in other hands--the Church is no longer founded on the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Its constitution and ministry have no power but what man gives them. It rests upon the sandy foundation of human authority. . . .[9]

The high church had a stronghold in Connecticut, where the first movement for unification of the Church began.

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[7]William W. Manross, The Episcopal Church in the United States, 1800-1840: A Study in Church Life (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), p. 165.

[8]Nelson W. Rightmyer, "The Episcopate of Bishop Kemp of Maryland," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 28 (March 1959), pp. 67-68.

[9]Chorley, p. 184.

High churchmen believed the "episcopal office was essential to a true church, and until it had obtained bishops the church had no power to organize or legislate."[10] On May 25, 1783, at a meeting in Woodbury, Connecticut, ten of fourteen clergy present elected Samuel Seabury for consecration as bishop. In late 1784 Seabury went to England to be consecrated as bishop, but the English bishops legally had to refuse his request because Seabury could not, as an American, take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy required by English law and because there was no organized diocese for him to administer. Seabury then travelled to Scotland for consecration by the bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church, who were not restricted in activity by English law.

Meanwhile, the movement for reorganization in Philadelphia and Maryland was led by William White, a low churchman and rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, and William Smith, ex-provost of the College of Philadelphia. White at first devised a plan for the Church to operate until there was peace between England and America and the episcopacy could be obtained. The low church did not consider the episcopacy mandatory, but felt it was the best form of church government. Both church parties knew that some form of government had to be agreed upon to make sure the different states adopted the same measures so that the Anglican

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[10]Manross, Episcopal Church in United States, p. 34.

tradition could continue in America. White decided, however, that until bishops could be ordained, "and only until then, the clergy . . . might exercise collectively the power of ordination."[11] The clergy ordination clause evidenced White's low church belief and led many to suspect him of trying to "presbyterianize the Church." However, the treaty of peace between England and America was concluded soon after publication of his plan, so the clause proved unnecessary and was omitted. White also proposed that state and national conventions meet and devise a constitution for the American Episcopal church. In September 1785, the first General Convention gathered in Philadelphia with representatives from all the middle states, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina, but none from New England. The convention adopted a constitution, drafted a <u>Book of Common Prayer</u>, and decided on a plan to obtain English consecration of bishops.

The approved constitution provided that the national church be governed by a General Convention consisting of two houses; an upper house, composed of all the bishops, and a lower house, composed of an equal number of clerical and lay delegates. The lower house could amend the constitution and make rules to govern the church. The bishops were given the right to preside over their diocesan conventions, but little

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[11]Ibid., p. 32.

other power, except those accorded their office--ordination and confirmation.[12]

The second General Convention met at Philadelphia in June of 1786 and "adopted measures that allowed White and Samuel Provoost, rector of Trinity Parish, New York, to go to England for consecration later in the year."[13] Before reconvening in the fall at Wilmington, Delaware, members of the convention had communicated with the English archbishops concerning the conditions of consecration for the American bishops and English reactions to the American church's proposed Book of Common Prayer and constitution. After the convention reconvened, it received a note stating that the English Parliament had passed an act permitting American bishops to be consecrated without taking the loyalty oaths.

After the consecration of White and Provoost in 1787, the General Convention did not meet again until early 1789. When it did meet, however, all members stressed unification of the English and Scottish lines of succession and "voted unanimously its belief in the validity of Bishop Seabury's orders, . . ."[14] The convention adjourned to allow the news to reach Bishop Seabury and when it reconvened in September, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, which was

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[12]Ibid., 35-36.

[13]Lippy, p.396.

[14]Manross, Episcopal Church in United States, p. 34.

seeking a bishop, were present. White, Provoost and Seabury then wrote the English Archbishops to obtain approval of their uniting to perform episcopal services. In the same year, 1790, Virginia's diocesan convention met on May 6, and elected James Madison, President of the College of William and Mary, bishop, replacing David D. Griffith, who resigned in 1789 because of his inability to proceed to England for consecration. Later that year, the convention sent Madison to England for consecration. This consecration resolved the difficulties of succession, for now there were three bishops consecrated in the English succession. Those three--White, Provoost and Madison, joined by Seabury--consecrated Rev. Thomas J. Claggett of Anne Arundel County first Bishop of Maryland and thereby successfully united the two lines of succession.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION OF THE DIOCESE OF MARYLAND AND
ITS FIRST THREE BISHOPS

After the Maryland General Assembly passed the Vestry Act
in 1779 giving title to church property to parish vestries as
trustees of property belonging to the Church of England, the
Episcopal churches in Maryland began to organize since church
members knew the property would remain theirs. Vestry
meetings began being held once again in an effort to seek a
method for organizing into a diocese. The first known meeting
that considered this problem occurred in Chestertown on
November 9, 1780 under the presidency of William Smith, rector
of St. Paul and Chester parishes. Three priests and twenty-
four lay representatives attended, most from the Eastern Shore
parishes.

This first meeting was especially important because it
was the first convention in the colonies to attempt to deal
with the changes brought by the Revolution. Composed of lay
representatives as well as clergy, it formally adopted the
name "Protestant Episcopal," which would be used by all
Anglican parishes and officially adopted by the Constitution
and Canons of 1789. Protestant Episcopal was not a new name
and had been used in seventeenth-century Maryland. The name

"designated what Anglicans claimed their church to be, namely, distinguished from Roman or Papal, Christianity by being Protestant, and distinguished from Protestant bodies that were the creation of the Reformation by being Episcopal, i.e., having bishops in Apostolic Succession."[1]   After this first meeting, conventions were held annually to organize the diocese of Maryland.

In August of 1783 the clergy met to agree on articles of government, to appoint a committee to alter the liturgy, and to draw up a Declaration of Fundamental Rights of the Church, which was forwarded to Governor William Paca. The Declaration asserted the "Church's right to 'preserve herself as an entire Church, agreeable to her ancient usages and profession', to be independent of foreign jurisdiction, [and] to perpetuate her threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons . . ."[2] Next, two committees, one for each Shore, were set up to serve the diocese in the absence of a bishop.

On June 22, 1784, the church held a convention in which the laity could ratify the clergy's 1783 decisions and in which a plan of ecclesiastical government was drafted. This plan evidenced the convention's fear of a strong political episcopate in its definition of the duties of bishops, priests

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[1]Arthur P. Middleton, "From Daughter Church to Sister Church: The Disestablishment of the Church of England and the Organization of the Diocese of Maryland," Maryland Historical Magazine Vol. 79 No. 3, Fall 1984, p. 194.

[2]Ibid., p. 195.

and deacons. The report stated that the bishops' duties did not differ from a priest's except that the bishops could ordain, confirm and should be in charge during ecclesiastical meetings.[3]

Maryland churchmen wanted to secure a bishop even though they remained unsure of how a bishop would conduct himself and how much clerical and lay power he would take for himself. Although doubts concerning bishops persisted, the Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Claggett of St. James Parish, a man involved in nearly all of the state conventions, a delegate to the General Convention in 1789, and president of the diocesan convention in 1791, was unanimously chosen to be the first Bishop of Maryland at the Maryland Convention of 1792.

The procedure for nominating and electing a bishop appeared in Article 5 of the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland. This document states that the clergy nominates and appoints by ballot

> . . . some fit and qualified clergyman of
> the Protestant Episcopal Church of the
> United States, . . . and the votes of two-
> thirds of that order shall be requisite
> to constitute a choice. . . . Such
> appointment shall be presented to the
> order of the lay delegates, and be
> considered by them, and if, on a ballot,
> it shall appear, that the person so

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[3]George B. Utley, The Life and Times of Thomas John Claggett (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1913), p. 42.

> nominated, is approved of by two-thirds
> of the lay order, he shall be then
> declared to be duly elected . . .[4]

In describing the bishop's duties and the manner of election, the conventions incorporated the newly created republic's ideals and restrictions--lay representation and limited powers.

The American Revolution definitely hurt the Church of England in Maryland. The Church was disestablished, its clergy shrank from fifty-four to fifteen, and of the forty-four parishes, only twenty-two had incumbent priests; of those, several had to share one priest. Claggett was therefore given control of a diocese that had "feeble congregations, decaying churches, and ill-paid clergy," something he, like all other Anglicans, had never experienced and something quite different from the established church to which he was accustomed.[5] Bishop Claggett was convinced of the benefits of a state-supported church, and felt that without that support the church was forced to "wander about our country in the character of a mendicant."[6] Throughout his

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[4]_A Compilation Containing the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States; the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland_, (Baltimore, Maryland, J.W. Woods printer, 1836), p. 97.

[5]William F. Brand, _Life of William Rollinson Whittingham: Fourth Bishop of Maryland_ (New York: E. & J.B. Young & Co., 1883), p. 217.

[6]Ibid., 218.

episcopacy he maintained that the greatest drawback to the growth and prosperity of the diocese was the "neglect of the due support of the ministry."[7]

Bishop Claggett was a very conscientious bishop and the only interruption of his duties stemmed from personal illness. His health continually worsened, so that in 1811 he asked for an assistant, or "suffragan" bishop, to help him in his duties. Since a suffragan had no independent authority, the bishop retained control of the suffragan's actions and of his diocese.

At the convention of 1812, the Rev. Dr. James Kemp, rector of St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore, and the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Contee, rector of William and Mary Parish, Charles County, were nominated as suffragans. Dr. Kemp received the two-thirds vote of the clergymen, but failed to get the lay vote needed for election. In 1813, the matter was not addressed, but in 1814 the issue came up on the third day of the convention. This time Dr. Kemp received the required two-thirds vote from both the clergy and laity. After this election the convention "passed a resolution 'That the Rev. Dr. James Kemp, recently elected suffragan of this Diocese, by two-thirds of each Order, shall succeed the Bishop in case of survivorship.'"[8]

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Rightmyer, p. 77.

Born in Scotland in 1764, Kemp was converted from the Presbyterian church to the Scottish Episcopal Church as a boy, and formed "strong views in opposition to anything which might approach Presbyterian or Calvinistic doctrine in the Episcopal Church."[9] He came to the United States in 1786, studied for holy orders, and was ordained in 1789. He served as associate rector of St. Paul's in Baltimore when elected suffragan.

Members of the low church party opposed Kemp's election, claiming that the American Church had no canon permitting the election of a suffragan. When first considering a suffragan, Bishop Claggett had referred to the English Church law, which "committed him to the high church view that wherever the American Church had not specifically adopted canons to the contrary, the English law was operative."[10] Thus Kemp's election stood.

Dr. Kemp was consecrated and given responsibility over the Eastern Shore. In 1816, at the death of Bishop Claggett, Kemp became the second Bishop of Maryland.

During Kemp's episcopacy the church did recover and the church experienced significant growth. Congregations grew from thirty-one to sixty-six and clergymen from thirty-one to fifty. In addition, twenty-one churches were built and consecrated. However, problems still remained.

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[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., 75.

Although Kemp was more active than Claggett, he "would have been still more efficient had his obligations to his diocese been felt to be primary."[11] He remained the rector of St. Paul's, and since he derived his living from the position, he felt it deserved all his services. A second problem involved the continued shortage of clergy and the relative non-support of the ministry by the laity. Throughout his episcopacy Kemp continually worked to suppress party feeling in the diocese, claiming it was "impossible for clergymen to manifest their zeal in a more ruinous way than to assume party names and party distinctions. . . . We all belong to the Protestant Episcopal Church."[12]

In 1827 Bishop Kemp was killed in a stage coach accident while returning from the consecration of Bishop Henry U. Onderdonk in Philadelphia. Though he had worked hard trying to unite the church parties, his death caused a struggle between the high and low church parties for the control of the episcopacy. As an example of the deep party feelings at this time, William F. Brand, William Whittingham's biographer, claimed that "this death was said by some to be a mark of God's displeasure against the consecration of Bishop Onderdonk," a high churchman.[13]

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[11]Brand, p. 222.

[12]Ibid., 223.

[13]Ibid.

The 1828 convention was unable to elect a successor to Bishop Kemp because of intense party differences, and the 1829 convention had the same result. Finally, in 1830, the convention appointed a committee to select a compromise candidate. The committee nominated and the convention elected fifty-one year old Rev. William Murray Stone, of Somerset County, although little was known of his leadership ability. He was known, however, for his personal integrity and humility, and the nominating committee believed that "the devotion which he had shown as a quiet, sincere minister of the Gospel in a rural parish, would have a calming effect on the belligerent forces within the Diocese."[14]

Contributing to party differences was the fact that the parishes and congregations were so widely scattered throughout the state that their views and interests were quite varied. Bishop Stone, like Bishop Claggett and Bishop Kemp before him, went on visitations to understand the needs of the parishes, to help furnish those needs, and, in this way, to bring unity to the diocese.

When in good health, Bishop Stone made an effort to visit each parish at least once in two years. He focused his energies on missionary work, preferring to preach in vacant parishes to people who had never seen or heard an Episcopal

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[14]Gerald F. and Patricia A. Vaughn, "The Life and Ministry of William Murray Stone, D.D.: Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Maryland--1830-1838," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 35 (December 1966), p. 314.

minister. In 1832 he reorganized the Diocesan Missionary Society, feeling that missionary work was desperately needed in western Maryland, in the Appalachian Mountains, which was a frontier area at the time. He believed that prejudice against the church and its ministry were "daily wearing away, and had we at this time a greater number of faithful laborers in the missionary field, those barren wastes would soon assume a different appearance."[15]

Unfortunately, Bishop Stone's poor health confined him to his home on the Eastern Shore for much of 1831, 1833, and early 1835. Stone had a promising year in 1837, however, ordaining eight, and opening four chapels and one church. He hoped for a prosperous 1838, but in January became very ill. This time he failed to recover and passed away on February 1, 1838.

Bishop Stone accomplished what he had been elected to do. Party rivalry decreased and the diocese's prosperity increased, but when the next diocesan convention met "it was as though each party had used the truce in getting ready for the renewal of the contest."[16]

As in the vacancy resulting from Bishop Kemp's death, the vacancy from Bishop Stone's death saw a struggle of the church parties to gain control over the diocese. The parties could

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[15]Ibid., 337.

[16]Brand, p. 226.

not agree on a candidate in 1838 or 1839. Once again, the delegates formed a special committee to nominate a compromise candidate. In 1840, William Rollinson Whittingham, Professor at the General Theological Seminary and chaplain of the New York Protestant Episcopal Public School, received the nomination and was duly elected fourth Bishop of Maryland.[17]

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[17]Brand, p. 232.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND - WILLIAM ROLLINSON WHITTINGHAM

Because the episcopacy represented an unknown in America in the 1780s, and because many people remained suspicious of it, the "most important thing for the early bishops to do was to avoid giving offense."[1] Although party differences were ever present, and especially prominent during the episcopate elections, Maryland's first three bishops accomplished that objective. Thus, when William Whittingham--a strong, assertive, zealous, and inspiring leader--became bishop, he was able to realize the growth and prosperity in the diocese that his predecessors had begun and believed possible.

William Rollinson Whittingham was born in New York City on December 2, 1805. His father, Richard Whittingham, was a brass founder, and though he lacked formal academic training, he was well-educated because of his love for books. Mary Ann Whittingham, William's mother, was the daughter of a successful seal engraver and silversmith. Fiercely intelligent, she also possessed a strong character and a strong will. Religion was very important to her, and since she could not serve in the Episcopal Church herself, she

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[1]Manross, <u>Episcopal Church in United States</u>, p. 42.

determined that "if ever I had a son I would lend him unto the Lord, . . ."[2] Therefore, upon William's birth, she learned what her son would need to know to prepare for the priesthood, subjects such as Greek and Latin, and then taught them to him herself. William and his parents attended the Zion Church in New York City, where at the age of ten, William was confirmed by Bishop John Henry Hobart, a leading high churchman. At that time William and Hobart became friends, and Hobart's religious philosophy strongly influenced young William. According to Hobart, the church should be evangelical because it needed to convince people of the benefits of being Christian, although this was to be done within the Church's doctrine. Thus, Hobart's motto was "Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order."[3]

After receiving a private education Whittingham, consenting "to the dedication made by his mother," entered the General Theological Seminary in 1822 at the age of sixteen.[4] Before entering the Seminary, he became interested in scholarly research, an interest he pursued much more after his admission. He studied whatever he could--physics, logic, science, music, German and history--all in addition to his

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[2]Brand, p. 6.

[3]George E. DeMille, The Catholic Movement in the American Episcopal Church 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Church Historical Society, 1941), p. 20.

[4]Brand, p. 21.

appointed studies. Whittingham immersed himself in studies so deeply that he often sacrificed his health. His fellow students addressed this fact in a letter to him, describing the young scholar as a "young man . . . so completely absorbed in the care of the mind as to neglect the care of the body . . ."[5]

Whittingham graduated from the Seminary in July of 1825 and took a position there as librarian until he reached twenty-one and was old enough to be ordained. Finally ordained in March, 1827, Whittingham began preaching in parishes around New York City.

At this time he became involved with educating children through the church. He was appointed chaplain at the Charity School run by Trinity Parish, New York City, that provided schooling for approximately three hundred children. Whittingham was not new to teaching. During his second year at the Seminary, he and an older student had started a school in New Jersey, but were run off by a rival religious group. Additionally, Whittingham was superintendent of the Sunday school in his own parish, Zion Church. Under his leadership, it grew to become the largest in the city with fifty-six teachers and six hundred students.

Interest in Sunday schools increased in the mid-nineteenth century, and Bishop Hobart hoped to form the

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[5]Ibid., p. 33.

Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union as a mutual support to those schools. Because Whittingham had been working in this area, Hobart asked him to help with its formation. The General Convention formed the Union in 1826. Whittingham became its secretary and was immediately assigned to prepare the system of instruction and everything else necessary for conducting the Sunday school program.

Whittingham's work at the Seminary library, the Charity School, Sunday school, and the Sunday School Union overtaxed him, and because of illness, he was forced to give up some of his duties. He resigned from the Union and then, "in accordance with his manner of seeing God's hand governing all the events of his life," he received and accepted an offer in early 1829 as rector of St. Marks Parish in Orange, New Jersey.[6]

Since 1827 Whittingham had been editing The Family Visitor and The Children's Magazine. Then, in 1830, while still at St. Marks, he was offered another editorship. The Church Press, an association of New York gentlemen originally formed to publish books for the Sunday School Union--and which eventually came to be depository for them, the Diocesan Sunday School Society, Bible and Prayer Book Society and Tract Society--decided to publish, by subscription, some of the standard works of English church writers and asked Whittingham

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[6]Ibid., p. 77.

to be editor. Whittingham accepted and the extra income enabled him to marry Hannah Harrison, the daughter of the man he was residing with in Orange, in April of 1830. Parish duties combined with editing duties again proved to be too much of a strain for Whittingham, and in November of 1830 Whittingham left Orange to work for the Church Press full-time, editing the standard works.

After finishing his work with the Church Press in the fall of 1831, Whittingham became rector of the parish of St. Luke's in New York on October 1. He was successful there and "especially thanked God" for the fact that the parishioners' generosity enabled him to erect a large building "for a parish school for boys and girls where they could be trained religiously, that is as church children, while receiving a high class of literary instruction"[7] Whittingham held his post until 1834, taking a year's leave of absence in 1832-33 to edit Bishop Benjamin T. Onderdonk's magazine, The Churchman. In 1834, he fell seriously ill with chronic bronchitis and was advised to give up all his duties.

Because of Whittingham's dedication to education, there was nothing he "had longer desired, or then more truly wished for, than the chair of a professor."[8] In late 1835, after his recuperation, he got his wish when the General Theological

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[7]Ibid., p. 106.

[8]Ibid., p. 170.

Seminary temporarily appointed him Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Professor of Pastoral Theology and Pulpit Eloquence. Then in January, 1836, the Seminary permanently appointed him Professor of Ecclesiastical History.

While Whittingham was teaching at the Seminary, America began to feel the impact of the Oxford Movement which had begun in England. In 1833 the Church of England was struggling in England and not growing as it was in the United States. In fact, the Church appeared threatened with disestablishment. To some it therefore seemed that "only a vigorous restatement of church principles could avert this threat."[9] This call for renewal was the impetus for the Tracts for the Times, pamphlets written by John Keble and John H. Newman, two fellows at Oxford, and Edward B. Pusey, a scholar of ancient languages at Oxford.

Beginning as a restatement of early high churchmanship, the Oxford Movement eventually came to stress the Catholic background of the Anglican Church. The Tractarians believed that the Church of England, along with the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, were all branches of the true Catholic Church. Therefore, they called for a return to Catholic doctrine and tradition. They emphasized the authority of the priesthood and sacraments as the high church did, but they went further and reintroduced the ceremonial and

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[9]Manross, American Episcopal Church, p. 268.

ritualistic practices which had been largely lost to the Anglican Church since the Reformation.

Since Whittingham was an "insatiable student and great scholar," his research and studies led him to anticipate the early ideas of the Tractarians.[10] Therefore, he defended much of what they had to say about church doctrine, but remained obedient to the Prayer Book and would not accept the reintroduction of such ritual and ceremony.

The effect of the Oxford Movement in the United States was less significant than in England because the American high churchmen had been stressing some of the same points for many years. The effect of the movement was felt at the Seminary, where the students had been taught by many high churchmen. Combined with the passionate writing in the Tracts, these teachings made many students more devoted to the Episcopal Church's Catholic tradition.

While teaching at the Seminary, Whittingham preached temporarily at Grace Church in New York City, and in April of 1836 was again appointed "to his old charge," librarian at the Seminary. For this reason, if for no other, Whittingham's biographer states the Seminary owed him a "debt of gratitude for his many hours of unpaid labor bestowed on the library, for his care of it and zeal for it which nothing but love

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[10]DeMille, p. 26.

could beget."[11]   He was also reappointed chaplain at the Charity School, which had been renamed the New York Protestant Episcopal Public School.   This was his last clerical duty until he became bishop.   "Thus he began and ended his parochial life as preacher to children. . . ."[12]

In 1840 Whittingham was elected bishop of Maryland according to its canons and constitution. To the episcopacy he brought a great knowledge of church doctrine, a background of Anglo-Catholicism and high churchmanship, an enormous concern for educating children to church doctrine, and specific ideas on the duties of a bishop.

In 1837, a few years before Whittingham's election, Bishop Stone had told the Maryland diocesan convention that "a desire prevails among many who are unconnected with any religious denomination, to see the church of their fathers reestablished among them ."[13] Whittingham realized that this desire, if well-directed, could be one factor in establishing a successful diocese. Under Bishop Whittingham's episcopacy, 1840-79, the Diocese of Maryland was, in fact, successful. Because of the large size of the diocese, which consisted of all of Maryland and the District of Columbia, and because of the growth that occurred during Whittingham's tenure, the

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[11]Brand, p. 175.

[12]Ibid., p. 180.

[13]Vaughn, p. 337.

diocese would split in 1867-68 into the three dioceses of Maryland, Washington (D.C.), and the Eastern Shore (Easton).

Whittingham's education and high church background formed his outlook regarding his role as bishop. His commitment to the task ahead caused him to survey the diocese's problems and then immediately set out to solve them. The reason for Whittingham's success may perhaps be found in his approach to the episcopacy and how he dealt with the various situations he encountered at the outset.

CHAPTER IV

DECADE OF ACHIEVEMENT - 1840-1850

After taking office as bishop, Whittingham immediately
began traveling throughout the diocese to determine its
condition. During his initial travels and his first year in
office, the problems he would have to deal with became
apparent.

First, there was the traveling itself, which was time-
consuming and at times quite impossible. Second, he saw the
condition of the parishes and churches and realized that they
required renovation and leadership. He also realized that he
would have to find a solution for the shortage of clergy
throughout the diocese and the lack of funds for missionary
work in and outside of the diocese. Third, diplomacy and a
firm adherence to church policy regarding politics would be
needed to face the political problems that were evident in the
South during the 1840s. Whittingham knew that he would also
have to use diplomacy to find a method for dealing with the
high and low church factions and their differences. Finally,
Whittingham wanted to see the diocese involved in more
educational ventures to assure that the following generations
would have the proper religious and educational background.

Once elected as bishop, Whittingham acknowledged that his duties included preaching, ordaining, confirming, and governing the churches. He believed that he was also "placed by God over the Church in Maryland, . . . [and] responsible for all within its territory . .   ," meaning **all Episcopalians** in the diocese, not just those nearby.[1] It was not his duty simply to furnish pastors and assure the "flock is fed," but to "feed them himself, giving each his portion in due season."[2] This attitude toward the episcopacy was reenforced by Bishop Alexander V. Griswold's sermon given during Whittingham's consecration, in which he said:

> If a bishop be in character, talents and
> faithfulness what he should be, and his
> office is duly respected, he is the bond
> of union, and the mainspring of energy in
> his diocese . . . the bishop visits all
> the parishes of his diocese, administers
> to each the word of life, . . .
> superintends the concerns of all the
> churches, regarding the interest and
> promoting the peace of every minister of
> Christ, and of every congregation of his
> people . . . and to have a careful eye to
> all doctrine and discipline.[3]

With such goals in mind, Whittingham began on his first visitation of the diocese. The traveling itself provided

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[1]Brand, p. 280.

[2]Ibid., 187.

[3]Alexander V. Griswold, <u>The Order and Duty of Bishops</u>, Sept. 17, 1840, sermon at consecration of the Rev. Wm. R. Whittingham, (Baltimore: Jos. Robinson, 1840), pp. 14-15.

Whittingham with a chance to get to know the people he would be serving. On his first visitation, which was to the area south of Baltimore, Whittingham took passage on a steamboat, where he had a chance to observe the people around him. His initial response was that they surpassed his expectations.

> There is more real gentility, with less parade of it, than I have met with anywhere else; . . . an habitual recognition of the importance and value of religious truth . . . and where it is there is a boldness and freeness in its avowal, with an amiable unpretending simplicity of profession wholly different from the starched, pattern carded character of so many religionists farther north.[4]

Whittingham liked the people, and the people liked him as well. He had the ability to adapt himself to his company; when he was with the cultured, they appreciated his learning; when he was with plain farmers, he talked about crops and animals; and when he was with artisans, he convinced them of his interest in their concerns.

Whittingham found most of Maryland, with the exception of Baltimore and some of Allegany County, in the mountains in western Maryland, to be quite rural. People lived scattered on farms separated by creeks, inlets, rivers, and bad roads. The parishes were usually ten miles square, but sometimes they

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[4]William Whittingham to Mary Ann Whittingham, 18 November 1840, Whittingham Papers, Maryland Diocesan Archives, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

were not, and the people often had to ride ten, fifteen, or twenty miles in order to attend church.

As James E. Lindsley notes in his history of the Diocese of New York, "the rigors and inconveniences of episcopal travel were a necessary duty for the American successors of the apostles."[5] Traveling across the creeks, rivers, inlets and bad roads had to be done mostly by carriage and horseback, and in all types of weather. In his first year alone, Whittingham traveled 2,900 miles under those conditions. Time and again Whittingham's letters to his family contain accounts of these travels. He writes of passing on horrible roads "through snow and mud;" riding ten miles through rain and hail; and having one man take him "12 miles, in the teeth of the storm, in his little carriage."[6] The most vivid account of these traveling conditions is in a letter to his wife in which Whittingham relates an attempt at travel on the Eastern Shore.

> The afternoon and evening were consumed in an abortive attempt to get to Taylor's Island, in which after forty miles travel, we accomplished as much as the song says the King of France did, with ten thousand men, except that our march lay 'not up hill and down again' but along a perfectly level road -- here and there muddy and

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[5]James E. Lindsley, This Planted Vine (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) p. 130.

[6]William Whittingham to Hannah Whittingham, 24 November 1840, 13 March, 1841, Maryland Diocesan Archives.

> here and there washed -- through pine
> woods and bleak, bare fields, with black
> ugly ditches, very Dutch looking, on
> either hand.[7]

These visitations often made extreme demands on Whittingham's time. In addition to official duties and actual travel time, he felt obligated to repay his hosts by fulfilling certain social duties as well. Since he quartered in private homes and ate the food of his hosts, used their horses, and sometimes took their beds, Whittingham felt he needed to do more than allow them the privilege of watching him write or immediately retire to bed. "I have to sit in the parlor and chat, and hear and tell news, and put questions, and give advice and instructions to the accompanying clergy, and discuss and solve theological questions until late bedtime, . . . tired enough to find even writing up my journal . . . a labor."[8]

During these early travels Whittingham discovered the run-down condition of most of the churches in the diocese. One of Whittingham's first visitations took him through the northwestern portion of the state to Allegany County, situated in the Appalachian Mountains. At this time, Allegany County was engaged in coal mining, manufacturing, commerce, and, after 1842, served as a vacation area as well. The coming of

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[7]William Whittingham to Hannah Whittingham, 8 November 1848, Maryland Diocesan Archives.

[8]Brand, pp. 252-253.

the Baltimore and Ohio railroad in 1842 meant that the coal companies could increase production, and as a result of the profits to be made, thirty coal and iron companies were incorporated in Allegany County between 1828 and 1850. This in turn led to rapid growth; the county population doubled from 1830-40 and doubled again from 1840-50.[9] On his journey Whittingham stopped at Lonaconing, a region suffering an economic setback. Whittingham was glad to see, however, that St. Peter's parish there had erected at least a temporary chapel, which meant that a "provision has been made that the multitudes congregated in pursuit of worldly gain shall not be left to contaminate each other and brutify the immortal soul as is always the case where a crowded manufacturing population is destitute of religious privileges and restraints."[10]

On the Eastern Shore numerous examples of the poor condition of the churches in the area existed. In the middle section of the Eastern Shore, in Vienna, Whittingham visited the ruins of a church "of which the roof and south side had fallen in." Consequently there were no Sunday services in a town of 400 to 500 people. Whittingham noted that the church in St. Martin, on the eastern edge of the Eastern Shore near

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[9]Harry I Stegmaier, Jr. and others, <u>Allegany County, A History</u> (Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co., 1976) pp. 130, 132, 142.

[10]William Whittingham to Hannah Whittingham, 8 November 1840, Maryland Diocesan Archives.

the Delaware state line, was in a "dilapidated state," with broken walls. Of the Rehoboth Church and Annimerisk Chapel on the southern Eastern Shore near the Virginia state line, Whittingham wrote that they "sadly need repair."[11] The unfavorable economic condition of the Eastern Shore may have been part of the reason for the poor condition of the churches. The area had been known for its agriculture and shipbuilding, but the people in the region refused to employ the new techniques taking hold of both industries in the 1830s. As a result, poor economic times were only beginning to improve as Whittingham began his visits across the Eastern Shore.

In 1842 Whittingham discovered a chapel of ease about twenty-five miles west of Baltimore, in Carroll County, built sixty years earlier and fallen into a state of ruin. He wrote his wife that "Never till today could I even get positively at the fact of its existence." People hoped that the chapel would be repaired so services could be held there again. Whittingham found it hard to believe that he was "the first clergyman that has been here (less than twenty-five miles from

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[11]*Journal of the 53rd Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland*, (henceforth referred to as Journal of the Maryland Convention) (Baltimore: 1841), pp. 39, 41, 42.

Baltimore and almost every family <u>originally Episcopalian</u>) for twenty years."[12]

Whittingham's acute awareness of the poor condition of the churches in his diocese led him to continue to address the problem during his first ten years in office. Though the situation did not improve as quickly as he would have liked, Whittingham often noted in his addresses to the convention and in personal correspondence throughout those first ten years how pleased he was that churches were being built and repaired, even though most were modest structures. Perhaps part of the reason Whittingham had success in his first years as bishop was that he constantly traveled through the diocese encouraging the parishioners to improve the churches and chapels. In return, the parishioners knew Whittingham was interested in their welfare and would do all he could to help. As a result, Maryland had 106 parishes and ranked fourth nationally in the Protestant Episcopal Church with 7,473 communicants at the close of 1850.[13] Although this was a substantial increase, the fact that only some 7,500 people in all of Maryland belonged to the Episcopalian Church shows that it continued to have a relatively small membership in the state.

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[12]William Whittingham to Hannah Whittingham, 20 September 1842, Maryland Diocesan Archives.

[13]<u>A Tabular View of the Church in the United States at the Close of the Year 1850</u>, General Convention, (Baltimore, Maryland, 1851).

The churches in Maryland could be repaired, and were, but the condition of the clergy posed a more difficult challenge. Part of the problem in securing clergy was that the parishes could not and often would not support them adequately; therefore the rectors were hesitant to take the positions.

Stable ministries were a main goal of Whittingham's because unsettledness in the clergy "unsettles doctrine, discipline and practice in the laity."[14] Closed churches meant that not only would Sundays be spent in idleness but also that the people would be exposed to ideas of heresy and false doctrine from other denominations. Whittingham preached that "decaying churches . . . tell too true a tale of decaying interest in all that raises men above the brute that lives to nourish its carcase [sic] or to work as a machine, and dies to fatten the soil or feed its slayer."[15]

While addressing the diocesan convention in 1841, Whittingham related the situation in Church Creek on the Eastern Shore, where the rector served two churches forty miles apart. The journey between the churches was across two rivers, "broad and often perilous," and in the winter it was sometimes impossible for the rector to travel between the two at all. Thus, church services were sometimes unavailable and, according to Whittingham, "churches left empty four or six

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[14]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1845], p. 21.

[15]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1848], p. 11.

months in the year, and irregularly supplied the rest, can never gather regular and thriving congregations."[16]

Whittingham claimed that the laity was chargeable for failing to support the clergy and for their unwillingness to contribute monetarily to missionary work in and outside of the diocese. This delinquency threatened "to ruin our operations at home and abroad," he claimed, "just when the buds of hope are beginning to blow."[17]

In a pastoral letter written in 1842, Whittingham discussed the poor financial situation of the diocese. He stated that if each communicant contributed six cents a week the diocese could maintain twenty missionaries in the diocese and twenty missionaries outside of the state. Instead, only three congregations received help, ten remained neglected and two counties simply had no minister. To help solve the problem a Board of Missions for the diocese was formed to take accumulated collections and distribute them.

In 1835 the General Convention of the national church formed the Board of Missions to handle missionary work. A pattern formed whereby the high church provided ministers in the United States and the evangelicals supplied missionaries to foreign countries. A missionary spirit accompanied the Oxford Movement, leading some Seminary graduates to volunteer

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[16]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1841], pp. 37-38.

[17]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1842], p. 24.

for missionary work in the western United States, and soon the high church "completely dominated the home mission." When reports of high church dominance in the west reached the low church members, they "withheld their support, and by 1850 the Society had suffered a marked decline in income."[18]

This feeling existed in Maryland and possibly provides one explanation of why Whittingham had a problem with contributions for missionary activities. Poor economic conditions in parts of the state, the Episcopalians' lack of a sense of an extended church and tendency not to support other parishes, as well as the fact that supporting the clergy remained a relatively new obligation represent other possible contributing factors to Whittingham's problem.

To help solve this problem Whittingham continued to raise the issue of supporting missionary work at each diocesan convention. In 1843 he stated that Maryland's Episcopalians were behind other denominations in this area. "None of them," he said, "so badly uses, or rather so miserably neglects to use, the means at its disposal."[19] The situation remained unimproved in 1848. There were fifteen vacant parishes and fourteen vacant clergymen willing to work but no money to put the two together.

[18]Raymond W. Albright, _A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church_ (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1964) p. 217.

[19]_Journal of the Maryland Convention_ [1843], p. 16.

Many clergy who attempted to serve in the diocese had to leave because they were unable to support themselves and their families. Some congregations requested single clergymen not burdened with a family. Concerning this matter, Whittingham warned that "Should this state of things continue, the result must be to drive the church to enforce celibacy on at least a portion of her ministry. Souls must be cared for."[20]

Support for the clergy and missionary work was another situation Whittingham closely monitored. Improvements in these areas did not occur as quickly as he wanted, but again his constant reminders to the laity and his tireless efforts resulted in a degree of success, and by 1850 Maryland was supporting 124 clergy.[21]

Whittingham's decree that souls be taken care of extended to the black population of his diocese as well. He expressed concern for the religious welfare of the slaves and free blacks. In his church services Whittingham always provided some instruction to the blacks and always made sure the slaves were present at family prayer when he was in private homes. In an 1841 address to the diocesan convention Whittingham reminded those present of their obligation to do more in the way of providing religious instruction to their slaves. He

[20]*Journal of the Maryland Convention* [1842], p. 19.

[21]*Tabular View of the Church in the United States at the Close of the Year 1850*, General Covention, (Baltimore, Maryland, 1851).

found it "lamentable to see how little <u>operative</u> and <u>practical</u>" actual instruction progressed. He added that "a heavy burden lies on us, brethren, both of the clergy and of the laity until we do more, much more, than is now done, for the servile portion of our church."[22]

Whittingham was raised in the North, without slavery, and did not like the institution. Though concerned for all blacks and believing them to be his fellow man, Whittingham did not get involved with anti-slavery, or any other reform movement, for many reasons. According to the high church principles of the time, questions not "treated directly in the scriptures or by the primitive church were . . not theological issues."[23] Therefore, such reforms as abolitionism were not seen as religious questions, but rather as political or moral issues. The Episcopal Church had acquired a bad reputation during colonial times because of its connection to the state and its politics, and because many of its clergy had supported the British during the American Revolution. Because of this, politics were left out when the high church principles were formulated. The church had "the peculiar and exclusive prerogative . . . to prepare men for another world; . . . The

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[22]<u>Journal of the Maryland Convention</u> [1841], p. 22.

[23]Robert B. Mullin, <u>Episcopal Vision, American Reality: High Church Theology and Social Thought in Evangelical America</u>, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 70.

safety of the church depends upon her keeping aloof from the excitements of the day."[24]

During the decade of the 1840s many denominations split over the slavery question. Whittingham coped with the issue by following the high church view which allowed no innovation--no change to the received order. The high church felt that the anti-slavery movement represented just such an innovation, based on modern rather than primitive views of morality. According to high church doctrine there could be no sudden innovation; rather, there must be a gradual approach to everything "since nothing in Episcopal piety or devotion happened immediately," and because a plan existed that had "God working over time in cooperation with human endeavor."[25] Whittingham's personal view that he was "content that the slave should abide in his calling until his one Master should change his condition" was in total agreement with high church doctrine.[26]

Evidence that the Episcopal Church did not get involved in political issues can be found in the fact that, according a study of high church theology, little writing was found to have been done on reform movements in the high church journal,

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[24]Alvin W. Skardon, <u>Church Leader in the Cities, William Augustus Muhlenberg</u> (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), p. 238.

[25]Mullin, p. 127.

[26]Brand, p. 265.

The Churchman.   In addition, Whittingham's personal correspondence and diaries mentioned events concerning blacks, but nothing about reforms of any kind.

If the Episcopal Church had actually faced the slavery problem and tried to deal with it, the ensuing debate might have led to a schism in the church. That, according to the high church, would be the greatest sacrilege. The high church placed emphasis "upon the sacred nature of the church" and on the fact that unity was "a mark of the spirit of God."[27] The Episcopal Church, therefore, believed that the problems other American Protestant churches were facing "came from a willingness to modify their teachings to fit the modern temper."[28]

Since the clergy were to prepare men for "another world," Whittingham felt that the task could best be accomplished by following Anglo-Catholic and high church doctrine. From 1811 to 1830 the high church in the United States had been under the leadership of Bishop John H. Hobart of New York. He was committed to the directing and instructing of "the religious life of the New York Church." Through his instruction there developed a piety and theology "unique in antebellum America," one that served as a basic alternative "to evangelical

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[27]Mullin, p. 125.

[28]Ibid., p. 115.

religious social thought."[29] Whittingham, raised in New York and confirmed by Bishop Hobart, naturally fell under his influence. The Oxford Movement, which also espoused Anglo-Catholic doctrine, had its greatest effect in the United States during the 1840s. It was during this time, the 1840s, that Whittingham came to Maryland and had to deal with the many low church clergy there.

As stated earlier, Whittingham had definite views on the role and authority of a bishop. Others, however, disagreed with those views and challenged his authority as well as his church doctrine.

In 1844 Whittingham sent out "Heads of Inquiry" requesting information on the state of the churches and parishes, which in turn would be used by the standing committee at the next diocesan convention. Whittingham knew some of the inquiries might "imply suspicion or distrust," but assured the parishes "that none exists; . . . my only motive is to carry out the laws of the church faithfully and honestly."[30] Although the majority of the diocese answered the questions, a small group of low churchmen refused on the grounds that the Bishop was exceeding his authority as stated

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[29]Ibid., p. 60.

[30]William R. Whittingham, "Heads of Inquiry," [draft], AD, February, 1844, Whittingham Papers, Maryland Diocesan Archives, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

in the canons, especially Canon XXVI. Section 2 of Cannon
XXVI stated:

> And at every visitation it shall be the
> duty of the Minister and of the Church
> Wardens of Vestry, to give information to
> the Bishop of the state of the
> Congregation, under such heads as shall
> have been committed to them in the notice
> given as aforesaid.[31]

Bishops Claggett and Kemp had issued similar inquiries in the
past, and Whittingham did not expect this trouble.
Whittingham believed someone had to yield in the matter, so
in a printed circular, an undated copy of which is in the
files of the Maryland Diocesan Archives, he wrote, "Which
ought to? should the presbyter's construction be the bishop's
rule? or is it not fitter that the bishop's construction
should prevail until proved faulty?"[32] This entire
controversy included the issuance of the original Heads of
Inquiry, a remonstrance by those opposed to them, and a
circular by Whittingham to those opposed. These documents
reveal the lengths that Whittingham had to go to in order to
carry out his authority.

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[31]Constitution and Canons For the Government of the
Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America,
(New York: Swords, Stanford & Co., 1838), p. 17.

[32]Whittingham, "Circular," D, 1844, Whittingham Papers,
Maryland Diocesan Archives, Maryland Historical Society,
Baltimore, Maryland.

"I am just at present in the midst of the Philistines," wrote Whittingham from Frederick County in a four-page letter to his mother,

> in that portion of my diocese which is
> under the influence, almost exclusively,
> of clergymen who are bitterly opposed to
> my measures, and my principles.   An
> unexpected specimen of this opposition has
> been given me within the last 24 hours.[33]

Whittingham went on to describe how he was to consecrate St. Luke's Church and noted that two weeks earlier the rector had inquired into the procedure to make sure everything would be ready when the time came.

He told the rector a Deed of Donation and Request to consecrate would be necessary and gave the rector the necessary form.   It seemed that the rector objected to a clause in the form requesting "the said bishop to take the said house <u>under his spiritual jurisdiction</u> (emphasis supplied), and that of his successors in office."[34]   This passage, according to the rector, indicated a tendency to go beyond the "canonical restrictions of the power of a bishop," Whittingham noted, "and he thought the same disposition was

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[33]William Whittingham to Mary Ann Whittingham, October 1845, Maryland Diocesan Archives.

[34]Ibid.

still more plainly shown in my insisting on the presentation of a deed, when the rubric did not. . . . ."[35]

Whittingham replied that the deed was always used in England and in the United States, and although there were some people trying to make innovations in the church by way of objections, he was determined to hand down to his successor "the trust committed to me undiminished and unchanged by one jot." He concluded by saying he would "quietly and humbly but steadfastly resist any attempt at the advancement of novel claims as objections."[36]

Whittingham addressed this issue at the 1846 diocesan convention. He confirmed that some "differences of opinion in doctrinal matters and of practice in ritual and discipline . . . ." still existed, but reassured those who feared his Anglo-Catholicism, and warned those he felt exhibited too much Catholicism, that the church was not heading toward the "yoke of Roman bondage."[37] As far as ritualism was concerned, he felt that the Book of Common Prayer should be changed only when it no longer provided adequate instruction; until then all should remain obedient to the established rules and custom of the church. Whittingham tried to convince everyone that the uneasiness created by the parties' different practices and

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1846], p. 24.

customs "will become extinct . . . as we understand one another better and trust one another more."[38] As the tension continued, problems arose over even simple matters such as when to wear the surplice and the interior arrangement of the church furnishings. Whittingham suggested that whereas uniformity would be desirable it was not to be achieved "at the expense of peace."[39]

Another problem occurred during Whittingham's first ten years in office, one which proved that differences between a bishop and priest as to churchmanship could lead to matters of discipline and new canons. In 1846-47, the Rev. Joseph Trapnell, Jr., a low churchman and rector of St. Andrew's parish in Baltimore, asserted that the rector alone could administer communion to his congregation, that the bishop had no canon allowing him to assume that duty during visitations, nor did he have the right to take the collections for diocesan use. Trapnell insisted it was by Whittingham's own innovation that Whittingham have full "episcopal prerogatives during his visitations."[40] Trapnell published the correspondence he had with Whittingham "in justification of his course and to defend himself against misrepresentation." Trapnell was brought to trial before the diocesan court for opposing Whittingham,

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[38]Ibid., p. 25.

[39]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1844], p. 30.

[40]Albright, p. 242.

incompatibility with the character of a Christian minister, and "grossly indecorous" language.[41]   The case was decided against Trapnell for opposing Whittingham and for indecorous language, and since an appeal process did not exist in the diocesan convention, some of those sympathetic to Trapnell asked the General Convention to take action on the matter.

As a result, the General Convention passed a canon in 1850 supporting Whittingham's claims and stating that it was the bishop's duty to visit every parish in the diocese regularly to examine the state of the church, inspect the behavior of the clergy, minister the Word, and possibly communion.[42]   The last provision, however, was probably directed at Bishop Manton Eastburn of Massachusetts. Eastburn refused to visit one of his Anglo-Catholic churches, the Church of the Advent in Boston, because it would not conform its services and interior arrangements to his wishes. Thus, Whittingham was not the only bishop affected by differences in churchmanship.

Like the bishops before him, Whittingham tried to concentrate his efforts toward keeping the church unified by working out party disputes, but these problems, too, were never completely solved. Whittingham knew that he would have to continue dealing with the low churchmen, and he showed some

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[41]Brand, p. 328.

[42]Manross, <u>American Episcopal Church</u>, p. 283.

flexibility on, certain issues but remained inflexible concerning ritualism, procedure, and his role as bishop.

At the beginning of Whittingham's episcopate, the high church emphasized that a good and thorough knowledge of theology was sufficient for clergymen and therefore placed more importance on piety and less on intellectual curiosity. On this matter Whittingham differed from high church ideas. His own profound intellectual curiosity led him to be one of the most learned churchmen of his time, and his background with the Sunday School Union and the General Theological Seminary proved that he was very interested in education. Whittingham realized that the church faced problems concerning growth and adequate support. "The hopes of the church are in the young," stressed Whittingham as he addressed the 1843 diocesan convention. His attitude toward education, which he felt was one solution to those problems, was revealed later in his speech when he said:

> Neglect them, and all other effort is
> little better than thrown away. . . . I
> regard it, therefore, as no small portion
> of my duty . . . to watch over, protect,
> and foster schools, in which religion may
> be given its due place. . . .[43]

Whittingham believed that by giving children a religious as well as a literary education they would grow up supporting the

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[43]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1843], p. 21.

church. It is not surprising then that Whittingham soon began to establish church schools of a high character.[44]

Opportunities came right at the start, in 1841, when Whittingham received two offers he could not turn down. The first came in January from some church members near Hagerstown. They offered to purchase an old mansion, Fountain Rock, and place it and its land at Whittingham's disposal if he could establish a diocesan school there. Second, in July, the trustees of the Patapsco Female Institute, in what is now Ellicott City, offered to turn it over to the diocese. The establishment of these two schools would be the largest undertaking of Whittingham's educational goals. The College of St. James was so important to Whittingham that he considered it "_first_ among the many interests in his diocese."[45]

St. James Hall, a school for boys over twelve years of age, was to be established at Fountain Rock. All the diocese had to do was to furnish the completed building with all the necessary goods. When finished, and when the diocesan standing committee was authorized to receive it, the building and twenty acres of land would be turned over to the diocese.

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[44]Brand, p. 286.

[45]Hall Harrison, _Life of The Right Reverend John Barrett Kerfoot, First Bishop of Pittsburgh_, (New York: James Pott & Co., 1886), p. 155.

When Whittingham first brought this proposal to the attention of the diocesan convention, it appeared that enough monetary support existed to open the school by May of 1842. However, Whittingham did not receive the support he needed and the opening date was pushed back to October of 1842.

That date would not be met either, and an indefinite postponement of the school opening resulted from a lack of funds. Whittingham's intense desire to see the school built meant that he was willing to sacrifice his own as well as his family's needs. Every spare penny went to St. James, which prompted Mrs. Whittingham to say that the Bishop would leave their children "without butter to their bread." Whittingham replied that "our Father has taught us to pray for bread, and I doubt not He will give it us. If it should be His good pleasure that we should eat it dry, I suppose we can learn to do without butter."[46]

In August of 1841, however, Whittingham learned that a legacy by a Maryland clergyman was at his disposal, "for the advancement of literature and religion," which amounted to $2,100, enough to open the school on time.[47] Whittingham hoped from then on that St. James would be supported well enough that the diocese could afford to educate the sons of

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[46]Brand, p. 290.

[47]William Whittingham to Hannah Whittingham, 3 August 1841, Maryland Diocesan Archives.

"half-paid" clergy, the fatherless and the destitute as "faithful ministers and pious laymen."[48]

Originally, St. James Hall was to be a branch of College Point, a school in New York operated by the Rev. Dr. William Muhlenberg. Muhlenberg was also intensely interested in education, and since College Point was at the time the only school similar to what Whittingham envisioned of St. James, Whittingham turned to Muhlenberg for assistance. In the end, however, the schools remained separate, and Muhlenberg sent his former student and then associate, John B. Kerfoot, to Maryland. Hall Harrison, biographer of Kerfoot, states that both Kerfoot and Whittingham were "inspired from early manhood with the idea that the Church of Christ and the education of the young were causes worth toiling for, and that they had a holy commission to fulfill."[49] In 1844 a charter of incorporation and license to confer degrees was obtained from the Maryland legislature, and St. James Hall became the College of St. James. The college operated under the direction of the Rev. John Kerfoot until 1864, when it closed as a result of financial problems caused by the Civil War.

The Patapsco Female Institute at Ellicott Mills was already established when Whittingham and the diocese took control. The trustees offered it to the Bishop on the

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[48]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1844], p. 26.

[49]Harrison, p. 156.

condition that he operate a school there under his own supervision. Whittingham agreed and once he obtained approval from the diocese set out to find a competent headmistress. Mrs. Almira Hart Lincoln Phelps of New York received the appointment. A pioneer educator, especially in the field of female education, she believed in and furthered the idea that the sciences were fit subjects for girls.[50]

Whittingham was involved in all aspects of St. James and the Patapsco Female Institute while it remained a diocesan school. Concerning the Institute, voluminous files of correspondence between Whittingham and Phelps regarding curriculum, faculty--those needed and their backgrounds; finances, the proper chaplain, and discipline exist. Likewise, the letters that passed between Whittingham and Kerfoot concerning St. James are numerous. Here again, Whittingham involved himself in everything concerning the school, down to the smallest detail. In a letter to his wife Hannah, Whittingham gave details about the building plans and even drew a diagram of the floor plans.

Besides St. James and the Patapsco Female Institute, Whittingham and the diocese supervised St. Clements at Ellicott Mills, for boys under twelve years of age, and St. Timothy's Hall. Other schools that were not diocesan but were

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[50]Dumas Malone, ed. <u>Dictionary of American Biography</u> (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), s.v., "Phelps, Almira Hart Lincoln," vol. xiv, p. 524.

managed on the principles of the church and in which Whittingham took an interest included the Hannah Moore Academy in Reistertown, which would become a diocesan school in 1856; St. John's Institute near Georgetown; St. Mary's Hall for girls in Baltimore; Landon Female Institute; Ingleside School, for girls near Catonsville; Rock Hill Institute at Ellicott Mills, for boys; and Trinity School. These are the schools Whittingham dealt with in the 1840s; there would be more schools as Whittingham's episcopacy progressed.

To benefit institutions that were not strictly religious, but still under the management of church members, Whittingham drew up the "Office for the Use of Schools." The Office's purpose was "to nurture up the little ones who may be taught to use it, in the spirit of God's most holy fear, and in the love of His Holy name and word."[51] In addition, Whittingham kept a file of circulars and pamphlets put out by other religiously affiliated church schools throughout the country because he liked to keep abreast of new developments in those areas.

Whittingham's self-sacrifice and persistent efforts at education yielded results. In 1846 students from four church schools accounted for one-tenth of the total number of confirmations in the diocese. By 1850, more than 500 students, of both sexes, attended institutions established by,

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[51]Journal of the Maryland Convention [1842], p. 50.

or under the control of, the Church in Maryland.[52] To Whittingham, those 500 students represented the Church's future support. Whittingham considered the establishment of the College of St. James to be the greatest achievement of his episcopacy, and upon its close, his greatest disappointment.

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[52]Journal of the Convention [1846]; Journal of the Covention [1850], pp. 34, 13.

SUMMARY

The Episcopal Church had a difficult time organizing,
obtaining bishops and gaining trust during the first several
decades after the American Revolution. The role of the
church's first bishops was to gain trust and set the stage for
those that followed, and they did so. Some dioceses were wise
enough to elect succeeding bishops who could go even further
than their predecessors and promote growth in their dioceses.
William R. Whittingham was one of those bishops.

As a result of Whittingham's actions, communicant totals
in Maryland rose from 3,992 in 1840 to 7,473 in 1850, an
increase of approximately 90 percent. The number of parishes
increased over 80 percent, going from 58 in 1840 to 106 in
1850. According to the "Tabular View of the Church in the
United States at the Close of the Year 1850," compiled by the
General Convention in 1851, the Diocese of Maryland, though
twenty-second in area, ranked third in the number of clergy
and fourth in the total number of communicants, surpassed only
by New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.[1]

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[1]Tabular View of the Church in the United States at the
Close of the Year 1850, General Convention, (Baltimore,
Maryland, 1851).

Growth in the states around Maryland also occurred, but not as dramatically. Communicant totals in Delaware increased 72 percent and 62 percent in Virginia. The largest increases in communicant totals, however, were in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Connecticut, smaller in size and population than Maryland, had the total number of communicants increase from 4,530 in 1938 to 9,360 in 1850; an increase of approximately 106 percent. In Pennsylvania, larger in size and population than Maryland, communicant totals rose from 5,781 in 1938 to 11,750 in 1850 which was an increase of 103 percent. Although Maryland did not lead the way in growth, it ranked near the top.

The General Convention also compiled a "Tabular Arrangement of the American Dioceses; According to Sundry Existing Relations." One category is listed as Absolute Ecclesiastical Momentum, in which Maryland ranked third. How the results of that category were arrived at is unclear, but it nevertheless reflects the zeal that Whittingham had and inspired in his diocese. Whittingham's success was perhaps best described in 1879 by an old clergyman who had voted for Whittingham in the 1840 election, "His course through the diocese could be traced by the revival of decayed parishes."[2]

Whittingham arrived in Maryland entirely committed to his job, full of zeal, and ready to tackle the problems facing

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[2]Brand, p. 241.

him. He relentlessly reminded church members of their duties concerning support for the churches and clergy, adhered to church policy concerning political questions, strove to lessen the problems between the high and low church parties, and committed himself completely to religiously based education in the diocese. He was flexible and diplomatic when he had to be, yet totally inflexible on matters he felt strongly about. Whittingham offered strong leadership at a time when the Church faced confusion and controversy over the Oxford Movement and began moving in a new direction. The achievements of Whittingham's first ten years laid the foundation for the continued success and growth of the Diocese of Maryland.

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