

Toward a Renewed Theological Framework of Catholic Racial Justice: A Vision Inspired by the Life and Writings of Dr. Arthur Grand Pré Falls

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TOWARD A RENEWED THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF
CATHOLIC RACIAL JUSTICE: A VISION INSPIRED BY THE LIFE AND
WRITINGS OF DR. ARTHUR GRAND PRÉ FALLS

By

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ABSTRACT
TOWARD A RENEWED THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF
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Lincoln Rice

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Catholic theological thought in the field of racial justice has evolved considerably during the 20th century—and even more so over the past twenty years. I analyze changes in Catholic racial justice concerning the use of black Catholic sources and the role for African American Catholics in working toward a more racially just society. In order to properly critique and augment more recent developments in the field of Catholic racial justice, this work retrieves the life and writings of Dr. Arthur Grand Pré Falls (1901-2000), a black Catholic medical doctor who worked ceaselessly for racial justice within the Catholic, political, educational, medical, and residential institutions of the Chicago area. The life and writings of Falls confirm that black historical retrieval and a role for African Americans in racial justice projects (or black agency) are prerequisites for the success of any Catholic racial justice project.

Chapter one delineates the use of African American sources and black agency within the work of American Catholic theologians, United States Bishops' documents, and Vatican documents during the 20th and early 21st centuries. Chapter two outlines the life of Arthur Falls—his family and educational background, his work and positions within the Chicago Urban League, the Federated Colored Catholics, the Chicago Catholic Worker, as well as his focused assaults on segregation in the housing and medical fields in his later life. Chapter three examines the writings of Falls in the field of theology and race relations. His writings provide insight into the fluid relationship that he entertained between contemporary theological thought and the suffering caused by racism in Chicago. Chapter four integrates the life and writings of Falls with the insights of current Catholic theological reflection on the social sciences, racial justice, and modes of action for addressing racism. This final chapter exhibits the efficacy of Falls as a resource for Catholic racial justice projects and the necessity of organized and authentically interracial collaboration if one hopes to achieve lasting positive results.

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INTRODUCTION

SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT & STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Essentially, the problem can be stated as follows: an inadequate understanding of racism plagues official Catholic documents and Catholic ethical scholarship in the United States. Before explicating this statement, let me begin by setting the context of the proposed research that makes this dissertation unique and significant.

The immediate context is the discovery of an unpublished memoir manuscript composed in 1962 by the black Catholic medical doctor Arthur Grand Pré Falls (1901–2000). This memoir is a *new* source of information about a man who has been largely absent in writings on black and/or Catholic American history. While doing research during spring 2009 for a doctoral seminar in American Catholic Theology with Dr. Patrick W. Carey, I came across the edited memoir (about 620 pages, typed) of Falls when I made an unsolicited phone call to his octogenarian niece in Kalamazoo, MI. I then aided the head of the Raynor Library Archives at Marquette University in obtaining these personal papers for Raynor's Social Action Collection. This source, of which certain pieces were missing, was augmented with about 180 pages from a very incomplete first draft of Falls's memoir that was part of the August Meier Papers at New York Public Library.¹ The use of this newly discovered memoir, as well as the following resources, is what will make my contribution to the field of racial justice unique. Along

¹ Arthur G. Falls, *Reminiscence*, 1962, manuscript, Catholic Social Actions Collections, Raynor Library Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI; Arthur Falls, *Unpublished autobiography*, 1962, manuscript, August Meier Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY. These two sources are two parts of a memoir that is not available in one complete copy. I will only use the second source to fill in missing parts of the first source. Falls made notes and corrections to the first source. The second source of the memoir has no corrections.

with the sources cited thus far, Falls had numerous other writings in publications such as the *New York Catholic Worker*, the *Chicago Catholic Worker*, the *St. Elizabeth Chronicle*, the *Interracial Review*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Sign*, and *America*. Moreover, there are numerous archival sources in the Chicago area that aided me in confirming many of the episodes relayed by Falls and in piecing together those parts of his life that were not covered in the memoir.

Falls is most well-known for founding the first Catholic Worker in Chicago in 1936 and worked tirelessly on racial justice issues within the Catholic Church and the Chicago area for decades. Historical references to Falls are often limited to a few sentences; even Cyprian Davis's *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*,² which is the first and only work dealing with the entire history of black Catholics in America, does not mention Falls.

This newly discovered memoir documents Falls's family background, childhood, and adult life until the mid-1940s. It chronicles the life of a man who dedicated almost every spare minute of his adult life to improving the situation of African Americans in the Chicago area. A short, but not exhaustive, list of the organizations and groups that Falls was involved with are: the Catholic Worker movement, the Chicago Urban League, the Federated Colored Catholics (later the National Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations), The American League Against War and Fascism, Chicago Catholic Worker Credit Union, Cooperative Wholesale and Consumer Cooperative Services, People's Consumer Cooperative, Chicago Catholic Interracial Council, Citizens Committee for Adequate Medical Care, Ogden Park Citizens Committee, the Cook

² Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990).

County Physicians Association, National Medical Association, Illinois State Commission on the Urban Colored Population, Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Chicago Chapter of the Post War World Council, and St. John of the Cross Catholic Church in Western Springs, IL.

In the March 1941 issue of the *Chicago Catholic Worker*, Falls wrote an article against restrictive housing covenants,³ which prevented blacks from living in the more desirable parts of the Chicago area. In expressing why Catholics in particular should be concerned about race relations, he stated: “Catholics are adherents of a faith which proclaims the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which Body still remains mythical, not mystical to too many of its members.” He went on to testify: “the overwhelming majority of our Chicago Catholics have been either active leaders or passive followers in these discriminatory practices.”⁴ The doctrine of the mystical body of Christ permeates Falls’s life and writings, whether implicitly or explicitly. Falls viewed racism as rooted in a heretical understanding of Christianity that was foreign to Christianity’s true nature. Falls dedicated his life to fighting this evil with the same tenacity that early Christian saints dedicated themselves to fighting their contemporary heresies. It is his vision for Catholic racial justice, which brought together both theory and active struggle, that is needed as a corrective and inspiration for contemporary Catholic thought on racial justice. His emphasis on struggle could aid in bridging the divide that often exists in

³ Falls, “Restrictive Covenants Create Negro Ghettos: Chicago No Example for Rest of World,” *Chicago Catholic Worker*, March 1941, pp. 1-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

theology between theological thought and action. This combination of thought and action echoes liberation theology's notion of "practical mediation" or theological praxis.⁵

Despite the work of Falls and countless others like him, racial injustice continues to pervade American society. To state this more succinctly: the reality still prevails that being black means that one will experience "racial prejudice, discrimination, rejection, and hostility" and being white means that one will experience "*the presumption of dominance and entitlement... [and being] the measure of normativity.*"⁶ For those who think that racism ceased to be a problem when Barack Obama was elected president of the United States, Bryan N. Massingale gives countless examples of racist acts that occurred within the first two hundred days of Obama taking office. Among them are the "resurgence of race-based hate groups and militia movements" and Obama receiving more death threats than any previous presidential candidate, president-elect, or president.⁷ Bishop Dale Melczek of Gary, Indiana points out that the "very existence of segregated communities is a sad testimony to the fact that people of faith have not translated religious values into action."⁸ In a 2002 article, M. Shawn Copeland gave fourteen recent examples of racist actions in the United States in order to illustrate that racism is still one of the signs of the times. Among them, she notes the killing of James Byrd, a black man

⁵ For more information on the notions of theological praxis and practical mediation, see Patricia McAuliffe, *Fundamental Ethics: A Liberationist Approach* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1993), 130-43; Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 1-42.

⁶ Bryan N. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 19, 24. Italics in the original.

⁷ Ibid., 6-8.

⁸ Dale J. Melczek, "Created in God's Image: A Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism and a Call to Conversion" (Gary, Indiana, 6 August 2003). <http://www.dcgary.org/pdf/Created-In-Gods-Image.pdf>.

who was dragged to death behind a truck by a group of young white men.⁹ In addition, Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer recently published a 784 page book examining aspects of racial domination and progress in all aspects of contemporary society.¹⁰ More recently, there was national outrage and tension over the murder of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed seventeen-year-old African American. He was shot by a neighborhood watch volunteer who states that he killed Trayvon in self-defense.¹¹ Most of the above examples point to blatant explosions of racial tension that exist in the United States. These examples also point to a more subtle racism below the surface that can be more difficult to discern since it is not as blatant as the Jim Crow system that preceded it.¹²

For the last hundred years (and even before that), Catholic ethical thought in the area of racism has almost exclusively consisted of white Catholic clergy (and laypersons after Vatican II) writing and speaking about how whites should be more civil in their interpersonal interactions with blacks. In other words, the remedies put forth can be distilled almost solely to moral suasion. No need was seen to make use of African

⁹ M. Shawn Copeland, "Racism and the Vocation of the Christian Theologian," *Spiritus* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 22-24.

¹⁰ Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009). They are also releasing another book on the subject in the near future: Mustafa Emirbayer and Matthew Desmond, *The Theory of Racial Domination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

¹¹ Jennifer Preston and Colin Moynihan, "Death of Florida Teen Spurs Outcry and Action," New York Times, 21 March 2012, <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/21/death-of-florida-teen-spurs-national-outrage-and-action/> (accessed 23 April 2012).

¹² There is a definite connection between the Jim Crow and contemporary forms of racism, which is why Daniel Maguire appropriately refers to racism in its contemporary manifestation as Jim Crow, Jr. Daniel C. Maguire, *A New American Justice: Ending the White Male Monopolies* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1980), 5, 15. This is a stark reminder that our current situation has grown out of previous historical circumstances.

American sources or to advocate for any active agency on the part of blacks. Over the past twenty years a shift has begun among Catholic ethicists who engage racism to employ African American sources and promote black agency, or a role for African Americans to play in furthering their liberation. Jon Nilson, the white theologian who has perhaps most seriously considered the issue of racism, believes that the problem with white Catholic theologians is that they are blind to contemporary forms of racism and white privilege. He ponders how this can be the case when many of these same theologians have no problem addressing anti-Semitism, feminism, and class issues despite their non-membership in those groups most directly affected.¹³ Nilson sees the racism of white Catholic theologians as having taken two forms: *ignoring* the issue of racism “as a fundamental contradiction of the gospel and *marginalizing* black theology.”¹⁴ Catholic thought on racism must be inclusive of black thought because no theology is universal or relatively adequate for all times, places, and issues.¹⁵ Essentially, there is a great inadequacy in Catholic ethical reflection regarding racism.

This inadequacy also extends to official Catholic reflection as found in documents from the Vatican and U.S. bishops. As with most Catholic scholarly reflection over the past 100 years, none of the statements make any serious use of black or black Catholic sources. This omission of African American resources is in itself a damning indictment of a mentality that functionally posits that white European reflection is adequate for all times and places.

¹³ Jon Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain: Why White Theologians Need Black Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 4-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

A rethinking of racial justice thus requires a more attentive engagement with black Catholic thought. Falls represents a shift from traditional Catholic ethical thought on racial justice. In his thought and writings, he seamlessly brought together traditional Catholic dogmas and doctrines with the everyday experiences of African Americans. Although his writings did not always indicate the role of black agency, his very active and busy life in the pursuit of racial justice spoke volumes. The dissertation's ethical framework, which is grounded in the life and thought of Falls, is part of the necessary retrieval of black voices—and particularly black Catholic voices. The work of Cyprian Davis noted above has only begun to realize the richness of the all but forgotten history of black Catholics in the United States. With the newly discovered personal papers of Falls and his other forgotten writings, there is an opportunity to retrieve an important voice that was almost lost.

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY¹⁶

The central thesis guiding the dissertation is that the retrieval of Arthur Falls as a new source of information can bring a fuller and deeper understanding to current notions of Catholic racial justice. This renewed understanding will view racism not only as sin, but rooted in a heretical understanding of Christianity—particularly a denial of the mystical body of Christ. Such a view provides new types of practices for combating racism.

¹⁶ LIMIT: This dissertation will stay within the confines of the United States and focus almost exclusively on racism against African Americans. Although current immigration controversies and a growing Latino population add a new and important dimension to the discussion, it would make this work too large and unmanageable. Also, as Bryan Massingale has pointed out, “the estrangement between black and white Americans has shaped American life in decisive ways not matched by either the estrangement between whites and other racial/ethnic groups, or the tensions among the ‘groups of color.’” Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, xi.

First and foremost, this central thesis will be fulfilled vis-à-vis the newly discovered memoir of Falls. The 800+ pages discovered with his niece and the New York Public Library add a rich and abundant resource for knowing more about the forgotten life of Falls and the inner motivations for the life that he led. Since Falls had been largely forgotten, there has never been a project to use his life and writings to inform a theological racial justice framework.

Two theoretical methodologies inform the approach and perspective of the dissertation: critical historical retrieval and liberation theology's "practical mediation" or theological praxis. Critical historical retrieval allows for the retrieval of important sources and figures that have been omitted, ignored, or silenced. Stacey Floyd-Thomas employs a similar method with her womanist ethical methodology. Floyd-Thomas believes that it is essential in ethics to examine the lives of oppressed black women so that one can understand how they "survived and subverted" the advances of racism and sexism.¹⁷ She points to the stories of Harriet Jacobs and Sojourner Truth as examples of black women who "maintain—or even attain—a sense of dignity and self-worth that is in contradistinction to her social status."¹⁸ In surveying the slave narratives of black women, Floyd-Thomas posits: "the moral system(s) of these enslaved black women formed, informed, and transformed not only their moral systems and those of others around them, but often altered their social circumstances as well." Within the context of her retrieval of female African American voices, she asks: "*How do you resurrect the*

¹⁷ Stacy M. Floyd-Thomas, *Mining the Motherlode: Methods in Womanist Ethics* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2006), 105.

¹⁸ Ibid., 120. Harriet Jacobs (1813-1897) was born as a slave in North Carolina and was most famous for her book, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) was a famous abolitionist and speaker who had escaped slavery in 1826.

ethical realities and concerns of black women from the ‘underside of history’?”¹⁹ This question is just as relevant for this study if it is slightly rephrased: How do you resurrect the ethical realities and concerns of African American Catholics from the “underside of history”? The assumption here is that the ignoring of African American figures by white Catholic ethicists has led to an inadequate and often harmful vision of racial justice, when the topic is addressed at all. Therefore, a retrieval of the life and writings of Falls will be a necessary aspect of this dissertation. Through this critical historical retrieval, I hope to contribute to an American Catholic historical, ethical, and theological field that has often ignored black sources.

Liberation theology’s theological praxis allows a new experience to inform a new understanding and practice, which leads to an improved theological framework.²⁰ In addition, a liberationist ethic believes that an ethic that does not address suffering “cannot be taken seriously.”²¹ This understanding of ethics gives an “epistemological privilege” to the poor, since it is the poor who experience suffering firsthand.²² With this in mind, genuine responses to suffering must be willing to go beyond standard academic responses and be willing to integrate new data.²³ Within the context of this dissertation, the life and writings of Falls will act as a new experience. This experience is new because Falls has been unknown to contemporary historians and ethicists. As a new source of information,

¹⁹ Ibid., 105. Italics in the original.

²⁰ McAuliffe, *Fundamental Ethics*, 134.

²¹ McAuliffe, *Fundamental Ethics*, x. For liberationists, suffering is foundational for ethics.

²² Ibid., 34 n10.

²³ Ibid., 127-28.

the life narrative and ethical thought presented by Falls introduce new types of thought and practices for understanding and combating racism. These practices and writings can then be recapitulated into an improved theological framework for addressing racial justice in Catholic ethical thought. A *more* relevant approach to dealing with the evil of racism is the most that this work can hope to accomplish. And, of course, as more retrieval and listening to African American figures occur, even more relevant and adequate frameworks can be proposed.

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

In the first chapter, I will examine more deeply the current state of Catholic racial justice, particularly as pertains to the role of black agency and the use of the intellectual, cultural, and ecclesial experiences of African Americans. The first section of this chapter will examine those sources that offer a more limited view of the African American experience and black agency. The latter section will examine those sources that give greater legitimacy for African American experience and agency. The first section will examine Vatican documents, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' documents, the statements of individual bishops, and the life and writings of John LaFarge (a contemporary of Falls). The latter section will examine James Cone,²⁴ Shawn Copeland, Bryan Massingale, Jon Nilson, Alex Mikulich, and Laurie Cassidy.

The next two chapters will examine the life and writings of Falls. The second chapter will present the life of Falls. To put Falls into his proper black Catholic historical context, I will give a brief survey of Daniel Rudd and the Black Catholic Congress

²⁴ James Cone is, of course, not Catholic. But, as will be seen below, he is the interlocutor most used by Catholic ethicists when discussing racial justice. In addition, he is considered the founder of black liberation theology and is still an influential and pivotal figure in the field of racial justice.

movement of the late 19th century, which momentarily empowered a generation of educated black Catholics. I will then examine Falls's childhood, medical career, family life, Catholic Church experiences, as well as his involvement with the Chicago Urban League, the Federated Colored Catholics, the Catholic Worker, and his integration into the totally white Chicago suburb of Western Springs, Illinois. In order to accomplish this, I will make heavy use of the newly discovered 800+ page rough draft memoir that I discovered with his octogenarian niece, articles he wrote for the *St. Elizabeth Chronicle*, *Interracial Review*, the *New York Catholic Worker*, the *Chicago Catholic Worker*, an interview he gave in 1988, and archival material located at Marquette University Archives—Social Action Collection, the Chicago Urban League's archival material at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, court case records on file at the National Archives in Chicago and the Richard J. Daley Center, the Chicago Historical Society, the Wisconsin Historical Society, the Chicago Public School Archives, the Western Springs Historical Society, and St. John of the Cross Catholic Church in Western Springs, IL, where Falls was a founding church member in 1960.

The third chapter will mine the writings of Falls in order to more precisely tie his life and actions to his thought concerning racial justice and unearth his ethical perspective. These writings will make use of the same sources as above, though the emphasis will be different. I will draw out and examine Fall's theology, the motivations for his actions, as well as the evolution of his thought that occurred in response to new personal and social experiences. I will accomplish this through looking at the primary theological concepts and other important themes that permeate the writing of Falls. I will give particular attention to the doctrine and image of the mystical body of Christ, which

he contrasted with a heretical doctrine that he identified as the mythical body of Christ.²⁵ Because this concept is so important for Falls, I will also examine the historical context of the theology of the mystical body of Christ during the 20th century. I will then examine his thought concerning sin, discipleship, interracialism, the social sciences, white privilege, the role of blacks and whites in racial justice, and his analysis concerning the necessity of struggle for opportunity.

The final chapter will synthesize a new understanding of racial justice in Catholic theology that is inspired by Falls. The chapter will begin by proposing a definition of Catholic racial justice inspired by Falls. Then, the current landscape of the reality of racism in the United States as found in the social sciences will be considered. Next, the inadequacy of racism as sin will be recognized and this will lead to scrutinizing the notion of racism as a heresy. After reenvisioning racism as heresy as found in the thought of Falls, the extent that this notion is already present to varying degrees in the thought of theologians such as Cone, Massingale, Copeland, and Nilson will be explored. This will be followed by an appraisal of various responses to heresy in the Christian tradition and how one approaches the tension that exists from living in a heretical church. I will then touch on the need for active and organized struggle, of which Falls's life is a prime example. Falls's life challenges the divide between action and theological thought, and attempts a reconciliation. Falls struggled to reconcile blacks and whites via truth-telling, personal interaction, and enforced integration in the areas of housing, medicine, education, and religion. Lastly, Falls will be examined as a sign of hope.

²⁵ Falls, "Restrictive Covenants Create Negro Ghettos: Chicago No Example for Rest of World," p. 2.

By using the resources and methods listed above, it is my hope that this dissertation can make the following three contributions: 1) draw attention to the necessity of African American sources and focusing on black agency in Catholic racial justice, 2) expose the life of Dr. Arthur Grand Pré Falls to a new generation of Catholics, and 3) deepen our current understanding of Catholic racial justice.

CHAPTER 1: THE ROLE OF BLACK AGENCY AND EXPERIENCE IN CATHOLIC RACIAL THOUGHT

This chapter will examine more deeply the current state of Catholic racial justice—particularly as pertains to the role of black agency and the use of African American sources in Catholic racial justice. “Black agency” refers to the role that African Americans are deemed to possess in working toward racial justice in society and “the use of black sources” refers to the extent that the intellectual, cultural, and ecclesial experiences of African Americans are incorporated into a theological framework of racial justice. The first section of this chapter will survey those sources that offer a more limited view of African American sources and black agency. The latter section will consider those sources that make greater use of and give greater legitimacy to black agency and experience. The first section will begin with an examination of the life and writings of John LaFarge, who, in addition to being a contemporary of Falls, was the most prominent American exponent of Catholic racial justice in the first half of the 20th century whose impact is still discernible in the documents of American bishops. This section will then appraise documents from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Vatican documents, and the statements of individual American bishops. The second section will examine James Cone, Shawn Copeland, Bryan Massingale, Jon Nilson, Alex Mikulich, and Laurie Cassidy.

SOURCES OFFERING LIMITED USE OF BLACK AGENCY AND EXPERIENCE

John LaFarge

John LaFarge, S.J. (1880-1963), a contemporary of Falls, was the most famous champion of racial justice in the first half of the 20th century.¹ He rose to prominence in the interracial relations movement when he became involved with the Federated Colored Catholics (FCC). The FCC was founded in 1924 by Dr. Thomas Wyatt Turner (1877-1978), a biologist, for “the development of self-consciousness, pride, identity, and leadership among blacks.”² The independence of this group from clerical leadership and its methods of self-determination to solve the oppression of blacks made LaFarge uncomfortable. As David Southern observes, “LaFarge simply disliked protest with an

¹ Though primarily remembered for his work for racial justice, LaFarge also gained some fame in recent years when it was discovered that he had wrote an encyclical for Pius XI that condemned racism and anti-Semitism. Pius XI died before the publication of the encyclical. For more information, see Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky, *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XII*, trans. Steven Rendall (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997); Robert A. Hecht, *An Ordinary Man: A Life of Fr. John LaFarge, S.J.* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1996). The document on anti-Semitism written by LaFarge for Pius XI contains a similar theological understanding of the problem of racism in the United States. For LaFarge and the Vatican, theological understandings of racism are the same despite the cultural context. In addition, the 1988 Vatican document on racism, *The Church and Racism: Toward a More Fraternal Society*, which will be covered below, proposes a common understanding of racism that is shared by anti-Semitism, racism against blacks in the United States, and the situation of apartheid that existed in South Africa. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Church and Racism: Toward a More Fraternal Society*, 3 November 1988, EWTN.com, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pcjpraci.htm> (accessed 13 May 2012), 7, 9, 15, 31, 33.

² Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 31. The FCC will only be briefly mentioned here; the focus in this section will be the theology and praxis of LaFarge. The FCC will be addressed more concretely in the next two chapters through Falls’s involvement with the organization. For more information on the FCC, see Marilyn Wenzke Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest and the Federated Colored Catholics 1917-1933* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

African American accent.”³ He believed that the group should have clerical leadership and focus primarily on employing moral suasion and appealing to white sympathy to bring about racial justice.⁴ In 1932, after garnering enough support from black Catholics within the FCC, LaFarge and fellow Jesuit, William Markoe, orchestrated a constitutional revision of the FCC, which resulted in a change of aims and leadership for the organization.⁵ As Southern notes, after LaFarge took over the movement, “[i]nstead of raising a cadre of black leaders, the Catholic interracial movement actually helped create a vacuum of black leadership in the church.”⁶ Essentially, LaFarge “found it difficult to think beyond papal encyclicals,”⁷ and the papal encyclical tradition does not advocate that the oppressed confront their oppressors. Papal encyclicals promote the use of moral suasion to convince those in power to act properly.⁸

In LaFarge’s 1937 book, *Interracial Justice*, well before *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, he advocated for the integration of public and Catholic schooling in

³ David W. Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 362.

⁴ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 47-50.

⁵ Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 32. The organization eventually became known as the Catholic Interracial Council. Markoe left the organization shortly after the takeover in the fall of 1935. Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest and the Federated Colored Catholics*, 206.

⁶ Southern, *John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism*, 361.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁸ For more information on moral suasion in the papal encyclical tradition, see Albino Berrera, “The Evolution of Social Ethics: Using Economic History to Understand Economic Ethics,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 27, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 285-304; Bernard Brady, Kenneth Goodpaster, and Robert Kennedy, “*Rerum Novarum* and the Modern Corporation,” *International Journal of Value-Based Management* 4, no. 2 (1991): 57-75; Richard Benoit Francoeur, “In Pursuit of a Living Wage,” *Social Thought* 19, no. 1 (1999): 1-14.

the United States.⁹ *Interracial Justice* pointed to a two-fold approach for Catholic action in the attainment of interracial justice: 1) “the combating of race prejudice,” and 2) “the establishment of social justice.”¹⁰ LaFarge defined racial justice as an “equality of opportunity” for all groups or individuals, regardless of race.¹¹ LaFarge’s understanding of racism did not address how to create an equality of opportunity when great economic disparity already exists between blacks and whites.¹² Southern notes that the interracial movement had a history of applying pressure on the northern Church to integrate Catholic schools, hospitals, and seminaries, but that LaFarge was “more successful at improving the church’s image than in changing the church’s behavior.”¹³

By 1956, LaFarge had greatly refined and simplified his theology of racial justice when he published *The Catholic Viewpoint on Race Relations*.¹⁴ This work, which was published near the end of his life, avers that growing economic security for blacks depended upon the social attitudes of whites towards African Americans.¹⁵ For LaFarge, there was little that blacks could do to improve or contribute to the betterment of their own situation. LaFarge cited African Americans from time to time, but these sources did

⁹ John LaFarge, *Interracial Justice: A Study of Catholic Doctrine of Race Relations* (New York: America Press, 1937), 152-61.

¹⁰ Ibid., 172. Emphasis in the original.

¹¹ LaFarge, *The Race Question and the Negro: A Study of the Catholic Doctrine on Interracial Justice* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), 84.

¹² LaFarge, *Interracial Justice*, 179-87.

¹³ Southern, *John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism*, 358..

¹⁴ LaFarge, *The Catholic Viewpoint on Race Relations* (Garden City: NY, 1956). I will be using the following revised version for purposes of citation. The only substantial difference is the addition of several appendices. LaFarge, *The Catholic Viewpoint on Race Relations*, revised edition (Garden City: NY, 1960).

¹⁵ Ibid., 31.

not serve as an inspiration for his thought, but as a proof-text for his own preconceived notions. In a subtle jab at the policies of the FCC before he and Markoe took over the organization, he stated that “the more repeatedly the demands [for justice] were uttered, the less attention and interest did they create.”¹⁶ He considered the black empowerment present in the FCC to be a form of separatism that made their calls for integration hypocritical.¹⁷ He believed that after being properly educated, whites would destroy the idol of racism that they were worshipping.¹⁸ An emphasis on white agency and clerical leadership was necessary because “[a]lthough the Negro is the victim of discrimination, he does not necessarily know the answer or the cure.”¹⁹ Such a sentiment left scant room for appreciating either African American sources or black agency.

U.S. Bishops’ Statements:

Discrimination and the Christian Conscience

In 1958, the U.S. Bishops issued their first major post-World War II document on racism—*Discrimination and the Christian Conscience*.²⁰ In the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), twenty-one documents were published by Protestants decrying segregation before the issuance of the U.S. Bishops’ document. This document, authored by Fr. John Cronin, S.S. (1908-1994), was only published after the death of a

¹⁶ Ibid., 64.

¹⁷ Ibid., 72.

¹⁸ Ibid., 71.

¹⁹ Ibid., 73.

²⁰ The complete text of this document can be found in National Catholic Welfare Conference, *Discrimination and the Christian Conscience* in *The Catholic Viewpoint on Race Relations*, ed. John LaFarge, rev. ed., (New York: Hanover House, 1960), 186-92. All references to this document indicate page numbers in this work.

prominent opponent bishop, Cardinal Edward Mooney, who anticipated that the document would divide the bishops. Even a cable from Pope Pius XII, on the day before his death, directing that the document be published immediately, was ignored by leading bishops on the grounds that it lacked the papal seal and was, therefore, unofficial. Nevertheless, when the document was finally brought before the bishops, they approved the statement with only four bishops dissenting.²¹ *Discrimination and the Christian Conscience* grounded its theology of racial justice primarily in two doctrines: 1) the universal Fatherhood of God and 2) the Paschal Mystery or Jesus Christ's salvific death for all. It also utilized the Catholic natural law teaching on the basic equality of all human persons and each person's right to life and justice. The bishops urged a "method of quiet conciliation," which they saw as a middle path between "gradualism" and "rash impetuosity" in combating the unacceptable practice of mandated segregation.²²

Although the document called for a movement towards a society more clearly marked by equality, there were no clear set of goals or specific mechanisms to execute any plan. Essentially, the document offered vague generalities concerning any manner in which to address the problem of racism. In the end, the document lacked any mention of African American sources or black agency, and called for "responsible and sober-minded Americans of all religious faiths... [to] seize the mantle of leadership from the agitator

²¹ John F. Cronin, S.S., "Religion and Race," *America* 150, no. 24 (30 June 1984): 472; John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 90-91. John Cronin was mainly known for his crusade against communism, though he also wrote some speeches for Richard Nixon and advised him on race relations. John T. Donovan, *Crusader in the Cold War: A Biography of Fr. John F. Cronin, S.S. (1908-1994)* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2005), 103-06.

²² *Discrimination and the Christian Conscience*, 192.

and the racist.”²³ The bishops did not clarify if an African American demanding his or her rights can be anything but an agitator.

The National Race Crisis

In 1968, the U.S. Bishops released another statement on race: *The National Race Crisis*.²⁴ The writing and publication of this document was swift compared to the previous document. Massingale cites four reasons for its hastened publication: 1) the race riots of 1967; 2) the release of the Kerner Commission’s Report, which blamed the recent race riots and racial segregation on the racism of whites; 3) the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.; and 4) the inaugural meeting of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus (NBCCC), which was extremely critical of the Catholic Church.²⁵ The document was issued a mere three weeks after the assassination of King—a far cry from the four years between *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* and the 1958 document. Also, unlike the previous document, it stressed the necessity for solutions that addressed the structural aspects of racism by employing the Kerner Report. The document moved beyond the moral suasion present in *Discrimination and the Christian Conscience* and clearly stated that recent events made immediate changes necessary: “There is no place

²³ Ibid., 192.

²⁴ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The National Race Crisis*, in *The Pope Speaks* 13 (Spring 1968): 1975-79. All references to this document indicate page numbers in this work.

²⁵ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 56-58. *Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 91-93. The Kerner Report was the popular name for the *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, which President Lyndon B. Johnson requested of a blue-ribbon citizen commission in the wake of dozens of riots in the summer of 1967. The two largest riots were in Detroit and Newark. All together, the riots resulted in close to \$100 million in damage and eighty-four deaths. For more information, see the just mentioned report and The Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation and The Corporation for What Works, *The Millennium Breach: Rich, Poorer and Racial Apart*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation and the Corporation for What Works, 1998), 14-17, (accessed on 24 September 2011) <http://www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/docs/millennium.pdf>.

for complacency and inertia. The hour is late and the need is critical.”²⁶ In addition, it explicitly recognized the fault of Catholics for the present problem.²⁷

Although *The National Race Crisis* referenced King’s “Poor Man’s Bill of Rights,” it can be difficult to ascertain the source of the bishops’ proposed solutions.²⁸ The bishops’ document asked for “special attention” to be paid to the following areas: 1) education, 2) jobs, 3) housing, and 4) welfare. All four areas were named in the Kerner Report, but they were also important to King and the Poor People’s Campaign. Michael K. Honey writes that in the Poor People’s Campaign, King wanted “to abolish poverty directly through government redistribution that allowed poor people enough money to pay for their own housing, education, and other necessities.”²⁹ The current economic benefits possessed by the wealthy were due to the slave labor and cheap wage labor of African Americans and the poor of all racial backgrounds. Additionally, King noted, “So often in America, we have socialism for the rich, and rugged, free enterprise capitalism for the poor.”³⁰ Unlike the Kerner Report and *The National Race Crisis*, King commented on the need to significantly decrease funding to the military. King contended

²⁶ *The National Race Crisis*, 178.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁹ Michael K. Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King’s Last Campaign* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 175; *Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders*, 229-65. For more information on the Poor People’s Campaign, see also, Ronald L. Freeman, *The Mule Train: A Journey of Hope Remembered* (Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998); Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Trumpet of Conscience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here? Chaos or Community?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Hilliard Lawrence Lackey, *Marks, Martin and the Mule Train* (Jackson, MS: Town Square Books, 1998); Gerald D. McKnight, *The Last Crusade: Martin Luther King, Jr., the FBI, and the Poor People’s Campaign* (Denver, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

³⁰ King, quoted in Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road*, 186-87.

that the cost of the Vietnam War, if left unabated, would limit the resources necessary to abolish poverty in the United States.³¹ So although one could argue that the bishops made partial use of King as a source, they did not specifically cite King or utilize his claim that poverty and racism could not be properly addressed as long as America's financial resources were dedicated to a war in Vietnam.

Furthermore, *The National Race Crisis* left no role for black agency. Three particular agents are mentioned for enacting needed change: 1) the creation of an interreligious Urban Task Force to create Church programs throughout the United States; 2) the business community, particularly regarding the creation of jobs; and 3) government intervention to complement the first two agents.³² In contrast, King wanted to coordinate a massive mobilization of poor persons from all racial backgrounds in Washington DC to non-violently agitate the government into spending billions of dollars to solve the problem of poverty in the United States.³³

Even though the document prescribed the formation of the Urban Task Force, nothing substantial occurred in the organizing of this entity for over a year. A large part of the reason for this was the admission of John McCarthy, who was the primary author of *The National Race Crisis* and a member of the Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry,

³¹ Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road*, 175.

³² Lawrence J. Engel, "The Influence of Saul Alinsky on the Campaign for Human Development," *Theological Studies* 59, no. 4 (December 1998): 651; Conference of United States Catholic Bishops, *The National Race Crisis*, 176-78; Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road*, 186.

³³ Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road*, 186.

that “I had no experience of community organization.”³⁴ McCarthy, who was elevated to bishop of Austin, TX in 1979 (now retired), “helped forge the idea [of the Urban Task Force] that would grow into the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.”³⁵

McCarthy also wrote a “supporting technical paper” that explored in more detail the need for the empowerment and self-determination of blacks:

Political, organizational and economic independence were important elements in earlier rapid integration of immigrant ethnic groups into the American society. The church must now support the black community in its efforts to achieve organizational, political and economic power so necessary to break down existing patterns of dependence and frustration.³⁶

The bishops approved McCarthy’s supporting paper “in substance,” as a guide for the bishops themselves, but it would not be issued to the public.³⁷ Despite the high ideals put forth in the second document for fostering the self-empowerment of African Americans, Massingale points out that the bishops budgeted only \$28,000 for the Urban Task Force while they budgeted several hundred thousand for a study of clerical celibacy during the same period.³⁸ The Urban Task Force quickly morphed into the Campaign for Human Development, for which the bishops would raise \$8.5 million in 1970 alone, but that program focused more on eliminating poverty than addressing racism. This change of emphasis from race to poverty ignored the issue of racism and would quickly negate

³⁴ John McCarthy, quoted in Engel, “The Influence of Saul Alinsky on the Campaign for Human Development,” 651.

³⁵ “Bishop John E. McCarthy,” Diocese of Austin Website. http://www.austindiocese.org/dept/bishops_office/mccarthy_bio.php (accessed 19 April 2011).

³⁶ McCarthy, quoted in James R. Jennings, ed., *Daring to Seek Justice: People Working Together: The Story of the Campaign for Human Development, its Roots, its Program and its Challenges* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), 4-5.

³⁷ *Daring to Seek Justice*, 5. I contacted both the Catholic University of America and an archivist with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, but neither could locate the supporting document.

³⁸ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 60.

McCarthy's call for black agency and empowerment under the more generic guise of empowering the poor.³⁹

Brothers and Sisters to Us

In 1979, the U.S. Bishops issued *Brothers and Sisters to Us*.⁴⁰ As the document itself states, it was written for two reasons: 1) an appeal for a new document on racism was requested at the 1976 Call to Action consultation on social justice, which the bishops called to consult with the laity as a way to celebrate America's bicentennial and to give a greater voice to the laity, as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council; and 2) racism was just as pernicious as ten years previous, though the "external appearances" had changed and become more "subtle."⁴¹ This document, in a vein similar to LaFarge and previous statements, grounded the sin of racism in a denial of 1) the universal Fatherhood of God, and 2) the Incarnation, in which Jesus became the brother of all, with the intention of offering salvation to all humanity.⁴² Unlike previous statements, it affirmed that minorities have something "rich" to bring to our nation and that "each [racial group] is a source of internal strength for our nation."⁴³ The document admitted that the Church was experienced by many as a "racist institution," and called for the Church to be an exemplar of racial justice in its employment practices, in the fostering of vocations,

³⁹ *Daring to Seek Justice*, 8-78.

⁴⁰ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1979; revised to include *For the Love of One Another*, Washington, DC, United States Catholic Conference, 1991). Page references are to the revised edition.

⁴¹ *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, 1-2,14. Bryan Massingale notes that black Catholics played an "integral part" in Call to Action and raised awareness concerning racism to their fellow Catholics. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 63.

⁴² *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5.

calling for racial justice in the structures of greater society, and supporting the poor especially by means of providing “spiritual and financial support” for Catholic associations organized by minority groups.⁴⁴

Also in contradistinction to the previous two statements on racism, which were composed solely by whites, *Brothers and Sister to Us* had considerable input from a black Catholic. Cyprian Davis, an African American Benedictine monk and Church historian, was asked by then auxiliary Bishop Joseph A. Francis (d. 1997) of Newark, the chair of the committee working on the document, to rewrite a draft of the statement. Davis believes that the most significant idea that he added to the document was a systemic notion of racism.⁴⁵ In addition, the document admits that the support of Catholics and others who joined the civil rights movement of the 1960s received “much of its initiative and inspiration within the black Protestant Churches,” an important acknowledgement that black agency and black sources have led to concrete Catholic involvement in racial justice.⁴⁶

As Bryan Massingale writes, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* was “more concrete and detailed” in its plans to address racism than previous documents and it did lead to more African Americans entering the priesthood as well as broader liturgical inculturation.⁴⁷ This analysis corresponds with Davis’s memory who, when solicited by the bishops to rewrite the document, was asked to add “strong language” and “definite” plans to the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8, 11-14.

⁴⁵ Cyprian Davis, interview by author, Digital recording over phone, Milwaukee to St. Meinrad, IN, 13 June 2011.

⁴⁶ *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, 11.

⁴⁷ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 66-67.

document.⁴⁸ In response to Massingale's assertion that the document appears to be written by white Catholics for white Catholics, Davis agrees. At the time that he was asked to write the document, he believed that he was supposed to write the document as the bishops, who were overwhelmingly white, would write the document, making heavy use of hierarchical sources. He further points out that this is why "*What We have Seen and Heard*," a 1984 document on evangelization published by the African American Catholic bishops, is an important sequel. Cyprian observes that in the latter document, in which he also had a significant authorial role, the black bishops spoke as black bishops. In addition, Davis felt he had the liberty to contribute to the latter document as a black Catholic.⁴⁹ Although *Brothers and Sisters to Us* acknowledged the importance of African American sources and black agency during the civil rights movement, and even suggests that Catholics cooperate in the pursuit of racial justice with black Protestant churches, the document is implicitly addressed to white Catholics and does not offer any direction or encouragement for Catholics belonging to any racial minority group.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Davis, interview by author.

⁴⁹ Davis, interview by author; Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 75; Black Bishops of the United States, "*What We Have Seen and Heard*": *A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984). References to this document refer to the page numbers in the publication.

⁵⁰ *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, 11-13.

“What We Have Seen and Heard”

In contrast to the implicit white orientation of *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, “*What We Have Seen and Heard*” is explicitly addressed “To Our Black Catholic Brothers and Sisters in the United States.”⁵¹ This document could properly be placed in the latter section of this chapter because of its emphasis on black agency and African American sources, but it will be kept in the present section to reflect Cyprian Davis’s belief that this statement is a sequel to *Brothers and Sisters to Us*. “*What We Have Seen and Heard*” is inundated with black sources and African American spirituality. The African American bishops wanted to bring to the universal Church the gifts present in black spirituality: 1) spontaneous contemplation; 2) holistic faith that brings together “intellect and emotion, spirit and body, action and contemplation, individual and community, sacred and secular;” 3) joyful celebration; 4) a stress on community; and 5) the importance of the extended family.⁵² The document perceived a role for African American men and women in transforming society based on what was particular to them, including roles within their families and in ecumenical efforts with different denominations within the greater “Black Church.” The bishops encouraged black men to be responsible fathers and caring husbands, despite the economic hardships of a society that often makes gainful employment for black men extremely difficult. Black women were called to complement the role of black men by their service to the black community and the Church. For their task, black women have role models in Harriet Tubman, Mary McLeod Bethune, Mother

⁵¹ *What We Have Seen and Heard*, 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 8-12.

Theodore Williams, Elizabeth Lange, and Henriette Delille—who all worked tirelessly for the betterment of the African American community.⁵³

“*What We Have Seen and Heard*” is predominately a letter on evangelization; the second half of the letter focused on the requirement that blacks take an active role in this endeavor. The greatest hindrance to African American Catholics sharing their faith with others was racism within the Catholic Church itself. Therefore, African American Catholics must “demand” recognition and leadership roles in order to seriously carry out the work of evangelization.⁵⁴ In addition, the black bishops observed the need for more African American vocations to the priesthood and religious life, the lack of which has been complicated by racism. Black leadership should also be fostered in the promotion of the permanent diaconate, a trained and empowered black laity, opportunities for child

⁵³ Ibid., 8-16. Harriet Tubman (d. 1913) is most famous for aiding dozens of slaves to freedom after escaping slavery herself. For more information, see Beverly Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2007); Milton C. Sernett, *Harriet Tubman: Myth, Memory, and History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: Road to Freedom* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004). Mary McLeod Bethune (d. 1955) was a prominent educator and businesswoman from Florida who founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1932. For more information, see Joyce A. Hanson, *Mary McLeod Bethune & Black Women's Political Activism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003); Audrey Thomas McCluskey and Elaine M. Smith, eds., *Mary McLeod Bethune: Building a Better World; Essays and Selected Documents* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). Mother Theodore Williams (d. 1931) established the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary in 1917, an African American religious order with the purpose of providing education for black children. For more information, see Camille Lewis Brown, *African Saints, African Stories: 40 Holy Men and Women* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008), 126-27. Elizabeth Lange (d. 1882) was the founder and first superior of the first order of African American women in history, the Oblate Sisters of Providence. For more information, see Paul McCardell, “Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange: Founder and First Superior of the Oblate Sisters of Providence,” *Baltimore Sun*, 14 February 2007, <http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/bal-blackhistory-lange,0,2431999.story> (accessed 6 June 2012); George M. Anderson, “Relying on Providence,” *America*, 11 October 2004, 21-23; Diana L. Hayes, “Mother Elizabeth Lange,” *Rite* 34 (Jan-Feb 2003): 14; Dianne Batts Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Henriette Delille will be covered below during the discussion of Shawn Copeland's writings.

⁵⁴ *What We Have Seen and Heard*, 20.

education, inculturation in the areas of liturgy, the Rite of Christian Initiation, and dedication to work for racial and social justice.⁵⁵

Moreover, the document was partially informed from the input of African Americans in the United States. Before the writing of the document, listening sessions were held in Catholic Churches that had predominantly black congregations and that feedback was incorporated into the document. This may account for the emphases on the gifts that African American spirituality can bring to the Catholic Church as well as the perceived roles for black men and women in transforming society.⁵⁶ In the conclusion, the African American bishops called upon all people in the Catholic Church, in their respective roles, to foster a climate that is conducive to evangelization among African Americans and they specifically asked black Catholic lay leadership “to help implement the actions called for in this letter” on the local and national level.⁵⁷ This document is a stunning example of how valuable and practical a document can be that is informed by the African American experience and encourages black agency.

Individual Bishops’ Statements:

In Bryan Massingale’s analysis of twenty-one statements from individual bishops and bishops’ conferences from 1990 until 2000, only three utilize the 1984 pastoral letter, “*What We Have Seen and Heard*,” produced by the African American Catholic bishops. Otherwise, African American sources are completely absent from these bishops’

⁵⁵ Ibid., 21-34.

⁵⁶ Dr. Bryan N. Massingale, interview by author, notes, Milwaukee, WI, 8 September 2011.

⁵⁷ *What We Have Seen and Heard*, 34-36.

statements.⁵⁸ Since 2000, three American bishops have issued documents on racism: Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, Bishop Dale J. Melczek of Gary, and Archbishop Alfred Hughes of New Orleans. I will examine these documents in chronological order, though the use of African American sources and the notion of black agency vary widely from document to document.

Cardinal Francis George's *Dwell in My Love*

In 2001, Cardinal Francis George of the Archdiocese of Chicago published *Dwell in my Love: A Pastoral Letter on Racism*,⁵⁹ which Bishop Joseph N. Perry and Sr. Jamie Phelps aided in writing and researching along with others.⁶⁰ Perry, an auxiliary bishop in Chicago, and Phelps, a Dominican sister and systematic theologian, are both African American. Their names are the first two mentioned on a list of four researchers and writers. At face value, it appears this document had significant input from the black Catholic experience. George begins the document by sharing an experience of racial prejudice he witnessed against his African American friends as a youth while spending a summer in Memphis.⁶¹ He also includes the testimony of a Chicago businesswoman who once told him that “she never wakes up in the morning without realizing immediately that she is a black woman.”⁶² Such experiences and stories point to the failure of our society and the Christian community to live up to its doctrinal ideals, particularly as grounded in

⁵⁸ Massingale, “James Cone and Recent Catholic Episcopal Teaching on Racism,” *Theological Studies* 61, no. 4 (December 2000): 724.

⁵⁹ Francis George, *Dwell in My Love: A Pastoral Letter on Racism* (Chicago: Archdiocese of Chicago, 4 April 2001).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Acknowledgments. This page is not numbered.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3.

the *imago Dei*, the incarnation, the paschal mystery, and the Trinity.⁶³ George narrates the history of whites fleeing the city—fearing the infiltration of blacks into white neighborhoods, schools, and churches. The letter itself was prompted by the beating of Lenard Clark, a thirteen-year-old African American. Clark was biking home with a couple of friends from a basketball game through Chicago’s Bridgeport neighborhood, a white community, on 21 March 1997. Three white males from the neighborhood, beat Clark into a coma, and left him with permanent brain damage as well as impaired motor functions.⁶⁴ As George states, “White people might find themselves afraid in a black neighborhood, but blacks have even more reason to be afraid in many white neighborhoods.”⁶⁵

George addresses the often more subtle forms of racism that exist today, such as the existence of wealthy white suburbs in contrast to poor black ghettos, as well as diminished access to quality health care and education, and higher prison rates for African Americans. He also employs the social sciences and the notion of white privilege in analyzing contemporary forms of racism.⁶⁶ Unlike the following two bishops’ letters, George specifically writes of the need for schools to “celebrate” the contributions of minorities to our society. The omission of such honors “devalue[s]” other cultures and reinforces negative stereotypes.⁶⁷

⁶³ Ibid., 3-6.

⁶⁴ Mary Houlihan-Skilton, “8 Years in Clark Beating,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 October 1998.

⁶⁵ George, *Dwell in My Love*, 7-9.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 12-14.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 14-15.

Although the document attempts to utilize African American sources, it does not significantly address the role of black agency. The only role that blacks appear to be given in the document is in “forgiving those who have offended them,” and even this sentence is not race specific.⁶⁸ The conclusion offers many concrete structural changes that can and should occur on the parish, Archdiocesan, educational, and societal levels, but there is not any specific role or mechanism for African Americans in ensuring that these changes take place.⁶⁹ Without a doubt, the absence of any significant role for African Americans in pursuing racial justice is the greatest weakness of this document. In addition, because this document does not relate narratives of black empowerment, which will be the case in the last letter to be examined, the notion of black agency is not even implicit.

Bishop Dale Melczek’s *Created in God’s Image*

In 2003, Bishop Dale Melczek of the Diocese of Gary issued *Created in God’s Image: A Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism and a Call to Conversion*,⁷⁰ which states that its sources are scripture, Church teaching, and the social sciences.⁷¹ For Melczek, racism is a sin that permeates society on an individual, cultural, and institutional level.⁷² The proper response to racism is threefold: 1) analyze racism, 2) conversion of Christian hearts to a more inclusive vision, and 3) for whites and people of color to work towards

⁶⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 23-27.

⁷⁰ Dale J. Melczek, *Created in God’s Image: A Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism and a Call to Conversion* (Gary, Indiana, 6 August 2003). <http://www.dcgary.org/pdf/Created-In-Gods-Image.pdf>.

⁷¹ Ibid., Opening Letter.

⁷² Ibid., 1.

racial justice in solidarity.⁷³ His concrete steps for confronting racism stress bringing whites and people of color together under various circumstances to nurture dialogue.⁷⁴ The document does not make explicit use of the African American experience, utilize black sources, or put forth a coherent role for African American Catholics to address racism apart from collaboration with whites. His explicit use of black resources is limited to a generic citation from the African American philosopher, Cornel West, and an acknowledgement that a black priest and black bishop gave him feedback on a draft of the document.⁷⁵

In addition, a recent dissertation that evaluated the Diocese of Gary's initiative to end racism states,

Although the Bishop referred to some of the history of the various ethnic groups in his Pastoral Letter, and individuals were able to tell their story within the context of Listening Sessions, a comprehensive history of white supremacy and racism in this region of Northwest Indiana and the Church's response was absent.⁷⁶

The dissertation also mentions that even though people of color have been present on the Anti-Racism Committee for the Diocese, the "primary architects of the Initiative were white."⁷⁷ Despite the genuine attempt of Melczek to confront the problem of racism in his diocese, both the use of black sources and the promotion of black agency are noticeably absent.

⁷³ Ibid., 27-28.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 29-34.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 2, 41.

⁷⁶ Marian Fredal, "A Catholic Diocese's Initiative to End Racism: A Case Study" (EdD diss., Cardinal Stritch University, 2007), 188.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 187.

Archbishop Alfred Hughes's *Made in the Image and Likeness of God*

In 2006, Archbishop Alfred Hughes of New Orleans (retired in 2009) published "*Made in the Image and Likeness of God*": A Pastoral Letter on Racial Harmony,⁷⁸ which had originally been scheduled for publication a month after Hurricane Katrina occurred in August 2005. Hughes then delayed the issuing of the document so that he could incorporate that catastrophic event into the letter.⁷⁹ Near the beginning of the letter, he relates his belief that the continued existence of African American parishes is important for "the development of black Catholic identity, community, leadership, liturgy, and spirituality."⁸⁰ Hughes's belief may be a result of a recent experience he shares regarding his decision to merge St. Augustine Parish with a neighboring parish. News of the merger resulted in a sit-in from some parishioners, community activists, and aid workers. St. Augustine refers to itself as the oldest African American Catholic parish in the United States and the protestors felt the parish was being closed without proper consultation with the parishioners. Hughes admits that actions by parishioners and others made him rethink his decision, especially in light of the black population of the parish, and he reached an agreement with the parish to remain open.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Alfred Hughes, "*Made in the Image of God*": A Pastoral Letter on Racial Harmony (December 2006). Online at www.arch-no.org/12.15_pastoral_final.pdf;

⁷⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁸¹ *Made in the Image of God*, 5; St. Augustine's website is: <http://www.staugustinecatholicchurch-neworleans.org/>. Regarding this event, see also, Peter Finney, Jr., "Archbishop Reopens New Orleans Church After Dispute is Resolved," *Catholic News Service*, 10 April 2006, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0602073.htm> (assessed 12 June 2011); Associated Press, "New Orleans Black Parish Faces Uncertain Future," *MSNBC.com*, 13 March 2006, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11811002/ns/us_news-life/ (accessed 12 June 2011).

For Hughes, racism is “both a personal sin and a social disorder.”⁸² He grounds his understanding of racial justice in Vatican II, other Vatican documents, the documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as well as the heroic witness of black Catholics from the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Chief among these witnesses is Henriette Delille, a free black woman who dedicated her life to educating the enslaved.⁸³ In addition, Hughes references the witness of Homer Plessy, who lost the Supreme Court Case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*; A. P. Tureaud, called the dean of the New Orleans black civil rights attorneys; and others. Whether black or white, he notes that those who worked for racial justice often suffered severe consequences.⁸⁴

Hughes develops the ideas of beauty and harmony to illustrate the importance of recognizing racial diversity in the Catholic Church. He also conveys the need for addressing the problem of white privilege in relation to the disadvantages faced by people of color. His ultimate response, although it addresses certain systemic issues, does not assign any significant role for black Catholics.⁸⁵ This is surprising, since earlier in the document he raised up examples of black Catholics and even in one of his own churches

⁸² *Made in the Image of God*, 5.

⁸³ In 1988, the cause for sainthood began for Delille. In March 2010, Pope Benedict declared that she had lived a life of “heroic virtues,” which is one step before beatification and two steps before sainthood can be declared. She could very well become the first African American saint. Carol Glatz, “Pope Brings African-American Foundress One Step Closer to Sainthood,” *Catholic News Service*, 29 March 2010, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1001298.htm> (accessed 12 September 2011). Delille has been written about in depth by Cyprian Davis and Shawn Copeland. See Cyprian Davis, *Henriette Delille: Servant of the Slaves: Witness to the Poor* (New Orleans: Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, 2004); M. Shawn Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love: The Vision of Henriette Delille* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009).

⁸⁴ *Made in the Image of God*, 7-9, 13-16.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 12, 18, 22-28. Although he does not explicitly state that he employs the social sciences, his analysis of racism betrays at least a limited use.

that performed acts of agitation. Ultimately, there is a disconnect in the document between the great black Catholic witnesses of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and the proposed solutions to contemporary manifestations of racism.

Vatican Documents

In the last twenty-five years, the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has published two documents dealing with racism: *The Church and Racism: Toward a More Fraternal Society*⁸⁶ and *Contribution to the World Conference Against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance*.⁸⁷ *The Church and Racism*, issued in 1988, is similar to most American thought on racism, as it grounds its teaching against racism in every person being created in God's image and every person being offered redemption through the Paschal Mystery.⁸⁸ The document conveys the strong institutional aspect of racism and the complicity of Church members at certain times. It also introduces an image that is not present in American documents—Pentecost.⁸⁹ Unexpectedly, instead of employing the Pentecost event as an opportunity to express the gift that diversity could bring to the Church, the document cites this event to regard all “ethnic, cultural, national, social, and other divisions... [as] obsolete.”⁹⁰ Later on, the document does point out “the diversity and complementarity of one another's cultural

⁸⁶ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Church and Racism: Toward a More Fraternal Society*, 3 November 1988, EWTN.com, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pcjpraci.htm> (accessed 13 May 2012).

⁸⁷ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Contribution to the World Conference on Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*, 31 August–7 September 2001, The Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20010829_comunicato-razzismo_en.html (accessed 13 May 2012).

⁸⁸ *The Church and Racism*, 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1,9, 22.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

riches and moral qualities,” but this is not grounded doctrinally.⁹¹ The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace describes racism as a type of blasphemy that must be addressed by educational and structural changes on all levels of society for the purpose of equality for all minority groups and respect for one another’s “cultural and religious characteristics.”⁹² The document stresses that racism exists in every society and lists two specific instances of racism on the globe: 1) the American situation with African Americans; and 2) South African apartheid, which still existed when the document was written.⁹³ As a document written for a global context that encompasses countless situations of racism, it cannot be critiqued in the same manner as the American documents. Nevertheless, the statement does not emphasize the importance of the theology of the oppressed or recognize that the oppressed have any sustained role in confronting racism. The recognized agents in society to confront racism are seen primarily as the Church and the state.⁹⁴

The Contribution to the World Conference Against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance was issued for the United Nations Conference of the same name in Durban, South Africa in late summer 2001. The document begins by citing the rise in ethnic violence since the 1988 document as well as the increasing gap between rich and poor.⁹⁵ It asks for a “purification of memory,” in which the oppressed are to be “guided by the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation,” while at the same time

⁹¹ Ibid., 23.

⁹² Ibid., 24-30.

⁹³ Ibid., 31, 33.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 24-33.

making sure that the past is not covered up, but revealed.⁹⁶ In other words, this is not a case of “forgive and forget,” but rather a case of being keenly aware of what actions and responsible parties are being forgiven so that deficient structural realities can be repaired. Along this line of thought the document supports the options of reparations and affirmative action as tools to correct past injustices to the greatest extent possible.⁹⁷ The document also recommends the proper role for the Church, state, and media in aiding the poor and protecting basic human rights—stressing the need for education and material needs.⁹⁸ Although the document clearly denounces the evil of racism, it does not address the gifts that the oppressed can bring to a discussion of racism or the rich diversity that their cultural backgrounds can bring to the world. In addition, it does not allot any significant role to the oppressed in working toward their liberation other than forgiveness. Although a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation is an essential aspect of a society trying to heal past injustices, this spirit will not prevent current or future injustices. Regarding how the oppressed should address current injustices, the document is silent.

⁹⁵ *Contribution to World Conference Against Racism*, 3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12, 18. This document uses the terms affirmative action and positive discrimination interchangeably.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-17.

Summary of First Section

If “*What We have Seen and Heard*” is removed from the first section, the result is a rather monolithic response to racism. The documents and authors in this section ground their theology of racial justice not only in traditional European Catholic doctrines, but also a traditional European understanding of these doctrines. Following from this traditional Catholic framework, they all state that the most important action that one can perform in the cause of racial justice is moral suasion. With the publication of *The National Race Crisis* in 1968, there was room for structural responses to racism, but these always took on a secondary role—particularly in practice. It mentioned Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but was not informed by his thought. The inclusion of African American Catholic sources began with *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, but was always superficial and absent from the principal thrusts of the documents. Moreover, the documents lack any substantial role for African Americans and are simply statements with white Catholics as their primary audience. These deficiencies could be attributed to an almost exclusive use of hierarchical sources as well as Catholic social teaching’s almost exclusive reliance on moral suasion for the resolution of injustices and emphasis on substantial change proceeding from those in power instead of those being oppressed. The limiting of sources to hierarchical sources prevents innovation when searching for a solution to an injustice that Catholic social teaching has not been able to adequately address.

On the other hand, “*What We have Seen and Heard*” was informed by African American Catholic sources with final editorial control in the hands of the African American Catholic bishops. Black Catholics were its target audience, for whom they saw a meaningful role in the field of racial justice and evangelization. Additionally, they

asserted that African American spirituality had significant value that could augment traditional European Catholic thought. As the letter's primary purpose was evangelization, its analysis of racism itself was not in-depth. Nevertheless, "*What We have Seen and Heard*" displayed a pronounced break with the traditional paradigm found in Catholic racial justice framework and is more representative of what will be found in the second section.

SOURCES OFFERING SUSTAINED USE OF BLACK AGENCY AND EXPERIENCE

James Cone

James H. Cone, an immensely important figure for recent Catholic racial justice reflection in the United States, professes a need and urgency for African American sources and black agency within a racial justice framework. Most current Catholic theologians who write about racial justice are deeply influenced by his work. Cone is considered to be the founder of black liberation theology and his thought is still prominent today. Cone's *Black Theology and Black Power*,⁹⁹ was the first book in the world published on liberation theology in 1969.¹⁰⁰ Cone's importance for, and influence on, Catholic racial justice cannot be overstated. For this reason, and because Cone's theological framework for racial justice has developed over a forty year period, this will be longest section in this chapter. The section will begin with Cone's critique of white churches and Eurocentric theology, followed by the necessity of African American sources and black agency within a theological framework of racial justice.

⁹⁹ James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury, 1969).

¹⁰⁰ Dwight N. Hopkins, "Introduction," in *Black Faith and Public Talk*, ed. Dwight N. Hopkins (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 3-4.

In 2000, Cone was invited by *Theological Studies*, the flagship journal of U.S. Catholic theology, to write an article about racism and the Catholic Church. As Shawn Copeland observes, this was only the second time in twenty-five years that an entire issue of *Theological Studies* was dedicated to a “specific paradigm shift in theology,” the previous time was a 1975 issue of the journal devoted to feminist theory.¹⁰¹ At the beginning of the article, Cone frankly states that white Protestant churches, along with the Catholic Church in America, are “racist institutions whose priests, ministers, and theologians seem to think that White supremacy offers no serious contradiction to their understanding of the Christian faith.”¹⁰² He perceives a reality that he also observed when he wrote an article about Catholic racism almost twenty years earlier—that white Catholic theologians are “virtually silent” about the issue of racism and its permeation of society.¹⁰³ This omission in white theology, Cone contends, illustrates the disdain that white theologians have for black thought and weakens all subsequent theological conclusions to a level that is racist and irrelevant.¹⁰⁴ White theology’s silence regarding racism and its omission of black voices results in the dehumanization of blacks. Furthermore, Cone remarks that it is difficult for African Americans to take the many excellent social justice teachings of the Catholic Church seriously when they are so

¹⁰¹ M. Shawn Copeland, “Guest Editorial,” *Theological Studies* 61 (December 2000): 603.

¹⁰² Cone, “Black Liberation Theology and Black Catholics: A Critical Conversation,” *Theological Studies* 61 (December 2000): 731.

¹⁰³ Cone, “Black Liberation Theology and Black Catholics,” 731; *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1986; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 52. Page references are to the reprint edition.

¹⁰⁴ Cone, “Black Liberation Theology and Black Catholics,” 737.

neglectful of racism.¹⁰⁵ He specifically comments on the “contradiction” that is required by black Catholics in order to remain in a racist Church. Black Catholics who want to affirm their blackness must “refuse to accept European values as the exclusive definition of the Catholic Church,” which have been and still are the *modus operandi* for constructing Catholic belief and practice.¹⁰⁶

In light of the poor track record that white churches have with eliminating racism, Cone avers that whites have no role to play in deciding if the elimination of racism is being suitably addressed. That role is reserved for blacks, who endure the evil of racism.¹⁰⁷ Another problem with white European theology is its assumed objectivity and universalism. Cone argues that Jesus was not a universal human being, but an oppressed Jew.¹⁰⁸ Cone maintains that Jesus did not come to be everything for everybody, but primarily as a liberator for the oppressed. To illustrate this point, Cone frequently cites Luke 4: 18-19,¹⁰⁹ in which Jesus unrolls a scroll from the Prophet Isaiah in his home synagogue in Nazareth, stating, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a

¹⁰⁵ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 60.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 55-57.

¹⁰⁷ James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation: Fortieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 13. This book was first published in 1970 and as Cone notes, the only changes he made to the book are a few stylistic changes and the omission of sexist language (p. xx).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁰⁹ Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 3; *Speaking the Truth*, v, 123; *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, Inc., 1975; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 69, 159-60 (page references are to the reprint edition).

year acceptable to the Lord.”¹¹⁰ Essentially, Jesus is bad news for the rich, because the kingdom of God is for “the poor *alone*.”¹¹¹

Notwithstanding the myriad problems associated with a Eurocentric theology and white churches, Cone believes there is a role for whites in black liberation. For instance, Cone commends white abolitionists for their work to end slavery, but he is critical of their omission of black resources and the perception that black freedom could be secured from legal means alone.¹¹² These weaknesses need to be rectified. Cone believes that white theologians can have a role to play in black liberation, if they were willing to reorder their theological priorities according to an African American cultural viewpoint.¹¹³

The history of African American churches is an integral source for Cone’s black theology. For Cone, the original reasons that African Americans separated from white churches are still pertinent today. Blacks separated from white churches during the age of slavery because of the unwillingness of white churches to condemn slavery as well as the outright support that was often shown for this terrible institution. In contrast, black churches were almost unanimous in their stance against slavery. Separation from white churches was concretized in the 1787, when Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and other blacks walked out of St. George Methodist Church. In 1816, Richard Allen became the

¹¹⁰ All scripture citations are from the New American Bible. Note Cone’s the similarity between Cone’s use of Luke 4:4:18-19 and his stress on liberation with *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, 6-7.

¹¹¹ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 71-72. Emphasis in the original.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 45.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 46. It appears that this is the white theologian’s way of “becoming *black* with God,” which requires that one share the oppression of African Americans and engage in the work of liberation. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 69.

first bishop for the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. In the South, blacks often met in underground churches to discuss their dignity and the struggle for liberation as found in Jesus Christ and in the 1770s, the first Baptist church organized by slaves was founded in Silver Bluff, South Carolina. These churches, along with other African American churches, were important institutions in working for the freedom of blacks before and after the dissolution of slavery.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, Cone does not give sources for his historical retelling. It seems that he has internalized this history from various sources.¹¹⁵ Cone asserts that the black church narrative has proven that integrated churches, during slavery and since, were essentially white churches that limited the work of liberation for African Americans and led blacks into a place of compromise. Additionally, Cone concludes that contemporary integrated churches continue to exhibit an inability to confront white supremacy by their lack of black sources and virtual silence on the issue of racism.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, as Massingale explains, Cone places a great deal of importance on the ability and necessity of black history and culture as theological resources.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 141; Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 91-96, 130-37.

¹¹⁵ As an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Cone initially became familiar with the basic origins of African American churches in America through pastors in his own church, though he admits their understanding was limited. It seems that at some point after his ordination he took time to familiarize himself with this history at a much deeper level. This personal study was also necessary because he believed his formal education was too exclusively grounded in Eurocentric theology. Cone, "Preface to the 1989 Edition," *Black Theology and Black Power*, xi-xii; Cone, *My Soul Looks Back* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), 71-72, 80, 84-85.

¹¹⁶ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 141, 221; *Speaking the Truth*, 91-96, 130-37; Cone, "Black Liberation Theology and Black Catholics," 731-47.

¹¹⁷ Massingale, "The Social Dimensions of Sin and Reconciliation in the Theologies of James H. Cone and Gustavo Gutierrez: A Critical Comparative Examination" (PhD diss., Academia Alphonsianum, 1991), 61-74; Cone, *For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 147.

White theology, which is informed from a place of privilege, is inadequate to define theology. Talk about God's work in the world can only be known from the experience, writings, and freedom struggles found among blacks.¹¹⁸ Cone's argument here does not change significantly between 1970 and today. In 1997, he stated that his stance had softened slightly because of the additional insights of gender and class, as well as being more aware of the broader scope of the Bible; nevertheless, "the God of biblical faith and black religion is partial toward the weak."¹¹⁹ This perspective leads Cone to state that the black experience, which he designates as "a black tradition of struggle," must be a starting point for black Christians prior to the Bible. The Bible is an indispensable source for Christian thought, but it is secondary to the black experience of oppression. It is only through the lens of oppression that the Bible can meaningfully speak to the liberation that God is enacting in contemporary situations.¹²⁰ Theology that does not have its starting point in the poor can only be ideology.¹²¹

For well over forty years, Cone has persistently stated that African American sources and black agency are essential for achieving racial justice within societal and ecclesial realms. Any Christian theology that is lacking these two ingredients cannot properly be called theology since it does not take seriously God's central work of liberation in the United States in the 21st century. Whites can play a role in liberation if they are willing to preference African American sources and the notion of black agency

¹¹⁸ Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 129-30.

¹¹⁹ Cone, "Preface to the 1997 Edition," *God of the Oppressed*, xi.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

¹²¹ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 87.

in their theologies. The theologians below, whether black or white, have all been influenced by Cone's call to make black theology a priority.

M. Shawn Copeland

M. Shawn Copeland, unlike the other Catholic theologians I am examining, is a systematic theologian. She retrieves the stories of black men and women for the purpose of putting forth a more accurate synthesis of Christian belief and practice. For Copeland, who is African American, the reality of Jesus Christ in the flesh paved the way for making use of black bodies as a theological resource. The embodied spirituality of Jesus has anthropological ramifications that can be further identified in the suffering of others.¹²² Not being an ethicist, she rarely examines either the structural or systemic underpinnings of racism, though she is cognizant regarding this aspect of racism.¹²³ Her understanding of racial justice is grounded in the doctrines of the Trinity and the *imago Dei*: “[T]he creativity of the Triune God is manifested in differences of gender, race, and sexuality.”¹²⁴ Racism, and particularly the enslavement of black women, is “the attempt to degrade the *imago Dei*... through commodifying, objectifying, and sexually violating black women's bodies.”¹²⁵ The tortured and mutilated body of Jesus Christ on the cross,

¹²² M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 55-84. As she also states, the oppressed “body of Jesus of Nazareth impels us to place the bodies of the victims of history at the center of theological anthropology, to turn to ‘other’ subjects.” Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 84.

¹²³ Copeland, “Racism and the Vocation of the Christian Theologian,” *Spiritus* 2, no. 1 (2002): 16-21; *Enfleshing Freedom*, 109-10.

¹²⁴ Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 2.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4, 23-29.

which has eerie similarities to the lynching tree, should jolt Christians out of their stupor and awake them to the plight of African Americans.¹²⁶

Copeland submits two requisite steps to address racism and oppression: 1) “*anamnesis*” or remembering the stories of the oppressed; and 2) solidarity. Through the mindful knowing of the oppressed, Christians will realize how the situation contradicts the Christian message and be moved to compassion. This compassion should elicit concrete acts of solidarity, which she defines as taking on “responsibility” for the oppressed at a personal risk.¹²⁷ Actions of solidarity are a meaningful *modus operandi* for following and imitating Christ. In other words: “a praxis of solidarity for human liberation... make[s] the mystical body of Christ publicly visible in our situation.”¹²⁸ For Copeland, the mystical body of Christ has interpersonal, ecclesial, and soteriological implications that she believes speak doctrinally to her notion of solidarity.¹²⁹

Copeland authored a small book on the life and vision of Henriette Delille (1812-1862), which was originally the 2007 Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality.¹³⁰ Delille, who could very well become the first American born black saint, was the foundress of a religious order for black women, the Sisters of the Holy Family around 1842, though they

¹²⁶ Ibid., 121-24.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 100-01. It is unclear how solidarity is practiced by women of color. Copeland’s description of practicing solidarity seems to assume that one is not a woman of color.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 105.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 101-05.

¹³⁰ Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love: The Vision of Henriette Delille* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009).

were originally known as the Sisters of the Presentation.¹³¹ Copeland's introduction to Delille occurred in 2004, when Archbishop Hughes of New Orleans appointed Copeland to sit on a theological commission to evaluate Delille's writings. She found in Delille an example of a black woman "acting as a moral agent, who, through discernment and prayer, intellectual and moral acumen, resourcefulness and, often, resistance, exercises her essential freedom in order to realize the integrity of her life."¹³² As a free black woman in New Orleans, it was expected that she participate in the extralegal system of *plaçage*, in which a free black woman became the mistress of a white man of means. Instead, she began a religious order that dedicated itself to the education of free black persons and slaves and according to Copeland, "exposed the timidity of the church."¹³³ In Delille, Copeland recognizes a black woman who did not

submit to ecclesiastical indifference... [but rather] exercised her intelligence, creativity, and moral agency in a preferential option for despised enslaved blacks, the poor, aged, and infirm... [following] the path took [by] Jesus of Nazareth to the outcast, marginalized, and poor.¹³⁴

Although there was little written by Delille, Copeland pieces together a theological portrait of Delille by combining her few writings with her lived "praxis."¹³⁵ Delille did write of her desire to "live and die for God" and, according to Copeland, religious life provided a "liberative" avenue for avoiding *plaçage* to dedicate her life to

¹³¹ Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 30, 58; Carol Glatz, "Pope Brings African-American Foundress One Step Closer to Sainthood," *Catholic News Service*, 29 March 2010, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1001298.htm> (accessed 12 September 2011).

¹³² Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 2, 8.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

God as well as to free and enslaved persons of color.¹³⁶ Copeland argues that religion was the impetus for a “crucial mediation of black personal and communal transformation, to the possibilities of self-transcendence in the midst of the direst circumstances.”¹³⁷ By choosing religious life, Delille chose a degree of autonomy and self-determination over her own body for the purpose of giving priority to her spiritual life.¹³⁸ For Copeland, the experiences of Delille point to the reality that “Christian witness demands an engagement with bodies, not their denial; a struggle with history, not surrender to it.”¹³⁹ Within this context, she defines experience as “the differentiated range and interconnections of black women’s religious, racial, cultural, sexual, legal, and social (i.e., political and economic) experience.”¹⁴⁰ Copeland’s book on Delille has similarities to this dissertation, but her project was more focused and narrow with the aim of demonstrating the contribution that Delille can make to systematic theology, instead of Christian ethics.

Retrieval of African American sources is integral for Copeland’s theological project as well as her analysis of white supremacy and privilege. She argues that only by exposing the ugly reality of racism into the light of day will Christians be moved to adequately realize the evil of racism and be provoked to oppose it. Within her theology of racial justice, she utilizes the horrific, inspiring, and faithful lives of African Americans—particularly women—to inform and expand the understanding of many

¹³⁶ Delille, quoted in Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 27-28; Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 10-11.

¹³⁷ Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 8.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

traditional Catholic doctrines. Although she offers no explicit role for African Americans in confronting racism today, it was not the purpose of her project to give specific responses for whites or blacks. Instead, she remembers the stories of many brave African American women from the past in order to inspire all Catholics to acknowledge and reflect on racial injustice in their own context and to follow the example of Christ in living a practice of active solidarity.

Bryan N. Massingale

Bryan Massingale, who is the only black Catholic ethicist that I will examine, has published multiple articles on racism and in 2010, he published a comprehensive book on the issue, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*.¹⁴¹ Massingale wrote his dissertation on the social dimensions of sin and reconciliation in the theology of James Cone and Gustavo Gutiérrez.¹⁴² He believes:

[T]here is a valuable and essential contribution that the black experience—the experience of creating meaning and possibility in the midst of the crushing ordinariness of American racism—can make to Catholic faith and theology.¹⁴³

Since racism is in some manner connected to practically every justice issue in the United States and is still largely ignored by Catholic theologians, Catholic theology regarding justice has been decisively compromised and, by default, rendered inadequate.¹⁴⁴ In a 1997 article, Massingale, examining *Theological Studies* and the *Proceedings from the*

¹⁴¹ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*.

¹⁴² Massingale, “The Social Dimensions of Sin and Reconciliation in the Theologies of James H. Cone and Gustavo Gutiérrez.”

¹⁴³ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, ix.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

Catholic Theological Society of America dating from the 1940s to the present, observes the absence of interest regarding racial justice in their regular summaries on important trends and publications in moral theology. As he poignantly points out, one would not be aware of the civil rights movement from these sources. When racism was addressed in the theological realm, blacks were often treated as objects of white study, analysis, and charity. In other words, African Americans were rarely seen as agents capable of independent action to better their own situation.¹⁴⁵

Massingale's understanding of racism is largely informed by Bernard Lonergan's theory of culture. According to Lonergan, "a culture is simply a set of meanings and values that inform the way of life of a community."¹⁴⁶ For Massingale, racism refers to a set of meanings and values "attached to skin color, a way of interpreting skin color differences that pervades the collective convictions, conventions, and practices of American life."¹⁴⁷ Understanding racism as a cultural phenomenon is a key component of Massingale's thought and is viewed as a necessary way in which to understand racism if one hopes to effectively confront it. As Lonergan stated: "Culture stands to social order as soul to body."¹⁴⁸ Massingale, after incorporating the work of Lonergan, regards

¹⁴⁵ Massingale, "The African American Experience and United States Roman Catholic Ethics: 'Strangers and Aliens No Longer?'," in *Black and Catholic: The Challenge and Gift of Black Folk: The Gift and Challenge of Black Folk: Contributions of African American Experience and Thought to Catholic Theology*, ed. Jamie T. Phelps (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1997): 79-101.

¹⁴⁶ Bernard Lonergan, quoted in Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 16. This quote is from Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, ed. William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Terrell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 232.

¹⁴⁷ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 1-2.

¹⁴⁸ Lonergan, quoted in Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 16. This quote is from Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, 102.

culture as a shared group reality that is learned, shapes the identity of a community, and is expressed symbolically.¹⁴⁹

Massingale asserts that culture manifests itself in the structural realities of a society. As a result, the American culture of racism and white privilege has produced such atrocities as slavery, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), and the exclusion of domestic and agricultural workers (mostly non-white) from the Social Security Act of 1935. These structural manifestations of racism prevented African Americans from acquiring wealth and security in old age, which whites were able to obtain and pass on to their posterity. Consequently, the inequalities of the distant and recent past continue to affect the lives of blacks today.

For there to be any reasonable expectation of legitimate redress, American Catholic ethical reflection must espouse structural and systemic approaches to challenge racism.¹⁵⁰ Since culture pervades our society, racism will only be eradicated from our culture when it is seen as “contrary or foreign” with regard to a deeper and more important “cultural ethos.”¹⁵¹ Massingale posits that authentic religious faith can provide a more foundational cultural ethos that can overcome the cultural bedrock upon which structural forms of racism are grounded.¹⁵² Racial reconciliation, which is the objective of racial justice, should not result in “the elimination of racial differences, but rather the elimination of the stigma and privilege associated with race.”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 16-17.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 37-42.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 90.

In *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, Massingale presents two aspects of African American culture that can augment Catholic Social Teaching's concept of distributive justice: the welcome table and the beloved community. These images champion freedom and justice for all persons and all peoples, and offer a formidable threat to the problems of racism, war, and poverty.¹⁵⁴ These images are both biblical and require less extrapolation than the regularly used doctrines to promote racial justice: the Fatherhood of God and the Paschal Mystery.

In his 2010 presidential address to the Catholic Theological Society of America, Massingale enlisted Malcolm X as a resource for Catholic theological reflection on racism.¹⁵⁵ Bringing Malcolm into dialogue with Catholic ethics permits Massingale to create an ethical system that is both "authentically black and truly Catholic."¹⁵⁶ One aspect of Malcolm's thought that Massingale believes still needs to be addressed today is "a profound inner wounding" and demoralization that plagues African Americans.¹⁵⁷ This wounding requires healing through "cultural recovery and celebration," which is often absent in American society and in white churches.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, Massingale incorporated Malcolm in order to illustrate the benefit of bringing African American

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 137-43.

¹⁵⁵ Massingale, "*Vox Victimarum Vox Dei*: Malcolm X as a Neglected 'Classic' for Catholic Theological Reflection," *CTSA Proceedings* 65 (2010): 63-88.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 63.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 67-68.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 71.

thought into Catholic ethical dialogue—even those African Americans that are not always “considered tame or acceptable,” such as Martin Luther King Jr.¹⁵⁹

Essentially, Massingale attests to the need that:

U.S. Catholic ethical reflections must adopt a more structural and systemic approach to racism, one that views this evil primarily as a cultural phenomenon, a culture of White advantage, privilege, and dominance that has derivative personal, interpersonal, and institutional manifestations.¹⁶⁰

The Catholic community can play an integral role in promoting structural changes while at the same time integrating African American practices into their liturgical life, which can address the foundational cultural elements of racism. For Massingale, the retrieval of black sources and the inclusion of the black experience are necessary as a corrective for Catholic racial justice. Although specific recommendations for black agency are more implicit in his thought, Massingale’s dialogue with African American spirituality and the thought of Malcolm X, as well as his own work to combat racism, evidence the role of black agency in this thought.

Jon Nilson

Jon Nilson is arguably the white Catholic theologian most interested in retrieval of black sources and the concept of black agency. Other than Daniel C. Maguire, he is the only white Catholic ethicist to dedicate an entire book to racial justice since *Brothers*

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 81.

¹⁶⁰ Massingale, “James Cone and Recent Catholic Episcopal Teaching on Racism,” 730.

and *Sisters to Us* was issued.¹⁶¹ His book, *Hearing Past the Pain*,¹⁶² begins by contrasting the insightful theology of a group of illiterate black slaves in the 19th century to a scholarly bishop who promoted slavery.¹⁶³ The example illustrates for Nilson that all the rich learning and tradition found in the Roman Catholic faith has not prevented the Catholic Church in America from being a racist institution. As previously stated, Nilson succinctly avows that the problem with white Catholic theologians is their blindness to contemporary forms of racism and white privilege. He ponders how this can be the case when many of these same theologians have no problem noticing and addressing anti-Semitism, sexism, and class issues.¹⁶⁴ Nilson surmises that the racism of white Catholic theologians takes two forms: ignoring the issue of racism “as a fundamental contradiction of the gospel and marginalizing black theology.”¹⁶⁵ Catholic thought on racism must be

¹⁶¹ Daniel Maguire, who dedicated a book to affirmative action in 1980, will not be covered in this work. Maguire really does not fit into either of the camps listed above, but is a notable white theologian who has written on the issue of race. Maguire does not emphasize black or white agency, but the need for the government to intervene through an efficient and effective use of affirmative action. He argues that affirmative action is not a form of reparations because of slavery, but a manner in which to address the more subtle forms of racism that exist today, particularly structural forms. He coins this latest form of racism “Jim Crow, Jr.” This manner of explicating contemporary structures of racism is helpful in delineating the fluid connections of racism during the various eras of American history. Maguire asserts that affirmative action is necessary because “voluntary conversion and... litigating infractions on a one-to-one basis” have not been effective. Since Maguire perceives racism as primarily a structural problem, it needs a structural solution. Regarding black agency, he comments that blacks have been unfairly “expected to attack the Leviathan” of racism, when the proper party that possesses the best tools to apply distributive justice to racism is the state. Maguire’s thought on this issue remains largely unchanged since 1980, but in one of his latest books, he adds that “[c]ontact can be a bias solvent, and love removes veils of inherited ignorance.” This addendum of white-black interactions to address racism is added to his strong belief in state agency because of his experience of having one of his sons marry an African-American. See Daniel C. Maguire, *A New American Justice: Ending the White Male Monopolies* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1980), 5, 7, 15, 25, 93. He published a second edition of the book with very minor changes under the title *A Case for Affirmative Action* (Dubuque, IA: Shepherd Inc., 1992); Daniel C. Maguire, *Whose Church? A Concise Guide to Progressive Catholicism* (New York: The New Press, 2008), 74.

¹⁶² Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1-4.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

inclusive of African American thought because no theology is universal or relatively adequate for all times, places, and issues.¹⁶⁶ Nilson takes his own advice to heart by ensuring that his book is imbued with the thought of African Americans, whether Catholic or non-Catholic. A list of black sources that is not exhaustive includes: James Baldwin, the black bishops of the United States, Stephen L. Carter, James Cone, Shawn Copeland, Ellis Cose, Cyprian Davis, W.E.B. DuBois, James H. Evans, Diana L. Hayes, Dwight N. Hopkins, Bryan Massingale, Stephanie Y. Mitchem, Jamie T. Phelps, Cornel West, and Gayraud S. Wilmore. I provide this incomplete list of his African American sources to substantiate that Nilson's inclusion of black sources is not superficial. Incorporating black thought is particularly important for Nilson, since "most of us [white] Catholic theologians have some vision problems that need correction before we can find the common ground necessary for engagement with black theologians."¹⁶⁷ In a previous article, entitled "Confessions of a White Catholic Racist Theologian," Nilson stated, "I am a racist insofar as I rarely read and never cited any black theologians in my own publications."¹⁶⁸ Obviously, Nilson has changed his scholarly practices.

Taking his cue from Cone, Nilson wants to underscore that racism should not be viewed as a type of sin, but heretical: "Sin does not threaten the integrity of the church, as heresy does."¹⁶⁹ Viewing racism as heretical betrays the incompatibility of racism with

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 66.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 45.

¹⁶⁸ Nilson, "Confessions of a White Catholic Racist Theologian," in *Interrupting White Privilege: Catholic Theologians Break the Silence*, eds. Cassidy, Laurie M. and Alex Mikulich (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 18. This article is a revision of an article published four years earlier by the same name, "Confession of a White Racist Theologian," in *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 58 (2003): 64-82.

¹⁶⁹ Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 68-69.

Christianity as well as the lack of tolerance that it deserves—unlike many sins for which we are asked to be patient with the sinner.¹⁷⁰ Nilson sympathizes with his heretical peers, noting his belief that “Catholic theologians’ horizons are limited not by bad will or a deliberate turning away from light, but from a lack of development in authenticity.”¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, without the aid of black sources, Catholic theology is lacking from the start.¹⁷² In other words: “Black theology is not a luxury or a hobby for white Catholic theologians. It is indispensable to their vocation and identity.”¹⁷³ Employing a liberationist ethic, Nilson insists that theology must begin with those who are considered non-persons in society.¹⁷⁴ Nilson relays a quote from Cone at the end of his book, which puts the above sentiment into action: “One of the most important things whites can do in fighting white supremacy is to support black empowerment in the society, church and theology.”¹⁷⁵

In a 2010 article, Nilson used Martin Luther King Jr.’s image of the Beloved Community to write about the Church’s role in confronting racism.¹⁷⁶ Nilson understands this notion in King as pointing to “both the fulfillment of the American dream and the actualization of the Kingdom of God, a society where all live lives that

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 68-69.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 73.

¹⁷² Ibid., 74-75.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 79.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 83.

¹⁷⁵ Cone, quoted in Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 94. The quote is originally from James H. Cone, “Theology’s Great Sin: Silence in the Face of White Supremacy,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 55, nos. 3-4 (2001): 13.

¹⁷⁶ Nilson, “Towards the ‘Beloved Community’: The Church’s Role in the Struggle Against Racism,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 83-91.

befit their dignity as children of God; a society where everyone is accepted, everyone belongs.”¹⁷⁷ Nilson then provides concrete examples of how the Beloved Community is not being actualized in American society or the Catholic Church. Across the United States, it is the norm to see diocesan offices that are dedicated to black Catholics closing. If anything, resources need to be rededicated to confronting racism on the diocesan and parish level. In order to take King’s image seriously, Nilson wishes there were diocesan plans that “intentionally fostered interracial communities and neighborhoods.”¹⁷⁸

Without a doubt, Nilson’s work is permeated with the thoughts and ideas of African American intellectuals and theologians. He is well read in black sources and familiar with the history of slavery, Jim Crow, racism, and black theology in the United States. Although his thought offers advice and admonitions to white theologians and Catholics, it rarely provides any proper role for African Americans in securing their own liberation. Nevertheless, Nilson’s omission here is certainly due to humility and not to an accidental oversight. As someone who considers himself an apprentice to African American thinkers, Nilson does not deem himself qualified to give advice to blacks. This is why he quotes Cone’s advice to white Catholics that their best role in fighting racism is to be supportive of black empowerment.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 84.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 90.

¹⁷⁹ Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 94; “Confessions of a White Catholic Racist Theologians,” 33.

Alex Mikulich

Alex Mikulich is a younger white theologian, who along with Laurie M. Cassidy, has attempted to take Cone's call for the incorporation of black sources and black agency into theology seriously. Mikulich brings together the social sciences, black sources, and traditional Catholic theology—particularly that of Nicholas of Cusa—in order to bring about a renewed reflection on racism and white privilege within a Catholic context.¹⁸⁰ Mikulich brings contemporary reflection on racism into dialogue with St. Nicholas of Cusa's insight of "*learned ignorance*."¹⁸¹ Learned ignorance is a positive attribute in which the Christian realizes the infinite chasm between discursive knowledge and God. It is also a state of humility and constant wonder before the Ultimate. Staying within the confines of white European theology prevents theologians from appreciating the Mystery to the extent that one should and betrays a lack of humility. A proper humility regarding one's limited knowledge of God should compel one to look for God in untapped resources.¹⁸² Mikulich argues that the best manner to address racism, white privilege, and to employ one's learned ignorance is by the "[r]etrieval of the revolutionary practices" of those who have been oppressed. In his 2005 article, "Mapping 'Whiteness'," he focuses on the resistance of the "motley crowd" of sailors, free Africans, Indians, and Mestizos in the 18th and 19th centuries, who collaborated to resist

¹⁸⁰ See in particular, Alex Mikulich, "(Un)learning White Male Ignorance," in *Interrupting White Privilege: Catholic Theologians Break the Silence*, eds. Cassidy, Laurie M. and Alex Mikulich (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 160-76; and Mikulich, "Mapping 'Whiteness'" The Complexity of Racial Formation and the Subversive Moral Imagination of the 'Motley Crowd'," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 25, no. 1 (2005): 99-122.

¹⁸¹ Mikulich, "(Un)learning White Male Ignorance," 161. Emphasis in original.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 161-62.

oppression among all peoples.¹⁸³ In one instance, the motley crews held a general strike, which contributed to the elimination of impressments (i.e., forcing someone into a navy) and plantation slavery.¹⁸⁴ Mikulich perceives the method of the motley crowd to be at once individual, structural, and cultural, as well as a “witness [that] contrasts sharply with the development of dominant forms of Western Christianity and secularism.”¹⁸⁵ It also illustrates how those on the underside can collaborate to improve their situation without waiting for the goodwill of whites or governments. Lastly, his example challenges Christians to create a society that “invites a radical democratic politics in which the most disadvantaged people gain full participation as human beings and as citizens.”¹⁸⁶

Laurie M. Cassidy

Laurie M. Cassidy is exemplary in integrating the thought of African Americans and black Catholics into her theological framework. In 2006, she wrote an article in which she incorporated Shawn Copeland’s historical recovery of the *imago Dei* in the thought of the Black Catholic Congresses of the late 19th century.¹⁸⁷ In this article, she depicted how Copeland’s insight into the Black Catholic Congresses can address and challenge the notion of simplistic attribution—blaming God for a disaster or referring to

¹⁸³ Mikulich, “Mapping ‘Whiteness,’” 109.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 112.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 115.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 115-17.

¹⁸⁷ Laurie M. Cassidy, “Affirming *Imago Dei*: Implications of the Black Catholic Congress Movement’s Reception of *Rerum Novarum* no. 32 for Moral Reasoning in Suffering,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 3, no. 1 (2006): 39-55. The Copeland article that Cassidy refers to is M. Shawn Copeland, “Tradition and the Traditions of African American Catholicism,” *Theological Studies* 61 (December 2000): 632-55. The purpose of Copeland’s article is largely to illustrate that it is a mistake to conflate black Catholicism with American Protestantism.

it as God's will.¹⁸⁸ She has seen simple attribution used in popular and religious discourse in America to refer to the HIV-AIDS epidemic and the horrific events of September 11th, 2001 as punishments by God for the sins of the American people.¹⁸⁹

Amid a backdrop of lynching, the Black Catholic Congresses took the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, as found in Pope Leo XIII's labor encyclical, and applied notions about the dignity of the worker to their own situation. In the words of Cassidy, this doctrine from *Rerum novarum* connotes: "[N]o human being may submit to any condition that subverts her transcendental end."¹⁹⁰ The delegates of the Black Catholic Congresses saw terrible suffering in their own day and clearly stated that this was against the will of God for humanity. Cassidy argues that the insight of the delegates against attributing suffering to God "is an urgent imperative for all Catholics in the United States."¹⁹¹ Cassidy's article is a perfect example of how retrieving the voices of the oppressed can improve not only Catholic racial thought, but also deepen the Catholic understanding of traditional doctrinal.¹⁹²

More recently, Cassidy reflected on how Cone's notion of "becoming Black with God," can enhance Christian spirituality, which she argues is particularly needed for the

¹⁸⁸ Cassidy, "Affirming *Imago Dei*," 40-41, 52.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 41-42, 44.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 53. Cassidy and Copeland cite Leo XIII's use of *imago Dei* from *Rerum novarum* 32, which is an older numbering of the document. The Vatican's website, which has renumbered the paragraphs of the document, put the use of the *imago Dei* in *Rerum novarum* 40. See http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html (accessed 26 September 2011).

¹⁹¹ Cassidy, "Affirming *Imago Dei*," 40.

¹⁹² Cassidy practices a similar method of retrieval using the experiences of women in relation to the crucifixion as explicated in the third week of Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*. This method permits her to discover a fresh contemporary meaning to Ignatius's *Exercises*. See Cassidy, "Contemplating the Crucified: A Woman's Reflection," *Review for Religious* 56, no. 2 (March-April 1997): 169-81.

white Catholic theologian.¹⁹³ For Cone, the most relevant image of Christ today is the “black Christ.”¹⁹⁴ The image of the black Christ is a concrete image that brings forth the contemporary importance of Jesus coming into the world as an impoverished oppressed Jew, who is the Suffering Servant with a mission to liberate his people. Cassidy recognizes Cone’s image as “revelatory” because “it offers central questions that challenge white theologians to interrogate the connections of whiteness and the experience of God.”¹⁹⁵ In other words, it challenges white theologians to mistrust the assumption that European concepts of God are normative and to incorporate the plight of the vulnerable into their theology, which has the ability to enhance its relevance.

Summary of Second Section

In the second half of the chapter, all of the theologians are imbued with a sense that black agency and the use of African American sources are essential for any racial justice project. Cone plays a critical role in the thought of all the Catholic theologians and it is difficult to imagine what the theology of the Catholics would look like without the inspiration they have received from Cone. Nevertheless, while Cone is suspicious of any interracial project, his Catholic peers, black and white alike, cannot comprehend a Catholic racial justice framework that is not interracial. In other words, while Cone is not at all troubled by the prospect of leaving whites behind who are roadblocks on the path to racial justice, the Catholic theologians never consider this as an option in their writings.

¹⁹³ Cassidy, “‘Becoming Black with God’: Toward an Understanding of the Vocation of the White Catholic Theologian in the United States,” in *Interrupting White Privilege: Catholic Theologians Break the Silence*, eds. Cassidy and Mikulich (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 147-59.

¹⁹⁴ Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 129-30.

¹⁹⁵ Cassidy, “‘Becoming Black with God’,” 156.

The work of Massingale clearly laments and agonizes over the racist attitudes entrenched in the mindset of much of the Catholic laity and even among the American bishops, but he continues to dialogue with and challenge white Catholics.¹⁹⁶

The importance placed on African American sources and the black experience in the United States means that examinations of racism begin with the suffering that is experienced by blacks. This experience, which is usually augmented with data from the social sciences, converses with traditional theological doctrines in order to permit fresh and relevant theological insights into the problem of racism.¹⁹⁷ The theology in the second section is almost as much a historical project as an ethical project. The use of such sources as Nicholas of Cusa, the motley crews, the Black Catholic Congresses, and the speeches of Malcolm X often require diligent research on the part of the theologian. Moreover, the inclusion of these sources demonstrates the historical reality and necessity of black agency. It would be a non sequitur to employ the speeches of Malcolm X as a key resource while overlooking the importance of black agency. The stories of black struggle and survival brought to light by these theologians illustrate the powerful role that African Americans can and must play in their own liberation.

¹⁹⁶ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 78-82.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Copeland, "Foundations for Catholic Theology in an African American Context," in *Black and Catholic: The Gift and Challenge of Black Folk: Contributions of African American Experience and Thought to Catholic Theology*, ed. Jamie T. Phelps (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2002), 137-39; Copeland, lecture at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies, Summer 1994, quoted in Massingale, "Cyprian Davis and the Black Catholic Intellectual Vocation," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 76.

CONCLUSION

The contrast between the first and second sections of this chapter reveal the necessity and practicality of creating a racial justice framework that embraces African American sources and promotes black agency. The theological framework of the second section of the chapter is grounded in the concrete reality of racial injustice as a starting point to work towards racial justice. The theological framework of the first section of the chapter is more theoretical, less concrete, and less relevant to the all too common injustices that are faced by African Americans. Therefore, the solutions for addressing racism are often theoretical and impractical—such as state and Church intervention, for patience and forgiveness to be practiced by African Americans, and for whites to be more kind and intentional in their actions towards blacks.

Even if it could be argued that the decades of writings by John LaFarge and the issuance in 1958 of *Discrimination and the Christian Conscience* laid the groundwork for Catholic involvement in the civil rights movement, it was the witness and actions of African Americans that inspired white Catholics to support and/or join the civil rights movement. The American bishops admit in *Brothers and Sisters to Us* that Catholic involvement in the civil rights movement had its impetus in African American thought and action.¹⁹⁸

Cone is also very frank in his belief that black liberation can only be brought about by African Americans. Cone's historical narrative of black and white churches illustrates how white churches have repeatedly compromised their Christian values in regard to white supremacy. Even the African American Bishops of the United States

¹⁹⁸ *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, 11.

candidly wrote that black Catholics must “demand” recognition and leadership roles to aid the Catholic Church in eradicating racism.¹⁹⁹ Copeland’s retrieval of Henriette Delille, a figure who shamed the greater society and the local Catholic Church of her time period with her aid to fellow blacks, is another reminder of the constant failure of white clerics and laity in addressing white supremacy in the United States.

In the writings of the theologians of the second section, there is an emphasis on the positive—and integral—role that black retrieval can have in the deepening our comprehension of the mysteries of the Christian faith as well as efficacious ethical formulations based on these mysteries. The profound experience of suffering and injustice that plagues the African American experience is invaluable as a resource for understanding hope in dire circumstances as well as the Christian necessity to reject any notion that racial injustice is willed by God. The very use of the black experience betrays the dignity and respect that the authors have for African Americans. This respect is completely absent in LaFarge. At best, LaFarge’s omission of the black sources represents his lack of creativity; at worst, it represents a form of racism that does not deem the black experience as worthy of retrieval or having anything important to offer. Massingale’s emphasis on the elimination of racial stigma and racial privilege instead of racial differences is very different from the viewpoint offered by John LaFarge, which focused solely on the ontological equality of the races and dismissed any type of cultural equality.

The survey performed in this chapter on the state of Catholic social thought regarding racial justice in the 20th and early 21st century clearly indicates the necessity for

¹⁹⁹ *What We Have Seen and Heard*, 20.

continued retrieval of African American narratives to aid the Church in more adequately confronting white supremacy. In addition, Cone asserts that white theologians, like me, could have a role to play in black freedom, if they were willing to reorder their theological priorities according to an African American cultural viewpoint.²⁰⁰ As a forgotten black Catholic who dedicated his life to fighting racial injustice, the life and writings of Dr. Arthur G. Falls are indispensable resources for continuing to improve upon the contemporary Catholic racial thought. Therefore, the next chapter will narrate the life of Falls and chapter three will critique his writings.

²⁰⁰ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 46.

CHAPTER 2: THE LIFE OF DR. ARTHUR G. FALLS

This chapter examines the life of Dr. Arthur Falls to give a working background for this forgotten figure and highlights portions of his life that exhibit his work for racial justice. The following chapter will present and critique his writings on the subject of racial justice. Undoubtedly, there will be some crossover since the majority of what we know about his life is from his own writings, but a strong attempt will be made to keep these two chapters separate. Additionally, this chapter on his life will familiarize the reader with his life and provide a historical context for his writings.

This chapter begins with an overview of the Black Catholic Congresses of the late 19th century, to which Cyprian Davis sees Falls's generation as a successor.¹ Next, I will address the childhood of Falls and his experience of the riot of 1919, followed by an introduction to his medical career and the start of his own family. This will set the background for his work with the Chicago Urban League, the Federated Colored Catholics, the Catholic Worker, his correspondence with Cardinal Samuel Stritch, his integration into the upper-class white suburb of Western Springs, as well as his later work for hospital integration.

Remembering and listening to historical black Catholic figures is important. As Massingale asserts:

Thinking about the Catholic tradition's pluralism, ambiguity, and contradictions through serious, responsible, careful, and disciplined scholarship—while also being attentive to the dynamics of exclusion, silence, and repression of certain voices in that tradition—strikes me as an essential dimension of the vocation of Catholic theologians today, and especially so for U.S. Catholic scholars of African descent.²

¹ Davis, *The History of Black Catholics*, 229.

² Massingale, "Cyprian Davis and the Black Catholic Intellectual Tradition," 74.

Although I am not of African descent, I hope that by listening to the life and voice of Falls will in some manner answer Massingale's call for my vocation as an ethicist in the Catholic tradition.

BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESSES

The Black Catholic Congresses³ of the late 19th century have garnered much scholarly interest in the past twenty years, as there has been greater interest in black Catholic history.⁴ These five lay-initiated Congresses took place between 1 January 1889 and 11 October 1894. Although no exact figures exist regarding attendance at the conferences, each conference attracted between fifty and two hundred black Catholics, mostly from the northern United States. The conferences were an opportunity for black Catholics from across the United States to come together, foster a national identity, and address issues of particular concern for the black Catholic community. Each Congress attempted to build on the actions of the previous Congress and each successive Congress became more practical in its orientation. Additionally, each Congresses passed resolutions for action and/or communal parting addresses. Although Falls never mentioned the Black Catholic Congresses of the late 19th century, they warrant acknowledgment; Falls's actions took place within the same culture of Jim Crow as his Catholic predecessors. By the end of the next chapter, it will be evident that there are a

³ At the time they took place, they were often referred to as the Catholic Afro-American Congresses or the Negro Catholic Congresses.

⁴ For example, see Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*; Shawn M. Copeland "Tradition and the Traditions of African American Catholicism" *Theological Studies* 61 (2000): 632-55; Diana L. Hayes, "The Black Catholic Congress Movement: A Progressive Aspect of African-American Catholicism," in *What's Left?: Liberal American Catholics*, ed. Mary Jo Weaver (Bloomington Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999), 238-51.

number of similarities between the thought and actions of Falls and the Congresses that can be attributed to indirect cultural and religious connections. In essence, while Falls will give us an example par excellence for a black Catholic fighting racial injustice, his basic stances against racial injustice were not unique or new among African American Catholics.

Daniel Rudd (1854-1933), a black lay Catholic, is universally recognized as the primary initiator of the Black Catholic Congress movement of the late 19th century. Rudd was born in Kentucky of Catholic parents and was an ex-slave, who in 1886 founded the weekly newspaper, the *American Catholic Tribune*.⁵ Although not uncritical of Catholicism regarding race issues, he believed that the Catholic Church would play a crucial role in bettering the situation of blacks in America.⁶ In fact, he believed “the Catholic Church alone can break the color line, our people should help her to do it.”⁷

In January 1889, with the support of Archbishop William Henry Elder of Cincinnati (1819-1904), about 200 black Catholics attended the first national Congress.⁸ Daniel Rudd succinctly illustrated the boundaries of the first Congress in his address to its participants:

The object of this Congress is not to discuss doctrine. The teachings of the Church to us are axioms. Therefore the only work the delegates will have in hand, is to look out for the temporal interests of the race, consult

⁵ It was originally called *The Ohio State Tribune*. It is considered the only successful black Catholic newspaper of the 19th century. See Cyprian Davis, “Black Catholic Theology: A Historical Perspective,” *Theological Studies* 61 (December 2000): 660-61.

⁶ Daniel Rudd, in “Wednesday’s Journal,” *Three Catholic Afro-American Congresses* (Cincinnati: The American Catholic Tribune, 1893), 26; Davis, *History of Black Catholics*, 165-66.

⁷ Daniel Rudd, quoted in *Daniel Rudd: Founder of Black Catholic National Congresses*, VHS, Catholic Life in America Series, directed by George Torok (Sparkill, NY: Hallel Videos; 1999).

⁸ Davis, *History of Black Catholics*, 171-73.

together as to the best means to be adopted to advance the Colored people in... civilization.⁹

In other words, since Catholic doctrine at the Congresses was a given, the proper application of this doctrine regarding the situation of blacks in America was the object of debate.

Before the first Congress took place, an agenda and a proposed set of resolutions in the form of an address had been submitted to Archbishop William Elder, which he approved. Father John R. Slattery (1851-1926), a white Josephite missionary, was apparently the primary author of the set of resolutions, which was titled, "Address to the Colored People." The address was initially ratified at the conference, although shortly after the ratification there was an approved motion to reconsider the address. The result was an expansion of the committee that composed the original resolutions and the rewriting of the address.¹⁰ This committee composed a revised set of resolutions that was addressed to a much wider audience: to "their Catholic fellow-citizens of the United States."¹¹ This address, unanimously adopted, emphasized a seven-point plan that should be implemented in order to better the plight of blacks. The points were grounded in "the inalienable rights given to every man in the very dawn of creation."¹² The fact that the Congress felt comfortable rewriting an address already approved by Archbishop Elder indicates the level of independence and freedom that they must have felt in stating what

⁹ Rudd, quoted in *Three Catholic Afro-American Congresses*, 25.

¹⁰ David Spalding, "The Negro Catholic Congresses, 1889-1894," *Catholic Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (October 1969): 339, 341-42.

¹¹ *Three Catholic Afro-American Congresses*, 66.

¹² *Ibid.*, 66, 72.

they believed was truly necessary to attend to the needs of blacks near the end of the 19th century.

With each successive Congress, the group became bolder in their statements and actions. By the fourth Congress, which was held in Chicago in September 1893, the delegates, while professing their “love and loyalty” for the Roman Catholic Church, concluded that “owing to the frailty of human nature, if we would have our rights, we must needs [sic] demand them.”¹³ The fourth conference had also created a special committee on grievances that began documenting discrimination charges within Catholic churches and other Catholic institutions. This task was carried out mainly by sending a questionnaire to the bishop of every diocese in the United States concerning such items as official diocesan protocols for African Americans, the policies of hospitals and schools in the diocese for admitting blacks, and the policies of religious orders in the diocese for admitting blacks. After collecting this information, the committee sent a letter to the *New York Sun*, one of New York’s three premier newspapers at the time, listing some of the most scandalous discriminatory practices. The article also related the committee’s discussion with Cardinal James Gibbons (1834-1921) of Washington, D. C., one of the Congress’s most ardent supporters, about his cathedral’s practice of having blacks relegated to backless benches in the rear. Gibbons blamed the lay trustees of the cathedral. The chairman of the committee concluded: “[E]very Bishop or priest who

¹³ Quoted in Copeland, “Tradition and the Traditions of African American Catholicism,” *Theological Studies* 61 (2000): 640. Also quoted in Cyprian Davis, “Two Sides of a Coin: The Black Presence in the History of the Catholic Church in America,” in *Many Rains Ago: A Historical and Theological Reflection on the Role of the Episcopate in the Evangelization of African American Catholics* (Washington, D. C.: Secretariat for Black Catholics/National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1990), 57. From the statement agreed upon at the Fourth Black Catholic Congress. Original quote from *Boston Pilot*, “The Colored Catholic Memorial: The Eloquent Expression of Their Fourth Congress,” 23 September 1893, p. 6.

discriminates against, or permits discrimination against colored Catholics in his diocese or church... is either vicious or a coward.”¹⁴ It is clear from these interim actions that the Congress was becoming much more practical, proactive, and bold in its approach.

Fr. Slattery, in the opening address at the fifth Congress, insisted the best tools available to African Americans to address racial justice were “Time and Silence.” African Americans “have everything to gain by patient forbearance, and much to lose by hurry and temper.”¹⁵ Slattery asked the Congress to focus on “inward growth” and to allow their white friends to confront their enemies.¹⁶ The Congress disagreed. On the third day of the fifth Congress, two delegates went to Philadelphia to bring the grievances of the Congress to the archbishops who were meeting there. Unfortunately, no record of the archbishops’ response has been preserved.¹⁷ There would not be another Congress. Although there is no evidence to confirm any reason for the lack of another Congress, it is likely that after challenging the bishops and publishing embarrassing discriminatory practices in a widely read newspaper, they could not find a bishop who would sponsor or host another Congress.¹⁸

Although the degree of Falls’s acquaintance with the Black Catholic Congresses is unknown, there is a marked similarity between their writings and actions. Neither

¹⁴ Robert N. Wood, letter to the editor, *New York Sun*, 29 June 1894, p. 6; Spalding, “Negro Catholic Congresses,” 350-51; Davis, *The History of Black Catholics*, 190-91.

¹⁵ Very Rev. J. R. Slattery, “The Hope of the Colored Race: Very Rev. J. R. Slattery’s Sermon Points Out the Way to Prosperity,” *Catholic Mirror*, 27 October 1894, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁷ Spalding, “Negro Catholic Congresses,” 352-53.

¹⁸ Davis speculates that the increasing militant tone and actions of the Congresses led to their cessation. Davis, “Black Catholics in Nineteenth Century America,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 5, no. 1 (1986): 15.

questioned the integrity of Catholic doctrines, but rather the lack of willingness on the part of many Catholics to live out their own beliefs. They both looked for practical ways to implement changes into Church practice and society that would benefit African Americans as well as others. In addition, it appears that the Congresses had Protestant observers at all of their conferences.¹⁹ Falls, as we will see through his work with the Chicago Urban League, the Catholic Worker, and other groups, regularly worked with blacks and whites of different denominations or faiths. Lastly, they both showed a desire to work with the hierarchy of the Church, but were not afraid to point out the failings of clerics when necessary. In both cases, this led to a lack of willingness from most bishops to participate in an active relationship. While stating a direct link or influence between Falls and the Congresses would probably be incorrect, there is probably an indirect cultural connection through the work of African Americans in the North to work for racial justice. The type of aggressive action for racial justice was a common denominator with Falls, the Black Catholic Congresses, the NAACP, the Urban League, and the Federated Colored Catholics. Essentially, all these groups shared a militant stance in working for racial justice through any moral means available.

GROWING UP & THE RIOT OF 1919

Falls was born in Chicago on Christmas 1901 in his family's home at 3801 S. Dearborn Street and was the descendent of Creole Catholics from Louisiana and the surrounding area.²⁰ His father, William Arthur Falls, was a postal worker and his mother,

¹⁹ *Three Catholic Afro-American Congresses*, 12.

²⁰ AGF, Box 1, Folder 1, p. 1. According to family lore, when his extended family entered the bedroom to see the newborn Falls, his mother presented him saying, "Meet Dr. Falls." AGF, Box 1, Folder 1, p. 1. Falls would be baptized within a couple weeks at St. Monica parish. Baptismal Records, St.

Santalia Angelica (née de Grand Pré), was a dressmaker.²¹ His father was a convert to Catholicism, but his mother's side of the family had been Catholic for generations, going back to their French ancestry.²² Falls could never remember a time that being African American did not signify "a certain handicap."²³ As a child, his parents would often remind him and his siblings that they had only one person to fear—God. His parents also taught the children that all people shared in a common humanity, which was "reinforced by the fact that we were warned that if we ever attacked another child because he happened to be white, we would get a licking when we got home."²⁴

Falls's parents had sent him to a public school because the only Catholic school he could be admitted to was St. Elizabeth's, which was designated for blacks and known to be inferior to the other Catholic schools. In addition, Falls noted that the North Central Association did not accredit St. Elizabeth High School and, therefore, its students could not attend Crane Junior College.²⁵ Essentially, receiving a Catholic education would have meant that Falls could not have become a medical doctor.

Monica Church, 5 January 1902, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Sacramental Registers, Microfilm Roll 179.

²¹ Tim Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 130,132; *Who's Who in Colored America*, 5th ed., (New York: Who's Who in Colored America Corp., 1940), s.v. "Falls, Arthur Grand Pré." AGF, Box 1, Folder 1, p. 2; Falls, Unpublished autobiography, disc 11-side 2 p. 1 (also Box 1, Folder 6). In tracing his own family tree, Falls believed he had African, French, German, Spanish, and Choctaw Indian ancestry. AGF, Box 1, Folder 1, pp. 1-2.

²² AGF, Box 1, Folder 1, p. 7. William's baptismal record is available at the Archdiocese of Chicago Archives, Baptismal Records, St. Monica Church, 23 November 1900, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Sacramental Registers, Microfilm Roll 179.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁵ AGF, Box 1, Folder 12, disc 18-side 2, pp. 4-5. He discovered this when the daughter of a National Catholic Interracial Federation member was rejected from Crane Junior College until after she took evening courses at Englewood High School. Perhaps in response to this incident, St. Elizabeth's did

Early on, Falls's parents stressed the importance of religious tolerance and he credited his family's befriending the Jewish family next door as the main reason he did not have anti-Semitic feelings growing up. It should be noted that the neighborhoods in which he grew up were mostly white.²⁶ As a high school student, Falls remembered the many volunteer hours that his father provided as the secretary for St. Monica's Order of Foresters. Without being specific, Falls recalled an instance in which "I saw my father stand and fight on principle. He was the only person fighting in a group of two hundred, and I saw him fight until he won. This left a lasting impression on me."²⁷ After graduating from Englewood High School in 1918, he attended Crane Junior College. There he befriended a group of German Jews who told him that he should not associate with Slavic Jews, as they were inferior. Believing this to be "silly," he refused to follow their advice.²⁸ Later on, while he was involved with the Catholic Worker movement, he had opportunities to speak to white Catholic school children with whom he found a great deal of anti-Semitism. It was his practice in these situations to ask how many of the girls were named Mary. Many of the children would proudly raise their hands and tell him that the name was holy because it was the name of "our Holy Mother." To this he would respond: "Mary was a Jew. Christ was a Jew. And an Oriental Jew. Believe me,

receive accreditation from the University of Illinois in December 1933. It published this news in the local Archdiocesan newspaper. *Chicago New World*, "St. Elizabeth's H. S. Accredited," 14 September 1934.

²⁶ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, pp. 43-44.

²⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 1, pp. 39-40.

²⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, pp. 60-61.

Oriental Jews are not blue-eyed blondes!” This line of reasoning usually made the kids think twice about their anti-Semitic comments.²⁹

The summer of 1919 is often referred to as Red Summer because there were over two-dozen separate race riots in the United States, including one in Chicago.³⁰ While the black population had been steadily increasing in Chicago since the Civil War, in the three years before the riot, it had doubled. This led to very tense racial conditions in the job market following the end of World War I with the return of white workers whose labor had been replaced by black men.³¹ The riot in Chicago lasted from 27 July to 3 August. On the second day of the riot, several white gangs were stopping streetcars to pull off blacks, beat them, and in some cases, kill them. Falls’s brother was almost killed by a gang of whites while on his way home from work. A white man on the street car hid Falls’s brother under his seat and his brother was not discovered.³² On the third day of the riot, not realizing the situation was still dangerous, the eighteen-year-old Falls and his father decided to go to their jobs at the post office. They were attacked by a gang of whites on a street that was busy with many other people going to work. After initially

²⁹ Arthur Falls, interview by Rosalie Riegle Troester, January 10, 1988, transcript, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-9, Box 4, Folder 12. On 2 April 1939, Falls was on a local radio station where he spoke against anti-Semitism from a Catholic perspective. He stated that he received many anonymous threats from Fr. Charles Coughlin supporters. AGF, Box 2, Folder 1, disc 24-side 1, p. 8.

³⁰ For further information on this riot, see Janet L. Abu-Lughud, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and William M. Tuttle Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York, Atheneum, 1970; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

³¹ Steven M. Avella, *This Confident Church*, 250; Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 18, 66, 83-84. At the time of the riots, black workers amounted to twenty-five percent of the labor force in the stockyards. Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 124-25, 160. For more information about the migration of blacks from the South to Chicago during this period, see James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

³² AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, 74.

fighting back, Falls ran off, hoping to take most of the gang with him, which he did. Being young, fast, and athletic, he outran them and made it to the post office. His father arrived an hour later, with six white men who had surrounded him and protected him from the remaining gang. They later discovered that a black man by the name of Robert Williams had been killed less than an hour earlier on the very corner on which they were attacked.³³ Falls and his father did not bother trying to go to work the rest of the week. For the next few nights, they stayed alert in their home and listened to the rioting that, fortunately, did not come to their doorstep. They had little with which to protect themselves; the family did not own a gun. When they finally went back to work, the African Americans from his neighborhood went to work in groups of five or more and Falls and his father armed themselves with knives.³⁴ Falls had felt helpless as rioting occurred outside his parents' home with no means of protection. Although Falls was never a proponent of violence in the struggle for racial justice, he never wavered in his belief of the right to self-defense.

MEDICAL CAREER

Falls attended Northwestern University Medical School and earned his Bachelor of Arts and Doctor of Medicine in 1925.³⁵ Though not required for graduation at many

³³ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, pp. 79-85; Box 1, Folder 3, p. 86. *Chicago Defender*, "List of Slain in Four Days Rioting," 2 August 1919, p. 1.

³⁴ AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, p. 88-94.

³⁵ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, 69-70. In the early 20th century, most medical degrees, like Falls's program at Northwestern University, were granted in four years without an extra year as an internship. Graduates were then expected to begin their own practice and perhaps later work their way into a hospital. For more information concerning medical training during this era, see John S. O'Shea, "Becoming a Surgeon in the Early 20th Century: Parallels to the Present," *Journal of Surgical Education* 65, no. 3 (May/June 2008): 236-41. Falls was probably the last black person to graduate. A younger friend of Falls, Dr. Quentin Young, a white physician, who also graduated from Northwestern was always in disbelief that

medical schools other than Northwestern, Falls did an internship at the Kansas City General Hospital the year before he graduated.³⁶ This was his first experience of a city that was deeply segregated in all respects. Despite episodes of racial prejudice and violence in Chicago, he was accustomed to being able to go into any shop he pleased. In Kansas City, he was not allowed in most stores or restaurants because of his skin color. Even at church, after genuflecting, but before entering the pew, a white person would often notice he was black and go to a different pew. He often “wondered why such people bothered to come to church at all.” These experiences in Kansas City gave him “a sense of being contaminated by the bigotry and discrimination” he had experienced and he developed a temporary hate for white people that scared him. He was very glad to return to Chicago.³⁷

In March 1926, Falls applied with a number of other blacks to the Chicago Medical Society. Out of the group, he was the only one to regularly write, call, and stop in their office to see what was happening with his application, to which he was always told he would receive a response soon. He finally received notice of his admittance to the group in March 1927. None of the other African American doctors were admitted. Falls believed that the other men were not admitted because “they were not willing to fight.”³⁸

Immediately after graduation, Falls opened his own office to begin a general practice.³⁹ From 1926 to 1930, he also worked as a junior surgeon from time to time at

Falls graduated from Northwestern, since he knew first hand the racism present there. Quentin Young, interview by author, Digital recording over phone, Milwaukee to Chicago, 18 November 2011.

³⁶ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, p. 70.

³⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, pp. 156-58; Box 1, Folder 5, pp. 173-75.

³⁸ Falls, Unpublished autobiography, disc 11-side 2 pp. 4, 7-9. (also Box 1, Folder 6)

Wilson Hospital in Chicago. From 1932 onward, he worked more and more regularly as a surgeon at Provident Hospital in Chicago, initially as a junior surgeon, then as an attending surgeon, and for a time as the chief of staff.⁴⁰ Falls pointed out that Provident was known as “the colored hospital” in Chicago and a fellow physician noted its standing as a “second-rate” hospital, but it was one of the very few places that would hire Falls.⁴¹ During his time as a doctor, Falls wrote a number of articles in medical journals regarding the use of different treatments for various ailments.⁴² In 1929, he wrote an article for doctors just beginning in the medical profession entitled, “As a Beginner Figures It Out,”⁴³ in which he lamented the constant difficulty in collecting bills. He began by using moral suasion—explaining to clients that he expected prompt payment in return for his full attention to their needs. This method was not successful and he found

³⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 4, p. 176.

⁴⁰ *The American Catholic Who's Who*, 7th ed., (Grosse Pointe, MI: Walter Romig, 1947), s.v. “Falls, Arthur Grand Pre.” Arthur G. Falls, “The Search for Negro Medical Students,” *Integrated Education* 1, no. 3 (June 1963): 15; “Re-Elect Dr. Falls Head of Staff,” Unknown newspaper clipping, 10 January 1957, Western Springs Historical Society, Western Springs, IL, Folder: Dr. Arthur G. Falls.

⁴¹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, p. 161. It is unclear when he stopped working as a surgeon, but he stated that he worked as a doctor in general practice until he was eighty-eight years old. Falls, interview by Troester. Dr. Michelle Sykes, interview by author, Digital recording over phone, Milwaukee to New Jersey, 26 January 2012. Dr. Sykes is the granddaughter of Arthur Falls. In a letter that Lillian wrote to her sister, Muriel, when Falls was eighty, Lillian mentioned that “Art has several patients [today].” Lillian Proctor Falls to Muriel Proctor Holcombe, 11 October 1982, Henry Hugh Proctor and Adeline L. Davis Papers 1989 Addendum, 1919-1984, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, Unprocessed; Young, interview by author. It was Young who referred to it as a “second-rate” hospital from personal experience.

⁴² Arthur G. Falls, B.S., M.D., “Protein (Milk) Therapy of Pelvic Inflammations: Report of First Hundred Cases,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 20, no. 3 (July-September 1928): 117-21; “Management of Pulmonary Tuberculosis,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 47, no. 6 (November 1955): 399-402; “Ammonium Chloride and Novasurol: The Use of, as a Diuretic,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 19, no. 2 (April-June 1927): 65-67, 72-73. The *Journal of the National Medical Association* was the publication of the National Medical Association, which was an association for black medical doctors. It was created because black doctors were refused admittance to the American Medical Association.

⁴³ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “As a Beginner Figures It Out,” *Medical Economics* 6, no. 8 (May 1929): 16-18, 65, 67.

that almost 25% of his patients were delinquent in their bills. In response, he sent a letter to all his delinquent patients, in which he clearly stated that besides one emergency, all payments would be expected at the time of service, with emergency patients given an extra two weeks to pay. If he would be performing a surgery, thirty percent was due at the consultation with the balance due at the time of the operation. At the time that he wrote the article, he had also two delinquent cases in court. The following year his delinquent accounts only amounted to 6.92% of his clients. Falls concluded: "Every individual has certain hobbies; one of mine has been 'figuring.'" He continued: "It seems to me that the sooner a practitioner establishes a reputation for demanding the same conscientious co-operation from his patients that they demand from him the sooner his collections will increase."⁴⁴ Falls applied the knowledge that "personal appeals alone" do not work to his future confrontations with racism.⁴⁵

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Falls met his wife, Lillian Steele Proctor,⁴⁶ on 18 April 1921, while he was a 19-year-old medical student at Northwestern. She was from Atlanta and graduated *summa cum laude* from Fiske University. At the time they met, she was studying for her Master's Degree in the Department of Social Service at the University of Chicago and

⁴⁴ Ibid., 65, 67. Although this method improved his financial position momentarily, the worsening depression eventually made many of his patients uncollectible. AGF, Box 1, Folder 9, p. 458, 463; Folder 10, p. 524; Folder 11, p. 572.

⁴⁵ Falls, "As a Beginner Figures It Out," 67.

⁴⁶ There does not appear to be any relation between Lillian Proctor and Samuel DeWitt Proctor (1921-1997), who was best-known for his active role in civil rights during the 1950s and 1960s as well as being a mentor and friend to Martin Luther King Jr.

was receiving a fellowship from the Urban League.⁴⁷ Lillian was instrumental in changing Falls's attitude toward the role of a woman in marriage. He had initially thought that a woman should stay home and rear the kids, but Lillian would not tolerate such a viewpoint since she planned on having a career in social work.⁴⁸ The year before they married, Falls purposefully read books on sociology and psychology "to understand more thoroughly the work that Lillian was doing and to establish a closer rapport with her."⁴⁹ Beforehand, he had almost exclusively read medical texts and his interest in her studies undoubtedly gave him a foundation in the social sciences.⁵⁰ They dated for the next seven and a half years, with prolonged periods of separation pertaining to her schooling, before they married on 6 December 1928 in New York City in the living room of her parents' house. The Congregationalist minister who witnessed their marriage was Dr. William D. Berry, an old Proctor family friend.⁵¹ The Fallses had one son, Arthur Falls Jr., who was born on 19 October 1929 and baptized in the Catholic Church on 1 December 1929.⁵² Later that December, they had a Catholic wedding in the rectory of a

⁴⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, p. 121, 127.

⁴⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 5, p. 166. When Arthur and Lillian first met, she said that she had no plans to marry. This was very likely grounded in the reality that most men at the time would expect their wives to stop working when they got married. AGF, Box 1, Folder 5, pp. 165, 169-70; Folder 8, pp. 399-400.

⁴⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 5, p. 208.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁵¹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 8, pp. 413-14. Lillian's family was Congregationalist and was not happy with her marrying a Catholic. Arthur and Lillian had originally planned on having a Congregationalist and Catholic ceremony in New York, but Lillian could not agree to an aspect of the Catholic ceremony, which Falls left unnamed, and so they only had the Congregationalist ceremony in New York with hopes of having a Catholic ceremony in Chicago in the near future.

⁵² AGF, Box 1, Folder 9, pp. 446-47.

Catholic Church.⁵³ In August 1929, Lillian received her Master's Degree in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago. Her thesis, "A Case Study of Thirty Superior Colored Children in Washington, D.C.," studied the potential of black children in particular social and cultural settings.⁵⁴

On 29 March 1929, Arthur's father, William Arthur Falls, unexpectedly died. As members of Our Lady of Solace Catholic Church, his family wanted to have the funeral there. Since the riot of 1919 ten years earlier, however, there had been increased discrimination and segregation in Chicago and St. Elizabeth's had been deemed the church where funeral services were held for blacks. Therefore, Fr. Joseph Eckert, S.V.D., who was serving at St. Elizabeth's, announced to the congregation that the funeral would be at St. Elizabeth's. The family protested that William Falls would be "buried from his local parish or he would not be buried from a Catholic church at all." The parish relented and on 1 April, Fr. MacDowell celebrated the funeral mass for William at Our Lady of Solace.⁵⁵

Falls never understood why African Americans often segregated themselves. Falls was raised not to segregate himself from whites and he was well aware that better resources existed for whites. As such, even regarding family visits to the beach, the Fallses would go to the "white beaches" because they knew that those beaches were superior. Realizing that this could become a dangerous situation if some whites decided

⁵³ Ibid., p. 418. The details concerning the reason for two marriage ceremonies by a Congregationalist minister and a year later by a Catholic priest are unclear. They were probably married at Our Lady of Solace, but Falls does not name the church and sacramental records for this time period are not yet open to the public.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 443-44. Lillian Steele Proctor, "A Case Study of Thirty Superior Colored Children in Washington, D.C." (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1929).

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 431-33.

they did not like his family being there, they always went to the beach with a loaded revolver. Fortunately, they never felt compelled to use it.⁵⁶

CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE

By early 1928, Falls joined Albon L. Foster (d. 1968), executive secretary of the Chicago Urban League, in forming a local men's division, which called themselves the De Saible Club.⁵⁷ The Chicago Urban League is an interracial organization that was founded in 1916 as the black population was rapidly increasing in Chicago. Representing a wide range of persons and groups in the field of race relations, it promoted the social and economic advancement of blacks in the Chicago area. It was Falls's mother, who always had an interest in community activities such as the Chicago Urban League and the League of Women Voters, who got Falls interested in the Chicago Urban League.⁵⁸ Another reason he became involved with the Chicago Urban League was because it "gave me a better opportunity of knowing social work in which Lillian was interested."⁵⁹ Most of all though, he felt obligated to work with the group because "it gave me added opportunity to follow the promise that I had made as a child that as I lived I would fight discrimination and segregation."⁶⁰ Another reason for Falls's involvement with the

⁵⁶ AGF, Box 1, Folder 13, pp. 19-2-7/8.

⁵⁷ Falls, Unpublished autobiography, disc 12-side 1 p. 9. (A copy of this document can also be found in AGF, Box 1, Folder 7.)

⁵⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 6, disc 11-side 2 p. 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid., disc 12-side 1 p. 10.

⁶⁰ Ibid., disc 12-side 1 p. 10.

Chicago Urban League was that Falls was at that time not aware of any Catholic group, such as the Federated Colored Catholics, that were interested in race issues.⁶¹

The De Saible Club hosted a number of speakers who provided an in-depth education for Falls concerning the plight of blacks in America and abroad, with the first speaker being W. E. B. Du Bois.⁶² From these speakers, who were often significant persons in the field of race relations, Falls was “learning something of their attitudes and activities, all of which helped to provide a framework for the activity with which I would be engaged in the future.”⁶³ The group also served the purpose of actively addressing issues in “industry, housing, health, discrimination and civic improvement.”⁶⁴ This newly organized group was the first to make contact with the Chicago’s World Fair leadership in April 1928 about paying its respects to Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable.⁶⁵ Du Sable was the first settler in Chicago as well as being a black Catholic. As Falls

⁶¹ Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” December 1935, p. 8; Falls, Unpublished autobiography, disc 12-side 1 p. 17. (A copy of this document can be found in AGF, Box 1, Folder 7.) In the cited autobiography, Falls wrote that black Catholics in Chicago during the early 1930s would be “in constant contact with almost every group except their own religious groups [sic].” In other words, if black Catholics wanted to work for racial justice in the early 1930s, most had to work with non-Catholic groups because most white Catholics did not work for racial justice.

⁶² Falls, Unpublished autobiography, disc 12-side 1 p. 17. (A copy of this document can also be found in AGF, Box 1, Folder 7.)

⁶³ AGF, Box 1, Folder 8, p. 379.

⁶⁴ Chicago Urban League, “Inter Racial Good Will Through Social Service: Twelfth Annual Report of the Chicago Urban League,” 31 October 1928, Chicago Urban League Records, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 1, Folder 8.

⁶⁵ Christopher R. Reed, “‘In the Shadow of Fort Dearborn’ Honoring De Saible at the Chicago’s World Fair of 1933-1934,” *Journal of Black Studies* 21 (1991): 402. There were a number of spellings for Jean-Baptiste Pointe du Sable in common usage during the 1920s and 1930s.

succinctly stated in 1968: “The first white man to settle in Chicago was black.”⁶⁶ Other groups soon added their voices to the De Saible Club and their struggle succeeded when a replica of du Sable’s cabin was exhibited at the fair when it opened in 1933.⁶⁷

Falls was elected to the Executive Board of the Chicago Urban League in February 1932 and was asked to organize the Interracial Commission of the Chicago Urban League for the purpose of examining race relations in the Chicago area and to be a coordinating point for the various groups working on racial justice.⁶⁸ On 29 April, the Commission met with Mayor Anton Cermak (1873-1933) to urge the appointment of African Americans to the school board to ensure that there was a black voice to address problems related to racism. Cermak told them that decisions had been already made this time around but that he would strongly consider their suggestion next time.⁶⁹ In February 1933, the mayor did not follow through with appointing an African American to the School Board. Instead, he appointed Earl Dickerson, a black lawyer, as Assistant

⁶⁶ Dr. Arthur G. Falls, quoted in J. O. Schueler, “W. Springs Doctor Has a ‘Better Idea’ About Civil Rights,” *Chicago Tribune*, 27 December 1968, clipping at Western Springs Historical Society, Western Springs, IL, Folder: Dr. Arthur G. Falls.

⁶⁷ Reed, “In the Shadow of Fort Dearborn,” 402-411. This article does an excellent job of documenting the struggle that black groups faced in obtaining permission to build a replica of du Sable’s cabin. Although Falls was aware that du Sable was Catholic, this was not a point that the De Saible Club pushed. They were not a Catholic organization and wanted du Sable recognized at the fair because he was black.

⁶⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, p. 540. Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 5 (May 1935): 74-75. In the just cited *Interracial Review* article, Falls noted that the Interracial Commission began in the fall of 1931, but was ineffective until he took control in February 1932 and created a Committee on Organization and Development. See also, A. L. Foster, “The Negro League and the Urban Community: The Eighteenth Annual Report of the Chicago Urban League,” 1932, Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 1, Folder 10. When the De Saible Club first formed, Falls was the secretary for group. In February 1930, he was elected president of the club, but it is uncertain for how long he was president or even how long the club continued. The Chicago Urban League archives at the University of Chicago at Chicago has scant information on the De Saible Club. AGF, Box 1, Folder 9, p. 454-55.

⁶⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, p. 540. During this time period, school board members were appointed, not elected.

Attorney General of Illinois.⁷⁰ As Falls and the Commission began to pressure the mayor again to appoint an African American to the School Board, Cermak was shot on 15 February while shaking hands with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and died on 6 March.⁷¹ On 3 April 1933, the Commission met with the new mayor, Edward Kelly, about appointing an African American to the school board. That May, Kelly appointed five white men who had no experience in education with the obvious intention of pleasing his financial backers.⁷² As late as January 1938, Falls and the Interracial Commission were still unsuccessful in getting the mayor to appoint an African American to the school board.⁷³ In late October 1939, Dr. Midian O. Bousfield, a black physician, was appointed to the Chicago School Board by Mayor Kelly, although the exact reasoning and timing for the appointment are unclear.⁷⁴

As the head of the Interracial Commission, Falls also aided residents in forming the Morgan Park–Beverly Hills Interracial Group. These were two adjacent areas of Chicago with Morgan Park being almost completely black and Beverly Hills being completely white except for servants who lived there. Certain white residents in Beverly

⁷⁰ AGF, Box 1, Folder 11, pp. 592-93; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “First Colored Democrat Named to State Law Post,” 12 February 1933, p. 11. The newspaper article states that Dickerson was appointed by Attorney General Otto Kerner, Sr., but Falls was certain that the appointment was made possible because of the influence of Mayor Cermak.

⁷¹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 11, pp. 592-93.

⁷² AGF, Box 1, Folder 12, pp. 602-603. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “5 New School Trustees Given O.K. by Council: Mayor Kelly’s Appointees Pledged to Economy,” 11 May 1933, p. 13.

⁷³ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 23-side 1, p. 8.

⁷⁴ *Chicago Defender*, “Dr. Bousfield on School Board: Dr. Bousfield in Placed on School Board; Culminates 25-Year Fight Launched by Editor Robert S. Abbott,” 28 October 1939, p. 1-2; Dennis A. Bethea, M.D., letter to the editor, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 23 October 1939, p. 12. Dr. Bousfield (1885-1948) was the vice president and medical director of Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company and must have known Falls because Bousfield also served time as director of Provident Hospital and president of the Chicago Urban League. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Dr. Midian O. Bousfield,” 17 February 1948, p. 21.

Hills were “disturbed” by the obvious segregation and requested the help of the Interracial Commission to make some positive steps towards breaking down racial prejudice.⁷⁵ In May 1932, Falls met with some of the residents to begin planning how best to organize such an association. Falls recommended that a formal meeting not take place until October, with smaller groups meeting in their respective communities in the interim. These groups were given a list of proposed books to be discussed that placed heavy emphasis on understanding the black experience through the social sciences.⁷⁶ At the first formal meeting in October at Bethany Union Church, Falls explained that the group would meet for the next six weeks to hear speakers on various race issues with plenty of time for discussion. As chairman of the Interracial Commission, he was in contact with various groups, which he utilized in obtaining a number of expert speakers. Based on responses from the audience, he noted that between the first and last session, the attitude of many white persons about blacks had undergone “some modification” while blacks “still had very deep-seated distrust” of whites.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, the following August when Falls’s brother Leo moved into a home in Morgan Park, his house was stoned. Falls used this as an opportunity to call a special meeting of the Morgan Park–Beverly Hills Interracial Group to hold “very frank

⁷⁵ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 540-41.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 541-44. The three books that Falls recommended were Donald Young, ed., *The American Negro* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1928); Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro in American Civilization: A Study of Negro Life and Race Relations in the Light of Social Research* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1930); Herbert J. Seligmann, *The Negro Faces America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920).

⁷⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 544-49. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Interrace Group Opens Weekly Forum Series: Designed to Settle Problems,” 6 November 1932, p. F4.

discussions which resulted in the organization taking a determined stand in terms of equal opportunities for all people.”⁷⁸

As chairman of the Interracial Commission, Falls performed a similar function beginning in December 1932 in helping to form the Lower North Interracial Group on the Lower North Side of Chicago where there was “increasing friction between Italian and Colored boys.”⁷⁹ This situation was different from that between Beverly Hills and Morgan Park because the Italian and African American residents were not segregated. Falls arranged with residents to have a number of speakers come and talk to them on race relations. In addition, based on a survey of needs, it was agreed that larger recreational facilities were needed so that the Italian and black children would not feel compelled to fight over the current resources that were very limited.⁸⁰

Taking advantage of the Chicago World’s Fair, the Interracial Commission held a National Interracial Conference on 20 June 1933 in the Illinois Host Building of the Fair Grounds. Falls viewed this conference, which brought together experts in the field of race relations from all over the country, as “an outstanding success.”⁸¹ Noted personalities at the conference included Eugene Kinckle Jones (1885-1954) from New York, who was the first Executive Secretary of the National Urban League and Mary

⁷⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 11, pp. 624-25.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 574-75.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 575-77.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 609-10.

McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) of Florida, a prominent educator and businesswoman from Florida who founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1932.⁸²

On 15 July 1934, Falls went to Jackson Park Beach to observe how the police would react to an organized interracial group of swimmers. A week before, the police had arrested eighteen swimmers at the beach who were promoting integration. After it appeared that nothing would happen that day, a group of police marched towards the interracial group in double columns and arrested eleven of the white swimmers. Falls believed the intention of the police was to enforce segregation and scare interracial groups from attempting another event at the beach. Falls organized a meeting of the Interracial Commission with the superintendent of the South Park System and a representative of the South Park police. After a two hour meeting, the police agreed to change their tactics of enforcing segregation.⁸³ The police did stop harassing interracial swimming groups and there were no more disturbances at Chicago beaches that year.⁸⁴

By May 1935, the Commission had about 100 organizations and thousands of individuals affiliated.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, it appears that after 1936, Falls's involvement with the Urban League lessened as he became involved with the Catholic Worker, which will be covered shortly.⁸⁶ Falls would carry the spirit of active struggle that was present in the Urban League to his involvement in the Catholic Worker movement. Unfortunately,

⁸² Ibid., p. 610; Ruth De Young, "Race Relations Parley to Open at World's Fair: Progress Made to be Topic of 2 Day Conference," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 June 1933, WC 11.

⁸³ AGF, Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side, 2 pp. 8-11.

⁸⁴ Ibid., disc 19-side 2, p. 12.

⁸⁵ Falls, "Interracial Cooperation in Chicago," *Interracial Review* 8, no. 5 (May 1935): 75.

⁸⁶ Chicago Urban League, "Two Decades of Service: 1916:1936," 1936, Chicago Urban League Records, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 1, Folder 12.

Falls was not often forthcoming about his declining participation with any group. A plausible explanation was that he thought the Catholic Worker would be a better avenue for racial integration and racial justice. Although his involvement with the Chicago Urban League would be minimal by the late 1930s, he did rejoin the board of directors from the mid to the late 1940s.⁸⁷

FEDERATED COLORED CATHOLICS / INTERRACIAL FEDERATION

Before addressing Falls's involvement with the Federated Colored Catholics, I will address the situation of African American Catholics in the Chicago Archdiocese as well as the personal experience of Falls. After the Chicago race riot of 1919, not only were more public places segregated, but Cardinal Mundelein ordered that only blacks be served at St. Monica's Catholic Church. This action, whether intentional or not, resulted in the almost complete segregation of the Archdiocese's parishes and schools. In fact, two years before the riots, he brought in the Divine Word Fathers (S.V.D.) to St. Monica's to pastor to blacks. Falls was keenly aware that no diocesan priest advocated the cause of desegregation. When St. Monica's burned down in 1924, Mundelein had that congregation join St. Elizabeth's. As the black population grew, Mundelein

⁸⁷ See, Chicago Urban League, "Chicago Urban League," 1946 Annual Report, Chicago Urban League Records, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 1, Folder 17; Chicago Urban League, "Annual Report of the Chicago Urban League: 1916-1947," 1947, Chicago Urban League Records, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 1, Folder 19; Chicago Urban League, "Freedom from Want... Freedom from Fear... Security... A Human Aspiration: 33rd Annual Report of Chicago Urban League: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1949," Chicago Urban League Records, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 1, Folder 21. The exact reason for Falls rejoining the board of directors is unknown, but as the following example illustrates, he still believed it was a useful organization. In October 1947, Falls was delayed while traveling with Lillian in South America for five weeks and missed a Chicago Urban League meeting. He sent a letter, notifying the League and letting them know that "[a]ll of these countries certainly could use such an agency as the Urban League." Arthur G. Falls, M.D., to Mr. Sidney Williams, 6 October 1947, Chicago Urban League Records, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 50, Folder 556.

dedicated more churches for ministry to the African American population.⁸⁸ Beginning in the early 1930s, some of the parishes that found themselves in neighborhoods with a growing black population and only a remnant of white parishioners decided to open their schools to black students in order to become black Catholic parishes. This led to the resurgence of St. Anselm and Corpus Christi in the early 1930s and St. Malachy in 1938.⁸⁹

Falls was well aware while he was growing up that black Catholics were not viewed as legitimate Catholics; they were viewed as a “missionary problem.”⁹⁰ Believing St. Monica’s to be composed mostly of blacks who had been Catholic for generations, he did not understand why they needed to be served by missionaries. When he was six years old, his family moved and began attending Holy Angels, an almost completely white parish. His mother tried to enroll him in the parish school, but was unable to because he was a “problem.” Thirty years later, Falls was unable to enroll his only son, Arthur Falls Jr., at Our Lady of Solace grade school for the same reason.⁹¹ In addition, his favorite niece, Vilma Childs (née Falls), who was in possession of Falls’s

⁸⁸ Avella, *This Confident Church*, 252, 258. Karen Johnson, “The Universal Church in the Segregated City: Doing Catholic Interracialism in Chicago, 1928-1963” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, forthcoming). It should be noted that the arguments for Mundelein’s segregation of black Catholics in Chicago are more complicated than can be accounted for here. For a more nuanced view of segregation of blacks in the parish and school system of the Chicago Archdiocese, see the just cited Johnson, “The Universal Church in the Segregated City.”

⁸⁹ Avella, *This Confident Church*, 252-53, 284-85.

⁹⁰ Falls, interview by Troester. In the opinion of Falls, the Archdiocese of Chicago did not stop treating African Americans as a missionary problem until the 1950s. AGF, Box 1, Folder 1, p. 7.

⁹¹ Falls, interview by Troester. According to Falls’s granddaughter, Arthur Jr. was accepted as a student at St. Raphael, a German parish that was not much further away than Our Lady of Solace (Sykes, interview by author). Arthur Falls Jr. went to Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey and married Muriel Bryant. They had one child, Michelle Falls Sykes. The family remained in New Jersey and Falls Jr. was a social worker. In 1997, he died from complications related to cancer and a stroke (Sykes, interview by author).

memoir, was excluded from St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in Chicago in 1933 as a child of six years. Since the family had a very light complexion, Vilma's mother was told by the Mother Superior that if she stated that Vilma was white, she would be accepted into the school. Vilma's mother could not in good conscience deny her race, and the school refused admission.⁹² In mixed parishes, blacks were discriminated against not only in the schools, but also in the Church's sacramental system. Black children, for example, had their confessions heard after the white children were finished. Regarding confession, Falls explained, "We had to keep going to the back of the line. Each parish had its way of telling you that you didn't belong."⁹³ At some point he came to the conclusion that the Church's preaching at the time about the necessity of its schools and other activities that blacks were often barred from meant "either that someone was lying about the necessity of these aids, or else the priest and the

⁹² *Chicago Defender*, "Catholic School Joins Jim Crow Crowd; Bars Race Child," National Edition, 7 October 1933, p. 12. The article also states that shortly after the refusal to accept Vilma, a gas bomb was thrown into the family's home while they slept. The events were not assumed to be related. The school situation would not improve very quickly either. In a report presented at the 1960 Chicago Catholic clergy conference on race relations, it was related that "practically all Negro high school students in Chicago are receiving a secular education [because of] a definite policy of exclusion on the part of many religious who staff our Catholic high schools." It continued: "Many religious teachers use every subterfuge to keep Negro pupils out of the Catholic high schools even in areas almost entirely surrounded by Negroes." See, "The Catholic Church and the Negro in the Archdiocese of Chicago," pp. 14-15, September 20-21, 1960, Cardinal Albert Meyer Papers, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago IL, box 43809.01, folder: Clergy Conference-Apostolate for the Colored." Hereafter, referred to as "Negro in the Archdiocese." During the 1990s, Vilma shared this story with Unsworth, as well as telling him that her parents had to bring her to four parishes before they could find a priest who would baptize her. Vilma Childs, quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 130-31.

⁹³ Falls, quoted in Unsworth, "A Lonely Prophet Falls in Chicago," *National Catholic Reporter*, 3 March 2000. James Cone and Cyprian Davis both document examples of African Americans waiting last for communion in churches in the South. Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 145; Davis, "Reclaiming the Spirit: On Teaching Church History: Why Can't They Be More Like Us?" in *Black and Catholic: The Challenge and Gift of Black Folk*, Jamie T. Phelps, ed. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1997), 46. In the early 1990s, Falls also related to a group on retreat how he remembered being spat on as a child by white children in the choir loft above him. Bill Bright, interview by author, 11 November 2011, digital recording over phone, Milwaukee, WI to Western Springs, IL.

mother superior were saying to colored Catholics ‘You can go to hell.’”⁹⁴ This attitude reminded him of a joke that was prominent among African Americans:

Two colored men are sitting looking at a TV show and they hear a Representative of Congress... expostulating about the rights of the citizen, and about the principles of democracy, and the needs of the people; and when the program is all over, one colored man turns to the other and says, “And he don’t mean you.”⁹⁵

In similar fashion, Falls was aware that Catholic meant universal and that the Catholic Church was supposed to include everybody, “but ‘universal’ didn’t mean us.”⁹⁶

Dr. Thomas Wyatt Turner (1877-1978), a lay black Catholic, founded the Federated Colored Catholics (FCC) in 1924 with the purpose of uniting black Catholics and ensuring greater racial justice within the Catholic Church.⁹⁷ In early September 1931, Falls went to the FCC conference in St. Louis. He was pleased with the interracial nature of the group and attended a Mass on 6 September celebrated by Fr. Stephen L. Theobald of the Archdiocese of St. Paul, the first American-trained diocesan black priest. Falls believed that this was the first time he had seen a black priest.⁹⁸ Shortly after his return to Chicago, Falls organized a chapter for his parish, Our Lady of Solace, and

⁹⁴ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, pp. 45-46.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 45.

⁹⁶ Falls, quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 130.

⁹⁷ Marilyn Wenzke Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest and the Federated Colored Catholics 1917-1933: Three Perspectives on Racial Justice*, The Heritage of American Catholicism Series (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 2-4; Davis, *The History of Black Catholics*, 220. For more information about the history of the Federated Colored Catholics and the disagreements among the major players, see the just cited Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest and the Federated Colored Catholics*.

⁹⁸ AGF Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 511-12.

became its president.⁹⁹ The chapter's purpose was "the stimulation of inter-racial co-operation in all parish activities."¹⁰⁰ Shortly after the group formed, they began selling the FCC's national journal, the *Chronicle*, in front of the parish, with the parish having recognized and approved the publication.¹⁰¹ Falls lamented that he was not able to integrate this all-black parish group, especially since he had noticed the integrated character of the national meeting that he had attended.¹⁰² It was at this time that Falls was appointed associate editor of the FCC's national publication.¹⁰³ Regarding this time period and the self-empowerment felt by the black Catholics in the FCC, Falls wrote: "To many of the clergy, the hierarchy was 'The Church,' but some of us felt that we also were the church and we certainly were sustained in this position by the actual teachings of the church itself."¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 513-15. When Falls founded his chapter, there were fifteen other chapters in Chicago. M. Johnston, "Chicago, ILL," *Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* 5, no. 1 (January 1932): 15.

¹⁰⁰ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., "Our Lady of Solace Chapter Formed," *Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* 5, no. 1 (January 1932): 15.

¹⁰¹ Falls, "Colored Churches," 27.

¹⁰² AGF Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 511-12, 515.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 515. He would stay on as an associate editor until William Markoe left his position as editor of the journal in September 1934. *Interracial Review*, "New Editorial Board," vol. 7, no. 10 (October 1934): 118.

¹⁰⁴ AGF Box 1, Folder 10, p. 521. Falls also commented that he felt that many clerics thought that the empowerment of the laity in the United States would lead to the anti-clericalism that existed in parts of Europe. As a result, Falls thought many priests "went overboard in fighting any type of organization of Catholic laity and certainly of Catholic Negroes." AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 521-22. One must consider that Falls wrote this in 1962 and was possibly informed from the strong emphasis on the laity being considered during the Second Vatican Council. Nevertheless, this emphasis existed prior to the Council and one can see it even in the 1820s in the Trustee Controversy and the Black Catholic Congresses of the late nineteenth century. In addition, Falls's struggle for racial justice, dating back to the late 1920s, justifies the opinion that Falls always had a strong sense of lay empowerment. Also, Falls's other writings from the 1930s clearly exhibit his a sense of lay empowerment. The discussion of the mystical body of Christ in the next chapter will explore the notion of lay empowerment during this time period more in-depth. For more on the lay trustee controversy, see Patrick Carey, *People, Priests, and Prelates*:

In January 1932, Falls was one of the organizers of the Grievance Committee of the Federated Colored Catholics in Chicago. On 5 February, this committee met with auxiliary Bishop Bernard James Sheil. Although Bishop Sheil listened to their complaints and was sympathetic, Falls doubted that anything would change.¹⁰⁵ Either in response to a labor reporter or Falls, both of whom wanted movement from Sheil on labor and race issues respectively, Sheil responded, “We’ve got to be practical” in order to halt substantial progress on an issue.¹⁰⁶ On 5 June 1933, the Grievance Committee met with Mundelein’s secretary, Monsignor Robert C. Maguire, who “gave evidence of knowing very little about the basic factors involved in human relations and caring even less.”¹⁰⁷ Falls wrote that this was the first in a series of meetings of the Grievance Committee at the Chancery, but as no other meetings are noted in his memoir, they must have been uneventful.¹⁰⁸ It was probably experiences like this that made Falls believe that the acts of racism by priests and laity in the Catholic Church were “an organized act of intolerance... [and] that the very structure of the Catholic Church made the discrimination an almost built-in part of this structure and almost prevented any correction by the laity.”¹⁰⁹ During the 1990s, Falls would still insist that racism is “not just a way of life or a cultural thing. Those who were responsible for it always knew

Ecclesiastical Democracy and the Tensions of Trusteeship (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).

¹⁰⁵ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, p. 527-28.

¹⁰⁶ Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 128-29.

¹⁰⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 11, pp. 607-08.

¹⁰⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, p. 527. The Chicago Defender did record another disappointing meeting that Falls and the grievance committee had with Msgr. Maguire that occurred in 1935. *Chicago Defender*, “See Catholics Planning Jim Crow Church: Chicago Parishioners Fight Proposal,” National Edition, 20 July 1935, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 506-07.

what they were doing. And that included church leaders.”¹¹⁰ In Falls’s encounters with the Chancery, he would never receive a response that he recognized as adequate. He told his mother, who had been afraid he might leave the Catholic Church, “[I]t is very fortunate that I was born into the Roman Catholic Church because under no stretch of [the] imagination could I conceive that I ever voluntarily would have joined it because of the discrimination and segregation which existed.”¹¹¹ At the time, Falls had hoped that the FCC might affect some change in the Church’s practices.

The national conference for the FCC in September 1932 was a pivotal turning point in the organization’s history. It would signal a change in leadership and style. At this meeting in New York City, the white priests, John LaFarge, S.J., and William Markoe, S.J., took control of the organization out the hands of its black leadership—particularly out of the hands of Dr. Thomas Wyatt Turner.¹¹² Because of finances, Falls was unable to attend the national conference, but Chicago did send some delegates. Falls urged the delegates to push for the name change being proposed by the white priests because he felt the present name excluded the goal of integration for the organization.¹¹³ The conference indeed changed the organization’s name to the National Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations. Falls stated that Dr. Turner

¹¹⁰ Falls, quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 125.

¹¹¹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 506-07.

¹¹² Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest and the Federated Colored Catholics*, 16-18, 96-135; Davis, *The History of Black Catholics*, 226-229.

¹¹³ AGF, Box 1, Folder 11, pp. 577-80. The proposal sent by the Chicago Group is available at: Federated Colored Catholics of Chicago, “Recommendations of the Federated Colored Catholics of Chicago. Changes in the Revised Constitution Submitted by the Committee on the Revision of the Constitution,” Thomas Wyatt Turner Papers, Howard University Moorland-Springarn Research Center, Washington, D.C., Series E, Box 153-13, Folder 25. Thank you to Karen Johnson for sharing this document with me. Even the 1990s, Falls felt the name of the FCC was too exclusive to the purpose of integration. Falls, quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 126.

“refused to recognize the decision of the group and insisted that the name remain the Federated Colored Catholics and made an attack on Father Markoe of St. Louis which was very difficult to understand.”¹¹⁴ Turner’s resignation soon followed, which Falls saw as a “satisfactory” development.¹¹⁵

I do not think that Dr. Falls was completely aware of the intentions of Markoe and LaFarge. Markoe was paternalistic and did not believe that African Americans or laypersons should be leaders in Church movements. LaFarge thought that the issue of race relations could be solved almost solely by education. Their leadership kept the organization in the hands of white priests and prevented the gifts of black lay Catholics from growing or flourishing.¹¹⁶ Falls had talked to Markoe and was obviously impressed with him. It was Fr. Markoe who had invited Falls to speak at the St. Louis convention of the FCC on “Industrial and Social Problems.”¹¹⁷ Additionally, shortly after the controversial meeting, in October 1932, the Chicago FCC had visits from Markoe and LaFarge. In recalling this meeting, Falls stated: “To me, the opportunity of meeting men like Father Garvy, Father LaFarge, and Father Markoe was a very heartening experience

¹¹⁴ AGF, Box 1, Folder 11, pp. 577-80.

¹¹⁵ AGF, Box 1, Folder 12, pp. 604; 18-2-4.

¹¹⁶ For further discussion on the views of Markoe and LaFarge on the issue of black leadership, see John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 38-47; Nickels, *Federated Colored Catholics*, 199-201; Jon Nilson, “Confessions of a White Catholic Racist Theologian,” in *Interrupting White Privilege: Catholic Theologians Break the Silence*, eds. Laurie M. Cassidy and Alex Mikulich (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 25-26; Southern, *John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism*, 105-46, 186-213, 357-75.

¹¹⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, p. 510.

because I had no such experience with the clergy in Chicago itself.”¹¹⁸ Falls was obviously taken by their interest in race issues and their willingness to engage with black Catholics. Nevertheless, in his memoir, Falls recalled a disagreement he had with Fr. Garvy in 1931 over Garvy’s belief in the ability of education alone to address racial prejudice in the Catholic Church.¹¹⁹ In addition, Falls did not have much respect for Fr. Eckert at St. Elizabeth’s because he “never thought of colored people as the equals of white people nor did he ever think that lay people should have anything at all to say about what the Catholic Church did.”¹²⁰ If Falls had had as much contact with LaFarge and Markoe as he did with Garvy and Eckert, who had an almost identical view of race relations as LaFarge and Markoe, I think his high opinion of them would have waned. Falls wanted an integrated group with integrated leadership; he did not want the leadership to change from lay black to clerical white. Lastly, it should be noted that there is no evidence that Falls ever met Dr. Thomas Wyatt Turner. Perhaps the perspective of Falls would have been different if he had been personally engaged with Turner.

Also, during the latter half of 1932, Our Lady of Solace Catholic Church denied the children of a black couple at the parish entry into the parish school. Falls talked extensively with the parish priest, Mother Superior, and the superintendent of the School Board. The chapter also sent letters to the Archdiocese, but to no avail. Mundelein, by his refusal to intervene, had given the priests of each parish the final say over the

¹¹⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 11, pp. 582-83. Fr. Garvy refers to Rev. Arnold J. Garvy, S.J., who oversaw the St. Joseph Colored Mission at Holy Family Catholic Church in Chicago during the 1930s and early 1940s. Avella, *This Confident Church*, 253, 258; Holy Family Parish, “Newsroom,” <http://www.holyfamilychicago.org/newsroom/EditorialBackground.htm> (accessed 4 August 2011).

¹¹⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, p. 504.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 505-06.

admittance or denial of black children, and the parish priest at Our Lady of Solace refused to admit African American children.¹²¹

In early 1933, Falls was appointed chairman for a Committee on Constitution for the Chicago branch of the National Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations. This committee adopted a new constitution for the Chicago branch that united all the Chicago chapters together as the Chicago Branch of the Federation. It was hoped that the unification of the chapters would result in better coordination of activity with more expedient results for racial justice in the Chicago Archdiocese.¹²² On 8 May 1933, Falls was appointed to the Executive Board of the Federation and on 7 June, he was elected president of the Chicago Branch of the Federation. His first action was to work on reorganizing the group by outlining a new constitution and by-laws.¹²³ In 1934, as the President of the Our Lady of Solace Chapter, he sent a letter to Bishop John F. Noll of Fort Wayne, Indiana, later elevated to the title of Archbishop, to critique an article that Noll had written for *Our Sunday Visitor*, a paper he had founded. Noll, who at the time was also the chair of the Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the predecessor of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote of the concern for the future of America with its aging population and without appropriate alarm “*even of Negro predominance*” that could occur to the detriment “of a

¹²¹ Mrs. Geneva Brantley, “Our Lady of Solace Chapter,” *Interracial Review* 5, no. 11 (November 1932): 229.

¹²² Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Chicago Further Organizes,” *Interracial Review* 6, no. 4 (April 1933): 70.

¹²³ AGF, Box 1, Folder 12, pp. 604; 18-2-4. At this point it might seem that Falls was simply interested in collecting titles. To illustrate that this was not the case, Falls did turn down a position on the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee because he was too busy. AGF, Box 1, Folder 12, p. 18-2-18. It is unknown how long he was on the executive board or how involved he was with the organization on this level.

homogenous population,” which was ideal.¹²⁴ Falls told Noll that his statement was an “appeal to race-prejudice” that is representative of the “lack of consistency between the doctrine and the practice of our Catholic groups.”¹²⁵ Bishop Noll responded to Falls, explaining that the article was a copy of a speech he had given to the National Council of Catholic Women in Washington, in which he did not say “even of Negro predominance.” And in any case, the phrase had “no greater significance than if I had said ‘Slav predominance’, which is often referred to.”¹²⁶ Noll went on to write that “the Negro has no better friend than the Catholic Hierarchy,” that the color line was created by Protestants, and that greater Catholic influence would dissolve the color line. Noll finished by writing, “I can appreciate why you should be sensitive, but I am certain that your conclusions, if they relate to the Bishops of the United States, must often be wrong.”¹²⁷ Falls sent Noll a final letter in which he stated his continued disagreement and reminded him that some bishops are indeed “hostile” to blacks and that the Catholic Church is viewed as the “bitter enemy” by most blacks in the United States.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Falls to Bishop J.F. Knoll, 16 November 1934, Carbon copy by Falls to New York Catholic Worker, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.1, Box 3, Folder 1. Emphasis in Falls’s letter. Quoted from Bishop J.F. Knoll, “Objectives for Catholic Action,” *Our Sunday Visitor*, 7 October 1934, 8.

¹²⁵ Falls to Bishop J.F. Knoll, 16 November 1934.

¹²⁶ Bishop J. Noll to Falls, 24 November 1934, Carbon copy by Falls to New York Catholic Worker, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.1, Box 3, Folder 1.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Falls to Bishop J.F. Knoll, 28 November 1934, Carbon copy to New York Catholic Worker, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.1, Box 3, Folder 1.

In 1935, even though the Chicago Branch of the National Catholic Federation had changed focus, Falls still lamented that only a few whites had joined the group.¹²⁹ A year later, he wrote to a friend that although the group still had potential because its national organization structure was still intact; nevertheless, the group was currently ineffective because of “insufficient good leadership and good ‘followship.’”¹³⁰ In other words, the group contained only followers of ecclesiastical leadership and lacked innovative leaders who were willing to take the militant steps necessary to bring about racial justice.

In early 1937, he lamented that the National Catholic Interracial Federation lacked any type of “definitive program.”¹³¹ Additionally, he was disappointed because of the organization’s insistence on working “within the framework of clerical leadership.”¹³² He believed that the group was too eager to please Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati.¹³³ Falls considered this overt association with clergy to be compromising the group’s mission. Interestingly, he did not see LaFarge as having any involvement in this situation. It was his opinion that “precisely because the Catholic Worker Group did not operate in such a manner that it proved to be much more effective.”¹³⁴

The next time that Falls mentioned this group was in stating that in December 1938, the former Chicago Federation group was reorganized as the Chicago Interracial

¹²⁹ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 8 (August 1935): 123.

¹³⁰ Falls to Mr. Priest, 14 March 1936, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.1, Box 3, Folder 1.

¹³¹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 22-side 1, p. 8.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

Council, which met at his house. At this point, he viewed the National Catholic Interracial Federation as defunct.¹³⁵ Because the Chicago group refused “to take decisive stands in the problems which confronted us,” Falls planned to officially withdraw from the group in 1939, but was persuaded not to by the president of the National Catholic Interracial Federation, George W. B. Conrad. Therefore, Falls decided to start a separate Catholic interracial group that would meet at his home. The group first met on 7 December 1938. He stated that out of this developed the Chicago Catholic Interracial Council.¹³⁶ The group was largely made up of Catholic Workers who were interested in having a group that focused solely on race relations. They decided to stay small to allow for the possibility of direct action.¹³⁷

THE CATHOLIC WORKER

Peter Maurin (1877-1949) and Dorothy Day (1897-1980) founded the Catholic Worker on 1 May 1933. On that day they began selling the *Catholic Worker* newspaper on the streets of New York City and soon afterwards started providing food and shelter for the poor in New York. Afterward, others started following their example in various cities across America.¹³⁸ Right from the start, the newspaper reported on the issue of

¹³⁵ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 23-side 2, p. 6.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

¹³⁷ AGF Box 2, Folder 1, disc 24-side 1, p. 7-8.

¹³⁸ The Catholic Worker movement is far more complex than what can be mentioned here. In addition to the works of mercy for the poor and a dedication to peace issues, the Catholic Worker movement has a social theory largely informed by the notion of distributism. For further information about the Catholic Worker movement, Dan McKanan, *The Catholic Worker after Dorothy: Practicing the Works of Mercy in a New Generation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008); William D. Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982); Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of the Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press,

racism. In October 1933, a friend of Falls gave him a copy of the *Catholic Worker*. A month later, he wrote Dorothy Day and complimented her on the paper and its coverage of problems facing both white and black workers. In this same letter, he wrote: “It also would be interesting to see one of the workmen at the top of your front page shown to be a colored workman.”¹³⁹ Immediately after this letter to Day, the letterhead was changed to feature a white and black worker instead of two white workers.¹⁴⁰

Since first reading the newspaper, Falls wanted to start a Catholic Worker school in Chicago, which was the part of the Catholic Worker program that focused on roundtable discussions about issues of the day. Unfortunately, most priests were against the idea and he received a lukewarm response from laypersons. In 1934, in a letter to Day regarding some negative clerical response, he commented that “some clergy... [seem to have a] distinct superiority complex as concerns the laity (I already knew they had as concerns racial groups).”¹⁴¹ Beginning in April 1934, he became a regular contributor to the *Catholic Worker* newspaper—almost always writing about race issues—and would remain so for the rest of the decade.¹⁴² Despite a strained budget, he visited the Catholic Worker in New York in August 1934 and shared his opinion about the evils of segregated Catholic schools. Shortly afterward, the *New York Catholic Worker* wrote an article about the visit and the need to integrate Catholic schools as a way to “build up the

1982); Rosalie Riegle Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).

¹³⁹ Falls to Dorothy Day, 3 November 1933, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.1, Box 3, Folder 1.

¹⁴⁰ *New York Catholic Worker*, December 1933, p. 1. AGF, Box 1, Folder 12, p. 18-2-19.

¹⁴¹ Falls to Dorothy Day, 16 June 1934, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.1, Box 3, Folder 1.

¹⁴² Falls’s first article was Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “The Communist Says: ‘Welcome, Negro Brother!’” *New York Catholic Worker*, April 1934, p. 1, 8.

understanding of the dogma of the Mystical Body.”¹⁴³ Living out the dogmas of the Church was extremely important to Falls.

At this point, Falls was still chairman of the Interracial Commission for the Chicago Urban League, which had the purpose of coordinating and bringing together various groups interested in interracial justice. Believing the *Catholic Worker* to be a vehicle for furthering these goals, he advertised a speaker and discussion series being sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the June 1935 issue of the *Catholic Worker*.¹⁴⁴ In the same article, he announced an upcoming regional meeting for the National Catholic Interracial Federation (formerly the FCC) in St. Louis, as well as an interracial retreat and other opportunities for interracial learning and cooperation. It was his hope that this list of opportunities “will give to our [Chicago] Catholics information on some lines of approach.”¹⁴⁵ In another example of promoting collaboration in race relations, Falls hosted a group of Catholics and non-Catholics in his home that June who were interested in racial justice to hear a talk given by Fr. John LaFarge.¹⁴⁶ Falls believed that the contact of Catholics with persons from

¹⁴³ *New York Catholic Worker*, “Interracial,” September 1935, p. 4. Falls also recounted this visit in his memoir. AGF, Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 2, p. 16.

¹⁴⁴ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, June 1935, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, June 1935, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Rosary College Will Welcome Negro Students: Encouraging Catholic Interracial News Sent by Chicago Correspondent,” *New York Catholic Worker*, July-August 1935, p. 3. For other examples of Falls promoting the work of various racial justice groups, see also Falls, “Chicago Fights Racial Prejudice, ‘Security’ Wage,” pp. 2, 6; Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” December 1935, p. 8; Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, April 1936, p. 7.

disparate backgrounds permitted Catholics to mature in their “understanding of social and economic problems and of the application of Christian doctrine to those problems.”¹⁴⁷

Falls also used the *Catholic Worker* newspaper as an opportunity to publicize both good and bad examples of Catholics regarding interracialism in the Chicago area. During the summer of 1935, he lauded the administration and professors at Rosary College in River Forest, Illinois for not only beginning to accept African American students, but for also implementing an entire curriculum concerning race relations from a Catholic perspective. He also took the opportunity to remind the reader that blacks were already welcome at Loyola in Chicago, but not at DePaul or Mundelein.¹⁴⁸

In June 1936, Falls wrote an article for the *Catholic Worker* that documented the case of an African American student being admitted to a white Catholic high school after students protested the decision of the school’s faculty to deny the student’s admittance. Falls attributed this action for justice on the part of the student body “in no small part to the increasing circulation of THE CATHOLIC WORKER [sic] and to the appearance of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in this area.” Based on this belief, he wrote again of his desire to start a Catholic Worker group in Chicago.¹⁴⁹ Falls orchestrated a visit by Peter Maurin in late spring 1936 at St. Ignatius College on Roosevelt Road. Falls remembered that when he stood up to explain the outline for the program, a woman also stood up and “said just because she was a Catholic didn't mean she had to associate with niggers. And

¹⁴⁷ Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1937, p. 6.

¹⁴⁸ Falls, “Rosary College Will Welcome Negro Students,” p. 3

¹⁴⁹ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, June 1936, p. 3.

walked out the church.”¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Maurin’s visit produced enough excitement about the Catholic Worker that Falls was able to coordinate a weekly gathering in the basement of St. Patrick’s Church to discuss the issues of the day.¹⁵¹ Future clarifications of thought¹⁵² included diocesan priests, Benedictines, Jesuits, Dominicans, Society of the Divine Word priests, lay Catholics and non-Catholics, as well as people from the city and from the suburbs. Some of the non-Catholics “offered a distinct challenge to Catholic thought on social and economic problems.”¹⁵³ One of the speakers for the clarifications of thought and a strong supporter of the Chicago group, Fr. John Hayes (d. 2002), who at that time taught at Archbishop Quigley Preparatory Seminary in downtown Chicago, discussed the doctrines of the Catholic Church in “clear-cut descriptions... which, otherwise, might be lost in the maze of theological terms.” Falls was particularly impressed with his explanation of the mystical body of Christ.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Falls, interview by Troester. Falls also shared this story over a decade earlier with Francis Sicius, Arthur Falls, interview by Francis Sicius, 16 June 1976, Cassette, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, WI, Series W-9.1, Box C-3. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Peter Maurin to Appear Here at Discussions,” 7 June 1936, p. NW8.

¹⁵¹ Falls to Edward K. Priest, 5 May 1936, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.1, Box 3, Folder 1.

¹⁵² Clarification of thought is a technical term referring to the first part of the Catholic Worker program, which hopes to bring an eclectic group of people together to discuss important issues of the day and see where a consensus can be reached. The other two parts include the creation of houses of hospitality for performing the works of mercy and farming communes to foster community and address massive unemployment. For more information on Maurin’s three point program, which he referred to as the Green Revolution, see Luke Stocking, “When the Irish were Irish: Peter Maurin and the Green Revolution” (M.A. Thesis, University of St. Michael’s College, 2006).

¹⁵³ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, August 1936, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, September 1936, p. 3. In 1940, Fr. John Hayes, later Monsignor Hayes, worked on the Social Action Committee of the National Catholic Welfare Conference until he contracted tuberculosis in the 1944. His work on that committee included immigration, race, and labor issues. Epiphany Catholic Church, “Monsignor John Hayes, The Priest,” www.epiphanychicago.org/index.cfm?load=page&page=160 (accessed 19 November 2011). In the September 1937, he even led a retreat for the Chicago group. *New York Catholic Worker*, “Chi [sic] CW Holds Retreat, Makes Plea for Poor,” October 1937, p. 2. At this point, he officially became

By November, the Catholic Worker group in Chicago had organized itself into four primary committees: labor, cooperatives, Church, and schools—with each committee having a chairperson. The organizational scheme was most likely at the behest of Falls. Each committee would perform its separate work, but then take a turn once a month organizing a “Sunday Forum.” Falls believed that this style of organization provided an opportunity for personal responsibility and activity by each member of the group;¹⁵⁵ nevertheless, the committee style probably bothered Dorothy Day, who believed in a less organized *modus operandi* for the Catholic Worker.¹⁵⁶

The Sunday before Thanksgiving 1936, the Chicago Catholic Worker group procured a storefront at 1841 Taylor Street, for which Falls paid the rent.¹⁵⁷ At this address, people like the sociologist Fr. Paul Hanly Furfey, the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, and the liturgical reformer Virgil Michel O. S. B. (1890-1938) spoke during clarifications of thought.¹⁵⁸ Falls became friends with Michel and when his family

their spiritual director. Helen Farrell, “Chicago,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1938, p. 6; Farrell, “Chicago Catholic Worker,” *New York Catholic Worker*, November 1937, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, November 1936, p. 7. Falls was the chairman of the school committee.

¹⁵⁶ Day’s recently published letters document a disagreement between her and Friendship House foundress, Catherine de Hueck. Upon visiting the New York Catholic Worker in February 1936, de Hueck wrote to Day of the need for cleanliness, a rule for the community, more organization with a stress on hierarchy. Day disagreed. Dorothy Day and Catherine du Hueck, in *All the Way to Heaven: The Selected Letters of Dorothy Day*, ed. Robert Ellsberg (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 86-87. In contrast, Falls believed that Day did not take advantage of having a national organization. See Falls, interview by Sicius.

¹⁵⁷ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1937, p. 6. Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 128.

¹⁵⁸ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, February 1937, p. 2; Sicius, *The Word Made Flesh: The Chicago Catholic Worker and the Emergence of Lay Activism in the Church* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 30, 36-37. After meeting Falls at the Chicago Catholic Worker, Furfey invited Falls to give a presentation at the New Social Catholicism Colloquium at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. at the end of March 1937. AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 22-side 2, p. 1.

took a vacation through the Northwestern United States and Canada in late August and early September 1937, they made a visit to Michel at St. John University in Collegeville, Minnesota and stayed a short while. At the invitation of Michel, Falls gave talks to the nuns and seminarians that were situated around the campus. The family then drove Michel to the Chippewa Reservation and the Red Lake Reservation where Falls gave talks to the groups of nuns ministering at each place.¹⁵⁹ On 26 November 1938, Virgil Michel died unexpectedly after catching pneumonia. For Falls, his death was a tragedy. Michel was “one of the few persons who had commanded my utter respect and devotion.”¹⁶⁰

Although Falls had talked his pastor at Our Lady of Solace into hosting an FCC group in 1931, he could not persuade the priest to let him talk about the Catholic Worker to the parish’s Holy Name Society. Falls indicated that, by and large, most priests and lay persons in the Chicago area were still reticent about the Catholic Worker movement. The pastor initially told him he could not speak to the Holy Name Society because the purpose of the society was entertainment. When Falls reminded him that the subject of the last meeting was narcotics control, the priest “became frustrated and said, ‘I am not going to have you coming in to stir up my men to do something.’”¹⁶¹

The Chicago Catholic Worker also started a library that focused on such issues as labor, race, and cooperatives that were accessible to “man in the street,” began giving out children’s clothes, and would soon use the storefront as a soup kitchen on a regular

¹⁵⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 22-side 2, p. 1.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 3, 6; Mark J. Twomey, *Seventy-Five Years of Grace: The Liturgical Press 1926-2001* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 15. The safe use of antibiotics that could have treated his pneumonia did not come into use until 1945.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 3.

basis.¹⁶² Although providing food and clothing to those in need was important, it “is only part of our job.” The most important part was to awaken Catholics from their apathy regarding the important social issues of the day, in which they could properly apply their vital Christian doctrines.¹⁶³

The Catholic Worker was the first real opportunity Falls had to bring white and black Catholics together as well as Catholics and non-Catholics. “Black people didn't call upon me because I was an anomaly [being a member of such a racist Church]. So that when I first became aware of the Catholic Worker movement, I said, ‘Well, here's an opportunity!’” He brought rabbis, Protestant ministers, social workers, doctors, and lawyers to the weekly Catholic Worker meetings. For some Catholics, these Catholic Worker meetings were the first time they knowingly interacted with non-Catholics.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps because of their openness to other groups, various Chicago Workers also gave talks at Y.M.C.A.'s, clubs for young people, as well as Catholic and Protestant churches.¹⁶⁵ Although Falls was able to bring such a diverse group of people together, he lamented that he was unable to get very many African Americans interested in the Chicago Catholic Worker.¹⁶⁶

In 1937, John Cogley (1916–1976), who would go on to serve as executive editor at *Commonweal* and religion editor at the *New York Times*, went with a friend to check out the Chicago Catholic Worker. He was “surprised to learn” that the leader at the

¹⁶² Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1937, p. 6.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Falls, interview by Troester.

¹⁶⁵ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1937, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 22-side 1, pp. 9-10.

house was African American: “It was unheard of that black people should have positions of leadership in a general Roman Catholic undertaking.”¹⁶⁷ As Cogley recalled, everyone else during his first visit to the Catholic Worker was white and the group included “veteran leaders of the German social movement... as well as a number of middle-aged men and women of the kind one might find at almost any parish gathering.”¹⁶⁸

During the time that Falls ran the school, there were regular meetings and everyone who wanted to be involved was assigned to a committee. In addition to the clarifications of thought already mentioned, the group regularly came together to recite Compline.¹⁶⁹ And for at least for a period of time, the group agreed that one person would be praying in adoration at every hour of every day.¹⁷⁰ All the members of the group were sacrificing time from their busy schedules. According to Falls, each member of the group “is either working or in school.”¹⁷¹ Falls also encouraged members of the group to interact with other organizations in Chicago. Because of his insistence, Fr. John Hayes (d. 2002), who acted as a spiritual director for the group, attended a meeting of the

¹⁶⁷ John Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale: Experience and Reflections: 1916-1976* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), 8.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 9. The German social movement was the *Central Verein*, which was an organization made up of German Catholic immigrants with an emphasis on social reform. For more information on the *Cental Verein*, see Mary Ligouri Brophy, “The Social Thought of the German Roman Catholic Central Verien” (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 1941); John Philip Gleason, “The Central-Verein, 1900-1917: A Chapter in the History of the German-American Catholics” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1960); Matt J. Alphonse, “Father Virgil and the Social Institute,” *Orate Fratres* 13, no. 3 (22 January 1939): 135-38. Tom Sullivan also confirmed that there were a number of *Central Verein* at the meetings, particularly from St. Alphonsus Catholic Church at 1429 W. Wellington. Thomas Sullivan, interview by Francis Sicius, 24 June 1976, transcript. Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-9, Box C-8.

¹⁶⁹ Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale*, 10. Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1937, p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1937, p. 6.

¹⁷¹ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, April 1937, p. 7.

board of directors of the Chicago Urban League. This was the first time a Catholic priest attended one of their meetings. Falls found himself successfully coordinating a degree of interaction with the Chicago Catholic Worker School, the Chicago Urban League, and the local cooperative movement.¹⁷²

Cogley, who associated the Catholic Worker more with voluntary poverty and houses of hospitality, stated: “There was little or no emphasis on the themes of the *Catholic Worker* itself.”¹⁷³ Cogley admitted that “people did remain interested,” but Dorothy Day “was obviously not happy about the way things were going on Taylor Street.”¹⁷⁴ By May 1937, committee meetings and public talks were occurring at Taylor Street every day of the week, with sometimes more than one program happening on a given day.¹⁷⁵ They had also started a credit union with a state charter, on which Falls sat on the board of directors. The credit union services were available to anyone involved with the Catholic Worker movement, regardless of religion, race, or nationality. They began making loans right after opening.¹⁷⁶ The credit union would continue until 1948, when those with immediate control of it had made too many loans to those who could not honor them. At that point, Falls reimbursed everyone who lost money and officially closed the credit union.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 22-side 1, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷³ Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale*, 10.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁷⁵ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, January 1937, p. 6; “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, May 1937, p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, March 1937, p. 2; “Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, April 1937, p. 7. Falls, interview by Sicius.

¹⁷⁷ Falls, interview by Sicius; Sicius, *The Word Made Flesh*, 30. Falls would go on to be on the board of directors of the Peoples Co-Op Credit Union in Chicago and serve as its president from 1945 until

In May 1937, while Day was visiting Chicago, she rented an apartment near St. Elizabeth's parish, and upon leaving town, gave the keys to Cogley and Paul Byrne, a Loyola sophomore, with instructions to open a Catholic Worker house of hospitality. Day had done this without consulting anyone at Taylor Street. Although the apartment Day rented did not work out as a Catholic Worker, a hospitality house did open shortly afterwards a few blocks away on Blue Island Avenue. The main players of the Blue Island house, which consisted of John Cogley, Ed Marciniak, Tom Sullivan, and Al Reser, also founded the *Chicago Catholic Worker* newspaper.¹⁷⁸ Monsignor John Hayes pointed out that there were two reasons for the additional house. First and foremost, "Bowers was a very difficult man to work with. He was abrasive and caustic in his comments." John Bowers (d. 1950) would become the face of the Taylor Street Catholic Worker within a couple years, but at this point was a minor figure who was particularly interested in working with the neighborhood children. Many at Taylor Street did not want to work with Bowers, who made being insulting his "trademark." Second, many wanted to provide hospitality for homeless men, and even if the rest of the group at Taylor had been willing, the size of the Taylor Street store front could not accommodate

at least 1958. This credit union would become the largest credit union in America that was primarily owned and operated by African Americans. "Falls Is Re-Elected Head of Credit Union," Unknown newspaper clipping, 21 February 1957, Western Springs Historical Society, Western Springs, IL, Folder: Dr. Arthur G. Falls; *Jet*, "Masses of Negroes Learn Thrift Through Credit Unions," 21 January 1965, p. 24. During 1957, the Peoples Co-Op Credit Union grew in membership from 85 members to almost 2,500 and was providing over \$5,000,000 in financing for its members. *Chicago Defender*, "Co-Op Hits \$1 Million in Assets," 1 February 1958, p. 9. Perhaps trying to learn from mistakes made by the Catholic Worker credit union, Peoples had a reputation for building a relationship with all the members. In addition, if a member was denied a loan, they made clear to the member what was needed to rectify the situation. Credit Union Bridge, "Talking to Members," newsletter of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), February 1957, pp. 10-13, available upon request from CUNA Archives in Madison, WI, (608) 2321-4104.

¹⁷⁸ Sicius, *The Word Made Flesh*, 36-39; Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale*, 8-14; Sullivan, interview by Sicius; AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, p. 23-1-8. The new house originally opened at 4105 S. Wabash Ave. *New York Catholic Worker*, "New Branch of C.W. Opens in Chicago: Colored and White Work Together in South Side Center," June 1937, p 2.

large-scale hospitality.¹⁷⁹ None of the original group ever mentioned Falls as the reason for starting another house and there was no apparent animosity between Falls and the Blue Island group, although Falls thought the opening of a second house with a focus on hospitality would detract from what he believed was a effective means of improving the situation of black Chicagoans.¹⁸⁰ Also during 1937, Falls began regularly meeting with a group of about thirty seminarians at different individuals homes on the topic of race relations.¹⁸¹ These meetings continued, though after a while less regularly, through 1942.¹⁸² Fall prided himself regarding the positive influence he believed that he had on these future priests, which included Martin William Farrell,¹⁸³ Howard Matthias

¹⁷⁹ Msgr. John Hayes, interview by Francis Sicius, 14 June 1976, Cassette, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, WI, Series W-9.1, Box C-3. Falls, in his interview with Sicius, stated that he disagreed with Bowers regarding “methods of procedure,” but that they remained good friends. Falls, interview by Sicius. Even before the split, John Bowers had focused on making the storefront more of a daycare center to better the lives of the neighborhood children. Sicius, *The Word Made Flesh*, 36-39. Hayes, interview by Sicius. Tom Sullivan, who was a member at both the Chicago and New York Catholic Workers during his lifetime, also confirmed Hayes opinion that Bowers, with his caustic attitude, drove a number of people away. Sullivan, interview by Sicius.

¹⁸⁰ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 22-side 2, p. 6.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 7; Falls, interview by Troester. In addition, during this time period, Falls chaired the Civic Committee, which had the purpose of disseminating the thought of the Catholic Worker throughout the city of Chicago. Helen Farrell, “Chicago Catholic Worker,” *New York Catholic Worker*, November 1937, p. 3.

¹⁸² AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 1, p. 9; Falls, interview by Troester.

¹⁸³ Rev. Martin “Doc” William Farrell (1910-1991) was ordained in 1938 and was immediately assigned to St. Malachy’s, with newly assigned pastor, Fr. John F. Brown. With Brown and Farrell, St. Malachy “took on new life as a Negro parish.” They would be the first diocesan priests to serve the black community since Mundelein brought in the Divine Word Fathers. He was known for his organizing to prevent mistreatment of the African American community. Farrell was closely associated with The Woodlawn Community in the early 1960s as it fought against attempts by the University of Chicago to remove African Americans from the neighborhood. Harry C. Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago* (Chicago: The Archdiocese of Chicago, 1980), 553; Joseph Kirby, “Rev. Martin W. Farrell: Aided Woodlawn Group,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 February 1991, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1991-02-17/news/9101150766_1_pastor-community-improvement-group-park-ridge (accessed 29 March 2012); Msgr. Daniel Cantwell, interview by Rev. Steven Avella, 14 December 1983, Transcript, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Box 43615.05, Folder Msgr. Daniel Cantwell.

Hoffman,¹⁸⁴ and Fr. John Egan.¹⁸⁵

In early 1938, Day was admitted to Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. In her column, she simply wrote: “Dr. Arthur Falls visited me daily and operated on my abscessed throat.” She could not read or speak for a week.¹⁸⁶ Falls, in a 1991 interview, shared more details. After being admitted to the hospital, the staff asked Day if she had a private physician. She replied that Dr. Falls was her physician and he was called to the emergency room. There was a frantic discussion by a group of nuns in charge after he arrived because no Catholic hospital allowed black doctors to practice medicine in the Chicago Archdiocese. The nuns finally allowed Falls to operate on Day and treat her, though Day had to be officially admitted to the hospital by a white doctor. Not too long after this incident, Falls applied for staff status at the hospital, which would mean that he could refer and

¹⁸⁴ Rev. Howard Matthias Hoffman (d. 2004) was ordained in 1940 and is the least well known of this group of priests. He taught at Chicago’s Quigley Preparatory Seminary from 1944 to 1960 and at St. Mary on the Lake Junior College for the entirety of its existence, from 1961-1967. From 1966 to 1979, he was the pastor at St. Teresa of Avila Parish, where he diligently pastored to the Spanish-speaking community, which had just recently moved into the neighborhood. Archdiocese of Chicago, “Fr. Matthias Hoffman, Chicago Heights Pastor, Dies: Was Professor at Two Chicago Seminaries,” http://www.archchicago.org/news_releases/obituaries_04/obit_040104.htm (accessed 4 April 2012); Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 916-17. AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 23-side 2, p. 1; Box 2, Folder 2, disc 25-side 2 pp. 7-8.

¹⁸⁵ Rev. John “Jack” J. Egan (1916-2001), who was ordained in 1943, is the most well known of this group of priests. From 1958 to 1969, he headed the Archdiocesan Office of Urban Affairs, which addressed issues of segregation and urban renewal projects that were often intended to drive African Americans out of desirable neighborhoods. In 1965, he marched in Selma, AL with Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. During the 1960s he worked did work with Saul Alinsky in community organizing and did similar work with Peggy Roach at Notre Dame during the 1970s. Peter Steinfelds, “John J. Egan, Priest and Rights Advocate, Is Dead at 84,” *New York Times*, 22 May 2001, section C, p. 18. For more information on Egan, see McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*; Margery Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago: The Ministry of a City Priest* (Kansas City: MO: Sheed and Ward, 1991); Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books / Henry Holt and Company, 2009).

¹⁸⁶ Day, “More Houses of Hospitality Needed,” *New York Catholic Worker*, March 1938, p. 1.

treat patients there; he was turned down.¹⁸⁷ The Mother Superior, however, assured Falls “that they did admit colored physicians to their hospitals in Africa.”¹⁸⁸

At the end of December 1938, he and a number of his fellow Catholic Workers attended the First Annual Conference of the American Catholic Sociological Society. Falls was interested in a “sociological discussion and exploration on the basis of Catholic doctrine.”¹⁸⁹ He and his fellow Workers also believed that they could add to the discussion at the conference based on their practical experience in addressing social problems in Chicago.¹⁹⁰

In 1938, the Chicago Catholic Worker also started hosting folk dances and musical appreciation programs that incorporated the music of various ethnic groups. Additionally, they also preformed humorous skits written by Falls about the field of race relations. These programs were very popular and Falls was hopeful that all these programs, and particularly an appreciation for another culture’s music, could be another helpful tool in promoting interracial cooperation.¹⁹¹

At the end of 1940, the Chicago Catholic Interracial Council that Falls had formed was still active, and as noted above, largely made up of Catholic Workers. On the evening of 30 November 1940, Arthur and Lillian, along with Al Reser and others,

¹⁸⁷ Tim Unsworth, “A Lonely Prophet Falls in Chicago,” *National Catholic Reporter*, 3 March 2000, p. 18.

¹⁸⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 23-side 1, p. 10.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 10-11. The American Catholic Sociological Society still exists today, but is now known as the Association for the Sociology of Religion. Falls would be a member of the society until at least 1943. American Catholic Sociological Society, “Roster of the American Catholic Sociological Society,” *American Catholic Sociological Review* 4, no. 4 (December 1943): 220.

¹⁹¹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 23-side 2, pp. 1-2.

attended a dance sponsored by the Illinois Club for Catholic Women at the Drake Hotel. The presence of an interracial group in attendance was shocking for many of the members and the group was asked to leave. They stayed and decided to have a pleasant evening.¹⁹²

Falls left an indelible mark on many Catholics he met at that time. John Cogley was strongly anti-racist during and after this time at the *Chicago Worker*.¹⁹³ In addition, Ed Marciniak would be regularly involved in race relations in Chicago. Shortly after the *Chicago Catholic Worker* ceased publication, Marciniak founded the labor newspaper *Work*, which he published until the end of 1961. He was also founding member of the Catholic Interracial Council in Chicago during the 1940s and he would work for the City of Chicago as the Executive Director of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations during the 1960s. In this capacity, he stated that one of his priorities was to open up all hospitals in the Chicago area to black physicians. During a late 1980s interview, he stated that although they were working the hospital issue from different vantage points, he kept in contact with Falls while he was suing the hospitals, which will be covered below.¹⁹⁴ No other Catholic Worker house from this time period can claim to have so many influential individuals come out of their ranks with a dedication to racial justice.

¹⁹² AGF Box 2, Folder 1, disc 24-side 2, p. 10.

¹⁹³ For example, see John Cogley, "Racial Prejudice is a Stupid Sin: Chicago Letter," *New York Catholic Worker*, September 1937 p. 3; John Cogley, "Negroes in Catholic Schools: 'Catholic Education in Catholic Schools for All Catholic Youth,'" *Chicago Catholic Worker*, August 1941, p. 3; John Cogley, "Archbishop Ousts Selma Priest Who Aided Voter Registration Drive," *New York Times*, 26 June 1965, p. 13; John Cogley, *Catholic America* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1974), 132-34

¹⁹⁴ Edward Marciniak, interview by Rev. Martin Zielinski, [1987?], transcript, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Unprocessed [therefore, no box number], Box "Rev. Martin Zielinski's Oral History Project," Folder "Mr. Ed Marciniak."

And even though Cogley and Marciniak opened a house of hospitality separate from the house started by Falls, the next few decades of their lives would be dominated less by hospitality and more by trying to change the social sphere—the method of Falls. Falls alleged that “the Catholic Worker group may be credited with changing completely the stance of the Catholic Church in Chicago in terms of human relations.”¹⁹⁵

Since most Catholic Worker houses of the time provided shelter for the homeless or had a soup kitchen, Falls’s focus almost solely on the roundtable discussions aspect of the Catholic Worker made the Chicago group an oddity. Falls himself wrote that the greater need in Chicago was for an avenue of “intellectual exploration and an avenue for bringing together white and colored Catholics for mutual enterprise,” not housing and feeding the needy.¹⁹⁶ According to Falls, the Catholic Worker group in Chicago never did focus “a great deal of support into the House of Hospitality” and he “had the feeling that Dorothy Day was not particularly pleased” with the situation.¹⁹⁷ At the 50th anniversary celebration of the Catholic Worker in Chicago he stated: “We didn’t have a house of hospitality established, but we did a lot more.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Arthur Falls, Chicago Catholic Worker 50th Anniversary Celebration, 5 December 1986, Cassette, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, WI, Series W-9.1, Box C-27. In this same talk, he also stated his belief that the Catholic Worker gave many non-Catholics in Chicago a much better attitude toward the Catholic Church. Additionally, Falls’s statement on race relations probably is meant to include the effect that that the Chicago Catholic Worker had on the many CISCA students who were involved. CISCA (Chicago Inter-Student Catholic Action) was a group of Catholic college students that were involved in the work of charity and social justice. They organized in 1927 at Loyola around Fr. Joseph Reinert S. J. and continued into the 1960s. For more information on CISCA, see Rae Bielakowski, “You are in the World: Catholic Campus Life at Loyola University Chicago, Mundelein College, and De Paul University, 1924-1950” (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2009).

¹⁹⁶ AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 23-side 1, p. 10.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* Falls disagreed with Day on a number of issues. For example, the Catholic Worker movement espoused voluntary poverty, something to which Falls never aspired. Nevertheless, Falls was obviously interested in certain Catholic Worker ideas, such as the cooperative movement and roundtable discussions.

¹⁹⁸ Falls, “Chicago Catholic Worker 50th Anniversary Celebration.”

The Blue Island house closed as a result of World War II. Most of the workers at the house disagreed with Dorothy Day regarding her pacifist stance and joined the armed forces.¹⁹⁹ The closure of the Blue Island house and the departure of the majority of its workers also marked the end of Falls's involvement with the Catholic Worker movement, except for credit union. Falls did not participate in World War I or World War II, but not because he was a pacifist. World War I ended before he was old enough and he refused requests to serve as a physician in the Second World War.²⁰⁰ Regarding both wars, "I was under no illusions, however, that I would be going to fight to make the world safe for democracy because I recognized the fact that one of the most bigoted institutions in our country was the armed forces."²⁰¹ During both world wars he noted that African Americans were segregated, given more menial work than white soldiers, and prevented from achieving higher ranks.²⁰²

As noted above, Falls's participation in the Catholic Worker movement left an indelible mark on many white Catholics in the Chicago area. Although Falls had always

¹⁹⁹ Francis Sicius, "The Chicago Catholic Worker," in *Revolution of the Heart: Essays on the Catholic Worker*, ed. Patrick G. Coy (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1992), 349-52.

²⁰⁰ AGF Box 2, Folder 2, disc 26-side 1, pp. 9-10. Falls believed that his experience with the riots of 1919 prevented him from ever entertaining the idea of pacifism. He thought that such violence had to be "opposed vigorously." AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, p. 62. Beginning in September 1941, Falls was regularly contacted by the Navy and asked to serve as a doctor and accept a commission as a lieutenant junior-grade. Other white doctors he knew, with less experience, were being offered positions as commanders and lieutenant commanders. They refused him higher rank and he refused to join. AGF Box 2, Folder 2, disc 26-side 1, pp. 9-10.

²⁰¹ AGF Box 1, Folder 2, pp. 55-56. In another place, Falls stated: "I certainly was not going to volunteer to serve in the United States Jim Crow army." AGF Box 1, Folder 14, disc 23-side 2, p. 9. He stated this again at AGF Box 2, Folder 2, disc 25-side 1, p. 9. As World War II progressed and scandalous incidences of Jim Crow continued, Falls decided in July 1943 that if he were drafted, he "would accept non-military service or go to jail." Falls was never tested on this because soon afterward the U.S. government's War Manpower Commission determined that Falls medical service in Chicago was essential. AGF Box 2, Folder 4, disc 29-side 2, p. 6.

²⁰² AGF Box 1, Folder 2, pp. 56-58, 67-68.

preached an integrated solution for racial justice, the Chicago Catholic Worker allowed him his first extended foray into working with whites for racial justice that was on a level greater than moral suasion. During the remainder of his life, as we shall see, he would search out coalitions with both whites and blacks that were willing to use any moral means possible to attain racial justice.

FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION, CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY & FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

In October 1941, Falls accepted an invitation to join the Fellowship of Reconciliation's Program Planning Committee and their newly formed Race Relations Cell.²⁰³ The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)²⁰⁴ is an international interfaith group dedicated to nonviolence and justice that started in England in 1915. On 26 October, Falls took the Race Relations Cell on a field trip around Chicago to show them the housing problem faced by African Americans.²⁰⁵ After serving the group for a while in a mostly advisory capacity, the Race Relations Cell, almost to person, became founding members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a group solely dedicated to the elimination of racial discrimination.²⁰⁶ CORE's initial activities included confronting restaurant owners in the downtown area who were notorious for denying service to African Americans. The group would talk to the owners, try to obtain service with

²⁰³ AGF Box 2, Folder 2, disc 26-side 2, pp. 8-9.

²⁰⁴ For more information on the Fellowship of Reconciliation, see Richard Deats, introduction to *Peace is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation*, ed. Walter Wink (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000); Betty Lynn Barton, "*The Fellowship of Reconciliation: Pacifism, Labor, and Social Welfare, 1915- 1960*" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1974).

²⁰⁵ AGF Box 2, Folder 2, disc 26-side 2, p. 9.

²⁰⁶ AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 1, p. 5. For the first year, the group was known as the Committee of Racial Equality.

interracial groups, and leaflet outside restaurants that continued to refuse service to blacks.²⁰⁷ Eventually, CORE published a list of restaurants that served blacks as places worthy of patronizing.²⁰⁸ As with the FOR, Arthur and Lillian participated in a more advisory role.²⁰⁹ Many of the men in this group would be sent to the conscientious objector camp in Coshocoton, Ohio in 1943. In February of that year, Falls took a road trip to visit them.²¹⁰ Later that year, Falls sat on a couple CORE committees and hosted the executive committee meetings at the office where he had his private practice at 4655 S. Michigan Boulevard.²¹¹

On 2 July 1942, Baroness Catherine de Hueck (later Catherine Doherty), the founder of Friendship House, visited Falls to discuss the opening of a Friendship House in Chicago.²¹² Friendship House was a Catholic interracial apostolate that began in Toronto in the early 1930s. Based on the correspondence of their own members, it appears that the group was happy to have the support of Falls, who one of the members stated was well respected in the African American community and was known for not

²⁰⁷ AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 1, pp. 6-7.

²⁰⁸ AGF Box 2, Folder 4, disc 29-side 2, pp. 8-9.

²⁰⁹ AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 1, p. 7. Arthur and Lillian attended their first CORE meeting on 12 July 1942. AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 1, p. 5.

²¹⁰ AGF Box 2, Folder 4, disc 29-side 2, p. 7.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 8. Falls's early interaction with CORE is confirmed by the listing of his name on two separate committees on a program for an Interracial Education Conference in Chicago in November 1943. "Conference on Interracial Education," 19 November 1943, Congress on Racial Equality Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI, Series 3: Executive Secretary's File, Box 6, Folder 5.

²¹² AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 2, p. 3. For information on Friendship House, see Elizabeth Louise Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement" (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, 1977); Catherine De Hueck, *Friendship House* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1946).

compromising.²¹³ Although Falls was too busy to be active in another group, he did invite the Friendship House people to his home to meet others in the interracial movement about two weeks before Friendship House officially opened in Chicago on 5 November 1942.²¹⁴

CARDINAL STRITCH CORRESPONDENCE²¹⁵

Cardinal Samuel A. Stritch (1887-1958) was the Archbishop of Chicago from early 1940 until his death in May 1958. Stritch was born in Tennessee and would remain Southern in his accent and attitudes towards African Americans for the whole of his life. Although he would always strongly support efforts toward the evangelization of African Americans, he would remain apathetic on matters of racial justice.²¹⁶

Falls first wrote Stritch shortly after he came to Chicago in August 1940 to commend him on the Archdiocesan presence at the American Negro Exposition.²¹⁷ To his credit, Stritch had sent a circular to all the priests of the Archdiocese a few weeks earlier, asking the priests and their assemblies to attend the exposition, which commemorated the 75th anniversary of the emancipation of slavery. Stritch hoped that the friendly Catholic presence would give a better impression to African Americans of

²¹³ Ellen Tarry to Baroness Catherine de Hueck, 1942, Madonna House Archive, Combermere, Canada, Catherine de Hueck Doherty's Correspondence, Folder Ellen Tarry 1940-1942—1992 042-250. Thank you to Karen Johnson for sharing this document with me.

²¹⁴ AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 2, pp. 3-4.

²¹⁵ It is likely that the cited correspondence between Stritch and Falls that is held at the Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago is all that was written between the two of them.

²¹⁶ Avella, *This Confident Church*, 2, 254.

²¹⁷ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., to Most Rev. Samuel A. Stritch, 9 August 1940, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43848.01, Folder 14. Falls also covered this event in his memoir. AGF Box 2, Folder 1, disc 24-side 2, pp. 7-8.

white Catholics and perhaps lay the groundwork for the winning of African American souls.²¹⁸

Falls appreciated Stritch's "zeal" for the exposition, hearing of his effort from the moral theologian Fr. John A. Ryan (1865-1945), who was at the Catholic booth and of whom Falls stated he "had the opportunity of working with... from the early days."²¹⁹ It appears that Stritch accomplished his goal; Falls remarked that many African Americans whom he knew to have an antagonistic view of the Catholic Church were now speaking of the Catholic Church with "respect and reverence."²²⁰ Falls offered Stritch his services in the field of racial justice and spoke of "a new note of hope in the hearts and minds especially of our Catholic Negroes."²²¹ Falls was apparently very hopeful that this early effort by Stritch to improve race relations in Chicago would be indicative of a strong Archdiocesan stance on racial justice. In addition, Falls's memoir joyously remembered 19 September 1940 because of the assignment of Father Vincent Smith, S. V. D. as the assistant rector of St. Elizabeth Parish. Smith was the first African American priest assigned to a parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago in over forty years. This was a dramatic change in policy from Cardinal Mundelein, whom Falls believed would not

²¹⁸ Samuel A. Stritch to Priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago, 17 July 1940, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43848.05, Folder 7.

²¹⁹ Falls to Stritch, 9 August 1940. Unfortunately, nothing is known of the "the early days." It is possible that Falls had contact with Ryan when the Chicago Catholic Worker was first forming. There is a large section of the memoir that is missing for that time period.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

allow any black priests to serve in the Chicago Archdiocese.²²² This is probably the most pleased that Falls would be with Stritch during his tenure in Chicago.

In December 1941, Falls wrote Stritch again, asking him to support the creation of a Chicago Interracial Council, “developed under your auspices, consisting of representatives of clergy and of laity, of labor and capital, of the press and of such other groups as might be effective in this field.”²²³ Falls related to Stritch the “frustration and despair” among African Americans in Chicago and proposed that the vast resources of the Chicago Archdiocese in the guise of an Interracial Council could accomplish much in the field of racial justice.²²⁴ Stritch immediately wrote back, acknowledging Falls’s frustration, but ignoring his request for a Catholic Interracial Council.²²⁵ In 1943, the recently ordained Rev. Daniel M. Cantwell (d. 1996) also unsuccessfully asked for a Catholic Interracial Council. Nevertheless, in early 1945, Cantwell organized, apart from the Archdiocese, a group that included Illinois Appellate Court Judge Roger J. Kiley, Alderman George D. Kells, a couple of attorneys, and black labor leader John Yancey. In September 1945, they would officially ask Stritch to be recognized by the Archdiocese as the Catholic Interracial Council. The group presented itself as pliant to the Cardinal’s authority and Stritch approved the group, but gave them a short leash.²²⁶ Although Falls had always offered his services to Stritch for the cause of racial justice, he would never

²²² AGF Box 2, Folder 1, disc 24-side 2, p. 8.

²²³ Falls to Stritch, 26 December 1941, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43849.04, Folder 5.

²²⁴ Falls to Stritch, 26 December 1941.

²²⁵ Stritch to Falls, 27 December 1941, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43849.04, Folder 3.

²²⁶ Avella, *This Confident Church*, 290-92.

serve on the Catholic Interracial Council. It is safe to assume that Stritch would have considered Falls too volatile and confrontational for the group.²²⁷

In response to three days of race riots in Detroit in late June 1943 that only ended with the aid of federal troops, Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago appointed a municipal Committee on Race Relations in July 1943.²²⁸ In May 1944, the chairman of the committee asked Falls to sit on the Health Subcommittee and he accepted.²²⁹ It was probably Fall's involvement with this committee that led him to write Stritch again in December 1946, when he sent an urgent telegram, pleading for Stritch to use his "leadership" to positively address the riot that broke out at the Airport Homes.²³⁰ The Airport Homes were a housing project for World War II veterans that opened near what is now called Chicago Midway International Airport in the city of Chicago. When a couple of black families attempted to move in while the white men were at work, a mob of mostly white women attacked the African Americans as well as police and city officials. Though worse incidents of racial violence would follow, it was at the time the worst outbreak of racial violence since the riot of 1919.²³¹ Falls indicated that he was asked by the Chicago Housing Authority "to mobilize dynamic Catholic leadership" to

²²⁷ Edward Marciniak, in an interview that he gave in the 1980s about his involvement in the Catholic Interracial Council could not remember exactly why Falls was not a part of it, but speculated that "whites weren't ready" and would have viewed him as "too militant" at that time. Marciniak, interview by Zielinski.

²²⁸ Mayor's Committee on Race Relations, *Race Relations in Chicago: December 1944* (Chicago: Mayor's Committee on Race Relations: 1944), 1; *Race Relations in Chicago: December 1944*, 26.

²²⁹ Edwin R. Embree to Doctor Falls, 10 May 1944, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, Box 179, Folder 3.

²³⁰ Falls to Stritch, 6 December 1946, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43863.02, Folder 3.

²³¹ Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 60, 76, 90, 187.

support the Housing Authority in this matter.²³² Stritch did not respond to Falls and was completely silent on the matter.²³³ Falls would not write to Stritch again for three years.

In December 1949, Falls wrote to Stritch once more about the continuing outbreak of riots. The impetus for Falls's letter was a pledge against "indecentcy as expressed in motion pictures and in theatrical productions" that Falls and his fellow parishioners were asked to take the day before by the parish priest at Sunday Mass.²³⁴ Although Falls did not state that he had any problem with such a pledge, he could not understand why Catholics were not being asked to make a much more important "pledge of opposition to indecentcy as expressed in rioting and physical attacks on one's fellow-man, as so recently demonstrated in Visitation Parish," which is also, without doubt, "a mortal sin."²³⁵ In Falls's opinion, Catholics were the most active group and even had leadership roles in the rioting and violence against African Americans. Falls pointed out, and other sources concur, that the unmitigated racism of the clerical and lay leadership at Visitation Parish was largely responsible for the November 1949 riot in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago.²³⁶ The Englewood riot was based on a rumor that a black family might be moving into the neighborhood, after African Americans were seen by a woman through the living room window of a man's home who was holding an informal union meeting. Soon hundreds gathered outside of his home and, at one point, ten

²³² Falls to Stritch, 6 December 1946.

²³³ Falls to Stritch, 12 December 1949, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43873.07, Folder 2.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Falls to Stritch, 12 December 1949; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 85-86; Avella, *This Confident Church*, 256-57.

thousand protesters surrounded his house, attacking Jews, blacks, and whites suspected of supporting integration.²³⁷

Falls communicated to Stritch that his silence was fostering an anti-Catholic sentiment among African Americans because his “silence [about the riot] is construed as sympathy with those responsible for the rioting.”²³⁸ Falls suggested that a public denunciation as well as an “intercultural education” program on the parish level could curb future large-scale participation of white Catholics in race riots.²³⁹ It does not appear that Stritch responded to Falls but, without any concrete direction, ambiguously told his secretary, Monsignor John Fitzgerald, to eliminate racist activity at the Visitation Parish.²⁴⁰

Of lesser importance, in June 1951, Falls wrote to Stritch on behalf of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity (a predominantly, though not exclusively, African American society that Falls had joined as a student at Northwestern), asking his opinion regarding the best way to publicize the October coming of the Boys’ Town Choir, which was interracial.²⁴¹ Stritch promptly responded that he should contact the editor of the Archdiocesan newspaper, the *New World*.²⁴² A large advertisement with an interracial photograph and prices was included in the *New World* a couple of days before the choir sang at the

²³⁷ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 55-56.

²³⁸ Falls to Stritch, 12 December 1949.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Avella, *This Confident Church*, 257.

²⁴¹ Falls to Stritch, 18 June 1951, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43878.02, Folder 10; AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, p. 116-18.

²⁴² Stritch to Falls, 20 June 1951, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43878.02, Folder 10.

Chicago Opera House.²⁴³ There is one more known instance of correspondence between Falls and Stritch regarding hospital segregation, but that will be covered below in the section entitled, “Hospital Integration.”

INTEGRATING WESTERN SPRINGS

In the summer of 1952, Arthur and his wife, Lillian, decided to integrate Western Springs, Illinois, a totally white suburb of Chicago, by purchasing land there with the intent of building their future home on it. A large part of the reason for this move may have been the belief the Fallses had that the “core of the difficulties in race relations... lay in the matter of housing segregation.”²⁴⁴ The move to Western Springs was a direct assault on housing segregationists.

In early 1943, the Fallses purchased their first home at 1412 West 61st Street in Chicago. They were the first African American family to move onto the block and they only had difficulty with one neighbor two houses down. This neighbor struck Arthur Jr., who was thirteen at the time. Falls had her arrested and placed on a peace bond. From this point on, they no longer faced any difficulties with the neighbors.²⁴⁵

In mid-September 1952, some residents in Western Springs became aware that the Fallses were African American.²⁴⁶ Before the Fallses could even obtain a building permit

²⁴³ *Chicago New World*, “Father Flanagan’s Boys Town Choir,” 12 October 1951.

²⁴⁴ Deerfield Citizens for Human Rights, Short History of the Fallses’ Purchase and Building of their Home in Western Springs, IL, December 1959, Archives, Western Springs Historical Society, Western Springs, IL. Hereafter referred to as “Western Springs Situation.” This paper was put together by the Deerfield Citizens for Human Rights and does not have a title. AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 27-side 1, p. 3.

²⁴⁵ AGF Box 2, Folder 4, disc 29-side 2, p. 4. A peace bond is a court order that requires the perpetrator to deposit an amount of money that they will be lost if they continue to harass the victim.

²⁴⁶ Western Springs Situation.

for their home, they were required to perform “elaborate and expensive soil tests” and meet with members of the Property Owners’ Association. The purpose of this meeting, of which two of the members were on the Board of Trustees for the local Congregationalist Church, was to dissuade the Fallses from building a home in Western Springs.²⁴⁷ During this period, certain residents collected 1,267 signatures that petitioned the Park District to condemn the Fallses property for park land using eminent domain.²⁴⁸ After finally obtaining a building permit, they were forced to endure a drawn-out legal battle when the Park District of Western Springs attempted to condemn their house for parkland.²⁴⁹ The Fallses hired two lawyers, Edward B. Toles and Sydney A. Jones Jr. to defend them. Toles became the first African American bankruptcy judge in Chicago in 1968 and Jones would become the first black alderman of the 6th Ward in Chicago, later serving as a municipal court judge for Chicago and circuit court judge for Cook County.²⁵⁰ The circuit court met about sixteen times from early January to mid-June when the judge dismissed the Park District’s suit, citing that the Park District had abused its power in attempting to condemn a home with the primary purpose not of building a

²⁴⁷ Western Springs Situation; Raulin B. Wight to Mr. George Smith, 7 November 1952, Western Springs Department of Community Development, Western Springs, IL, Folder: 4812 Fair Elms Avenue. This letter contains the bill for the soil sample tests. Falls, interview by Troester; Mrs. Hugh E. Bogardus and Mr. James E. Davis, “Experience in Interracial Living,” *Social Action* (November 1957): 16.

²⁴⁸ Park & Development Committee of the Forest Hills Association to Mr. Frank E. McWethy, 6 November 1952, in Western Springs Park District v. Arthur Falls, et al., 52C 14741, 1 December 1952, Richard J. Daley Center—Archives Room 1113, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chicago. Hereafter referred to as “Park District v. Falls.” The actual signed petitions are also in this court file.

²⁴⁹ Park District v. Falls.

²⁵⁰ Dan Baron, “Edward Toles, 1st Black Bankruptcy Judge,” *Chicago Tribune*, 5 December 1998, p. 23; Kenan Heise, “Judge, Rights Crusader Sydney Jones Jr.,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 November 1993, p. 15.

park, but keeping a black family out of their area.²⁵¹ An article in the national newspaper of Friendship House, the *Catholic Interracialist*, referred to the ruling as “probably the most important court decision upholding property rights since restrictive covenants were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1948.”²⁵² Judge Jacob Berkowitz was quoted as stating, “If this land were condemned... it would be a monument in that particular area to hate and intolerance... and I’m sure none of us would want our little children playing on it.”²⁵³ Berkowitz continued by stating: “Dr. and Mrs. Falls can enjoy the fraternity of brotherhood not in five, fifty or a hundred years, but now.”²⁵⁴ The Council Against Discrimination in Greater Chicago, for which Falls served on the Advisory Board, “agreed that Dr. and Mrs. Falls are rendering a public service in resisting the pressure to prevent their moving into this suburb.” They offered “psychological and financial” support and put out an action notice to all their affiliates to attend the court case.²⁵⁵ At the time of the case, Falls’s lawyers remarked that this was

²⁵¹ Park District v. Falls; Deerfield Citizens for Human Rights, Short History of the Fallses’ Purchase; “Chicago Couple Win Court Fight Over Home,” *Jet*, 25 June 1953, 8.

²⁵² Dixie Anne McCleary, “Vital Court Decision in Chicago: Judge Berkowitz Rule for Social Justice,” *Catholic Interracialist*, July-August 1953, p. 1.

²⁵³ Jacob Berkowitz, quoted in the following: Bogardus and Davis, “Experience in Interracial Living: Western Springs, Illinois,” 16-17; McCleary, “Vital Court Decision in Chicago,” p. 1.

²⁵⁴ Judge Berkowitz, quoted in Council Against Discrimination of Greater Chicago, *Newsletter*, June 1953, Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 263, Folder 2639.

²⁵⁵ Council Against Discrimination of Greater Chicago, “Minutes of the Monthly Board Meeting of the Council Against Discrimination,” Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 263, Folder 8; Council Against Discrimination to All Affiliates, 2 June 1953, Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 263, Folder 2630. The Council was founded in 1943 and originally called the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination. It was organized to “coordinate efforts to eliminate inter-group tensions by education, legislation, and direct action.” Annetta Dieckmann to Mr. Sidney Williams, 1 January 1953, Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 263, Folder 2628.

the first instance they were aware of in which a court refused a government's right to condemn land on the basis of racial discrimination.²⁵⁶

Shortly after the dismissal of the case, a referendum was brought before the citizens of Western Springs to authorize a bond sale for \$116,000 for the purposes of funding an appeal, purchasing the Fallses's land, and turning that land into a park. On 10 July 1953, the village voted 1,037 to 896 against the bond issue, so the appeal of the court case was dropped and the Fallses moved into their new home that December.²⁵⁷

During the trial, Lillian's Congregationalist minister took the stand in support of the Fallses, gave a discussion at church on the matter, and urged church members to go to the trial to support the Fallses. Arthur, who at the time belonged to St. Cletus Catholic Church, received no support from the parish priest, even though he was very active in the parish and the trial was widely covered in the press.²⁵⁸

Though they were often threatened with violence, the only instance of violence that they experienced was a brick being thrown through their window that almost hit a friend of theirs in the head. For two weeks after that incident, Arthur and Lillian often sat

²⁵⁶ Sidney Jones and Edward B. Toles, in "Dr. Falls Will Build in All-White Suburb," *Chicago Defender*, 20 June 1953, p. 4.

²⁵⁷ Bogardus and Davis, "Experience in Interracial Living: Western Springs, Illinois," 17; *Council Against Discrimination Newsletter*, July 1953, Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series I, Box 263, Folder 2640; "Western Springs Situation." *Western Springs Times*, "Villagers Will Vote Next Friday on 3 Park Referendum Proposal," 3 July 1953, pp. 1-2; *Western Springs Times*, "Drop Appeal of Park Condemnation Ruling," 17 July 1953, p. 1. The *Western Springs Times* can be obtained at the Thomas Ford Memorial Library, Western Springs, IL. Of the five precincts that voted regarding the bond issue, the only one that voted in favor of it was the one in which the disputed property resided. This village's vote was also covered by the *Chicago Defender*. *Chicago Defender*, "Voters Defeat Last Attempt Against Falls," National Edition, 25 July 1953, p. 5.

²⁵⁸ Bogardus and Davis, "Experience in Interracial Living: Western Springs, Illinois," 16-17; Falls, interview by Troester. The contrast here between Lillian's black church and white churches to which Falls and the Western Springs officials belonged to confirm Cone's suspicion of white churches are too concerned with their own selfish interests to practice the gospel of liberation.

at the door with a shotgun. It seemed that word got out that they were armed and they were left alone afterward. In telling this story, Falls confessed his “one failing”: “I have utter contempt for stupidity. I have a hard time [because I am] utterly contemptuous of stupid people. And of course this whole thing is so stupid.”²⁵⁹

The winning of this case was in no sense certain. In 1959, the Progress Development Corporation, for which Falls chaired the board of directors, bought land in Deerfield, Illinois in order to build an integrated housing project in which about ten of fifty-one homes were to be sold to African American families. In that case, the village of Deerfield, which is a suburb of Chicago although it resides in separate a county, was successful in condemning the property and turning the land into park land.²⁶⁰ Unlike when Falls purchased property in Western Springs, the Deerfield community was more covert about their racist intentions and the community approved a \$550,000 bond issue to cover court costs and additional costs to condemn the homes and build a park.²⁶¹

Arthur and Lillian Falls were successful in their assault against segregation in Western Springs, but they did not do it alone. They had the support of the Chicago Urban League, Friendship House, and many others. And although they also had the support of Lillian’s black church, the white Catholic Church that Falls belonged to offered no support. In addition, two of the main figures in the village advising Falls to

²⁵⁹ Falls, interview by Troester.

²⁶⁰ Schueler, “W. Springs Doctor Has a ‘Better Idea’ About Civil Rights.” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “U. S. Enjoins Deerfield in Housing Row: Integration Issue in \$750,000 Suit,” 23 December 1959, p. A10. The extent of Falls’s involvement in the Deerfield situation is uncertain. For more information about the very complicated court cases and their appeals, see Harry M. Rosen and David H. Rosen, *But Not Next Door* (New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1962); *Chicago Tribune*, “Builder Ask Rehearing of Deerfield Suit,” 28 May 1963, p. B17.

²⁶¹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “U. S. Enjoins Deerfield in Housing Row,” p. A10. The same article states that the bond issue referendum, which had the largest voter turnout in the village’s history, won by a vote of 2,635 to 1,207.

not build in Western Springs were trustees of a local white Protestant church. Once again, the importance of retrieving black voices, whether Catholic or Protestant, is of utmost importance in piecing together a racial justice framework. In this episode, both the white Catholic and white Protestant churches in the area placed their own immediate desires over the gospel of Jesus Christ.

HOSPITAL INTEGRATION

When Albert G. Meyer became Archbishop of Chicago in the 1958, the Catholic hospital system was still thoroughly entrenched in racial discrimination. Despite clear documentation to the contrary, Meyer testified before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1959 that African Americans are “teaching in the classrooms of our large universities, pleading cases in our law courts, performing operations in our hospitals.”²⁶² There were a number of studies concerning hospital integration, which often addressed the lack of integration by Catholic hospitals in Chicago. I will give a selection of these reports and an overview of Falls’s previous activity in this arena to set the scene for Falls action of suing almost every Chicago area hospital in February 1961 with a number of fellow black physicians. A report presented at the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice in 1958, which met in Chicago, stated: “[O]ur consultants have provided more-than-sufficient evidence to indicate that many Catholic hospitals now practice policies of racial exclusion or segregation, a condition which we can only

²⁶² Albert G. Meyer, quoted in LaFarge, *The Catholic Viewpoint on Race Relations*, 152. By the word “our,” it appears that Meyer is indicating secular as well as Catholic institutions.

describe as scandalous.”²⁶³ Also in 1958, Dietrich C. Reitzes (1935-1988), a sociologist most well-known for chronicling the life of Chicago community organizer Saul Alinsky, wrote the book, *Negroes and Medicine*.²⁶⁴ He discovered that in 1956, although in many large cities Catholic hospitals were leaders in integration, in Chicago this was not the case. Reitzes found one white physician who stated: “[W]ith two notable exceptions, [Catholic hospitals] were the worst of all hospitals as far as facilities for Negroes.”²⁶⁵ Only one Catholic hospital in 1955 did not segregate patients.²⁶⁶ In addition, Chicago had only 226 black physicians, which was two less than in 1938. The only other major city to regress in its number of black physicians was Boston.²⁶⁷ Out of this number, only sixteen had affiliations with white hospitals, which largely came about because of some personal connection to influential members of the hospitals. Only one African American physician was affiliated with a white hospital whose first contact with the hospital was his application for the position.²⁶⁸ Additionally, in 1956, the physician-population ratio in Chicago was 1:587 for whites and 1:3,123 for African Americans.²⁶⁹ Obviously, the

²⁶³ Commission on Parochial and Institutional Life, “Findings and Recommendations,” p. 4. Cardinal Albert Meyer Papers, Box 43809.01, Folder Catholic Interracial Council (1/2), Archdiocese of Chicago Archives, Chicago.

²⁶⁴ Dietrich C. Reitzes, *Negroes and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 130. Reitzes cited a couple interviews he had with black Catholic physicians in his book, he withholds all the names of interviewees. Based on the extensive research performed by Reitzes, it is highly probable that he interviewed Falls.

²⁶⁶ Avella, *This Confident Church*, 279; Avella noted that this information is from the Report on Discrimination in Catholic Hospitals, submitted by Chicago Friendship House, 30 September 1955. A copy of this report is in the Stritch Personal Papers, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Unfortunately, since Avella did his research, the Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago have completely renumbered their boxes and this report could not be located.

²⁶⁷ Reitzes, *Negroes and Medicine*, 103.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 389.

denial of medical care for blacks by many white hospitals left an unmanageable burden for black doctors to care for a much larger segment of the population. At the time of the study, only Cook County Hospital, Provident Hospital, and Michael Reese's Sarah Morris were notable for their admittance of, as well as providing physician appointments to, African Americans.²⁷⁰ Although some hospital personnel were forthright in their denial of care to African Americans, most "hesitated to discuss the situation with representatives of the survey, and the answers submitted on questionnaire schedules were ambiguous, unreliable, and frequently misleading."²⁷¹ Dr. Quentin Young, a physician who worked with Falls on hospital integration issues during the 1950s and 1960s, comments that tens of thousands of black union workers in Chicago had great health insurance through their union contracts, but were forced to receive sub-standard care at black hospitals because of discrimination.²⁷²

Reitzes also discovered the work of the Committee to End Discrimination in Chicago Medical Institutions (CED), of which Falls was a founding member. The CED was formed around 1952 by area physicians, educators, medical students, and other concerned parties for the purpose of eliminating "discrimination in the teaching and practice of medicine." Falls served as the CED's chair and co-chair during various times of its existence.²⁷³ Their first action was to contact the deans of each of the five medical

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 104-05.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 108.

²⁷² Falls, in "Says Medical Bias is City's Worst Problem," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 5 December 1960, p. 3. Young, interview by author.

²⁷³ Falls, "The Search for Negro Medical Students," 15-16. Although the CED clearly remained in existence until the lawsuit against the Chicago hospitals was completed, it is unclear when the group

schools to inquire into the reason why so few African Americans were in their programs. From each dean the response was clear and convincing: “no quota, no discrimination, send us qualified applicants!”²⁷⁴ Therefore, the CED turned their attention to the white private hospitals that discriminated against African Americans while benefiting from “tax exemption, government licensure, and community support.”²⁷⁵ Exploiting the information above, the CED was the main group that successfully lobbied the state of Illinois and the city council in Chicago to pass the ordinances, in 1955 and 1956 respectively, which were supposed to prevent the denial of care in any hospital because of “race, color, creed, national origin, or ancestry.”²⁷⁶ The difficulty in enforcing this measure and the lack of black doctors with black patients on staff made the ordinance ineffective.²⁷⁷ These laws had little, if any, impact.

On 3 April 1956, after the state and city non-discriminatory bill had been passed, Falls, along with his fellow co-chair of the CED, Dr. Alfred B. Stein, and the secretary of the banquet committee, Mrs. Walter Johnson, wrote Cardinal Stritch to ask him to be an official sponsor for the group’s banquet in June. There would be no fee to sponsor the banquet, which would be used as a tool to publicize the need for integration within

ceased. Dr. Quentin Young, a white doctor who was also a founding member of this group, refers to Falls as “a very key person” in the CED. Young, interview by author.

²⁷⁴ Falls, “The Search for Negro Medical Students,” 16.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 17.

²⁷⁶ Reitzes, *Negroes and Medicine*, 131; National Medical Association, “Chicago Ordinance Against Hospital Discrimination Introduced,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 48, no. 1 (January 1956): 69; National Medical Association, “Chicago Enacts Hospital Anti-Discrimination Ordinance,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 48, no. 3 (May 1956): 202; Falls, “The Search for Negro Medical Students,” 17.

²⁷⁷ Reitzes, *Negroes and Medicine*, 131.

Chicago's hospitals. The banquet was also going to honor two black medical doctors, William Montague Cobb and T. R. M. Howard, for their contributions in fighting discrimination in the medical field.²⁷⁸ Stritch promptly replied and stated that his position against racism within hospitals was well-known from a speech he addressed to the Hospitals Conference of the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago in October 1955.²⁷⁹ Stritch added that he could not attend the banquet because of a previous engagement; there was no mention of Falls's request that he sponsor the banquet.²⁸⁰

Falls would write again a month later on banquet letterhead, which had a list of sponsors running down the left column that did not include Stritch. Falls thanked him for his previous letter and asked him if he would send a priest as his representative to the banquet with the purpose of leading the opening prayer.²⁸¹ Stritch responded that Falls should contact Monsignor John Barrett, the Director of Hospitals for the Archdiocese of Chicago, whom Stritch wrote was "much interested in this matter."²⁸²

In September 1960, there was a Clergy Conference in Chicago on race relations in which a report was presented on the exclusion of African Americans in parishes, high

²⁷⁸ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., et al. to Cardinal Samuel A. Stritch, 3 April 1956, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43891.04, Folder 7.

²⁷⁹ An abridged version of his speech appeared in, His Eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch, "Interracial Justice in Hospitals," *Interracial Review* 28, no. 11 (November 1955): 185-86. In this speech, Stritch stated that there can be no "distinction of color" for Catholics and that even private hospitals have an obligation to serve the public good of all. In addition, he said that doctors need to be hired "without any respect to color" and asked, "How can we kneel before our blessed Savior on the Cross with His arms outstretched for all, and limit our charity and limit our ministration to any particular group?"

²⁸⁰ Stritch to Falls, 6 April 1956, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43891.04, Folder 7.

²⁸¹ Falls to Stritch, 4 May 1956, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43891.04, Folder 7.

²⁸² Stritch to Falls, 9 May 1956, Chancery Correspondence, General Correspondence, Executive Records, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Box 43891.04, Folder 7.

schools, hospitals, and lay organizations.²⁸³ A stunning paragraph from the report, which is worth citing in full, illustrated the nefarious situation:

Chicago has the least degree of medical integration of any of the major northern cities. In this picture the Catholic hospitals are at least as bad as the white secular hospitals: Only six of our seventeen Catholic hospitals have Negro physicians on their staffs—ten physicians in all. If Lewis Maternity Hospital is excluded, our Catholic hospitals delivered only one-half per cent [sic] of all the Negro babies born in 1956. Colored adult patients are almost exceptional in many of our Catholic hospitals.²⁸⁴

The section on hospitals concluded that improvement would only take place when the Archbishop gave clear orders and had an Archdiocesan coordinator implement the hiring of black doctors.²⁸⁵ Reitzes, who was previously mentioned, had a similar conclusion. He believed that in order to change the current practices of discrimination, one needed to reach key people in positions of influence in hospitals. His book, which studied fourteen communities, found that “when influential persons in a hospital were determined to have integration, integration took place without great difficulty.”²⁸⁶ Although such methods may have had success in other parts of the country, the Archbishop of Chicago had little control over Catholic hospitals run by religious orders and the religious orders could not be swayed by him to eliminate their discriminatory practices.

²⁸³ See, “The Catholic Church and the Negro in the Archdiocese of Chicago,” September 20-21, 1960, Cardinal Albert Meyer Papers, Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago IL, box 43809.01, folder: Clergy Conference—Apostolate for the Colored.” Hereafter, referred to as *Negro in the Archdiocese*.

²⁸⁴ *Negro in the Archdiocese*, p. 18. At this same conference, Cardinal Albert Meyer gave a speech imploring the priests to work for justice and equality for the blacks based on their human dignity. This required that African Americans be integrated into the full life of the Catholic Church, including hospitals. Albert Cardinal Meyer, “The Mantle of Leadership,” in *The Catholic Church and the Negro in the Archdiocese of Chicago: Clergy Conference*, by the Archdiocese of Chicago, 20-21 September 1960, pp. 22-32, see especially p. 29, Chicago Historical Society, call number: F548.9 N3 1960.

²⁸⁵ *Negro in the Archdiocese*, pp. 18-19.

²⁸⁶ Reitzes, *Negroes and Medicine*, 131, 335-38.

As Falls and the CED realized that their previous actions were not procuring results, they heeded the words of Robert M. Cunningham Jr. (d. 1992), who at the time was the editor of *The Modern Hospital*: “Until Negro physicians are accepted as attending physicians on hospital staffs on the same basis as white physicians, the problem of discrimination will continue to exist.”²⁸⁷ In other words, until African American physicians were indiscriminately given appointments at white hospitals, there would not be a substantial increase in black patients at those hospitals. Falls was well aware of a “gentleman’s agreement” between white hospitals and their doctors against admitting too many African American patients. Breaking of the policy would be “dealt with quietly and effectively at the annual or biennial staff re-appointment date.” Such a quota agreement would be difficult to enforce with a black physician, whose patients would probably include a disproportionate number of African Americans.²⁸⁸

Therefore, in addition to pressuring the City Council of Chicago to unanimously pass another law against racial discrimination in hospitals in 1960, Falls and nine other physicians filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, against fifty-two corporations that owned fifty-six hospitals, or roughly seventy-five percent of all available hospital beds in the Chicago area in February 1961. The physicians sued with the intent of gaining admission to hospital staffs. It is beyond the scope of this work to go into the complexity of this lawsuit, but a few words of explanation are necessary. Falls and his fellow doctors sued the hospitals using the two major anti-trust acts as their foundation: the Sherman Act of 1890 and the Clayton Act of

²⁸⁷ Robert Cunningham, quoted in Falls, “The Search for Negro Medical Students,” 17.

²⁸⁸ Falls, “The Search for Negro Medical Students,” 17. In my interview with him, Dr. Young corroborated the quota system that Falls wrote about. Young, interview by author.

1914. The doctors alleged that the hospitals' monopoly over private and federal insurance programs led to "substantial losses of income and return on property, and of reputation, stature and development in their chosen occupation through loss of patients."²⁸⁹ Immediately after the suit was filed, a nurse from one of the hospitals being sued wrote to the *Chicago Sun-Times* to proclaim that no such discrimination existed at her hospital because one black doctor served on its staff. The rest of the letter revealed her bias that African American physicians were inferior to white doctors. She concluded that "these [black] doctors appear to be so contentious as to think any Negro must be admitted to any hospital he chooses just because he has a medical degree."²⁹⁰ John Kearney, the director of Friendship House, wrote a letter to the editor in response in which he cited the "disproportionate number of Negro births and deaths" in black hospitals as proof of discrimination.²⁹¹

Falls and the CED believed that the lack of staff appointments available for black doctors in Chicago not only curbed the number of young African Americans interested in medicine from pursuing such a career, it also dissuaded black doctors from other areas of the country from moving to Chicago. The suit never went to trial, but did spur action on the part of the hospitals. Within two years of the suit being filed, those same hospitals gave over 100 staff appointments to African Americans doctors and nurses, with 66 of those staff appointments going to physicians at 33 hospitals. In January 1964, almost

²⁸⁹ Robert G. Morris Jr., M.D., et al. v. Chicago Hospital Council, et al., 61 C232, U.S. District Court, 1819-1999, Civil Case Files, 1938-1985, Record Group 21; National Archives Building, Chicago. Box 54, Folder 1, "Complaint," pp. 2, 17, 23-24. Hereafter, the court case and location will be documented as Court Documents. Falls, "The Search for Negro Medical Students," 17-18.

²⁹⁰ A.M.N., letter to the editor, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 February 1961.

²⁹¹ John Kearney, letter to the editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Chicago Historical Society, Friendship House Collection, Box 27, Folder Feb 1961. It is unclear if his letter was ever published.

three years after the initial filing and dozens of court dates later, all but two of the hospitals agreed to subject themselves to a commission, which would handle any further complaints of discrimination. This was the first lawsuit of its kind to procure positive results.²⁹² This lawsuit would have had much wider implications except for the passage of the Civil Rights Act, which was enacted five months later on 2 July 1964 and barred discrimination in employment because of skin color. If the passage of this legislation had been delayed, the lawsuit by Falls and his fellow black doctors might have led to a flurry of similar lawsuits across the United States and resulted in this becoming a landmark lawsuit. The verdict and the happy response of the plaintiffs were covered in a *Chicago Defender* article, in which Dr. Quentin Young made clear that this verdict would be meaningless unless “sufficient [African American] doctors would choose to practice in Chicago.”²⁹³ Nevertheless, the commission that was put in place did not receive a single complaint of racial prejudice. The reason was that during the first year of the ruling not a single black doctor was denied admittance to a hospital. This led to a dramatic increase of African American patients in traditionally white hospitals almost overnight.²⁹⁴

In June 1963, almost two and half years into the pretrial motions, Falls wrote an article about the lack of new African Americans physicians in the Chicago area for

²⁹² National Medical Association, “Chicago Physicians Sue for Admission to Hospital Staff,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 53, no. 2 (March 1961): 198-99; W. Montague Cobb, “Hospital Integration in the United States: A Progress Report,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 55, no. 4 (July 1963): 336; Falls, “The Search for Negro Medical Students,” 18; National Medical Association, “Chicago Court Agreement Reached,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 56, no. 2 (March 1964): 205-06; Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 137. Court Documents, Folder 1, “Stipulation.”

²⁹³ Young, quoted in *Chicago Daily Defender*, “Negro Doctors Pleased with Court Agreement,” 4 February 1964, p. 4.

²⁹⁴ Young, interview by author.

*Integrated Education.*²⁹⁵ Falls observed that while the African American population in Chicago had tripled over the past 25 years, the number of black physicians had decreased from 228 to 218. During the previous twelve years, the number of black students in Chicago's five medical schools had decreased from fourteen to ten and the median age of black doctors continued to rise. Falls placed the primary responsibility for this situation with the Chicago Board of Education, whose segregated school system provided "only an inferior education and has produced a graduate lacking in both motivation and qualification for higher education."²⁹⁶ At the time the article was written, the CED had begun an unofficial program to "find, stimulate, and guide Negro children who are interested in pursuing medical or medical related careers."²⁹⁷ The program coordinated principals, vocational counselors, teachers, and doctors to locate and mentor young African Americans with a propensity for medicine.²⁹⁸ In one high school, where a pilot version of the program was already underway, eight students in the graduating class had been "discovered." There were another fifteen high schools with a predominant African American enrollment that the group hoped to target. Although Falls hoped that the Board of Education would adopt the CED's program, there was an even greater requirement to truly end discrimination in medicine: "the ending of segregation in education."²⁹⁹ Shortly afterward, the CED founded the Council for Biomedical Careers. This group, of which Falls was an early president, wanted to make medical careers available to anyone who

²⁹⁵ Falls, "The Search for Negro Medical Students," 15-19.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

was interested.³⁰⁰ In February 1965 they obtained a \$12,000 National Science Foundation grant to aid in funding twelve three-hour sessions to be held on alternate Saturdays with over one hundred selected students in conjunction with seventeen high schools with the purpose of covering important areas in science for those interested in medicine. The sessions included programs on how to apply and succeed at the university level and provided an opportunity for hands on experience for the top thirty-five performing students. The program also gave the students a stipend to cover the cost of lost wages for attending the sessions that would otherwise make the classes prohibitive for most of the students. The program was a success with 125 students receiving a diploma for completing the program that September.³⁰¹ It appears that this program eventually morphed into the Cooperative Laboratory Program in September 1969, which solidified a relationship between Waller High School, which had a significant African American population, and Wesley Memorial Hospital. The program expanded in 1971 and 1972 to include additional schools and hospitals.³⁰²

By 1966, the CED decided to change its focus and become the Chicago branch of the national Medical Committee for Human Rights. The Chicago branch focused on the ways in which people in the medical field could aid the civil rights movement. For a

³⁰⁰ Schueler, "W. Springs Doctor Has a 'Better Idea' About Civil Rights."

³⁰¹ Connie Seals, "Human Relations Beat," *Chicago Defender*, 6 February 1965, p. 5; *Chicago Defender*, "125 Science Students Get Diplomas Sunday," 18 September 1965, p. 35.

³⁰² "Proceeding of the Chicago Board of Education," vol. 3: Jan. 22-June 25, 1966, for meeting held on 25 June 1969, p. 3114; vol. 3: Jan. 27-June 30, 1971, for meeting held on 13 February 1971, pp. 2607-08; vol. 1: July 1-Dec. 22, 1971, for meeting held on 27 October 1971, pp. 880-81; vol. 4: April 26-June 24, 1972, for meeting held on 26 April 1972, pp. 3455-56, Archives-Chicago Board of Education, Chicago.

while Falls was on the governing board of the national Committee for Human Rights and chaired the national group's 1966 conference that was being held in Chicago.³⁰³

During 1965, the Medical Committee for Human Rights provided financial support for marchers in Selma, which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference had strategically organized as a campaign that successfully pressured Congress to pass the Voter Rights Act of 1965.³⁰⁴ One of the Committee's own members attended the march and although they had already provided money to help in providing food for the marchers, Falls and a fellow doctor sent out a letter to those on the Committee's mailing list to request more funds for Selma. In the letter, he recounted the danger faced by the marchers and those traveling to the South to join them. Falls was trying to procure additional funds to aid with transportation issues. Those taking buses to the South to join the marchers would be dropped off at a bus depot in a dangerous white area. Funds were required so that the hopeful marchers could be picked up from the bus station in Volkswagen vans.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Young, interview by author. *Western Springs Villager*, "Dr. Falls Chairman of Nat'l Meeting at University of Chicago," 17 March 1966, clipping of article available at Western Springs Historical Society, Western Springs, IL, Folder: Dr. Arthur G. Falls.

³⁰⁴ Arthur G. Falls, M.D. and Mark Lepper, M.D. to Friends of Medical Committee for Human Rights, 1965, Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Series III, Box 14, Folder 177. For more information on the Selma campaign, see Daniel W. Aldridge III, *Becoming American: The African American Quest for Civil Rights, 1861-1976* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2011), 284-92; William T. Martin Riches, *The Civil Rights Movement: Struggle and Resistance*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 69-81; Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *The Voting Rights Act of 1965* (Detroit: Omnigraphics Inc., 2009).

³⁰⁵ Falls and Lepper to Friends of Medical Committee for Human Rights, 1965.

PARISHIONER AT ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

St. John of the Cross Catholic Church was founded 10 August 1960 with the building being completed on 12 October 1961. Before the school building was ready, which parishioners would use for worship for over a decade, they used a large home for a temporary chapel and headquarters as well as the South Campus Gymnasium of Lyons Township School.³⁰⁶ Falls was one of the founding members of St. John of the Cross and was listed in the parish's inaugural booklet as one of the "Pioneer families of St. John of the Cross."³⁰⁷

In his later years, Falls told a fellow parishioner at St. John of the Cross that he did not feel that he was part of a real Catholic parish until he joined St. John of the Cross, where he felt like he was an accepted member of the parish.³⁰⁸ In large part, this may have been due to the parish's involvement with race issues during the late 1960s. St. John of the Cross' Parish Committee of Community Life was a regular sponsor of speakers and videos concerning race relations and the proper Catholic response.³⁰⁹ Because minutes and lists of members from this group appear to be lost, the exact role

³⁰⁶ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 1611; "St. John of the Cross Solemn Blessing," commemoration booklet for the completion of the church building on 12 October 1961, stored at St. John of the Cross Catholic Church, Western Springs, IL. The booklet does not have any page numbers.

³⁰⁷ "St. John of the Cross Solemn Blessing"; Falls, interview by Troester.

³⁰⁸ Dr. Joseph Gougiel, interview by author, notes, Western Springs, IL, 12 December 2011.

³⁰⁹ This information is from the St. John of the Cross parish bulletins that are stored at St. John of the Cross Catholic Church, Western Springs, IL. They will be cited as "JCBulletins." In 1967, the group held events such as playing an audio recording of Martin Luther King Jr. for discussion and bringing in the Executive Director of the Chicago Urban League, the Director of Housing for the Chicago Conference on Religion and Race as well as a real-estate agent. JCBulletins, 23 April 1967, 28 May 1967; 23 March 1969.

that Falls played in this group is uncertain, though it would be hard to believe that he was not involved with the group in some way.

The parish council formed during the summer and fall of 1967 and was originally all men.³¹⁰ Falls was an alternate on the parish council in February 1968 when he asked the council to address Cardinal John Cody's (1907-1982) "Operation Hospitality."³¹¹ Operation Hospitality was a program of the Chicago Catholic School Board that began in 1967 with the purpose of busing kids from all black inner city Catholic schools to affluent all white suburban Catholic schools. The program was voluntary on the part of the suburban Catholic schools and began with 256 children from fourth to eighth grade. It was hoped that the program would eventually be a two-way program with white suburban children also being bused to the inner city, but the latter aspect of the program was never realized.³¹² Though it appears the parish had not been asked by the Archdiocese to join the program, Falls proposed that "the Council go on record and give serious consideration to the conditions which cause busing to be introduced."³¹³ The parish council voted 13-5 to discuss the issue, to which Councilman Edgar Wolfe commented:

I think the Council is a useless thing if it addressed itself only to stone and mortar matters... We have to be concerned with the totality of the parish, the people. I don't know how I feel about busing. I don't know enough

³¹⁰ JCBulletins, 18 June 1967, 9 July 1967, 17 September 1967. Falls, interview by Troester.

³¹¹ Ibid., 25 February 1968.

³¹² Burleigh B. Gardner, Benjamin D. Wright, and Sister Rita Dee, "The Effect of Busing Black Ghetto Children into White Suburban Schools," prepared for the Chicago Catholic School Board, Archdiocese of Chicago, July 1970, 4-5, <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED048389.pdf> (accessed on 28 December 2011). Hereafter referred to as "The Effect of Busing." *Integrated Education*, "Chronicle of Race and Schools," *Integrated Education* 10, no. 4 (July-August 1972): 29.

³¹³ Falls, quoted in JCBulletins, 25 February 1968.

about it. But I do know that people and their problems are of prime importance to us.³¹⁴

That May the school board for St. John of the Cross held an open meeting in the school gym about Operation Hospitality that was highly attended and very contentious. The school decided not to join the program, but Rev. William J. Bennett,³¹⁵ the founding pastor of the parish, overruled them and had the school join the program. Zita Wheeler, who was a teacher at the time and is now the school's assistant principal, recalls that the only noticeable disruption was that a few families removed their children from the school and that a police presence was provided for the arrival of the first few black families.³¹⁶ Although Falls's role and level of involvement throughout the discussion is unknown, his interest in this issue is clearly aligned with his thoughts regarding the need to focus on integration in education during and following the hospital integration lawsuit. St. John of the Cross soon joined Operation Hospitality and bused in five to six students from St. Thaddeus Catholic Church on the South Side of Chicago.³¹⁷ Going into the Fall 1972 school year, the School Board of the Archdiocese of Chicago decided to end Operation Hospitality. Children already in the program could continue until they graduated, but no new children would be accepted.³¹⁸ From the point of view of adding some diversity at

³¹⁴ Edgar Wolfe, quoted in JCBulletins, 25 February 1968.

³¹⁵ Fr. William J. Bennett was the pastor of St. John of the Cross from 1960 until he retired in 1980. He had previously been an assistant pastor at St. John Fisher Catholic Church in Chicago. Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 1611-12.

³¹⁶ JCBulletins 5 May 1968; Rev. David P. Dowdle, interview by author, notes, Western Springs, IL, 12 December 2011. Zita Wheeler, phone interview by author, digital recording, Milwaukee, WI, 23 January 2012.

³¹⁷ Dowdle, interview by author; Wheeler, interview by author; Sr. Josephine O'Brien, interview by author, notes, Western Springs, IL, 14 December 2011.

³¹⁸ *Integrated Education*, "Chronicle of Race and Schools," 29.

their grade school, St. John of the Cross considered Operation Hospitality a success and to this day St. John of the Cross and St. Thaddeus have a strong relationship as “sharing parishes.”³¹⁹

In July 1968, the Parish Committee on Community Life published a parishioner survey on housing discrimination in the Sunday bulletin. When asked if there was “strong discriminatory feeling in our community against non-whites,” 110 answered “yes” while 19 said “no.” When asked if they would sell their home to a non-white person, 47 answered “yes” while 80 said “no.” When asked if a city ordinance was necessary in Western Springs to prevent discrimination in home sales, 48 answered “yes” while 80 answered “no.”³²⁰ With these responses, the parishioners clearly revealed that racial discrimination was a problem in their community but did not want to take any confrontational steps to remedy it. Falls’s role in this initiative is again unknown, but a project based on collecting information, publishing it, and noting the discrepancy between a problem and the will to change it echoes the type of activity that Falls was involved with his entire life.

By the spring of 1969, Falls was a regular parish council member and also served on the Education Committee. He would serve on the parish council until 1971.³²¹ The council consisted entirely of men and Falls wished to remedy this situation. Each

³¹⁹ Bill Bright, “Sharing Parishes,” St. John of the Cross website, <http://www.sjcws.org/Organization.aspx?lngOrgID=34> (accessed 31 December 2011). As “sharing parishes,” St. John of the Cross provides financial support to St. Thaddeus in exchange for a sharing of the gifts of St. Thaddeus. In October 2011, the St. Thaddeus Choir provided the music for the 5:00 pm mass and stayed for a reception. Saint John of the Cross Catholic Church, “Sharing Parish St. Thaddeus Choir Visits SJC,” <http://www.stjohnofthecross.org/event/sharing-parish-st-thaddeus-choir-visits-sjc/> (accessed 31 December 2011).

³²⁰ JCBulletins, 7 July 1968.

³²¹ Ibid., 20 April 1969; 10 September 1972.

member was told that he or she could bring an alternate so that that person could stand in for him if he missed a meeting. Falls brought a woman down the street from his home to serve as his alternate to break the gender barrier on the parish council.³²² Also around this time, St. John of the Cross began allowing lay eucharistic ministers and Falls was one of the first appointed.³²³ Initially, there were a noticeable number of parishioners that refused to receive from Falls, but this blatant act of racial prejudice soon stopped.³²⁴ One of the tasks of the eucharistic ministers was to find a boy to hold the tray underneath the reception of communion so that none of the host would fall on the ground. Falls purposely brought a girl to hold the tray for him, which was not allowed by the Catholic Church at the time. The pastor allowed him to do this without interference.³²⁵ Falls would become associated with being a eucharistic minister at the 5:00 pm mass on Sunday. There was even a notice of his “retirement” from this role in August 1989 that commented on his commitment to distributing at that mass for the past 15 years. It was notoriously difficult to find eucharistic ministers for that mass.³²⁶ Although the date of Falls’s retirement from surgical practice is unknown, it was also around 1989 that Falls

³²² Falls, interview by Troester. There are various instances of Falls’s interest in women’s rights issues throughout his life. In 29 March 1952, he was the only male speaker at an event sponsored by the B’nai B’rith Women’s Council entitled: “Women’s Role in Human Relations.” Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination, “Human Relations Calendar,” *Against Discrimination: The Monthly Newsletter of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination*, March 1952, in *Against Discrimination Newsletters*, Chicago Historical Society, call number: HN80 C4 A35.

³²³ John Kravcik, interview by author, Digital recording over phone, Milwaukee, WI, 29 December 2011.

³²⁴ Joan Kravcik, interview by author, Digital recording over phone, Milwaukee, WI, 29 December 2011.

³²⁵ Falls, interview by Troester. Falls does not give a date for this, but he does indicate that it was before the practice was permitted.

³²⁶ JCBulletins, 13 August 1989. At some point after Vatican II, Falls was also asked to serve as a deacon, but declined. Falls, interview by Troester.

decided to close his private practice, which he had maintained since first becoming a doctor.³²⁷

Arthur Falls lived in Western Springs until after Lillian died on Easter Sunday 1988.³²⁸ Although they had a tumultuous beginning in Western Springs, he and Lillian eventually made friends and grew to like it there.³²⁹ Arthur Falls died on 9 January 2000 at the age of ninety-eight. He spent his last few years living quietly in a small home near his niece, Vilma, in Kalamazoo, Michigan.³³⁰ They are both interred at Queen of All Saints Mausoleum at Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery in Hillside, Illinois.

CONCLUSION

Falls dedicated his life to the achievement of racial justice in a number of different spheres. His method in each instance was dependent on changing circumstances and what he felt was the most practical, yet Christian, manner to achieve racial justice. None of the archbishops of Chicago were ever willing to work with Falls on racial justice, but it is clear that Falls would always have been willing to work with them. Other than his parish, Falls no longer worked with Catholic groups in the field of race relations after the early 1940s. Although he would always remain a dedicated Catholic, these groups did not present the best avenue for achieving the results in racial justice. The parents and wife of Falls played critical roles in influencing Falls's dedication and method in the

³²⁷ Dr. Rosalyn P. Scott, interview by author, Digital recording over phone, Milwaukee, WI, 5 January 2012.

³²⁸ Falls, interview by Troester.

³²⁹ This view was confirmed by Falls's granddaughter and niece. Sykes, interview by author. Scott, interview by author.

³³⁰ Unsworth, "A Lonely Prophet Falls in Chicago," *National Catholic Reporter*, 3 March 2000; Sykes, interview by author.

realm of racial justice. His parents instilled in him the Christian notion of the common brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity. His father displayed the virtue of standing firm on one's principles despite little support. His mother, who came from a long line of Catholics, was involved with the Chicago Urban League and encouraged the involvement of Falls. Lillian was an astute student of the social sciences, of which Falls became an avid reader. In addition, she was a lifelong partner in the quest for racial justice and also put her physical safety at risk when they both moved to Western Springs. The three people that Falls most respected in his life were themselves shining examples of how to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As mentioned above, there were a number of similarities between Falls and the Black Catholic Congresses. As we will see in the next chapter, neither Falls nor the Congresses questioned Catholic doctrine—it was a given that Catholic doctrine supported the cause of racial justice. The only question that remained was the practical application of Catholic doctrine for the achievement of racial justice. For both Falls and the Congresses, practical concrete steps toward racial justice enfolded the doctrines of the Catholic Church and made them meaningful. With both parties, we also see a willingness to work with clerics, but only in so far as they authentically apply the message of Jesus Christ toward racial justice. The Congresses discarded clerical statements that had been written for them when they were not meaningful in exchange for writing their own statements that they believed represented the present need. It is possible that the Congresses preferred their dissolution rather than become a group that rubberstamped meaningless statements. Falls also tried to work with clerics through his work with the FCC and his unsuccessful attempts to dialogue with Stritch and the representatives of

Mundelein. When clerics were not willing to lend their support or cooperate in his racial justice endeavors, he found others with whom to work.

Falls asserted that racial harmony could only be achieved by blacks and whites working together. For this reason, despite the problems that arose with the change in focus and control of the FCC, Falls always believed that Dr. Turner made a mistake by resisting the name change and the focus of the organization. His lifelong praise of the Catholic Worker movement can be traced to his ability to organize with whites in this movement in a way that had lifelong consequences for the white members, who would go on to prominent positions in the city of Chicago and the Catholic press.

CHAPTER 3: THE THOUGHT AND WRITINGS OF DR. ARTHUR FALLS

Dr. Arthur Falls adapted to his thought and writings to various circumstances—just as with his actions. Nevertheless, after acquiring a theological praxis from the Chicago Urban League and the Federated Colored Catholics, which was strongly grounded in Catholic theology and the necessity of struggle to achieve positive results, certain theological principles and notions of how substantial change occurred in society became foundational to his thought and writings.¹ Falls’s writings had a more practical orientation, not theoretical—with an implicit theology when his audience was not Christian. These ideas were revealed in his memoir, numerous journal and magazine articles, as well as interviews and remembrances from friends and family. The ideas in this chapter span from the late 1920s to the late 1990s, though his most prolific writing period began in the early 1930s and ended in the early 1960s.

This section will begin with one of Falls’s foundational Christian doctrines—the mystical body of Christ—followed by his ideas concerning sin, discipleship, interracialism, the social sciences, white privilege, the role of blacks and whites in racial justice, and his analysis concerning the necessity of struggle to create authentic opportunities.

¹ Although Falls did not utilize the term “praxis,” he would be familiar with the concept. On one occasion Falls, defined belief as “practices as well as verbal utterances.” Falls, “Chicago Fights Race Prejudice.”

THE MYTHICAL BODY OF CHRIST

Falls's fight against racism rested on a firm theological foundation. There were a number of Catholic doctrines that he was particularly fond of in order to unmask the incompatibility of racism with Christianity, but none was more important to him than the mystical body of Christ. As Henri de Lubac has previously noted, *corpus mysticum*, or mystical body, originally referred to the real presence of Christ in the eucharist and *corpus Christi*, or body of Christ, referred to the Church. Over time, a reversal of the terms occurred and today the mystical body of Christ is said in reference to the Church.² Coinciding with the start of Falls's activity, the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ came into vogue in liturgical and social justice circles in America. Patrick W. Carey observes that there was a "flowering of lay activity" in the United States and worldwide. This flourishing of lay activity in the United States was closely aligned with the liturgical movement,

which saw the Eucharistic celebration as the center of a deep Catholic spirituality and the church itself as the Mystical Body of Christ... These laity were self-consciously aware of their membership in the Mystical Body of Christ and therefore of their responsibility for justice and peace in public life.³

In essence, the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ was an insight into the sacramental and personal bond of the Catholic with Jesus Christ that empowered one to take responsibility for this relationship through active work for charity and justice in the

² Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Sister Elizabeth Englund, O. C. D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 100.

³ Patrick Carey, "Lay Leadership in the United States," *U. S. Catholic Historian* 9, No. 3 (summer 1990): 238-39.

Church and in the world.⁴ Perhaps the most famous expositor of the mystical body of Christ in the United States was Virgil Michel, with whom Arthur Falls was friends. Michel understood the mystical body of Christ to be the spiritual bedrock for communal living. Following this doctrine to its logical conclusion, Christians united in Christ are also “intimately united to each other in Christ.”⁵ Being a part of the mystical body of Christ includes a responsibility for each member to “share in maintaining the supernatural life of the entire mystical body; each one has the duty, as far as circumstances allow, to come to the help of his fellow members, and thus to maintain the common life of the entire body.”⁶ Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement were influenced by the liturgical renewal movement started by Michel. In 1935, when Falls would have been an avid reader of the *New York Catholic Worker*, Day wrote:

The Mystical Body of Christ is a union—a unit—and action within the Body is common action. In the Liturgy we have the means to teach Catholics, thrown apart by Individualism into snobbery, apathy, prejudice, blind unreason, that they ARE members of one body and that ‘an injury to one is an injury to all.’⁷

Although LaFarge did not put the same social justice emphasis upon it, he also referred to “His Mystical Body” in reference to the universal nature of the Church that includes people of all races and nations.⁸ Friendship House, which was a network of Catholic interracial communities, opened a house in Chicago in 1942. Shortly after they opened in

⁴ Ibid., 239. For more information about the how the mystical body of Christ was utilized during this period, see Margaret M. Kelleher, “Liturgical and Social Transformation: Exploring the Relationship,” *U. S. Catholic Historian* 16, No. 4 (Fall 1998): 58-70.

⁵ Virgil Michel, O. S. B., *Christian Social Reconstruction: Some Fundamentals of the Quadregesimo Anno* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1937), 7.

⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁷ Dorothy Day, “Liturgy and Sociology,” *New York Catholic Worker*, December 1935, p. 4.

⁸ LaFarge, *Interracial Justice*, 173.

Chicago, they sponsored an interracial discussion on the mystical body in relation to racial justice.⁹ The notion of the mystical body of Christ was well-known and discussed in many Catholic quarters as a foundation or argument for social and/or racial justice.

During the time in which Falls was involved in the Catholic Worker, he was also a regular contributor for the *Chicago Catholic Worker*. Of special note is an article by Falls in the March 1941 issue of the Chicago paper concerning segregation in Chicago. In expressing why Catholics in particular should be concerned about race relations, he stated: "Catholics are adherents of a faith which proclaims the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which Body still remains mythical, not mystical to too many of its members." He goes on to state: "[T]he overwhelming majority of our Chicago Catholics have been either active leaders or passive followers in these discriminatory practices."¹⁰ In this particular article, discriminatory practices referred to restrictive housing covenants that denied blacks the opportunity to live in certain neighborhoods. In the opinion of Falls, "Catholic doctrines meant nothing to the promoters of restrictive covenants."¹¹ The restrictive covenants resulted in the overcrowding of African Americans in slum conditions. Therefore, when fires broke out, they were often deadly. Falls compared the

⁹ Avella, *This Confident Church*, 297.

¹⁰ Arthur G. Falls M.D., "Restrictive Covenants Create Negro Ghettos: Chicago No Example for Rest of World," *Chicago Catholic Worker*, March 1941, p. 2. Falls borrowed the expression "the mythical body of Christ" from fellow Chicago Catholic Worker John Bowers, who would state that Catholics believe in "the mythical body of Christ," not "the mystical body of Christ." Falls, a letter quoted in packet for Summer School of Social Action, 1937-1938, Reynold Hillenbrand Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, IN, Box CMRH 5/19, Folder, Summer School of Social Action, 1937-1938. The original date or to whom the letter was sent is unknown. Hereafter referred to as "Summer School of Social Action."

¹¹ AGF Box 2, Folder 2, disc 25-side 1, p. 3. Falls wrote this in 1962, twenty-one years after he wrote the above article. For more information the history of restrictive covenants in Chicago, see Wendy Plotkin, "'Hemmed In': The Struggle Against Racial Restrictive Covenants and Deed Restrictions in Post-WWII Chicago," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society* 94, no. 1 (spring 2001): 39-69.

black restrictive ghettos to the Jewish ghettos of Adolf Hitler, which Americans supposedly abhorred. Hitler's Germany may be crueler to Jews than Americans are to blacks, but the "average American" and the "average Catholic" share a similar ideology regarding the people that are contained in their respective ghettos.¹² Like LaFarge, Falls believed that if the Catholic Church would firmly address racial justice, it could be "the most powerful factor in the development of a new social order in which opportunity for all individuals will be more equalized."¹³ Being fully aware that Catholics made up over one-third of the population in Chicago and that prominent Catholics were often behind prejudicial practices within unions, hospitals, and other businesses, Falls believed that the elimination of racism in the Catholic Church would have played a significant role in ameliorating racism in the city of Chicago.¹⁴

For Falls, the collaboration of whites and blacks was not only an issue of justice, but also of common sense. In April 1937, he wrote an article for the *New York Catholic Worker* about housing segregation and covenants. He described the higher rents and dilapidated buildings in black ghettos that led to overcrowding, prostitution, and other desperate acts in order to survive. He believed that if changes were not made in the near future to correct this horrific situation, there would be riots started by African Americans who had nothing else to lose—such as was seen in the Harlem riot of 1935.¹⁵ Although

¹² Falls, "Restrictive Covenants Create Negro Ghettos," p. 2.

¹³ Falls to St. Columban's Seminary in St. Colbumbans, NE, carbon copy to New York Catholic Worker, 13 July 1934, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, Series W-2.2, Box 1, Folder 11.

¹⁴ Falls, "Honesty in Race-Relations," 159; Falls, "Chicago Letter," *New York Catholic Worker*, June 1935, p. 8.

¹⁵ Dr. Arthur Falls, "Danger of Riots in Chicago Slums: Housing Conditions Make for Danger to Peace on South Side," *New York Catholic Worker*, April 1937, pp. 1, 4. For more information on the 1935

there would be race riots in America during the coming decade, like previous riots, they were almost solely white on black violence. Black on white violence in the form of a riot in Chicago would not occur until the 1960s. Regardless, Falls contended that Chicago's 1.25 million Catholics could choose the outcome by either opting to work for justice in the form of equal housing opportunities for all or their continued apathetic acceptance of unjust and prejudicial order.¹⁶ In the meantime, Falls would keep readers of the *New York Catholic Worker* updated on the dreadful conditions in Chicago's slums as well as activities to remedy the situation.¹⁷

Regrettably, Falls noticed that white Christians were rarely up to the task of confronting racism. According to Falls, "too often... when he [a black person] walks in Christianity *dies* out." Essentially, "the Christian Church, as now constructed, has failed [African Americans]."¹⁸ Falls would often hear the complaint that when he openly confronted racism in the Catholic Church, he was "fighting the Church" or "fighting the clergy." This was a completely false assessment in the eyes of Falls. The one who openly confronts racism in the Catholic Church "is not combating any of the laws or teachings of the Church, but is combating the sinful abuse of the position which the clergyman occupies. It is the priest or Sister who causes this discrimination who is guilty of 'fighting the Church.'" Falls believed that the clergy were "direct descendants of the

Harlem riot, see Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Or Does it Explode? Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁶ Falls, "Danger of Riots in Chicago Slums."

¹⁷ See, for example, Arthur G. Falls, "The Communist Says: 'Welcome, Negro Brother!'" *New York Catholic Worker*, 1 April 1934, pp. 1, 8; "Chicago Letter," *New York Catholic Worker*, June 1935, p. 8; "Chicago Fights Race Prejudice, 'Security Wage,'" *New York Catholic Worker*, September 1935, pp. 2, 6; letter to the editor, *New York Catholic Worker*, April 1937, pp. 1, 4.

¹⁸ Falls, "The Race and Its Opportunity," *Chicago Defender*, 10 February 1934, p. 10. Emphasis in the original.

apostles” and their representatives who have the commission to hand on to us the word of God, “*but only insofar as they give us the word of God.*”¹⁹ For Falls it was important to focus on the prejudice exhibited by the clergy and the teachers of Catholic children. As long as the teachers and role models of Catholic children were racist and even, in some instances, denied the sacraments to black Catholics, one could not realistically expect these children to “have a Christian concept of race-relations when they grow older.”²⁰ This earlier view of Falls presents racism in the Catholic Church on a more individual level. Later on, he became aware the problem was “institutionalized discrimination, not simply the human weakness of an individual member of the clergy or of the sisterhood.”²¹

Those who preferred to ignore the racism found in the Catholic Church were “emulating the example of the ostrich who [sic], it is said, hides his head in the sand when in danger.” Such a solution is unworkable and will never eradicate racism within the Church, “[o]nly by an intelligent and forceful repudiation of the abuses of Catholics, will the Catholic Church be accepted as the firm rock of justice and love.”²²

To illustrate that the use of the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ was not a passing fancy for Falls, he again used the image of the mystical body of Christ while writing his memoir in 1962, stating that “the practical application of this theology of the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ either had to be demonstrated or else the whole

¹⁹ Dr. Arthur G. Falls, “Honesty in Race-Relations,” *Interracial Review* 6, no. 9 (September 1933): 158-59. Emphasis in the original.

²⁰ Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, October 1936, p. 4.

²¹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, p. 55.

²² Falls, “Honesty in Race-Relations,” 159.

structure seemed shaky to me.”²³ This exact quote was in response to Falls’s thought of the Catholic Church’s claim to being the “one true church.”²⁴ For Falls, the “one true church” was a precarious claim if it was not authentically inclusive of all races. Falls took pride in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, but experienced considerable tension with its lack of practice concerning these doctrines.²⁵

Just like the Black Catholic Congresses before him, Falls did not question Church doctrine and assumes that all her teachings are more than adequate.²⁶ He never understood “how so much intolerance did develop among people whose fundamental principles would seem to rule this out.”²⁷ Falls stated that he never left the Catholic Church because it “has given me the foundation, which has enabled me to fight [racism].” He brought this “solid foundation” to other parts of his work with others, even though “I may not have announced it as Catholic doctrine—I announce it as basic principles of human relations—but it is Catholic doctrine.”²⁸

²³ AGF, Box 1, Folder 5, pp. 158-59 (2). I have place parenthesis around the number 2 because this is the second time in the memoir that Falls uses this number. Unfortunately, there is a section of the memoir where he repeats page numbers 145-210. These pages neither fit into his primary numbering system for the first 600 pages nor list disc numbers on top. Sorry for the confusion.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 158 (2).

²⁵ Falls was not the only Catholic of this time to refer to the heretical nature of racism. Fr. Philemon Merrill also stated that racism was a heresy. Unlike Falls, the discussion was more theoretical and not grounded in a concrete situation of racial prejudice. Philemon Merrill, “The Theology of Racism,” *Interracial Review* 19, no. 4 (April 1946): 56-57.

²⁶ Falls, “Colored Churches,” 27.

²⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 2, p. 43.

²⁸ Falls, interview with Sicius.

RACISM AS SIN

Sin is perhaps the most common way of classifying racism within Catholic and Christian frameworks and Falls also referred to racism as a sin. Falls defined sin as “deny[ing] any individuals those things which we claim to be the right of all humans beings.”²⁹ At first sight this may seem to be a strange definition for sin. For St. Thomas Aquinas, the great 13th century Catholic theologian, sin was understood as disorder.³⁰ Sin was disorder because God created the universe with a natural order. We also see in Falls’s definition of sin an emphasis on the disordered distribution of the gifts of God. In addressing the lack of quality medical care available to African Americans, Falls stated that it was “my philosophy that every human being has an inherent right to equal access to all medical facilities; that when he is unable to secure that access it is the duty of society, as expressed through government, to aid him in this endeavor.”³¹

Sin also related to members of the Church not following the Church’s teachings. In this regard, Falls argued that the Church must “clean house” to effectively confront racism in broader society.³² Falls placed the origin of the sin of racism in fear: “Probe a little, and you’ll find *fear*.”³³ In 1931, he believed this fear was grounded in “the two bugaboos of race-relations”: social equality and marriage. Regarding social equality,

²⁹ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Industrial and Social Problems,” *Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (December 1931): 679.

³⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, question. 72, article. 1

³¹ Falls, quoted in “Says Medical Bias is City’s Worst Problem,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, 5 December 1960, p. 3.

³² Falls, “Industrial and Social Problems,” 679.

³³ *Ibid.*, 680. See also, Falls, “Colored Churches,” 27.

there is a fear that justice for blacks will result in having African Americans coming into the homes of whites as close friends. Falls stated that this would not be the case. The social equality desired by blacks was the “opportunity” to participate in all the activities of the parish, not to enter white people’s homes who do not want African Americans there. Regarding intermarriage, he reiterated to the white person that no marriage occurs without the consent of both parties. Nevertheless, blacks “must be allowed that freedom of choice which the Catholic Church teaches is essential to the marriage contract.”³⁴

For Falls, not following the teachings of Christ and the Church was sinful and led to disorder and injustice in society. These sinful acts are rooted in fear of an unwanted closer association with African Americans. Admittedly, his analysis of racism as sin was not very in-depth. Nonetheless, Falls saw an integral web of interconnections between doctrine, sin, and discipleship. In other words, he believed that heretical doctrine was expressed in disordered behavior and vice-versa. And in both cases the call to be followers of Jesus in Christian discipleship was capitulated to the “existing local situation.”

LIFE OF CHRIST & DISCIPLESHIP

Falls also made use of other theological concepts in his writings, including discipleship. His notion of discipleship was grounded in his understanding of Christ. Falls employed the death of Jesus Christ to address more than the expiation of sins. In examining one of the historical reasons for the death of Christ, Falls concluded: “He

³⁴ Falls, “Industrial and Social Problems,” 680-81.

taught the will of His Father in opposition to the ‘existing local situation.’”³⁵ By the “existing local situation,” Falls was referring to cultural evils that appeared to be a given in certain societies with little hope for change in the near future. The “existing local situation” was a term he acquired from contemporary Catholics and it was the reason they gave for the Catholic Church not faithfully living out its teaching on racism.³⁶ For Falls, “Our Lord on earth clearly has demonstrated that there can be no such thing as ‘modified’ truth or justice; that there can be no compromise if one wishes to remain on this road toward the goal of human brotherhood.”³⁷ Falls noted that not only was Jesus willing to defy local custom, but the Apostles as well as thousands of Christians who were fed to the lions, and more recently, the twenty-two Ugandan martyrs were all willing to sacrifice their lives to uphold the “teachings of the Church, no matter what the ‘existing local situation.’”³⁸ In response to all those who he felt capitulated to the “existing local situation,” Falls said near the end of his life, “This is an unchristian thought... but when I die I want to go to Heaven and sit next to St. Peter at the Last Judgment and listen to all those explanations about why the time was never ripe.”³⁹

In a 1931 article, which was also an address that Falls delivered at the national convention of the Federated Colored Catholics the previous September, Falls affirmed a common Catholic prejudice of the time that Catholics, unlike Protestants, “*practice* all

³⁵ Falls, “Colored Churches,” 27.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Falls, “Honesty in Race-Relations,” 158.

³⁸ Falls, “Colored Churches,” 27. In Falls’s analysis here we can clearly see a liberative theological framework at work. Falls’s experience of injustice at the hands of Catholics who blame the local situation permits Falls to see a similar occurrence in the Gospels that he can bring to bear on the contemporary situation.

³⁹ Falls, quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 138.

the teachings of Christ and not those alone which happen to conform to our particular desires.”⁴⁰ Therefore, when Catholics refuse to “give the Negro justice and fair-play in all our religious activities... there is no possible way that we can claim to be true disciples of Christ.”⁴¹ In other words, “the lives of [Christians] serve, in many cases, as examples of the extent to which many religious groups have departed from the teachings of Christ.”⁴² In this sense, the degree to which a parish community or denomination is embroiled in racist practices can act as a measuring stick for how much needs to be corrected until that community can be properly called church once more. If the Church wants to prove the importance of its teachings for rest of the world, it first needs to illustrate and confirm their importance by trying to live them out.

Particularly during the time of Falls, Catholics were expected to attend and support the parish within whose boundaries they were lived. Additionally, parishes were entrusted with the care of all the souls within their assigned boundaries.⁴³ Since each Catholic knew that he or she “is obliged to support the parish in which he [or she] lives and to receive administration of services from his [or her] parish,” black Catholics should not be expected to travel across town to receive basic services from the “colored church.”⁴⁴ Therefore, he believed it best that Catholics who denied the Church’s teaching regarding the necessity to support and to be administered to by one’s local parish readily

⁴⁰ Falls, “Industrial and Social Problems,” 678. Emphasis in original.

⁴¹ Ibid., 678, 681.

⁴² Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 8 (August 1935): 123.

⁴³ For more information about parish boundaries during the time of Falls, see John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 13-25.

⁴⁴ Falls, “Colored Churches,” 27.

admit that they hold a double standard for African Americans.⁴⁵ Within secular affairs, justice is even more so demanded, because “the wealth of America has been built upon the co-operation of all groups, and that the Negro has more than contributed his share.”⁴⁶ It is safe to assume that Falls is referring to the contributions that African Americans have made to this country for which they have not been properly compensated, whether during slavery or afterward, with the black person statistically earning less than a white person for the same job. The only religious group that Falls saw to be practicing authentic inclusion with African Americans were the Bahá'í.⁴⁷ In addition, Falls commented that “*The Communist Party* is interracial throughout and includes its stand for interracial justice in all its platforms and selection of candidates.”⁴⁸ In other words, Communists were better followers of Christ in the area of race relations than Catholics. Falls contended that a return to early Christianity in which theory and practice were not separated would have to occur for racism to be eradicated from the Church.

It would appear that religious groups cannot be expected to provide leadership or even much cooperation until their members return to the attitude of the early Christians—the acceptance in practice as well as in theory of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and the repudiation of their present attempt to maintain the status quo.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Falls, “Industrial and Social Problems,” 679.

⁴⁷ Falls, “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 8 (August 1935): 124.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 125. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁹ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 9 (September 1935): 141.

Although not extensive in Falls, he did make use of scripture on occasion.⁵⁰ The following are five New Testament passages that Falls quoted to disclose scriptural warrants against racism. Even though only one of the quotes is attributed in scripture to Jesus, Falls ascribed all of them to Our Lord. From the Gospel of Matthew: “And the second is like to it: Though shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets.”⁵¹ He also quoted 1 John 3:14-16: “Everyone who hateth his brother is a murderer. And ye know, that no murderer hath life everlasting abiding in himself.” For those who would state that the Catholic Church should only deal with the spiritual realm, he cited James 1:22, 26: “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. If any man thinks himself religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his heart, this man’s religion is vain.” The “true Catholic” or follower of Christ allowed his/her faith to affect the everyday actions of one’s life; it is not limited to attending Mass on Sundays. Falls likely saw himself as trying to emulate Ephesians 6:14-15: “Stand, therefore, having your loins girt in truth, and having on the breast plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”⁵² Being a follower of Christ meant getting actively involved in the struggle to love one’s neighbor by creating a more just society.

⁵⁰ Falls’s minimal use of scripture was not uncommon for the time. During the 1930s, if scripture was used to support a position, it was often an afterthought. The use of scripture in this way is referred to as proof-texting. For further discussion on this topic, see Richard M. Gula, S.S., *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 166; Sandra M. Schneiders, I.H.M., “From Exegesis to Hermeneutics: The Problem of the Contemporary Meaning of Scripture,” *Horizons* 8 (Spring 1981): 29-30.

⁵¹ Matthew 22:38-40. I use the translation of the passage given by Falls. Falls, “Honesty in Race-Relations,” 158-59.

⁵² Falls, “Honesty in Race-Relations,” 158-59. Lastly, he used 1 Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of the Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

In a 1933 letter to the editor that Falls wrote to the Jesuit journal, *America*, which he signed as President of the Chicago Branch of the National Catholic Interracial Federation, he wrote of the need that the Catholic Church had for African Americans. Regarding a contemporary discussion on the possibility of state funds to keep parish schools afloat, Falls reminded the reader that blacks, who are a sizable voting bloc in some states, would not support the Catholic Church, which most African Americans viewed as “its bitter enemy” and as an “equivalent to ‘Jim Crowism,’” in its bid for public monies for parish schools and universities. Oddly enough, the Communist Party, which advocated strenuously for blacks, was more of a friend than the Catholic Church.⁵³

In the mind of Falls, the constant denial of white Catholics to accept African Americans as equal members of the body of Christ was a rejection of the call to discipleship and the life that Christ lived. A Catholic could not in good conscience regard oneself a disciple of Christ while treating blacks inhumanely, particularly those who lived within their parish boundaries. Catholics were regularly reminded that they had an obligation to the parish in whose boundary they resided and the parish likewise had an obligation to care for all the souls within its boundaries. Although Falls’s understanding of discipleship as following all the teachings of Christ may sound legalistic to the contemporary ear, Falls found this to be a simple and clear way in which to reveal the hypocrisy of many white Catholics.

⁵³ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., letter to the editor, *America* (7 October 1933): 21.

BLACK MILITANCY

Falls was very cognizant of the need for African Americans to play a key role in obtaining justice for themselves. Falls was often critical of blacks for not taking the initiative to better their own situation. Falls observed, to his disappointment, that blacks were not often well organized and were “too willing to accept an inferior position.” This was largely the result of a lack of “stamina and self-determination [within the midst of] suffering.”⁵⁴ In 1935, he lamented that African Americans “as a whole have not entered [Parent-Teacher Associations] as widely as they might, the potential has not been realized.”⁵⁵ During the same year, Falls also blamed much of the segregation found within Catholic parish organizations on “the failure of colored members to utilize to the fullest extent the opportunity afforded” to integrate certain organizations.⁵⁶ He later stated:

the majority of Negroes are not sufficiently anxious, to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded to other groups, to be willing to work unremittingly for the securing of these opportunities... Not only must they be informed of those advantages which they now freely can enjoy in Chicago, but they must also be taught constantly the opportunity of further progress.⁵⁷

In addition, Falls never understood why African Americans would choose to segregate themselves. As a medical student at Northwestern, he usually ate lunch in the university’s sole cafeteria. There were eight other black students in his class, but he

⁵⁴ Falls, “The Race and Its Opportunity,” p. 10.

⁵⁵ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 7 (July 1935): 107.

⁵⁶ Falls, “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 8 (August 1935): 123.

⁵⁷ Falls, “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 9 (September 1935): 141.

never saw any of them during lunch, until “[o]ne day, through chance, I happened to pass a room underneath the stairs leading to the basement where the brooms and mops were kept.”⁵⁸ He found most of the African American students eating there. Apparently, one of the students also worked as a janitor for the building and had a key to the room, but “[h]ow this group of colored students ever decided to eat their lunch there I never knew.”⁵⁹ Falls also believed that the segregation at beaches in Chicago was largely “self-imposed by Negroes themselves for reasons which I was not able to understand except to ‘lack of desire to fight.’”⁶⁰

In his 1962 memoir, he wrote regarding the self-segregation of many African Americans:

I have always felt, and still feel, that in the city of Chicago, at least, Negroes do not need to be as deprived as they are of certain basic opportunities. The solution obviously is a determined, militant and unending fight against every vestige of discrimination and segregation in the city of Chicago.⁶¹

He then listed a number of arguments that he heard from fellow African Americans over the years against taking advantage of opportunities for integration, such as “I don’t want my feelings hurt,” “I don’t want to go where I’m not wanted,” “I go for pleasure and not for battle,” and “I don’t want to be a pioneer.” For Falls, the honest answer was a “lack of courage.”⁶² The situation that Falls saw developing in Europe in the early 1930s

⁵⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, pp. 106, 111.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁰ AGF, Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 2, p. 7.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶² Ibid., p. 11.

regarding anti-Semitism led to his belief that without constantly fighting one could lose the opportunities that one already possesses.⁶³ In his nineties, Falls proposed a reason he had not previously given for the lack of African American involvement in racial justice: “[P]eople who are discriminated against are loathe to discuss it. It’s very painful. So, it was very hard to get even colored Catholics to challenge the Church to abide by its own teachings.”⁶⁴ It seems that by his nineties, Falls had learned to empathize, to a degree, with why some blacks would not work for racial justice.

Early on in his involvement with race relations, in September 1930, he did witness an instance of organized black “militancy” that he recalled over thirty years later. As the Great Depression worsened, unemployment and segregation increased in Chicago, as well as calls for employers to fire blacks and hire whites. In August of that year, two African American men had been lynched in Marion, Indiana, which Falls felt was much too close to Chicago.⁶⁵

One of the results of the situation was an increasing militancy on the part of Negroes in Chicago—a militancy which bore direct fruit on September 16th. The construction company which had been building street car tracks from South Parkway to Cottage Grove on 51st Street had persistently refused to hire colored workers. On this day about five hundred Negroes congregated in the area, took the tools away from the men, and told the foreman there would be no further work there until Negroes were hired on the job. As a result, twenty-five Negroes were employed the next day.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid., p. 11-12.

⁶⁴ Falls, quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 127.

⁶⁵ AGF, Box 1, Folder 9, pp. 465-67. For contemporary accounts of the lynching, see *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Raid Indiana Jail: Lynch 2; 5,000 See Mob Hang Rapists in Court Yard,” 8 August 1930, pp. 1-2; *Chicago Daily Defender*, “Indian Mob Murders 2: Police Aid K. K. K. Hoodlums: American Christianity,” 16 August 1930, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁶ AGF, Box 1, Folder 9, pp. 465-67. Falls story is confirmed by *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Police Quell Trouble Over Car Extension,” 17 September 1930, p. 15.

In this seemingly minor historically event, Falls witnessed a group of African Americans who organized themselves and created a disturbance, at great personal risk. This group of African Americans could have been jailed, beaten, and/or killed. There was no guarantee that their action would succeed, but it was guaranteed that none of them would be working on the track if they did nothing.

Falls was also very familiar with the tactics of Gandhi in India during the early 1930s. He envied Gandhi's ability "to obtain the support of thousands of people who willingly went to jail and to appear in their program of civil disobedience."⁶⁷ This type of action had led to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March 1931, an agreement which included a cessation of civil disobedience on the part of Indians for the release of almost all political prisoners and greater freedom for the Indian National Congress by the British.⁶⁸ Although Falls knew the situation in the United States was "very different... [he] could not help wondering when Negroes in the United States would be able to have real victories in their resistance to oppression."⁶⁹

In July 1931, he met with Rev. Arnold J. Garvy, S.J., who was then teaching at Loyola University in Chicago. He knew Garvy to be "sincerely" concerned over the injustice that African Americans faced in the Catholic Church. During their conversation, Falls proposed the necessity of "militant action" in addition to education. Garvy disagreed and alleged that ignorance was the sole factor in the prejudicial attitudes

⁶⁷ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, p. 479.

⁶⁸ For more information on the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, John Copley Winslow and Verrier Elwin, *Gandhi: The Dawn of Indian Freedom* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1931); Horace Alexander, *Gandhi Through Western Eyes* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1969); *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 45, *December 1930 – April 1931* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Publication and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1971).

⁶⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 479-80.

of white Catholics in Chicago. Garvy also worried that a militant stance by black Catholics would lead to the anti-clericalism that had been problematic in Europe. Missing in Garvy's assessment was the reality that most non-Catholic African Americans already viewed the Catholic Church and its clergy as the enemy. Falls stated that Garvy, years later, "a sad and disillusioned man, finally admitted that his program was not going to be the program which would produce results."⁷⁰

An overrated value in the Catholic community was patience. Patience was a word that caused in Falls the greatest impatience. When Falls and the Grievance Committee of the Federated Colored Catholics in Chicago were meeting with Bishop Sheil in 1932, Bishop Sheil underscored the need for patience for black Catholics in Chicago. In time, the problem of racism would work itself out. For Falls, the practice of patience by African Americans "had always proved to be fallacious in the absence of any direct action."⁷¹ In addition, "patience, perseverance, industry, and thrift... particularly in the South, found that the years of such patience and industry often were swept away within an hour by the lynch mob."⁷²

On a practical note, Falls wrote an article for the *Chicago Defender* in 1931 in which he touted the need for African Americans to focus on their health. Falls knew that sickness and disease were more prominent in the black ghettos of Chicago than in the white areas of the city. He recommended that blacks focus on nutritious eating habits, proper amounts of sleep, regular medical examinations, and consulting a physician at the

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 499, 504-05.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 528.

⁷² Falls, "The Race and Its Opportunity," p. 10.

first sign of an illness. He argued that “Negroes can improve their health status and in so doing improve their economic status.” In essence, if blacks addressed their health problems, they “cannot be held back in their march toward economic security.”⁷³ In 1942, Falls published another article related to health in the *Chicago Defender*, in which he communicated to a black audience the facts about tuberculosis and when one might need to go to the sanitarium.⁷⁴ Because of work by Falls and others during the 1930s to eliminate racial discrimination at the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium, by 1941 it was no longer the case that African Americans had a higher rate of tuberculosis than whites.⁷⁵ In both articles, Falls did not focus at all on the agency of whites in improving the situation of blacks. Falls’s purpose was to instill hope in impoverished African Americans about their ability to start improving their situation on their own without waiting for someone else.

Without a doubt, Falls perceived an active militant and confrontational role for African Americans in working toward their liberation. Although whites also have a role to play, which shall be covered in the next section, blacks could not wait for white cooperation or accept faulty white leadership. Militancy for Falls cannot be equated with violence, though he firmly believed in the right to self-defense in cases of imminent danger. Militancy referred to employing every moral means at one’s disposal for achieving racial justice and refusing to compromise with any cultural evils of the day.

⁷³ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “Health and Jobs,” *Chicago Defender*, 2 May 1931, p. 15.

⁷⁴Dr. Arthur G. Falls, “Your Health is Wealth,” *Chicago Defender*, 18 April 1942, p. 15.

⁷⁵ AGF Box 2, Folder 3, disc 28-side 2, p. 2, 7-8.

WHITE COOPERATION & SOLIDARITY

Obviously, since Falls was an integrationist, he also saw a role for whites in working towards racial justice. Often, though, whites were a source of disappointment for Falls. In frustration, he regularly observed “the apathy or indifference or cowardice of white people” when confronted with prejudice from another white person.⁷⁶ One of his first experiences of this type was as a medical student at Northwestern University. He had been denied access to white female patients at the clinic by a newly arrived doctor and no professors or fellow students came to his defense—even those who were sympathetic.⁷⁷ Additionally, after Falls’s class, he observed that no African American students were admitted to Northwestern’s medical school for over twenty years.⁷⁸ If whites at Northwestern had been willing to fight with Falls at this time, perhaps the denial of future black applicants would have been prevented. It was perhaps in response to situations like this that Falls related the story of an FCC meeting in which “we discussed whether or not there was such a thing as a decent white man.”⁷⁹

In another instance, Falls attended the Educational Institute of the Catholic Youth Center in early October 1940. The conference was mostly for young people, but adults were allowed in attendance. On the evening of October 5th, the entirely African American choir of St. Elizabeth’s High School was ecstatically applauded by the conference. The next day, one of the youths proposed a resolution for the desegregation

⁷⁶ AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, p. 142, 152-53.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 138-42.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 143, 151-52. Young, interview with author.

⁷⁹ Falls, quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 126.

of Catholic high schools that fell on deaf ears. In fact, many of the youth were adamantly opposed and the priests in attendance refused to offer any advice to the participants. Therefore, no action was taken.⁸⁰ For Falls, this was another example of cowardice on the part of supposedly sympathetic white clerics and certain students in adequately addressing racial injustice. Falls stated:

In spite of the clear cut statements of the Pope and of the Hierarchy of the Church and in spite of the enlightened discussions in such publications as the *Interracial Review*, most Catholics, both laity and clerical, absolutely failed to take a position for justice when the chips were down.⁸¹

In contrast to whites whom Falls thought were often apathetic, there were whites who thought they knew what was best for African Americans, without any consultation. Falls complained that concerned paternalistic whites would give advice about the solution for African Americans being found in education, politics, or Christianity; these solutions were subterfuges for asking that whites be permitted to resolve racial injustice. Falls asserted that these solutions were ineffective and insulting “because in practically all cases, something was being done for the Negro, and not with him.”⁸²

Communists, on the other hand, were a threat to be taken seriously, because they work “*with* Negroes, not *for* Negroes.”⁸³ Falls believed that this difference in procedure and their proven policy of non-discrimination in all matters were the main reasons that

⁸⁰ AGF Box 2, Folder 1, disc 24-side 2, pp. 8-9.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸² Falls, “The Race and Its Opportunity,” p. 10. Falls obviously made use of education, politics, and Christianity during his lifetime, but he was critical of how whites often expected him to make use of these avenues.

⁸³ Falls, “Summer School of Social Action.” Emphasis in original.

Communism was popular among African Americans.⁸⁴ He did not believe that inroads had been made with blacks because “they accept the ideology of the movement or the actions of the leaders in Russia, but solely because they feel that Communism may offer the only chance to get an ‘even break,’ even if that ‘break’ is not all that might be desired.”⁸⁵ Falls agreed with the assessment that if the regime of Communist Russian “were to be transplanted here, Negroes would be far better off than they are in this so-called Christian and democratic order.” He believed that that should serve as a warning to white Christians, who could easily attract African Americans to their ideology if they would simply live out their doctrines.⁸⁶

Another issue that often plagued white Catholics with good intentions was ignorance. In 1941, under the editorship of Rev. Edward B. Dailey, the official newspaper of the Chicago Archdiocese, the *New World*, began providing greater space to the issue of interracial cooperation. Unfortunately, some of the articles that Dailey permitted to be published included such terms as “darkies” and “Negress.” Falls wrote Dailey to inform him that these words were offensive to African Americans and should not be printed.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ AGF Box 2, Folder 2, disc- 26-side 2, p. 1. Unfortunately, the past issues of the *Chicago New World* are not yet searchable, but from paging through 1941 copies of the paper, I did find the word Negress used. Vin Agar, “‘Granny,’ Born in Slavery—Lived Simply—and Died in Freedom: Aged Catholic Negress Mourned by La Grange Parishioners,” *Chicago New World*, 14 February 1941, p. 6. Also, as Falls stated, the paper had a number of articles highlighting interracial cooperation. Here are three examples: *Chicago New World*, “Meeting to Urge Better Relations Between the Races,” 18 April 1941, p. 7; *Chicago New World*, “Bill Overcomes Race Preference,” 18 July 1941, p. 11; *Chicago New World*, “Interracial Group Urged by Bishop,” 19 December 1941, p. 1.

From the above, it becomes apparent that Falls believed that whites could, and should, work with blacks in working toward racial justice. Nonetheless, when whites, even with good intentions tried to aid the cause of racial justice without taking the time to listen and work with African Americans, they were taking on a paternalistic attitude that betrayed an ignorance of how racial justice was to be best attained and the extent to which a culture of racism had compromised their best intentions.

INTERRACIALISM

In his memoir, Falls recounted a “tragic” event that occurred on 20 March 1934. W. E. B. Du Bois gave a talk that night in Chicago concerning his changed stance from a focus solely on integration to the need for African Americans to also focus on establishing a separate culture and society. Du Bois was willing to use any means or situation necessary to further the desperate plight of blacks.⁸⁸ Falls remembered: “We could hardly believe our ears because Dr. Du Bois had served throughout as the outstanding example of militant Negro leadership. Now [he]... was advocating that Negroes accept discrimination and ‘make the most of the situation.’”⁸⁹ Falls believed that this “defection” could be attributed to a loss of hope by Du Bois in the field of race

⁸⁸ AGF, Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 1, p. 19. The *Chicago Defender*, which covered the event with shock, was so bold as to ask, “Is he a quitter?” Dewey R. Jones, “Why Fight Segregation?” *Chicago Defender*, 24 March 1934, p. A10. It should be noted that Du Bois still believed that racial justice could only be finally achieved with the attainment of an integrated society. In addition, to be fair to Du Bois, he had always practiced his “new” philosophy, he had just never written or spoke about how segregation could be used for the advantage of African Americans in achieving racial justice in particular situations. For more information on this topic, see David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000), 335-45.

⁸⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 1, p. 19.

relations.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, for Falls any compromise with segregation when there were available opportunities for fighting at one's disposal was unacceptable.

For Falls, not only was the goal of racial justice an interracial society, but the manner to achieve racial justice was through organized interracial groups. This section will show that his reasons for interracialism were not only theological, as indicated in the above discussion on the mystical body of Christ, but also very practical. Although Falls was a strong proponent of interracialism, this did not result in Falls passively waiting for whites to take the lead in promoting racial justice. For Falls, prejudice was “a two-edged sword” that was harmful for blacks and whites alike. While it “humiliates and insults Negroes, it also stultifies the conscience of whites and frustrates the normal workings of democracy and Christianity.”⁹¹ Therefore, to confront this problem, whites and blacks must band together as “fellow-Catholics” and “fellow-Americans.” Working with blacks is a necessity for whites because “[w]hite Catholics can never be good Catholics as long as they keep Negroes from being good Catholics.”⁹² Racism was harmful to black Catholics because it excluded blacks from fully participating in the life of the Catholic Church and its saving grace.

Although Falls hoped that African Americans would become more organized and practice greater self-determination, he rejected that racial justice could be accomplished by blacks alone for reasons that extended beyond the theological realm. American society was too complex and the fate of African Americans “is so interwoven with the

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

⁹¹ Falls, “Industrial and Social Problems,” 681.

⁹² Ibid.

lives of other groups that there can be no separate development.” As such blacks must work with whites to attain racial justice, which in itself will aid with the “elimination of much of the prejudice and discrimination which now exist.”⁹³ In addition, he argued that blacks should view themselves more in terms of citizens than as blacks. He wrote this to stress that African Americans should feel willing and able to participate in those activities that can improve not only their situation, but the situation of all in society. Additionally, if one is willing to step out of the black ghetto, the chances to participate in interracial cooperation and to create a more just society are “far greater than most people realize.”⁹⁴ It should be noted that this emphasis in Falls on citizenship has similarities to the first composed address of the Black Catholic Congresses to “their Catholic fellow-citizens.”⁹⁵

Falls also believed that interracialism was larger than blacks working with whites. He thought it would be helpful if there were joint collaboration between “[t]he Jew, the Negro, the foreign-born laborer— [because] all these have an insight which members of the dominant group seem to miss.”⁹⁶ While working with whites may have been theologically correct and practical for Falls, they would often not understand the great harm inherent in racism. This common background of discrimination could allow for productive interaction in analyzing racism and formulating proper responses.

In 1931, Falls wrote an article in the *Chronicle* regarding the success of communism among African Americans. Falls was obviously envious of communists when it came to the level of integration they practiced. He cited an unknown newspaper

⁹³ Falls, “The Race and Its Opportunity,” p. 10.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ *Three Catholic Afro-American Congresses*, 66.

⁹⁶ Falls, “Summer School of Social Action.”

account that stated that 80% of evictions in Chicago were directed at blacks. Not only were communists in Chicago aiding black party members in moving their belongings back into their apartment within a day, when white communists referred to a black communist as “Comrade,” he “seem[s] to mean it.”⁹⁷ The Catholic Church would be wise to follow suit in treating the black person as an equal. Falls asserted that “[a]ctive support” for the FCC and the National Urban League would not only prevent the spread of communism among African Americans, but lead to effective change in society regarding racism.⁹⁸

In an April 1934 article that Falls wrote for the *Catholic Worker*, he relayed the experience that he and a friend had when they decided to attend a concert and dance being hosted by the local Communist Party. Falls was attending as a part of his duties as chairman for the Interracial Commission of the Chicago Urban League. Before the dance, there was entertainment of various sorts, including an African American woman presenting her drawing of the most recent lynching in Maryland and a play with white and black children called, “They lynch little children in Alabama.”⁹⁹ After the entertainment, there was a dance in which many black and white individuals danced together. Someone that Falls knew stated, “In this organization there is no discrimination; if anyone comes in who isn’t willing to subscribe to this stand, he is put

⁹⁷ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “The Spread of Communism Among Chicago’s Negroes,” *Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (September 1931): 577-78.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 578. See also, Falls, “Industrial and Social Problems,” 681. Falls belief that African Americans would become Communists if other avenues were not made available was not idle speculation. He had seen a number of blacks with whom he was working for racial justice become communists, including Claude Lightfoot, the politician and author, and John Gray, former president of the International Negro Youth Movement. AGF Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 1 p. 21.

⁹⁹ Falls, “The Communist Says: ‘Welcome, Negro Brother!’” p. 1.

out at once.”¹⁰⁰ This was all in contrast to three segregated Catholic institutions in the same neighborhood in which the dance was held. Although the neighborhood was mostly African American, there was a Catholic maternity hospital for whites only, a Catholic homeless shelter that housed only white boys, and parish whose priest temporarily succeeded in blocking the occupancy of a social agency that served mostly blacks near his white congregation. With this juxtaposition, Falls asked to which situation a black non-Catholic would respond more positively: “to the ‘beautiful liturgy’ and sound theology of the [Catholic] Church, or to the practical demonstration of human brotherhood demonstrated by the [communists]?”¹⁰¹

Despite Falls’s admiration of communist integration, he would never be a communist. Despite the obvious difference on the efficacy of religion, his experience with communists was not all good. In early 1934, Falls was involved with the religious committee for the American League Against War and Fascism. As the whole, the group had a strong contingent of communists. Though he was “impressed with the sincerity and the devotion of the Communists in pursuing their aims... I was utterly disgusted at the lack of principles which seemed to motivate some Communists and the lack of... regard for any basic democratic procedures.”¹⁰² He found their basic contempt for anyone who did not agree with their avenue for change to be disconcerting.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰² AGF, Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 1 p. 13.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

In 1937, Falls wrote a review of John LaFarge's recently published book, *Interracial Justice*, in which he wrote that the book fulfilled a need for clearly laying out the problems faced by all African Americans. In addition, the book revealed the absolute incompatibility of racism with Catholic doctrine. Falls noted that missing from the book was a "discussion of methods of approach which have been found effective in various situations." Falls hoped that this would be the focus of a future work by LaFarge.¹⁰⁴ In essence, LaFarge lacked a perspective informed by the social sciences for adequately addressing racism. Not being an academic, Falls's use of the social sciences was not extensive, but he did view them as important. He realized that the social sciences could give insights into the current situation of racism as well as more effective ways to address it. Unfortunately, Falls's writings on the social sciences are all from the 1930s, but they obviously informed his activities for the rest of his life.

In 1932, Falls wrote an article for the *Chronicle*, in which he corrected a priest for his "misconceptions" about African Americans in a previous issue of the *Chronicle*.¹⁰⁵ Falls chastised Fr. Mark Moeslein for his broad generalizations about black and white culture, particularly Moeslein's understanding of "Negro culture," which Moeslein

¹⁰⁴ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., review of *Interracial Justice*, by John LaFarge, S.J., in *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* 15 (August 1937): 246

¹⁰⁵ Arthur G. Falls, "Some Misconceptions on 'Negro Culture'," *Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (April 1932): 70-71. Falls is responding to Mark Moeslein, C.P., "'That He Might Present Himself a Glorious Church, Not Having Spot or Wrinkle or Any Such Thing; But That it Would Be Holy and Without Blemish'," *Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (February 1932): 54-55.

viewed with disdain.¹⁰⁶ Falls took an opportunity at this point to share relevant data from the social sciences about the greater similarity between different races of the same social status than within racial groups as a whole.¹⁰⁷ In a separate article, Falls asserted: “The study of race-relations is the study of human relations and belongs properly in the field of Sociology.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, without a basic understanding of human societal behavior, one could not address racism. Going back to Moeslein, Falls quoted Moeslein’s worst assertion: “Should colored people cling to their culture, as it is, only miracles of grace can bring about what the Federated Colored Catholics urge so earnestly.”¹⁰⁹ In Moeslein we see here a kindred spirit of LaFarge, who also believed only in the ontological equality of the races, but perceived European culture to be superior. Falls questioned the desirability of assimilating all of society into a European culture and offered the Negro Spirituals as a universally appreciated aspect of African American culture.¹¹⁰ Moeslein

¹⁰⁶ Falls, “Some Misconceptions on ‘Negro Culture’,” 70; Moeslein, “That He Might Present Himself as a Glorious Church,” 54.

¹⁰⁷ Falls, “Some Misconceptions on ‘Negro Culture’,” 70. For his argument, Falls utilizes E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago* (Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1932). This book makes use of interviews, census data, and other available statistics to analyze the family unit among African Americans in Chicago. Frazier concludes that slavery and poverty have been detrimental to familial stability while a good paying job is the most essential element for familial stability among blacks in Chicago. In particular, see Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago*, 246-250. Falls was probably also influenced in this area by his wife, Lillian who received her Masters Degree in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago. Her thesis, “A Case Study of Thirty Superior Colored Children in Washington, D.C.,” studied the potential of black children in particular social and cultural settings and found that social class was the main determining factor in academics, not race. See Lillian Steele Proctor, “A Case Study of Thirty Superior Colored Children in Washington, D.C.,” (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1929).

¹⁰⁸ Falls, “Honesty in Race-Relations,” 158-60. Moeslein, “That He Might Present Himself as a Glorious Church,” 54.

¹⁰⁹ Falls, “Some Misconceptions on ‘Negro Culture’,” 70.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 70-71. In his memoir, Falls recounted that he never heard a Negro Spiritual until medical college when he had interaction with African Americans who had come from the South. AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, p. 67.

also questioned the usefulness of legislative responses to racism, which Falls argued was naïve. Falls's reading of history made it clear to him that injustices were not easily rectified with moral suasion and that very "constructive pieces of legislation... [came] as the result of a long and bitter fight."¹¹¹ Moeslein also advised black Catholics to be patient and justice would arrive. Falls rejected this notion: "The large body of colored people finally are beginning to understand that nothing is going 'to come to them.' What they will accomplish will be the result of intelligent, co-operative efforts of colored and white friends."¹¹² Falls finished this particular article with a counsel that black and white Catholics need to "obtain facts and not emotional reactions or opinions" with regard to racism.¹¹³

In response to Falls's article, a priest wrote a letter to the editor of a well-read journal of the time called *The Sign*, in which he criticized Falls's perspective and asserted that the priest that Falls criticized was correct. He concluded the letter by stating that blacks will best aid their cause by placing their faith in the Catholic Church.¹¹⁴ In response, Falls gave five concrete examples of how the Catholic Church in Chicago was not a friend to African Americans and, in fact, promoted segregation. He contended that an enormous amount of harm was done by the recent opening of a Catholic maternity

¹¹¹ Moeslein, "That He Might Present Himself as a Glorious Church," 54-55; Falls, "Some Misconceptions on 'Negro Culture'," 71. For his understanding of history, Falls cites James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1931). This history book, which was published during the Great Depression, was a bestseller and is known for coining the term, "American Dream." Adams strongly believed in the ideals of America, where every person would have an opportunity for a fulfilling life, but that this would not be accomplished by the masses trusting the government and large corporations. The accomplishment of the American Dream is "a long and arduous road to travel," because "[n]o ruling class has ever willingly abdicated." Adams, *The Epic of America*, 414-16.

¹¹² Falls, "Some Misconceptions on 'Negro Culture'," 71; Moeslein, "That He Might Present Himself as a Glorious Church," 54-55.

¹¹³ Falls, "Some Misconceptions on 'Negro Culture'," 71.

¹¹⁴ C. J. Ahern, letter to the editor, *Sign* 11, no. 10 (May 1932): 611.

hospital in a mostly black neighborhood that advertised itself as “for mothers of Catholic families of the white race.”¹¹⁵ Practices such as these necessitated the existence of the Federated Colored Catholics. The solution in overcoming racial injustices was “[c]lose cooperation between white and colored Catholics.” In order to achieve cooperation, “[p]erhaps a little moral suasion is needed—and then perhaps there is needed a long fight using every honest means of getting justice. Whatever is needed, that the Federation proposes to do!”¹¹⁶

Falls was also aware of what later writers and social scientists would refer to as “white privilege.” Racism does not simply harm blacks, it benefits whites: “It is well to remember that prejudice pays—pays in hard, cold cash, for someone, whether it be the ‘Aryan’ doctor who drives out his Jewish competitor from a paying position, or the Chicago realtor who derives exorbitant rent from slum property because the occupants can’t move.”¹¹⁷ Additionally, in situations where African Americans were able to achieve a greater “educational and cultural” status, they faced discrimination from whites worried about their own status.¹¹⁸ Falls further stated that racial animosity and hostility in the United States were based on “the greed and selfishness and paganism of millions of

¹¹⁵ One of the ads for the hospital can be found in Lewis Memorial Maternity Hospital, “Lewis Memorial Maternity Hospital,” *New World* 40, no. 18 (29 April 1932): 6.

¹¹⁶ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., letter to the editor, *Sign* 11, no. 11 (June 1932): 675. Falls’s view on the need for militant struggle would not change. In his 1962 memoir, he wrote: “I have always regarded the fight for human relations as warfare—warfare which broke out in battle after battle on the very same subject.” AGF Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 2, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Falls, “Restrictive Covenants Create Negro Ghettos,” p. 2. In spring 1931, Falls gave an address to the group entitled, “Is the Rising Unrest Among the Darker Races Threatening White Supremacy?” Unfortunately, no copy of this talk was preserved. Chicago Urban League, “The Chicago Urban League: Season 1930-1931,” Chicago Urban League Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 1, Folder 27.

¹¹⁸ Falls, “The Race and Its Opportunity,” p. 10.

human beings, including, sadly enough, many of us Catholics.”¹¹⁹ Here then, in the same article that Falls implied that racist Catholics were heretics, he also classified them as pagans. His emphasis on millions of people also indicates that Falls was fully aware that the racism was harmful because it had permeated the minds and souls of countless individuals. Racism was not only part of the legal fabric of society, it was also part of the cultural fabric, and ordinary white individuals regularly profited from it.

In 1934, with fascism a stark reality in Spain and Italy, and with situations in Germany and Russia that Falls considered to have much in common with fascism, he wrote of the “spread of Fascism in the United States.”¹²⁰ Falls observed that fascism had always been a part of the African American experience and that a common denominator in fascist regimes was “the terrorization of minority groups” to conceal the underlying problems of a country.¹²¹ Falls noted that in Germany and the United States, fascism resulted in racially and religiously motivated discrimination and violence against Jews, blacks, and Catholics. Therefore, white Catholics should be concerned about the growing trend toward fascism in the United States. Falls even mentioned a handful of fascist groups in the Chicago area and concluded by arguing that “one of the most effective bulwarks against the establishment of Fascism in this country is the unity of white and

¹¹⁹ Falls, “Restrictive Covenants Create Negro Ghettos,” p. 3. Obviously, if Falls was writing today he probably would not refer to racists as pagans. He used this term in a derogatory sense that is similar to how theologians like Cone, Massingale, and Copeland employ the term idolatry. All are attempting to make clear that Christians that willingly participate in racism are very far from the teachings of Christ.

¹²⁰ Arthur G. Falls, M.D., “The Graver Menace,” *Interracial Review* 7, no. 8 (August 1934): 102.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

colored people, understanding that their problems are common.”¹²² The Catholic Church could play a critical role in fighting fascism by seriously investing energy in the interracial organizations already in existence.¹²³ Through his work with the Morgan Park–Beverly Hills Interracial Group, which was mentioned last chapter, Falls tried to implement this interracial vision with the incorporation of social science instruction on race relations to both whites and blacks.¹²⁴

In another article by Falls, written shortly afterward, he wrote of the need for the social sciences to analyze human situations because it took “a great deal more than a spirit of sympathy or good-will... for a person to be able to cope with prejudice and discrimination in American life.”¹²⁵ With the aid of the social sciences, which even in the 1930s were available in a wide body of literature, “one is able to pierce through the labyrinth of misconceptions, falsehoods, and sophistries which exist in [race relations].”¹²⁶

THE NECESSITY OF SOCIAL STRUGGLE

Although usually met with limited success, Falls believed there was a role for moral suasion: appealing to the consciences of whites and those in power about the need

¹²² Ibid., 102-03. Believing that racism has affected all people of color, Falls joined a local committee of the World Committee to Aid the Victims of German Fascism in early 1934 to help raise funds for European Jews to travel to the United States. AGF Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 2, p. 3.

¹²³ Falls, “The Graver Menace,” 103.

¹²⁴ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 541-44.

¹²⁵ Falls, “Honesty in Race Relations,” 158.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

for charity and justice for African Americans in society and the Church.¹²⁷ As stated above, Falls asserted that moral suasion needed to be coupled with a dedication for a long and bitter struggle.¹²⁸ The tools that Falls used to fight racism may have evolved based on changing circumstances and available options, but the commitment to fight and to, at times, put one's life on the line, as he and Lillian did in moving to Western Springs, are essential ingredients for racial justice.

Even though Falls was involved in applying political pressure to the mayor in Chicago and involved in getting legislation passed on the city and state level, Falls never became involved in actively supporting a political candidate or party. Although he did identify as a Republican during the 1930s and 1940s, he did not find voting helpful. In his experience, political parties that were aware that they were a better choice for African Americans expected the black vote and, consequently, took no action to improve their situation.¹²⁹

A better avenue was "organized opposition," which Falls deemed was the only way to achieve justice for African Americans on a large scale. He focused his energy not only on society, but also on the Catholic Church.¹³⁰ He pointed to the success of this method in the battles waged by the Chicago Urban League, the International Labor Defense, the Federated Colored Women's Clubs and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. "To the extent that this mass force can be guided along well thought out lines,

¹²⁷ Falls, "Industrial and Social Problems," 679.

¹²⁸ Falls, "Some Misconceptions on 'Negro Culture'," 71.

¹²⁹ Falls, "The Race and Its Opportunity," p. 10.

¹³⁰ M. Johnston, "Colored Churches," *Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (February 1932): 26.

adapting the action to the needs of particular situations, will the effectiveness of this technic [sic] be best demonstrated.”¹³¹ Again, he considered his actions most effective when they were performed within the context of a group that had specific goals and a plan of action. Group action was preferable for those who were not wealthy, because their power was in numbers. The wealthy could act alone with the use of money to often sway decisions in the mind of a person or institution practicing prejudice. In 1928, when H. L. Swift, a donor of the University of Chicago, sent one of his African American employees to the new Billings Memorial Hospital located on their campus and she was refused admittance, Swift threatened to discontinue any further contributions to the university. As Falls succinctly stated, “She was admitted.”¹³²

Another example of organized opposition was buying power, which Falls considered a helpful tool in achieving racial justice.¹³³ Falls observed that stores that existed in predominately black neighborhoods could not exist without African American customers, who should not patronize a store unless they employed a decent number of black workers.¹³⁴ In addition, Falls believed that worker and consumer cooperatives could play an integral role in creating more just remuneration for African Americans and others that found themselves in a more vulnerable position in society. In December 1935, he documented the existence of the Farmers’ Cooperative Milk Company in the wake of a recent milk strike. Because the middleman, in this instance the distributor, takes such a large cut of the profit, many of the smaller farmers were not receiving an adequate wage.

¹³¹ Falls, “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* 8, no. 9 (September 1935): 141.

¹³² AGF, Box 1, Folder 7, disc 12-side 1 p. 8.

¹³³ Falls, “The Race and Its Opportunity,” p. 10.

¹³⁴ Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, December 1935, p. 8.

The cooperative was not only able to pay the small dairy farmers an adequate wage, they also sold their milk for less than the large distributors because they were not concerned about their profit margin.¹³⁵ Falls believed cooperatives needed to be utilized by blacks and others to oppose the rich and large corporations that were hoarding profits and decent paying jobs. The cooperative movement was also positive because it valued cooperation instead of exploitation; it was inherently democratic and accepting of all races and creeds, and its “very construction... gives colored members, as well as all others, equal power in determining policies, including employment, a power which is most limited in the present chaotic system.”¹³⁶ His promotion of cooperatives coincides with his belief in the universal destination of goods: “[T]he earth and everything on it was created by God—and for the use of mankind, all mankind, not just Americans.”¹³⁷ If God’s creation is to be shared by all, then there needs to be an endorsement of economic models that work toward such a goal.

In addition to moral suasion and struggle, another essential element in the long battle toward racial justice is hope. Without hope that change can and will occur, groups will fold after a short period of time. For Falls, hope was closely related to belief. For example, even though the Catholic Church often rejected Falls, he believed that Catholic meant universal and he was determined to have the Catholic Church live up to its ideals: “The Catholic Church never really welcomed me, but if you believe in something, you

¹³⁵ Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” *New York Catholic Worker*, December 1935, p. 8.

¹³⁶ Ibid. Falls never explicitly attacked capitalism as a system, but many of his ventures are concerned with working toward an economic reality that is more democratic.

¹³⁷ Falls, “Restrictive Covenants Create Negro Ghettos,” p. 2.

have to stick with it.”¹³⁸ In an interview that Falls gave near the end of his life, he stated that he would often remind people in the various groups he participated in that “if you are right, you don’t always lose.” He said this to combat the common attitude that the problem was unworkable and the solution was not worth trying.¹³⁹

THE CIVIL RIGHTS & BLACK POWER MOVEMENTS OF THE 1960s

Unfortunately, we do not have a lot of information regarding Falls’s opinion of the Civil Rights or Black Power Movements during the late 1950s and 1960s. During this period, he was involved with the CED, the lawsuit against the Chicago area hospitals, his church, as well as still regularly speaking on racial justice matters.¹⁴⁰ In 1968, however, Falls did give an interview to the *Chicago Tribune* about the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements.¹⁴¹ He commented that much of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements in 1968 were “a great deal of vocalization and very little cerebration.”¹⁴² Based upon his personal engagement with college graduates in these movements he maintained that they lacked any cogent plan for addressing racism. He believed that if it was more organized, it might be able to accomplish some magnificent

¹³⁸ Falls quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 130.

¹³⁹ Falls, interview by Troester.

¹⁴⁰ For documentation of his talks, see “Dr. Falls to Speak at Housing Meeting,” Unknown newspaper clipping, 7 November 1964, Western Springs Historical Society, Western Springs, IL, Folder: Dr. Arthur G. Falls; *Alton Evening Telegraph*, “Says Doctors Fail to Face Racial Problem,” 12 November 1963, p. 18; *Chicago Daily Defender*, “League Head to Talk at Science Meet,” 6 April 1964, p. 17; Alderman Leon M. Despres, “Alderman Reports Integrating Medical Services,” *Hyde Park Herald*, 13 October 1965, p. 4, <http://ddd-hph.dlconsulting.com/cgi-bin/newshph?a=d&d=HPH19651013.2.14&cl=&srpos=0&st=1&e=00-00-0000-99-99-9999--20--1----Sen.+Obama-all> (accessed 3 January 2012); *Chicago Daily Defender*, “Calendar of Community Events,” 24 May 1969, p. 13. According to this notice, Falls would be presenting a review of *Black Rage* by William H. Grier, M.D. and Price M. Cobbs, M.D.

¹⁴¹ Schueler, “W. Springs Doctor Has a ‘Better Idea’ About Civil Rights.”

¹⁴² Falls, quoted in Schueler, “W. Springs Doctor Has a ‘Better Idea’ About Civil Rights.”

feats. He pointed out that the groups like the Urban League, the NAACP, and the Council for Biomedical Careers were not receiving much news coverage in 1968, but that they were better suited to achieve greater equality in society because of their clear goals and organization. Though Falls was extremely familiar with African American history, he stated: “I realized it’s not as dramatic a cry to shout, ‘We want competent teachers’ instead of ‘We want black teachers and black history courses,’ ... but that’s what’s needed.”¹⁴³ Falls continued: “I’d rather have them think science than think black... We’ve already heard all the things the ‘white man’ has done—they haven’t left any out—now the thing to think about is what do we do now.”¹⁴⁴ This thought coincides with Falls’s thought from over thirty years previous that blacks should view themselves more in terms of citizens than as blacks.¹⁴⁵ For Falls, the common humanity shared by every person of every race was more important than racial differences. Additionally, this corresponds with Falls’s opinion in early 1969 that although the issue of racial injustice was complex, “I feel that the main reason for the few students [in medical schools] lies within ourselves.”¹⁴⁶ In response to this opinion, which a *Chicago Defender* writer referred to as Falls’s “unpopular stance,” Doris E. Saunders wrote: “Dr. Falls is probably

¹⁴³ Ibid. In addition to the familiarity he would have gained about African American history during his time with the De Saible Club, he also gave one of the welcoming addresses at the Annual Meeting and the Celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Chicago, which focused on African American achievements in music and art, the immediate antebellum period, and West African culture. *The Journal of Negro History*, “Proceedings of the Annual Meeting and the Celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Chicago, September 9-11, 1935,” vol. 20, no. 4 (October 1935): 373-78. It should be noted that he had the same critique of the National Catholic Interracial Federation being disorganized without a “definite program” in the late 1930s. AGF, Box 1, Folder 14, disc 22-side 1, p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ Falls, quoted in “W. Springs Doctor Has a ‘Better Idea’ About Civil Rights.”

¹⁴⁵ Falls, “The Race and Its Opportunity,” p. 10.

¹⁴⁶ Dr. Arthur G. Falls, quoted in Doris E. Saunders, “Confetti,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, 10 February 1969, p. 12.

one of our heroes who won't be appreciated until the night of his wake, but then, prophets are usually unappreciated in their own home town."¹⁴⁷

A niece on Lillian's side of the family remembers her father and Falls arguing about affirmative action, with Falls arguing against the use of affirmative action. As she recalled, Falls viewed it as special treatment as opposed to being given a fair chance.¹⁴⁸ Falls's granddaughter also recalls that he just wanted everyone to have an opportunity. He was only supportive of affirmative action in cases where an opportunity was currently being denied African Americans. His experience with quota systems during medical school in the early 1920s had left him opposed to such ideas. At Northwestern, about one third of his class flunked out as part of their quota system. He was the only one of the nine African American students to return for his second year. Falls believed that medicine should be a field open to anyone who worked hard and was qualified.¹⁴⁹ One issue that Falls did not address is that schools may have limited resources and can only accept so many students. Since whites, as a whole, will have better financial and educational background with which to succeed, how are opportunities to be afforded to blacks when opportunities are limited?

It would likely be illuminating if Falls had written or said more about the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. Based on Falls's use of concrete goals, we can

¹⁴⁷ Doris E. Saunders, "Confetti," p. 12.

¹⁴⁸ Scott, interview with author.

¹⁴⁹ Sykes, interview with author. Dr. Sykes, while working on her thesis about the lives of her grandparents, interviewed Arthur and Lillian in depth. Her knowledge regarding so many parts of Falls's life before she was born makes her a credible source for including this secondhand information. In his memoir, Falls vividly recounted that on the second day of school all the students were brought to the auditorium and told that one third would not make it to sophomore year—a threat with which the school followed through. AGF, Box 1, Folder 3, pp. 105-06, 137-38.

assume that he was supportive of the push to have the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed, but believed that the goals of the Civil Rights Movement lacked an adequate focus by 1968. Falls's actions speak for themselves; during the late sixties his focus had shifted to school segregation in Chicago and creating opportunities for those interested in medicine to achieve that goal, as was covered in the last chapter.

CONCLUSION

Even though Falls was not a theologian, there is a depth to his thought and writings on Catholic racial justice that is, unlike his contemporary John LaFarge, informed by personal experiences of racism. Along with his own involvement in working against racism, Falls has given rich and practical meaning to the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ, sin, and the notion of Christian discipleship. These Christian ideas, combined with an analysis of the contemporary situation through the social sciences, became foundational for proper notions of interracialism, with its particular roles for black and white agency, as well as the necessity of struggle in the attainment of opportunities for African Americans.

The relationship present in Falls's understanding of Christian doctrine, the social sciences, his own experiences with racism and experiments in racial justice is not linear. Each area was a source of mutual enrichment for the other. His notion of Christian discipleship was influenced by his reading of the scriptures in light of his contemporary situation in Catholic Chicago. On the other hand, his vision of an integrated society was in turn informed by his reading of the life of Christ as one dedicated to the healing of all humanity despite the "existing local situation."

Unfortunately, one area of his life that we know very little about was his prayer life. As stated in the previous chapter, we know that he participated in Compline in the late 1930s during his time with the Catholic Worker and regularly attended mass his entire life. In addition, it is known that he read the works of Virgil Michel and the popular Catholic magazines and newspapers of his day. Nevertheless, there is no account of his preferred method of prayer or what his prayer life entailed outside of an organized setting. Nevertheless, his informed and thoughtful application of the doctrines of the Catholic Church to his contemporary situation indicates a rich spiritual life that is presently hidden from us.

The final chapter will bring into dialogue the insights that have been gained from our study of the life and thought of Falls with contemporary insights from the social sciences and current notions of Catholic racial justice. My hope is that the life and writings of Falls will further the conversation in Catholic racial justice and make explicit the need for the retrieval of stories of more black Catholics for the continuous improvement of this project.

CHAPTER 4: A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF CATHOLIC RACIAL JUSTICE—INSPIRED BY FALLS

Falls left behind more than four full decades of actions and writings dedicated to improving race relations in the United States. As the two previous chapters attest, Falls did not haphazardly address issues of racial injustice. He utilized his Catholic faith tradition while constantly experimenting with different methods, which he adjusted, based on the results. He also employed his knowledge of history and the social sciences to make the best decisions possible. Using a definition of Catholic racial justice inspired by Falls as its foundation, this chapter will bring certain insights and methods from the previous two chapters into conversation with contemporary views and methods of understanding and confronting racism in order to explore a more adequate Catholic theological racial justice framework.

More specifically, after proposing a definition of Catholic racial justice that is inspired by the life and writings of Falls, this chapter will probe certain facets of the definition to confirm its validity and ascertain its implications. It will then address contemporary manifestations of racism as noted by the social sciences in order to ensure that racism will be efficaciously addressed in the twenty-first century. Next, there will be an examination of the concept of sin and its limits in addressing racism. This will be followed by an investigation into the legitimacy of classifying racism as a heresy by first evaluating racism in light of traditional Christian heresies. Next, the manner in which the Church has traditionally responded to heresy will be summarized. Additionally, there will be an examination of the tension experienced by Falls and other African Americans

in their attempts to live faithfully in a heretical church. Lastly, the chapter will cover the need for active struggle and the necessity of hope.

A DEFINITION OF CATHOLIC RACIAL JUSTICE INSPIRED BY FALLS

One obvious question that has not been addressed is: What is Catholic racial justice? This section will work toward a new definition of Catholic racial justice that the remainder of the chapter will scrutinize. Any definition of racial justice will be dependent upon our understanding of racial injustice. In short, racial justice is about trying to most accurately address the problem of racial injustice in order to apply the most appropriate and efficient solution. For Cone, racial injustice is grounded in the slavery of African Americans and can only be rectified through liberation. Falls placed the emphasis of racial injustice on a lack of opportunities for blacks in American culture. Therefore, his definition of racial justice stressed creating opportunities so that African Americans could truly be integrated into society and Church.¹ For both Cone and Falls, the problem and the solution are both deeply influenced by their Christian faith. Racial injustice is clothed in the language of sin, idolatry, and heresy while racial justice is clothed in notions such as discipleship, militancy, and liberation. A working definition of Catholic racial justice that is informed by the life and writings of Falls could be as follows: *an organized struggle for the realization of the mystical body of Christ in the context of racial injustice in our society and within our Church.*

Implicit in this definition—and based on an authentic understanding of the mystical body of Christ—is a struggle for racial justice that joins together black and

¹ LaFarge also stressed an “equality of opportunity” for all groups or individuals, regardless of race, but misunderstood the nature of racism and the degree to which racism had permeated American Catholic culture. LaFarge, *The Race Question and the Negro*, 84.

white agency as well as further work in the retrieval of African American and black Catholic narratives. Although Falls's life and writings have been a substantial source for improving our understanding of Catholic racial justice, there are countless other African Americans and black Catholics whose voices should be added to Falls's in order to continuously improve our conception of Catholic racial justice. As noted in chapter one, Massingale's examination of Malcolm X and Copeland's retrieval of Henriette Delille are two examples of new and efficacious insights brought into the realm of Catholic racial justice that were previously absent in Catholic theology. Additionally, the insights provided by our study of Arthur Falls in chapters two and three demonstrated the significance of the life and writings that even one black Catholic can have in penetrating more deeply into the harm of racism from a theological perspective as well as offering concrete responses. Therefore, it is fair and necessary to state the following conclusion: From this point forward, it needs to be relentlessly defended that no theory of Catholic racial justice can be considered adequate, acceptable, or effective unless it incorporates the voices of black Catholics and/or other African Americans.

In this definition of Catholic racial justice, "mystical body of Christ" has additional faith connotations. A faithful response to racial injustice from a Christian perspective must be grounded in a liberative and inclusive vision of Christianity as well as a struggle that is based in hope. Falls's reading of history from the social sciences and the background he received in African American history from the De Saible Club also aided him in being conscious that hope could be, to a certain degree, established by previous victories in racial justice. In addition, the Christian education that Falls received from his parents, the Federated Colored Catholics, and the Catholic Worker put in place a

firm foundation upon which he worked for the greater inclusion of African Americans in the Catholic Church and society.

Furthermore, the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ insinuates that the problem is not always a Church against the world situation—it is more than that. It will involve struggling against injustice within the Catholic fold—even in priests and nuns. In the fight for racial justice, we must not forget that the Church herself has been infected with racism and that future work for racial justice requires a two front battle: Church and society. The Church, as it is composed of members of a culture, is not immune to the biases of a culture. Falls experienced the sinfulness, and at times the heretical nature, of his own Church, such not being able to attend his parish's grade school, not being able to work in his Church's hospitals, and having fellow Catholics and Christians trying to segregate his living quarters to a Chicago ghetto.

During his life, Falls was always involved in organizations because he knew that more could be accomplished through a group than on his own. This is one way of interpreting the word “organized.” Falls understood that power among the oppressed could be best wielded with greater numbers. None of the groups with which he was involved, with the possible exception of the Catholic Church, was more important than the goals to be achieved. Therefore, Falls often left groups and/or joined additional groups to best address a new situation or gain a new insight into a situation. The other interpretation that follows from “organized” is the planned nature of actions. Falls did not find it helpful or useful to blindly lash out at our racist culture. Actions against this culture required an accurate diagnosis and surgical precision in applying a remedy.

Lastly, the work for racial justice will not be accomplished solely through moral suasion. Although theory, reason, and argument are necessary for change, they are only one component. Since the injustice of racism is so ingrained in the hearts and minds of Americans, change will only occur with “struggle.” Although Cone would say the form of the struggle should take “any means necessary,” Falls would qualify that statement by saying any moral means at our disposal. Moral means include such actions as letter writing, boycotts, meetings, co-operatives, lawsuits, protests, civil disobedience, educational programs, and political pressure, but would exclude violence. Even though Falls accepted violence as a means of self-defense, he did not advocate it as an instrument for achieving justice. Additionally, this organized struggle should be informed by the social sciences. The social sciences furnished Falls with a more accurate assessment and solution for the evil of racism.

RACIAL JUSTICE IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Through his wife, Lillian, Arthur Falls was immersed in the social sciences of his day. He utilized certain insights from this field and valued its existence. The same could be said, to varying degrees, for all the theologians covered in the second half of chapter one. For example, Cone asserts that the social sciences are an indispensable tool for practically analyzing racism and considering different methods of confrontation.² Exactly how one is to work for racial liberation is not always explicitly stated in Cone’s work because “black religion is not a social theory that can be a substitute for scientific

² Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 123. The use of the social sciences by those agents listed in the first half of chapter one is more limited. Official U.S. bishops’ documents from 1968’s *The National Race Crisis* onward began employing the social sciences, but in very limited capacity.

analysis of societal oppression.”³ Two weaknesses that Cone believes were especially present in early black theology were the lack of social and economic analyses.⁴ For Cone, an omission of these tools occasions an unrealistic dependence on moral suasion to respond to racism. The solution to poverty and racism is more complicated than the use of persuasive arguments being made to the white and privileged.⁵ Study of the origins and causes of racism, poverty, and oppression are required to put forth realistic solutions.⁶

Therefore, it is appropriate to consider the latest findings in the social sciences about current manifestations of racism and how to best address them if we are to take Falls seriously. This section will especially review the work of social scientists Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, whose work on racism and racial justice is current and comprehensive.⁷ Although the audience of their book is primarily white college students, their framework can be expanded to include the non-college educated and people of color.

³ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 32, 46.

⁴ Cone, *For My People: Black Theology and Black Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 88-96.

⁵ Ibid., 88-93.

⁶ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 123.

⁷ Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009).

There is a popular notion that racism no longer exists in the United States.⁸ Although laws are in place to prevent discrimination in residential, educational, and economic areas of American life, racism still exists as a cultural phenomenon that has severe consequences. To illuminate how racism endures in the twenty-first century, consider these recent statistics. (Statistics are helpful because of their ability to view racism on a large scale where its systematic effects are most clearly visible.) For example, between 1995 and 2004, the FBI has recorded over 40,000 race-based hate crimes in the United States. In 2004, there were over 3,800 race-based hate crimes with 67% being perpetrated against African Americans.⁹ In 2005, 25% of African Americans were living in poverty compared with 8% of whites. Additionally, since 1940, the unemployment rate for blacks has remained at a level around twice that of whites. In 2006, the unemployment rate for blacks was 9.2% compared with 4% of whites.¹⁰ This disparity also remained consistent during the Great Recession. In January 2012, the unemployment rate for blacks was 13.6% compared with 7.4% for whites.¹¹ Despite these obvious inequalities, half of whites believe that there is relative economic equality

⁸ Numerous examples are given in the following texts: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010); Michael Brown, Martin Carnoy, Elliot Currie, Troy Duster, David Oppenheimer, Marjorie Shultz, and David Wellman, *White-Washing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Joe R Feagin, Hernan Vera, and Pinar Batur, *White Racism: The Basics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2001).

⁹ Desmond and Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress*, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Tami Luhby, "Big Drop in Unemployment Rate for Blacks," CNN Money: A Service of CNN, Fortune & Money, 3 February 2012, http://money.cnn.com/2012/02/03/news/economy/unemployment_blacks/index.htm (accessed 5 April 2012).

between whites and blacks.¹² Sociologists Matthew Desmond and Mustafa Emirbayer contend:

Like a recessive tumor, twenty-first century racism has disguised itself, calling itself by other names and cloaking itself behind seemingly ‘race neutral’ laws, policies, and language. But it is still with us, influencing our relationships, our institutions, and our world. And it will not simply fade out of existence if we turn a blind eye toward it. A tumor will destroy a body regardless of whether its bearer recognizes it or not.¹³

The racial inequalities of the present are the result of a long-existing culture of racism, which has been compounded by the inheritance of “social conditions, historical contexts, and state policies” most dreadfully realized in the institutions of slavery and Jim Crow.¹⁴ This inheritance has resulted in a present day situation in which the median net wealth of white families is twenty times that of African American households. In 2005, the disparity was eleven-to-one, but the current economic crisis has been more injurious to the already precarious situation of many black families than to white families.¹⁵

Desmond and Emirbayer point out five fallacies about racism that prevent our society from adequately addressing it. First, there is the individualistic fallacy, through which racism is usually thought of solely on the interpersonal level as an intentional act between two people, even though “intentionality is in no way a prerequisite for racism. Racism is often habitual, unintentional, commonplace, polite, implicit, and well-

¹² Desmond and Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress*, 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5, 12.

¹⁵ Rakesh Kochhar, Richard Fry, and Paul Taylor, “Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics,” Pew Research Center, 26 July 2011, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/07/26/wealth-gaps-rise-to-record-highs-between-whites-blacks-hispanics/> (accessed 12 January 2012). According to this report, the median net wealth of a white family in 2009 was \$113,149 compared to \$5,677 for an African American family.

meaning.”¹⁶ This fallacy also fails to account for the many systematic and structural forms of racism.¹⁷ Second, there is a legalistic fallacy that assumes that eliminating laws that sanction racism will purge racism. For instance, school systems all across the country are still severely segregated almost sixty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, which was supposed to eliminate segregation in schools by making it illegal to compel segregation. Third, there is the tokenistic fallacy, which wrongly assumes that if a few African Americans are successful then economic and political power are now equally available to all races. For example, the election of Barack Obama to the presidency and the ascension of Oprah Winfrey to being one of the richest people in the world are not fair indicators that economic and political opportunities are legitimately available to people of all races.¹⁸ Fourth, there is the ahistorical fallacy, which implies that past instances of racism are of no consequence for today. Past instances of limited opportunities and lower net wealth have resulted in African Americans needing to put forth greater exertion in order to attain a standard of living equal to that of the average white family. Fifth, there is the fixed fallacy that presumes that racism does not change forms. Under this notion, if the previous forms of racism improve, such as allowing black Catholics to enroll in predominantly white Catholic schools, then it can be concluded that racism has been eliminated.¹⁹ In addition, the most horrific manifestations of racism should not be considered the norm for dealing with the problem because “[t]o

¹⁶ Desmond and Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress*, 27.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 28. As Desmond and Emirbayer point out, the first black congressman, Joseph Rainey, was elected in 1870, but his election did not mark the end of racism.

¹⁹ Ibid., 30.

define racism only through extreme groups and their extreme acts is akin to defining weather only through hurricanes.”²⁰

Another point made by Desmond and Emirbayer is that since white is the “*dominant category*,” which defines what is normal in American society, it should not be seen as simply another race among others. Whiteness provides “many cultural, political, economic, and social advantages and privileges for white people and withholds such advantages and privileges from nonwhite people.”²¹ White privilege is the term used to refer to this set of advantages for whites or those who appear to be white.²²

Just as Massingale notes the way that the Christian narrative—authentically told—can replace the dominant racist narrative, Desmond and Emirbayer propose a cultural narrative based an alternative reading of the American narrative. Their reading emphasizes personal and civic responsibility and the ability of a dedicated minority to change the current situation.²³ An alternative reading of the American narrative is a common foundation for many social scientists who address racial domination.²⁴

²⁰ Ibid., 27.

²¹ Ibid., 38. Emphasis in the original.

²² Ibid.s, 40.

²³ Ibid., 501-505, 518-19, 541. One important reason they probably use a version of the American narrative is because it is considered acceptable to teach in the social sciences departments of public universities.

²⁴ For example, Jeffrey C. Alexander posits that through the stories such as the creation of Bill of Rights, the Constitution, as well as those of George Washington and America’s involvement in World War II, there is a “cultural structure at the heart of democratic life” that promotes solidarity, liberty, and a politics of responsibility. Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Civil Sphere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), ix, 60-62. In contrast, Charles Taylor grounds his thought in “citizen dignity” because he feels it is the only concept for mutual recognition that everyone shares in a democracy. Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 27.

In order to properly address racial justice, Desmond and Emirbayer rightly assert that “racialized poverty” must also be addressed. Since racism is closely connected to economic domination, it is essential that issues such as fair wages, affordable housing, education, medical care, and old age security are addressed.²⁵ Furthermore, power structures need to move away from those of white domination towards those that are egalitarian and multicultural.²⁶

Effective transformation of current domination structures can occur when change is focused on four overlapping areas: “(1) ourselves, (2) our inner circle, (3) our institutions, and (4) our nation.”²⁷ Change of self for whites means a dedication to listening, learning, and being aware of our almost unconscious racist attitudes. For African Americans, it means acknowledging and resisting culturally influenced feelings of “self-hate” that are created by the normalization of European standards.²⁸ Changing our inner circle includes challenging the prejudicial attitudes of family and friends, as well as being cognizant of the best ways to have a meaningful conversation. Changing our institutions requires individual and multiracial coalitions to influence and transform the institutions of which we are a part. This type of change will require personal sacrifice

²⁵ Desmond and Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress*, 509-11.

²⁶ Ibid., 513, 517-19. Jeffrey C. Alexander defines multiculturalism as expanding the normative, i.e. the white male group, to include others—not through some type of assimilation, but with mutual “understanding and recognition” of differences. Alexander, *The Civil Sphere*, 451. For a thoughtful critique of multiculturalism and how it can be either advantageous or abusive, see Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” 63-72; and K. Anthony Appiah, “Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction,” in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Guttmann (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 149-63.

²⁷ Desmond and Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress*, 523.

²⁸ Ibid., 34, 523-27.

and could easily lead to a loss of promotion, job, or bodily safety.²⁹ Since federal and local political policies contribute to racial domination and influence the flow of money and power, a reform of political structures as well as changes in policy are imperative. Substantial change on this last level principally occurs “through methods of public protest, including strikes, sustained boycotts, public demonstrations, civil disobedience, racial uprising, and full-scale revolutions.”³⁰ Coalitions are indispensable because the dominated require numbers to exert their influence. Lastly, a long commitment will be required and a willingness to break particular laws in order to expose certain kinds of domination.³¹ In agreement with Desmond and Emirbayer, Frances Fox Piven contends that extensive change happens in the political sphere only when people “rise up in anger and hope, defy the rules that ordinarily govern their lives, and by doing so, disrupt the workings of the institutions in which they are enmeshed.”³² On a large scale, such actions will force politicians to give attention to injustices that are often ignored because of corruption within government as well as the influence of the wealthy and big business on electoral politics and government policies.³³

In combating racism on all its various levels, one needs to believe that winning is possible. To add to this hope, Desmond and Emirbayer alleges that social change rarely is the result of a large scale involvement, but rather the dedication of anywhere from 20%

²⁹ Ibid., 527-34.

³⁰ Ibid., 534-36.

³¹ Ibid., 537-41.

³² Frances Fox Piven, *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 1.

³³ Piven, *Challenging Authority*, 1-18.

to less than 1% of the entire population.³⁴ Jeffrey C. Alexander, with a slightly different opinion, asserts that significant achievements in racial justice require the mobilization of the oppressed with an apparatus in place to communicate their injustice in a manner that permits a large number of the majority to empathize. Regarding racism in the United States, this will not occur until “a new social movement” appears that is able to unite “the increasingly fragmented black community” and effectively communicate its struggle to the average white American.³⁵

Although Falls’s use of the social sciences was more limited because of what was available at the time, chapter two shows that he used the social sciences to prove the intellectual and cultural equality of African Americans with whites and to demonstrate that militant, determined struggle was a prerequisite for substantial societal change. Falls accomplished change in many areas of Chicago life by collaborating with a small group of dedicated people who believed that change was possible. Without necessarily being aware of it, Falls was a model and forerunner all four levels that Desmond and Emirbayer propose for implementing change. First, he worked on constantly developing his own understanding of racism. He learned about American history and his racial heritage in order to more properly understand the evil of racism. He also conversed with his family, or inner circle, regarding the best way to address racism. Additionally, he labored to change the Catholic and medical institutions with which he was involved. Finally, he attempted to change government policy by having laws enacted on the city and state level, pressuring the mayor to appoint an African American to the school board, and

³⁴ Desmond and Emirbayer, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress*, 541.

³⁵ Alexander, *The Civil Sphere*, 390.

suing in federal court to ensure that government funds given to white hospitals would be available for African American patients.

The social sciences are no less important today than they were for Falls for his organized struggle against racism. To a certain extent, they have been utilized by the theologians in the second half of chapter one, but greater use could aid these theologians and others in proposing practical paths for confronting racial injustice through theological praxis. Concerning most ecclesial documents on racism, the need for employing the social sciences is even more pronounced. As Cone alleged, without the social sciences, Catholic racial justice is usually reduced to moral suasion.³⁶ With the use of the social sciences, moral suasion can be transformed into organized struggle.

INADEQUACY OF RACISM AS “SIN”

Although Falls referred to racism as sin, it was clearly also more than that in the eyes of Falls. Racism attacked the integrity of the mystical body of Christ, the Church. This section will briefly review modern notions of sin to examine to what extent it is adequate to call racism sinful. It is outside the context of this work to present an exhaustive overview of sin; therefore, I will paint some broad strokes and touch on certain dimensions of sin that will be helpful for this project. A sinful action can be examined objectively and subjectively. The objective aspect of the sin refers to the wrongness of an action independent of whether one is aware of or intends the evil that one is performing. The subjective aspect of sin refers to what degree a sinful act should

³⁶ It should be noted that Massingale has made this same claim. He states that in ignoring social analysis, “American Catholic teaching on race often presumes that it addressing a rational audience of well-intentioned people, and thus assumes that racism can be overcome principally by education, dialogue, and moral persuasion.” Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 75.

attribute guilt to the agent performing the action.³⁷ Our examination of sin will focus on the objective aspect of sin. (For, as we will see below, being a heretic is not dependent on whether one is aware of his or her heretical beliefs or behaviors.) Therefore, this section will not address the subjective qualities in order to narrow our comparison.

Karl Rahner, the great German theologian of the twentieth century, defined guilt, which was closely allied with sin, as “closing oneself to [the] offer of God’s absolute communication.”³⁸ For Rahner, this rejection of God can occur either in an explicit or unreflective manner. The American moral theologian Daniel C. Maguire, defines guilty behavior, a term that he prefers to sin, as a “*conscious and free behavior (active or passive) which does real unnecessary harm to persons and/or their environment.*”³⁹ Maguire’s definition, in contrast to Rahner, emphasizes the harmful effect that sin has on creation. Both theologians are pointing to different aspects of the same reality and combining their complementary definitions of sin could be helpful: sin is a rejection of God that causes material harm in the created world. Obviously, racism can be classified as sinful under these terms because of the manifest harm it causes to human society and individual persons, which is a rejection of Jesus and his command to love one another.

³⁷ *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2010*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Sin (Theology of).”

³⁸ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 93. Emphasis in the original.

³⁹ Daniel C. Maguire, *The Moral Choice* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1979), 392. Emphasis in the original. The reference to sin as guilt in the work Rahner and Maguire is to emphasize the subjective nature of sin. Therefore, it should be noted that Rahner’s definition also stresses the free and conscious decision of the subject.

James Cone's understanding of sin mirrors that of Rahner and Maguire, but also stresses the communal nature of sin.⁴⁰ As Bryan Massingale observes, Cone's communal analysis of sin is grounded in his utilization of Exodus.⁴¹ In this context, Cone defines sin as

a religious concept that defines the human condition as separated from the essence of the community... To be in sin, then, is to deny the values that make the community what it is. It is living according to one's private interests and not according to the goals of the community. It is believing that one can live independently of the source that is responsible for the community's existence.⁴²

In other words, sin is intimately associated with right living in community—particularly one's religious community. Since God's relationship with Israel is centered on the liberating event of the exodus in which the Hebrews were set free from slavery, any action against liberation, whether personal or communal, would be a sinful act against God and the community.⁴³ Cone's communal understanding of sin could be applied to interpret the dominant culture in the United States as a sinful culture of white privilege.

Relying on Cone, Nilson wants to underscore that racism should not be viewed as a type of sin, but heretical: "Sin does not threaten the integrity of the church, as heresy does."⁴⁴ Viewing racism as heretical betrays the incompatibility of racism with

⁴⁰ For more on Cone's understanding of communal and personal sin, see Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, [1969] 1997), 63-64; Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 110-12; *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), 82. As recognized by Massingale, Cone's notion of personal sin is grounded in his understanding of Genesis. Massingale, "The Social Dimensions of Sin and Reconciliation in the Theologies of James H. Cone and Gustavo Gutiérrez," 81-84.

⁴¹ Massingale, "The Social Dimensions of Sin and Reconciliation in the Theologies of James H. Cone and Gustavo Gutiérrez," 85-91.

⁴² Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 110.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 111-12.

⁴⁴ Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 68-69.

Christianity as well as the lack of tolerance that it deserves—unlike many sins for which we are asked to be patient with the sinner.⁴⁵ Nilson sympathizes with his heretical peers, noting his belief that “Catholic theologians’ horizons are limited not by bad will or a deliberate turning away from light, but from a lack of development in authenticity.”⁴⁶ This same lack of authenticity will be found below in our examination of heretics.

Although racism is clearly sinful in that it is a rejection of God and does harm to humanity, it is more. As Nilson so eloquently explains, racism harms the very integrity of the Church in a way that is not equaled by the sinful acts of adultery, eating steak on Good Friday, or cheating on one’s taxes. Since the notion of sin does not adequately address all the implications of racism, the next section will explore the possibility of recognizing racism as heresy. A major question that will need to be dealt with in the following section is if heresy can be understood not only as a belief, but also as a practice.

RACISM AS HERESY

Traditional Understanding of Heresy

If we are going to seriously consider racism as a heretical practice of the mythical body of Christ, a brief account of heresy in the Christian tradition needs to be explored. After this section, we can then reexamine Falls’s notion of heresy along with other modern theologians in light of this examination. Heresy, from the Greek αἵρεσις, is a fluid term in the Christian tradition, which in the New Testament referred primarily to a

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 73.

sect, such as the Pharisees or Sadducees, though 2 Peter 2:1 used the term to indicate “lying teachers.” Later, during the patristic era, heresy was often synonymous and interchangeable with schism, since heretics were viewed as separating themselves from the Catholic Church.⁴⁷

Alister McGrath defines heresy as “a doctrine that ultimately destroys, destabilizes, or distorts a mystery rather than preserving it.”⁴⁸ He makes the important distinction that heresy has its origin in belief, not unbelief, although he considers it destructive like a virus.⁴⁹ For example, Marcion (85-160) and Valentinus (100-160) were early heretics who thought they were defending orthodoxy. Both of them, disappointed that their ideas did not take hold within the Roman Christian community, founded their own communities.⁵⁰ Essentially, the error would be a Church-dividing issue. In the Middle Ages, heresy was seen as threatening the integrity of the faith and exposing disdain for the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. It can be difficult to integrate heresy in the Middle Ages into the rest of the discussion because it often dealt with issues of papal authority, not necessarily theological ideas.⁵¹

Since the seventeenth century, heresy has more often been used as a doctrinal censure or condemnation of a teaching that was viewed as contravening an essential

⁴⁷ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Heresy.” McGrath, *Heresy*, 103.

⁴⁸ Alister McGrath, *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 31.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 62, 103, 171, 201. Marcion promoted what became known as Marcionism, which is covered in the next paragraph. The exact views of Valentinus are difficult to distinguish from possible innovations from his followers, but he did advocate a type of Gnostic dualism, which thought of matter as the imperfect creation of a subordinate God. For more information, see McGrath, *Heresy*, 119-23.

⁵¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Heresy.” McGrath, *Heresy*, 103. Three examples of “heresies” based more on a contention with papal authority are the Hussites, Waldensians, and Lollards.

aspect of the faith.⁵² In the 1917 edition of the Code of Canon Law, heretics were defined as baptized persons, who still retain the word Christian, but reject a vital aspect of the Christian faith.⁵³ At Vatican II and since, the term “heretic” has been avoided when referring to other Christian denominations in favor of the term “separated brethren.”⁵⁴ Today there is usually a distinction made between material heresy and formal heresy. Material heresy pertains more to rejections or distortions of belief caused by ignorance; formal heresy pertains to cases where a person continues in obstinacy after being informed and warned by the appropriate Church authority.⁵⁵ Since Vatican II, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), which is the Vatican congregation assigned the task of protecting the integrity of the faith, has placed more emphasis on teaching the faith than punishing those holding heretical teachings.⁵⁶

Throughout the Christian tradition, the definition and understanding of heresy has undergone a constant evolution and revision. Nonetheless, there are certain common elements. Heretics view themselves as defending a cultural tradition that they believe to be essential to the faith. In addition, heresy has been seen as primarily related to either

⁵² *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Heresy.”

⁵³ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., supplement 2009, s.v. “Heresy (Canon Law).” Canon 1325, paragraph 2. This same paragraph states that one who completely rejects the Christian faith is an apostate. I used the following copy of the 1917 code of canon law: *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, eds., T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., and Adam C. Ellis, S.J. (Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1949). The 1983 Code of Canon Law changes the wording slightly from the 1917 version, but the sentiment is the same. Code of Canon Law, c. 751, in *The Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition* (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983).

⁵⁴ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., supplement 2009, s.v. “Heresy (Canon Law).” Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, 1, 3-4, 7-11, 20, 24, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html (accessed 25 June 2012).

⁵⁵ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., supplement 2009, s.v. “Heresy (Canon Law).”

⁵⁶ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., supplement 2010, s.v. “History of Heresy: IV: After Vatican II.” Nevertheless, there have been notable recent censures of theologians by the CDF.

the assent or rejection of certain doctrines rather than actions. By stating that many white Catholics in Chicago were implicitly assenting to the mythical body of Christ, Falls was placing a strong emphasis in practical mediation or the relationship between faith and practice. But can an implicit assent to a religious error grounded in one's actions be heretical? The next section will compare racism with traditional heresies in order to further probe this possibility.

Comparison of Traditional Heresies & Racism

Although traditional heresies have been explicitly associated with doctrines, there are a certain number of similarities between heresy and racism. It is logical that since there is a relationship between thought and action, that there should also be a relationship between traditional doctrinal heresies and practices. This section will compare some of the traditional heresies with racism in order to detect whether one can legitimately claim that these heresies have substantial continuity with racism. Approaching racism as heresy is not without problems. Mark Edwards, in his recent work on heresies within the early Church, reveals that many viewpoints that were initially condemned as heretical were later incorporated into the orthodox teachings of the Catholic Church.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, there are certain heresies from the early history of the Church that are still deemed heretical and there are a number of clear similarities between racism and these heretical controversies.

With Marcionism in the second century, Marcion rejected both the Old Testament and Jesus's Jewish roots. For him, the Old Testament was too morally questionable to be

⁵⁷ Mark Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy in the Early Church* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2009). This is not the case with racism.

associated with the person and message of Jesus Christ. Jesus was sent by the God of love while the Jewish god was an inferior, hateful, vengeful deity. McGrath asserts that it is not an accident that Marcionism reappears during outbursts of anti-Semitism: “[I]t is a heresy about the dignity and historical significance of the Jewish people.”⁵⁸ Similarly, racism denies the dignity and historical significance of African Americans.

Another heresy of the early Church was Docetism, which taught that Jesus only appeared to be human and that he did not die on the cross. In effect, the notion of God being joined to a human nature was too horrific to contemplate.⁵⁹ Both Docetism and racism are based on cultural notions that a group finds too difficult to consider. Docetists could not assent to any sort of joining of the divine with the human. In like manner, many racists in Falls’s time would not assent to a church community that permitted the interaction of whites and blacks within the same worship space or neighborhood, much less a scenario where blacks and whites were a community of genuine equals.

Similar to the traditional heresies, racism in the twenty-first century is perpetuated by individuals who are capitulating religious truth to cultural notions about race that are incompatible with the Christian faith. Racists believe that they are protecting the purity of the Church and will to separate themselves from contact with blacks by withdrawing their children from “contaminated” schools or fleeing from areas in which African Americans reside. Racism rejects any form of Christianity that affirms the value of African American history or culture. Unlike the traditional heresies, racists do not explicitly disavow any specific Catholic doctrine, but as Falls asserts, their concrete

⁵⁸ McGrath, *Heresy*, 131.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 111-16.

practice betrays implicit heretical beliefs. Nonetheless, certain heretics, such as the Marcionists, had beliefs that were indubitably lived out in a practice of exclusion. Although not officially viewed as heretics at the time, the circumcision party that Paul rejected certainly had beliefs that proceeded to particular practices.

But can our understanding of heresy evolve to place more emphasis on praxis and still be heresy? As previously mentioned, many writers refer to racism as idolatry. Originally, in the Old Testament, idolatry had a strict definition based on either a rejection of the Jewish God and the worship of other deities or the worship of other deities in addition to the Jewish God. Beginning in the New Testament, idolatry was also used in the metaphorical sense to refer to Christians who placed disproportionate importance on wealth and other material objects.⁶⁰ It is in this metaphorical sense that modern theologians refer to racism as idolatry. This precedent for a development in meaning could legitimize such a similar advance in our understanding of heresy, especially since certain heresies have had a close relationship to praxis.

A controversial matter that is raised by the classification of racism as a heresy is that it logically follows that many in positions of Church authority would be heretics. Although Falls did not specifically apply the heresy of the mythical body of Christ to bishops, he made the same accusations of white superiority toward certain bishops as he alleged against white lay Catholics. That numerous bishops could be heretics has a historical precedent in the Arian heresy of the fourth century.⁶¹ The more problematic

⁶⁰ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Idolatry (in the Bible)." Two examples of idolatry in this context are in Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5.

⁶¹ John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 251, 275-79.

issue concerns the fact that a number of popes in the past have supported slavery based on racial determination.⁶² Even though this is a delicate matter that deserves consideration, it is outside the scope of this dissertation to further assess this issue. In any case, if we assume that racism can rightly be called heretical in the twenty-first century, it is appropriate to consider how recent writers have viewed racism as heresy.

Addressing Racism as Heresy in the Twenty-First Century

As Desmond, Emirbayer, and Massingale affirm, an alternative cultural narrative or ethos is necessary to replace the current acceptability of our culture of racial domination. Desmond and Emirbayer ground their alternative ethos in an egalitarian reading of American history while Massingale advances a Christian ethos in which racial reconciliation is foundational. Although Falls did not explicitly put forth a different cultural ethos in his arguments, he stated that his work for racial justice was grounded in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. A particularly meaningful doctrine for him was the mystical body of Christ. This section will examine how the mystical body of Christ, authentically understood, can serve as an example of the prophetic nature of Catholic doctrines. The previous two chapters examined Falls's battling with those who lived by a heretical, or inauthentic, notion of this doctrine—the so called “mythical” body of Christ.

To reiterate, Falls never unequivocally stated that the mythical body of Christ was a heresy. Nevertheless, it is clear from his writings that racism, which is an outright

⁶² Pope Nicholas V, Papal Bull, *Dum diversas*, 18 June 1452. Pope Innocent VIII accepted one hundred dark-skinned slaves as a gift from King Ferdinand of Aragon in 1488 and gave some of them to his favored cardinals. Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 330. From 1600 to 1800, the papal navy was composed of 2,000 slaves who were almost totally Muslim, which may indicate they were almost all black. John T. Noonan, Jr., *A Church that Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching* (Notre Dame: IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 102.

rejection of the mystical body of Christ, is more than mere sin. For Falls, it was the primary Church dividing issue in Catholic Chicago during the twentieth century. He firmly believed that it was the racist clergyman who was “fighting the Church.” Falls was defending the Catholic Church and all her teachings.⁶³ If Falls had been a theologian, he probably would have given greater theological precision to his views on racism. Despite his theological imprecision, he held that racism, as practiced by Catholic clergy and laity, did more harm to the unity and well-being of the Church than sin.

In 1946, five years after Falls’s article on the mystical body of Christ in the *Chicago Catholic Worker*, a priest wrote an article for the *Interracial Review* in which he provided “overwhelming” proof that racism was a heresy based on a “theological error.”⁶⁴ He asserted that racism was a heresy because it denied the doctrines regarding all humanity being created in the divine image as well as Christ’s redemptive death for all. He concluded that when one denied any part of divine revelation, one “rejects every single item of Catholic doctrine.”⁶⁵ For this writer, racism was not a sin from which the faithful Christian repented, but represented a complete break from the teaching of Christ and the Church.

More recently, Cone provided an extended section on heresy in *God of the Oppressed*, though I will also incorporate some of Cone’s other works into this section. Cone defines heresy as “any activity or teaching that contradicts the liberating truth of

⁶³ Falls, “Honesty in Race-Relations,” 158-59.

⁶⁴ Merrill, “The Theology of Racism,” 56-57.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 56.

Christ.”⁶⁶ Traditional definitions of heresy focus on the denial of a doctrinal truth that is essential for the Christian faith. Cone’s approach to heresy is broader in the sense that it includes actions and narrower in the sense that it is concerned with one divine truth, “the liberating truth of Christ.” Cone admits that theology and ethics are not the same; nevertheless, they are “closely interrelated.”⁶⁷ The ethical dimension in his definition of heresy is also found in his classification of Christ. He defines Christ by his ethical work toward freedom and liberation instead of using metaphysical classifications.⁶⁸ In addition, he believes that heresy prompts one to mistake “untruth” for “truth” and to readily allow a separation of theory and praxis.⁶⁹ In other words, one cannot only believe that Christ came to liberate the oppressed, one must also struggle to make Christ’s mission present today. For Cone, heresy is not simply an issue for historians, but a real and present danger. Heresy needs to be addressed again in our time, “*not* for the purpose of witch-hunting, but for the sake of the Church’s life.”⁷⁰ The church’s life is at stake

⁶⁶ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 33. Although it is possible to perform an analysis of Cone’s thought on racism as heresy, the main thrust of his work more properly displays that racism is an idol that must be destroyed. Cone, “Preface to the 1986 Edition,” in *A Black Theology of Liberation*, xvii. It should be noted that Cone, Copeland, and Massingale prefer to classify racism as idolatry. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 61. Copeland, “Racism and the Vocation of the Christian Theologian,” 17; Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 109-10. Massingale, “Response: The Challenge of Idolatry and Ecclesial Identity,” in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times*, eds. Dennis M. Doyle, Timothy J. Furry, and Pascal D. Bazzell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 130-35. Although it is outside the scope of this dissertation to compare the merits of viewing racism as heresy versus idolatry, a few words concerning the difference between heresy and idolatry would be helpful. Generally speaking, heresy is concerned more with church unity, the hope of reconciling the heretic back into the Church, and involves a truth of the faith that is overemphasized to the detriment of the faith as a whole. Idolatry is concerned with the identity of the church (or a lack of church) because another object has replaced the centrality of God. With idolatry, conversion is necessary in order to return to the church. Undoubtedly, the notions of heresy and idolatry do have overlapping qualities.

⁶⁷ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 34.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶⁹ Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 10.

⁷⁰ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 34. Emphasis in the original.

because when the church lapses into heresy, the church ceases to be church. According to Cone, the church—the Christian community—has three tasks in order to justify the appellation of Christian: 1) to preach liberation; 2) to share in the struggle for liberation; and 3) to be a visible manifestation of the Gospel.⁷¹ When the three tasks are not all present, church is not present and the gathered community is in a heretical state. In other words, heresy is not merely notional, as the Code of Canon Law contends, but ethical—it involves praxis.

Based on his apprenticeship with Cone and other black theologians, Nilson also recognizes the heretical nature of racism. Nilson contends that racism is not simply a behavior that is discordant with the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, making it a solely an ethical problem, but also a “theological problem.”⁷² He also quotes a white German theologian who powerfully describes the heretical nature of racism:

The theological justification of racist structures must be condemned as heresy. This is not a matter of “heresy” in a figurative, ethical, sense. Heresies are a challenge to the essential being of the church, not simply the truth of a particular belief. Racism is a heresy in that basic sense of the word: under the appearance of credal legitimacy it undermines the unity of the church.⁷³

Although Copeland does not refer to racism as a heresy, the christological implications that she relates to racism have strong heretical overtones. For instance, Copeland calls believers to follow Christ, to be the body of Christ: “If my sister or brother is not at the table, we are not the flesh of Christ.”⁷⁴ In other words, to be the body

⁷¹ Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 138-39.

⁷² Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 56-57, 68.

⁷³ Nilson, *Hearing Past the Pain*, 69, quoting in Konrad Raiser, *Ecumenism in Transition: A Paradigm Shift in the Ecumenical Movement?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 10.

⁷⁴ Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 82.

of Christ, we must emulate Jesus' radical inclusivity with those whom society despises. Copeland makes the christological implications of racism quite clear: we are not Christ's flesh if we oppress others. Also, Copeland employs the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ: "a praxis of solidarity for human liberation... make[s] the mystical body of Christ publicly visible in our situation."⁷⁵

Based on the evidence collected here, it is fair to conclude that heresy is a better way to classify racism than sin because it directly attacks the integrity of the Church. Viewing racism as heresy implies that the Christian's faith is compromised when one assents to racist practices. Whereas a Christian lives a life of orthopraxis (or correct belief lived out in practice), a heretic lives a life of heteropraxis (or compromised belief lived out in corresponding incorrect practices). If we assert that racism is heretical, the next logical area to explore is how heresy has been addressed. By knowing how heresy has been addressed in the past, decisions about how to best approach racism from a theological perspective in the present can be formulated.

Traditional Responses to Heresy

This section will give a brief overview of responses to heresy in the Christian tradition. This section is not meant to serve as an exhaustive examination of the topic, but to provide an opportunity to incorporate the larger tradition into modern confrontations with the evil of racism. In order to bypass complications in current scholarship regarding the worth of certain heresies, the focus will be on responses to heresies that the broad consensus of Christian scholars still find troubling and about

⁷⁵ Ibid., 105.

which there is less debate regarding the possibility or usefulness of incorporation into orthodox theology.

As noted above, Valentinus and Marcion left the church in Rome to start their own churches. Their views were rejected by Roman Christians. During most of the second century, there was neither a firm authoritative apparatus nor a power structure in place to take any concrete actions against heretics.⁷⁶ Therefore, most actions against heretics took the form of writing—with the most well-known being St. Irenaeus of Lyons. Irenaeus hoped to bring heretics back to “the Truth” by changing their minds—or at least compelling them to change their current reasoning once it had been proven deficient and false.⁷⁷

Extraordinary changes in the manner in which heresy was addressed occurred after the Emperors Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan in 313, which granted religious freedom and the return of confiscated property to Christians. In the wake of this edict, Constantine desired a unified Church to create a more stable political environment and called the Council of Nicaea in May 325 to handle divisions in the Church during the time of the Arian heresy. Though it appears he favored Arianism, he brought the bishops together to decide for themselves.⁷⁸ In the end, the Council of Nicaea condemned Arianism and Constantine exiled those in authority or positions of influence, including Arius, who refused to accept the results of Nicaea. Despite the

⁷⁶ McGrath, *Heresy*, 132-33.

⁷⁷ St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against the Heresies*, Book 2, Chapter 11, Section 2. For my reading of this text in English, I used St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against the Heresies* (Book 2), trans. Dominic J. Unger (New York: The Newman Press, 2012), 37-38.

⁷⁸ McGrath, *Heresy*, 136-49.

condemnation, or anathema, canons were also passed that clearly stated that those who rejected heresy would be welcomed back.⁷⁹

After Constantine's edict, religious coercion became a factor in addressing heresy. St. Augustine (354-430) was the first theologian to write frankly about the issue and endorse coercion as a way to stop heresy and bring people back to the Catholic Church.⁸⁰ This issue came to the forefront for Augustine regarding the Donatists in North Africa, who believed that the church could not readmit Christians who denied their faith during the Diocletian persecution from 303 to 311. Initially, Augustine was against the use of force and promoted the idea that all people—both Donatists and Catholics—should be exposed to the arguments of both sides so that each person could make an informed decision for the truth.⁸¹ Later, particularly after Augustine had witnessed the ability of force to induce the acceptance of the Catholic viewpoint by Donatists, he took a very favorable stance towards coercion for religious purposes under specified circumstances and conditions. He supported the use of force by the imperial authority partly because he thought it was the only way for a large number of heretics to seriously consider the truth

⁷⁹ Ibid., 203. The condemnation can be found in the creed agreed upon by the council and a letter that was composed by the council for the Church of Alexandria. "The Nicene Creed," in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, series 2, vol. 14, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1890), 3; "The Synodal Letter," in *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 53. Canons eight and nineteen describe conditions for accepting back heretics, with the ordained normally being able to retain their position. "The Canons of the 318 Holy Fathers Assembled in the City of Nice, in Bithynia," in *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 19-20, 40.

⁸⁰ Louis J. Swift, *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1983), 110. For more information on Augustine's changing view of religious coercion, see P. R. L. Brown, "St. Augustine's Attitude to Religious Coercion," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 54 (1964): 107-16.

⁸¹ John Mark Mattox, *Saint Augustine and the Theory of Just War* (London: Continuum, 2006), 66. One could say that initially Augustine had a leaning toward moral suasion and the power of reason to rectify the situation.

of Catholicism. Augustine compared such conduct to a physician who is forced to treat a recalcitrant patient. He did admit that such actions should be carried out with loving restraint that is careful not to give way to malice or greed.⁸²

St. Jerome (347-420) had strong words against heretics. He believed that they needed to be cut out of the community as soon as they were noticed. Comparing them to cancer and dangerous hot embers, he stated:

[T]he cancer gradually festers in the body and, according to the familiar proverb, one sheep's disease pollutes the entire flock. Therefore, the ember must be extinguished as soon as it appears so that the house does not burn down. Yeast must be kept far from the batch [of flour] so that it does not spoil. Putrid flesh must be amputated so that the body does not rot. And the diseased animal must be sequestered from the sheepfolds so that the flocks do not die. Arius was one ember in Alexandria, but because he was not extinguished at once, his flame destroyed the entire city.⁸³

Although Jerome was prone to hyperbole, his point was clear: heresy is harmful, unacceptable, and cannot be allowed to flourish within the Church under any circumstance.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) lived during the Cathar heresy, which was a religious movement with a dualistic theology that was strongly entrenched in Southern France. To a large extent, Aquinas's order, the Dominicans, was founded with the purpose of preaching among the Cathars for conversion. Since Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* was written as a theology handbook for his order, many of whom would be

⁸² Mattox, *Saint Augustine and the Theory of Just War*, 67-69; St. Augustine, Letter 93, chapters 1-5, 12. This document can be found in English in St. Augustine, "Letter XCIII," in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, series 1, vol. 1, *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin, with a Sketch of his Life and Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 382-401.

⁸³ Jerome, *Commentarius in epistolam ad Galatas*, 5.9. Translation from *St. Jerome: Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Andrew Cain (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2010), 210-11.

preaching among the Cathars, his comments on heresy are not hypothetical.⁸⁴ After a heretic had rejected a number of pleas to return to the Church, they were to be excommunicated and handed over to the secular authorities for death. For Thomas, “if heretics be altogether uprooted by death, this is not contrary to our Lord’s command.”⁸⁵ Regarding a heretic that repented, he or she was always to be welcomed back into the Church, but after the first time, the penitent should also be handed over the secular authorities for death. This was to be done for the good of the weaker members of the faithful community who might be further scandalized and possibly lose their own salvation if the heretic fell back into error once again.⁸⁶

Especially in light of *Dignitatis humanae*,⁸⁷ the Second Vatican Council’s document on religious freedom, coercion in religious matters is no longer considered acceptable. The document repeatedly notes that the innate dignity of the human person is of greater importance than religious unity. Therefore, statements against the use of coercion in religious matters are reiterated numerous times.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the truths of

⁸⁴ Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, revised ed., trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 144-145.

⁸⁵ *STh*, II-II, Q. 11, art. 3, reply; answer 3. The translation is from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, vol. 32, *Consequences of Faith*, trans. and ed. Thomas Gilby, O. P., (Cambridge: Blackfriars, 1975), 89-91. The above quote is from the reply of the second article. All further translations of Aquinas from this source.

⁸⁶ *STh*, II-II, Q. 11, art. 4, reply, p. 93

⁸⁷ Second Vatican Council, Declaration of Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis humanae*, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html (accessed 2 June 2012).

⁸⁸ *Dignitatis humanae*, 1-4, 9-12.

the Church are still to be proclaimed in earnest, to the point of shedding one's own blood, but never the blood of another.⁸⁹

This notion echoes Falls's belief from the 1930s that racial justice should be worked toward "using every honest means of getting justice."⁹⁰ Such a stance included responses such as moral suasion and militant struggle, depending on the circumstances. Falls's view on the need for militant struggle would not change. In his 1962 memoir, he wrote: "I have always regarded the fight for human relations as warfare—warfare which broke out in battle after battle on the very same subject."⁹¹ Falls was obviously using warfare in a symbolic sense. Although racist heretics should never face violence for their actions, this overview demonstrates that the matter is serious enough that it needs to be addressed in a manner more confrontational than moral suasion. An assault on racism is required that will attend to its personal, social, cultural, and structural aspects.

It has been mentioned many times that the heresy of racism is a problem in the Catholic Church—among laity, nuns, priests, and even bishops. It is expected that Catholics live in an imperfect society in need of certain tools to aid in the betterment of society. But as this section reveals, heresy is something which not only affects society, but greatly harms the Church. The next section will appraise how one lives in a faith community with widespread heresy.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁰ Falls, letter to the editor, *Sign* 11, no. 11 (June 1932): 675.

⁹¹ AGF Box 1, Folder 13, disc 19-side 2, p. 6.

Tension of Living in a Heretical Church

Cone has always been suspicious of white churches, such as the Catholic Church, and does not have any intention of joining such a church. Nevertheless, he views the separation of white and black churches as a “scandal” that can only be rectified once both decide to “achieve their Christian identity only through an unqualified solidarity with the victims of oppression, seeing their struggles of liberation as God’s eschatological sign to make us all one.”⁹² He has also been “critical of black churches for their imitation of the white ones from which they are separated.”⁹³ He sees this similarity in the stress many black churches place on doctrinal confessions instead of liberation. In fact, “many have adopted the same attitude toward the poor as have the white churches... [and] are more concerned about buying and building new church structures than they are about feeding, clothing, and housing the poor.”⁹⁴

Massingale has a heartfelt and poignant section within his book about being in a racist Church that is entitled, “A Concluding Black Catholic Reflection: ‘Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.’”⁹⁵ He writes of the reality of white privilege in the Catholic Church, where there is a pervasive “racist” perspective that “European aesthetics, music, theology, and persons—and only these—are standard, normative,

⁹² Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 81-82.

⁹³ Ibid., 81

⁹⁴ Ibid., 122.

⁹⁵ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 78-82.

universal, and truly ‘Catholic.’”⁹⁶ Though this section ends only with questions regarding the issue of being a black Catholic in a white church, he later remarks that he has often been

weary to the depths of my soul and overwhelmed by the challenges of keeping my sanity in a white culture and its institutions. I have experienced such despair as a true “dark night” of sense, will, and spirit in which all I have to cling to is the naked faith that being a theologian in the Catholic Church is what God has called me to do.⁹⁷

Massingale believes that the voices of black Catholic theologians allow for the possibility in the American Catholic Church of a theology that is “truly ‘catholic’” and “provides an alternative model and/or needed corrective” for the Catholic Church.⁹⁸

Falls clearly struggled with being in a racist Church. On the one hand, he could not imagine voluntarily joining the Catholic Church because of its deeply ingrained racist practices from the level of lay person to bishop; and, on the other hand, Falls stated that he never left the Catholic Church because it “has given me the foundation, which has enabled me to fight [racism].”⁹⁹ The mystical body of Christ, which he saw, exemplified in the notion of a unified Church and society, prevented Falls from ever considering the creation of a segregated society separate from whites. It is worth mentioning that while

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 82, 167. He hopes in a future work to further navigate the notion of the “dark night” from an African American perspective. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 211. At present, Massingale’s project is in the form of an unpublished manuscript and is currently titled, “The Dark Night(s) of Malcolm X: Catholic Spirituality and African American Sanctity.” It was most recently presented at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, CA in April 2012.

⁹⁸ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 172-73.

⁹⁹ AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 506-07; Falls, interview with Sicius. The first part of the sentence is reference to the following quote of Falls that was given in the second chapter: “[I]t is very fortunate that I was born into the Roman Catholic Church because under no stretch of [the] imagination could I conceive that I ever voluntarily would have joined it because of the discrimination and segregation which existed.” AGF, Box 1, Folder 10, pp. 506-07.

Cone does not advocate a segregated society, he is very suspicious of integrated churches based on the past and current failures of these churches—which are normally white churches in actual practice—to promote racial justice.¹⁰⁰ In effect, Falls, like the black Catholic theologians covered, does not question the fundamental doctrines of the Church. These doctrines became a life-giving font for Falls in which he was able to find the basic tools and inspiration to confront racism. Nonetheless, his writings are saturated with the pain and agony caused by so many fellow Catholics being apathetic to the prophetic demands of these same doctrines and the person of Jesus Christ. Falls was not willing to sacrifice genuine Christian practices for the “beautiful liturgy” and sound doctrine. He wanted both and he focused his energy on sound theological praxis.¹⁰¹

For Falls and current black Catholic theologians there is also a strong attitude for inclusion. Falls found his reasons for inclusion in doctrines such as the mystical body of Christ. Any church that did not strive to include all peoples was not worthy of the name church. On the other hand, Massingale not only found an emphasis on universal inclusion in Catholic conceptions of eucharist and baptism, but in black Protestant theology with its emphasis on the welcome table and the beloved community.¹⁰² These notions have profound implications as correctives for the Catholic Church in becoming truly “catholic.” Copeland’s argument for integration is thoroughly based in the Catholic concept of “Eucharistic solidarity.” There is a strong connection between the body of Jesus Christ and the faithful bodies of his disciples—both black and white. There is also

¹⁰⁰ Cone, *For My People*, 34, 46-52; *Black Theology and Black Power*, 71-82; *Speaking the Truth*, 54-60, 143-47.

¹⁰¹ Falls, “The Communist Says: ‘Welcome, Negro Brother!’” p. 8.

¹⁰² Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 122-25, 132-43.

an ardent connection in “Eucharistic solidarity” to the eucharistic meal, for the “Eucharistic banquet re-orders us, re-members us, restores us, and makes us one.”¹⁰³

To a large extent, the tension present from living in a racist church is irreconcilable. Even though Catholic doctrine provides invaluable tools for opposing racism, the vocation to push one’s church to live out the Gospel is filled with frustration and constant rejection. For the Catholic struggling with this tension, the only undertaking that can bridge this contradiction is active struggle. With this task in mind, we move on to the next section, which explores the necessity for organized struggle and praxis in our work toward Catholic racial justice.

NECESSITY FOR ORGANIZED ACTIVE STRUGGLE & PRAXIS IN CATHOLIC RACIAL JUSTICE

From his life and writings, Falls illustrated a clear belief that meaningful change did not occur without active struggle. Of course, Falls did not randomly lash out in anger against the injustices he experienced and witnessed. He joined or gathered with a group of people, formed a plan that he thought had a possibility for success, and then executed that plan. Just as the Desmond and Emirbayer have observed, racial justice requires collective action and multiracial coalitions. This conviction was in contrast with John LaFarge, who was not against recourse to courts, judges, legislators, and working with non-Catholic groups per se, but placed the primary emphasis on moral suasion and educating whites.¹⁰⁴ Essentially, any work toward structural change through coalitions

¹⁰³ Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 126-28.

¹⁰⁴ LaFarge, *The Catholic Viewpoint on Race Relations*, 72.

was secondary and seemingly superfluous.¹⁰⁵ Falls had mixed results in his work for racial justice. Sometimes, as with the building of his home in Western Springs, he was successful. Other times, such as with trying to build an integrated neighborhood in Deerfield, he failed. Nevertheless, he learned from every success and failure and incorporated his trials and errors into more effectively addressing future problems.

Although Falls would have been unfamiliar with the term theological praxis, it is not anachronistic to say that Falls implicitly used this method.¹⁰⁶ Falls's praxis may be partially due to his being a medical doctor, a profession in which theory and action are in constant dialogue. Falls wrote a number of articles in which he tested innovative treatments on patients, analyzed the results, and then offered advice on future treatment.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, he allowed the racial injustice that he suffered and witnessed to inform his understanding of the mystical body of Christ. It was perhaps his personal experience of living in integrated neighborhoods that aided him in understanding the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ when he witnessed the unchristian character of housing covenants.

For Falls there could be no separation between doctrine and action. If one believed in the reality of Christ and the teachings of Christ and his Church, one was responsible for living out these doctrines in a life of Christian discipleship that almost

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 141.

¹⁰⁶ As Cone points out, all theology is contextual and, therefore, responds to contemporary concerns and circumstances. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 36-41.

¹⁰⁷ Falls, "Protein (Milk) Therapy of Pelvic Inflammations: Report of First Hundred Cases," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 20, no. 3 (July-September 1928): 117-21; "Management of Pulmonary Tuberculosis," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 47, no. 6 (November 1955): 399-402; "Ammonium Chloride and Novasurol: The Use of, as a Diuretic," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 19, no. 2 (April-June 1927): 65-67, 72-73.

always required personal sacrifice. In the work of Falls there was a fluid relationship between doctrine and practice, with each informing and enriching the other. Although the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ, which was popularized by Michel, was in regular use to promote lay participation in the cause of social justice, Falls applied the doctrine to his own context of fighting housing covenants in Catholic Chicago. Such an application deepened the meaning and application of the doctrine within an interracial context in which white Catholics benefited from oppression of their fellow Christians.

Furthermore, struggle is the constant companion of one truly dedicated to racial justice. Cone asserts that God is best known through “a participation of the whole person in the liberation struggle.”¹⁰⁸ This perspective leads Cone to state that the black experience, which he designates as “a black tradition of struggle,” must be the starting point for black Christians prior to the Bible. The Bible is an indispensable source for Christian thought, but it is secondary to the black experience of oppression. It is only through the lens of oppression that the Bible can meaningfully speak to the liberation that God is enacting in contemporary situations.¹⁰⁹

For Copeland, the experiences of Delille point to the actuality that “Christian witness demands an engagement with bodies, not their denial; a struggle with history, not surrender to it.”¹¹⁰ Her separation from the cultural practice of *plaçage* was an action against predetermined cultural expectations. Instead of reasoning with her culture to repent, her dedication to the education of free and enslaved African Americans offered an embarrassing witness to how Christians should have been living.

¹⁰⁸ Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 98.

¹⁰⁹ Cone, “Preface to the 1997 Edition,” *God of the Oppressed*, xi-xii.

¹¹⁰ Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 57.

In addition, Massingale states that for the black scholar, “‘speaking the truth’ is an activity engaged in, on behalf of, and in solidarity with a community-in-struggle.”¹¹¹

This is not surprising since Massingale sees struggle to be the one word that defines the African American experience in the United States.¹¹² If struggle characterizes the experience of blacks trying to simply survive, it undoubtedly describes the experience of any person laboring for authentic opportunities for African Americans.

FALLS AS A SIGN OF HOPE

Just as hope is an integral aspect of the Christian faith, it is also constitutive of the Catholic racial justice project. Falls was aware, in no uncertain terms, that one could not accomplish anything if one did not try. In an interview that Falls gave near the end of his life, he stated that he would often remind people in the various groups in which he participated that “if you are right, you don’t always lose.” He said this to combat the common attitude that the problem was unworkable and the solution was not worth trying.¹¹³ Despite writing very little on the notion of hope, Fall implicitly exuded hope. One could not dedicate one’s entire life to a cause that one felt was hopeless. Every campaign in which Falls was involved was joined under the assumption that there was a possibility of success. Hope also plays an important role in the theologians that have been covered.

¹¹¹ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 155.

¹¹² Ibid., 20.

¹¹³ Falls, interview by Troester.

Hope is an explicitly prevalent theme in the work of Cone. “Victory over evil is certain because God has taken up the cause of the oppressed.”¹¹⁴ Scripturally, Cone grounds hope in the exodus event and the resurrection of Christ. Because Jesus has been raised, African Americans do not need to fear death in their struggle for liberation—Christ has conquered death.¹¹⁵

Massingale dedicates a considerable amount of space to hope in his book on racial justice. For him, hope is a prerequisite on any journey that intends justice in an oppressive situation. Because the aim of hope runs counter to the dominant cultural order, it is even “subversive.”¹¹⁶ Often, in the African American experience, hope is implicitly present in the cries and songs of lament—similar to those found in the psalms of the Old Testament that cry out in pain regarding Israel’s contemporary situation, but firm in hope that God will correct the wrong.¹¹⁷

Hope also played a key role for Henriette Delille who, in 1836, wrote the following prayer in the opening pages of a prayer book that she used at mass: “I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I wish to live and die for God.”¹¹⁸ Copeland, in conflating this prayer with the life of Delille, proclaims that Delille lived a new way of being within the bounds of tepid Catholicism “with eschatological and situated hope.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 91.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 91, 120-21, 127-49.

¹¹⁶ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 145-47. Emphasis in the original.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 105-10, 147-49.

¹¹⁸ In the ordinal French, she wrote: “*Je Crois en Dieu. J’espère en Dieu. J’aime. Je v[eux] vivre et mourir pour Dieu.*” Henriette Delille, quoted in Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 27-28.

¹¹⁹ Copeland, *The Subversive Power of Love*, 66.

The relevance of hope must never be underemphasized. In addition to being an integral aspect of the Christian faith, the social sciences confirm its necessity in inspiring people to work for change. Hope must continue to be a part of any racial justice framework. Positive change can and does happen on this side of heaven. In the lives of Delille and Falls, we see that much was accomplished to bring dignity to the lives of African Americans, but that much is still unfinished. The reality of justice unrealized in race relations should not be cause for despair. The victories of the past witness to new and unforeseen possibilities. In other words, there have been many achievements in the past despite dire circumstances. The social sciences, as read by Falls, spoke to this reality.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation began with the hope of making the following three contributions: 1) draw attention to the necessity of African American sources and focusing on black agency in Catholic racial justice, 2) expose the life of Dr. Arthur Grand Pré Falls to a new generation of Catholics, and 3) deepen our current understanding of Catholic racial justice. Thanks in large part to Falls, this task has been accomplished. The life and writings of Falls are important components of the Catholic tradition that affirm much of the work being done by those few Catholic ethicists who are addressing racial injustice. Specifically, this dissertation used the life of Falls in order to verify the necessity of the notion of black agency and the use of African American sources. It then postulated a definition of Catholic racial justice inspired by Falls: *an organized struggle for the realization of the mystical body of Christ in the context of racial injustice in our society and within our Church*. This last chapter has scrutinized and explored certain aspects of

this definition—especially the implication of racism as a heresy. Allowing that more work should be done to confirm this proposition, the tentative assessment from this dissertation is that racism can be rightly called heretical.

The second and third chapters of this dissertation gave ample space to the life and writings of Falls. The insights reached in this chapter vindicate such a historical emphasis in an ethical dissertation and corroborate the need for more historical research in the area of African American Catholicism in order to further enrich the area of Catholic racial justice. Even though a doctrinal emphasis in ethics, as we see in Falls, can be an indication of an overly legalistic solution, Falls's theological praxis embodies how doctrines such as the mystical body of Christ can be dynamic guides for Christian discipleship.

As to whether this dissertation will be successful in introducing Falls to a new generation of Catholics is yet to be seen. This dissertation includes countless hours of research on the life and writings of Falls that has been collected and summarized in chapters two and three. But in order for this final goal to be successful, more work on Falls by this author and others will be required to ensure that his legacy can be communicated to the average Catholic in the pew. Communicating the principal truths embedded in the life and writings of Falls should not be difficult. Except when writing for medical journals, the work of Falls was not scholarly, but still reached a depth of importance that most scholars hope to one day reach.

AFTERWORD

Bill Bright, a white resident of Western Springs since 1973, got to know Falls better at St. John of the Cross Catholic Church in the late 1980s. Near the end of Falls time in Western Springs, they led a weekend retreat together called, “Christ Renews His Parish,” which is a national retreat program with the aim of bringing parishioners into closer relationship with Christ. While Falls was giving a presentation for one of the sessions, Bright explained that Falls “thought that we couldn’t hear him because we were all leaning forward” and he apologized for his weak voice. At this point, Bright interrupted him and said, “Dr. Falls, it’s not that we can’t hear you. It’s just that we want to hear every single syllable of what you’re saying.”¹²⁰ Falls still has something important to tell us that should keep us at the edge of our seats.

¹²⁰ Bright, interview by author.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note of Explanation & Organization

As this dissertation in Christian ethics relied heavily on archival material, the bibliography will be arranged in such a way as to highlight the archival material to make it easier for others to find primary sources for the life of Falls. I have begun by listing the archives that contain primary sources for Falls with a brief description of each archival collection and its contents. The following section presents citations in chronological order of every primary source for Falls that I discovered in the listed archives. The subsequent section lists published primary sources for Falls from journals, magazines, and newspapers.

The next section presents a list of archives that were used for secondary source material for the life of Falls. There is a brief description of each archive and the type of secondary material that was utilized from each of those collections. Next, a list of published materials that were used as secondary sources for the life of Falls are listed. This is followed by list of interviews that I performed for the dissertation. Except for my interview with Cyprian Davis and Bryan Massingale, which were concerned with ecclesial documents published in the United States, the remainder of the interviews were performed to fill in details regarding the life of Falls. The section after this focuses on published works that were used to inform historical background regarding the time in which Falls lived and worked.

The remainder of the bibliography does not have Falls as the focus. It begins with ecclesial documents that were cited for their focus on racial justice. This is followed by theological works that were cited because of their racial justice focus. Next, the contemporary sources that were employed in examining the social sciences are listed. This is followed by sources that were specifically used for the sections in chapter four that addressed the notions of sin and heresy in the Christian tradition. Lastly, items that did not into any other category are listed under Other Works

Archives Used as Primary Sources for Falls

Archdiocese of Chicago's Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center, Chicago.

This is the archives for the Archdiocese of Chicago. Pertaining to the dissertation, the archive includes correspondence between Falls and Cardinal Stritch, the record of Falls's baptism, material from the Catholic Interracial Council and other Archdiocesan initiatives concerning race. It also contains an interview with Edward Marciniak that was part of the PhD work of a Chicago priest.

Chicago Historical Society. Chicago Federation of Labor Collection, Chicago. 56.5 linear feet.

This collection includes minutes, correspondence, and files from the Chicago Federation of Labor from 1890 to 1983. There is one folder called “Negro and Civil Rights Items” that contains a letter from Falls to the Chicago Federation of Labor. It is from 12 August 1935 and identifies Falls as the secretary for the Joint Conference for the Defense of Ethiopia. This letter is not mentioned in the dissertation, but is cited below.

National Archives Building, Chicago.

This National Archives in Chicago is one of the regional repositories for federal court cases. Pertaining to the dissertation, it is notable for containing the suit that Falls and number of other African American doctors made against seventy-five percent of all the hospital corporations in the Chicago area: Robert G. Morris, Jr., M.D., et al. v. Chicago Hospital Council, et al., 61 C232, U.S. District Court, 1819-1999, Civil Case Files, 1938-1985, Record Group 21; National Archives Building, Chicago. There are a few sheets where Falls provides his own background and relates specific experiences of racism with Chicago hospitals. About 3,000 pages.

Raynor Memorial Libraries. Special Collections and University Archives. Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI. Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection. Over 200 cubic feet.

This collection focuses not only on the founders of the Catholic Worker movement, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, but includes writings, letters, pictures, newsletters, newspapers, and logbooks from Catholic Worker communities across the world. Pertaining to Falls, it has a number of letters written by Falls to persons at the New York Catholic Worker, a few letters that were written to Falls, and all of Falls’s published writings in the *New York Catholic Worker* and *Chicago Catholic Worker* newspapers.

Raynor Memorial Libraries. Special Collections and University Archives. Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI. Arthur G. Falls, Reminiscence. About 800 pages.

Its contents are the limited to most of the unpublished memoir manuscript that were donated to the archives by Falls’s niece, Vilma Childs. About 620 pages. There is also a copy of one missing section of the manuscript that is there with the permission of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture New York Public Library. About 180 pages.

Richard J. Daley Center. Archives Room 1113. Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chicago.

The Daley Center contains the court file for *Western Springs Park District v. Arthur Falls, et al.*, 52C 14741, 1 December 1952. This includes the record of all the court dates, motions, and a petition by signed by many of the residents to have Falls's home condemned for a new park.

Richard J. Daley Library. Special Collections and University Archives. University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL. Chicago Urban League Records, 1916-2000. 664 linear feet.

This collection includes minutes, reports, and correspondence from the Chicago Urban League. Falls was intimately involved with the Chicago Urban League from 1929 until 1936. During the 1940s and 1950s, he was again involved with League, but in a more peripheral manner. Unfortunately, records of the League during Falls's first involvement are sparse. He is mainly mentioned in certain reports. Additionally, the records contain almost no record of the De Saible Club. The collection also includes the records of groups with which the League worked closely like the Council Against Discrimination of Greater Chicago. There are three primary sources for Falls in this collection: a letter he sent to the Chicago Urban League from South America and two other letters that he sent as part of different groups of which the Chicago Urban League kept copies.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. New York Public Library, New York, NY. August Meier Papers. 74 linear feet.

The August Meier Papers includes the personal correspondence, academic work, conference papers, speeches, and research of August Meier (d. 2003), who was an expert in African American history. Included in this collection are about 300 pages from Falls's memoir. About 180 of these pages were not a part of the collection at Marquette University. With the permission of the Schomburg Center, copies of these pages have been included with the memoir at Marquette.

Western Springs Department of Community Development, Western Springs, IL. One folder of microfiche.

This site has a folder that contains microfiche copies of letters and permits pertaining to Falls's 4812 Fair Elms Avenue address in Western Springs. Included in this are letters that Falls wrote the department over the years as well as soil sample tests that were sent to the department by the company that Falls had hired to perform the tests.

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Secondary Sources for the Life of Falls in Archives

Amistad Research Center. Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. Henry Hugh Proctor and Adeline L. Davis Papers 1989 Addendum, 1919-1984. Unprocessed.

This collection includes a couple dozen letters that Falls's wife, Lillian, wrote to her sisters. These letters are mostly from the last decade of Lillian's life and were helpful in adding a few minor details to the dissertation.

Amistad Research Center. Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, 1920-1948. 3.75 linear feet.

This collection includes minutes, reports, and correspondence from members of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which was an endowed foundation that donated monies to public schools, colleges, Jewish charities, as well as a number of persons and institutions concerned with the plight of African Americans. The one citation from this collection in the dissertation is a letter to Falls from the president of the fund who was also chairman of the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations

Archdiocese of Chicago's Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center, Chicago.

This is the archives for the Archdiocese of Chicago. Pertaining to the dissertation, the archive includes correspondence between Falls and Cardinal Stritch, the record of Falls's baptism, material from the Catholic Interracial Council and other Archdiocesan initiatives concerning race. It also contains an interview with Edward Marciniak that was part of the PhD work of a Chicago priest.

Chicago Board of Education Archives. 125 S. Clark Street, 6th Floor, Chicago.

This archive includes minutes from the meetings of the Chicago Board of Education and old year books. The main source of information used for the dissertation were the Proceedings of the Chicago Board of Education during the late 1960s when Falls was working with groups to provide opportunities for poor students to get into medical school. The archive also had a copy of a Englewood High School yearbook from 1918 that included Falls senior photo.

Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

The Chicago Historical Society is located in the Chicago History Museum and has a substantial collection concerning anything important to the history of Chicago. Areas of the collection that are of importance for this work include files for Friendship House, a book concerning Chicago's 1960 Clergy Conference on Race, and the monthly newsletters of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination.

Credit Union National Association Archives (CUNA). Located at the CUNA offices in Madison, WI. Access to records available upon request: 608-231-4104.

The CUNA archives do not contain the archives of individual credit unions, but of the national association. This includes minutes, financial statements, and their newsletter, Credit Union Bridge. This archive was utilized to discover more about the People's Co-op Credit Union, with which Falls was involved. Information about this credit union was available in their newsletter. To the best of my knowledge, Falls is not specifically mentioned in their archives, but there is also no digital search engine with which this can be verified.

Madonna House Archive. Catherine de Hueck Doherty's Correspondence, Combermere, Canada.

This archive is located at Madonna House, which is a lay-training center that was founded in 1947 by Catherine Doherty. The archives for Catherine Doherty and Friendship House are held there. The lone letter cited from this archive was one that was written to Doherty and mentioned Falls. This letter was shared with me by Karen Johnson.

Moorland-Springarn Research Center, Washington, DC. Howard University. Thomas Wyatt Turner Papers. 9.5 linear feet.

This collection includes Dr. Turner's correspondence, newspaper clippings, writings, and documents relating to his involvement in the Federated Colored Catholics, Hampton Institute, and Howard University. The only reference to this collection was the following document: "Recommendations of the Federated Colored Catholics of Chicago. Changes in the Revised Constitution Submitted by the Committee on the Revision of the Constitution." This document was shared with me by Karen Johnson.

Raynor Memorial Libraries. Special Collections and University Archives. Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI. Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection. Over 200 cubic feet.

This collection focuses not only on the founders of the Catholic Worker movement, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, but also includes writings, letters, pictures, newsletters, newspapers, and logbooks from Catholic Worker communities across the world. Pertaining to Falls, it has a number of letters written by Falls to persons at the New York Catholic Worker, a few letters that were written to Falls, and all of Falls's published writings in the *New York Catholic Worker* and *Chicago Catholic Worker* newspapers.

Richard J. Daley Center. Archives Room 1113. Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chicago.

The Daley Center contains the court file for Western Springs Park District v. Arthur Falls, et al., 52C 14741, 1 December 1952. This includes the record of all the court dates, motions, and the petition by signed by many of the residents to have Falls's home condemned for a new park.

Richard J. Daley Library. Special Collections and University Archives. University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL. Chicago Urban League Records, 1916-2000. 664 linear feet.

This collection includes minutes, reports, and correspondence from the Chicago Urban League. The collection includes the records of groups with which the League was involved like the Council Against Discrimination of Greater Chicago. Falls was intimately involved with the Chicago Urban League from 1929 until 1936. During the 1940s and 1950s, he was again involved with League, but in a more peripheral manner. Unfortunately, records of the League during Falls's first involvement with the League are sparse. He is mainly mentioned in certain reports. Additionally, the collection contain almost no record of the De Saible Club.

National Archives Building, Chicago.

This National Archives in Chicago is one of the regional repositories for federal court cases. Pertaining to the dissertation, it is notable for containing the suit that Falls and a number of other African American doctors made against seventy-five percent of all the hospital corporations in the Chicago area: Robert G. Morris, Jr., M.D., et al. v. Chicago Hospital Council, et al., 61 C232, U.S. District Court, 1819-1999, Civil Case Files, 1938-1985, Record Group 21; National Archives Building, Chicago. About 3,000 pages.

St. John of the Cross Catholic Church, Western Springs, IL.

The parish, of which Falls was a founding member in 1960 and served on its parish council, contains almost all of the bulletins for the parish dating back to its founding. They also have a commemorative booklet from the founding of the parish. Unfortunately, they have not archived minutes from the parish council or other parish groups.

Western Springs Department of Community Development, Western Springs, IL. One folder of microfiche.

This site has a folder that contains microfiche copies of letters and permits pertaining to Falls's 4812 Fair Elms Avenue address in Western Springs. Included are letters that Falls wrote the department over the years as well as soil sample tests that were sent to the department by the company that Falls had hired to perform the tests.

Western Springs Historical Society, Western Springs, IL.

This site contains some basic information on Falls and a couple dozen newspaper clippings about Falls. Unfortunately, many of the newspaper clippings only have a publication date written on them and omit the name of the newspaper. It also contains a brief history of Falls's purchase of property in Western Springs that was composed by the Deerfield Citizens for Human Rights. Falls integrated Western Springs after a long legal battle to prevent his home from being condemned in 1953. He lived there for over forty years.

Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI. Congress on Racial Equality Collection. 43.5 cubic feet.

This collection includes minutes, reports, and correspondence. Despite the size of the collection, the majority of material in the collection is from the period 1959-1964, when the group received most of its national attention. Falls's primary involvement was in the period 1941-1943, when the group first began. The material for this period is very sparse with only one document that cites Falls, which was also cited in the dissertation.

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