Extraordinary People : All Saints' and the Civil Rights Movement

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I. Introduction.

Some people stay on the periphery of major events—close but not really involved.

In late 1953, my older brother and I took over an *Atlanta Journal* paper route in College Park. On Monday afternoon, May 17, 1954, I picked up my *Journals* from the basement of Pup's drugstore and headed on my bike down West Lyle Rd. I kept noticing the headline; the biggest and boldest I had ever seen--larger than the one when the Korean War had ended in 1953. I read the lead story about the Supreme Court deciding *Brown v. Board of Education*. I think I knew there were segregated schools, but I had not thought about the subject.

On January 9, 1961, I was a sophomore at Georgia, standing on a sidewalk in Athens, in front of the C-J building; and down the sidewalk came a small group of African-Americans walking with Dean of Men William Tate. I later knew I had been looking at Charlayne Hunter, Hamilton Holmes, Horace Ward and Vernon Jordan (all 6 feet, 5 inches of him) —the two black students and their lawyers heading to the Journalism building to register Charlayne Hunter for her first day of classes. The University of Georgia was being desegregated before my eyes. The administration, cowering in their offices in fear of offending powerful politicians, left Dean Tate all alone to handle the situation—no security, no help of any type.

In the summer of 1964, I was a Capitol Policeman in Washington and worked the hallways outside the Senate chamber, where the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that opened public accommodations in the South to blacks, was being debated and being fought to the end by Georgia's Senators Talmadge and Russell. The excitement and tension level was high, with President Johnson pushing for passage with all his famed talent for persuasion. When Republican Senator Everett Dirksen delivered enough Republican votes for passage to defeat the Southern filibuster, I was just outside the Senate chamber.

When it comes to the civil rights movement, your speaker is the quintessential peripheralist.

II. The Past.

On April 4, 1916, the vestry of All Saints' voted to donate the plate offering on Sunday, April 16, to the Ku Klux Klan.[1] The minutes of the May 1916 All Saints' vestry meeting report that $12.38 was thus collected and donated to the Klan.[2]

We are all creatures of our time and, in 1916, even the people at this good place were. But some few break out of the confines of time; and, if they do so for good, they are extraordinary people. We will look at All Saints' and the civil rights movement

through the prism of three extraordinary people in the life of All Saints': Elbert Tuttle, Ralph McGill and Frank Ross.

Unlike your speaker, these three did not hover on the periphery of the greatest moral issue of their day.

In talking about Frank Ross, I will also talk about All Saints' in general during the height of the civil rights movement.

III. Elbert Parr Tuttle.

Elbert Parr Tuttle was born in 1897 in California and lived his early years in Hawaii and Washington, D.C.[3] Judge Tuttle often told a story about his mother one afternoon when the family was living in Washington. He was about 10 years old and was sitting with his mother on their front porch. They watched a bus drive by a black woman who was waiting at a bus stop. A second bus drove by without stopping. Tuttle's mother went inside, put on her hat and walked to the bus stop to stand by the black woman. The next bus stopped. The black woman got on, and Mrs. Tuttle returned to her porch. She said nothing to her son who watched the entire episode.[4] He said he never forgot it.

Tuttle attended Cornell, then served in the Army in World War I, and returned to Cornell for law school, during which time he married Sara Sutherland of Jacksonville, Florida. He graduated first in his law school class.[5] Tuttle and his brother-in-law, Edward Sutherland, started a law firm in Atlanta and Washington, a firm now known as Sutherland, Asbill and Brennan. Elbert Tuttle was 44 when he turned down a military desk job to serve as commander of a field artillery battalion in the Pacific Theater in World War II. He was wounded in the head, back, hand and leg in a Japanese night attack in 1945 on an island near Okinawa. He later became a Brigadier General in the National Guard.[6]

In Atlanta, in the midst of a not unusual commercial practice, Elbert Tuttle took on unpopular *pro bono* cases. In 1931, he made an unsuccessful effort to keep Georgia from executing a black man convicted of raping a white woman. Tuttle's National Guard unit had been called out to Elberton to hold back a lynch mob, and Tuttle became convinced of the black man's innocence while on guard duty.[7] In another case, he appealed the inciting insurrection conviction of a black Communist from New York who had been sentenced to 20 years on a Georgia chain gang for passing out Communist literature at the Atlanta Post Office. The appeal to the very conservative Georgia Supreme Court failed (his partner Randolph Thrower remarked that in these cases Elbert Tuttle "always lost in the Georgia Supreme Court")[8] The United States Supreme Court overturned the conviction and sentence by a 5 to 4 vote.[9] Tuttle also prevailed in a United States Supreme Court case in 1938 that established the right to counsel in criminal cases in federal court, 25 years before that right was extended to state courts.[10] And that case alone has been favorably cited hundreds of times.[11]

An Eisenhower Republican, Tuttle was made General Counsel of the Treasury Department in 1953 and, in 1954, shortly after *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided by the Supreme Court, he was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which then included Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas—all the major battlegrounds of the school desegregation wars.[12] During his years on the court, he wrote 1,400 opinions, and served as Chief Judge from 1961 to 1968.

Judge Tuttle was thus thrust, in the words of Chief Justice Earl Warren, "in the eye of the storm". [13]

In large part what this meant was beating on recalcitrant federal district court judges, especially in Mississippi, who failed or refused to follow Supreme Court and Fifth Circuit rulings on school desegregation. For example, in January 1961, Judge Bootle in Macon ended 18 months of jurisprudential obfuscation by the State of Georgia and ordered the admission of Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes to the University of Georgia. But just as they were enrolling, he granted a stay of his order while the state appealed—this had the effect of delaying their admission for at least another quarter and probably longer. The stay was granted in Macon at about 11am on January 9. The students' lawyers, Donald Hollowell and Constance Baker Motley, drove straight to Atlanta to see Judge Tuttle. At 2:32 pm, he dissolved the stay and ordered the immediate admission of Hunter and Holmes.[14] Of that moment, Charlayne Hunter wrote, "At that moment, we loved Judge Tuttle and, with warmth for him in our hearts, rushed back to the University to complete our registration."[15]

Two years later on May 22, 1963 a local federal judge in Birmingham upheld a decision by the Birmingham School Board to expel about 1,000 black students for participating in demonstrations against segregation. It only took a few hours that same day for Judge Tuttle in Atlanta to reverse the Birmingham judge and strongly condemn the Birmingham School Board for expelling students who chose to exercise a constitutional right.[16] The Fifth Circuit became a great constitutional court, and Judge Tuttle said: "I think we largely have to thank the black plaintiffs for that."[17]

Up until the late 1950's, Judge and Mrs. Tuttle attended the Peachtree Christian Church, across from the Temple. The minister, one Robert Burns, was known to be "hard-hearted" about African-Americans and opposed to integrating the church.[18] One Sunday in an adult Sunday School class, Judge Tuttle asked the minister what he would do if a black person at invitation time came forward to join the church. The minister responded that he would take him into his study and talk to him—as opposed to just letting him join the church. "We left and never went back", Judge Tuttle told an All Saints' priest later.[19] The Tuttles moved to All Saints'. Judge Tuttle was elected to the vestry in late 1966, together with Ralph McGill.[20]

I have my own Judge Tuttle story. In 1967 when I was a brand new lawyer, we lived in a duplex on Inman Circle in Ansley Park. I went to work on the bus, and the bus stop was in front of Judge Tuttle's home. I would stand at the bus stop, often with one or two other people, as normal traffic of people driving to work flowed by. If he was in Atlanta, Judge Tuttle would come out of his driveway between 7:30 and 8, stop in front of us, ask if we were going downtown and invite us to ride with him. So on a number of mornings, brand new lawyer Miller was chauffeured to work by arguably the most important federal judge in America.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter awarded Judge Tuttle the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He called Tuttle " a true judicial hero" who had "helped make the Constitutional principle of equal protection a reality in American life." The *Atlanta Constitution* called Judge Tuttle, "perhaps the most influential civil rights judge in Southern history."[21]

The most moving tribute came not from President Carter or the Atlanta paper. When Judge Tuttle died in June 1996, at the age of 98, his memorial service at All Saints'

was filled to the brim with judges and civil rights figures—Andrew Young, Maynard Jackson and many others. I stood in the back as an usher while Congressman John Lewis gave a eulogy. Lewis, who had been jailed and beaten on many occasions during the 1960's, said that no matter how many Alabama or Mississippi sheriffs and police chiefs threw him and his demonstrators in jail, "We always knew Judge Tuttle in Atlanta would protect us."[22]

IV. Ralph McGill.

Ralph Waldo Emerson McGill was born on February 5, 1898, about 8 miles from Soddy, Tennessee. Soddy was about 30 miles from Chattanooga. The "Waldo" was soon discarded "by something like mutual consent"[23]. His father had changed *his* name from Benjamin Wallace McGill to Benjamin Franklin McGill, so he approved of his son's famous name. The town of Soddy now lies at the bottom of a Tennessee Valley Authority lake.[24]

McGill was raised in Chattanooga, attended the McCallie School and enrolled in Vanderbilt in 1917. He was a tackle on the football team but left school in 1918 following America's entry into World War I to join the Marines. The war ended before he was sent overseas, and in 1919 he reenrolled in Vanderbilt and rejoined the football team. Vanderbilt suspended McGill in 1922, shortly before graduation, for an offending column in the school paper plus the prank of sending invitations to some ladies of the night to attend a competing fraternity's prom.[25] He could have gone back and finished his degree, but by then he was a sports reporter on the *Nashville Banner* and had lost interest in school.

In 1929 he married Mary Elizabeth Leonard and moved to Atlanta to become a sports editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*. In 1938, he was named executive editor of the *Constitution* and later became editor and then publisher.

McGill and Mary Elizabeth had a daughter who died at two days of age in 1936, and a daughter, Virginia, who died of leukemia at Egleston Hospital at the age of five in 1938. Their son, Ralph McGill, Jr. was born in April 1945.

After years of not attending church, Ralph, Mary Elizabeth were confirmed and with Ralph, Jr. joined the Cathedral of St. Philip in 1953. McGill was soon elected to the vestry. He called it 'the most curious appointment since Caligula made his horse a consul."[26] In 1962, after years of declining health, Mary Elizabeth died. The next year Ralph McGill left the Cathedral because of the Lovett School "flap"—of which much more later—and joined All Saints', mainly because he liked what Frank Ross had to say.[27]

McGill was elected to the vestry in late 1966 together with Judge Tuttle. By then he had met our member, Dr. Mary Lynn Morgan, a pediatric dentist; and she, of course, is still a member of All Saints'. They were married at All Saints' in 1967.

The dry recitation is over. He was a good man. One former staff clergy tells the story of a Ralph McGill speech to the combined Canterbury groups of Georgia Tech, Agnes Scott and the Atlanta University Center, held at All Saints'. The meeting was also attended by one Frances Brunton, a mentally ill man whom Frank Ross let live in the scout hut that was then on the property. Frances was well known to parishioners and to

reporters at McGill's office downtown. Frances would show up there periodically and be given a few dollars by McGill, Harold Martin, Celestine Sibley and others. In any event, McGill had an early flight the next morning, and so the priest hustled him down the parish house stairs to the exit even though the students would have asked questions for hours. Near the bottom of the stairs, McGill turned around, went back up, walked over to Frances Brunton and unobtrusively slipped him a few dollars. Only then did McGill leave the parish house.[28]

He was a voracious reader, with an equally large and acute memory. He read three books a week. Of his memory, Mary Lynn said, " He could read a historical marker after he had gone by it."[29]

As you know, Ralph McGill was and is best known for his daily column that appeared for many years on the first page of the *Constitution*. The *Constitution* once took a reader survey and found McGill was the most read and also the most hated of all its columnists.[30] And in the Deep South from the 1930's to the 1960's, the only way to win both those titles was to write about race, segregation and civil rights. And write about them he did. He was a moderate, but he forced the South into a discourse on race long before most other whites wanted such a discourse. One of his biographers has written:

> "There is room for debate about McGill's place in the great movement for civil rights in the segregated South. But there is no doubt that his daily columns, focusing frequently on the race issue and an 'honest facing up to facts' thrust the issue into the arena of public discourse. When all is considered, he was seldom far ahead of his readers, although it seemed so…."[31]

In the 1940's he did not advocate an end to segregation but instead wrote about the failure of "separate but equal" to be truly equal and the dishonesty inherent in claiming schools and facilities under segregation were in fact equal. After 1954 he in effect advocated the end of segregation by urging his readers to "… ignore frenetic demagogues and white citizens' councils and instead obey… the law laid down by the Supreme Court" in *Brown v. Board of Education*. [32] Not surprisingly, the sit-ins that came to Atlanta in the Spring of 1960 were a real problem for McGill, as were the passive resistance tactics of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He somehow had to take years of arguing to whites that they had to obey the law and come to terms with a movement that was, for a good end, openly breaking the law. He did, but it was not an easy transition.[33]

John Egerton, in his book, *Speak Now Against the Day*, noted McGill's ability to change: "…what set Ralph McGill apart from…so many other homegrown white liberals…was simply that McGill managed somehow over time to change his mind…and grow into a fuller understanding of what democracy and social justice meant and what they required of him."[34] McGill soon realized that King was good for the South. He wrote this in a column for a New York newspaper during King's Birmingham protest in 1963:

> "One of these days the South, even Birmingham, will be grateful to Dr. King. Had a real hater …come along with Dr. King's power of speech and personality, the South long ago would have been bloodstained."[35]

McGill knew that the rabble rousers, the haters would not be able to confine to black people the violence they so loudly urged in the 1950's and 1960's. When the Temple in Atlanta was bombed in October 1958, he wrote this:

> "Let us face the facts. This is a harvest. It is the crop of things sown.
>
> It is the harvest of defiance of courts and the encouragement of citizens to defy law on the part of many Southern politicians.
>
> This too is a harvest of those so-called Christian ministers who have chosen to preach hate instead of compassion.
>
> You do not preach and encourage hatred of the Negro and hope to restrict it to that field. … When the wolves are loosed on one people, then no one is safe."[36]

This column was particularly cited when McGill won the 1959 Pulitzer Prize, long overdue, for editorial writing.[37] McGill went on to be awarded in 1964, 16 years before Judge Tuttle, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He was in a distinguished group who received the medal that year—Carl Sandburg, Walter Lippmann, Edward R. Murrow, John Steinbeck and Walt Disney.[38]

McGill did not spare the church in his litany of who planted seeds that led to the harvest he described. He wrote that too many Episcopal parishes had become "merely gymnasiums where we exercise with the reading of the Book of Common Prayer, neither sweating too hard nor breathing hard in the stuffy air of sanctity."[39] His more specific comments about the church's role in civil rights and race were equally as pointed. He wrote, "…there is no blinking the fact that in general the Christian church has been either in retreat or standing afar off wringing its hands in an agony of spirit and guilt."[40]

When Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed in Memphis in April, 1968, McGill wrote a piece that in some ways echoes a 1964 Frank Ross sermon I will talk about later. McGill wrote:

> "White slaves killed Dr. Martin Luther King in Memphis. At the moment the trigger man fired, Martin Luther King was the free man. The white killer (or killers) was a slave to fear, a slave to his own sense of inferiority, a slave to hatred, a slave to all the bloody instincts that surge in a brain when a human being decides to become a beast…..It is something of an irony that Dr. King was free and was hated by so many slaves."[41]

Hearing those words, one can understand why the all-black skycaps, when handling Ralph McGill's bags at the airport, always refused a tip. They knew what he had already done for them.[42]

If many blacks were appreciative of McGill's writing and work, the same could not be said for many whites. Thugs shot up the mailbox of his home on Piedmont Road. They dumped bags of trash on his lawn. They shot a 22-caliber bullet through a front window. Once, during the desegregation of the University of Georgia, his family received 19 abusive phone calls between 7:30 pm and 9 pm. To top it off, here are some headlines from the Georgia equivalent of the White Citizens Council newspaper: October 1957—"Ralph McGill Menace to Georgia: South's Worst Foe Since Thad Stevens"; November

1957—"Ralph McGill Deliberately Lies Again; Tries To Scare South into Race Mixing"; March 1959—"Ralph McGill is Just a Carpetbagger"; and January 1960—"Rastus McGill, Atlanta Constitution, Led People of Atlanta into a Boghole."[43] There was even a bomb threat phoned in to Frank Ross's office just before McGill's funeral.[44]

Ralph McGill died quickly on February 3, 1969, while he and Mary Lynn were dining with friends. The funeral on February 5, his birthday, attracted the high and mighty like former Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Senator Herman Talmadge, and Mayor Ivan Allen and a like number of black maids and yardmen. Frank Ross presided; and, at Frank's request, The Rev. Sam Williams, black pastor of the Friendship Baptist Church, gave the eulogy. After the burial at Westview Cemetery, one last mourner lingered, an elderly African-American woman. She said, "I came on the bus and got here late. I think I'll stay just a minute longer."[45]

The tributes to Ralph McGill were many and eloquent. But I think none tops what Frank Ross wrote in the All Saints' bulletin on the Sunday following McGill's death:

> "In the death of Ralph McGill our city has lost one of its brave and courageous souls. Ralph McGill for so long was a voice crying in the wilderness of our past, calling us to a new world, speaking of justice and the breaking down of needless barriers between people. We were honored to have had him in our midst, and our lives are richer because of him. May his soul rest in peace. FMR".[46]

V. Frank Ross, All Saints' and the Civil Rights Movement.

A. Frank Ross.

Frank Mason Ross, who led All Saints' through the change wrought by the civil rights movement, was born on April 14, 1925, into a banking family in Wilmington, North Carolina. Wilmington is in the eastern, coastal and very conservative part of North Carolina and was and is an unlikely homeplace for a white preacher outspoken on civil rights. Ross graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1947, following a year in the army after World War II. He then joined the bank in Wilmington that had been founded by his by then late father. He joined the country club. He said of that time, "something was missing"; and he entered seminary at Sewanee in 1948. He graduated in 1951, was ordained a deacon and then a priest. He first served three small parishes in eastern North Carolina and then became assistant rector of St. John's Church, Charleston, West Virginia, in 1952. He moved to St. James Church in Alexandria, Louisiana, in 1954 and came to All Saints' as associate rector to Milton Wood in 1956. In 1953, Frank married Kitty (Katherine Fitzhugh Ficklen) of Charleston, West Virginia. They had two sons, Nelson and Fitzhugh.[47] Later, Ross's personal life adversely affected his relationship with our congregation, but that is not a subject of this talk.

In October 1960, Milton Wood resigned as rector of All Saints' for health reasons. The vestry asked Frank, who had received a call to be rector of another church, to serve "temporarily" as Acting Rector. That same month a Calling Committee (the term "Search Committee" came later) was appointed.[48] Two months later, in December,

the Calling Committee reported to the vestry that it had considered 47 candidates, had reviewed 14 of these carefully and had interviewed 5 candidates in person. The Calling Committee decided that two of the candidates were well qualified, but it unanimously recommended Frank Ross as its choice. The vestry unanimously agreed and, on January 1, 1961, The Rev. Frank M. Ross began his 19 years of service as our rector.[49]

For our purposes, it is important to put that call to All Saints' in context. In January 1959, Governor Ernest Vandiver, in his inaugural address, had pledged that "not one, no not one" black child would ever go to a public school with a white child. In February 1960, the sit-in movement started in Greensboro, North Carolina, and spread to Atlanta in the Spring of 1960. Almost every day in 1960 and into 1961, the lunch counters and restaurants in downtown Atlanta would be closed when African-American Atlanta University Center students tried to eat at those establishments. Desperate for a way out of his "not one, no not one" speech, Governor Vandiver in 1960 had asked John A. Sibley, father of our member Jimmy Sibley, to head a commission that would hold hearings around the state to determine whether the people really did want to close the public schools rather than desegregate them. The Sibley Commission reported that a majority did not want to close the schools, but state law at that time cut off all government funds from any desegregated school. In January 1961, nine days after Frank Ross became rector of All Saints', the University of Georgia was desegregated, thanks to Judge Tuttle; and this was the first public facility desegregated in the State of Georgia. The Atlanta public school system became the first such system in Georgia to be desegregated (admittedly on a token basis), eight months after Frank became rector of All Saints.

It was an atmosphere and a time made for Frank Ross.

Some years ago, I asked some people who were on the vestry that elected Ross as rector if they knew or suspected how outspoken he would be on civil rights and race. The then lone surviving member of the Calling Committee said, "I never gave it a thought; I just liked Frank Ross."[50] Other members of the vestry, and former members, said that they probably knew what Ross's views on civil rights were but they did not know how outspoken he would be.[51] Not being aware of how outspoken Ross would be, one then vestry member said that "a lot found out to their sorrow" that they really did not like Frank Ross.[52]

What made our new rector that way? One former associate says that Frank Ross viewed his role, not as one of taking to the barricades, but instead to educate and minister to the members of the congregation, saying "Things are changing. Do not be afraid. No matter what happens, you'll be all right."[53] Ross would meet with women's chapters and say, "This change is coming. It is the future; and we all need to adjust to it."[54] Ross some years later did "take to the barricades" by marching for civil rights; but, as he saw it, it was not his first duty. In 1980, Ross told a reporter for *The Atlanta Constitution* when he decided to be a demonstrator: "I decided to get involved when I saw a newspaper picture showing the ushers of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Selma, Alabama, standing on the front steps of the church, keeping blacks out. I remember how angry that made me and I didn't want people thinking that all Episcopal churches were that way, so I joined a civil rights march in downtown Atlanta."[55]

Frank Ross did not educate and minister lightly, however. As one former Senior Warden said to me in 2002, "He had more than a bit of the provocateur in him"; and "he

seemed to enjoy keeping things stirred up". He also said, "Frank Ross could turn any gospel lesson into a civil rights sermon."[56] Ross told his staff that he would be the "lightning rod" for people who were upset with what the clergy were saying, and that the other priests should just keep doing "their thing".[57]

Here is an example of the stirring-up provocateur in action. In 1965 or somewhat later, Atlanta Bishop Randolph Claiborne held a regular meeting of diocesan clergy. When it came time for questions, Ross's young assistant, The Rev. Walter Smith, raised his hand and asked Bishop Claiborne what he and the clergy were going to do about the private club memberships held by many of the clergy. All those private clubs were segregated at the time. Somewhat coldly, Bishop Claiborne said the question was out of order because Walter Smith was an assistant and only rectors could ask questions at these meetings. Ross immediately raised his hand and asked precisely the same question. The answer is not recorded.[58] [Dean David Collins later said he would keep his private club memberships because it was the duty of a priest "to go among the sinners."]

B. All Saints' and the Civil Rights Movement.

1. The Ministers' Manifestos.

One of the first stirrings by white clergy in Atlanta was the Ministers' Manisfesto signed by 80 Atlanta Protestant clergy and reported in the Atlanta papers on November 3, 1957.[59] Our then rector, Milton Wood, was one of the eight draftsmen of the manifesto.[60] With the gift of hindsight, it was a fairly mild document, calling for people to obey the law and to accept school desegregation when it came. It also called for preservation of freedom of speech and preservation of the public school system. Milton Wood signed it, Frank Ross signed it and, interesting in light of what would happen in 1963, Alfred Hardman, Dean of the Cathedral, signed. One year later a similar manifesto was published, this time signed by 312 white Atlanta ministers and rabbis, including Wood, Ross and Dean Hardman. It called for pretty much the same thing.[61] It was hardly a radical document—the ministers wrote,

> "We do not believe in the wisdom of massive integration and are sincerely opposed to the amalgamation of the races….There are some areas in which some integration in schools at this time would be possible without insurmountable difficulty…while there are other areas where such integration would involve needless hardship and grave danger."

My guess is that the "grave danger" being referred to is for black students.

Not all white clergy in Atlanta were so enlightened. Some months before the second manifesto was issued, 53 Atlanta ministers formed the Evangelical Christian Council and issued a statement signed by all stating that integration of the schools is "satanic, unconstitutional and one of the main objectives of the Communist Party."[62] Competing rhetoric like that makes the ministers' manifestos seem more courageous than one might think using only hindsight.

The very real fear that the public schools might be closed rather than face desegregation led some to want to have church facilities ready for use upon such an

event. The All Saints' vestry discussed the matter at its December 1958 meeting; and Milton Wood reported that at a diocesan clergy meeting in December Frank Ross had proposed that a clergy committee be formed to determine a course of action "in the event of a crisis." The resolution passed, but the committee passed into apparent obscurity.[63]

2. Law and Order Sunday.

With the approach of the desegregation on a token basis of the Atlanta public schools in September 1961, Ross and other Atlanta ministers, with the likely exception of the Evangelical Christian Council, took steps to ensure their members would act correctly. Remember, only with the benefit of 41 years of hindsight is this pretty tame stuff. This was only four years after it took federal troops to desegregate Central High School in Little Rock. In preparation for September, the vestry, at the request of Frank Ross and on behalf of a group trying to make the desegregation a peaceful event, adopted a resolution in June 1961 that asked members "to show respect for and obedience to the processes of law and order" and to "pray diligently that our city may be spared any civil disturbances."[64] The All Saints' bulletin for the Sunday prior to the opening of school designated the day, at the request of the Atlanta Council of Churches, as "Law and Order Sunday". The bulletin noted that the desegregation of four high schools was not something "that has the endorsement of all of the city, and there are those who would use it to stir civil strife and contention. It is beholden upon us…to be examples of rectitude to our fellow citizens."[65]

3. The Lovett School "Flap", OR McGill Arrives at All Saints'.

As a preliminary comment, all three of our children graduated from The Lovett School.

Why was the 1963 Lovett School affair important to All Saints'? There are a number of reasons. First, Lovett's refusal to admit three black applicants was a big issue to the "young turks" among the clergy in the Diocese of Atlanta, who felt that Bishop Claiborne was reluctant to move forcefully to open the church to blacks.[66] As one Atlanta priest said, referring to the 1957 use of federal troops to desegregate Central High School in Little Rock, the Lovett School "has become the Little Rock of the Episcopal Church."[67] Second, the Lovett School affair brought Pulitzer Prize winning Ralph McGill to All Saints'. Third, the Lovett School affair caused our new rector to speak out emphatically on segregation to his congregation and to his bishop. Last, and sadly, the Lovett school affair cast our immediate past rector, Milton Wood, in an unfavorable light.

In 1954, The Lovett School was given to the Cathedral of St. Philip. In 1959, the school was put in a separate corporation whose charter provided that the 21 self-perpetuating trustees were to consist of 7 members of the Cathedral of St. Philip, including the Dean of the Cathedral, 7 other Episcopalians and 7 members who did not have to be Episcopalians.[68] In 1963, the Dean of the Cathedral, Dean Hardman, who had signed the Ministers' Manifestos in 1957 and 1958, served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The Lovett School.[69]

In August 1962, The Rev. John Morris, executive director of a group called the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity, or "ESCRU" for short, sat by Mrs.

Martin Luther King, Jr. on a plane flight from Albany, Georgia to Atlanta. She asked whether Lovett was segregated, and he responded that the Episcopal Church was open to all and that, as an Episcopal school, he assumed that Lovett was an open school. He later said the same thing in writing to Mrs. King. Morris said and wrote that he then advised Bishop Claiborne that an application to Lovett for Martin Luther King, III was probably coming soon.[70]

In the event, both young King and two black Episcopalians applied for admission to Lovett in the Spring of 1963. The Lovett trustees, in June 1963, rejected the applications; and in response the Lovett Headmaster, The Rev. James R. McDowell, resigned, writing to parents, "The church has spoken on the matter of segregation according to race and it is my duty, as long as I am a priest, to adhere to the Doctrines and teachings of the Church."[71]

The storm broke. Bishop Claiborne took the position that all Episcopal institutions were open to blacks and that it was appropriate for The Rev. Mr. McDowell to resign as headmaster; but that he could do nothing about Lovett admissions practices because it was "...an independent, autonomous corporation, subject to no ecclesiastical control by the Episcopal Church."[72] There were, of course, numerous ties between Lovett and the Episcopal Church. The Cathedral of St. Philip controlled the Board of Trustees, the Dean of the Cathedral was Chairman of the Lovett Board, the Cathedral Dean celebrated communion each week at Lovett, the Lovett charter stated that the school was committed to furthering the "Episcopal faith as contained in the Book of Common Prayer", and the Standing Committee of the Diocese specifically found that the Dean's holding of communion services at Lovett was not objectionable.[73]

ESCRU claimed that the Bishop showed his true feelings when he told the press, "I am interested to know that a Baptist minister [King] has a desire for an education for his son where Episcopal services take place." The Bishop and his Canon to the Ordinary, Milton Wood, called John Morris, the ESCRU executive director, to the Bishop's office and "blessed him out"[74] Bishop Claiborne subsequently lifted Morris's license to serve as a priest in the Diocese of Atlanta. (As a priest from the Diocese of South Carolina, Morris required the approval of the Atlanta Bishop in order to perform priestly functions in the Diocese of Atlanta.)[75] In his July 1963 pastoral letter, the Bishop chastised ESCRU for fanning the flames.

McGill, as a vestry member at the Cathedral, had voted in favor of the arrangement that gave the Cathedral control of Lovett. He assumed, given its Episcopal affiliation, that Lovett would be open to African-Americans, and he felt betrayed by the school's rejection of black applicants.[76] McGill was interviewed by the Rev. Albert Hatch of St. James Church in Marietta, and said, "I think the Cathedral has acted with hypocrisy (in the Lovett school matter), and I think this is too bad."[77] The interview appeared in the diocesan newspaper and about 50 copies of it were distributed before Milton Wood, presumably acting on orders from the Bishop, had 13,000 copies destroyed, and a new issue printed that did *not* contain the McGill interview.[78]

Ralph McGill moved his membership to All Saints' because Frank Ross said "the things in the pulpit he thought needed saying…." [79]

One of the things Ross was saying those days in the pulpit was that the action of the Lovett Board and the Cathedral was totally out of accord with the tenets of the Episcopal Church. Several sermons on the Lovett situation were delivered, with some

attendees walking out during the sermons.[80] Ross not only preached about Lovett, he also picketed the Cathedral and went to see the Bishop to object to the Bishop's claim of inability to do anything. It was, one longtime member recalled, "the first time Frank really got on the bishop's radar screen."[81] (One suspects he was regarded as a hostile blip on that radar screen.)

Ross did not picket The Lovett School on Paces Ferry Road, but others did. In the fall of 1963, after school opened, Lovett was picketed by Episcopalians from California, Michigan, Texas, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Massachusetts, in addition to Atlantans. Well-known churchmen such as The Rev. Kilmer Myers and The Rev. Malcolm Boyd picketed Lovett that fall.[82] Episcopal civility was not, however, totally absent from the dispute. One day, John Morris, who coordinated the picketing, was concerned that his pickets for that day had not shown up. Instead of driving from his downtown ESCRU office out to Lovett to find out (there were no cell phones then), he called the Lovett office and asked them to go out and see if his pickets were there. The lady who answered the phone went out, took a look and said, "Yes, Reverend Morris, your pickets are out there."[83]

The Lovett School held its baccalaureate service at the Cathedral of St. Philip in 1964, 1965 and 1966—each time greeted by pickets, once including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.[84] In 1966, the Lovett Board lifted the ban on black students, well ahead of many private schools in the South. In this event, All Saints' had gained a famous member and had lost some other members, due in large part to its rector's inflexible view that Lovett, the Cathedral and the Diocese were in the wrong.

4. Bishop Zulu.

Ross was not content to "take a breather" after the Lovett School affair. In September 1963, he had The Right Reverend Alphaeus H. Zulu, Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of St. John in South Africa, as the guest preacher. Bishop Zulu was the first black Anglican bishop in South Africa.[85] Not only did Ross have Bishop Zulu as the guest preacher but also he and Kitty had Bishop Zulu as their house guest at the rectory on Arden Road in Northwest Atlanta.[86] At the September vestry meeting, Ross announced the upcoming visit of Bishop Zulu and asked "that we accept him in the spirit in which he was invited to come and preach to us."[87] The Ross home received a number of obscenity-laced telephone calls over the event; and a former Senior Warden got a call from a lady complaining about the rector housing Bishop Zulu on Arden Road in Buckhead. The caller said, "How could our Rector do such a thing?"[88]

How indeed.

5. The Civil Rights Act of 1964.

On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which opened up public places—hotels, restaurants, theaters and stadiums—to blacks on an integrated basis. I suspect many pulpits in Atlanta were silent on the subject the next Sunday, but the Frank Ross who viewed his job as to educate and to minister to his congregation did not remain silent. Instead, he preached a moving sermon that reads well after 48 years on the shelf. (I am indebted to The Rev. Walter Smith for providing

me with a copy of this sermon.) First, Ross made it clear the law was a major change for the South:

> " The Bill strikes directly at customs and traditions of long-standing and will demand of us a major readjustment in our way of living and getting along with those of the Negro race….This is something new and different and strange and frightening. We have lived in the South for many years with a different way of doing things….Certain things were done and certain things were not done, and that's the way we lived and are living mainly, even now."

These are words of comfort and understanding. But then Ross described the good from this bill by preaching deliverance:

> "This bill makes possible the end of the struggle to maintain the past….We no longer have to be separated from one another and looked upon with suspicion and anger and addressed with epithets. There is a sense of deliverance in it."

Ross next described the burden of segregation—the cost in lost energy, the work it took to maintain the system. And he spoke of his children:

> "Finally to my children, I want them to be forever delivered of this burden….Again I think there is a kind of real deliverance for all of us of the South in this Bill."

At the last he said this:

> "My brethren, there is no need to be afraid—for the worst has happened and we are alive—Come, let us live with confidence in ourselves."[89]

He added a note: "It is not my custom to write finished and polished sermons and I beg your indulgence in this habit."

6. The March.

The civil rights march Ross talked to a newspaper reporter about in 1980 took place in about 1966. For some protest reason, now forgotten, two groups were supposed to converge on the federal courthouse and old post office downtown. One group left from Ebenezer Baptist Church and one from the Atlanta University Center. Ross, urged on by his two younger colleagues, Woody Bartlett and Walter Smith, decided to join them in marching with the group from Ebenezer Baptist Church. The Ebenezer group arrived before the AUC group, and the three All Saints' clergy were standing around when a voice rang down from the second or third floor of a nearby office building, "Frank Ross, what are you doing down there?" Office windows opened in those days, and leaning out

the window was the conservative, 1958 Senior Warden of All Saints', Sims Bray. One of the three yelled back, "Come on down and join us!" A beet-red faced Bray slammed his window shut.[90] Sims Bray did *not* leave All Saints'; he was a regular at the 8 am service up until just before he died in 2002.

Many clergy from many churches participated in the 1968 funeral march for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ross was no exception. The story is told that some corporate law type was looking down from his law office in downtown Atlanta that April 1968 day and blurted out to others in the room, "My God, that's my rector down there!"[91]

7. Crank Calls and Lost Members.

The Ross house, given his outspoken views on civil rights, regularly received crank calls.[92] As late as 1977, Frank Ross noted in his "Dearly Beloved" letter that on a Thursday night in May his phone rang at 1:30am—"A voice said very clearly and distinctly, TROUBLE MAKER. Then he quietly hung up." Objecting to an anonymous call, Ross wrote, "I fail to think of myself as being so fierce that I cannot be addressed." And added, "We Christians are called to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)."[93]

As Frank Ross spoke, and as other members and clergy did the same, some members left for elsewhere. Generally, but not always, the older ones left for the Cathedral and the younger ones left for St. Anne's.[94]

By my informal poll, at least two former Senior Wardens exited over Frank Ross's outspoken views on civil rights matters. One likely left over Ross's race views in general; one likely left over Ross's support of the majority-to-minority busing program in the Atlanta Public Schools that began in the early 1970's. Some Episcopalians, at All Saints' and elsewhere, were upset at The Rev. Austin Ford at Emmaus House, who was encouraging poor black students to transfer to schools on the northside of Atlanta. Ross, in a 1972 Sunday bulletin, supported Austin Ford, noting that Ross had a son at an Atlanta school involved in the M to M program. He went on to say that his son "is being enriched by all of this" and he was "grateful to Austin Ford. It's called Christian leadership."[95]

We had a longtime member, now deceased, who could tell you name-by-name who left All Saints' over its and its rector's stand on civil rights—but you will not get her name from me.[96]

As some left, Ross told his staff that because of what All Saints' stands for "others will come."[97]

8. Other, Assorted.

By and large the clergy and the congregation joined in what Frank Ross, Elbert Tuttle and Ralph McGill were about. In 1966, Woody Bartlett hired our first black secretary for the college program, at a time when very few white-owned Atlanta businesses would have had black secretaries.[98] By about 1965, Walter Smith, then a fulltime All Saints' priest, was taking the high school group on multi-racial weekends in Atlanta and in those weekends holding a conference with Lyndon Wade, head of the Urban League in Atlanta, as his co-leader. Although many blacks had attended worship at All Saints', as of 1964, no black or black family had transferred their membership to All

Saints'. The 1964 Wardens, Fred George and Dan Hodgson, looked into what the effect on the parish would be if a black family transferred its membership to All Saints'.[99] They first noted in their report to the vestry that All Saints' and the Episcopal Church were very clear in their canon and doctrine—the black family would of course be accepted as communicants. The reported that some white members would probably leave, and their would be some loss of income; but the majority of those in the parish who *opposed* integration would stay and "try to work out any problem." The vote was unanimous that the prospect of black members should not delay any expansion or building plans that All Saints' might have.

All Saints' and Frank Ross received considerable coverage when *The Washington Post* noted that the election of Jimmy Carter as President marked "…the first full acceptance of the South into the nation's political life in modern times" and that "we have rarely seen this circumstance noted more eloquently" than in a letter sent out by Frank Ross.[100] That week's letter from Frank Ross to the parish noted that Dr. Martin Luther King's life

> "…among us was for most of us as a stranger, for some of us as an enemy, for all, as it turned out, the one who delivered us from the curse of segregation into the freedom of being with people as people….Next week we who carried that curse send one of ours to be President of the United States. It's been such a long time…."[101]

VI. Conclusion.

In the 1970's Atlanta became a black majority and an African-American-governed city, and a number of whites and white-owned businesses left the city. In a 1977 Sunday bulletin, Ross noted this white flight from Atlanta and said of those leaving:

> "…the grass always looks greener elsewhere; but I'm sure the reasons are valid from their perspective. They aren't from mine or ours or we would have been gone years ago."

And then he added:

> "The grass may look greener, but it won't be near as sweet for it hasn't been watered with the tears of three generations or salted by the laughter of three generations, or made special by the prayers of three generations."[102]

Thirty-five years later, I would amend Ross's words to add a fourth generation. Elbert Tuttle, Ralph McGill, Frank Ross and other Saints, in the words of the Prophet, "made straight the way of the Lord"[103] for us; and, thus guided, we will long stand on this corner, doing the right thing.

Robert W. Miller
March 17, 2013

[1] All Saints' Episcopal Church vestry minutes ("VM"), April 4,1916.
[2] VM, May 10, 1916.
[3] Elson, Charles, "Remembering Elbert Tuttle", 82 Cornell Law Review 15 (1996).
[4] Bass, Jack, "Judge Elbert P. Tuttle Remembered As a True Judicial Hero", *The New York Times*, June 25, 1996 ("Bass"). Also told in Remarks by Randolph W. Thrower, November 6, 1996, American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia Annual Dinner ("Thrower #1").
[5] Aman, Alfred, "Elbert Parr Tuttle", 82 Cornell Law Review 1, 2-3 (1996) ("Aman").
[6] Bass and Thrower #1.
[7] Aman, Bass, and Downer v. Dunaway, 53 F. 2d 586 (5th Cir. 1931).
[8] Remarks by Randolph W. Thrower, June 29, 1996, at Memorial Service for Elbert Parr Tuttle ("Thrower #2").
[9] Aman, Bass, and Herndon v. Lowry, 301 U.S. 242 (1937).
[10] Aman, Thrower #1, and Johnson v. Zerbst, 304 U.S. 458 (1938).
[11] Thrower #2.
[12] Aman.
[13] Bass, Thrower #1.
[14] Pratt, Robert,*We Shall Not Be Moved* ,pp.87-88 (U. of Georgia Press, Athens 2002).
[15] Hunter, Charlayne, *In My Place*, quoted in Bass.
[16] King, Martin Luther, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York 1963).
[17] Bass.
[18] Confidential Interview #7 ("CI"), December 5, 2002. All interviews were conducted on a "no attribution" basis.
[19] CI #1, November 20, 2002.
[20] VM, December 1966.
[21] Bass.
[22] I have been unable to locate a copy of the eulogy. I rely on my memory for those words.
[23] Teel, Leonard Ray, *Ralph Emerson McGill*, p. 62 (Knoxville 1999) ("Teel").
[24] Teel, pp. 62,470.
[25] Teel, p.57.
[26] Martin, Harold, *Ralph McGill, Reporter*, p. 146. (Boston 1973) ("Martin").
[27] Martin, p. 147.
[28] CI #5, November 26, 2002.
[29] Teel, p. 455.
[30] Teel, p.279.
[31] Teel, p xix.
[32] Teel, p.xx.
[33] Teel, p. 352.
[34] Egerton, John, *Speak Now Against The Day*, p. 257 (New York 1994).
[35] Quoted in Martin, p. 195.
[36] Quoted in Strickland, Davis and Strickland (eds.), *The Best of Ralph McGill*, pp.112-113 (Atlanta 1980) ("Best").
[37] Teel, p.325.
[38] Teel, p. 413.
[39] Quoted in Shattuck, Gardiner, *Episcopalians & Race*, p. 118 (Lexington, KY 2000) ("E&R").
[40] McGill, Ralph, *The South and The Southerner*, p. 286 (Boston 1963) ("TSATS").

[41] Best, pp. 145-146.
[42] CI #6, November 26, 2002.
[43] TSATS, pp. 294-295.
[44] Martin, p. 321.
[45] Martin, pp. 320-323.
[46] Quoted in VM, February 17, 1969. Also all bulletins are bound and maintained at the church.
[47] Hartley, Fred, *Young Man on the Go: Frank Ross*, Atlanta Magazine, November 1961.
[48] VM, October 7, 1960.
[49] VM, December 15, 1960.
[50] CI #3, November 21, 2002.
[51] CI #6, November 26, 2002; CI#8, December 6, 2002; CI #9, December 12, 2002.
[52] CI #9, December 12, 2002.
[53] CI # 1, November 20, 2002.
[54] CI #2, November 20,2002.
[55] *The Atlanta Constitution*, May 22, 1980.
[56] CI #8, December 6, 2002.
[57] CI #5, November 26,2002.
[58] CI # 10, December 19, 2002.
[59] *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 3, 1957.
[60] Undated 2002 letter from The Rev. Milton L. Wood to Margaret Langford.
[61] *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 23, 1958.
[62] TSATS, p. 277.
[63] VM, December 15, 1958.
[64] VM, June 1961.
[65] All Saints' Episcopal Church bulletin, August 27, 1961.
[66] CI #5, November 26, 2002.
[67] *Time Magazine*, November 15, 1963.
[68] Pastoral Letter by the Bishop of Atlanta, July 10, 1963, contained in Special Collections, Box 725, Woodruff Library, Emory University ("ESCRU Papers").
[69] Pastoral Letter by the Bishop of Atlanta, July 10, 1963, ESCRU Papers.
[70] ESCRU Newsletter, August 6, 1963, ESCRU Papers. See also, E&R, pp. 135-137.
[71] Letter from The Rev. James R. McDowell to Parents and Patrons of The Lovett School, July 22, 1963, copy in files of Bob Miller.
[72] Pastoral Letter by the Bishop of Atlanta, July 10, 1963, ESCRU Papers.
[73] Statement of the ESCRU Executive Committee, September 17, 1963, ESCRU Papers. See also, E&R, p.136, and *Time Magazine,* November 15, 1963.
[74] ESCRU Newsletter, August 6, 1963, ESCRU Papers.
[75] E&R, p. 136. The license was restored by Bishop Clairborne in 1967. E&R, p. 174.
[76] Martin, p. 147.
[77] *The Atlanta Constitution*, August ,1963. Copy of article in files of Bob Miller.
[78] *The Atlanta Constitution*, August ,1963; *Time Magazine*, November 15, 1963; CI #5.
[79] Martin, p. 147; CI #6.
[80] CI # 8.
[81] CI #8.
[82] ESCRU Newsletter, December 8, 1963, ESCRU Papers.

[83] CI #5.
[84] ESCRU Letter to All Clergy in the Diocese of Atlanta, May 20, 1966, ESCRU Papers.
[85] All Saints' Episcopal Church bulletin, September 15, 1963.
[86] CI #4, November 25, 2002; CI #8, December 6, 2002.
[87] VM, September 1963
[88] CI #8, December 6, 2002.
[89] The Rev. Frank M. Ross, July 5, 1964. I am indebted to The Rev. Walter E. Smith for providing me with a copy of this sermon. He obtained the copy from a longtime parishioner of All Saints'.
[90] CI #5, CI # 10.
[91] CI #1.
[92] CI #4.
[93] All Saints' Episcopal Church Bulletin, May 8, 1977. Reprinted in *Dearly Beloved*, p. 120.
[94] CI #8.
[95] All Saints' Episcopal Church Bulletin, September 24, 1972. Reprinted in *Dearly Beloved*, p. 108. See also Hal Gulliver's column in *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 28, 1972, about the Ross letter.
[96] CI #6 and CI #8.
[97] CI #10.
[98] CI #5.
[99] VM, March 15, 1964.
[100] *The Washington Post*, January 20, 1977.
[101] All Saints' Episcopal Church Bulletin, January 16, 1977. Reprinted in *Dearly Beloved*, p. 79 and in *The Washington Post*, January 20, 1977.
[102] All Saints' Episcopal Church Bulletin, April 24, 1977. Reprinted in *Dearly Beloved*, p.118.
[103] John 1:23, quoting Isaiah 40:3.