

LUNCH-COUNTER DESEGREGATION IN CORPUS CHRISTI,  
GALVESTON, AND SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

by Kenneth Morland

Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Randolph-Macon Woman's College

## Introduction

San Antonio was the first city in the South to receive publicity for the desegregation of its lunch counters on March 16, 1960, and announcements of Galveston's desegregation on April 5 followed. However, Corpus Christi had made some steps toward desegregation as early as 1950, and the Woolworth counter was desegregated in November, 1958. All of the remaining downtown Corpus Christi lunch counters were desegregated without any publicity on March 28, 1960.

The way in which desegregation came about in each of these cities was different. In Corpus Christi the early desegregations were the result of requests by Negroes for equal service and the granting of those requests by individual managers. The recent desegregation resulted from the objection of an NAACP leader to the refusal of Kress's to serve a Negro, and from the

consequent agreement by the managers of four large downtown stores, after several conferences with the Negroes, to desegregate. In San Antonio religious leaders took the initiative in helping store managers and protesting Negroes to work out a solution. Only in Galveston were there overt demonstrations in the form of sit-ins, and a mediating group composed of prominent white businessmen and lawyers, as well as religious leaders, brought about an agreement between managers and Negroes.

Since the story of lunch-counter desegregation in each town is different, it is necessary to trace the development in each separately. Then, generalizations from these three case studies will be derived. But one result can be reported at this point: desegregation of lunch counters is working well in each city, and there is general community acceptance of the change.

## Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi is a fast-growing city on the Gulf of Mexico in south Texas. In each ten-year period since 1920, the population has about doubled, and informed persons estimate that there are now about 175,000 residents, made up of 7% Negro, 33% Latin-American, and 60% Anglo. As a rapidly growing city, it has a comparatively large number of young people, a factor cited by some community leaders as a reason for the ready acceptance of change in lunch counter service. Public schools, including Del Mar Junior College, were integrated in 1955, and public recreational facilities, including golf and swimming, were integrated a year later. The local NAACP took the lead in asking for desegregation, but there was little opposition and even some encouragement by white civic leaders.

### Steps in the Desegregation

The first lunch-counter desegregation came in 1950 in the H. E. Butt grocery stores, the largest of which

have lunch counters. When a Negro customer was refused service, he asked to speak to the store manager, who referred him to the general manager, who suggested that he talk to the owner, Mr. Butt. The Negro was told by the owner that he could be served, and an order was issued to the store managers that all customers, including Negroes, were to be served at the counters in the same way. However, it was not until 1952, according to one report, that all store managers fully complied.

The next step in lunch-counter desegregation took place in the fall of 1958. Negro and white classmates from an integrated school stopped in Woolworth's, sat at the lunch counter, and requested service. When the Negro children were refused, the whites walked out with them. Later an adult Negro member of the NAACP called on the manager of the store to inquire of his policy toward serving Negroes. The manager replied that he was willing to have Negroes served seated at his counter, and since

that time Negroes have eaten there without restriction. However, apparently not all Negroes knew about this privilege, for weeks later some were still standing to eat or were taking food out. A Negro dentist and former state NAACP president told the writer that he asked the Negroes who were standing why they did not sit down. When they reported that they did not know they were permitted to, the dentist went to see the manager who assured the Negroes that they could sit if they wished.

In a lengthy interview with the manager, the writer was told that managers of Woolworth stores were allowed to run their stores as they see fit. The manager said that he felt it silly and unfair to allow Negroes to purchase in other parts of the store and to treat them unequally at the lunch counter. So without consulting the managers of other stores or anyone else, he allowed Negro customers to be served. He was sure that desegregation was coming sooner or later and that his action helped Corpus Christi avoid the diffi-

culties that have developed in other Southern cities. While he had received some "kicks" from other merchants and from a few white customers, he told them that he had to run his store according to his best judgment. He noticed no loss of business from whites or Latin-Americans because of the integration.

The final phase in the desegregation of lunch counters began March 15, 1960. The manager of Kress's had been allowing a Negro employee to eat at one end of his lunch counter, but when this employee invited a Negro friend to eat with him, the friend was refused service. The Negroes reported this to an NAACP leader who then telephoned the manager and arranged a time when they could discuss the matter. In the meantime the Kress manager called together the managers of other stores in which there were sizable lunch counters: Walgreen's, Grant's, and Lichtenstein's (a fashionable department store with a tea room on the fourth floor). After several conferences among the managers and talks with the NAACP leader, the managers agreed

on March 25 to desegregate their lunch counters. They requested that no formal publicity be given to this decision but rather that Negroes be informed by way of the "grapevine." Several Negro ministers announced the decision in their churches, and word was passed from Negro to Negro.

### Results

None of the managers reported any real difficulty with the desegregation. Negro customers have not been numerous, and have been generally polite. In

### Factors Contributing to Desegregation

The following factors appear to be important in the success of lunch-counter desegregation in Corpus Christi:

(1) The general attitude of the community has been permissive toward integration. While there has been no overt drive toward desegregation by white community leaders, only gentle prodding by the NAACP was required to induce the whites to grant equal treatment.

(2) White opposition, in the form of a White Citizen's Council, has been weak and led by low-status persons. When the Council objected during the Christmas season of 1956 to having one of the wise men in a public representation of the manger scene depicted as black, the objection was ridiculed by churchmen and civic leaders. When the Council demanded that the newly-built public swimming pool be restricted to white use, the Park and Recreation Board, after hearing the NAACP

casual conversation with several lunch-counter waitresses, white patrons, and taxi drivers, the writer found ready acceptance of desegregation. But it was evident that not all prominent white citizens of the city knew about the desegregation. For example, when asked by the writer, the pastor of one of the leading Protestant churches replied that he did not know whether any of the lunch counters were desegregated. This is clear evidence that the matter has been kept quiet.

argue for its use by all, decided in favor of non-segregation.

(3) The fact that about one-third of the population is Latin-American made the integration of counters more readily accepted. Apparently most Latin-Americans do not have the prejudice against the Negro felt by many Anglos. And the Latin-American is more likely to have contact with the Negro, in residential areas and at lunch counters. In casual conversation with about ten or twelve Latin-Americans, the writer found no hint of non-acceptance of desegregation but rather a pride in its accomplishment. Also, since Latin-Americans have been integrated into most aspects of community life in Corpus Christi, the integration of Negroes was easier for the whites to take.

(4) Negro leadership has been effective. While not aggressively and overtly pushing for equality, it has, nevertheless, accomplished a great deal. The Negro dentist mentioned earlier has, for example, by working quietly and persistently, won the respect and confidence of white leaders. If desegregation is to be brought about in other areas of community life--restaurants, hotels, movies, the University of Corpus Christi (Southern Baptist)--it will require the same caliber of Negro leadership and initiative.

San Antonio is a city of half a million people, with a racial composition estimated by informed persons to be 9% Negro, 42% Latin-American, and 49% Anglo. An important part of the economy of the city is its military installations: Fort Sam Houston, headquarters for the Fourth Army; and the Air Force bases at Brooks, Kelly, Lackland, Medina, and Randolph fields. These installations are integrated, and San Antonio lunch counters have for some time served uniformed Negro soldiers and airmen, especially when accompanied by white military personnel. Public golf courses were desegregated in June, 1954, and all other public recreational facilities, including swimming pools, in March, 1956. Desegregation of public schools began in 1955 and by 1960 all grades were desegregated. The six colleges in the area, both municipal and private, have Anglo, Latin-American, and Negro students.

#### Steps in the Desegregation

When the sit-in demonstrations

spread over the South during February, 1960, three independent developments began in San Antonio. (1) The executive director of the Council of Churches (an organization of 150 Protestant churches of all prominent denominations except the Southern Baptists) started talking with religious and civic leaders to see if any action could be taken to avoid overt demonstrations in the city. Public officials, including the mayor, felt that it would be best if they did not participate directly, and they urged that representatives of the various faiths take the lead. The executive director of the Council of Churches then brought together white representatives of the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant churches, along with the executive director of the Community Welfare Council. They began to meet toward the end of February to discuss the problem. (2) The managers of downtown San Antonio stores with lunch counters met and agreed informally on a policy of not serving Negroes if they demanded service. (3) The NAACP opened

discussions on what course of action it might take to bring about lunch-counter desegregation. On March 7, 1960, a 17-year-old college freshman, president of the San Antonio Youth Group of the NAACP, began sending letters to downtown stores requesting equal service for Negroes. On March 13, at a mass rally of 1,500 Negroes, the NAACP decided to mail a formal "ultimatum" to downtown stores requesting desegregation of lunch counters by Thursday, March 21.

This action brought the three separate movements together. The religious leaders, chaired by the head of the Council of Churches, arranged a meeting with the store managers for Tuesday, March 19, promising that any decision about lunch counters would be that of the merchants themselves and that no publicity would be given to the meeting. This proved to be an all-day session, and ended with an agreement among almost all of the managers that they would desegregate their lunch counters the next day, March 20. A turning point in the meeting came when the manager of a

national chain store urged that the counters be desegregated. He declared that to solve a moral problem was, at the same time, to solve a business one, for, he said, strife disrupts business and creates ill will. He pointed out that business had fallen off from 45 to 60% in some of the stores in his chain where demonstrations had occurred. He further pointed out that it was silly for whites to complain of lunch-counter desegregation as too personal when in his store they tried on hats and girdles that Negroes had tried on before them.

The store managers secured three commitments from the mediating committee in regard to the proposed desegregation. The first was that responsible Negro leaders be informed about the new policy and requested to move slowly in taking advantage of the desegregation. The second was that the Negroes agree to take no action for 30 days against any store that was not ready to desegregate on March 20. The third was that the mediating committee do everything possible to convince white church members that



desegregation was in the best interests of the entire community. (See letter attached--Attachment A.) The mediating committee immediately began carrying out these requests. The chairman called together four leading Negro citizens, all of whom were associated with the NAACP, to explain the new policy and to ask for suggestions toward implementation.

These said that they would be glad to pass on to the Negro community the requests of the store managers that Negroes move slowly at first. At a mass meeting of the NAACP on Thursday, March 21, Negroes hailed the agreement and were urged by their leaders to be especially courteous and neat when they ate at the lunch counters.

### Results

Managers of the stores reported no difficulty and no loss in sales following the desegregation. They received a few telephone calls complaining of the action, and a few persons closed their accounts. But they also received words of commendation from many white persons, and some Negro customers expressed their

appreciation.

On the first day, reporters and cameramen were on hand. Cameras were hurriedly set up when two Negro men entered the Kress cafeteria. But the white patrons showed far more interest in the newsmen than in the two Negroes, and when one white woman asked about the excitement and was informed that there were Negroes in the cafeteria line, she remarked that she thought they had always been served in that cafeteria. Newspaper accounts of the first few days of desegregation reported that few Negroes sat at the lunch counters. The following two incidents, reported by members of the mediating committee, illustrate the attitude of some Negroes toward their use of the facilities. A Negro shoeshiner was asked if he had eaten at one of the desegregated counters yet. The reply was that he would eat there only when he could be properly dressed, not when he was in his work clothes with shoe polish on his hands. Five Negro youngsters standing outside Woolworth's debated whether they would really be served if they sat down. A member of the mediating

committee who happened to be standing near assured them that they would. He suggested, however, that all five not sit together. Two of the youths then went in together, were served, and when they left the store the other three went in.

### The Future

An interracial commission has been set up, with the executive director of the Community Welfare Council as its chairman. Its purpose is to consider quietly other types of desegregation. Managers of hotels, motels, and restaurants will be invited in to discuss with the committee the possibility of desegregating their facilities. Still one difficulty remains, however, in the completion of the desegregation of eating facilities in those stores where Negroes are invited to shop but are not allowed to sit to eat: Joske's, the only large, downtown store that asked for more time

to consider desegregation, did announce the desegregation of its basement cafeteria facility at the end of the thirty-day period. However, the store refused to desegregate the more fashionable eating places on its first and second floors, arguing that its basement facility was more comparable to the lunch counters and cafeterias in the desegregated variety and drug stores. The Negroes are not happy about this arrangement and have talked in terms of sit-ins and boycotts at Joske's. However, the white members of the interracial committee are urging the Negroes not to resort to overt demonstrations for fear they might undo much of what has been accomplished. Apparently a great deal of pressure is being brought to bear on the moderate Negro members of the committee by the more aggressive Negroes. At the time of this writing it is not clear how this issue will be resolved.\* But there is no question about the ultimate goal of the Negro

\* Subsequently, picketing in Joske's was begun, and one fight has occurred. It is reported that the demonstration does not have the undivided support of the Negro community. At any rate, the demonstration is not regarded as a reversal of the progress made; in fact, several places not a party to the first agreement have since quietly desegregated.

leaders; it is to make San Antonio a completely "open" city.

### Factors Contributing to Desegregation

The following factors were pointed out by San Antonians as being of importance in bringing about lunch-counter desegregation:

(1) The presence and success of integration in the large military bases, and in the public recreational facilities and schools, helped to show the city that desegregation could "work."

(2) The large Latin-American population, about 42% of the total, feels less prejudice toward the Negro than does the white. As one of the Negro leaders said to the writer, "You know, the Latin-Americans accept us more readily than do you whites." Furthermore, some of the Latin-Americans have dark skins, and whites have grown accustomed to seeing them eating at the counters. Politically, the Negroes hold the balance of power between the other two races, and some persons interviewed suggested that this was a factor in bringing about desegregation.

(3) Channels of communication between Negroes and whites have been developed through interracial membership of such civic committees as those for housing, libraries, and city planning. Through the past several years, the members of these committees have learned to understand and respect one another. It was from the membership of these committees that the Negro representatives were chosen to explain to other Negroes the proposed change of policy agreed to by the merchants.

(4) The vigorous leadership offered by white ministers helped in reassuring the managers and in explaining their point of view to the Negroes. For a number of years, forthright condemnation of enforced racial segregation had been made from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish pulpits, thus defining segregation as a moral issue. It is difficult to see how the problem could have been worked out without the effective direction given by the mediating committee of ministers.

(5) The pressure of the NAACP precipitated the meeting which led to the

desegregation agreement. Such pressure helped to crystallize the fear that had been felt because of the sit-ins and other demonstrations over the South. However, whites and Negroes interpreted the effect of the NAACP "ultimatum" differently. Some of the white persons involved claimed that it almost wrecked negotiations with the managers, while the Negro leaders were sure that desegregation would not have been agreed to by the managers unless they had been under such pressure.

(6) Favorable press coverage helped to show this conflict as a human rights struggle, and the press did not treat the situation in such a way as to arouse racial antagonisms. The meeting of the religious and business leaders was given no publicity so that those present would feel free to speak their minds.

Galveston is located in southeastern Texas on the eastern end of an island thirty miles long and three miles wide in the Gulf of Mexico. Many of its inhabitants think of it as "different" from the rest of Texas because it is separated from the mainland. Its population in 1960 is estimated by the Chamber of Commerce to be 70,000, with a racial composition 33% Negro, 15% Latin-American, and 52% Anglo. One of its largest "industries" is the University of Texas Medical School, which is integrated. Public buses are desegregated, and, while most Negroes live separately from the Latin-Americans and Anglos, there is no rigid residential segregation. Some Negro families are scattered among non-Negro families. The public schools are segregated, although the school board had planned to begin integration at the first grade level in September, 1957. The plans were halted by a Texas law, which went into effect on August 22, 1957, requiring a local referendum before desegregation of

schools. To integrate by order of a school board would result in a loss of all state funds for education and fines up to \$1,000 for violators. Although the Galveston school board attorney believed the law unconstitutional, he suggested that the city not try to contest it by having state funds cut off.

#### Steps in Desegregation

On Friday, March 11, 1960, around noon, a group of 25 Negro students from Central High School began sit-in demonstrations at Woolworth's. The students had a holiday because of a teachers' convention. Their resolve to claim equal service had grown, according to the youngster who organized the demonstration, out of discussions in their American history class. They carried copies of the United States Constitution and chanted, "We'll take a seat and sit for a week." When the manager of the store turned off the lights and cooking burners and announced the counter closed, the students went to the counters at Walgreen's,

which were promptly closed, and from there to McCrory's, and then to Kress's. The sit-ins continued on Saturday, and most of the next week after school hours. Police kept close watch over what was a fairly tense and threatening situation. The managers of the stores consulted informally among themselves and agreed to ignore the Negroes rather than close the counters.

During one of the demonstrations in his store, the Woolworth manager asked the students who their spokesman was, and a 16-year-old junior came forward. He assured the manager that the sit-ins were entirely the idea of the students and that no organization or adults were behind them. The manager then requested that the leader secure the help of responsible Negro adults who might talk the situation over with the managers of the stores. The Negro youth went to the wealthiest and most influential Negro in Galveston, a real estate dealer, who suggested that a white lawyer, who had chaired the school board committee recommending desegregation of public schools, be asked to explain to the

managers what the Negroes wanted. The high school boy then called on the lawyer who, rather than talking with the managers by himself, decided to set up a mediating committee of influential whites.

This white mediating committee proved to be of crucial importance in working out a solution. It was composed of eleven persons: three lawyers; the owner of a radio and television station; a clothing merchant; the wife of a cotton broker; the owner of a furniture store; and four ministers, representing the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths. This committee met without publicity and agreed on two basic principles: (1) they would attempt to provide needed leadership in order to keep irresponsible forces from moving into the situation; and (2) no publicity would be given their attempt to mediate the conflict. The committee then asked the managers of the stores involved to meet with them.

After a lengthy conference, almost all of the managers agreed to desegregate their counters, provided certain

conditions could be met: (1) responsible adult Negro leadership would have to be organized to communicate the new policy to the Negro community; (2) some assurance would be given that no further demonstrations would be held for at least a month, giving those stores that could not decide on desegregation immediately time enough to consider it; (3) a promise that Negro high school students would wait two weeks before using the counters, and that Negro adults would not overflow the counters; (4) extra police help would be available as the counters opened; (5) the ministers on the mediating committee would make a public statement supporting desegregation. A detailed statement of these conditions was later written and put into the hands of each manager, mediating committee member, and Negro committee member. (A copy of this statement is attached--Attachment B.)

The mediating committee then called the high school youth and the real estate dealer, requesting that a responsible Negro committee be set up. This was done within four hours and was composed of Negro businessmen, school teachers, labor leaders, doctors, dentists, and representatives from the Negro students. The white mediating committee met with the Negroes and conveyed the willingness of the managers to desegregate if they could be assured the conditions would be met. The Negroes readily agreed and promised to try to their utmost to persuade the entire Negro community to comply.

When the mediating committee relayed the Negro promise of cooperation to the managers, the final agreement to open the counters on Tuesday, April 5, was made. On the prior Sunday, Negro ministers urged their congregations to move slowly in their use of the counters, and on Monday, April 4, the full statement of agreement was announced over the public address system to the Negro students at Central High. Then, on April 5, the Galveston Tribune carried the headline, "City Lunch Counters Integrated," giving the city the first official news of the decision. Contained in the newspaper account was the following statement, agreed upon by the mediating committee and the managers:

After conferences held between Galveston store managers and Galveston leaders of all religious faiths, and civic and business leaders of the community, the managers of practically all the Galveston stores having lunch counters have decided that it is in the best interest of the entire community to open their lunch counters to all of their patrons. This decision has already been put into effect.

Religious leaders of Galveston have joined in commending all persons and interests involved for the example they have set by solving their mutual problem quietly and moderately in the spirit of good citizenship. The store proprietors in turn have expressed their appreciation to those who provided the mediation that led to this amicable solution.

The next day the following statement appeared in the Galveston News, written by Mr. T. D. Armstrong, Negro real estate dealer and adult leader of the Negro group:

The Negro citizens of Galveston are thankful that this community problem has been solved in a quiet and moderate spirit of good citizenship, functioning on the community level as suggested by President Eisenhower.

We are especially grateful to the mediation which led to the solution being provided by white civic and religious leaders on their own initiative. We intend to see that our conduct in using this new privilege will prove us worthy of our responsibility as good citizens in a city of good will.

## Results

Both the Negro adults and students complied fully with the conditions set down by the merchants. Few Negroes sat at the counters during the opening days of desegregation, and when they did, not more than two of them sat together. The Negro high school students scrupulously avoided the counters during the first two weeks, and they did not demonstrate against stores that did not desegregate. Some of the store managers received complaints from white customers because of the desegregation, and four accounts were closed in one drug store and two in another. However, in one case, the husband phoned in the closing of the account and the wife came to the store the next day and reopened, apologizing for the hasty decision of her husband. None of the merchants felt that they had lost trade during the first weeks of desegregation. At one drug store, which has 40 lunch-counter seats, the manager compared the total sales for April 1-19, 1959 with those for the same period in 1960. He found that his lunch-counter



sales were about the same, while the sales in the rest of his store were several hundred dollars higher in 1960.

Most of the people with whom the writer talked at lunch counters, in taxi cabs, on buses, and on the street, accepted the desegregation readily.

Typical of remarks of approval were: "If Negroes purchase in one part of the store, it is only fair that they should be able to purchase in all parts." "I'd rather sit by a clean colored person than next to an unbathed white." "It wasn't right for the Negro to have no decent places to eat downtown." "God made us all, and it isn't right for some to try to act like they're better than others." "We have a good spirit in this town." Other statements of reluctant approval were: "It had to come, and there wasn't much we could do about it-- but I hope we don't get to intermarriage!" "The Negroes just wanted to prove they could do it." "Now that they can eat at the counters, they don't bother to do so." "They don't bother me, for I never sit near them." None of those talked to

casually knew very much of how the desegregation was brought about. They remarked that they knew some influential committee was at work on the problem, but they did not know who composed the committee or how things were working out. One who disapproved said that the whites must have given in to the Negroes, and he did not know where it would all end. The head of the chamber of commerce received a long distance call or two from out-of-town persons who said they would not vacation in Galveston again. He also received a call from Governor Collins of Florida who wanted to find out how Galveston managed to desegregate its facilities so quietly and successfully.

The ministers of all faiths and races have set up an informal group which a steering committee can call together at any time. There is no question but what there will be efforts by Negroes to desegregate other facilities. Negro leaders feel now that there are channels through which they may make appeals, rather than having to resort to overt demonstrations.

## Factors Contributing to Desegregation

(1) As was true of the other two cities, background factors were important to **the** success of the desegregation. The school board was ready to begin a program of school integration, with apparently no strong objection from the community. The presence of the integrated University of Texas Medical School and of integrated Latin-Americans provided a favorable atmosphere for the desegregation.

(2) Influential white leadership arose and took charge of the situation. These were persons of good will who worked quietly and with genuine modesty to effect a solution. Because of their positions in the community, they could speak with assurance to both the merchants and the Negroes and thus were excellent mediators. Furthermore, they gave vigorous and unequivocal support to the decision once it was made. Special credit for the success of the mediating committee goes to the lawyer who called the group together and to the minister who chaired the sessions.

(3) The store managers acted in a restrained manner. They did not order the demonstrating Negroes out of the store or have them arrested, and they were willing, furthermore, to learn their point of view. One manager took the lead in asking the Negro students to arrange to have adult Negroes represent them. Another manager, born and reared in East Texas, stated at a crucial point in the meeting of managers and mediating committee that he would be willing to desegregate his lunch counters if the others would. His decision helped to sway his fellow managers, for he had lived in Galveston longer than any, and they felt he knew the local situation well. His statement is credited by mediating committee members as turning the tide. Of course, the managers feared that continued demonstrations would disrupt trade, and they wanted to avoid them. But they also spoke of wanting to be fair to their Negro customers. The managers had foresight enough to allow time before the decision to desegregate went into effect to talk to their employees. Some waitresses objected, but the managers were able to reason with

them. No employee resigned when the new policy was announced.

(4) Negro leadership was highly effective in making sure the terms of the agreement were carried out. Church services, lodge meetings, school sessions, and informal gatherings were used to urge Negroes to be careful in taking advantage of lunch-counter desegregation. All of the white persons involved in the negotiations stated emphatically that the responsible, circumspect behavior of the Negroes was a big factor in the success of desegregation.

(5) The clear support of the white ministers on the mediation committee stressed the religious and moral aspect of the issue. The cooperation among the three faiths was itself evidence of good will and a reflection of unity.

(6) Favorable reports on the results of the desegregation of lunch counters in San Antonio reassured the merchants. By chance, the regional director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith had just arrived in Galveston after spending several days in San Antonio. He was consulted by the committee and was able to point out that things were working well in that city and that none of the stores with desegregated counters had encountered difficulty.

(7) Publicity was kept to a minimum. During the time of the mediation, few persons in the community knew what was going on. Those present in the meetings felt free to speak frankly without fear of being quoted. None of those in leadership positions attempted to gain anything personally from the situation. They repeatedly stressed to all concerned that it was a community problem that required a community solution.

(8) Prompt police action prevented any possible disorder. The police did not allow any crowds to gather in the stores nor on the sidewalks.

## GENERAL SUMMARY

(1) It can be seen that each of the three cities followed a different pattern in desegregating lunch counters, and it would seem likely that each community of the South, depending on its size, racial composition, and traditions, may proceed somewhat differently. In other words, no single approach can be used. However, of the three cases studied, Galveston, with 33% Negro, is the most like other Southern cities.

(2) When the chips were down, influential white citizens in each city took a firm stand for desegregation. In Galveston, this was done through direct participation in the mediation by lawyers, ministers, and businessmen. In San Antonio, only the religious leaders involved themselves directly, but they had the tacit support of other influential persons. In Corpus Christi, the managers themselves agreed to desegregation without a mediating group, but they felt sure that white community leaders supported them. It is to be noted that public officials stayed out of the negotiations. When approached by other white leaders, the officials felt that mediation should be established on a less formal basis.

(3) Religious leaders were important to the success of desegregation in Galveston and San Antonio. In both instances the managers asked for and received public support from these leaders, and their support gave strong reassurance to the managers.

(4) Those managers who took the lead in deciding for desegregation put the decision on a moral basis, in line with American values. In each of the three cities, one of the managers, at a crucial point in the negotiations, stated the solution in terms of democratic ideals and expressed his willingness to desegregate. Of course, the economic factor was also involved in the decisions, for the managers reasoned that the alternative to desegregation would be worse for

their business than desegregation. Examples of what had happened to businesses in other cities helped to convince them that they should desegregate.

(5) Negroes in each of the cities revealed a willingness, even an eagerness, to comply with the terms requested by the managers. In Galveston, the high school students who started the sit-ins gladly waited two weeks to show good faith, and in San Antonio and Galveston the Negroes readily agreed to a moratorium on acting against those lunch counters that did not feel that they could desegregate at the time of the decision. And, for the most part, Negro patrons of the lunch counters have been almost overly careful to avoid offending whites. In all three cities the Negroes acted with a strong sense of responsibility in making sure the desegregation was successful.

(6) In each case publicity was kept to a minimum. Everything said during the meetings was held in confidence, no member of the press was present, and reports to the press were cleared with the group. Even after the decision to desegregate was put into effect, the leaders were careful to limit the type of publicity permitted. In both Galveston and San Antonio, reporters and photographers from nationally circulated magazines wanted stories and pictures of the individuals involved in the mediation. But the leaders pleaded with the representatives from the magazines not to give the decision this sort of publicity, for they believed it could do a great deal of harm to focus the glare of publicity on something that was working well. They stressed to the reporters that this was a cooperative, community decision, rather than the work of individuals. The magazines complied. For example, in the April 18, 1960, edition of Life, the only publicity given to the Galveston desegregation was a picture of four religious leaders, representing both races and the three faiths, with a "Welcome to Galveston" sign in the background. Those depicted are referred to as "catalysts in the quiet negotiations."

(7) It was freely admitted by the white leaders that without some direct pressure by Negroes, desegregation would have been highly unlikely. The Negroes were even surer of this. The type of pressure varied from requests over the telephone, to mass rallies demanding action, to actual sit-in demonstrations. No steps toward desegregation were taken until Negroes in each of the cities asked for it. In Galveston, one of the managers said that if he and the other managers had attempted desegregation on their own, without the crisis caused by the sit-ins, the white community would have been up in arms. But once the sit-ins started, desegregation became a defensible solution.

(8) The success of the desegregation, in terms of the smoothness and calmness with which it was generally accepted, surprised most of those involved. The managers said that they had expected far more trouble, and far more resentment by white patrons. However, as one manager expressed it, "Most of our fears were creations of our own minds." Regardless of how whites felt about lunch-counter desegregation before such desegregation took place, many of them expressed pride in the accomplishment, once it was done.

ATTACHMENT A

THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF METROPOLITAN SAN ANTONIO

Farm and Home Building  
403 East Travis Street  
San Antonio 5, Texas

The Reverend J. Edward Marshall, President  
The Reverend Martin P. Kniker, Vice President  
Mrs. Leland Palmer, Vice President  
The Reverend Frank R. Neff, Jr., Secretary  
Col. A. H. Seabury, Treasurer

---

The Reverend C. Don Baugh, Executive Director  
Mrs. Al Peacher, Director of Christian Education  
Mrs. Charles Jordan, Office Secretary

SPECIAL REQUEST TO THE CLERGY

As your representatives to the businessmen of San Antonio, The Reverend J. Edward Marshall, The Reverend Spencer Stockwell, Mr. Olin LeBaron, and I committed the Protestant clergy to make a special announcement from their pulpits on Sunday March 20, concerning the variety stores, drug stores, and the department store of our community who have set a policy in serving all people without discrimination in the lunch counters.

These men have shown a wonderful spirit during the deliberations and we unhesitatingly assured them that the Christian communities and the Jewish community would support them in their policy.

Please cooperate by commending the businessmen for their vision and action and ask your congregation to show their appreciation by continued patronage and in every other means of assurance.

C. Don Baugh

ATTACHMENT B

Note: The following set of conditions for the desegregation of lunch counters in Galveston, Texas, was worked out by the managers of Woolworth's, Walgreen's, Kress, McCrory's, Neisner's variety stores; and Star, Central, Pharr, and Texas drug stores, March 30, 1960. This was done with the help of a mediating committee composed of eleven white civic and religious leaders. It was submitted by the mediating committee to representatives of the Negroes protesting lunch-counter segregation, and accepted by them and carried out in every detail, without incident.

1. Date for Opening Lunch Counters:

On the supposition that the day selected for opening of lunch counters on an integrated basis should be the day when the fewest customers would be on hand, it would appear that next Tuesday, April 5, 1960, would be the proper time.

2. Moratorium:

We understand that Romar and Seawall Drug Stores are not prepared to open their lunch counters as yet. The agreement of the Negro group will be secured that no Negro will attempt to patronize those lunch counters, have a sit-down, or boycott, or take other action relating to those stores for a period of one month from April 5, 1960. At the end of this time, if the Negroes desire that those lunch counters be open counters, they will first discuss the matter with the manager before taking any further action.

3. Publicity:

It apparently is the consensus that the less publicity the better, since publicity will tend to attract extremists from both races involved.

A formal news release should be given out. The store owners and managers should be prepared in the event of inquiry by newsmen, to state something as follows:

After conferences held between the store managers and a committee of ministers of all faiths, and civic and business leaders of the community, the store managers of practically all of the stores decided that it was in the best interest of the entire community to open their lunch counters to all of their patrons without regard to race.

If the colored persons involved are approached by newsmen, their reply should be, "No comment." If asked if a similar agreement will be sought from cafes and restaurants, the colored patron should say simply, "No."

At all events there should be no publicity at all until the opening of the counters is an accomplished fact, and then in the



lowest possible key. There should be no suggestion at all that this step was taken "to avoid violence," for such is an invitation to extremists of both races.

Note: it was later decided that a formal release to the newspapers, in much the same form as above, be given by the chairman of the mediating committee, a Presbyterian minister. 7

4. Police:

Mr. Walter Rourke, Police Commissioner, will be requested to provide adequate policing during the early stages and as long as it appears such is needed, with the request that he deal forcefully with any at the first sign of violence on the part of any person of any race.

5. Undertakings of the Colored Students:

It must be agreed:

a. That no colored high school student will seek to patronize the lunch counters involved for a period of two weeks, from April 5 to April 19.

b. That at no time in the future will the colored students seek entrance to any of the stores maintaining open lunch counters giving integrated service to colored patrons in any organized group, nor congregate in any such store in large numbers, in the spirit of merely demonstrating that they have the privilege of being served at the lunch counter.

c. That if the manager of a given store maintaining an open lunch counter feels that colored students have unduly congregated in his store in such large numbers as to impede his normal service to his other customers, in violation of "b" above, the manager may request that a portion of the school children leave the store and the students will comply.

d. If any individual colored student, or group of colored students, become boisterous, profane, intoxicated, or otherwise do not conduct themselves in accordance with ordinary propriety, the manager of the store may eject such students from his store, just as he would for any other such customer.

e. That a colored student will not deliberately impose his presence on a white customer by sitting beside that customer, if other seating is available, nor attempt to engage that customer against his will in conversation.

6. Undertakings of Adult Colored Leadership:

The adult colored leadership will exert every means within their control, in church, lodge meetings and the like, to suggest to the entire colored adult population that the opening of the lunch counters to them is not a legal right that has been secured, but is a privilege that the stores involved have conferred on their patrons as citizens of the community. That in appreciation to the stores that have granted this privilege, the colored community must recognize that every privilege entails responsibility, and conduct themselves accordingly.

The adult colored community will be strongly requested to comply with the general spirit of the limitations of 5b, c, and d above.

7. Further Liaison:

If any store manager feels that colored patrons, student or adult, are creating needless problems, or are not conducting themselves properly, the membership of the white committee and the adult colored committee will continue to be available to the store managers to do whatever is possible to eliminate such objectionable practice.