

March 9, 1964

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Rev. Art Thomas
Commission on Religion and Race
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027

Dear Art:

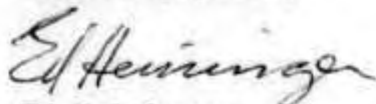
We arrived back in Des Moines at 2:00 Thursday morning. Our trip home included a thirty minute wait over Chicago for opportunity to land because of thunderstorm. Between planes in Chicago we visited with Frazier's son, and the minister of University Christian Church, Chicago, J. H. Sherman. He was anxious to talk with us to find out what happened after he left. He was planning to write an article for Christian Century about it.

Enclosed is my report on this experience. I have gone to some length in writing up parts of it in order that it may be shared with others as well as yourself. I feel that of particular importance are the comments made about the presence of our team by the whites. It makes me wonder whether it is even possible for northern clergymen to be considered observers.

Some of my other comments under "Negro Churches" have a bearing on the question you asked about Mt. Beulah. I know nothing about the legal situation of this property, but the case seems very clear that one of the greatest needs is the provision of citizenship training. If the churches can help by setting up the citizenship school at Mt. Beulah it would be most welcome--by the Civil Rights movement, that is.

It was good to meet you and Ken and we wish you well in your further adventures. My own personal involvement in the southern situation only helps to make more effective what I can do in the north. It is particularly valuable with reference to work with students. We regret that we could not stay longer, as you asked, but we felt it was too late to change plans and there was little that we felt we could do.

Sincerely yours,



Ed Heininger

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REGISTRATION

Canton, Mississippi

In Canton, Mississippi, until 1956 there was a liberal sherriff, and an old registration proceedure. People had a simple proceedure and a number of the Negroes began to register. After the new registration law was passed the liberal registrar lost the election, so the present one is very strict. All Negroes and whites previously registred, were called on to reregister. By this a process began to weed out the Negroes. They would be told,

I can't find your name on the list

Your name cannot be transfered

Between July 63 and February 64 only about 60 Negroes succeeded in getting registered. COFO reports:

In 18 years only 200-250 Negroes have been able to register. In the last 8 months, the staff has been in Canton, Negroes have made over 1000 attempts to register. Only 30 have been successful. Over 300 signed affidavits explaining of discrimination have been filed with the justice Department in Washington.

HARRASSMENT

The following is a quote from a Negro businessman:

I belong to a religious sect that does not use or permit alcoholic beverages. The first time that I voted, I left immediately for Chicago on business. That night THEY came to my house (my father was there). They had an arrest warrant charging me with having whiskey.

Also:

The next time I went to vote they did not have my name on the list of those registered. I went to see the sherriff about it. He sent me to the circuit clerk. He said he could do nothing and sent me back to the sherriff. He said I had to see the Madison County Democratic Chaffman. He sent me to the constable. He told me I had to vote a 'protest vote', sealed in an envelope. He said - Your just determined to vote arn't you.

I said - That's about the size of it.

They have given me a merry chase.

When asked how he escaped economic pressure on his job, he replied that he was in the insurance business, selling insurance to Negroes. They could not touch him. -We own the company.

SLOWDOWN

Tactics used to slow down this registration in Madison county seem to be the following. The Mississippi law itself requires a complex registration proceedure. The registrar takes only one person in his office at a time, although they tell me that eight people could be seated there. That one must finish before the next can begin, no matter how long it takes. The afternoon of Freedom Day, to harass the crowd standing outside the courthouse, the restrooms were closed. The slow dribble of registrations does not even keep up with the number of people who turn 21 each day. The registrar is the sole judge of the qualifications. He does not need to let people know whether or not they pass the test for 30 days. This gives time for economic or other pressure to get people to with draw/ their application.

The Justice Department has now filed suit against the Madison County Registrar. This event came by way of news on the Monday evening we were there. A special investigator was flown from Washington, and on Tuesday he began to collect cases and information in the community. It will have to go to the Federal Circuit Court to get a fair hearing.

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EVALUATION OF FREEDOM DAY by NEGROES

At the Mass Meeting on Monday night we heard a number of comments on the experience of Freedom Day. Spirits were high, and the mood was good. There may have been many who were disappointed because they were not really able to register. There was a mood of putting something over on the whites, such as the comments about how the county would go broke because of the cost of hiring the extra deputies. Everyone cheered on hearing that Mrs. Barnes, an 87 year old woman, had succeeded in registering, or at least filling in application.

If Mrs. Barnes can do it, standing outside for three days, and she is 87 you youngsters, any one of us youngsters ought to be able to stand there for 12 or 15 days.

When asked, "What do you think about Freedom Day?" they replied:
It ought to be right now.

Mrs. Brown commented:

How many of us raised our hand and voted for it. I'm working hard for my children. If everybody is for this organization we won't have to do this. We've done started it. God don't pay you for starting, but God will pay you for finishing. The Bible says if you stand together you won't fall. We'll stand together.

Unity comes through organized effort of the Negroes, and the Civil Rights workers will bring any organization and unity.

A man commented:

When I went up to the gate, the Deputy said; "Boy, where you going?"
I replied; I am 61 years old. When am I going to be a man. I'm going in there to register to vote as a citizen. I went in. They told me, "can't take you to day. Come back in 10 or 15 days." I'll be back every day until I'm registered.

MY OBSERVATIONS

Observing these things makes me understand why the Negroes consider voter registration as the most important thing in the South. This giving of the right to vote to the Negro does not at all mean that Negroes will take over the political affairs. One white commented: You can buy the Negro's vote. I'm not so sure this will happen if the Negroes learn to organize. Nevertheless, I can see that the morale factor associated with first class citizenship, and voting, has a great power. The impression we get up North, is that the Negro Revolt in the South is only at isolated places, and this is being well held in check by the Southern whites. This impression is clearly given by Northern papers. But behind the headlines there is much going on that could be seen up close. The revolt of the southern Negro in Mississippi is growing, and it is down at the grass roots level. There are people who are standing up and being counted, and some of it comes at considerable cost. There are Negro businessmen, and farmers who are going out on the limb. There is a Revolution going on, and it is happening in Mississippi. Things will never be the same again in Canton.

THE RESISTANCE

In addition to the previously mentioned parade of guns on Freedom Day, it is important also to note the other steps toward a police state. Now, by state law, or Canton City ordinance, there are the following restrictions: 1) A bill outlawing distribution of leaflets which encourage economic boycott; 2) a libel bill outlawing an economic boycott of a business; 3) a bill allowing interchange of police between communities; 4) permission allowed for police to enter a home without a search warrant; 5) police can limit mobility on the streets; 6) while we were there the mayor ordered an emergency 10 P.M. curfew.

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Canton, Mississippi
Ed Heininger
3/3/64

The description below indicates some of the powers involved in the social change taking place in Canton, Mississippi:

Picture a small frame church, white paint peeling, its yard muddy with the recent rain. It sits among unpainted and tar paper shacks, set on bricks to keep them out of the Mississippi mud. It is Monday after Freedom day, and 2600 Negro children have boycotted the schools by staying home. In this church are gathered 115 high school and younger children in Freedom School. They stay all day. With them are two young workers from CORE. The CORE worker instructs them in the 15 points of Non-Violence technique. They go over this again and again. The Negro ministers come and encourage these youth. The youth talk about their inadequate education, and list the things that need to be done: 30 typewriters and only 6 work; not enough text books; inadequate library; no glasses for drinking water in the cafeteria; no foreign language offered in high school; very poor equipment for scientific experiments....etc. The students form committees to work on plans for improving their school.

Outside, at the corner sit the representatives of the law, the power structure of the community, and the status quo. The mayor, the head of the White Citizens Council, other officials come and go. The law is represented by 10 to 12 police, 5 squad cars, pistols, clubs, shotguns. The shotguns are carried by men who walk back and forth in front of the church. Other cars of officers come and go. One civil rights worker is arrested. Guns, clubs, police organization, jail, and brutality (not used on this occasion) represent the efforts of the whites to keep the status quo.

Half way down the other street sits a car by itself. Inside are two representatives of the FBI, with 2 way radio. They sit and watch. They do not interfere, but only investigate after things happen. They report daily to the Justice Department. They represent the power of the Federal Government, a higher law, and the nation. Their power is legal in most cases.

On the steps outside stands a white Northern Minister. He is an outsider symbolizing hope, encouragement, the moral law, and people who care - to the Negroes and Civil rights workers; symbolizing "outside agitators" and unwanted interference to the white citizens. Their presence and power if any, are the moral power of a still higher law of God, which calls men to treat each other with love and respect, and declares that all people of our society have equality before God, and ought to have it in citizenship and opportunity.

I stood on that church step, and watched what fear did to the whites, as 115 Negro boys and girls inside talked of hope, opportunity, a better life, and non-violence.

I have a prediction. The South will change, because there are people who will dare the status quo, and persist in their demands; because there are people who will suffer the intimidation, the beatings, the imprisonment, and persist in their demands; because there is a higher law of government; because there is a higher law of God. I fear that change in the South will come only at great cost and with much suffering. I personally thank God that through the years that they have come up through slavery, He has prepared a people through suffering, who can bear the suffering and still turn the other cheek, and pay most of the cost that will bring us closer to the dream of "liberty and justice for all."

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CHURCHES

Canton, Mississippi
Ed Heining

WHITE MINISTERS WE TALKED TO

At the suggestion of Art Thomas we tried to talk to the white clergy about the events of the previous week, attempting to assess the value of the team and seeking their observations about happenings in the community. Thomason recorded these kinds of comments by the Roman Catholic Priest- Moran, who served the white congregation:

Thomason said that we did not discuss religion.

Moran: Only 10% of Negroes are married. They have children, spat and leave. The attitude of the enlightened is to do what is best, keeping the peace and maintaining separate relations. Negroes are imoral, uneducated, no ambition... look at those shacks they live in... 90% belong to the whites. They don't care about them. You'll find TV antennas, and they drive fine cars..

Thomason mentioned that he had stayed in one of the Negro homes and it was not like that.

Moran: Do THEY know where you are staying?

Best good workmen get \$1.00 an hour and some get \$60 a week in Jackson.

Moran had at one time served communion to a Negro. When the whites protested he told them:

If I hadn't given communion the bishop would have me fired from the job.

If the bishop had not fired me the Pope would have fired him. Now you run along and tend to your own business, and we will tend to ours.

Catholic schools, segregated, are some of the finest in the county, but they do not offer nor encourage social freedom.

Episcopal Minister- was new in the community, and was from Tennessee. He did not feel that he wanted to have anyone know his opinion, and asked that he not be quoted on anything. His attitude resembled a card at his office door, a prayer, which said:

Lord, please help me to keep my nose out of other peoples business. Amen

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER - This was the largest white church and represented the power structure of the community. The minister was young, and well educated. On our first interview he was reluctant to talk frankly. Among the things he said were the following answers to the question of whether it was valuable for the National Council team to come into the community:

I understand your motivations, but frankly it was not helpful. These people do not understand you. They don't believe that you are ministers. They consider you agitators, not observers. They are afraid of communists. They cannot understand how you can be concerned about this matter. They have not had any social gospel. They do not see this race problem as a religious problem, but as a political and economic problem. Seeing you here makes them put blame on you, as an agitator, rather than seeing any blame on themselves.

Mississippi has not developed any social conscience on this matter.

Our personal observations and conversations bear out this observation very much. As long as the people there can put the blame on outsiders, they will not admit that some of the guilt is their own. The next day one of the Presbyterian men and Thomason returned to see this man again. His other observations were as follows: Re: why the southern white takes this view -

The old attitude of the southerner is a personal relationship to the Negro.

Person to person, master to servant, he will take care of the Negroes he knows personally, take care of his family, get him out of trouble, and this is a well established way.

Last week (he continued) the Negroes began to act in a group. Whites can not understand this nor deal with this new factors. Other civil rights events out

(CONTINUED report of the Presbyterian minister)

Canton is isolated from the outside, and ignored what was going on in the rest of the country.

This man sees no hope of immediate change. Things have crystallized in Canton so that there is a gulf between Negroes and whites. No one can bridge it. The same people do not exist in this. He hopes that after this new situation settles down and is lived with by the whites, some new leadership will exert itself and new relationships will develop.

Older Negro leaders see their own personal comfort and leadership threatened. These have adjusted to the situation of the old way of life, and are getting along with it.

NEGRO CHURCHES AND MINISTERS

On Tuesday morning I attended the Ministerial Alliance of the county Negro ministers. This was a regular meeting, with not only ministers, but leading laymen present. These men were in good spirits. They felt that Freedom Day had been a victory, even though they did not register many. They spent some time registering their protest to the way that the whites had turned out with guns. One of them, making a motion that a letter of protest be sent, said:

I think that we must raise our voice in protest as Christians, for what happened Friday. We must protest against the city officials for the rifles and men all over town. We are not animals. We are people. The officers of the law, rifles in hand, were yelling at us and trying to provoke us. (The editor had commented that the police had yelled too loud, but had not intimidated the Negroes lined up to vote. The Negroes definitely did not agree with this interpretation.)

He continued: I can not preach the gospel to my people and condone this kind of thing without a protest.

This man was a Methodist, and an outsider from another part of the state. I felt that he had better education, and was perhaps the most capable of the Negro ministers. He had housed the white ministers in his home, and called on the others to do the same. They had not. They also commented:

We can not get any of our protest published in the newspapers. Only the outside newspapers will publish anything of our protest.

The ministers voted for the following things that day. 1) to send the above letter of protest; 2) to appoint a committee to help organize the town on a block by block basis to keep up the pressure of getting people to register; 3) they asked for assistance in training people for citizenship and voting.

The President of the Alliance made the following statement:

I wonder if there is a possibility of bringing instructors into Mississippi from the citizenship training school. What is being taught about citizenship in Madison County is not very much. People have not been taught in public schools. It would make a real difference if people could get this instruction without having to leave the state.

My PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS about the NEGRO CHURCHES: Apparently the Negro ministers as a group have been slow at coming to this kind of position. Some have been with the movement all the time, and others have feared economic pressures, which they all could suffer. Those who had outside denominational backing could take a stronger stand. Independent type churches leave a man standing by himself.

Attending the Mass Meeting, presided over by one of the ministers, the following kind of thoughts came to me: Negro Churches are often criticized for not being active enough in the social movement. There is a sense in which the CORE and SNCC workers are the new "religious" leaders, the new preachers, and new heroes. It was "brother George" who was in jail. The freedom songs are religious songs. These

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CHURCHES, Continued

Canton, Mississippi
Ed Heininger

The Civil Rights workers are the ones who now make the sacrifice, living on \$10 a month, and bearing the bodily abuse and sacrifice involved in the beatings and jailings. The mass meetings are similar to the revival services with a new this world emphasis. The young men are now listening, and participating, and acting in the movement with this religious overtone. Although the content of the "new message" has its non-violence emphasis, and this is compared to the teachings of Jesus on references, yet, this is not a Christian content in the full sense. The older people seem to be very reluctant to follow along, and do not join in the Freedom Songs. Some of them walk out.

Negro Churches, like white churches range widely on their opinions, and on their willingness to participate and sacrifice.

THE BETTER OFF NEGROES

One of my erroneous ideas was that the pressures of a segregated society like that in Mississippi would cause the industrious and most ambitious Negroes to leave. I found that this was not so. Some people told me this. I observed it. Not all Negroes in Mississippi live in poverty. There are ambitious people who have made something of themselves. There are independent farmers, small businessmen, substantial employees. One such man said to me:

Many of the middle class Negroes are reluctant to get involved in the Civil Rights movement. They are economically independent, and often older people with some position. They will help with money, and favors, but not direct participation. They fear the loss of homes, cars, etc. But the courage of the civilrights efforts will get these to vote.

This man had a small grocery business in the county, and owned several hundred acres of land. These people have been gaining ground, but they do not carry the masses with them.

Some do migrate. This man has a brother in Chicago. He has done well, in politics and business. His sons fly airplanes.

These Negroes will not be the ones to change the structures because they have too much to lose. Is not the same thing true of many whites, North and South, so many of the fairly independent business people in the economic power structure also refused to get involved, or take a stand in matters of civil rights.

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HOW VALUABLE WAS THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OBSERVER TEAM?

There is no question that the presence of the northern white ministers gave a great boost of morale to the Negro people and the COFO workers. It made them feel that the rest of the world, which seemed to be so distant, was behind them and their efforts. The letter of gratitude signed by the COFO workers and presented to us on Wednesday noon was one of their expressions of gratitude. Copies of this will be forwarded to the Commission on Race office.

WAS IT WORTHWHILE FOR OUR SECOND TEAM ON MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY?

Yes this was worthwhile. It gave us opportunity to observe another stage of the protest movement, involved in the school boycott. There were both good and bad sides to this part of the movement. It was my personal opinion that the new recruit from Chicago very badly overdid the effort to pressure the school officials. I think that the arrest of the COFO workers was the direct result of this bungling and the increasing intolerance of the community officials.

MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE MEETING

Tuesday morning I attended the meeting of the Negro Ministerial Alliance. Although Frasier Thomason and I did not say very much at the meeting, except for words of encouragement, it was most worthwhile. I was pleased to see the way these ministers were standing up for what was right, and evidently becoming more and more willing to risk for the sake of improved relations. Valuable quotes of their comments are included elsewhere in this report. At this meeting they not only voted to protest the "armed camp", but agreed to set up a block organization for recruiting people to register, and requested assistance for citizenship training.

REACTION OF THE WHITES

We were not able exactly to tell what the white citizens thought of the presence of white ministers. Apparently the first team was at one time, by some, regarded as a group of "observers." The Editor, Mullins, told of planning a meeting to which one of the first team was to speak. He later was embarrassed to learn that these white ministers were staying at Freedom House. By this, he stated, they were identifying with the Freedom movement, and were no longer considered objective. He said that if they were to truly be "objective" observers, they would come into the community, register at the white hotel, introduce themselves to the community whites, and generally follow the proper procedure for southern white behavior. Yes, they could have talked to the Negroes, but eating with them, and staying at Freedom House, and encouraging them at the meetings put these outsiders in the class of agitators.

By Monday the community opinion had clearly jelled. The white ministers were "outside agitators", suspected of being communists. The Presbyterian minister said that our presence in the community was not helpful. The Sheriff told one of us -

You are not welcome... you are outside agitators... We don't consider you ministers. We won't call you 'Reverend', nor even 'Mister', but 'white Niggers' He implied that they would no longer protect us.

- I'm responsible for law and order... and your being here makes it difficult for us....

It seems clear to me that the National Council Commission on Race should keep this in mind... that as a southern community will not regard what we did as an observer role. Any future strategy should keep this in mind.

COMMENTS BY OUR TEAM

Bob Johnson of Cincinnati: (Regarding his time spent in the country)

As I walked through the darkness toward these homes, I thought I may have been the first white face that these people had seen, looking kindly and wishing brotherhood. I went in and we sat by the fire and talked about common things. There was a warm feeling. I was accepted in these homes. I know that if you (Negroes) had come to the door of the homes in my parish, some Monday night, you may not have been accepted. One does find Christ in one's brother. I met Christ last night here with you.

T.W. Sifers: (To the 2nd meeting of the Negroes in the church)

(Using Romans 5... re: suffering - endurance - character - etc...
God is bring good out of this evil of segregation of the past. He has developed the character of you people to endure the suffering in a non-violent way. You will be able to help bring about peaceful changes.. etc.

I would heartily agree with his sentiments. Many of us whites would never put up with it.

This experience was very valuable for me. It gave me a first hand experience with the problems of social change in the south, with the nature and persistence of the protest movement, with the dangers that are involved. As I work with students and with this community and its own program for racial change the observations, and the story I can tell about this, will be helpful. I do wonder how much we whites can do to change our fellow whites in Mississippi. This is not our job. The encouragement we can give by our presence seems to be the most valuable thing that we have to offer the Freedom Movement in the south. It is quite apparent that the job that has to be done to organize voter registration can be done much better by the kind of CORE and SNCC workers that they had in Madison County. Northern ministers can not be at all as effective as these young men and women for whom I have the greatest respect. But we do need to support them with our presence, including running the risks.

THE VALUE OF THE SECOND TEAM

Was it worthwhile for the National Council to have a second group to come to this community after the first team left? I think so. It was certain that we did not change the minds of any whites. It was worthwhile for us to talk to some of them and get their reaction to what had happened. We hope it is also helpful for the Commission to know what people thought of the presence of outside white clergymen who said they came from the National Council of Churches.

The value to the Civil Rights workers was in helping to keep up their morale. I recall the dejected and wrung out expression on the face of Dick Jewett when we first met him Monday morning. They hadn't slept. There had been a bomb threat the night before - by phone, not only once, but several times. The COFO workers just sat it out in Freedom House. Nothing happened. But with our presence, and encouragement things perked up during the day. Their morale seemed much better, - before their later arrest on Wednesday.

It certainly was worthwhile to me, and will be very valuable in my continuing ministry in a college situation, as I endeavor to get students and other citizens to realize that we are living in a new age of relations between the races.

APR 6 1964

Three days in Canton, Mississippi! A Yankee churchman among the negroes and White Citizens. A guest, however unwelcome, in a county seat town in the deep south, observing its reactions and noting its racial character during a period of storm, commissioned by the National Council of Churches and the United Christian Missionary Society.

Who was I to be in such a role? This was the question put to me by the local Sheriff, Jack Cauthen, "Do you live in Canton? Are you a citizen of Mississippi? What is your business here?"

I am Pastor of a suburban church of business and professional people (white) in a new and growing area of Des Moines. Several times in the course of a year I can be counted on to preach on our various social concerns. We take all the offerings pertinent to Compassion and Race which come before us. We collect used clothing for Church World Service. Municipal issues such as fair employment practices and integrated housing will find us on the "Christian" side. On occasions we have been thrust into a more active identification with the cause of human rights. Our congregation has had three negro families in its membership or on its active responsibility roll. One fine negro was made a deaconess. We gave active support to a covenant on Open Occupancy "welcoming into our neighborhoods all citizens of good character, regardless of race, creed or color." Finally, some of us were caught up in a neighborhood fracas when two negro families moved into our community. We stood up and were counted, and though we added no blood to that of the martyrs, it can be reported that we have lost some significant families from our membership, and no doubt have lost others who might otherwise have joined.

Not very prophetic, really! My concern and sympathy can readily be aroused by evidence of flagrant injustice, but I have a rather effective coat of insulation, self-centeredness, call it what you will, which has kept me from a too active abandonment to any issue, almost, beyond that of the local church.

But common decency cries out when persons are denied their guaranteed rights of citizenship—to hold a job, to educate their children, to live where they can afford, to vote. A religion which does not include at least such elemental concerns as these is not deserving of the allegiance of its people.

So here was I, a clergyman far removed from the deep struggles in which the races find themselves, venturing to appraise the tensions, the fears, and the resolutions on the part of both.

I was startled and alarmed by the evidence that Mississippi is an armed state. Police cruisers, Sheriff's cars, Highway Patrol, pick-up trucks, all equipped with two-way radios, search light and bull horn, and with two or more men, with rifles, shotguns, revolvers and cameras. The local priest, Father Patrick K. Moran, told me the guns were not loaded, and only by order from a captain over ten men could they become loaded. "Of course the negroes don't know that!" said he. Nor was it very reassuring to me to be so informed! By contrast, the negroes I saw went about their tasks with quiet and peaceful determination, completely unarmed. As one of them said, "We have lived with fear all our lives. This does not seem much different."

The county negro ministerial association met Tuesday morning, March 3, and drafted a resolution of protest to the authorities for the display of armed force. Said the Rev. McCree, a Methodist, "We are not animals. We are human beings. I cannot serve my people and remain in subjection to such as this." A crowning indignity was the 10 o'clock curfew imposed on the negro community each evening. We white observers were under the same necessity of obeying the curfew as were our negro friends. The evening rallies were concluded in plenty of time to allow everyone to be settled for the night.

I was impressed with the character of the Civil Rights workers. The one exception would be Scott B. Smith, Jr., a Chicago CORE worker. We felt he was using northern city tactics in what is a rural community, though perhaps, for all we know, he was doing effectively that which needs to be done. His public disdain for school authorities was apparently the cause of a wholesale arrest of all Civil Rights workers on Wednesday morning, March 4. I would have desired a briefing Conference with the leaders of the movement to learn from them their plans and goals, but there never seemed to be time for this. We were welcomed into every circle of activity at Freedom House, headquarters for Council of Coordinating Organizations (COFO), but much that we learned was by piecing together bits of information and conferring among ourselves, rather than by a formal briefing.

The local negroes remain the unknown factor in this community. The accepted lines of communication between races have broken down. The business and professional negroes have been reluctant to take the lead in Civil Rights because they have achieved their status and leadership from within the old pattern. The younger negroes, with nothing to lose, are pushing forward. Some of them have not yet been checked out, and there has not been time for a new natural leadership to emerge. How long can the enthusiasm of these days be maintained in the steady pull that is ahead? At what point will the cause of freedom best be served by achieving a dialogue between the leaders of both racial communities, or must the tension be maintained in crisis after crisis, with no attempt at responsible dialogue?

The negro ministers had been divided as to the advisability of pushing Civil Rights. In the meeting Tuesday morning, it was evident that some of the ministers were only beginning to understand the implications of the preceding week. Richard Jewett, CORE, worked skillfully and patiently to get the ministers to put themselves on record, first to draft a resolution of protest, and second, to form a block by block organization to continue the push.

I had an opportunity to interview personally Sheriff Jack Cauthen; Mr. Herrington Rimmer, an Episcopal layman; Father Moran, Sacred Heart Church; the Rev. Richard Harbison, Presbyterian; and Phil Mullins, editor of the Madison County Herald. My host and hostess were Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Robinson.

The Sheriff is new to his job and under great pressure to show the power structure that he can maintain order. He is a Presbyterian, with an inherent respect for ministers, a former school teacher. By southern standards he is a moderate. An incident which happened to his brother seven years ago, when seven negroes attacked him and left him a permanent invalid, has left a deep impression on him. I sought him out to inquire as to the charges against George Raymond, a Civil Rights worker who had been arrested. The interview, while standing alongside his official car, went like this:

"What is your name? Where you from? What is your business? Why are you down here? Are you a citizen of Madison County? I don't think you or any other minister is entitled to this information. We can handle our own affairs. Let me tell you something. See those people there (waiting to register)? Until last Friday they could have come in any time they wanted to register, one at a time, white or colored. Friday, this Raymond stirred them up and so 80, 70, 60 people stood in line all day in the cold. Some of my men took cold. Raymond doesn't live in Canton, and as far as I'm concerned he's a trouble maker, and I'm waiting for him. One false move and I'll run him out of town. I'm a Presbyterian myself.

"I don't like to talk to any minister like I'm talking to you. My daddy taught me to be respectful. You look like a right nice sort. But if you break any of our laws! We resent outside interference. We treat 'em fine. We think we understand them better than you do up north. Some of the finest friends I've got are negroes. I used to run with them, steal watermellons with them, but I don't suppose you'd understand what I'm talking about. Where you say you are from? I'm mighty glad to meet you. I live in Madison. I'm a family man myself. Got four children. If you ever get in trouble, let me know. You can use my name, providing you're not on the

other side of the fence. But it would take a lawyer to get the kind of information you're asking for. The FBI was asking, too. There are eight of them. We know every one of them. Whenever they move, one of our men moves right along with 'em. They were right there when Raymond was arrested." With that we shook hands. A negro sitting in the Sheriff's car told me later than he commented when I left that "there was one minister he enjoyed talking to". I understand some of our party received different treatment.

Mr. Rimmer is a delightful person with whom to visit. An Espiscopalian lay leader, "emeritus" by virtue of ill health rather than age, and, I imagine, still the lay power of the parish, Mr. Rimmer is one of those in every community who can be different from the rest and get away with it. He describes himself as one of the two men in the community (Editor Mullins the other) who honestly believe the negro has been ill-treated and has a just grievance. I take it the community accepts him socially and thus he is free to talk and be ignored. I saw no evidence to suggest that he would ever become a crusader, but he just might become one who could eventually reopen conversation between the races.

Father Moran talked for an hour, discussing the situation in Canton from a civil and political, rather than a moral or religious standpoint. His attitude is that of a paternal southerner, terribly parochial, doing what is best, keeping the peace, maintain'ng separate relations between races. Mr. Mullins told us of the time when Rev. Moran gave communion to a negro Catholic and dismissed those who came to protest. "If I hadn't, my Bishop would have removed me, and if he didn't the Pope would have removed him. Good day!" To me, however, Father Moran stated that "Negores are immoral, uneducated, with no ambition. Just look at the way they live. Ninety percent of them renting shacks belonging to white people, but everyone of them with a TV and a fine car. Only ten percent of them are married. The others live by convenience. They have a couple of kids, then they have a spat and the men up and leave and someone else moves in. There are five kinds of law in Canton—between negro and negro, white and white, negro and white and white and negro. (I never did learn the fifth). The guns were not loaded. Don't tell anyone else you stayed in a negro home. They would run you out in thirty minutes. Where does your host work? (Furniture factory in Jackson). He brings home \$60.00 or \$70.00 a week then. I'm a member of the Ministerial Association. No one dares speak with any other point of view. The Methodist minister is a member of the White Citizen's Council and Chaplain of the police and fire departments. I'm sure that if Dick Harbison were free to talk to you, he would be as frank as I am".

The Rev. Richard Harbison did indeed visit with us freely and with Christian courtesy. "People think you are intruders. They cannot understand your motives for being here or comprehend that you are clergymen. People here haven't heard much of the social gospel. I try to preach love, (meaning good-will and benevolence but not justice or freedom). The people pride themselves on keeping the peace (meaning the status-quo). The Methodist minister was caught off balance last week-end. He is the police and fire chaplain but not a member of the White Citizen's Council, though he did invoke the meeting last Tuesday evening and took pictures for the police. I hadn't intended to go to the White Citizen's meeting, but Phil Mullins encouraged me to go, to get the pulse of the community. I did, too! These people are determined not to give an inch. They are 100% united. Until last week (prior to the February 25 meeting) Canton's relations with the negro were on a personal, individualistic basis. Now we find them united, and we don't know what to do about it. I hope things might eventually settle down so our leaders can learn to make adjustment to the new situation, but for the present there is no such hope. Eleven of the forty-five leading members of the White Citizen's Council are in the Presbyterian Church."

Phil Mullins (how often do I refer to him!) prophesied that Mr. Harbison will be gone in a year. He was caught up in some controversy with his synod a year ago. He's a fine man, said Mullins, on his way up. In this we would concur. We do not envy his position in Canton, and we wonder when his conscience might burst and he can contain himself no longer.

Mr. Harbison referred us to an address by Professor James Silver, University of Mississippi, to the Southern Historical Association, Ashville, N.C., in November, 1963, before the President's assassination. His address, "Mississippi, A Closed Society" would be helpful in understanding the distinctiveness of Mississippi, not only regarding the negro, but the "power structure here" as well.

Phil Mullins, editor, has already crept into this report at many points. I would term him a practical crusader, running his own show, expressing his opinions freely, exercising freedom on the editorial pages (written by his father) but quite aware that his racial views do not count for much in the community. He is respected, a man to contend with, who has maintained an amazing rapport with the business community on whom he depends for support. "People ask me why I talk to you. I tell them there is no harm in it, that you will be making a report and we don't want it to be too bad! My father and I have preached better treatment for the negro for years, to no avail. They listen and read, but do not follow. We had a White Citizen's Council organized in 1954, but since then it has been dormant, until Tuesday. Every business has been forced to sign up, even me. There is no question but what the negro has not gotten his fair shake. And the whites are not going to give up their privileges. They'll not budge until they are forced. Only federal troops can break this thing (school integration). Some of these people would die to preserve the system. I wouldn't. This school boycott didn't mean anything. The white man doesn't care whether the negro goes to school or not. There is no compulsory education law in Mississippi. The Jackson school is prepared to integrate five negroes this fall as a token, and I hope Gov. Johnson has more sense than Gov. Barnett. You can't beat the Federal government! Pres. Johnson will get more done than Pres. Kennedy ever did. Kennedy was a moralist. People are uneasy around moralists. Johnson is a politician. People will say he had to do it.

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"This voter registration push isn't going to succeed either. The State of Mississippi has frankly seen to that in its registration law. What is really effective is the Economic Boycott. And the retail merchants have lost 50% of their Easter business. Some of them are already saying we've just got to come to terms, but the majority won't listen. Last week I wanted to set up a meeting with one of the white ministers here as an observer, until I learned that he was that very moment over at Freedom House. So I phoned him and told him his very presence there spoils any "observer" status he claims. An "observer" would be one who would stay in our white hotels and eat in our restaurants. But when you eat with the negroes and put up for the night with them, make the Civil Rights office your headquarters and attend their rallies, then as far as I'm concerned you are no longer an Observer. You're an agitator like the rest of them. (Of course, that's for your conscience to decide). However, even if you were to keep your observer status, it would make no difference to the people here. They just don't want you."

On Wednesday noon our party called on the editor again. Freedom House had been raided and nine Civil Rights workers arrested, and we wanted to learn the charges against them before leaving for Jackson and home. Said Mr. Mullins, "It will do absolutely no good to approach the Sheriff again. Any approach you make will only inflame the authorities. They're in good hands. The FBI will see to that. They won't be abused. That's the safest place they could be. They have a better case now than before they were arrested. Now they have a federal test case." He asked us who was paying our expenses here. We gave him an affidavit, signed and witnessed by his notary, that we were here on church allowance or at our own personal expense. He seemed relieved, because the townspeople were sure we were subsidized by CORE or the other Civil Rights groups.

We left Canton Wednesday afternoon, March 4, followed every mile of the way to the county line by the inevitable pick-up truck and two men who took movies as they went around us. We were discouraged and depressed. We had come as Church men to observe and to represent the Church in a society in which racial injustice exists. We were sure that the presence of friendly white men had a beneficial effect on the negro. We would like to believe our presence in the white community had some such beneficial effect, but there is little evidence of this. There was no opportunity for meaningful

confrontation with the people. The layman has great difficulty in accepting the image of a minister who comes as a Christian instead of an intruder.

What of our self image? We found ourselves so caught up in the negro's struggle and the hopelessness of it all that we lost our objectivity as "observers". So intensely did we identify with the cause that we wanted to move into Freedom House and fill the gap the moment the Civil Rights workers were arrested. Although we were Church men with a mission to open avenues of reconciliation, our glimpse of a society in which moral injustice was so evident made us inevitably choose sides, and I suspect that reconciliation was as little in our minds as in those of the white citizens. Our presence was more a dare than a witness, and this was our weakness.

What of the future of Civil Rights in Mississippi? We witnessed three separate movements in Canton--1. A school boycott, more a picnic for the children than an effective means of protest. 2. An economic boycott, far more effective. The merchants were hurting. 3. The voter registration drive. With all its frustrations, this simply must be the answer. Boycotts, even when effective do not contain the seeds of reconciliation. Citizenship does. It is to be hoped that the federal government will establish through the courts the rights of negroes to register and vote on the same basis as the whites.

There is the prospect of establishing citizenship schools throughout the south during the summer months. Mr. Art Thomas of the Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches, and Mr. Ian McCrae of the United Christian Missionary Society's Department of Social Welfare have proposed the use of Mt. Beulah Christian Center at Edwards, Mississippi, for one of these schools. Such a program, sponsored by the Church rather than Civil Rights groups has great merit. The key to freedom and voting rights for the negro will be in his education for citizenship, and men of good will everywhere can be expected to understand the role of the Church in such a program.

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