



really means give the power structure more time to strengthen its controls. If my friend's argument is that one should not go elsewhere unless he is also engaged with his own city's problems, I quite agree.

Did your going accomplish anything? Yes, when added to what others have and are doing. It encourages the COFO people who do the real work. Our presence helps enlist members of the Negro community not heretofore active. I hope we trouble the conscience of some of the whites. Being clergymen we bear witness to the Church's concern for human dignity, worth and freedom. This is tremendously important to me.

I should have explained before now the extent to which the rights of whites as well as Negroes are affected in places like Hattiesburg. It is truly a *Closed Society* as Professor James Silver (of the University of Mississippi) calls it. Colleges and universities have forbidden discussion of race. (We heard of one student who got in trouble for referring to "an integrated personality" in a speech.) Merchants must put the White Citizens' Council sticker in their stores or be boycotted. Clergymen lose jobs for the mildest involvement. We were told no white lawyer in Mississippi will take a civil rights case.

Are the Civil Rights groups infiltrated by Communists? (A favorite question.) We saw no evidence of it, but such groups would be foolish not to try. But is this reason to pull out or does it not make it more imperative to become involved? How better to combat enemies of our country than to seek removal of conditions which are seed beds of discontent? The movement is led by persons who want nothing more subversive than freedom. But they want it now. What's more, they are no longer afraid. As John Cameron, courageous Negro Baptist preacher in Hattiesburg, put it, "Fear is the only instrument they've had, and it can be blunted." It has been.

Finally, people have wondered what effect this has had upon my church. Some of our people may have been disgusted, others probably thought it was unwise, still others were proud of their pastor. I know of none who has left over it. Frankly, my concern is not only for those persons who may quit the Church in anger and disgust when it becomes active in the cause of civil rights, but also for those who will turn away in disgust and disappointment if the Church remains silent and does not match deeds with words. I cringed the other night during a discussion with young people when a girl said: "Don't you think in the case of a small church whose aim is to become big, that it should avoid becoming involved in controversial issues?" God help us! A church like this should close its doors. A warning has been given against gaining the whole world but losing one's soul in the process.

One still has to march to the music he hears. I have no idea what you should be doing. I do know that in my case it would have been more dangerous to stay in Oklahoma than go to Mississippi.

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