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Holy Week of 1964 was a time of special activity in the church visit campaign. On Palm Sunday many churches were visited. The doors were closed as usual and the visitors left before the police made any arrests. On Palm Sunday night several of us from the Tougaloo faculty accompanied the students on church visits. Mrs. Clarice Campbell was a white Methodist ~~from~~ woman ~~Gallitopville~~ who taught in the Tougaloo History Department. She was ~~an~~ active in ~~an~~ interracial organizations in the South such as the Southern Conference Education Fund. She was an active churchman and had joined Galloway Methodist Church ~~there~~ <sup>aware</sup> she could have contacts with white Jacksonians and ~~so~~ that they ~~could~~ meet Tougaloo people. Before moving to Tougaloo she had taught at Rust College, the Methodist school for Negroes in Holly Springs, Miss. As a Methodist church member she felt free to talk to her pastor and to the bishop about the problems of church segregation. On this Sunday evening she invited us to come to Galloway Church, but we had planned a visit to another church. She decided to come there with us. Also making the trip was DR. Savethri, a young woman from India who had just come to Tougaloo to teach in the Sociology Department. Jeannette and several students also came. We were a very interesting little group; Dr. Savethri was wearing

a sari as she frequently did.

We arrived at St. Luke's Methodist Church for the 7:30 evening worship service. There had been no night visits here and there were no police or usher-guards standing duty outside the church. It was a cold night so I opened the church door and invited everyone inside. I assumed we would be stopped in the foyer of the church by ushers who would block the inner doors to the sanctuary. But no one stopped us. The usher at the door we entered clearly saw us and understood, but he let us be seated. The organ continued playing as we sat quietly in the pews. I looked up at the beautiful stained glass window of Jesus--lighted from behind--that I had seen so many times when I came to this church as a <sup>Millsaps College</sup> ~~Tongaloo~~/student. Then a group of men approached us and told us there had been a mis~~t~~ake and asked us to leave. We got up and begin walking out, very slowly, and asking those embarrassing ~~q~~ questions about why we had to leave, and what was wrong with our group, and is Christianity for whites only. <sup>2</sup> Some more men came over and they did not think we were moving quickly enough. As we reached the church doors there was pushing and shoving from these men, never identified as ushers if they were. Dr. Savethri tried to ask a question. She said she was from India and did ~~not~~ really understand American and Christian ways. Would the men

please explain all this to her? But, while the voice of one man could be heard trying to make some impossible ~~of~~ apology and explain the unexplainable two men physically grabbed the Indian lady and forced her out of the church. I had not expected anything like that. I looked around, hoping to see Rev. Brooks Hudson, associate pastor of the church (and a college roommate of mine); I thought he might stop the men. But no one helped. The poor man trying to make the apologies just turned and walked back down the aisle of the church.

Campbell

Clarice-~~Campbell~~ suggested that we still had time to attend the evening worship at Galloway Methodist Church. We were all willing and so drove on into Jackson. Again there were no guards on duty. But this time I wanted the ministers and the congregation to see, to experience whatever would happen--our acceptance or our rejection. We entered the church through a side door which led to the front of the sanctuary, opening to the side of the choir and the pulpit. Many people use this door; it had also become popular as a way to enter the church without seeing the police or unwelcome guests at the main doors. As we were passing through the narrow doors we were seen and

several men leaped from their pews and rushed to defend the pass. Clarice, Jeannette, and the two Black coeds spotted the charge and quickly stepped back through the door. But Dr. Savethri were still there when the men reached the point. Again we tried to ask questions. This time several hundred persons in the congregation were staring at the scene. By this time there were no Blacks inside the church sanctuary--only ~~Ed/Kin~~ the lady dressed in the sari and Rev. Ed King. I was holding the door as tightly as I could--and kept it open for over a minute. One of the men placed his hands on the lady's shoulders and pushed her backwards as he told her to ~~not~~ move. She shouted, very loudly, "Take your hands off me. I thought this was a Christian church." I realized that the whole congregation could hear us so I started talking, and shouting, in a voice as loud as I would have used had I been invited to preach there, "Don't push that lady. Let her go. We just want to worship with you." I turned towards the congregation and pleaded, "Please let my friends attend your service." Before I could say more several men began clearing the door way, rather earnestly. I was kicked on the shin and poked on the stomach--perhaps not deliberately but only as part of the ~~sc~~ confusion. I was holding the door which they were trying to close in our face.

I shouted, loudly so the congregation could hear, "Don't kick me, Don't hit me. We'll leave. ~~We'll leave.~~" And we did.

(Many times that year I had wondered if we had not been too easy on the white churches, if we shouldn't do something more dramatic than just knocking on the doors, asking our questions, having what discussion we could--and always risking arrest so quietly. Sometimes I <sup>had</sup> thought, especially the previous Christmas, that some of the visiting ministers, or even myself, should take advantage of our <sup>whiteness</sup> ~~whiteness~~, our ability to pass by the guards without being noticed (perhaps not in my own case) and enter the churches and literally disrupt the worship service (as the court would convict us of that no matter what happened.) I thought that these segregated churches had no right to celebrate Christian events as if they were not mocking Christianity by their segregation. I wanted to shout, to preach to them. ~~And, besides,~~ I also thought that they received too much comfort from their white religion and that it should be disrupted. And now, on Palm Sunday, they were preparing to observe Holy Week and try to avoid thinking about segregation and the racial crisis. Should we, should I, so disrupt their hypocritical services they could not avoid thinking? But I always decided this was not the way. As I walked away that Palm Sunday night I was no longer so s

There were other incidents that Easter season involving white churches turning away foreigners as well as Blacks. Mrs. Ann Ashmore, wife of the church editor, tried to offer apologies to Dr. Savethri at Tougaloo. A group of concerned white women met with this Indian woman; Dr. Saver<sup>thri</sup> ended up ~~confronting~~<sup>forting</sup> the Southern women who had come to apologize to ~~the~~ her.

The white church women happened to be holding a conference on missionary activities that very week in Laurel, Mississippi (headquarters of the most violent Ku Klux Klan organization in the South--but the Methodist ladies had gathered to talk about how they could help the unfortunants in Borneo). There were, actually, many women there whose concerns for the mission of the Church did include their immediate neighbors. For many years these ladies had hoped (and sometimes spoken) for better race relations in the state. Some had fought the battles to keep national Methodist church literature in the Mississippi Sunday Schools (although such literature promoted integration). These ladies had formed the core of strength and support that had allowed a few members of "the 28 ministers" to keep their pulpits--or at least stay in the state a little longer. Two Mississippi women who were now leaders of the national

Church's programs in missionary and women's work, Mrs. Paul Arrington and Peggy Billings had returned to the state for this conference. The morning after the Palm Sunday troubles I placed a long distance call to Laurel to tell Peggy what had happened with my Indian friend. But Peggy could not come to the phone so I had to leave my name and number with the local church secretary. I was afraid that if it was known that notorious Ed King from Tougaloo was calling the message would never be delivered. So I just left a number and the name, "Rev. King." Peggy called back later and then contacted Dr. Savethri. ~~Myself~~ But among the Mississippi women at the conference there was some degree of confusion (perhaps caused by some degree of guilt. Peggy wrote me about it:

... Mrs. Arrington and a friend were having tea in the hotel coffee shop when the "conference gossip" came up to them, and said, "Oh, by the way, did you hear that Peggy Billings got a long-distance call from Martin Luther King about some Indian woman who got pushed off the campus at Millsaps?"!!!! It has its lighter side, too, doesn't it? 36

Somehow, on the Movement side, we always found some cause to laugh-- at our enemies, at our friends, at ourselves. The business of closed churches in Holy Week had become too serious, to sanctimonious, too holy for me. Peggy's comment was what I needed.

Easter Sunday of 1964 was celebrated ~~✓~~ in Jackson by white people in white only ~~✓~~ churches surrounded by white lillies on the altars and police ~~✓~~ wearing white riot helmets standing guard before the churches. ~~Van/Bogard/Dunn/~~ The Methodist Church was the scene of the major confrontations. At Capitol St. Methodist Church nine men were arrested--two Black SNCC workers and seven white Methodist ministers, all of them seminary teachers. Among this group was Dr. Van Bogard Dunn, dean of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio and, from the same school but a ministerial member of the North Mississippi Methodist Conference, ~~✓~~ the Rev. Charles E. Tilson. He was thus the first white Mississippi minister under direct appointment and supervision of Bishop Franklin to be arrested at a Methodist church, also under the direct supervision~~✓~~ of the same Bishop Franklin. Mr. Tilson had been a teacher for many years and had lived out of the state. He was the author of "Segregation and the Bible," a~~✓~~ book which examined the scriptural proof#texts used by the racists to justify their way of life--and demolished most of the popular segregation arguments. (The night before the arrests this group had been



in a session with most of the ~~leading~~ white Methodist clergy of Jackson. This meeting ran for several hours. Several local ministers, like Mr. Duke, tried to defend their position with some of the old, almost fundamentalist, Biblical arguments. It was clear they neither respected or agreed with the interpretations of Mr. <sup>Tillson</sup> Tyler. This was one of the angriest confrontations between local and visiting ministers that year.)

The seminary teachers were not the only ministers visiting the city that Easter. Two Methodist Bishops attempted to attend the eleven o'clock Easter Sunday worship service at Galloway Methodist Church. One was the Black leader of the Central Jurisdiction churches in Mississippi, Bishop <sup>Charles</sup> ~~Charles~~ F. Golden of Nashville; the other was a white man, Bishop James K. Matthews of Boston. (Such a visit had been ~~considered~~ <sup>considered</sup> for some time and was encouraged by those of ~~us~~ at Tougaloo. But everyone involved thought it best for the Bishops to act on their own and not as ~~a~~ a coordinated part of the Movement--but just attending Methodist church, as was certainly their right. The action of the seminary teachers was the direct responsibility of the Movement. There ~~is~~ was, of course, co-ordination so that these men and the Bishops did not all appear at the same place.) ~~The two Bishops~~

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The two Bishops arrived at Galloway church almost twenty minutes before the start of the worship service. Ushers blocked them at the church doors. The men introduced themselves, explaining also that they were Methodist Bishops. The ushers still blocked their way. Then the Chairman of the Official Board of the church came to speak to the Bishops. This was Nat Rogers (a leading banker and businessman, one of the most influential men in all Mississippi. The Bishops later said that this man ~~was~~ sounded almost apologetic as he also refused them admission and explained the church policy of the closed doors. Several times the Bishops asked to speak to the minister of the church. Although there was certainly time for this to be done before the church service started and although the minister must have heard who was at his church door, the minister never appeared. (This minister was a good man who tried through the words and quiet manners of the past to lead his people; but his silence, his absence, his inaction, his insistence on acting as everything were still normal and normal rather than radical, dramatic steps were necessary, ~~was~~ ~~the~~ were the most reassuring defense that could ever have been made for the status quo.)

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A crowd of church people, dressed in their Easter finery, was beginning to gather and stare at the Bishops, wondering if the police would suddenly move in and make the arrests. Then some clever church officials asked the Bishops to come with them. The men then led the Bishops around to a side door of the church, out of sight of most of the crowd (and <sup>and the approaching newsmen and television crews</sup> somewhat more out of reach of the police), and then asked the men to go back to their own states. The Negro Bishop could say that Mississippi was his X state, one of the three where he worked. When it was clear that they would not be admitted to the church, through any door, the Bishops gave the ushers a printed statement, asking that it be given to all people in the church. The Bishops then left the church. The time was still only about ten minutes before the worship hour; if they had waited longer they might have been arrested, but probably not. The police had already hesitated to arrest the men, probably because of orders to leave the Bishops alone because of possible bad publicity. There was no hesitation in arresting the nine other men that Easter Sunday.

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The two Bishops then went to one of the local Black Methodist churches for their Easter Sunday worship services. These churches always welcomed integrated groups turned away from

the closed doors of the white-only churches. Many Black churches in Jackson and all parts of the state were too afraid to allow any Movement meetings in their churches and no integrated groups ever bothered to go here on a Sunday morning. But all of the churches whose ministers were sympathetic to the Movement (and who had often received threats that their churches would be bombed if they continued letting the Movement hold meetings there) were glad to welcome all visitors to "the House of Prayer for all People." Many times these Black churches even served as literal sanctuary when an integrated group had been turned away from a white church and then was followed by the police as they started the long trip back to Tougaloo. These people sometimes went into a friendly Black church both to worship--and to escape the police.