

It is hoped that these cases will receive important and substantial support from church groups. Not only is litigation of this type expensive but it is vital that its progress be brought to the attention of communicants everywhere as well as to the general public. A breakthrough in this area in Mississippi would do a great deal to open up this hard-core state to further integration and it would mark the staking out of the church's battlelines, not only at lunch counters and amusement parks, but at the door of the church itself.

Among other things, it would be desirable to post a competent and energetic lawyer in Jackson for the next several months to remain available instantly. The local lawyer we now have is not a civil rights expert and, because he is one of three Negro attorneys in Mississippi, is not readily available because of the press of other legal business. We have already received assurance from the Chicago group of funds

for a two-week sojourn by an attorney who is available for such work. In fact, without such a man stationed in Jackson, it is almost impossible to keep the offensive that we have gained thus far.

It is hoped that the New Orleans meeting will produce a promise of financial and moral support to the Jackson cases. It is our rough estimate that the federal suit through the District Court will cost in the neighborhood of \$15,000.00. This includes travel, court costs, transcripts and moderate attorneys' fees. It is this type of budget that we urgently seek and we will, of course, account for such a sum to those from whom we receive it.

If any further information is needed, we will be happy to furnish it. We are deeply involved in the eventual success of this litigation and we hold ourselves available in any way you may see fit to use us.

CHRISTIAN UNITY, THE METHODIST CHURCH, AND JACKSON 1EK56.44c

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On behalf of the Chicago Inner City Methodist Ministers' Fellowship, two members have prepared a statement dealing with some of the theological issues related to the events in Jackson, Mississippi. Mr. Baggett, a native of the South, is pastor of Community Methodist Church, and Mr. Dripps is pastor of Ogden Park Methodist Church.

Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives. There is one body and one Spirit, as there is also one hope held out in God's call to you; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

—Ephesians 4:4-6, NEB

The Church is the instrument of God's purpose. This is his Church. It is ours only as stewards under his lordship. The requirements for its membership and the nature of its mission are set by God. The House of God must be open to the whole family of God. If we discriminate against any persons, we deny the essential nature of the church as a fellowship in Christ.

—Methodist Discipline, Par. 2026

CHICAGO MINISTERS, COEDS FILE PETITIONS Jackson, Mississippi—Four Chicago area white Methodist ministers and two Chicago coeds arrested while trying to go to church here sought Monday to transfer their cases to federal court. —Chicago Daily News

1. OUR CHRISTIAN UNITY.

The words of Holy Scripture, the Methodist Discipline, and the newspaper of October 21 present a stark and tragic contradiction in the life of the Methodist Church. By command of God the church is one; by the acts of men it is torn asunder. The arrest of Christians seeking to worship Almighty God in a Methodist house of prayer in Jackson, Mississippi, reveals to the church and to the world that a crisis of the first magnitude confronts Methodism in all its parts.

The letter to the church at Ephesus proclaims that the church is one body "bonded and knit together by every constituent joint" (Ephesians 4:16). The head of the body is Jesus Christ, on whom the whole body depends, and who "is himself our peace . . . who has made the two (Jew and Gentile) one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them" (Ephesians 2:14, 15).

This biblical understanding of the church as the body of Christ speaks to us in this hour of brokenness and confusion among the people called Methodist. In its light we can no longer speak as if one part of the church is independent of another part or, able to act without affecting the whole. As Bishop Charles W. Brashares has stated: "This incident in Mississippi is an embarrassment to our churches in Chicago. Likewise, any shortcoming in the churches of Chicago has a bad influence on Christians in Mississippi."

A man with cancer in his lungs cannot say that this dread disease has no relationship to his arms, legs or head. If he is in need of surgery the whole body must cooperate and act in restoring health. In like manner, a disease such as that of segregation, which affects any part or parts of the church, will necessarily become a concern to the whole body. Consequently the whole must act cooperatively to see that each part is functioning according to the will of Him who has created it. The lungs cannot say to the heart or head "I have no need of you." And when surgery becomes necessary, it will be painful, especially if the disease has taken deep roots and has spread throughout the body.

"I believe in . . . the holy catholic church." These words proceed from our lips as part of the ancient creed of the church. We are reminded by it that our involvement in the church is an act of faith. We are holy because God has set us apart to serve Him in the world by word and deed. We are catholic because all are called from every corner of the earth and from every condition among men. In Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, black nor white. We are the church because he brings us together in one body to serve Him as "citizens of heaven."

In John 17 the high priestly prayer of Christ reminds us that unity is the nature of the church as it witnesses to the world. For our Lord prays: "But it is not for these (the Disciples) alone that I pray, but for those also who through their words put their faith in me; may they all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:20).

Against this basic New Testament theme—the unity of Christ's holy, catholic and apostolic church—the present brokenness of Methodism, as symbolized by Jackson, Mississippi, stands in stark contrast. In the following section we shall examine this brokenness in three of its manifestations.

II. THREATS TO UNITY.

God has chosen Jackson, Mississippi to dramatize that part of Christ's body known as Methodism its sinful brokenness. The Methodists of Jackson cannot be condemned as more sinful than the rest of the people of our world-wide fellowship. The point that God is making through the Jackson situation is that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

It is important for us to examine carefully what God is revealing in this situation in order that we as Methodists respond to God's action with appropriate action of our own.

(A) *Racial Segregation*

The most obvious revelation is that racial segregation exists in the Methodist Church. What is less obvious but equally true is that segregation exists in the whole church. That segregation exists both North and South is not only evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of churches are either all white or all Negro, but also by the very existence of the Central Jurisdiction.

Although differences of theology, nationality and class are always threats to the unity of the church, it is safe to say that no person would be refused entrance to a Methodist church on any of these bases. Only because of color are people excluded.

The thing that must be seen is that segregation in the church is heresy and must be abolished before it corrupts the church completely. In Galatians 3:23 are these words: "There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus." Racial segregation has been condemned by the actions of several General Conferences of Methodism. In 1960 the direction was given (par. 2026) that our pastors, upon whom rests the responsibility of receiving individuals into church membership, discharge that responsibility without regard to race, color, or national origin and that the many racial and national groups which make up our Methodist world fellowship be afforded the opportunity without discrimination to enjoy full participation in all the activities of the church.

It needs to be seen clearly that any church that shuts its doors to a brother in Christ because of color shuts the door to Christ himself. And any Methodist church that shuts its doors to a person on the basis of color

is in violation of our Discipline and should be faced with disciplinary action.

(B) *False Unity*

A more subtle revelation of God's judgment on Methodism growing out of the Jackson situation is that genuine unity in Christ is threatened by a false unity which might be termed "cheap unity."

Cheap unity is man's substitute for the costly unity God has given us in Jesus Christ. Cheap unity is unity in the midst of heresy, unity with the loss of integrity, unity at the expense of faithfulness.

The prophets of cheap unity have not taken seriously the enmity which stands like a dividing wall between men. These words from Jeremiah 6:14 apply to them: "They have healed the wound of my people lightly saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace." They do not take separation seriously and therefore cannot take reconciliation seriously. So these prophets of cheap unity declare a unity not in Christ as the Scripture declares, but a direct unity found sometimes in class, sometimes in color, sometimes in sectionalism, sometimes in loyalties to family, friends, and nation.

Cheap unity is the unity of the world, the unity of the sorority and fraternity, the women's club and the men's club, the lodge and the cocktail party. It is unity designed to keep people happy. It is the unity of compromise. Cheap unity is unity without prophecy, unity without discipline.

The prophets of costly unity remember the words of Saint Paul in I Corinthians 5:13: "You are judges within the fellowship. Root out the evil-doer from your community."

These spokesmen for costly unity know that the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:29 and 30 concerning the body also apply to His body the church.

If your right eye leads you astray, tear it out and fling it away; it is better for you to lose one part of your body than for the whole of it to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand is your undoing cut it off and fling it away; it is better for you to lose one part of your body than for the whole of it to go to hell.

Cheap unity is unity without mission, it is unity that exists for itself alone. Costly unity exists for its mis-

sion to the world. Cheap unity is involved in lip service. Costly unity is involved in suffering service. Cheap unity promises togetherness. Costly unity engages in conflict. In Matthew 10:34-36 we read:

You must not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a young wife against her mother-in-law; and a man will find his enemies under his own roof.

Costly unity is what is expressed in John Wesley's words: "I desire to have a league, offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ. We have not only one faith, one hope, one Lord, but are directly engaged in one warfare."

(C) *Capitulation to Culture*

What has happened in Jackson, Mississippi not only dramatizes the segregated nature of the church and its false unity, but also reveals that the church has capitulated to the culture in which it dwells. The church is more loyal to human customs of a hundred years than to the custom of Jesus Christ which is much older. The church, like a chameleon, blends in with its background so that it loses its identity. For example, it is difficult to find any clear cut distinction between church and state when public officials arrest private worshippers on church property without objection from the congregation.

Christ prayed that his followers might be in the world, that is, involved in society and cultural expressions. But he also prayed that they not be of the world. The church is always to distinguish itself in faith and life from the surrounding culture. Its job is to judge the world, witness to the world, serve the world, and convert the world. It can do none of these things if it surrenders to the world. In Romans 12:2 we read:

Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus conformed. Then you will discern the will of God and know what is good, acceptable, and perfect.

There is nothing complex about the race issue or any other issue when it confronts a truly transformed mind. When a mind is transformed the will of God in any given situation becomes clear to the believer. This is not to say that there are not many wills of God in a particular situation and therefore many roles to play. To the contrary the transformed mind appreciates the roles played by others and understands

himself to dwell in unity with them.

The whole church in every part of the world needs to re-evaluate its relation to the culture in which it dwells. For whenever a church capitulates to cultural values the unity of Christ's church is threatened. Our unity comes from the head of the body, the cornerstone of the building, the one Lord of our lives. When we worship cultural idols we deny the Lord.

"No servant can be a slave to two masters; for either he will hate the first and love the second, or he will be devoted to the first and think nothing of the second."

If Christ's church is not to be torn asunder, we must declare Jesus Christ to be our Lord in deed as well as in word. We must never forget the words of our Lord in Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my heavenly Father."

III. THE RECOVERY OF UNITY.

"The time has come for the judgement to begin: it is beginning with God's own household" (I Peter 4:17).

We have attempted to speak of the unity "which the Spirit gives" and the threats to this unity present in Methodism today and symbolized by recent events in Jackson, Mississippi.

Luke records that Peter's Pentecost sermon cut his listeners to the heart and they responded by asking, "Friends, what are we to do?" (Acts 2:37). This question comes to each of us in the face of God's message and man's rebellion. The crisis in our midst has called forth from among our brethren sojourners to Jackson, Mississippi. Escorting students, white and colored, into Methodist Churches there, they witnessed to the unity of Methodism and were met by those in open rebellion to Scripture and the stated position of the Church. That the faith of Methodism has been tested and found wanting in Jackson few would deny. Yet the question raised again and again by persons sympathetic and not sympathetic has been, "Was not the action taken too drastic?" Answer: the depth of our sin rupturing the unity and mission of the church necessitates drastic and immediate action both near and far.

Those who have chosen to stand by the few in Jackson have not claimed that their action is purely moti-

vated, conceived or carried out. They have not claimed that there are not other ways of confronting the tragic disunity which they have met in Jackson Methodism. They have not claimed that there is not more than a considerable amount of labor to be invested in Chicago to check the spread of a like disease. They have not claimed that those who do not agree with their actions are disobedient sons of the church.

There are those who suffer in Jackson, Negro and white, because of their witness to the unity of the church. Can these persons be allowed to remain beaten and robbed beside the road while we attempt to conciliate the priest and levite who pass them by? Can we be faithful to the word of the church by submitting to the complaints of those who charge "outside agitators"? Was not Paul commanded by God "keep up your courage; you have affirmed the truth about me in Jerusalem and you must do the same in Rome" (Acts 23:11).

Yet, it may be asked, Why make public our sore divisions by action seemingly designed to attract attention and embarrass or harass people of good will? Why keep applying pressure upon our shameful, scandalous divisions by public demonstration? Can we not resolve our problems quietly, with patience, behind church doors? These are legitimate questions. However, on behalf of those who sought redress by journeying to Jackson two points need to be emphasized in analyzing the function of public or open demonstration of our disunity. First, this action brings to the immediate attention of the church and the world the severity of the problem. In light of this, it would seem that the media of communication within the church have a special responsibility to report accurately, fully and fairly the recent activities in Jackson. Secondly, and as a consequence of an informed church, such public action provokes church leaders to set the house of God in order. Is it too much to expect the Council of Bishops, the General Conference, the Boards and Agencies of Methodism to eradicate the blight of disunity which threatens to destroy the soul of the church?

"Use the present opportunity to the full, for these are evil days" (Ephesians 5:16). We pray that God will use the church to the full in this present crisis, for we are in the midst of evil days. But we need not despair for the grace of God is sufficient to meet every challenge. "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."