

ED KING COLLECTION - BOX 8, FOLDER 368 ; DATE: MAY 31, 1963
Ed King Personal, Methodist Church

- Methodists Sever King Connections -6/1/63
- Memo: From: Jackson NAACP Branches - 5/12/63
- 151 st Session MS Annual Conference - 5/28-31/63
- Letter to: Ed King, From: W. E. Lampton - 6/1/63
- Western Union Telegram - 6/29/63
- Letter To: Freind, From: R. C. Griffith 6/3/63
- Letter To: Ed. King, From: William R. Richerson - 7/2/63
- NOMSM Letter to: Eddie and Jeanette King, From: Wilson and Gayle Yates
- Letter To: Ed King, From: Jim Siloe
- Letter To: Ed King, From: J. B. Cain - 7/26/63
- Letter To: Ed King, From: George Maddox - 6/3/63
- Letter To: Ed King, From: Walter G. Muelder, Dean - 7/10/63

6/1/63

Methodists Sever King Connections

By JERRY DeLAUGHTER
Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer

The Mississippi Methodist Conference "discontinued" its connection Friday with the Rev. Edwin King, white chaplain at Tougaloo Southern Christian College who has been involved in recent racial demonstrations.

King responded with a demand from the floor of the 151st annual conference at Galloway Church to know "why I am not fit." He interrupted conference proceedings.

Bishop Marvin A. Franklin talked briefly with the young minister then asked that he "respectfully" be seated.

TWICE ARRESTED

King, a native of Vicksburg and graduate of Millsaps, was "discontinued" by a closed session of clergymen called by Bishop Franklin Friday morning.

The controversial King, arrested Thursday afternoon while participating in a bi-racial "prayer meeting" on the steps of the downtown Jackson post office, was "on trial" in the Methodist ministerial system prior to the action. He was arrested during Montgomery demonstrations in 1959.

The vote to discontinue was 80-85, with about a dozen ministers not voting. The group acted on a request by King for "full connection" with the Mississippi Conference, a customary procedure for ministers.

The Board of Ministerial Training and Qualifications had recommended instead that King be continued "on trial." The ministerial delegation to the annual conference must approve or reject the

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board's recommendation, and it rejected the recommendation.

The session of ministers, held in the church dining hall, was not open to the public. It was reported that arguments centered on the "principle" of such action chiefly, although King "personally" was mentioned.

The group in favor of continuing the minister argued that he was "exceptionally qualified" educationally, and that a rebuke by his Conference without adequate cause would be looked upon with disfavor by the General Conference of the Church.

A small number of ministers also argued for King's right to believe and practice according to "his own Christian conscience."

Opponents to his continuance said he was, after all, a minister "on trial," and the Methodist Discipline provides such a period to determine a minister's acceptability.

EXCEEDED DUTY

Some argued that King had "exceeded his just duty" as chaplain to the Tougaloo students by leading and participating in racial demonstrations in Jackson.

King stood outside the door of the dining hall with his wife during the hour-long closed session.

A number of ministers were visibly weeping following the sometimes-heated arguments over the case.

Later, after Bishop Franklin had ordained classes of deacons and elders (ministerial steps among Methodists), King stood at his seat about 15 rows back, in the center section of the church.

"Bishop Franklin," he said.

The Bishop, an active minister for over 50 years, looked up from a list of appointments which he was about to read.

"Bishop, I would like to speak," King said. "I believe you informed me this morning I would be given opportunity to speak before the Conference."

"No, sir, I don't believe I did that," the Bishop said.

"I would like to know how the decision was reached that I was not fit to be a minister in the Methodist Church in Mississippi," King said. "I would like for you to explain this, and then I still ask permission to speak to this assembly."

ruption Bishop Franklin maintained dignity and poise and showed no trace of impatience.

In earlier action the Conference unanimously approved a memorial to be sent to the General (national) Conference in Pittsburgh next spring.

The document asked that no change be made in the present Jurisdictional alignment which provides for a Central Jurisdiction Negro churches, with the option that churches may "by choice" make individual changes.

"On what grounds are you rejecting me," King continued.

Bishop Franklin said, "I think you are out of order at this time. I was about to . . ."

"It was my understanding I would be given permission to speak," King interrupted.

"I believe you misunderstood me," the Bishop said.

King then declared he felt he is "living up to the faith placed in me" by his home church (Vicksburg), Millsaps College and fellow ministers.

The Bishop patiently made no effort to interrupt King. He looked alternately at the young minister and at his list of appointments.

"I would like to know why I am not fit?" King asked. "My ministry was apparently satisfactory until last week. I am a home product of the Mississippi Methodist Church."

At this point an unidentified delegate rose and asked for recognition. He was not recognized, but during a lull in King's impromptu address said "This matter has already been determined. We don't need to go into it again."

"I would like to know on what grounds I have been dismissed," King said.

Bishop Franklin said quietly, "I believe the Board of Ministerial Training will be glad to explain everything to you. The grounds are not written out in this particular case. The committee recommended that you be continued, and the executive session of ministers voted 89-85 not to continue."

"We mean no reflection on your character," Bishop Franklin continued. "We will pray for you and assist you, help you in your ministerial calling in any way we can . . ."

"I know what the executive meeting did, and I know why it was closed," King interrupted.

"I have confidence in the honesty of Methodist ministers, and I know they did not want to discuss this before this body, which has been controlled by small groups of people and individuals like Satterfield . . ."

Bishop Franklin then interrupted for the first time and said firmly but quietly, "I will ask you now respectfully to be seated so I can continue."

He looked at King for a moment, and the tall, blonde King sat down. Throughout the ten-minute inter-