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MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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July 26, 1963

Rev. R. E. King, Jr.,  
Southern Christian College,  
Tougaloo, Mississippi.

My dear Eddie:

I am writing a belated letter to express my interest in your future and sincere regret circumstances have worked as they have in your case. You have all the qualities of a successful minister but unless some of the problems can be worked out you will have no ministry at all.

It is certainly not my purpose to offer you advice, though I think it might be well for you to listen more to the advice of your friends. It seems to me also that I have earned the privilege of offering some suggestions, since I led the fight in the Board of Ministerial Training and on the Conference floor in the executive session for your retention in the Conference. More members of the Board than I had anticipated joined in this action and seven out of ten with three absent voted to make this recommendation. I think these seven would not mind my giving you their names: Stewart Smith, Robert Kates, Selby Alsworth, Harmon Dillard, Robert Hunt, Shaw Gaddy, and myself.

The reason we did not fight for your admission into the Conference in full connection was because that case was hopeless from the beginning. You are now a local elder in the Methodist Church, unless some change has been made in your status since Annual Conference, and can be admitted on trial into any Conference that will receive you. I have not changed my mind that you can have a useful ministry elsewhere but I know now what I had suspected all along that you cannot have any ministry at all in this Conference and I do not think now in any Conference in the deep south.

You probably can have a good ministry in the Episcopal Church, toward which I imagine you have a slight flair. Whether they can use you here in Mississippi I have no way of knowing.

The question which you asked on the Conference floor as to why the Conference did not receive you has only one answer, namely that not enough people voted in favor. You would have to ask each one as to the reason for his vote. The truth is that we won a moral victory in the vote, getting far more to vote for you than I had supposed we could.

Now let me plead with you once more not to let your ministry go down the drain because of a foolish obsession to remain in Mississippi. If it is the thing to stay why did Don Whitsett leave? He could have ridden out the storm but you can't.

With every assurance of interest I am

Sincerely your brother,

J. B. Cain