

It had been snowing lightly most of the day as it should on the day before Christmas. In a small office in Baltimore, Maryland about twenty people, mostly college students, stood and sat while making final plans and waiting to leave. Their objective was to receive service in a segregated restaurant in Crisfield, Maryland.

Crisfield is a small town on the eastern shore of Maryland, a notorious area whose past has seen lynchings and mob violence. Its past wasn't the primary reason the students had chosen it. The governor of Maryland, Governor Tawes, was born in Crisfield and it is there that he makes his home. Recently Tawes has made promises concerning civil rights and new equality for the Negro of Maryland. The demonstration was to make known the prevailing segregation in Crisfield, the governor's home town. Another equally significant peculiarity to this demonstration was that Joseph and Mary were denied accommodation at an inn some two thousand years ago on the night before the first Christmas. In the minds of the students was the all but definite knowledge that they also would be refused service, but not this time because there was no room.

They knew that if they failed to comply with the management's policies of racial segregation they would be arrested and jailed under a trespass clause of the Maryland Legislature. They considered this a price for freedom.

As anticipated they were arrested and jailed that night, Christmas Eve in Princess Anne, Maryland, Somerset County jail. The police have since indicated but for the fact of severe weather and holiday preoccupations there would have been violence.

The ten students were arraigned before magistrate Riche in Crisfield on Tuesday Dec. 26th at three p.m. A proposed amendment to drop the charges as "...immoral and unconstitutional..." was by Mrs. Juanita Mitchell, N.A.A.C.P. attorney representing the students, was denied by Magistrate Riche. This was the expected outcome. Bail was set at one hundred dollars each and a jury trial for either Sept. or April 1962 was arranged. Frank McDougald, Donnie Flemming and Reginald Robinson of Baltimore and Bonnie Kilstein of New York posted bond. Angela Butler, Faith Holseart, Margaret Diamond all from New York, Diane Ostrofsky and David Williams of Baltimore and William Hansen of Cinn. remained in jail, by choice, as a further dramatization of the refusal.

This particular demonstration underlined several things. It typified

not only their imagination but also the courage and discipline of young men and women, and it made clear their willingness to make sacrifices in a world in many ways neglected by their parents.

To refuse these students a meal during a year which because of the atomic situation may contain the last Christmas is a wry way to illustrate the extent to which the first Christmas has been understood.

Part II

Six students had chosen to remain in jail until Friday. The other four began working almost immediately on recruiting people for another demonstration on Friday, Dec. 27th. People who would be willing to spend the first day of the year and the traditional partying-time of New Year's Eve in jail. A busload of about forty students volunteered to go.

The bus left Baltimore Friday afternoon and arrived in Crisfield at about eight thirty P.M. A rally had been scheduled for eight P.M. at the Shiloh Methodist Church, The church of Rev. Saunders, local N.A.A.C.P. chairman. The bus arrived at the church at eight thirty where the students began a march through the town, singing and gathering both whites and Negroes as they went. Six previously segregated restaurants and lunch counters threw open their doors shouting "Test us" and proclaiming permanent future integration. Unfortunately the CITY Restaurant was closed. Local people explained that the owner, Hilda C. Marshall, had closed early. The CITY restaurant was the object of the first sit-in.

A wonderful and significant change had come to Crisfield. It dramatized a point that has been ~~po~~ made clear again and again throughout the South. The courage and understanding smiles, the voices devoid of sarcasm and cynicism, the looks of deep sincerity had been so impressive that a long and accepted practice was cast aside. During the past week the people of Crisfield had evidently looked hard at themselves and each other. At the end of the week they were different and the town of Crisfield would never be the same.