

MEMORANDUM

July 15, 1965

TO: Bruce Hanson
National Council Commission on Religion and Race

FROM: S. Franklin Mack
United Church of Christ Office of Communication

RE: TV-RADIO OBSERVING AND MONITORING

In accordance with the directions given this office by General Synod, at its meeting in Chicago, we are now proceeding to set up the apparatus for observing the performance of television and radio stations in nine Southern states as regards their treatment of the Negro and of civil rights. We will probably need as many volunteers as can be recruited if we are to keep tabs on what happens throughout the broadcast day on any great number of stations, as it is unlikely that those recruited for this project will be able individually to observe continuously, all day, day after day.

We plan to observe both television and radio broadcasting, but feel we must give priority to television. The nine states to which we are confining this project, at least in the beginning, are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. The number of television stations in these nine states is 118. The radio stations number approximately 929. We cannot hope to cover all; but we should be able to cover all the TV stations and to identify among the welter of radio stations the ones that really merit close attention.

Note that we use the term "observe". This process of observing we envision as continuing for approximately thirty days. This is to be sure that we can be reasonably sure that the stations identified as failing to measure up to FCC requirements should be monitored. Monitoring is the second phase of the project. This involves the installation of equipment, the employment of monitors, the keeping of accurate records and the manning of the listening and viewing posts throughout the entire broadcast day for an entire week. Observers are volunteers; monitors will have to be paid.

Discriminatory practices which observers (and, later, monitors) will be asked to watch for include:

- Handling of news and opinion about race relations and civil rights on a one-sided basis,
- Failure to put Negroes on the air to discuss their views,

- Failure to use Negroes as entertainers, announcers, newscasters and commentators on locally originated programs,

- Failure to use courtesy titles for Negroes (Mr., Mrs., Miss) when such titles are used for whites,

- Failure to present educational programs, especially for children, on race relations,

- Failure to present Negro churches in locally originated religious programs,

- Failure to announce and report Negro community affairs,

- Identifying persons in the news as "Negro" when this is gratuitous, (e.g., other than when necessary for identification as for an escaped criminal)

Four procedural steps are envisioned:

1. The process of observation, during which observers make written note of discriminatory practices observed and report to the Office of Communication;

2. Where discriminatory practices seem to justify monitoring, it is proposed that a local committee of responsible citizens be formed to present the findings of the observers to station management with the request that these practices be eliminated.

3. Refusal to make the necessary changes, or failure to live up to a promise to do so will lead to the next step, which is the formal monitoring. For this the necessary materials, equipment, instructions, supervision and budget will be supplied by the Office of Communication and qualified persons recruited to staff the operation during the week chosen for the monitoring.

4. The Office of Communication will take the findings of the monitoring studies, put them in proper shape for presentation to the FCC and make the presentation.

It will be noted that the objective is to rectify malpractice, not to harass the broadcasters. It is no secret that this Office is engaging in a process of observing and monitoring. A press release from Chicago said so publicly. However, we do not propose to "tip off" a given station that it is under surveillance. Once it has been established that discrimination is being practiced, it is only fair that the station be given an opportunity to review the evidence and decide whether to make changes or risk having a monitoring study made and reported to the FCC. In case a monitoring study is decided upon, the station will not be told when it will take place.

Data on the number of television and radio stations in each of the nine states listed is attached.

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TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS IN SELECTED SOUTHERN STATES:

	TELEVISION		RADIO	
	# communities	# stations	# communities	# stations
ALABAMA	10	15	67	114
ARKANSAS	3	6	48	63
FLORIDA	13	24	75	150
GEORGIA	9	17	77	127
LOUISIANA	7	14	44	74
MISSISSIPPI	5	7	45	73
NORTH CAROLINA	10	12	96	152
SOUTH CAROLINA	6	9	46	70
VIRGINIA	8	14	68	106
TOTALS:	71	118	566	929

MULTIPLE-STATION MARKETS:

	<u>Television</u>	<u>Radio</u>
ALABAMA	3	18
ARKANSAS	2	9
FLORIDA	5	30
GEORGIA	4	17
LOUISIANA	4	9
MISSISSIPPI	2	18
NORTH CAROLINA	2	25
SOUTH CAROLINA	3	12
VIRGINIA	3	13
TOTALS:	25	151

WEEKLY PROGRAM REPORT SHEET

Station Call Letters: _____ Community: _____

Name of observer: _____ Please check whether: () 1st week

Report for week of: _____ () 2nd week

() 3rd week
() 4th week

During the week checked I have observed the following programs which I feel should be reported and on which reports are attached:

*Day and date: _____ Hour _____ Program _____
Specific observation (report as fully as may be necessary):

* (Record as many day-hour-program listings as you can get on this sheet, if you have that many; use the reverse side if necessary)

OBSERVER'S LOG SHEET

LOG

(Use separate sheet for each program reported)

Station Call Letters: _____ . Community: _____

Day and date of broadcast: _____

Type of Program (check one) News. Musical. Discussion of Public Issues
 Sports. Variety. Educational.
 Drama. Religion. Weather reports. Quiz.

Time program began: _____ . Time program ended: _____ .

Public service announcements (List the name of each public service organization for which a spot announcement was made)

Did one or more Negroes appear on this program? Yes. No.Were issues about race discussed or portrayed? Yes. No.

(If the answer is "Yes" to either of the foregoing questions, please fill out a race sheet.)

Content of program. (Describe content briefly, in two or three sentences. For News programs list the stories reported or discussed. Use other side if necessary.)

RACE REPORT SHEET
(Use as supplement to Log Sheet for each Race
program reported)

DIRECTIONS

NEWS: Describe how subject matter about race relations, negroes or other colored persons is treated in news broadcasts. Note especially whether or not both sides of controversial incidents are reported; how racial issues are described (i.e., is inflammatory language or sarcastic tone used?); whether network and local reports of the same event agree substantially; whether if a white official or interested party is quoted or interviewed there is similar treatment of a Negro source; etc.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Describe appearances of Negroes and how racial subjects are treated in public affairs and informational programs.

ENTERTAINMENT: Describe how Negroes (actors, for example) are employed in entertainment shows, their roles, how they are treated as characters.

Station Call Letters: _____ . Community: _____

NAME OF PROGRAM: _____ Day & date of broadcast: _____

Describe handling of race issues and Negro participation.