

URGENT

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WEDNESDAYS IN MISSISSIPPI
147 East 81st Street, Apt. 1E
New York, New York 10028

M E M O R A N D U M

August 25, 1965

TO: All WIMS Team Members
FROM: WIMS Staff

RE: Action Needed After Recent Violence in Jackson

All of you must be aware, from reports in the national press, radio and TV, of the dreadful incident that has occurred in Jackson: the ambush and shooting of the Reverend Donald Thompson, minister of the Unitarian Church. On the night of August 22, Rev. Thompson was returning to his apartment, in the heart of a substantial white neighborhood, after delivering a Negro parishioner to his home, when 3 men in a car that was circling the parking lot shot at him. They filled him with buckshot before fleeing, and he is in serious condition at Baptist Hospital.

Some of you met Rev. Thompson on your visit to Mississippi this summer or last summer, and were impressed by his fearless devotion to the cause of civil rights. Others observed the HEAD START project run at his church.

The Jackson community has been stunned by this incident. Many of our friends have been keeping a vigil with Mrs. Thompson. The mayor has made a public statement in which he said: "A lawless incident such as this is the personal problem of every citizen in Jackson and we need the complete cooperation and help of every person to bring the guilty to justice."

Along with the feeling of shock come continued fear and concern. Just as Rev. Thompson received threatening phone calls before being shot, so have other leaders in the Jackson community been threatened. There is special concern for the 12th grade children whose classes will be integrated for the first time this fall. The authorities in Jackson--the Mayor, the Police, the Board of Education--have a responsibility to afford greater protection to all citizens of Jackson, especially those whose stand for civil rights makes them vulnerable to violence. The Governor of Mississippi must share this responsibility. All public officials must be encouraged, not only to speak out for law and order, but to see to it that needed protection is given before more violence occurs.

We urge you to write or wire to express your concern to:

Mayor Allen C. Thompson
City Hall
Jackson, Mississippi

and

Governor Paul B. Johnson
State Capitol
Jackson, Mississippi

Superintendent of Schools
662 South President Street
Jackson, Mississippi

You might also want to express your concern and best wishes to:

Mrs. Donald Thompson
Magnolia Towers
809 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi