

The Interpreter

a publication of
the Mississippi Council on Human Relations

CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE WORK OF THE MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL

In the recent Civil Rights Commission hearings held in Jackson our state was described as a "showcase." The eyes of the world are focused upon Mississippi, but that which is happening is much more like an historical drama. In fact, it is just that. This unrehearsed drama seems to unfold in our lives under a direction coming from the audience. Mississippi has been invaded, but not by outsiders. Our situation is much like the drama contained in the Old Testament writings where the shepherds returned from Egypt to claim a freedom for the enslaved people of Canaan. These ragged shepherds were the distant cousins of the farmers living in Canaan. Their identification with the enslaved created a power which caused a political, economic, social and religious revolution.

If we are to understand the meaning of the events of the present revolution, we must cut deep with clear insight into all structures of our state life. It is not practical to do this in a short article, but it is possible for us to take a brief look at those who have come into the "New Canaan" to identify with and to set free the enslaved.

Various categories can be established for the purpose of discussing "Movement" groups, yet most any category seems inadequate. In that the groups working here are called civil rights organizations, it is in order to ask what constitutes such an organization. Sociologists have suggested that one possible way of describing a civil rights organization is to match the goal of the organization with a definition of civil rights. Our society has two primary organizational institutions, the state and the church. Herein we are concerned with the state or government.

The government is a representative organization of the people with a primary function of making and carrying out laws. Many of these laws are directly related to the civil rights of people. Any organization whose goal is the implementation of or the creation of laws having to do with the civil rights of people may be properly designated a civil rights organization. In Mississippi we have organizations which fall within this definition and an equal number or more that do not.

The main civil rights organization in Mississippi is the NAACP. The NAACP is working within the structures of old line political parties to bring about an

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OFFICE OPENED IN JACKSON

With the help of Mr. Power Hearn, on Feb. 11 the MCHR acquired office space in the First Federal Building in Jackson. On Feb. 16 the office was opened, fully equipped and staffed.

Mr. Kenneth Dean arrived in Jackson on Jan. 28 and assumed the duties of Executive Director of the Mississippi Council. Mr. Dean is a native Tennessean. He was a member of the 1959 graduating class of Carson Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. Since that time he has attended the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, and the Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York. He recently finished work toward the Bachelor of Divinity degree at Colgate Rochester and is listed with the 1965 graduating class.

Mr. Dean has taught school and served on church staffs while completing his graduate work. He was a student assistant at the First Baptist church in Rochester for two years. During his last year in Rochester he served on the staff at the Lake Avenue Baptist church where he was in charge of the ministry to the inner-city.

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The Mississippi Council on Human Relations is a private non-profit organization composed of Mississippians. The purpose of the organization is to work in the areas of education and council to further a community of wholesome and free relationships for all peoples to the end of equality and responsible citizenship. The organization is not related to any church or political party. The structure of the MCHR is a state council with local chapters. The state board members are:

Rev. John Aregood
Dr. A.D. Beittel
Mrs. Jesse E. Brent
Rev. T.B. Brown
Rev. Henry C. Clay, Jr.
Rev. Duncan M. Gray, Jr.
Rev. Powell Hall, Jr.
Mr. H. Power Hearn, Sr.

Dr. Aaron E. Henry
Dr. D.I. Horn, Jr.
Rev. Bernard Law
Rev. E.A. Mays
Dr. Perry E. Nussbaum
Dr. Matthew J. Page
Rev. Charlemagne Payne

Mr. John B. Pettus
Dr. George E. Powers
Mr. I.S. Sanders
Mrs. Wallis I. Schutt
Mr. Francis B. Stevens
Rev. Donald Thompson
Rev. Jim Waits
Rev. S. Leon Whitney

MCHR Officers are:

Rev. Duncan M. Gray, Jr., President
Dr. D.I. Horn, Jr., Vice-President
Rev. E.A. Mays, Vice-President
Rev. Donald Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer
Kenneth L. Dean, Executive Director

The offices of the Mississippi Council on Human Relations are located in Room 306, First Federal Building, corner of Capitol and South State streets in Jackson.

MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS
Membership Application

I am in sympathy with the purpose of the Mississippi Council on Human Relations and I am glad to become a member.

I enclose my check as indicated to support this endeavor for a community of wholesome and free relationships for all peoples to the end of equality and responsible citizenship.

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____, Miss. Zip Code _____

Contributing Member.....	\$ 5.00
Sustaining Member.....	10.00
Sponsor.....	25.00
Patron.....	100.00
Student Member.....	3.00

Please Mail Application to:
Mississippi Council on Human Relations
306 First Federal Bldg.
Jackson, Mississippi

THE WORK OF COUNCIL ACROSS THE STATE

Gulf Coast

The first local chapter of the MCHR to complete its organization was the Gulf Coast Chapter. On February 22 the body met at the USO in Biloxi with the Rev. Olin Beall acting as chairman. A set of by-laws and a slate of officers were presented and approved by the group.

The officers are: President, Rev. Jim Waits; First Vice-President, Mr. John B. Pettus; Second Vice-President, Mrs. Jack Martin; Recording Secretary, Mrs. John Aregood, Jr.; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Joe Ackron; and Treasurer, Mr. Booker T. Hudson.

This chapter has already begun to study various problems confronting the Gulf Coast community. Committees have been appointed to deal with the various areas of work. Under the careful leadership of Rev. Waits and with men such as Dr. Mason who have extensive experience in the field of human relations, this Chapter promises to be one of the leaders in the Southland.

Jackson Area

On March 30 the Jackson Area Council members met for the organization of a local chapter. Under the direction of Mr. Power Hearn a committee had been formed to draw up a set of by-laws and to serve as a nomination committee. Mr. William Lynch served as chairman of this committee. Other members were Mr. I.S. Sanders, Professor Sam Nicholas, Dr. Robert Bergmark and Mr. E.W. Banks, Sr.

The officers of the Jackson Chapter are Rev. Bernard Law, President; Mr. W.H. Williams, Vice-President; and Mrs. Pearl Draine, Secretary-Treasurer. These three officers plus six other members constitute a board of directors for the Chapter.

Laurel Greenville Hancock County

A bi-racial group of ministers and laymen have been meeting for some months in Laurel. On March 18 Mr. Dean attended one of the meetings and discussed the possibility of the formation of a chapter. Presently the Rev. H.C. Clay, Jr. is acting as chairman of the group. There are 24 persons interested in this work. The formation of a chapter in Laurel is expected soon.

Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Page plans for the organization of a chapter are in the making. Over 40 persons have expressed an interest in this chapter. In the near future the Greenville chapter should be formed. Already the interested parties have done much work similar to that of a chapter. This could prove to be one of the stronger chapters in the state.

The Rev. James C. Peters, Executive Director of Gulfside Assembly, called a meeting of persons from the Hancock County area who are interested in the formation of a human relations council chapter. 46 persons responded to the invitation. A steering committee has been formed and has met twice. The prospects of council work in this area look good.

The Executive Director is presently studying twenty of the larger cities in Mississippi in hopes that by the end of the year Council work will be established in each. Vicksburg, Tupelo, Holly Springs and Oxford are communities which show some promise for the organization of chapters. If you know of an area that is ready to be studied, please call this to the attention of the MCHR offices.

YOUR MCHR OFFICE WORKS AROUND THE STATE AND AROUND THE CLOCK IF NECESSARY!

CIVIL RIGHTS

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an integrated society. It seeks to create and implement laws which will bring about an integration of the present society. A concrete example of this is voters registration which the NAACP has chosen for its summer project. Mr. Charles Evers is the field secretary of the NAACP in Mississippi.

The SCLC is an organization with goals similar to that of the NAACP. The latter is structured into a national office with state and local chapters, whereas the SCLC pretty much functions as one large staff under Dr. Martin Luther King. Thus the structural organization of these two groups is different, but the goals are the same. The SCLC seeks to integrate society through the implementation of legislation. A classic example of this is the Selma march to Montgomery. We have very few SCLC workers in Mississippi.

We have at least five other major organizations related to civil rights in Mississippi. They are SNCC, CORE, NCC, COFO and FDP. SNCC, with headquarters in Atlanta, is one of the more influential organizations in the state. Two leaders from the Atlanta office, Mr. John Lewis and Mr. James Foreman, appear to be the main leaders related to the work here.

CORE workers are not as plentiful in Mississippi as are SNCC workers, but CORE is also critically involved on the Mississippi scene. Mr. Richard Jewett is the field secretary stationed here. CORE offices for this area are in New Orleans.

The NCC holds about the same status as does CORE. But NCC has been related to Mississippi in a slightly different way from the other organizations in that this church group has some affiliation with local church structures. Just what the present affiliation is is not certain. Mr. Art Thomas heads up this work out of an office in Greenville.

The FDP and COFO are organizations which are not easily classified. COFO came into being as an umbrella

organization for all the civil rights groups. It functioned so successfully that it became an end in itself. SNCC, CORE and NCC field workers seem to function best within this framework. Few, if any, NAACP or SCLC staff members are still a part of this organization. The make-up of COFO changes from time to time. At the present the structure has three divisions: (1) five district directors, (2) office personnel working with communications, funds and records, and (3) project directors. COFO functions as a body. At the present the central office is in Jackson.

The FDP is a political party. The organization of the party is similar to that of the Democratic party. Much of the work and shape of this party seem to have centered around the Congressional challenge which seeks to unseat the five Mississippi Congressmen on grounds that their election is the result of discriminatory practices in voter registration. Mr. Lawrence Guyot holds a position of leadership in the work of this party.

It has been pointed out that the NAACP and SCLC are civil rights organizations. While it is true that SNCC, CORE, NCC, COFO and FDP are involved in civil rights work, it would not be a complete picture to let the matter rest there. For all practical purposes we can dismiss the titles CORE, NCC and SNCC in favor of COFO. These three organizations along with some independent "Freedom Fighters" make up COFO.

The work and direction of COFO is difficult to summarize. Each local project works with the problems of the particular community. Yet there is also district and state discussion for purposes of evaluation and goal setting. Much of this project work has to do with civil rights. However, it is significant that some of the work of COFO goes to further the FDP. Insofar as this is true, SNCC, NCC and CORE, as they make up COFO, are more than civil rights organizations. They are

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related to political organization which seeks to change social, economic, political and religious structures.

What does this mean for Mississippi? It is a valid observation that the nature of the particular end goals of the organizations who limit their work to civil rights and the goals of organizations who go beyond civil rights are not the same. Some interested parties assert that the NAACP and the SCLC are working to claim the Negro vote in the South for the National Democratic Party. This would hardly be consistent with the FDP.

The question which remains before us has to do with the integration of present structures as over against the institution of new structures. Those who support the creation of new structures claim that you can not ask a Negro to register in a political party which has as a part of its structure a Sovereignty Commission. They claim that you can not ask a Negro to support an economic system which rests on principles that relegate him to a position of field hand or house servant. They claim that you can not ask a Negro to accept a religion which every historian of stature sees to have created the values of the present political, economic and social structures. They claim that you can not ask the Negro to trust a judicial system which has not moved for 90 years.

These are honest and clear issues which must be dealt with by every responsible citizen. As the issues become more clearly drawn, it is apparent that the drama of which we are a part is a revolution of values, not merely the process of integration. This is the context of the work of the MCHR. Only as these issues are kept in mind can the work of the state council and the local chapters be of creative significance.

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REMEMBER "THE NEW MISSISSIPPI"
LUNCHEON MEETING THURSDAY, APRIL 22
KING EDWARD HOTEL
JACKSON

OFFICE OPENED

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During five summers of work at the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly near Asheville, North Carolina, Mr. Dean made many Mississippi friends. As Staff Activities Director at the Assembly and as Director of Religious Activities at Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, he directed some sixty students from colleges in Mississippi. Mr. Dean assumes his present duties with many warm friendships among Southern Baptist pastors and college students already established.

Miss Kay Haggerty is office manager for the Council. Miss Haggerty, a graduate of Dominican College in New Orleans, is a native of Mississippi. She is the daughter of Mrs. James G. Haggerty and the late Mr. Haggerty. She was employed for two years by the Jackson Daily News and was with Macmillan Publishing Company prior to coming with the Council.

For a six weeks period Mr. Tyler Dudley of Sarasota, Florida, is involved in a research program for the Mississippi Council office. Mr. Dudley, a senior intern at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, arrived in Jackson on April 1. He will be visiting local churches throughout the state in preparation for a winter conference on "Church and Culture."

The Council office exists for serving local chapters of the Mississippi Council and as a coordinating and information agency. If your community needs the services of this office or our staff, please contact us either by phone or by mail. The office hours are 9 to 5 Monday through Friday. The office telephone is 948-0878. At most other times Mr. Dean can be reached at 362-8981.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES

The state office wishes to call to your attention that the 1965 dues are now being received. The Council mailing list is being brought up to date, and it will become necessary for us to limit our mailings to paying members. Mail dues directly to the state office.

STATE MEETING: "THE NEW MISSISSIPPI"

About this time each year it has become customary for Mississippians to begin talking about the "long hot summer" that lies ahead. We do stand on the door steps of another summer. However, the next six months need not be a period of emotional outburst or chaos. The business men of our state are now on the "human relations" side of the fence. Our Governor has begun talking of "regional integration" and "change" so that we might avoid economic destruction. Federal programs are getting under way. A more definitive voter registration bill is in the offing. Now more than anytime before things are moving in a positive direction in Mississippi. We are close to being a real part of the mainstream of American life. Let us not be just a part of the mainstream. Let us come with a constructive contribution! Do you want to be an up to date part of this progress?

On April 22 (Thursday) from 11 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. the Mississippi Council will hold a state meeting in the King Edward Room of the King Edward hotel in Jackson. "THE NEW MISSISSIPPI" is the theme of this meeting. The feature speaker will be Dr. Eddy Asirzatham from Jabalpur, India. Dr. Asirzatham is a Methodist layman who has taught at many universities in India and the United States. He was formerly on the faculties at Boston University and Ohio Wesleyan. His book, Political Theory, is used as a text throughout India. The subject of Dr. Asirzatham's address will be "Social Change." Being a native of India he brings many first hand experiences having to do with social change. Much of the more creative work of this nature originated in India. It was there that Mahatma Gandhi first made use of the non-violent approach in instigating social change.

Also on the program will be Mr. Al Ulmer who is with the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta specializing in Federal Programs. Mr. Ulmer is a native Floridian and has served two years with the Peace Corps in Africa. These two outstanding speakers will compose the major part of the meeting, but some time will be given for brief reports on "The Meaning of Political Change," "Civil Rights Plans for the Summer" and a progress report from the state office of MCHR. Send your reservation to MCHR, 306 First Federal Bldg., Jackson.

FUTURE PLANS FOR MCHR

The direction of the MCHR depends to a great extent upon the work of the local chapters. The planning of the state office has as one goal the creation of a strong network of local chapters. Other states have found this to be one of the more significant approaches to solving problems of human relations.

When new Federal and local laws are enforced, there will come into being an integrated society. But it is then that human relations council work really begins. An integrated society does not necessarily mean a harmonious society. Recent days have shown us that the "table of council" is becoming more and more the order of the day. The work thus far has had to do primarily with legislation and the courts. We are now on the eve of dealing with the problems of the heart as well as those of the mind. As more legal problems are solved, local people will be faced with learning how to live together. This is the meaning of "council," people coming together to deal with the problems of community life.

While we seek to stay out in front by the careful but rapid organization of local councils, plans in other areas are underway to create a climate of opinion favorable to human relations. With the kind assistance of Mr. Dudley it is hoped that plans projected for the fall and winter months will bring about the involvement of more Baptist and evangelical oriented church groups. The church is one of the more influential institutions in Mississippi. Law and business can set much of the tone of community life, but certain areas of work remain for the church. Not until the major church bodies of our state become creatively involved will we conquer the more difficult problems of human relations.

As we have begun to create councils and to implement programs which involve the churches of Mississippi, other programs will soon get underway. In the near future organizational meetings will be held for students interested in the area of human relations. It is our conviction that with the help of more Mississippians we can create a spirit of community for all peoples in our state.

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