

Miss Mollins, editor of the Madison County Weekly, that our visit to Canton was sponsored and financed by the Church, rather than by the Civil Rights Groups, that we gave him an affidavit to that effect.

March 24, 1964

A story in the Des Moines Tribune, dated March 19, 1964, by Gladys Sifton of the New York Times, reports the plans already underway for "Freedom Schools" in Mississippi. The possible encouragement of the United Society through the Mt. Beulah facilities would be worthy of brotherhood consideration.

APR 6 1964

Sincerely,

Dr. Loren E. Lair
Iowa Society of Christian Churches
1150 25th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50311

Dear Loren,

8:17 PM

Mr. Art Thomas of the Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches discussed with the Disciple members of our Observation Team in Canton, Mississippi, the possibility of using the facilities of Mt. Beulah Christian Center as a school in citizenship education. Ian McCrae and he had discussed it previously.

Such a program would appear to be badly needed in Mississippi (and elsewhere in the south). There is no compulsory education law in the state, and the negro schools do not offer anything in the nature of Social Studies or Citizenship education comparable to the need of the pupils. The ministers of the County Ministerial Association (negro) were greatly interested when they learned of similar centers in other states, and they expressed a desire for such a program in Mississippi.

One of the arguments most frequently used against granting equal voting rights is the low literacy level of the negro, and the voter registration form for Mississippi is a frankly subjective literacy test. Such an instrument of discrimination is indefensible morally, and I trust legally. Nevertheless there is merit in correcting the situation that does exist among the uneducated negroes in Mississippi by providing schools of citizenship. Should they gain the franchise today, they would certainly not be informed voters. My hostess in Canton told me about her mother in New Orleans, where negroes may vote freely. "She earns \$25.00 every election taking people to vote." For her, it appeared, every election day meant twenty-five dollars!

There would be reason to favor citizenship schools under direction of the Church, rather than the Civil Rights groups, because of the quality and duration of the program, as well as its community acceptance. No doubt they would meet with resistance, no matter how sponsored. But I believe the very great community prejudice against Civil Rights groups would preclude their being understood by even the most enlightened of the white southerners. It made such a great difference to Mr.

Phil Mallins, editor of the Madison County Weekly, that our visit to Canton was sponsored and financed by the Church, rather than by the Civil Rights groups, that we gave him an affidavit to that effect.

March 24, 1964

A story in the Des Moines Tribune, dated March 19, written by Claude Sitton of the New York Times, reports the plans already underway for "Freedom Schools" in Mississippi. The possible support and encouragement of the United Society through its Mt. Beulah facilities, would be worthy of Brotherhood consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Loren H. Blair
Loren Society of Christian Churches
1150 25th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50311
Minister

FT:ES

Dear Loren,

Mr. Art Thomas of the Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches discussed with the District members of our Convention Team in Canton, Mississippi, the possibility of using the facilities of Mt. Beulah Christian Center as a school in citizenship education. Ian McGee and he had discussed it previously.

Such a program would appear to be badly needed in Mississippi (and elsewhere in the south). There is no compulsory education law in the state, and the negro schools do not offer anything in the nature of Social Studies or Citizenship education comparable to the need of the people. The ministers of the County Ministerial Association (negro) were greatly interested when they learned of similar centers in other states, and they expressed a desire for such a program in Mississippi.

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