

Canton, Mississippi
August 22, 1964


THE MINISTERS' REPORT

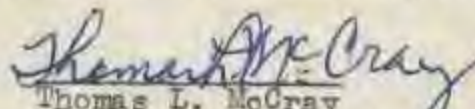
In our five days' experience in Canton, Mississippi, serving under the auspices of the N.C.C. Mississippi Project, in cooperation with COFO, we have experienced the following:

1. Overall conditions here at Canton seem to be essentially the same as reported in other parts of the state - intimidation, reprisals, hostile attitudes, and known acts of violence against Negroes by whites of the community. The Negroes who are participating in the movement, and who have either registered to vote, or attempted to do so are being harrassed and driven. Many have lost their jobs, and are threatened with mortgage foreclosure or with increased rentals.
2. Complete breakdown in police protection, and lack of ordinary recourse to law, including the state office of FBI. Police officers are known to be members of White Citizens' Council, and it is reported that one was seen throwing a fire bomb at the headquarters of the civil rights workers.
3. Lack of adequate medical and health resources creates serious problems. There is a complete back of communication between white and Negro communities.
4. Negroes appear to be giving strong support to economic boycott and other programs sponsored by COFO and the Madison County Movement.
5. The educational and cultural opportunities available to Negroes are woefully inadequate.
6. An important factor in the success of the movement has been the strength of the local leadership, and its ability to cooperate, and to gain popular response.

How have we seen our participation? We would hope that our presence here has given support to the program, that is, to the students working in COFO, and to the local people. We would like to think of our ~~participation~~ week's effort as part of our mission of communicating the Gospel. Our participation in this endeavor has yielded us new insights invaluable in the interpretation of the Freedom Movement.

We suggest better coordination of COFO and local community leadership; tightening of organizational set-up; more attention given to the briefing of the clergy so they can better understand the varied programs, and how they can be most helpful. It is very important that some means be devised through N.C.C. or otherwise for transportation for the clergy under the direction of the project director, without overburdening student volunteers.


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