

MFDP Chapter 59

REV. J. C. KILLINGSWORTH

Interview 0369
Rev. J. C. Killingsworth 0364
Negro; male; minister in Stonewall, Mississippi
FDP: local leader.

Q: Would you tell how you got involved with the civil rights?
And Could you begin with your name and address?

A: Yes. I'm Rev. J. C. Killingsworth. About 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years ago I happened to get in a conversation with some fellows that were interested in like M_____ Eggers (Evers?) and people like him and they encouraged me to maybe start working in civil rights activities. And later I met members of CORE, members of SNCC, and members of various other organizations, and I don't know, I just recognized the fact that I was a Negro and I was involved and as a minister and as a race man I should be a race man I should be concerned about people, and the things that people are involved in. So I began to visit the men, and as I visited them more my interest was created and, well, it just kept on building more and more and I felt I wanted to do something. And I thought about the whole thing; I began to think about the conditions that we were in, how badly we had been intimidated and how we had been deprived of everything that was ours, both our constitutional rights and our God-given rights. SO I just thought well something got to be done about it. And I began to set up and organize, and we set up something that was known as a Voters League, and began to invite people and talk to people and encourage people and they came, and they began to come in large numbers. And finally this thing grew to where we really had a real organization. And then we were contacted with this idea of maybe adding to this the idea of working with COFO, people came and they also joined with us and we joined with them and we worked very good, began to think in terms of protesting, doing some sitins, some layins, and some what-have-you. We thought then to...I believe the number 1 place was the Greyhound bus station that we went to test the first place in this section of the country that had ever been tested in the sense of a Negro going to be served. So I led these people there, I'm serving as chairman of this section of the country, and four other persons joined me there, the first week. We were a little shaky, but we went. And thinking in terms that there was a job to be done, and somebody had to do it. And the person who might have had the courage was the person who had to do it. And I thought well, I began to examine myself and say don't I have courage? And I answered my own question I said Yes, I have courage. And I went forward, and the persons who followed me, we went into the bus station, and the man said to us when we rushed over hurriedly and taken a seat, we can't serve you here. I said why can't you? He said, we can't serve Negroes in this side. I said we don't think in terms of being Negro, we think in terms of being people. And I said to him, did the Greyhound bus station not order people in 1960 to serve all people in

these such places? And he said he wasn't disturbed about that. And I said maybe you have forgot about that, but you could not have forgot about the Civil Rights Bill that passed. I know you want to respect that. And he said, well, damn the law, I don't know a thing about these laws; I know enough about my _____. I said if you know about them then I don't have to give you a lot of explanation, so just give us some action then if you will. I said, we demand to be served; He said we want you to go over to the other side. We said no, we won't go to the other side. We simply would be stupid to go over to the other side just to get served the same thing we're being served over here. No, we will not go to the other side. And I began to hit on the counter and said we demand to be served here, and not tomorrow, but rather now. So with that such demanding he thought well he would. He taken the orders and he served us there. But then after having been served, we left and no one walked out. We were surprised that nobody walked out, but everybody maintained their stay. They looked at us as though we were eagles flying away or bears walking in or something. But anyway we goes on and we continued this; we thought no point in going, we must continue to keep the place open. Farther than that, I sent other groups back, and they refused to serve them. They served us twice. And then on the third time they asked five dollars for a coke; and we did not buy them, but the second trip they asked for \$2.50 and we pressured the coke. We filed an affidavit against the bus company there, and it's still pending; we have not had a hearing from them yet. I didn't only do that but I joined the other section of the county, and the other section of the county joined into us, and I visit there with those people in the office and the organization, and they started me too as a leader for both Clarke and _____ County. They thought that I could do some of the things that nobody else seemed to be able to do very well. And they kind of had me lead their testing and demonstration and sitins, and layins, and what have you, and going to jail at times. And every time we recognize the fact that we have also become a part of the FDP, the Freedom Democratic Party. And the Democratic Party going to have a challenge going on. And we allowed ourselves to say that there's a thing going on, we think of the FDP. Everything that come up that we hear about we challenge. We learned that all open meetings were open to the public, we went and tried to participate in them. Many times we were arrested and denied and thrown out and those kind of things, but we went to jail, we paid our bond, we served our term and what have you, and kept on going on. So we kept the fight up. I had the privilege of going to Selma, Alabama, later, when the crisis were there; I must have spent when people were being so bad on the bridge on Sunday of that particular week, and this type demonstration continued on, we stood at what was known and was styled as a Berlin Wall. A wall which would cut off, the streets were cut off; we were cut off at a certain

section; we could not go farther; we had to stand there, with troops of all kinds in front of us, both officers... of various kinds stood there maybe about two weeks facing officers. But during this particular period men were shot, women were shot, bullets coming from somewhere, we knew not where. And many people suffered badly there; during that time Rev. Reeb was badly beaten along with two others, and Rev. Reeb's death came as a result of his being beaten. We continued our demonstrations during this period, and what have you. We stood at this wall and I as a part of this group named this wall the Berlin Wall. We began to sing about the Berlin Wall, the Berlin Wall, Hate was the thing that built this wall, But love will make it fall, in Selma, Alabama, and I thought that was beautiful. We continued that song along with many others. We sung every hour on the hour; _____ vigils were going on at this particular time. Quite a few of the officers there who we were facing, there was ministers who were on the very front; something happened to those men while they were standing there, some of them falling like dead men. And many of them accepted the fact that they accept Christ in their life; and he become real in their life, something happened to them and they lay down their pistols and clubs and walked out. I suppose this happened with maybe 45 or 50 men who just actually walked out. I feel like being in Selma meant more than helping to bring a new voting law; it also had a tendency to help to convert men, giving them to know that God still lives and he lives in the hearts of those who trust in him. We stood there two weeks; on the third week we began after having been given by the court order permission to journey to Montgomery, we began our tour there, and I believe we must have been about five days walking; I then at that particular time learned to walk fifty miles. Not on;y fifty miles, but I would almost say 58 miles, because we walked 8 miles down into the city after getting to the city limit. We suffered there in the rain and in the cold and what have you, and it rained and were bad most of the time but we stood there and faced a crisis where blood was perhaps running down from bodies like water. But we faced the crisis; we had a determination that we would not give up, we must keep on keeping on. We recognized the fact that this was the way to get the job done; should we stop, should we turn back, we would lose our whole value. So we singed the songs very close to our heart, I won't let nobody turn me around, I won't let Jim Clark turn me around, I won't let Al Lingo turn me around, and many others. We will keep on walking, we will keep on talking, marching up the freedom way. And many many other songs that we singed that we w _____; about these civil rights workers who were killed and placed into a _____ we said we wouldn't even let a p _____ turn us around. We thought about the people...the horse that people were being run over by, on the bridge that Sunday, we singed a song, we won't let no horses turn us around, we won't let no tricks,

we won't let no knife sticks, or nothing else turn us around. So we were determined and we were able to reach Montgomery on Friday afternoon where we were then addressed by Dr. Martin Luther King, where he brought to us a very wonderful message, and then following that the committee aksed to speak with the governor of that state, Governor Wallace, and he refused to receive us at the outset; finally he accepted the fact that he would see the committee later and they going in, and he also refused to see them even secondly. So we thought then that something most be done; we thought in terms then, we could think of nothing else except maybe boycott, boycott all things that might need to go in or out of the state. So that very thing is in process even now. After being there I was asked by a person who was a ~~news~~man in New York in various sections of the north, as to whether or not I didn't say I was from Mississippi. I repeated by saying, yes, I'm from Mississippi, I'm from the very heart of Miss. And he wondered whether or not I was expecting to journey elsewhere; they felt relatively sure that I wann't going to come back to Mississippi to try living with ~~these~~ type people which I know that maybe had _____ my life and who wished to take my life so badly. It was my desire to come back to Miss. to my very own home and home state to help to continue this fight for the benefit of my race and my people. I came back to Miss. and faced the crisis, faced the issues, and things that worked very well. I continued my fight. At this particular time Mrs. _____ who was from Detroit, Michigan, who also lost her life there, was found the night of the march. I must have been about the second person to make it there when they found the body. And of course you know she left five small children back home, which was very sad. Farther than that, her body was shipped home, and funeral services were held where Dr. Martin Luther King went and presided at the church service. We came back home and we talked to protest for being killed. We done so in the sense of a demonstration. I got my people together, and in the county of Clarke, the city of Quitman, we went...well, the day before I said to the sheriff that we would be marching. He said we couldn't. I said, well, I'm afraid if my feet stay on, we will. Otherwise we'll be doing what the spirit says too. And tomorrow, if the spirit says march, we will be marching. And he said very definitely we wouldn't. I never did take a dare, and as usual we got together and started planning our march. I called down to him and said that the march is about to begin now. And you can have your wish; whatever you want to do about it you can do just that, because we're going to be doing actually what we want to do, and that is marching, and protesting the death, the brutal death of Mrs. Luzzo who came to share with us during the very bad crisis in Selma, Alabama. So we did, but he seemed to accept the fact that we meant business. We marched down to the post office; we held a memorial service there for her, carried along with us a

wreath of flowers we left there on the post office as a memorial that people will always be able to recognize the fact that this demonstration, this memorial was held on behalf of her. Of course we were informed shortly after our leaving that the wreath was thrown away, but in reality it will always be recognized as being there, that this sort of thing was held. We continued our meetings, continued our protests. Just following that was a sheriff's convention was held in Jackson, Miss., and who do you imagine was the speaker for this particular convention? Mr. Jim Clark, from Selma, Alabama, the person who have beat, killed, intimidated, and attempted to our people down through the years, and called this a bad crisis to come upon them to the system which he operated there in Selma, Alabama, coming up to speak to the sheriffs of Mississippi and give them a new application by which to exasperate us with here in Miss. And particularly Sheriff Riley, the sheriff whom I am now living under his administration as executive of my own county of Clarke. He was at this meeting, and he were going also to get a new application of solution to exasperate us in the county. We protest Jim Clark coming to a march, a demonstration; people went from Quitman, Miss.; people went from Stonewall into _____, from Meridian, and Philadelphia. I left this march there. Of course from the COFO office on Main St. going down to the H_____ Hotel where this first session was being held. The FBI was notified; so was the newsmen; so was the chief of police. They readily formed and organized to capture and prevent our march from the hotel where this first session was being held. But we did not shake down; we knew of their arrangement, but we could not shake down. We'd gone ahead as if we had began. So they meets us down about 2½ blocks from the office, and said to me, asked me whether or not we had a permit by which to march. And I said, yes, I have a permit by which to march. And maybe it's invisible; it has been provided for me by the Constitution of the United States of America, and I've had it ever, I didn't just get it this morning. And I said I'm sure that you would not think in terms of taking away from me both my constitutional rights and my God-given rights. I will not go along with that; I expect to go to the H_____ Hotel and protest my grievance; it will be within my own rights to do so; the constitution provided me with this right, and in my expectation I expect to do just that. I attempted to bypass him, and they ran to the walls and began to link up in fours and prevent our going forward. And he said you will have to disperse or you will be under arrest. And all persons stayed together; nobody did not disperse; we stayed together. We thought, well, if you're going to arrest us you're going to carry us away yourselves. We just simply went limp in the street; so by going limp in the street we were then carried by the police to the paddy wagon and we were then hauled away to the city jail in Jackson where we stayed for three days. We were then bonded out. We returned

home and we kept on our meetings and we kept on our planning and then shortly following this demonstration which we had in Jackson, which the crowd grew as large as maybe 1000, when men and women protested this special legislature that were called by the governor, Governor Paul Johnson, to try to bypass the new voting law and many other laws that were being passed by the House of Congress. We also protest that, and this is the reason that we protest that. We thought in terms of that person who were holding this session who were illegally elected; it were not being held by the people of the state of Mississippi, because the people of the state of Miss. in general have no voice in the government, it's only the white man; and the law in supposed to be made by the people for the people. We protest that in the sense of a demonstration. Both a march and picketing; this session was being held at the state capitol. I must have joined the group in which there were being, that was was going to be picketing; I must have been leading that group. We fixed placards of various kinds, bearing different signs protesting this legislature that was being held, this session that was being held of the Legislature. Of course, on our arrival there--after having gone just a very few blocks, we were arrested. We also went limp. We were placed in a paddy wagon, and then we were hauled away out to the fairgrounds. And there I stayed there until late in the evening. They recognized the fact that I was one of the general leaders of, and for, the State of Mississippi--one who had done, most people say, an outstanding job for the State of Mississippi, I hope. Well, I have. It have actually been and was an interesting job, I say. And certainly they recognized the fact, and we were chosen, along with others, from the group at the fairgrounds and were taken to the city jail. In fact, I had planned organized there, at the fairground, rallies among the group--planning rallies and what-not so that we would continue out our protest of demonstration that we might be able to continue even in jail. So, we're saying, by that type of action, that we want that nobody should turn us around, and we do not expect to turn around for anything or anybody. I must have stayed there for eight days, there in jail, along with many others. At the end of the eight days I was released, Sunday night, to go to Philadelphia, Mississippi, to hold a memorial for the three civil rights workers which had been killed there one year before that time: Michael Schwerner, Andy Goodwin, and James Cheney. I was requested by the family to go and lead this march and in a memorial service. We journeyed from Jackson, Mississippi, very late in the night. I did alone, by myself, and I came home for 45 minutes, not even having gone to bed that night, and hardly the night before. I journeyed on to Philadelphia. I picked up two or three other persons from Meridian. We got there and we got orientated and organized. And about 8:45 we began the march. Going out to the church that were burned, and which these boys were going out to investigate at the time when they

were arrested, before being taken away and killed that very night. So, I led the march that day to the church. I was the general speaker for the memorial service, generally on race issues and the type of thing that might confront us in life. We were accompanied by Sheriff Raney, Deputy Sheriff Price, and other officials. They followed us out to the place. I spoke directly relative to what they meant to the County, to the State, and I also mentioned that they had been involved in this very brutal killing that took place with these boys, that we were memorializing at the service for. I spoke directly to them. I said to them that you persons, people like Jim Clark, I'm sorry, people like Sheriff Raney, Deputy Sheriff Price, you all are people who is here to protect us and to protect our lives from incident and violence and you all are the persons who have so involved yourself in taking the life of persons who were trying to obtain their rights, and the rights of other persons. And I said to them how brutal it was, and just what I thought about them in its entirety. They accepted the fact--holding their heads down almost to the ground--they seemed as if they wanted to go through the ground. So, we journeyed back to Philadelphia. We also journeyed back to Enterprise, Mississippi, where we are now living and continued our demonstrations in Jackson and what-have-you. The next day I went back and led another march down Capitol Street. We were also arrested there again and where I spent in for three more days. We were then released on bond. I came home and continued our meetings. I continued our explanations that relate to the breaking down of barriers. By that time it was time for an answer from Judge Carps relative to a school de-segregation plan which we had filed an affidavit at the second semester of last school year, where two of my sons, along with eight other students had gone over and filed written applications to enter into the white school. They were given nice little run-arounds saying that the school board had not met and as soon as they would tell us something and we would do something and so-forth and so-on. They same type of run-around that they're giving us in the State of Mississippi for centuries and centuries. So, this is just like Mississippi. They did not get out of their rocking chairs and give us any consideration until we started an affidavit there after not having been considered. We were then given a consideration by Judge Carps that they would have to at least integrate one grade this school year. We filed another affidavit stating that we would not go along with that and until the Circuit Court of Appeals reckoned out this thing for us. And then we were later given the consideration that the school would have to accept at least two grades this year. Later, we came into the ~~con~~idea of the (inaudible) Courts asking and ruling for the State of Mississippi that they be provided with Federal funds. They would have to at least de-segregate at least four grades. And two of them would have to be the first and twelfth. So, in the Enterprise School they accepted the fact that they would have to accept the first, twelfth, and second and third

grades on the 26th. We were able to enroll a goodly number of students. As of the 6th we were able to enroll the number which brought us up to the number of 25 for an overall amount of students. On this very morning, they went over and enrolled in the number of 25. Their parents accompanied them to their classroom. They had a chance to meet their teachers and to get the children all set away for classes. We must have spent an hour and a half there, accompanying their parents, giving them security as a leader of this section and they felt secure. They were given a pretty nice consideration there. But, in the meantime, while being there, there were F.B.I.s on the grounds. There were polices on the grounds, and Deputy Sheriffs on the grounds, and constables on the grounds, supposedly to give these people security. While during this same period, while looking on, I happened to notice there come a man across the street carrying a very, very long shotgun. Well, that's a different story. I must have been in the company of one of the F.B.I.s while this man was coming across. I directed him to the fact that "Here come a man with a gun." They ran out to the man, and so did the other officers, but he got almost into the school health building. And they managed to turn him around--not using any force of any kind with him, looked like they were just more or less just coaxing with him, trying to pant him up, look like to do such thing as they might want him to do. I thought in terms of who is supposed to give protection and security, direct them to use force on him just as if he had been a Negro. They would have captured him in a most forcive manner, even before, even as he entered the streets or what have you. But being a white man, being just like Mississippi, just like the guys in Mississippi being part of the system which is so very rotten in Mississippi. Not only has it just become rotten, it's been rotten for years and years. It's still rotten. I don't know if it's being able to be cured very much. When I looked on this incident this morning, when these fellows were patting this guy on the back, who was carrying a gun, who was going to bring violence, who was perhaps take lives of persons who might have been given their rights by the federal government, and given our Constitutional rights to do things we were entitled to, and they're out there patting him on the back. And no one has been able totell me, as of this moment, just what's taking place with this guy... whether he might have been arrested--just what might have taken place. I talked to the constable. I talked to the police. I talked to the Judge. And nobody seemed to know--just to tell who he is, namely. So, that's the big question in my mind. To me this doesn't seem to be giving much security to anybody, particularly to the Negro race. So, we will continue our fight. I have committed myself. I do not expect to take down; I do not expect to turn around. I am singing this same song that I sang two years ago--I want that nobody turn me around. I won't let Mississippi turn me around. I

won't let Sheriff Riley turn me around. I won't let the City Police, Floyd Jones, turn me around. I won't let Paul Gavin, who is a constable, turn me around. I won't let Pettis, who is the Deputy Sheriff, turn me around. Or nobody else. I expect to keep on walking, keep on talking in very gentle and very dignified matter, up the freedom way. On Monday past, as executive of this section of the country, as leader, I was priveleged to come down to this particular city, and to lead around 30 persons down to the school--Zack (inaudible) School, which have previous been an all-white school, which is no more considered an all-white school--it's an integrated school. It is just a school for people. We don't any more use the term "white school". We use the term "school" where we were able to register 30 students there. Elementary and high school students combined. When they first went, I must have sent two persons down before my going. They were denied the privelege of registering our children by the Superintendent, Mr. Zack Huggins. He said to them "You'll have to go back to the Shirley Owen Negro School, where you've been registering, and register as if you been registering--where you been registering." They came back to me, and somebody said "Find the Chairman of the vicinity, who is the Reverend Killingsworth, who is in authority to tell you what to do about these things." They readily found me. I said to them "We will form ourself together, more or less in a convoy, and I will be leading this group." I had the priviledge of leading about 16 cars in a convoy consideration, where we covered the school campus with cars and I lead this group into the school and givin' Mr. Huggin his orders. I give him the same type of orders that Judge Carp gave him through explanation, in which he give him certain type of things to do. I also said to him "If heknew who I am, and the stand in which I take, you wouldn't deny my people the priviledges because you know that I would not go along with it. I would not hear those things. I would demand the things that my people are entitled to. He, at that timma, did not recognize me, who I was in person. So he seemed to stagger badly when I said who I was--the people had to stand behind him. Just the name of --just my name and the thing that I might have done, in relating to getting things done for my people--for my race. So, we were able to register there then with courtesy. No incidents, no nothing, then. Both in the elementary and high school.

About the new voting law, that we able to help to secure a voice for myself and for my people as we suffered because of what we went through in Selma, Alabama. That is the time when President Johnson got up out of his good easy rocking chair and gotten up and moved. We stood there at the Berlin Wall sending him telegrams, if ever I were, were telling him that something had to be done. The National Council of Churches from throughout the world were present. I must have been the only Minister from the South who had priviledge to joing them there and who did stand by them there, not just in

the group, but I must have also stood by on the very front line, where I were interviewed from the very bottom to the top. The whole world had a chance to know at that time where I stood, what I want, and what I will demand. I have maintained that, and the Lord have blessed me, and things have went well. I'm saying now, as I said at the very offset, "Iwon't let nobody turn me around." People is resting now in Clark County, in consideration of the new voting law. They are lining up there in more than two hundred at a time. I'm very pleased with all the considerations that's being had. People have not let me down. They have actually been in keeping with standing by me for all the thing that I might have done. And I feel that all the things that I have done for my people have not been in vain. I'm so satisfied at this time, and I'm so confident in terms of people standing behind me reacting as I like to see them act, until I can start all over again. I thought once how I was tired. I thought once I was weary, but with these types of considerations, I say now that we must go forward. I think about the song that we used to sing. It was not a church song, but it was a song that came out of somebody's heart. You Can Make It if You Try. That was true. But, later, somebody else brought about a more favorable song, which I am much more in keeping with. The song is entitled We Got To Make It. So, I threw away that song, We Can Make It If We Try, because sometimes we might forget to try. We just got to say now We Got To Make It. So, the Negroes in Mississippi, particularly in Clark County, and in this section in which I'm leading, they are singing the same song that I'm singing: We Got To Make It. A few days ago we were fortunate to have, as special guests, the Ku Klux Klan, who were came to Meridian, Mississippi, and who walked the streets there in their robes and what-have-you. And they go into each place which had been integrated--and some ways we always have ways of knowing what's going on. We were, by some source, informed as to what would be happening that day. We had about three hundred people to come and all the persons, all the places, that had been de-segregated--the Klan went to visit those places and we had people there already awaiting their coming. They were already there being served, waiting in a company. We had about a hundred people in the streets waiting to accompany the Klan. And we did. We walked the streets with the Klan. We even pinned freedom buttons on the one or more members of the Klan. We offered to help carry their felt flags and those type of things. We offered to buy their dinners and what-have-you. We said to them that there once was a time that when they came to town we would leave. But, whenever you're coming to town now, we'll be coming to town. That we won't let the K.K.K. turn us around. We won't let the Assistant Council turn us around. We're going to keep on walking. We're going to keep on talking. Marching up the freedom way.

Q: May I ask you a question? What sort of positions do you hold now in the County and States?

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A: I serve as the Executive of the F.D.P.

Q: The Executive Committee?

A: Yes, of both Clark and Lowndes County. Yes. They consider me as a general leader. I do the general directing of whatever needs to be done, as relating to doing things. I must be the person who either will go to special meetings at Washington or Georgia or Louisiana to meet with other leaders of special groups--for instance, N.A.A.C.P., SNCC, CORE, or any certain organizations that might be meeting. We try to get together and try to get ideas that might make better provisions by which we might work together and try to get into a relationship by which we might be working toward one goal--breaking down barriers.

Q: Is this the Executive Committee?

A: Yes.

Q: Who are the other people from this district, the fourth district, who are in the State Executive Committee?

A: Reverend Kirkland from Nashoba. And, I'm not thinking well right now. Do you want to say something right now to let me think?

Q: Could you think of it later? Do you have much--well, what's the relationship between what you do and how the project operates? Here in....

A: No.

Q: Are you in the State or in the County--I guess in the County, for Clark County. And the County board sets up the project? Is that how you do it?

A: Yes. Yes, it does. It also gives suggestions to them. But, as an FDP organization, everybody helps to decide--we thought in terms--the FDP usually think in these terms. That if one person comes to offer all the suggestions as to what's to be done--if one person--if we do what one person wants to be done, what one person views, we'll simply be doing what they've been doing all the time. For instance, I come and if I give all the suggestions, and have all the know-how, we'll be doing the same thing that Sheriff Riley's doing down to the Court House, and throughout this county. I will be giving all the orders. We'd rather just stop using his theories, and start using mine--stop using white man's, start using black man's. So, we'd rather just stop and sit down and discuss together. And maybe we might have certain things we might want to discuss and we might start to use or consider and we would have them on the agenda.

And then we would sit down and discuss these things to the final analysis, and then whatever the final decision is, we would use that.

Q: Who chooses the local project director?

A: What?

Q: Who chooses the local project director?

A: The people...the people.

Q: In the form of an executive committee or a general meeting or what?

A: General meeting.

Q: Do you have much contact with the volunteers here?

A: Yes, quite a bit. Yes, they want to think that they're more or less--well, I'm the chairman for them in a sense. They respect me along those lines, and whatever they want to do, they seem to think that with the experience that I have in the county and the state and in these various organizations, that I would sort of have more inside experience than they would have. And see, many of them came out of school. They are not experienced people. They came here to do the things that we deem necessary to be done as people who is working here already. Actually they don't make rules of any kind. They don't...they don't say what we will do. The committee says, and the people here says, what they would want them to do, and that is the way because they don't know what's happening here; they don't know about the arrangements; they don't know--well, they just don't know. It's just like going into a new field, and it is a new field for them. For instance, maybe they would go over here and run into some kind of problem and might bog themselves down and maybe us too, not knowing the direction by which to take, and that's the way they work. We think in this terms, that we would have local people from the vicinity to work with them, and go canvassing with them and do various things. People who are experienced and know who lives where. We don't send them alone. We never send them out alone by themselves. We use local people from here, local Negroes to go with them, and then they work together, and then this is doing something for the people here, and for two reasons we send people with them, and for two reasons we don't send them by themselves. When they put their know-hows together, then our people will be able to grasp from them such as they have to offer and the ways and means they have of doing things, and the volunteers will soon be moving on back to school and back to the sections from which they came. All people will have so developed themselves until they will just continue their

canvassing and do the same type effective job as they were doing with these volunteers that came from out of town.

Q: What do you think the idea is in general of bringing these white volunteers to the state instead of doing like Johnnie Mae Walker says and letting the local people do everything? How do you feel about bringing the volunteers in?

A: I think they've done something for more--in more than one way. Number 1, it did help building the Negro's courage in that they have been able to recognize the fact that Negro and white can live together and can learn to love one another and respect each other, because for a long time this thing has not happened, and the white man has said that it couldn't happen, and it has said unto us--it has also said unto the white man, and for instance...let me make this little illustration if I may. We were down to the Big Aura; it's a concession stand down the street, and we'd gone down there in an integrated group, and we were all sitting there together eating and drinking together. We didn't own a use...or maybe a malt on our own truck, but we mixed the cups up--maybe you would reach over and serve me, and somebody would reach over and serve the other one, and so we just mixed the thing up in its entirety, and there were two small girls, about 10 and 12 years old, and they were pulling on their mama's apron in the place, and the mama, she said the Negro's and whites didn't have nothing to do with each other. They said, "Mama, look out there. You've been telling us that they didn't have no relationship. You've been telling us that they don't like one another. Look out there where they're eating and drinking. They do love one another, Mama. White people do love Negroes. Look how they're doing. Mama, they're having a good time." And she wouldn't answer them, she'd turn and she'd twist this way and that way, and the girl kept on her for I guess about half an hour, and she just had to say. And she just wound up saying, "You just hush. You can't be doing that." She said, "Well, Mama, we could do it just as good as they're doing it, since we have some colored friends too--we want to, so can't we have colored friends?" They just aggravated her wild almost, so she was disturbed twice over our being together and then this girl agitating her in the sense of saying, "They do live together. You said they didn't. You and Daddy said they didn't have anything to do with each other." She came and even pulled down the window to where we couldn't hear their voice, and the sound of the kid's voice saying that they do love one another, they do live together, so it's for more than one reason it's helped. If those children had not come down, they wouldn't have had this experience, but those children who have gone, they will be saying to other children as they go, that Negroes and whites can live together. They can get along, and we've seen them sit together and eat together and serve each other in

a very lovely manner. If they could do it, we could do it, so they tell their mother, "Mama, we want some white friends. Mama can we go out and get some white friends? Can we sit out there and do like they're doing?" She was shaking her head and trying to get signs over, and she didn't us to recognize the fact that she was trying to tell them no. And it was really something. So for that reason and for many other reasons, they have meant a lot. We have walked the streets together, and we eat together, we sleep together, we do everything together, and it has ended up giving the Negro more courage--I think in the Stonewall vicinity--till we have volunteers to come; we have Negroes that don't have anything to do with civil rights activities and anytime...but they were encouraged to take some of the and keep some of them and that, so those that we could count as the biggest Toms among us, we made it possible that they would be the ones that would keep some of the volunteers who are white. So they have them now, and they have changed. It has changed their personality altogether. They're some of our best workers now. They're doing more and they're doing a better job than some of those that we've had working with us all the time. So for several reasons, it has meant a lot for them to have come. And these people have come, and may I say for them, that they have actually worked. They have left no tests unturned. They have found the lost sheep. They have found the 99 on the mountaintop, and they have gone out and searched for the one that was lost--the persons who need to be encouraged, the people who need to be trained to recognize that they are human, that they were as intelligent as anyone else and come out and register and vote and become first-class citizens and demand the things they were entitled to. And when you look down to the Courthouse each day and see the great strings of people that have been brought out by both people of this section and by particularly volunteers. You recognize the fact that they have meant a lot here. We've been able to rescue hundreds and hundreds of Negroes that we would not have been able to register without them...had the volunteers not been here. They meant a lot to us, and they...and we are grateful the way they have conducted themselves. I said to them when they came, "You people will be coming and working with us. Recognize right now that you will also be a target, and you want to be a pattern for us and for the other men. You want to be just as intelligent as you can be and the type of man that you can carry yourself in!" They have carried themselves in a more dignified manner. They have not done one thing or have done any reflection on us that would be unbecoming to intelligent people. We are grateful of that. They sent the best group they had into Clarke County. They have done the best they could, and we are grateful.

Q: Do you see any disadvantages at all in having white volunteers?

0363-15

A: I haven't seen any.

Q: (inaudible)

A: No, I haven't seen any. Because our people are encouraged to the extent that they are just keeping on and keeping on, and in fact, we have caught them, because we have not only sent whites and Negroes out together, we have sent Negroes out to test and see just what they were able to take of this...this consideration that was being had. So we sent Negroes out together, and they turned out to be just as effective as when they had gone out with the white. So they're saying to us that, "watch these volunteers move on. We can do the same job that they have been doing. They have given us courage to the extent that we won't be able to think of turning back. We will be able to accomplish a great job." So that meant a lot. They have not been here to any disadvantage as far as I'm concerned. They have been to a great advantage by having them come. They have meant a lot.

Q: Uh, I want to ask you one question as a reverend. Going around and talking to a large number of the volunteers, we have found that the greater part of them are either agnostic or atheistic, though they're down here working among a very religious people. Do you think there's any contradiction involved here?

A: Hmmm, well, the ones who have been in this section, they seem not to have been disturbed in any extent, because they didn't emphasize religion to the extent that they would become--maybe they have over-emphasized religion in some instances...in some instances where they might have worked. And I can think that...well, I say this, and this is one thing that might have helped my volunteers...I said to them as an administrator, "Don't think of me as a minister. Just think of me as an individual, because a person who is working with you and a person who is trying to get the job done. Because we've been singing and praying and preaching and shouting for over a hundred years, and nothing has happened, and I think now we need to start mixing the thing up. We need something else. Pray some, but you've got to recognize the fact that if you want your prayer answered, you've got to get up and hustle, so we going to have to do some, so let's stop putting all the interest on prayer and singing and praying so much. That would help greatly. Maybe some people have over-emphasized the idea of religion. So I don't mix it up too much. We, we might have--to a couple of freedom songs, we might have one hymn or something--maybe one stanza and then a short prayer, and then we move back into freedom songs. We want everybody--we've been, you know, more or less, more on the ball-rolling side, not necessarily a prayer meeting. I've been

informed that in some sections they have, you know, emphasized the idea of prayer meeting too much. You know what I'm saying now, and people who become contaminated in the sense that...where this has to be a more or less religious thing is not really something that's working toward freedom. So this must be more of a soul-saving thing. They thought in terms of coming here to save people...this is the type of intimidation we've had, but it looks like this is more like saving their soul, more or less, so I think maybe that's it. Because I said to them, you know, "I know that you all are young people. I understand that, and you're not ministers, and I don't want you to act like ministers. I just want you to be decent and, you know, not to do anything that will throw any effects on my people that will cause the white man in the South to say, 'Well, that's what you have now here. That's what they came here for.' I know you're too intelligent to do that, so other than that, well, go ahead." Nothing complicated. My...I've given them freedom. I've done that. Maybe they haven't had that in some places. They need it, because these persons--most of them aren't chosen even for ministers. They--and another thing about it, I don't even think in terms of my children acting like me. They're not ministers. I said to the people in the vicinity, "My children are not the minister now. I'm the minister. They're children just like your children, you know, and if you understand what I'm saying, I'm telling them a lot. You don't expect them to...so you...they want to go and dance and do things in various manners, well, they can do it. They're children. They're not the minister. They won't bring you a message on Sunday. I will bring it. They're children. They got to grown up. They got to develop. I know that if I tell my people like this, there's a social life and there's a spiritual side, and if you see just one side, well, you're in bad shape anyway. See. So if you can think that way, you know, you won't wind up pressing anybody too close, but if you just think one way and see Jesus walking all around in the room and don't see him leaving, you're going to wind up... So, I don't think you want to...I don't think that will happen maybe in some cases...if they wanted the people to come in and act like ministers or some such person like that, but that would make a difference, but we don't pressure our peoples like that. We just want them to be just decent people and go ahead and start the ball rolling and go ahead. And it seems like everybody has a lot of freedom around here, all the persons who work with us. They're completely free, and yet it seems to have been good for us.

Q: Well, among the young people of Mississippi, the Negroes who are working with the Movement and the young kids, kids and young people around, say the ages of 18 to 25 or so... it seems also that we've noticed that a lot of them aren't religious in the traditional sense, like they don't attend

church and they don't believe that...they don't practice religion in the way that it has been practiced in the past. Can you explain this too?

A: Well, I can maybe in some way...I'm thinking maybe for the same reasons...they're thinking in terms of , you know, people emphasizing--why now, most people in the church, you don't find too many people who are really in the heart of the church who think in terms of freedom or are working toward this cause in any sense. They are people who confine themselves to religion and religion only. That seems to be a..and you'll find more or less that your best consideration that's been had for the Movement has been just people that just go to church, you know, and they may or may not--they're the people in this section who go to church, who actually call themselves Christians and real church people, you can hardly get them to go to a meeting hardly anywhere in town. They've been more or less--so what I'm saying, I would always have to emphasize church as a minister, but I've learned not to place as much emphasis on it as I once did for the simple fact that people get too carried away with religion and forget about this fact, really.

Q: Do you see a conflict between traditional religion and the Movement?

A: Well...

Q: Would you call it a conflict or...?

A: I don't know how to start. I don't know what to call it. Hmmm, well, I mean, according--some people think so. Some people are just letting it make one, yes, they're letting it do so, but it's not--I mean as far as I'm concerned personally there's no conflict because--I mean, I can see the difference because I know that some people will say, "Well, let's wait on the Lord. His will correct our mistake, and He will make everything for me," but when He gives you sense and knowledge about how to do certain things, well, He's a working man! That's what I try to tell my people, so...a lot of people think yes, you know, and some of the people think that for me to take the action that I've taken, they think that it was far different, that it caused me to lose a lot of value maybe, and so I don't think so. As far as I'm concerned it's not--but some people think so. It's...it makes a difference with some people, but people who are thinking, well, it's not really, and the people who are thinking and well, who are really concerned, it's not really making any difference for me or losing effect for me, so... But most of them that are in it are saying like I say: we've been singing and praying for over a hundred years and we haven't done nothing

but that, and we haven't moved off the subject; we haven't done one thing. So let's just over-emphazied---let's just recognize the fact that we're Christian but we need to be free Christian--Christian one the...I mean, you can't be... well...you can't exercise no rights and no privileges or nothing, so it still doesn't mean very much to you, even if you are a Christian. So...and I think you should feel closer...I think you ought to have a lot of fear. I don't think you can be a good Christian and have a lot of fear, like I...I don't think you can consider Broadwell and, well, he said fear no man. I mean, God's the only person we ought to fear. He's the only being that we should think of in terms of, you know, being able to do certain things when it comes to really changing things. I think in terms of the other man, you know, as just like myself. But, in some instances yes, but it seems to be decreasing more now lately than...it didn't make quite a difference at the offset, but now people realize that it's breaking down. Everything.../

Q: I've got a couple questions about the FDP and the way it's organized. Could you tell me what it means when the FDP says that it's a people's party?

A: Yes, all people. I mean, anybody can be a part. We don't discriminate.

Q: How about the decision making withing the party? Can you explain how a position is reached?

A: Yeah, by groups sitting down and discussing things... discussing a thing to a small point. No voting--you don't vote on anything, maybe for instance, like you do in most other instances, you would come to a certain point and say "all in favor of such a thing" and the large majority wins, but this is...I mean, we don't do it like that. We just set down and discuss, and then you might talk about something until twelve o'clock at night and not get it over, and you might come back and talk all day tomorrow about it until everybody says that this is it.

Q: Is this way of speaking out on a state level or a county level or what?

A: Yes, on all levels, all levels.

Q: What happens if, say, a decision is being reached between the state as a whole and that many different communities are discussing the same issue and come up with different conclusions. How do you reconcile these on the state level?

A: Well, we...there is...we...we have...let me see what I want to say; I'll tell you in just a minute. For instance there was a center at Stonewall--there is one here, and there's others throughout the section. We have our local...

our regular local meetings at these local centers. Well, once a month there is a general meeting for the county, and all the centers come together at one point, for instance, like at a certain time in the month we all...we meet about church work, and all the points then meet together. And at these same things people talk about their...if there's anybody that's different than we...we talk about these, and from this point maybe some of the other sons are maybe different or something. Well, we come here, and these things are place on the agenda. We get everybody's explanation about what they might have...all of it is placed on the agenda, and then we discuss these things one by one, one by one together, as if we do in the local centers, until everybody's satisfied on just where they are. And we have a state meeting. For instance, all the state will perhaps meet on the coast, maybe at Rayburn. I mean, we'd probably meet there for three days, five days or what have you. And these same issues, we will discuss them there. They'll be also on the agenda. They'll be discussed there by all the people of the state of Mississippi, and we'll discuss them there until we all come together, everybody blends in together on whatever...we think together. So that's how we use it to stay in trend...thesame thing. So don't worry, the whole state is together, and that's the way. The local centers, they discuss things to find out where everybody comes to agree on the same thing. Once a month we come together on a county level likewise, and then for the rest of the month--we did say once we tried to rule on every three months, but we finally come to the point that at such times as we deem necessary even if there's every month, there will come up some important issues that we need to discuss, and we call state meetings at such times as are necessary, so we left it open. We might just have to meet at any time on the state level and discuss these issues together. We will do so until we all blend in together, so that's why together. Whatever the FDP do, everybody is doing the same thing, and it meets with everybody's approval, and that's the thing that we can appreciate about the FDP.

Q: Well, what happens if, say, the people decide wrong or something; if there's some disagreement and then the consensus at the local meeting goes toward the one decision, and then when the state people get together, they decide that the people have decided incorrectly, and they have a different explanation or something else to do about it.

A: Well, if they need to be different--if it needs to be changed for instance...if it needs to be changed, or if it is changed, they're still doing it together, see. The same people from the local centers, the same people...

Q: (inaudible)

A: No, no, the same people from the local centers are there.

The same people from the counties...from the county centers are there, and all the people from the local centers and so on are at the state meeting. We are still...if there's anything there that needs to be changed, we still are there to change it together. We have people from all these places.

Q: Everybody comes into the meeting of the executive...

A: Yes.

Q: ...council to have a say, and if you were to vote, they would all have a vote too?

A: Yes, if we were to vote, yes.

Q: Do you ever have an occasion to vote?

A: No, we just don't let that come.

Q: Say, like picking a chairman or something like that, do you vote then?

A: No, we just don't vote period. Maybe some of them think maybe we ought to. They think that this would be a much quicker way to do it, but we say we know, but if we do that, we'll be doing the same thing that we've been doing. That's the way they do on other levels, but we're trying to be different as we relate to the state. We don't want just a few people to say...we want everybody to be free because this is everybody's party, and if we start voting these things by elections...percentage of the majority...well, maybe you have 200 persons here, and 101 will vote for, and then 99 will be left on the outside. Well, you see how many people you have that are not pleased. There are 99 persons that have not been reached. And that's...that's what we're trying to get away from.

Q: So what you're doing is reaching a compromise?

A: I beg your pardon?

Q: You reach a compromise?

A: Well, yeah, when everybody just blends in. We discuss to the final analysis, till everybody's perfectly satisfied. We talk about everything until everybody gets blue in the face, or maybe everybody may get mad, and some might become tired, and...well, you might become so tired at sometimes that you say I'm just tired of meeting, but that's right, and you stay with it.

Q: How did it arise last year, you know, when you had three candidates running for...(inaudible)... How were these candidates chosen?

A: By the...

Q: Out of the FDP. These three candidates.

A: Well, I wish I could explain this...(end of tape 1)... We had been notified of this even before we had talked about it in the local centers. We had been said to that if there were a person that we thought could run for these offices, well, they could be present--they could be on the agenda... you could say a person from such and such a place and all. We were just...these actually were just the persons that could be found, and this is the thing that's new and brand-new, that people don't just walk out and accept the responsibility. You know, they just think they...you know I couldn't be no...for a long time we thought that... Well, we think about our history books. Negroes haven't been shown to have done anything. They've been left out, even persons who have been in these positions...they don't usually let them get in the books anymore. Our children don't really know about them, as you know, so it, it has made a difference. Well, you get these books with the all-white pictures, you see, and this is the congress, and this is the this, and this is the that, well, you see, you think, well, I couldn't be one; you know no Negro could be those things. Negroes don't be...and that's what we're trying to get away from now--the idea of our children being aware of the fact that there are certain things that we can't be, like maybe I'm not good enough or I couldn't be a certain thing. We want to be able to receive books where people of our race have been shown to have been elected into certain offices and to have held certain positions, and they were able to do that, so so can we. So these were the persons that could actually be found that...these were the persons that could be found. We began to look all around, trying to see who would be willing to be presented, and these were the persons. Of course, I mean, some of them had to be encouraged to the extent that "yes, you're just as important as a white"... "I'm not!" "Well, why not?" Till in the final analysis they finally said yes, I will. So that's really the way they come about. In a state meeting, then, they were considered among the body of the people, while they still were considered by the whole states...by all the people. It was discussed them in the state meetings, then they were taken to the local centers and talked about over again, and their character was, you know, examined. They wanted to know just what were they like, they want to see their backgrounds and what-have -you, because it was important. And then all the centers accepted the fact that yes, these would be the persons that we would like to present. And they were. We began making preparations for their presentation.

Q: Is it just a coincidence that all three happened to be women?

A. Yes, yes, 'bout all I can say is yes, because we regretted not to have men. We thought we would rather have men, but these was the persons that was willing to offer theyselves, and they were the only persons that could be used. As I said this thing is new, brand new, and our people have not had much encouraging over here before, and they been so badly intimidated and things, they just couldn't...they weren't able to venture out into these areas. But now we, it won't be any trouble now. We can have people now for lanything we wants them for. Their interest has been stimulated to the extent that they're willing to move in now by giving 'courageing and volunteered and other folk comin' in like you people. That's done something, you know. I can think of each person whom I met, who I had a chance to talk to, is doing just a bit more, they're givin' me a bit more courage. That's right. They do somethin for you, just because.... Well, you'd have to be here, you'd have to actually reckoning with what the things are like, but this thing is pretty rough. If you could recognize the fact of what we've actually been doing, you could understand. I trust my people so much 'cause I thought they ought to have more courage, they ought to move in. Then you think about what these people been doing all day, you have to share with them a little bit. I don't tell them that because they'll wind up packing up even more, it's true. I think our people have actually...I think they've done well. Really, I have, I just have to say it. I don't pat myself on the back because I was attacked first and they had the rest of my courage. I never got it back. I always demanded some (inaudible), always. But that was sort of easy for me because that was just like me anyways, you know, I was just like that. The other persons watched me and encouraged me. There was another minister, for instance, who lived in the same city I lived in there, and he's a Baptist, has a Baptist church, and I said to him, "Why can't you do something? You look like you could do something. Of the people here you have the greatest opportunity, you just going to have to do something. Why can't you?" So I keep on discussing on and on, and one day he said, "Well, frankly speaking, maybe you might not understand. Whenever I think about doing something, and there's many a time I do, I just feel myself raising up from the ground, from the earth, and you jst can't do nothing without your feet on the ground." After a while people feel, you'd be surprised, you know, because things have been pretty rough, and there's somethngs happened that you people don't even know about that are actually, you know, threw our people in the complete background when it comes to having courage to facing issues. This morning, well, particularly Monday morning in the parish after these people going out to arrest our children after I gone through all these crises I gone through so they can have this consideration, they wasn't able to move into the school building other than me leading them in. You know, I just had to lead them in. I'd rather not to go in, I didn't

have a child to risk, and you know. The people think of me here and it would actually cause more frustration for me to go in than it would on their personal goal (tape broken here) ...but I actually had to go into all the classroom, even after going into the hall I had to go into each classroom and say, "This is your place, now you'll be all right. You will be waited on with courtesy." But each room I had to go in. It's been pretty rough here. We think about down the river here, been the hanging place for a long time. See they have a river between here and (inaudible) that's been the real hanging place - regular hanging place for people over a period of years, where they take people to kill them. And they tell me that there been so many people killed there, and that's something I need to check on, I need to talk to the F.B.I.'s. Down here somewhere supposed to be what they call the "blue hole", it's the hole water doesn't have no bottom in it, can't find no bottom, and there many, many person has been killed and put into this blue hole. It really needs to be checked, It oughta be checked out, you know, really. And not long ago we had a boy, that were taken, that would have - that were working in this center and around, and he were taken down, I can't tell you the boy's name for the moment, but some of them downstairs could tell you. And this boy was taken out to this place, and they were going to kill em - this same hanging place - because somehow he gotten away from them, but otherwise he would - they would have kept up this thing, and he would have gone into the blue hole. So - it's been pretty rough, it really have. People have gained a lot of courage recently - (inaudible) - it have given them a lot of courage.

Q: How are people chosen for the State Executive Committee? Let's see, there are three of you from the whole Congressional district, right?

A: Right.

Q: Is there some sort of meeting of all the people in the district to elect a state - committee people? How does it work?

A: Yes, all the people - oh yes, yes, all the district, they elect the state people, sure. That's the way it's done.

Q: You weren't just elected by the county?

A: No, no, no. No.

Q: How do you feel about something like the Congressional Challenge...?

A: Well, I feel pretty good. Look like things are working pretty good now, in our favor, I can understand, according to the information I can get. We're feeling pretty good - well, pretty good. We're encouraged more now than we were at one time. Look like things going to be all right. We think we gonna be able to go through with it, that's what we really feel. We will be planning to go to Washington - that's August fifth now, I believe. A good number of people from the state going to lobby and to do various things there,

and we're feeling good about that job. We're saying that we're...we're going to have to win, and we're going to win. We're saying that we can't lose. That's what we're saying--as I hope that we will win, and we're putting forth all effort that which we can, and we're saying that we're going to win.

Q: How do you think people would feel if the job were defeated? Do you think it would be a major set-back?

A: No, I think we've gone far enough now to the extent that we're not going to stop for anything. We just feel like we'd have to start all over again and take a new shock, and we feel like this might help us to know how to work a thing even if it don't matter. We could know all of our shortcomings and all of our mistakes we made, and we could step over them next time, and we could get over into...and we'd be able to do even a better job than we did in the sense that we're better trained than we were this time. No, we're not going to lose courage. We...we're not just going to turn around anytime. No. Nothing happening now will stop anybody. I've had people say here--I've heard two or three of them say, if anything would happen to me--they trust there won't--but they will take my place, and we've got men who have already consented, you know. We know that we...somebody walking around...it would be just like when President Kennedy were killed. Within thirty minnutes someone would just walk in, and everybody understands that, you know. Somebody would walk in my footprints, and tha's the deal of the whole thing, because if my going away or something happening to me would stop things, well, we would in fact not have gotten things to where they actually is. So somebody'd move in. Somebody has already committed themselves. So... and we've all committed ourselves to the challenge. If something happens as to why we are defeated, we will just take a new start. No.

Q: What kind of a new start?

A: Well, I'm not sure. That's what we have got...that's what we have to find. That's what we have to think about. That's what we'd have to find, because wed have to start all over again in a sense from another direction...I'm not sure what. That's what we'd have to all...we'd have to all get together immediately in a state meeting and decide together the next step that we would take, andthat's our intention. That's our aim. We know that there's a possibiltiy...we're not saying that we really know--we're not feeling any guarantee now--that we will be able to win the challenge. We just...we feel like we will, but we won't be thinking of giving up. It won't do any--to us in the sense of, you know, affecting us in any sense.

Because we know there's a possibility of winning or losing. We know this. We understand that. And it's good too, because if we didn't, it would be just like, you know, getting shot by a gun, because...but we know that there's a possibility of either thing happening. But we won't...we're saying that we won't be affected to the extent that we will think of stop carrying on. We'd just want to stop and adjust ourselves and take the next step in whatever direction we need to take, that we might be able to keep going and keep going. We've gone too far now. We've gone too far. We just feel like we are out in the middle of the stream now, and we've just got to go to the other shore, so we might not be able to get a boat or a raft, but we're going to get something. And that's the way we feel. We're not giving up. We're not giving up. We might set ourselves out more than we did at one time, but we...we going to set ourselves out. We won't sell ourselves out. We'll never get careless anymore. We don't expect to get careless. That's one of things we talk about in this county. Once we're competent at this thing, we won't at anytime become careless anymore. We'll hope not to lose our relationship between white and Negro, you know. For a long time people in the North, they just say, well, and they read about things, and they thought, well, undoubtedly this couldn't be real because nobody to do this...anybody...this bad. It couldn't be; it's just too much. But they'll realize that these things are really happening. They've come down here and stayed with us and lived with us and actually experienced these things, and they feel very much indebted to us because they know they should have helped to do some of these things a long time ago. They feel guilty, and well, we know that they are guilty, but we're not worrying about their part of it. We're just glad they were able to find themselves before...at such times as we can still do something about the matter and help somebody. And we don't ever expect to lose our relationship with people who think on us, and I know they don't about us, and with that, well, we'll be able to keep going. But for a long time we had no direct communication with the North. We just say, well, you people just always thought about us that we were people, that we were people that you could respect, that we were human, that we were entitled to some consideration, but you never did see us get it. They say we ought to have it, but how would we get it other than with some help. Somebody would have to come and awake us to the fact that we were entitled to it and help us to accomplish this thing. This is the thing that you are doing now, you know, and we know that it's late to even start this sort of thing, but this is late, but think how nice it is to start it even now, so we, we going to... And everybody that I talk to, everybody that has a connection with me, thinks just like I think. I'm voicing the same...the sentiment of the people of the South through this section which I am the direct leader for. That's what they say, and I say that when the Ku Klux Klan comes...the Klans came here

last Saturday. They wanted to...they went to a cafe that had been desegregated. They went...uh...everywhere they knew that we had done just anything at all, they went there. They thought this would frighten us. They knew the schools were opening, and they mentioned the fact that they were. They threw out pamphlets where they could be gotten, and those such things. They thought maybe this would bring fear, and there were times when this would have brought fear. We just said, well, we had thought to register our children in school, but we can't now because the Ku Klux Klan has been here and has put out their leaflets and...you know, they're ready to move in, so we can't do that. Maybe they set us back a couple of years, but we were more determined to register our children than we ever was, and en route to the school this morning we mentioned the fact that the Klan had been here and that they thought that they were going to prevent us from doing the thing that we were going to do this morning, but if we had to carry them along with us-- their elbow in one arm and the children in the other, we're going to register our children. So that's how determined the Negro is down here now. I know that you would want to know that because it's important. Other than these determinations, we wouldn't be able to move into these new avenues, no matter how wide they're open, and even with the things that I might have done to enable the doors to open for my people, they'd not have had the courage to move in because the whole thing would have fallen back into my lap. Had the children not gone to the school and registered our children, all the things I've done would have been in vain...had been the only way. They would have said here that the Negro don't want to do anything, and it's just a matter of the preacher here wanting to raise hell. He wants to be stubborn. We open the cafes and things. Should they not go, they'd say that the Negro don't want to do anything, but that the preacher just wants to be raising hell, but they have not allowed the white man to say such things about me. The things have not fallen in my lap at any time. They have stood there by each thing that I've tried to lead out for them. We have been able to accept the fact that it was the best thing that we've done it together, that we've moved into all that, we've sat down together. Should we try doing anything, everybody discuss it to the final point that everybody decides yes, we'll do that. Everybody...everybody, and we do it, and then it's everybody's program, not letting people say that "We wouldn't have done certain things, but he fooled us and we didn't know what we were doing." We want a movement where everybody's moving together with everybody's consent, and you can't stop any...you can't drag...you can disperse if there's anybody that don't want to do a certain thing, and there has never been any dispersion because it was everybody's plan. That's one thing that we can appreciate about this movement. It's everybody's plan, working together toward one common goal.

Q: You already said that at one time the party sold itself out. What did you mean?

A: No, I think about Negroes as a whole. I wasn't thinking about the party; I was thinking about Negroes, just Negroes in general, being weak and inexperienced and all those sort of things and, you know, a man could buy year-old clothes, you know, and anything. You know for an awful long time, we didn't know we could be bought out or anything. We say oh yeah, these are good folks; work you all year, take everything you have, and maybe you have made a farce of yourself, and they take everything out, and then when Christmas comes, they give you a Christmas present and then lend you some money, you know, and you come out \$500 in debt, and they say well, I didn't give you a clear receipt, or I'll lend you another \$500 and so on. You know, those kind of thing when you didn't know what money was and... (inaudible). But we say that we've got to stand together. We're going to do things together, and we're also saying to our people that we want to be emphasizing the value of the vote. It's just as much or more important to know how to handle the vote as to get it...than it was to get it. It's dangerous if you don't know how to handle it. We, we going to be moving into...(inaudible)...in our meetings, and we're going to be discussing the idea of the vote and how to handle the vote because as you know, it can be more dangerous, you know...you can be worse off with it than you can be without it if you have it wrong, as you know. We must move, and we must be able to move into the precinct which is the very first headstart of the whole thing, and where the...the resolution and whatnot for the congress and places is...the counties and the polls and those places--they'll be going to, I mean, the county and the state, and if you didn't get in on those sort of things, you know, you just lost the day. Talking about voting on something, you're just voting on something that somebody else already passed, and you either vote for or against, but see, you still haven't got nowhere. We, we're gonna...we hope not to miss the mark. We want to start at the very roots of the thing and simply follow up. You know what I'm saying. You know, if you miss your precinct meeting, and just vote on the issues that were passed in the precinct meeting and have gone on to the county and the state and been accepted, that's still the white man's idea, and you still haven't done nothing. You can't vote on anything then but his idea because you didn't help make it. You still hasn't gotten nowhere. You've worsted yourself than you bettered yourself. You're then voting for or against the thing that he has made, and he's always going to pass something on his own favor, you see, and those things, so... We've got a big job.

Q: Do you think that the vote is the answer to the problems down here?

A: No...in part...partly.

Q: (inaudible)

A: It's...it's...it's going to play a large part, that's true. It's going to play a large part, but it's not going to be the total answer, you know, to the problem. We couldn't possibly think so. No, until we would be able to get...no...over a period it will be...well, I don't ever think it will be the total answer. But it...over a period it will play, you know, in large measure...you know, it will come to be this semi-answer when people can be elected of our race into all parts of the government and we can... come in power, and we will be able to elect people into different positions, people who are proper to go into positions, that will do things according to and for the benefit of all people, not for just certain people. And so it will be...it will be a semi-answer, but I won't say the direct answer because there's a lot of things that will have to go along with the vote, not just the vote. I wouldn't think...(inaudible)... In any country, but not only down here, but up there. I don't think. Would you?

Q: I'd have to agree with you.

A: Up...down here...even that's true down here, because we could go to California right now if we could, couldn't we, if we wanted to. I'm saying that we have now the worst crisis that I've known about at any time, and ordinarily there has been no criticism about California as it relates to what's been going on down here in these sections of the South, not in any sense. People think, well, California... if you're in California, you're somewhere, but we actually have problems...not only here. We know that our problems have begun seeming greater in, well, they've been more open...they've been more open really, but I don't know. I tell you, in spite of the white man in the South, I respect him for this. There is one thing I can respect him for. He has been honest. I respect him for being honest, and I can't respect the white man in the sou--in the North for being honest, because he hasn't. In most instances I mean, they cover up and sham over and all, and we have problems everywhere the same...the same sort of problems. They may be in a different...in another manner...you know, in another direction, but I'm saying...the man down here has said he don't like Negroes and he...(indistinguishable)...the white man down here. You don't have to worry about the white man down here. You know where he stands. He's not to be questioned at all. You know where he stands. He'll tell you where he stands. He's not a hypocrite. He's just a sinner. The difference in the white man in the North and...(indistinguishable)...it won't matter who it is. Whoever it is. I'm talking about the person who is involved and the person who is responsible, is who I'm talking about. If it's me, I'm responsible, if it's me. He'll be honest. He'll tell you just where he stands and just what he feels

any and all things, but the white man in the North, he plays like he...he's hiding a rock in his hand, and...he don't care who sees him chunk it, he'll just chunk it. He'll just chunk. You know he don't like you; "I won't share my school with you, and I don't like you, and I don't think you should have it; I think that's good enough for you." But the white man in the North, he'll play like he'll give you the same type of job he'd give...well, not only, but he'd play like he'd give you the same type of consideration that he'd give, and that he'll think about you just the same as he does about the other people, but just underneath that he doesn't, and he knows he doesn't. And these are very open problems that come up down here in the South. They have shown up the whole world. The South now has shown up the North, the East, the West, the...everywhere. Everywhere has been shown up, and other things come in until these problems really aris---arose down here to the extent until they just become open problems and they just stirred up the whole world. They was not shown up so much so as they are now, but they're shown up now. It's not too much better either...you know, from another angle, but you...you just turn the corner and you'll find that maybe here it didn't look pretty good, but turn the corner and go in the back, and there you'll find the same sort of a problem. And it's true.

Q: Why do you think that there have been riots in the... in Chicago, and Los Angeles and New York, and yet not in the South?

A: Say that again?

Q: Why do you think that there have been riots in Los Angeles and Chicago and New York but not in the South?

A: Well, people haven't had the courage to face the issue. See, the people have been fooled that they see...they've been getting a lot of courage up there about...through hypocrites, and they have been getting a lot of courage. They're ready to face the entire thing, and when they find out they're being deprived, they're ready to raise all kinds of hell. But the people down here, they don't have that kind of courage, you know, you know. They just haven't been able to face these issues, and I don't know, maybe they just hadn't. They just haven't, because they've been in the background, and they're just...they're just waking up down here really. Now they're getting ready for them. For instance, in Stonewall a couple of weeks ago and a half when...what happened? There was some incident. I don't know what...oh yeah...this...the volunteers came in-- they were visiting each other, and one Negro boy came to the bus-stop in Stonewall with a white boy, and they began picking on them and messing around with them. And they came out and finally jumped on the boy and...uh...about

in about 10 minutes there were more than a hundred Negroes on the street with bricks and balls and some of the other things they could see to fight with, and the whites all moved out and scattered, and they dared not draw one breath, and they didn't, so I came down and got things quietened up and got the people out of the streets, so that night the whites began driving through the Negro quarters at night, maybe five or six cars, and they'd come back and there'd be maybe five or six more. There'd be ten or twelve cars, and they'd add on to that and there'd be fifteen cars, and then there was twenty cars, and it kept on till there was forty cars, and so they checked with me and wanted to know what to do now. "What can we do? They're over here in our section, and we're going to have to defend ourselves and our homes. What can we do?" I said, "Take care of yourself, and we'll move them out, and whether or not...whether or not they have to be moved out again." And they went through the town shooting up at us and saying, "You so-and-so Negroes, come out, come out!" and shooting things off, and those Negroes came out with bricks and bars and guns and things and tore up every car and run everybody out of the country, and guys are in the hospital now, but nobody ever mentioned it. They don't even tell nobody they've been hurt. Nobody even knows they came over there, and I said that "If everybody had gotten killed, there wouldn't nothing have been done, and there wouldn't have been no question. If everybody down here had gotten killed, you'd have just been dead. You had no business over here whatsoever." And they stay there all night long, and the next night...(inaudible) They didn't tell the sheriff or nobody about...(inaudible)...told the sheriff that "It goes for you, it goes for anybody who'll crook, who'll (inaudible) ...and the best thing for you to do is get out of here and go on back to the highway and go back home, because we've checked out that we don't need nobody," and when in the history of life have Negroes said and done those things down here section of the country? They haven't ever done it. They always take it low. But their interest and their courage have been created through persons who come down here and have given them courage--the volunteers and different people, and something has happened to them. They'll recognize the fact that they are individual, they are human, they are intelligent, and they're entitled to consideration and respect like other people, and they're saying they're going to demand it. But they didn't recognize the fact that they were important here before, but Negroes in the North felt all the time that they were important, and they felt that they were being considered all the time like people felt that they wasn't, and when they found out that they had not been, they started raising hell. They demand the consideration that they're entitled to equal with other people and (inaudible). Now they're starting down here.

Q: Do you think there will be more violence before there is less?

A: It depends. It would depend on the reaction of the white man down here. If he will give the Negro the consideration that they're entitled to, then there won't be more, but certain things that they're going to demand. They have decided not to be pushed back any further. They're taking a stand. They don't expect to be pushed back anymore, and they won't be pushed back anymore, and neither do I. We hope there won't be violence. We think...we think very much in the sense of non-violence as long as possible, and if it can exist, you know, where people just won't be pushed back too much or too badly intimidated. We won't accept too much of it.

Q: Non-violence is a tactic rather than a philosophy?

A: Well (chuckle)...(inaudible)...don't put me on a spot! So that's it.

Q: Okay.

A: That's it. (end of one side of tape 2). So it is our hope...we hope that we can maintain the spirit of non-violence. We do not really expect to be violent other than in the case where nothing else will work. We would expect this...we would expect this to be the only alternative that we have, however. We do not just expect to move into violence, you know, in any sense where it can be helped, but in a case where it can't be helped, well...it just might be the only thing.

Q: Are you familiar with the Deacons in Louisiana?

A: No, not too much.

Q: Do you know what the group is? That it's a defensive group?

A: Yes.

Q: What do you think of an organization like this? Would you approve of a...a Deacons Association in Mississippi or would you rather not see such a thing arise?

A: I don't think I'd want such a thing to arise. I think I'd rather not.

Q: I'd like to ask you about when the FDP was first formed last summer. Uh, why was it decided finally to go and create a new party instead of trying to work through the old parties? What sort of different questions and answers that were thrown back and forth in deciding, and what were the factors that determined the formation of it?

A: Well, uh...it seems as if...the original party was

formed as a survey party. It seemed not to have been considered for the people as a whole, and I think any party ought to be formed by the people, for the people, and I think that...and we all think that. It seemed as if the regular Democratic Party was organized mainly for less for certain people, but the FDP felt in terms--people felt in terms of maybe organizing a party that would be for the people, that it would not be a discriminating party, a party that people could be a part of and feel free, regardless to color, kind, or creed, or what-have-you, and with that we thought it would be important even in Atlantic City where...the white man walked off and he would not be seated. We thought, well...and it was for the simple reason, it seemed to me, that we held--for the reason that we thought it should be a party for the people, a party that was organized by the people, for the people. In fact, our people have not been in the position to elect or to help to organize any kind of party anyway, and that's...number 1, that's our first reason: we think that...a proper party would be organized by the people, not by a certain race or group of people, but by the people, and that wasn't true with the original party, and...the Freedom Democratic Party is...it has been organized for the people. Anybody can become a part of it. We do not discriminate...

Q: ...peace...

A: Yes...in any sense with anybody, so anybody can become a part of that party. Yes.

Q: Did you say also that the party was organized by the people or more or less by the group of people that formed it last summer?

A: Well, we...we think of it in terms of being...being open to be considered by all people, yes. Because there were no gates shut. All gates were open, and when we think in terms of the regular party, there were some gates that were open, and certain gates that were closed on certain sides, so we did not think in terms of closing any gates. We rather left all gates open...for all people, but that was not true with the original party. So we thought...if...this party could be on the nice...a party that would respect all people of all races, we thought it would serve the purpose for which we were organizing it to serve. Whenever any party becomes narrow enough...narrow-minded enough to start closing the gates to...on certain sides to certain people and all that, I don't think it's worthwhile anyway, and many more thought so. We thought in terms of a party with all open doors to all people, regardless to color, kind, creed, or...nationality. Regardless to what you have... There seemed to be a party that is even concerned about people...I mean, the most comeliest person that you could recognize. It seemed like it was...

like it would maybe be able to elevate people who---they hadn't forgotten about people either. That's one thing I can appreciate...the idea of it...it is to do. They haven't forgotten about people. Stand them on their feet and let them know that they're important; they're just as important as anybody. All they need to do is stand up and be counted. But the regular party did not do that. It did not go into nooks and corners to seek...to try for the lost sheep, but rather it was different. Am I saying anything that you...that would be interesting to you?

Q: Yes, very much. Uh, how much do you feel it's necessary for the party to be militant?

A: Well, you say how much do I think...

Q: When you hear about it much in the national press, it's talked about with CORE and SNCC and is called one of the militant civil rights organizations. Do you feel that it is a militant organization, and if so, for what reasons is it militant?

A: Well...uh...yes, I guess...to...a pretty good degree it is. Well, I think in terms...of it being thrown off on...to an extent by other parties and other people because...for the very reason that it...it is what it is, and when I say the Freedom Democratic Party is doing for the people the such things that it's doing, it's being able to recognize the fact that all people are important. Uh, yes I think it...it is militant to a degree. And for the simple fact that it is...more or less a build up of people who is of the different organizations, I think in these terms if we're now working and fighting for...so... Yes, to a pretty good degree and...for some of those such reasons...it would be considered... Am...am I saying anything?

Q: Yes. I've got one more question. When you speak of the Movement, do you think of it as the Civil Rights Movement or as something that ties in social issues...

A: Oh, even larger.

Q: Oh? Is it?

A: Yes.

Q: In what other sense?

A: Well...even being...let's see if I can...see if I can use the terms that I want to use... Because I think in terms of not only breaking down the barriers, but when I think in terms of a party, it helps to have a tendency to rule and direct...you know, in addition to the breaking down of barriers, it has a tendency to help...it probably

will have a tendency to help to rule and direct and to... be the part of law-making and...forming various things as need to be formed as relate to the building of these states of powers, because we know that when you think in terms of a party, this is something that...has a lot of weight and has a tendency to...have a lot of bearing on a large percent of the country as relates to law-making and what have you. But...well, we said that...the question was do we think it's even more...raise you question again.

Q: Do you think that...

A: You say is the Party civil rights or is it...

Q: Is civil rights part of the Movement, or do you think that the Movement deals with other issues?

A: Other issues. Other issues as well. And quite a few other important issues as well. Yes.

Q: Do you think that the Movement elicits any support from what some call white northern liberals because of the tying together of all these issues, such as Vietnam?

A: I've wondered about that. That's been a big question on my mind. I wonder about that. I really wonder. That would maybe be a question I would need to ask you about. That's something I've thought about, whether or not, but it loses me there. I...well...

Q: Something like the McComb statement on Vietnam...you know, in the FDP Newsletter there was quite a fuss about...

A: Yeah, I believe that it might have a tendency to take away the...(inaudible). It seems to me that after we think, you know, about the things that has been said and done, it seems like it might have a tendency to take over a little value. Yes...I would think so. But not to a large degree, I don't think.

Q: Uh, I want to ask you a question about the state executive council. How is the chairman of the executive committee...how is the chairman of that chosen? Is it again by the consensus of the community or just of its own members or what? And what kind of a term is it?

A: For instance, like...

Q: How many years?

A: Like a year...one year.

Q: And do you know if Mr. Guillott is planning to run again?

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A: Ummm...

Q: When does it expire?

A: I would think so. I'd have to check that date because I do so many things sometimes I forget...you don't know how many things I do. I can go back and always pin-point these things, but there's a lot--you know what I mean, if I kept up with everything in my mind, I'd have to have a head as big as one of these desks, but...yeah, I, I would think he would.

Q: The reason I ask is that around the state we've heard a lot of discontent with him as chairman of the party, and I wondered if this was...

A: Well, no, not really...not really. I think that when you come to the final analysis that most people would think that he has done a pretty good job. He, he would get good respect, and frankly speaking, he has done a good job, I can say that. He has pretty much of the know-how and he's.... he's quite capable to do a good job. When it comes to really going to special places and to facing special issues as relate to issues, he really knows just what and how to beat them and...and I...everybody in this section of the country whom I know about would 100% want his reconsideration along those lines.

Q: Were you one of the delegates to Atlantic City?

A: Yes.

Q: Well...we heard one story to the effect that the people in COFO, which I guess was mostly SNCC last year...chose the people who would go to the convention before the state convention--the national convention before the state convention--because they were worried that if it were left up to the convention itself that too many NAACP types and (inaudible) would get onto the slate. Do you know if there's anything behind this at all?

A: Oh well, you'll find in many instances--I may not be answering you direct--where you have more than one movement going on, and most of them--all of them, not most of them--all of them always want to gain recognition. For instance, we've had one or two--where there are four or five people in the race, we run the race, and I'd like to be the one to get to the end first, so that's always kind of natural. Maybe I wouldn't...maybe I wouldn't...maybe I'm not saying a lot about what might happen--I may not want to, but I'm telling you this, and I hope you understand what I'm saying. Where there is one...more than one person running on the race-track, everybody's going to run just as fast as they can to get to the end first. Every-

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body would like to win the race, so that's true where you have quite a few organizations, and that's the thing that will bring the friction between them...most times and in most cases and places, for one would wish to get to the end of the race-track, and he may be able to say, "Well, I won the blue ribbon in that race." So that happens, so...I mean, you might find in some of these cases some such thing might happen, but I would not want to go into that in detail because...

Q: Is it necessary to say withing the rules in such circumstances where you're trying to win the horse-race?

A: I beg pardon. Yes, it's good to stay in the race, but...

Q: Within the rules...

A: Yeah, within the rules, yes, and that's why we emphasize staying within the rules. We emphasize that as executives of the different sections. We have always emphasized that and different organizations stay within the rules, you know. Yes...but I really wouldn't want to go into this as to what maybe really did...might have happened at that particular time... I would not want to go into detail to explain what... I would not want to.

Q: Well, we've been here quite a while. Thank you very much, Reverend.

A: You're welcome. You're welcome.

END OF TAPE