

# Comments by Clergy

(Continued from Page 1-A)

a largely unspoken general agreement that we must at all costs keep our community a desirable place to live?

DO WE NOT really enjoy the freedom from group conflict only by excluding "different" groups? Why are we so threatened by "other groups"? Why are our agreements and policies about keeping our community as it is so rigidly set so unwritten, so unspoken? There is in our midst a collective unconscious. What lies behind this? We are, all of us, people of a double inheritance. On the one hand, we have a great spiritual and moral heritage, and on the other hand we live in a particular sociological community.

Spiritually and morally, we are the heirs of a noble tradition of defense of human rights and respect for human individuality. Our troops, safeguarding the admission of Negro students to the Little Rock High School, our armed forces and their allies in a war to safeguard the Four Freedoms, our United Nations won another war to free the slaves, and our fathers' blood shed for this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Our Bible says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and in Christ there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek.

In a very real way we identify with this tradition, we are proud of it, we believe in it, it is a part of us.

YET, ON THE other hand, we find ourselves in a particular community with particular attitudes, "standards," conventions. We find them here, yet we are here in part because they are congenial to us, and we to them. Most of us live by these. Why did we do so? There are many good reasons. In all honesty, ours is a community of people of above-average education, fine homes, good everywhere could enjoy the same privileges. We have thought of homogeneity in a sense of "neighborhoods," shifting racial and minority groups. This stability, too, we have desired, and this we have all helped to preserve, by common consent and often spoken consent. And the fact that we are not an island, that indeed many changes are constantly taking place in the constituency of our community, does not alter the fact that we like to keep it as unchanging, and want to keep it that way.

AND THIS is our problem. This is our conflict. A problem which each can see within himself, but must be dealt with there. We are people who are genuinely indignant at the Southern republicanism of the Supreme Court ruling, yet we are anxious to keep our own schools as they are. We are people who thrill to the words of the Great Emancipator, yet who allow a public attitude which tends to prevent our realizing from selling to people of minority groups. We are people who honestly seek to be Christian, yet who create barriers against the newcomers of our day. There is nothing simple about this problem.

A good school for our children is one of the things of permanent value we can give them. Real values are not lightly to be sacrificed. One does not go out of his way to look for neighbors from different cultural, social and religious backgrounds.

THERE IS a deep-seated conflict within us. We believe in freedom for all, yet we guard instinctively and jealously the privileged situation we temporarily enjoy in this community. A situation where one's conduct is at sharp variance with his deeply held principles, is a dangerous one. This is the chronic human situation which the church has called "sin." But it makes itself known in particular situations. We are speaking of one of the most dangerous and cancerous of our time.

One of the most ominous aspects of this problem is its hiddenness. We conceal it from ourselves. Do we not do this when we say "there is no problem here." It is repressed because it is "too hot to handle." Is that why we hate to think of it, refuse to admit it, and reluctantly speak of it? We are people who are concerned about our own integrity, our own honesty. Can we see ourselves as people who are heirs of the Christian tradition of respect for the individual, and at the same time people who find themselves in a privileged community?

Can we see how understandably our quiet collaborations on restrictions have resulted from this, and recognize the inner conflict which accompanies this? Let us have the faith to look at this, and the courage to talk about it.

From many of our pulpits on Race Relations Sunday, February 9, the sermons will be a further discussion of this subject. We are hopeful further that the coming year will see groups in our respective churches coming together for

THE REVEREND RUSSELL L. LINCOLN, Birmingham Unitarian church; Barton N. Lloyd, St. Stephen's Episcopal church; Ralph Stribe, Jr., West Birmingham Presbyterian church; Robert J. Sears, Franklin community church; John W. Wagle, First Baptist church; Emil Konitz, First Baptist church; Reginald J. Dobson, Methodist church; Mackay Taylor, Northminster Presbyterian church; Leonard L. DeWitt, Christ Church Cranbrook.

Also Robert D. Dewey and Carl Baird, Birmingham Congregational church; and Thomas G. Phillips and W. E. Snodell, St. James Episcopal church.

The membership list of the Birmingham Council of Churches was furnished to the Eccentric by its secretary, revealing the 18 churches included in this information.

There are eleven local and nearby churches whose clergymen, acting as individuals, have signed the above statement. Each is a member of the Birmingham Council of Churches. The letter of Rev. Sears, Council president, revealed that the majority of the signatories originated within the Council.

The Eccentric felt obligated to obtain statements from the clergymen of the non-signing churches involved. Each was offered the opportunity to make known his position.

These seven churches include: First Methodist and First Presbyterian of Birmingham; First Presbyterian of Birmingham; First Presbyterian of Birmingham; First Presbyterian of Birmingham; First Presbyterian of Birmingham; First Presbyterian of Birmingham; First Presbyterian of Birmingham.

WITH BUT TWO exceptions, the others declined to make a comment for publication.

Rev. W. D. Fendley, of the First Presbyterian church of Troy, said: "Although I am naturally concerned with the injustice of segregated housing, I feel that I am not well enough acquainted with the Birmingham situation to sign the statement circulated among individual ministers in Birmingham. I just moved to this area ten days ago, Jan. 21, 1958."

"However, I did circulate copies of a reprint from the Cleveland Press which shows without a doubt that property does not necessarily devalue when colored move into a neighborhood. Added copies may be obtained without charge from the Detroit Council of Churches, on request."

The Eccentric repeatedly tried to contact Rev. Ralph Janka, of the Big Beaver Methodist church, but was unsuccessful. However, our columns are available at any time for his statement on the subject.

"Interpreting 'Flight' are familiar to many."

Mrs. Moon said two more speakers completing their year to year plan will be announced later.

**Town Hall Raises Price for Season**

The Birmingham Town Hall board said this week in order to continue to present only speakers of the very highest calibre at today's higher costs, and with reduced seating capacity in the Birmingham theatre, since new seats have been installed—Town Hall tickets have been increased in price from \$12.50.

The board said the price of \$12.50 is the customary one for similar series throughout the country.

Former Birmingham residents, the Thayer M. Reynolds of Lansing, announce the engagement of their daughter, Marcia Lynne, to Burt C. Hagerman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Burdett Hagerman of Grosse Pointe Farms. The engaged couple are students at Michigan State university.

**Students Engaged**

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## B'ham Church Council President's Statement

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the official statement made by Rev. Robert J. Sears, pastor of Franklin Community Church, who is president of the Birmingham Council of Churches. Rev. Sears is referring to the statement relating to racial discrimination signed by a number of local and nearby clergymen, which is published on page one of this section of the Eccentric.) The statement, in full, follows:

By REV. ROBERT J. SEARS

Thinking Christians are agreed that there is probably no more crucial test of democratic and Christian principles in our day than that relating to the acceptance or rejection of people in our communities on the basis of race.

Because this critical problem is nationwide it is only natural that it would be a normal concern of the ministers represented in the Birmingham Council of Churches. At the regular May meeting of the Council the program period was devoted to this topic, especially as it relates to this area.

AS CLERGYMEN, we identify ourselves with our community and know its sins and shortcomings to be our own, so it was in the mood of soul-searching and confession that the program was presented. Most present at that session felt we need to take some united steps to let the community know our convictions.

With many of the Christian people of the area, highly aware of the economic interpretation of the topic, it was felt we ought to offer the community a theological orientation: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

We are firm in our belief that the church-going people of the Birmingham—Bloomfield—Franklin area look to the clergy for a clear Theological orientation on all crucial problems of our day.

THE CLERGY, in return, feel upon them the duty to make the Christian faith relevant for our lives here. In a day when Godless communism is a threat to the free world, we can do no less than express the full Christian gospel.

To this end a statement was developed within the Council of Churches on this problem.

At today's meeting (Feb. 4) it was decided that each church action, individual clergyman, of course, may release this statement to the churches for study. It was understood that individuals in the group, speaking for themselves only, might sign this statement and release it to The Birmingham Eccentric, so as to make their stand known.

IN WORKING on such a statement the members of the Birmingham Council of Churches do not feel that they are doing anything heroic or unusual, but rather, they are preaching on the subject of interracial brotherhood in our own pulpits many times.

Every major denomination represented in this group has made

similar statements at a national level. As recently as December 10, the meeting of the National Council of Churches issued this statement:

"Racial discrimination and segregation, though repeatedly condemned, still prevail within the church. We must severely criticize such un-Christian attitudes and practices while recognizing at the same time our own failures. It is our conviction that the leadership which the church gives when Christians stand up in the midst of strife to be counted on the side of a more just and brotherly America, may God grant us the fortitude of those who understand, and the courage of those who love."

It is our sincere hope that the Christian people of this area will continue to look to their clergy for the proclamation of a gospel made relevant for critical days like these.

1958 are there practicing residents for this year's show, to be held Sunday, Feb. 16, at 1:30 p.m. The cast consists of 200 boys and girls plus several guest stars, in 20 acts ranging from single exhibitions to several production acts.

Recreation board member Rol and F. Rose said, "Costuming, lighting and the choreography of the show indicates that this year's show will surpass the original production of last year."

**LOCAL TALENT CONSISTS** of girls and boys of six to 21, members of classes at the rink. Said Rose, "These young people show daily improvement in the skill and grace of skating."

An estimated 1150 people attended last year's show, for which seating was not adequate. To accommodate the audience expected this year, the show's producers are installing extra bleachers around the rink to seat approximately 1200 persons.

Tickets are on sale at the rink or at recreation board offices in the municipal building.

**Refer Statement To Real Estate Board Members**

Speaking for the Birmingham Real Estate Board, Cal M. Chamberlin, recently elected president, yesterday said: "I am aware of the contents of the document signed and released by certain Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Troy and Franklin clergymen, and will present the subject for discussion at the next monthly meeting of our Board of Directors."

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**At GOP Training School**

Discussing 1958 election campaign plans with Michigan's Senator Charles E. Potter (right) in the Senator's Washington office are Oakland County Young Republican Club President Charles Gilbert, (left), 680 Arden, Birmingham, and Don Barber of Pontiac. They were among 18 Michigan Young Republicans in Washington, D. C., at the Young Republican leadership training school Jan. 27-31.

**This & That Medal**

(Continued from Page 1-A)

"The people upstairs are very angry. Last night they stamped and banged on the floor way after midnight." Landlord: "Did they awaken you?" Tenant: "No. As it happened, I was still up practicing on my tub."

Nelson A. Rockefeller, whose grandpa amassed one of the nation's greatest fortunes, is the city's greatest asset, then Nelson Rockefeller has received a medal from Mayor William D. Coughlin. President Richard M. Nixon, if personal possession of money is a good political asset, then Nelson is just as good as Averell—but voters are more impressed in how Nelson would handle the public's hard-earned dollar. They already know that Averell wants to spend plenty of it.

An argument on the subject of gastronomy is being waged between U.S. Senate and House chefs over who makes and offers our statesmen the best bean soup. Since the beans used by both chefs comes from Michigan, our Congressmen just sit back and lick their lips.

State Senator Elmer R. Porter claims that Michigan loses about 15 millions annually because State employees waste too much time when they consume coffee. It's not right for our 20,000 employees to take these too frequent coffee breaks," argues Porter, "it's just a habit."

**In Training Course**

MARQUETTE Mich. Judith Gondek of Birmingham will spend the next seven months at Dickinson county hospital, Iron Mountain, where she will obtain nursing experience, instruction and practice. Miss Gondek is enrolled at Northern Michigan college at Marquette in the practical nursing program.

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