

Fight Against Segregation

Making Progress: U.S. Minister

"How many bubbles do you find in a bar of soap?" The question is one asked of Negroes who want to vote in Mississippi. It is never answered, Rev. Martin Luther King told 1,000 persons at Holy Blossom Temple last night.

Progress against racial segregation is being made. Dr. King said that since the 1954 Supreme Court decision 17 states and the District of Columbia have made efforts to integrate on the basis that separate is unequal.

"South Carolina, Alabama and the Great Sovereign State of Mississippi are the only three states that haven't made an effort," Dr. King said.

Attitudes on integration range from extreme optimism to extreme pessimism, Dr. King said.

One points to the achievements made in civil liberties and the other sees the presence of federal intervention in Little Rock and the revival of the Ku Klux Klan.

The correct attitude, Dr. King said, is to take a realistic position and avoid the extremes. "I agree that we have come a long, long way and I agree that we have a long, long way to go."

Dr. King spoke of justification of rightness of wrong. He gave an example that was not discarded so long ago in a religious argument justifying segregation. "Man was created in the image of God. God is not a Negro. So a Negro is not a man."

Dr. King said that some people argue that only time can solve the segregation problem. "Time is neutral," he said.

"Time can be used destructively or constructively. We must help time and the time is right now."

"I discussed the (segregation) problem with President Kennedy." After talking with the president, Dr. King quoted him as saying: "We'd like to show you around the White House."

"We went into the Lincoln room," Dr. King said. "It was a great experience."

Dr. King said that on the mantel in the Lincoln room was

a sign stating that it was in this room that President Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation.

Dr. King told the president: "I'd like to see you come back in this room and sign the second emancipation proclamation."

President Kennedy asked me to submit a document to him for the second emancipation proclamation. "It will be ready in a month," Dr. King said.

Dr. King was asked how Canadians could help to establish equality for Negroes in the South. He answered that Canadians should be sure that their own backyards are clean before they offer their help. He also said financial help is needed and that a person can help just by making public statements condemning racial segregation.

"We have faith in the future. We shall overcome," Dr. King said. "One day we shall be able to say: Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, free at last."

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Churches Accused of Discrimination

The Sunday morning hour of worship is the most segregated hour in the United States, Rev. Martin Luther King, the Negro integration leader, said yesterday.

The Georgia minister told a meeting sponsored by the Holy Blossom Temple Social Action Committee that the church was still the most segregated institution in the United States. The meeting was attended by 60 persons, including clergymen and members of civil liberties groups.

In the south, Mr. King said, there were still many white churches that would not allow Negroes to worship as a matter of policy. In the north, segregation was de facto—the churches did not have a policy of discrimination, but they did not go out of their way to welcome Negroes.

Dr. King said the Southern Baptist Church, the largest in the south, with 10,000,000 members, endorsed the U.S. Supreme Court's stand in 1954 which called for integration of schools. The predominantly white denomination condemned segregation as morally wrong.

"The problem is that the noble pronouncements of ecclesiastical council filter down all too slowly to local congregations," said Dr. King. One minister present thumped the table lightly and commented quietly: "Hear, hear!"

Dressed in a conservative grey suit, Dr. King adopted a casual stance as he invited questions from his Negro and white audience. What were the effects of last summer's embattled Freedom Rides? Dr. King, an advisor to the Congress of Racial Equality, which sponsored the rides, said they had resulted in pressure being put upon the Interstate Commerce Commission for an end to segregation in inter-state travel.

At that time, Attorney-General Robert Kennedy asked that the rides be called off so they would not embarrass the President in his forthcoming talks with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Dr. King said he replied that this would be done if the ICC passed a ruling with teeth in it forbidding segregation on buses and in terminals.

The attorney-general said the ICC could not move fast enough, but such a ruling was soon to follow, the speaker said. The total effect of the non-violent demonstrations against segregation has been to give a new sense of dignity and achievement to Negroes, Dr. King said. They have also educated whites, although the whites may not have realized it, he added.

When the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People organized a fight to have the courts declare segregation illegal, it was condemned by southern whites as a Communist group.

"When Negroes started boycotting buses, these whites said: 'Why not go through the courts like the NAACP did?'" Dr. King explained. And with each new form of demonstration — lunch counter sit-ins, Freedom Rides — the whites have urged demonstrators to return to the previous form of protest, he added.

But Dr. King did not feel the non-violent methods of U.S. Negroes would work as easily in places like South Africa, where democratic processes had been so reduced they were almost non-existent. "At least in Mississippi we can hold a meet-

ing and get it out to the press," he said. "There's no freedom of speech or assembly in South Africa."

Was there much support for the Black Muslims, a Negro movement in the United States that suggested violence to fight segregation? The Black Muslims made up a very small proportion of the U.S. Negro population, Dr. King said, and most Negroes were satisfied enough with the results of non-violence. But he warned that the conditions that inspired the Black Muslims to violence had to be eliminated.

Dr. King said the Kennedy Administration showed a far greater understanding of the U.S. Negro problem than the Eisenhower Government, but he added that it was still too cautious.