

October 7, 1959

Rev. Charles Smith
352 Chestnut Street
Lexington, Kentucky

Dear Charlie:

Please excuse the extreme tardiness of this letter. There are extenuating circumstances, but of course not a good excuse for thanking you in October for your hospitality in July! Please thank your wife also for the pleasant dinner and Sunday afternoon.

I have written notes to Don Armstrong and to Bill Reichert also. Don certainly handled that press release successfully while I was there. I wonder, if he is sufficiently active, whether he would not write or help write the Lexington stories for the CORElator. I do not currently know which person in Lexington gets Jim Peck's deadline notices.

As you may know, the deadline for the fall issue was set for October 8th. I am sure, however, that a story reaching us next Monday or Tuesday, October 12th or 13th, would still have a very good chance of getting in. On any dramatic actions such as sit-ins and picket lines, arrangements should always be made to have someone take a number of pictures. Not only can these be used in the CORElator, but, if received here immediately after a project with the news story, we can now have mats made and send story and mats (pictures) to our press list of about 125 papers, most of which are Negro weeklies. We are having excellent luck in getting our releases carried. This is, of course, a prime method of getting the Negro communities throughout the country to know about CORE -- and this in turn is most helpful when we attempt to organize new local action units.

If you have any ideas or contacts for organizing new CORE locals in areas accessible to you, please write me. Field work plans at this point of the year are still fairly flexible.

As I said when I was in Lexington, I was enormously impressed with the quality of the people who belong to Lexington CORE. The high degree of intelligence may lead to splitting philosophical hairs in discussions of tactics; but it should also mean better analysis of what was right and what was wrong about any given project. It might be important to stress that it is often impossible to anticipate all the plus values and minus values before a project takes place: analysis

October 7, 1959

after a particular action is carried out is both more specific and more productive of unity than trying to decide every possible effect before the action is tried. This does not mean that we should rush into action without prior discussion and planning. It simply means that we make and carry out a specific action plan -- recognizing in advance that in this imperfect world we are apt to run into some unanticipated negatives. We can then try to avoid the same trouble the next time, remembering that probably something else will be less than perfect this time.

I am most anxious to learn what is going on and what is planned. The Miami Action Institute and Miami CORE carried on sit-ins at Grants during the past month. Some of these were very well attended. At the moment, there are no sit-ins in Miami. Jim Peck has been in touch with the national offices of both Grants and McCrory's here in New York, and there was some indication that a meeting of dime-store managers in Miami might materialize to discuss opening all the counters at once. I am personally skeptical that this will happen as it has been a one-by-one process in such places as St. Louis and Baltimore. Also, I tend to feel that a successful meeting of the managers would be more likely to occur during frequent sit-ins by Miami CORE: their present state of waiting for manager action without carrying the sit-in program forward actually takes the pressure for decision off the managers. Without pressure, they naturally tend toward "business as usual."

Did anything happen when the new (Woolworth?) opened? This kind of opportunity gives CORE action a newsworthiness which is important pressure-wise. Woolworths is, of course, so enormous that the corporation as such feels almost no economic pressure no matter what: they could close 50 stores without affecting their profits by more than a tiny of a fraction of 1%. But the individual manager does feel concern: his rating depends upon how he manages his store. Also, these corporations do not like to create a bad public-relations atmosphere. When CORE groups expose discriminatory practices, they are bringing this kind of moral pressure upon the companies. Also, at least in the national offices, a good many of the executives may be on the side of integration. We definitely have that feeling about Peck's contact in McCrory's.

I wonder whether anything is developing toward another ministerial position for you. For your sake I hope so. On the other hand, of course, I should hate to see Lexington CORE lose you. If you are to be in New York at any time, let me know as far in advance as you can: it is often possible for people to stay in my apartment for a few days. Although there is no room for children, there would be room for you and your wife. Remember me to your father. And thanks again for driving me around and giving me such an excellent dinner.

Sincerely,


James R. Robinson
Executive Secretary

June 29, 1959

Mr. William O. Reichert
Chilgan, Lexington CORE
125 North Arcadia Park
Lexington, Kentucky

Dear Mr. Reichert:

I spoke with Rev. Charles Smith at the Conference-Convention about coming to Lexington in July. It now appears that I shall probably have to be in Atlanta, Georgia July 22, 23 and 24. As I can get a ride down there, it would be cheaper for me to travel by bus from Atlanta to Lexington than to make a special trip from New York, and I am wondering whether arrival on July 25th or 26th would be of any use to the Lexington group. I realize that summer is often a difficult period, and I would not want to make the trip if a great number of key people will be absent. If two or three are gone, that probably makes no difference as that is apt to be the case almost any time in the summer. Let me know what you think of the late July idea. I think that the 26th and 27th might be time enough. Right?

I did discuss your earlier letter with James T. McCain at the Convention. Incidentally, I do not think either of us regarded it as a personal criticism of McCain. And I think we both agree that it is important to take a new group into action as quickly as possible. At the same time, we probably did make an error in this case, not in taking the group into action, but in conducting a test which was larger than necessary and in leading from the test to negotiations too soon. I am glad that you pointed this out to us as it will be helpful in the future. For testing, several small groups entering at different times give much less cause for alarm to the managers, and their several reports also give a fuller picture of just what the situation is in any given store. A report back either to the group as a whole or to a project-planning committee should quickly take place, and then members should be selected for approaching the manager. The group discussion should provide a clear statement of what the negotiators are to do, and no negotiator should come up with a completely original suggestion in the middle of the negotiation without making it clear that this is a new idea for which the group is not responsible and which would require group approval before CORE would be committed to it. The same statement can be used to parry an unexpected proposal by the manager.

I think that Lexington CORE should know that we appreciate receiving any criticisms of our work, even if the criticism seems completely unfounded. It is only when we get a chance to discuss matters that we are able to discover where we have gone astray. On matters of tactics, we are sure to make mistakes which often become evident only by hind-sight. It is then necessary to point them out so that we do not make the same mistake again in a similar situation. At the same

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W. O. Reichert

Page Two

June 29, 1959

time, we must realize that, while mistakes in tactics are inevitable, they are not necessarily as important as they may seem at the time. The whole idea of CORE and its RULES FOR ACTION is based on group planning and group action. Most of us in CORE recognize that an individual may occasionally appear who can take almost perfect action time after time. Yet, with the exception of an occasional saint, the effect of any one individual on social change seems negligible. We live in an age where only group action is apt to count. A good average of right choices over wrong choices is all that can be expected. If this is combined with a genuine development of nonviolent feeling within the group and within its members, the effect is often astonishing.

I said above that I prefer criticisms expressed even when I feel they have no basis (in this case, I did find a definite basis), and the reason for this is organizational rather than philosophical. It is far easier to clear up a situation you know about than one you do not know, and an unjustified criticism often leads to a careful explanation and better understanding all around.

Do let me hear about the dates in July. If the earlier dates I had discussed with Rev. Smith are better, I shall try to make those instead.

One thing I think that members of Lexington CORE should remember: the same tendency I have: I stress all the faults in the national CORE set-up because these are the areas where changes need to be made, but, in the process, I sometimes lose sight of the really significant progress we are making.

Sincerely yours,

James R. Robinson
Executive Secretary

P. S. I enclose one extra copy in case it would be useful for Rev. Smith or some other member of the Steering Committee.

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

March 9, 1959

Mr. James R. Robinson
CORE, N.Y.
Dear Jim,

This is the first chance I've had to write since Nashville. CORE is going very well here. We are still working on the 4 variety store downtown. I think we should have some fair results to show for our efforts in a few weeks.

Unfortunately, I have been forced to cut out my active participation. Two doctors, not having wanted me to avoid all excitement the next 6 months. Not only that but I can't smoke my pipe (a tragedy for me) or do any physical work.

Since no one on the steering committee wanted to take over the chairmanship, I continued in the job. Last Monday I presided at a steering committee meeting and the excitement of the heated discussion that took place that evening was almost too much for me. Since then I have had to give away further active participation. We had

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UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

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general meeting Thursday night which I did not attend. I think that experience convinced everyone that an active chairman is a necessity. At the moment I remain chairman but the Rev. Don Anderson, a young white minister, is seriously thinking of taking the chairmanship over until I can take it back again. If he does we are set; he is a fine man and has all the attributes necessary to make CORE function well here. I will retain my position on the steering committee if Don becomes chairman and will do anything I can to help keep CORE going. We have lots of spirited members here and I am convinced we will have no serious difficulties so far as interest is concerned.

We continue to recruit members from the more conservative, white sector of the community. This presents some difficulties but it is the best way to operate in this town. I am amazed at the number of whites who have become interested in our radical approach to the racial problem. A visit by you to Lexington would be a very great help, Jim. I hope you can

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I'll attach a list of our officers. I enjoyed meeting everyone at Nashville; it was a valuable experience for both Chas. Smith and I. Sincerely,
Bud

Lexington,

Ky.

Dec 1st 1959

Dear Tim,

I think that these 2 clippings from our
lost Lexington Core News letter may be newsworthy.

The Unitarian who ^{organized} ~~was~~ the poll is also a Core member, and
took the poll with Core's knowledge, consent and of course
encouragement.

The Jerry's Drive - In concerned is near campus,
and also has an ordinary restaurant. Service to colored people
in cars has not been a problem, but service in the
restaurant to negro patrons was somewhat irregular, and seemed
to depend on the waitress concerned. Now all 'mixed' groups
are promised service to see how it works. Hopefully,
full service will follow. 'Mixed' groups of Core members
and friends are of course using this facility to keep
it open.

Sincerely,

Joy Query (ms.)

Corresponding Secy.

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Leesington
Nov 24th 1954

Jim,

The local group discussed the possibility of holding an institute here, but decided against it for the following reasons:-

- 1) Most of our membership is university affiliated - few people would be in town in August.
- 2) The difficulty of a meeting place - neither the University or Bible College would be likely to accept us.
- 3) The situation in the city is sensitive - and some members felt that we may jeopardize our own situation by bringing in 'outsiders'.

I am sorry that I have to write thus to you, but know that you will appreciate the situation.

Sincerely,

Joy M. Query (Cones. Secy.)

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COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUALITY
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

OFFICERS.

CHAIRMAN: WILLIAM O. REICHERT
VICE-CHAIRMAN: REV. CHARLES SMITH
TREASURER: SALLY STILES
RECORDING SEC: BERNICE LOTT 617 Freeman Blvd
CORRESPONDING SEC: AUDREY RICE Albert J
STEERING COMMITTEE: REV. DON ANDERSON
" " REV. W. A. ~~ANDERSON~~ JONES
" " REV. HOMER NUTTER
" " MRS. JAMES ANGELL
" " MISS JULIA LEWIS
" " LEEDY BLACK
" " AL. E. LOTT
" " SAM STILES

I'll send you the name of the
new chairman when we find him.

tel #20
5544 60061 037

Washington, Ky.

June 2, 1959

PARBLOKE

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Dear Jim,

As you know from your conversation by phone with Chas. Smith, he is intending to attend the convention. Sending him is a real burden on us. We had to take time out from our important activities to raise money to send him. As yet we are not certain that we will have enough. But I suspect we will. Chas. Smith will keep you informed as to his coming.

I'm sorry I have been so lax in my correspondence with you. My wife just had a baby and has returned home from the hospital, leaving me with much work to do. This was in addition to grading final exam papers.

I have wanted to say a few things to you for some time but haven't had time to write. I'd try to say them in this letter. But first, about the convention we next year I am afraid we are not able to go through with it. Next year we can probably take it or but

(2)

appears out of the question.

We have been having the usual difficulties of a new organization, and it has taken a lot of our energy. Our real problem has been in the Steering Committee. One way it was a mistake (maybe) to have created the Steering Committee. At least that is the way I feel right now as chairman. It has made my job twice as difficult in that I have had to manage both the general group and the smaller steering committee. The members of the committee are "intellectuals" of one kind or another for the most part. All of them are articulate, opinionated, egotistical, energetic, sincere, intelligent, highly-motivated people. Naturally they are hard to control. Lately it has been very difficult to get anything of a positive kind done because the committee tends to go round and round in making decisions like a dog chasing its tail. Some want immediate radical action now. Others want to be a O.H. in the

we were organized. We have changed the situation by infiltrating these restaurants. We discovered that direct negotiation with restaurant owners usually leads to their refusal to serve Negroes. If we say nothing, however, and simply end in a group now and then, we can establish a policy of non-discriminatory service.

What I now have to say is that between you and I, Jim, and is meant to be helpful to you. Jim Cain was a great help in getting organized here. But the net result of his activities has been to slow down the achievement of racial equality in Lexington. Jim did what CORE did in northern cities; he urged us to take immediate action without analyzing at the result of that action would be. When Jim arrived here we asked what our first move should be as a CORE group. He suggested we go as an interracial group to the 5 & 10's

206 C. Coopers town,

Lexington. Ky.

J. Pack Esq.,

C. O. R. E.

N. Y. C.

July 22nd 1959

FROM COKE

00094-00095

file # 20

Dear Mr. Pack,

I am sorry that we had sent you
no news item for the correlator - we had felt
that it might better wait until we had a
'finished' situation regarding the University Village
Restaurant - but enclosed is what might be
termed an interim report. I hope that it
is of some use.

Sincerely,

Joy M. Query,

Corresponding Secretary

The Lexington Core group has managed to peacefully infiltrate some 5 of the restaurants catering to student trade around the integrated University of Kentucky. Other restaurants have however, refused service to our small mixed groups. One of those which caters almost exclusively to students has been the scene of two sit-ins: The first on July 11th was preceded by a briefing by the sit-in-leader on non-violent demonstrations. Ten Core men (5 Neg. and 5 white) entered the restaurant at 11:00 a.m. above the verbal protests of the manager and sat quietly at the counter for two hours - meanwhile the group number swelled to 18 persons, all of whom upon leaving left a 25¢ tip for the waitresses. The group left at 1:00 p.m. when the manager said he was

Lexington CORE stages sit-ins

Over a period covering about three months the Lexington Core group has managed to peacefully infiltrate some 5 of the restaurants catering to student trade around the integrated University of Kentucky. Other restaurants have however, refused service to our small racially mixed groups. One of these which caters almost exclusively to students has been the scene of two sit-ins: The first on July 11th was preceded by a briefing by the sit-in-leader on non-violent demonstrations. Ten Core members (5 Neg. and 5 white) entered the restaurant at 11:00 a. m. above the verbal protests of the manager and sat quietly at the counter for two hours - meanwhile the group number swelled to 18 persons, all of whom upon leaving left a \$25 tip for the waitresses. The group

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October 29, 1959

Rev. Charles Smith
352 Chestnut Street
Lexington, Kentucky

Dear Reverend Smith:

Bill Reichert has written Jim Robinson a brief note. He mentions that you have gotten the Negro ministers to bring economic pressure upon the dime stores. But that is all he says. Would you give me the details. Has any printed material been issued (if so I'd like to get copies)? Do you have the support of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance? Have you any reports of recent negotiations? What I'd really like to know is everything that you have been doing. This is the kind of information which may make good news paper copy. And as you know this encourages other local groups and makes it easier for our field secretaries to organize new groups.

Mr. Reichert also mentions the action of the Unitarian Social Action Committee in taking a poll of University students. Do you have the results of the poll? The manner in which the results were used?

I hate to ask you for so much when you are on the firing line -- actually making the changes come about. Best of luck.

Marvin Rich
Sincerely,

Marvin Rich
Community Relations Director

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