This is a tour done on Monday, July 22, 2013 by Ed King. It is a civil rights tour.

REV KING: Yeah. Nobody even gets curious, but that's the way we are as human beings. I used a phrase last week, I have forgotten what it was, and then realized, yeah, I have never even thought about where those words come from.

Okay. This was put here maybe ten or twelve years ago, and there's a civil rights tour of Jackson, in fact, there are three or four, and we'll see if five will go around approximately. I guess number one would probably be over by the capitol.

This was put here to mark a major event. We will be talking about it back and forth, and this will be very Methodist and even Galloway focused what we are doing. In 1963 Medgar Evers was leading a movement here. The Woolworth sit-in was the first major step. Birmingham had been going on for three or four weeks. We were supposed to be coordinated with Dr. King for Easter and church visits start. They did in Birmingham. The hope was if you could get black and white church people talking together you didn't have to march, you didn't have to demonstrate. And Martin and Medgar would say time was not the issue. The time was that we begin now saying we will change something someday. At that time most people on the white side, especially the politicians, said there is nothing to change. Everybody is happy in their place. Medgar was pushing the mayor to have a biracial committee to discuss, not with authority to do anything, but to discuss the issues, and the mayor said there is no race issue in Jackson, there is nothing to discuss.

So when efforts of that began to fail we had to move and Woolworth's was the first direct action. Medgar said early on advance meetings and in messages to the mayor and so on, we don't want a Birmingham in Jackson. We want to solve this in another way. That never meant he was criticizing Dr. King. He was moving and planning that maybe there should be a Birmingham here, and that ties in.
Before the demonstrations at Woolworth’s, for several weeks we had been having secret interracial meetings that I had helped to coordinate but working with Dr. Selah, the pastor here, and Roy Clark at Capitol Street church, which grew out of this church and now has come back into it – both of them would recommend church women to meet with black church women, would recommend men – Bob Ezell, I think he’s been dead a number of years – we could use his name. And I think Dr. Selah didn’t even want to know the names if a layman or laywoman found someone else who would go and talk, so we don’t even know the names of some of these people who were real saints. I know the name of some who were not saints. But black men who were doctors, a few, a few lawyers, businessmen met. Dr. Selah was pushing back. Dr. Selah is the former pastor of this church. All of that got nowhere.

The Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference today is the outgrowth of that. But we had no ecumenical cooperation between Jews, Catholics, Methodists, and so on. And we certainly had nothing that was interracial cooperation. You would have thought the clergy could have been quietly meeting for years – and they were in most places. So we were moving to establish that.

And then a day or so before Woolworth’s, probably the Thursday or Friday before, we actually get some of the top white religious leadership in the state to come to a black church on Farrish Street. This is where time goes. You can drive down Farrish – the Methodist church is there and the Baptist church very close. Those were two of the four black churches in the state – I mean, in the city that would even allow civil rights meetings. Most churches did not want to be on the line, and didn’t want to be bombed, they said, but more they just didn’t want to take a stand.

I have told people, and I mean it, that at the time of Martin’s death, 1968, the only white Christian church he could have preached in in Mississippi was the Unitarians. And then he could not have preached in the majority of black churches in the state.

Question: Why?

REV. KING: The religions said it is our task as clergy, as religious people to help people get through things in this terrible world over Jordan, over Jordan, over Jordan.
Don’t talk about meeting in the Jordan. We have got enough trouble in the waters. We have to look to a different world. There is nothing we can do. You know, we will roil the world here.

We had the demonstrations with Woolworth’s lunch counter – no, that was Friday after. We were telling the church leaders that we would have to start demonstrations of some sort -- probably not mass marches as Birmingham was doing, but we would have to. Most of them didn’t know that Dr. Selah and Dr. Clark were advising us at every step. I was the go-between. They would, you know, send word back to Medgar we think we might be able to do this – no, if you do it that way, even the open-minded people in our congregation will side with the mayor.

But this last meeting, we were begging the white leadership, and that was The Leadership, the Episcopal Bishop – young Bishop, our Bishop, Capitol church had -- became a bishop within a year -- and Bernie Law …

(NOTE: AT THIS POINT WIND IS BLOWING IN THE MICROPHONE AND MUCH OF THIS PART CANNOT BE HEARD. REV. KING SHOULD FILL IN THIS SECTION.)

….Who was the key negotiator for the Catholics. He later became Cardinal.

The issue for the church people was if we take a stand will this hurt the church, will this backfire on us, over and over -- I know most of you aren’t seminarians, but it’s there. I knew Law very, very well and he was articulating why the Catholic Church cannot take a stand unless the Methodists and Episcopalians do first. But underneath, the institution has to be protected and preserved. We will have nothing if the institutional, the Catholic Church – but he could have meant Catholic Church universal.

God moves in strange and wondrous ways and while we are meeting in a back Sunday School room in a back annex off Farrish Street this loud knocking outside – well, I have
been in places where loud knocking meant the police. And to even have an interracial meeting -- I was first arrested in Montgomery with SCLC when police raided the SCLC office. And we had moved from the office to a black restaurant next door but it was illegal to eat together. You cannot break bread together on your knees. Well, I thought, isn't this wonderful, maybe the police will arrest my Bishop.

Well, it wasn't the police. It was television people and somehow they had heard that there was an interracial meeting going on. I don't think they could have imagined the Methodist Bishop, the Episcopal Bishop, the Catholic Bishop, pastor of Fondren Presbyterian church, pastor of the Disciples church right across -- that used to be across from Baptist –

Question: Where was the Baptist – a Southern Baptist minister?

REV. KING: Preaching the word of God and doing their witness and putting up barbed wire around their front door or, whatever.

Okay. People are in crisis and Medgar suggested -- no, Medgar didn't go to that one, that was one I was doing. And I was saying, well, the press is here. The pastor of the church, Black Baptist but not Southern Baptist, said he would go and talk to the media on the steps of his church. He felt he ought to invite them in, but that he would take care of things but he couldn't do it for more than about ten minutes, and could we come up with a statement. And I was just thrilled, the statement had to be but blacks and whites are talking together. And who are they? By God, Bishop Franklin. And if those people can talk together others should.

They appointed Bishop Allin from the Episcopal Church to be their spokesperson. And he went to the door and said that -- didn't say who was there, trivialized stuff, let the black minister do most of the meeting and he got back inside. And the black minister held off the press while the Bishops sneaked out of the back door down an alley to escape. And all of these people were pro-integration, racism is wrong, that sort of thing. You know, I wish the TV had been able to photograph Bishops sneaking away. But they told -- probably they told almost no other clergy. The laity certainly didn't know.
We start demonstrations. They rapidly escalate to the Birmingham scale, faster than we had thought. We at Easter had thought we would do a few things and then maybe by fall we would be able to have marches. At Easter I came to Galloway and we were going to try to do things as Martin was trying to do things in Birmingham – pick a few churches which will let people in. And Dr. Selah had said, well, of course, the Methodist Church is open but there are problems and wait on the church visit until mid-June. That would give him time to talk with laity but the church by being the church, it was open. And he and I knew he was fighting to save the jobs of some of these twenty-eight young ministers in the conference, white ministers, who had signed a pro-integration statement after the battle at Ole Miss. During this time there are still 15-20,000 troops in Oxford.

At the end of May – well, by mid-May Birmingham has had riots; blacks throw bricks and things like this – not the children who marched. The President sent 30,000 soldiers and stationed them at bases in Alabama so that if things didn’t cool off he would move in. So everybody afraid of what the stakes are. That was reasonable.

The second thing Dr. Selah was pointing out is that the Annual Conference meets at Galloway church the end of May and let’s get beyond that because there is a fight to elect delegates to the General Conference. There was a fight among the laity, pushed by the Citizen’s Council, to get rid of a progressive layman who had been head of the laity for years, so they were trying to target and make sure that the General Conference delegates on the clergy and laity side were very conservative. And Medgar agreed with me on dating. We had postponed the church stuff until mid-June.

After we have had three of four days of mass meetings at Woolworth’s, well, that night the mass meeting went from 200 to 600 or more. The next day, and it’s the last week of school, the next day at public schools, at the black schools students sing freedom songs on their lunch break. The next day the police go to the black high schools and junior high schools and tell the principals shut up your students. Of course, all the principals told the students to shut up. And the police are outside with dogs. Everybody has seen dogs on TV. If you are fifteen years old and the police are telling you to do something and they have brought their dogs, the students just sang louder. And then decided it’s time to march, without the leaders at the top planning it at all. The students do march.
The first place we will stop, this is a kind of a stop, we will go down to the fairgrounds which became a concentration camp. Things became very, very tense each day, and, finally, a court injunction is issued here by a city judge, prohibiting everything that we were doing – marches, picketing, so on, lunch counter sit-ins, anything that had happened in Birmingham, and then even prohibited kneel-ins and visits to churches where you are not welcome. Kind of a loophole was if you are an invited guest. Galloway comes back later on that point so remind me of the guest point.

So the injunction is appealed by attorneys with the National NAACP. And they ask a federal judge here in Jackson to set it aside or to support it, and if he supported it within three hours we would go to the federal court in New Orleans. We got as far as appealing to the federal judge here, a judge who used the N word when he wasn’t describing people as coons or as blacks trying to register to vote in Canton and had formed a line and he said, “Blacks acting like chimpanzees.” He was appointed by John Kennedy at the request of Jim Eastland. So politics and faith is underlying all of this.

Medgar has to decide what to do about the injunction. Again, that had happened in Birmingham and Martin had moderately disobeyed it but he had almost concluded the cycle of what he was doing. But it was just a local. Ours became a federal injunction. Once the judge has it and the judge said this is a serious issue of law and order, stability, the Bill of Rights, etc., and he would need at least until mid-September to think about it and then set legal hearings after the summer was over. But we were stuck then basically under federal orders and anything you did then the federal government should come in and arrest you. That’s the kind of politics.

Let’s look back in around inside just a second. And how many of you know what the building across the street is?

Answer: Used to be the parsonage, is that right?

REV. KING: No, it was built for the Bishop. I don’t think the parsonage was that grand. I am not sure, it may have been and they just enlarged.
REV. KING: What are the two strange items in the corners? Chinese lanterns. The Archbishop of Beijing had no control of Galloway Methodist. Why would we have Chinese lanterns? I am not sure they are Chinese. They may be Japanese. I think they are Chinese.

Those were gifts to Bishop Galloway who visited China and Japan as a Bishop in the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, ME Church South, major concern with world faith and deep concern that missions have an evangelical message but that we not be rice Christians, which basically we are doing right here with the people we serve on the streets. I mean, if they want to talk to us about Christianity, hallelujah, but our witness should be we are giving them food and not we will give you rice if you convert. A major figure in what becomes the ecumenical movement, World Council of Churches, and things like this, grow out of the cooperation of the mainline churches just before the First World War. After the First World War there is even more cooperation. People have seen civil war. And, of course, our church is named for Bishop Galloway.

Medgar decides how to face the injunctions. Well, I will talk more about that when we get to Tougaloo and then talk more about the sign.

REV. KING: Okay. We will be riding past things which I occasionally will quickly point out.

First Baptist Church is angled over from Galloway and the new annex building we are working on. And they were the most powerful church in the state, so the place you needed to get people agreeing to talk, this sort of thing, and the pastor of that church, Dr. Hudgens, so the most powerful pulpit in the state. I mean, the Episcopal Bishop or the Catholic Bishop or the Rabbis don’t have that kind of influence. The Governor, Ross Barnett, taught Sunday School at that church, so quite a symbol. And when we finally did do church visits that was the first church chosen because it was the most
powerful. And we did think it would be closed, and then we slowly moved to other things.

Let me change directions just a bit, and then head down to the fairgrounds.

Leaping ahead to 1966, we had mass march, people coming down on what was called the Meredith march. In June of 1966 Meredith was shot while trying to prove that it was safe to register to vote. So it was not a very effective demonstration, but it did show that loony tunes were still around.

After Meredith was shot the general civil rights leadership led by Dr. King said, we have to finish his walk. And the goal was to have a walk here, 200 miles, but to try to look at the next things in civil rights. We had the right to vote and hamburgers and coffee, and Dr. King wanted to focus on poverty and focus on education, that schools were not being desegregated, and that people were hungry. They might be able to vote and that in many counties where people had been able to vote because of the new law in 1965 they had been put off welfare, and that there was still punishment. And the Nation sort of thought everything was settled after Selma. So we have that, 100 people walking with him through the Delta. But the final rally was here in Jackson and we knew we would have probably 10,000 or more people and we would have the rally at the state capitol where we had tried to march for years. I have been arrested trying to march around this place. The Bill of Rights the president would not enforce because that would alienate too many powerful politicians.

Mrs. Hamer used to say, If I ever got to Washington I would tell them the truth about Mississippi. But when I got there I found out the senators, the congressmen and the president had always known the truth. And then what we had to do was go to Wisconsin, or Wyoming or New Hampshire and work through National Council of Churches, Church Women and others, and, finally, to the men in the Rotary and Kiwanis to let their senators know that they had learned about Mississippi, or Georgia, or Alabama.

So at the end of the Montgomery march in ‘65 Dr. King had a big rally at the Alabama state capitol. We did have the legal right to do that. That summer about 500 people
were arrested here. But we got a court order after that that the next time people could march. The state was saying, you know, we are not going to let them do sacrilege and march here and we were putting federal pressure on. And the state finally came to an agreement that they would have to allow it.

Now some of you are clergy and all of you are interested in church. Sympathetic whites, mostly through Galloway’s laity, and so on, let me know that the state is planning an insult and that the state politicians would not let Martin Luther King speak by the statue of the women on the Galloway side or on the steps, that’s where the governor is inaugurated. And they would let Dr. King speak right where we are. I think that it’s just because it’s the capitol. It may mention that this is where King spoke, and that whites were laughing and laughing and laughing. We had to let Dr. King come to Jackson, to Mississippi, but, of course, he will have to go to the back door.

Stokely Carmichael had started a week earlier shouting black power and damning Dr. King for being non-violent and still supporting integration. Stokely was saying there is no hope, black separatism is the answer. So there is tension between who will say what. But the white people weren’t even paying that much attention. They wanted to insult Dr. King. They might have to be forced to do it, it would be the back door.

I decided not to tell Martin or any of the other people that I could meet with the strategy committee. I had met with them in the Lorraine Motel when the march was planned. I thought if this is known, then Stokely, whom I knew well, and the black power folks would make an incident out of it. The state was looking for some riot or trouble where they could come in. And it was a victory. And that black people in Jackson would feel a victory coming here where a year before several hundred of us had been arrested. We didn’t even get on that side of the capitol. We could only get here. I don’t know whether I made the right decision or not. I think so, but it may take another fifty years before we know what really has worked out here. And I will be sharing some of my kind of stuff as a minister and a Christian with you.

Okay, we will take this one on down. Sixty-five, we were taken to the prison in a cart that you would use for leaves and limbs, stuff like that, still junk. In 1963 over 500 kids
were taken in garbage trucks. I think the trucks had been hosed out. One of them was, supposedly, even a new truck. But Birmingham two weeks earlier had used school buses to take the kids off the streets to jail, which is pretty awful, or it is saying our schools function as jails for most of you people. But Jackson used garbage trucks.

(WE ARE ENTERING THE FAIRGROUNDS AND CONTINUING THE COMENTARY.)

REV. KING: When Medgar was saying there will be a Birmingham if we don’t do this, the mayor said, “Come ahead. I can cage 25,000 black people if necessary.”

(WE ARE MOVING TO THE PEARL STREET SIDE OF THE FAIRGROUNDS.)

REV. KING: Okay. I have something to read from Margaret Walker. Her married name was Margaret Walker Alexander, a great black poet, wrote Jubilee, a fantastic novel about slavery and reconstruction and the memories in her family. And she comes from a long, three-generation or more, black African Methodist family, and very active as a member of Central Church, near us. And she was teaching English at Jackson State and she just was too prominent to be fired.

Here is a poem she wrote in the spring of ’63 called “Street Demonstration” from an eight-year-old who actually had been quoted or heard saying, “Hurry up, Lucile, or we won’t get arrested with our group.”

“We are hoping to be arrested and hoping to go to jail. We will sing and shout and pray for freedom and for justice, for human dignity. The fighting may be long and some of us may die but liberty is costly and Rome, they tell me, was not built in one day. Hurry up, Lucile, hurry up. We are going to miss our chance to go to jail.”

Okay. The city could not imagine that black people here could rise up as they had in Birmingham. It was just unimaginable to white people. And those who said maybe the same couldn’t happen without a demagogue like Martin Luther King stirring up things. And Medgar was very quiet. And Martin couldn’t always be quiet. So I think the city thought it would never happen. And suddenly they have got several thousand black kids. Birmingham only had about 3,000. Police realized Friday school is out at lunch time. It is the last day of the semester and exams. And the police have informants
everywhere. And they had black citizens and teachers who want to get a new building for the library and so you had to do what the white authorities say.

The police put up barricades and police again with dogs and guns at several black schools. And at least a thousand people never got to the demonstration site. Others were arrested at those sites.

Finally, we get people down to Farrish Street Baptist Church where Medgar talked to them about being non-violent and maintaining their discipline and giving any knives or anything that could be a weapon before they marched, good Ghandian style. And they walked out two by two, and only pairs of about a dozen people, five or six couples, because if you went out even as big a group as we are that could be very threatening looking. So we didn’t want to march all 500.

When the first group went out they knew they couldn’t carry picket signs. They had American flags. The police beat them to the ground, took the flags, stomped them in the gutters. And inside the church you could hear the screams of people right outside. And Medgar said, okay, it’s worse than we thought. It’s all right if we call this off. And people said, no. And over and over they would go out in small groups. And he would also say if your father is a school principal, if for some reason you can’t do this, it’s all right. We need some people to stay here and pray for those out there. About 500 people ended up brought down here by police who must have been frightened out of their minds. I mean, just try to imagine both sides. Could you be Lucile, but could you be on the white side and seeing black people act like this, when a hundred years earlier whites had been afraid of a slave rebellion but always said they are too happy to rebel. But there is long history here.

They were brought down here, more men than women. There were two Quonset huts over here that have just been torn down that were used for women and in 1965 one was used for men and one was used for women.

(WIND NOISE.)
(WE ARE ENTERING THE STALL AREA OF THE FAIRGROUNDS. ED IS TAKING US IN.)

REV. KING: This is boys and younger. We had kids as young as ten, eleven, and twelve. The men were put here. There were wooden pieces where the metal ones are now. Yeah, these look like they can be folded out and made into individual stalls for a cattle show or something like that. The men were put here.

There had been sort of daily demonstrations and at the city jail there were already people who had been to another lunch counter, or something like that.

They brought them here. Outside they erected barbed wire, had a search light down on the corner and patrolled the area with guards marching with guns like this and with German Shepherd dogs. I had asked for Medgar to interview people. We would get a few released each day and to try to find out what was going on and at the end. And so I believed everything people told me. And then I would find a particular horror story that Medgar needed to hear face to face.

The police become Nazis. Maybe that’s in all of us and I think it’s particularly in people who want an authoritarian position. But not everyone goes there.

But the police hear the students singing and shout, “Shut up, dogs,” and cursed them. They would find out -- spot the leader of the singing, bring him up here in front of them and beat him with night sticks.

This goes on through the afternoon. They are processing people at some outside things where they have to get names, give you a number. At least they didn’t tattoo the numbers on anybody’s arms.

Late afternoon the sun is even worse. The police have Cokes, water. I went through some of this a week later at this same place -- yeah, a week later. The police brought water for the black students in wooden barrels about this big and only had one or two tin dippers and didn’t bring any Dixie cups. And they told the kids go scooping. And the first few kids scooped it. And they said one man shouted, “Don’t let them use their hands. Make them lap like dogs. Make them crawl.” So they would come out of here
and some of them would have to crawl through the stall. And some kids told me they would come over and shove the kids down in the water. That kind of stuff going on.

I was here a year later – no, I was here a week later and then a year later. So I have seen enough stuff that happened that I believe the stories I am telling you. It’s hard for me to make up stuff like that because I have seen movies about Germany . . .

(Wind noise.)

. . .Demonstration.

Medgar is extremely visible and it is kind of obvious that nothing has to wait for Dr. King. And Medgar is pleading with Dr. King and will he bring Dr. King to Jackson. But the fact that the police knew who Medgar was but that this could happen, people could do this on their own is very significant. Hold this thought.

After Medgar’s funeral, a march of about 5,000 people . . . (WIND NOISE) controlled by the Masons, so the state could control it, that’s where the funeral was. The body was brought back here to Farrish Street to Collins Funeral Home. Mrs. Collins, a national leader of the Methodist Women and she . . . so it was a march . . . South Africa and other places. . The body was shipped by to be buried in Arlington.

At the end of that March . . . pressure from Washington that we don’t want 5,000 people arrested, we have enough trouble with Birmingham. It was supposed to be silent. The last couple hundred people in the march were singing. They were singing “Over My Head,” very slow kind of songs, peace and freedom songs. . . “Before I’ll be a slave I’ll be buried in my grave.” Ladner was leading some of the songs, I think an agitator waiting for her chance to shift from music . . . Then we would sing, “No more dogs over me, no more guns.” And she shifted the next song to “This Little Light,” “I’ve got the light of freedom, Jesus gave it to me, I have to let it shine,” That’s the way we sang it. It was very religious. The most radical verses aren’t even in our hymnal.

But with Medgar at any of the churches we would meet . . . and we would sing, “All over Jackson I’m going to let it shine, all over Capitol Street I’m going to let it shine.” And here the police are, probably 500 of them barricading Capitol Street. We crossed for
two blocks on Farrish. There are still about a hundred there at the funeral home. And blacks start pointing at . . . there are only about a dozen police that close to us, and begin retreating back to where there are guns and dogs and fire hoses. And the students and adults start walking towards Capitol Street, saying, “Arrest us, arrest us.” Some begin to run close to Capitol, it was getting bigger. . . . at Capitol Street police finally stop things, and beat people, shoot guns over their heads, this sort of thing.

John Salter of Tougaloo, he was Medgar’s strategy lieutenant, and I had gone up to a black dentist’s office overlooking Farrish Street. Dr. King had gone to the airport and we were trying to get messages to him that trouble is breaking out, you need to stay.

John -- tell Dr. King, and the police see me. Might have stayed in the window. I got out. Saw four rifles pointed at me. And the police charge inside the building, grab me. Salter said, “What are you doing?” So they grab him. I tried to stall for time, thinking maybe he has finished his message to Dr. King. So they drag me by the feet down a flight of stairs, out into the street, threw me into a paddy wagon where I saw people bloody and realize that I could be in much worse shape. And we are brought us down here. And beatings, that kind of stuff we had heard about.

We get here, we are made to lean against this wall. Come try it. If you didn’t stretch our far enough they would say, “not far enough, not far enough, damn you,” curse you, so on. At some point you are going to fall. If you fell, they would come over and hit you with a rod. But sometimes they would come up with a rifle, and hit you there with the back end of a gun – not the pointed end, but the back end.

Hundred degree weather. When we were here the police had Cokes and cakes supplied by volunteer white women who came down to take care of the boys at the front and came down for two or three days serving homemade food, picnic tables right over there. These were people trying to do what they thought was best. Did they know what happened to the black children? No. Could they have imagined it? No. Was there a free press which would let you know? No. We are about losing free press now in this country. But have to say if I was on the black side could I have gone through
that? Some can and some can’t. If I was on the white side but I organized women in my church to help prepare food to take to the police officers? Very hard.

Standing next to me – I don’t think I gave this – we will talk about it now, in the picture was the man with the white shirt torn and blood spots all over it. If they caught you talking, they would beat you again. And it turned out he had come down to apply for a job teaching math at Tougaloo College. That had been set up six weeks earlier and he just got down here the day of the funeral. His interview, I think, was to be on Monday or something. So he attended the funeral and was totally bewildered, how had he ended up beaten down here. And he is still leaning there. I learned, you know, be quiet if the police guard came by. And I noticed that there was a lot of blood still on his face, and then blood clotting, dark black on his head, back of his neck, and horse flies from the stable. And I started to go to him and police cursed me. I took out a handkerchief, I just said I want to wipe off the blood and chase away the flies, and cursed me again, and said, “You will be in worse shape than he is. Turn your head this way.”

And I am ... I was so afraid. Now I had just been to a funeral for my friend. You know, I felt some responsibility that he died instead of us. I could not turn back to drive off the damn flies. Finally, the police pulled me on down to about where the edge of the thing is. They were taking me and Salter and a few of the other people up to the city jail. Said that they were arresting me for disorderly conduct a few days earlier. Well, they could have arrested me any day, and the same for Salter. And there was an occasion where Salter was beaten unconscious, and about a hundred people were arrested the day after Medgar’s funeral.

And I called police and said, call an ambulance, some people have got broken bones and you have got the radio service. Well, that was assaulting the police. That’s what they wanted me for. But I was separated from this man. They said we are going to take you, it will be about a half an hour. I didn’t say let me go back to the man with the horse flies. Then I felt failure and everything like that.

And the damn police guards marching along with their dogs. And one of them just outside the fence area, a small fence, and a bigger one along the highway, and they
would say something, “Well, well, well, what happened today?” And then one of them started whispering . . . (WIND NOISE) And my thought was I will strike him dead. I’ve had all I can take. And this man whispered, “Reverend King, don’t you folks give up now. Some of us in Jackson know the way the colors are trending. (WIND NOISE.)

(BACK ON THE BUS.)

REV. KING: I think Danette and Marguerite Garner, who was the wife of a Tougaloo professor, were the first people arrested. And Marguerite was a member of Galloway church – not for long, about three or four months later. They are at Wells now.

The president of the Tougaloo student body, a black minister, about 25, a little older than the students. He was arrested and several black women.

And when we started the Woolworth’s demonstration we had a new Supreme Court had just ruled the preceding week that people could not be arrested unless they had really done something wrong, and that the sit-ins were legal, but if you did something wrong at the counter you could be arrested but you couldn’t just automatically be arrested. So we thought that the Woolworth’s demonstration would be fairly quiet. Three folks would go stay for an hour or so and that at five o’clock, six o’clock they would shut the store down. It wasn’t open at night. And could you make it that long with no rest, and so on? The volunteers could and people out picketing on Capitol Street, we thought, would get more attention. So they were carrying signs saying, “Let’s talk. We need a biracial committee.” And we knew those people would get arrested, but that was the message we wanted to get out. And we were just sort of testing the new Supreme Court ruling on Woolworth’s. And then the Woolworth’s thing turns out to be the most violent of all sit-ins.

(WE ARE GOING DOWN NORTH STATE STREET.)

REV. KING: I have taught World Religion classes here at Millsaps for many, many years.

This brick building is where the Goodman and the Watkins family lived, a big Galloway family. The Bill Goodman family is still in the church. His father is a major lawyer here
and supporting the resistance. His sister Marguerite Watkins Goodman was a member of Galloway and very active in Methodist Women’s work. And we have to realize that the women for thirty years have been doing things on an interracial basis, especially if they went out of state.

Mrs. Goodman is famous as being a real tough English teacher for freshmen at Millsaps. She was my freshman English teacher; I think she taught Bishop Clay Lee, and so on. She also taught at Tougaloo College. I was going to mention this out there but may as well mention it here when we were passing where her home used to be.

There were very close relations between Millsaps and Tougaloo. Occasionally, when Tougaloo would not have enough faculty or somebody would suddenly in August was ill or couldn’t come, or didn’t, they would appeal to Millsaps, is there somebody who could add a class, we will put it at night because of your classes in the daytime, and that, apparently, had gone on occasionally over the years. But Mrs. Goodman had taught at Tougaloo only a year or so before I had her teaching at Millsaps. I am sure people in the Women’s Society at Galloway talked about it and knew she had done it. Tougaloo would not have been regarded as being a real frightening place, but that is still crossing every line imaginable.

We had had one early crisis with the state in ’54-’55, while the Citizen’s Council and the Sovereignty Commission, and others are developing, and the big political leaders are screaming, “Never.” The University Hospital is on the line, and we are just getting ready to open it and the hospital is put here because in Oxford if you put the medical center there and you need a hospital you still don’t have enough beds. So you needed it to be in Jackson. And the VA had opened a hospital or was in the process and so it was worked out that the VA hospital would be opened to the Ole Miss medical students as part of putting things here. Somebody somewhere in the black community out of Washington was raising cane, Mississippi gets a VA, is it going to be segregated? And so agreements were quietly made, not by Ross Barnett, but by more moderate predecessors that there could be some kind of discreet integration at the VA hospital, so the pattern would be why are there 90 percent black people on this floor and 90 percent white on the next? But that was still violating and starting things. The state agreed that
the University students could participate at the VA Hospital, so there are moderates, but they never organized.

Church, you never got the Catholics, the Methodist, the Episcopal Bishops together. Fondren Presbyterian Church is the steeple down there. The pastor of that church, a white pastor, was very, very supportive of Medgar and the movement; that's the church William Winter attends. And they knew in that church that the big Presbyterian churches were far more conservative. And in that church they stayed members of the National Presbyterian Church whereas most of the white Presbyterian churches here are ultra-conservative and split away over the race issue first. Now they say, no, it was the theology; but it was the race issue to start with.

(THE BEGINNING OF CD #2.)

REV. KING: As I mentioned, in 1966, march through the Delta came to Canton and wanted to camp there overnight and then to Tougaloo the next night and then march into Jackson this street, which was Highway 51 at that time. And the march goes through white neighborhoods—we will see in a few blocks, they are now black—and then turned over onto Northside Drive to go through black neighborhoods, and urged the people join us, join us, join us. And more than 10,000 people did, and we had thought it would be 5,000. But at that point, Dr. King is walking, so it's join us, join Dr. King. And the police actually tolerated things, I guess laughing because he was at the back door, but no attacks on us.

In Canton, two nights earlier, we tried to stay at the school yard. In the Delta several nights Dr. King and his group had been able to set up tents at black playgrounds or playgrounds usually connected to a school. This is June so schools aren't in session. Here, as we get closer to Jackson, the Canton authorities said, “You cannot use the school yard.” It was too far away. People had already walked probably ten, twelve miles. We had to do something. It could be chaotic, and by that time the crowd had
grown to several hundred. And we can’t get to Tougaloo. We don’t want to try to get Jackson people to come up with cars because we said we are going to walk. And Dr. King decides we have used black school yards, we didn’t try to go to an all-white school yard, we have as much right to any public facility, we are a reasonable group. If you, you know, were marching in support of March of Dimes or something, you could have done something. We were not trying to use a school auditorium, black or white, but just the yard. And Dr. King decides we have the right to do this.

The police surround the field, and then Ghandian discipline, Martin and others decide we will go ahead. A lot of women and children from Canton had joined us. This was ’66. And the police attacked, firing tear gas first. And it is more violent than Selma Bridge, but the American public opinion probably had grown tired of civil rights. It had been intense for five years. The media was reporting next to nothing Martin said. They focused on Stokely black power and Martin talked about hungry children, Martin talked about more money for Head Start. And here is a country, for instance, that has no Head Start program because the white mayor and governor, and stuff like that, won’t allow it. The media ignored what he was trying to do with wise, quiet words, and they were ignoring him before Stokely started shouting black power. But once Stokely started shouting that, they just didn’t report anything else that was going on.

The violence here, as I said, was worse than Selma, but it was almost unknown. And I think the American people could have been shocked. Certainly, the network of church people who had supported Dr. King throughout the country would have been involved, didn’t get it.

I guess I have given you something to read about him sometime.

TOUR MEMBER: I have read a couple of books about him and his colleagues.

REV. KING: Bring that up a little later.

Here is the Salvation Army which could not survive staying in Jackson. There was so much violence, so much crime. At least, this is what I have been told. They were broken into so many times they needed to have places where they could provide
clothes to some family who had been burned out, some poor family or something like that, and their warehousing kind of stuff, they just could not function in Jackson.

TOUR MEMBER: They were downtown?

REV KING: They were west – no, south of Capitol Street and near the railroad, down in that area. There are still several service things there, but, symbolically, if the Salvation Army has to leave – but in old days at our church we could always say, “Here is the address of the Salvation Army,” we will pray for you. And, you know, because how can we serve you? And it’s here’s the Salvation Army. And I think they do great work wherever they go. The historic roots of the Salvation Army are in the British Methodist Church and working with displaced rural people who had gone into London or Manchester or Birmingham and no longer had the community network and would drift into men beating their wives and alcoholism, all this kind of stuff. And the Salvation Army, General Booth, was organized out of the Methodist to work on those kinds of problems.

At the Madison County line is some – well, about where that next light is, but it jags. This is called County Line Road. Now they have changed it to Little Village Road. Most of the campus is in Madison County. A few acres would be in Hinds County. Now it is in the city limits, even including the part in Madison County. People will say Jackson can’t expand into Clinton or Terry or all the new areas. Those are even in our county. It can be if the politicians want it and agree to it.

This was a plantation. The plantation home became the administrative offices, over the years, for the college. It is now being rehabilitated.

(WE ARE APPROACHING TOUGALOO COLLEGE OFF OF COUNTY LINE ROAD.)

REV. KING: I was out here on Saturday and people said, yes, we could come. Hopefully, the same person is here. I bring people all of the time.

County Line Road would be a major road whites could use. And for two to three years we never went a week without shots by drive-bys.
This cemetery goes back, was started, and some slaves are buried in there who lived in the community. The church which we will be going in is a functioning church, United Church of Christ, the Congregationalists. And I was appointed here by the Methodist Bishop and Superintendent, both to work as a college chaplain, you have to have special, you know, our bureaucracy covers all of these things, and there’s also bureaucracy for Methodist ministers serving in another denomination if they accept you without making you have to be that denomination. The Methodist Conference was never told that my coming to Tougaloo went through the proper bureaucracy of the Bishop and the District Superintendent.

During the stuff honoring Medgar and the fiftieth anniversary of things.

(REV. KING: There is another marker that was put in on Capitol Street on the site of the Woolworth’s. It is right near where the ramp comes down from the parking lot and the ramp is being removed as they redo Capitol Street. It’s a garden area but has a memorial to the Woolworth people and the Jackson movement.

Have some new technique of putting things in on the back side. I went over to Vicksburg a couple of times for 150th Anniversary of war stuff. I grew up there, and see all these statues of Generals with beards and nobody could recognize who they are, probably not even their great grandchildren, and thinking how odd, and I got put on one of these monuments. So I am on here looking as saintly as possible – clerical collar, helping the victims.

Autographing things for students after he had done a sermon in here.

The Freedom Trail thing goes throughout the state – or will, eventually. The Jackson thing I gave you the map of is just Jackson sites that have numbers and you have to read in the little book.

Now the white family who was here was Boddie – B-o-d-d-i-e. And this was the plantation home. I never disagree with campus black teachers or students, who show
tours, but they always will refer to the mansion up there and, you know, what it must mean that it’s still there. I happen to know the family. The family was losing money in reconstruction. Taxes, property, and stuff was taken over. A school for freedmen was set up here. And the family, some of the family were always proud -- they were Episcopalians -- and proud that their plantation had been turned into a school. And continued to visit the new presidents of Tougaloo, or so on.

I have a friend who died about five years ago, around 80-ish, taught with her at the Ole Miss Medical Center. She had visited here as a child. There was a new president here at Tougaloo. She wanted to meet him, came out, and said, “Now, Ed, I have been up in the tower and talked to the new president. He was thrilled,” and she said, “And can I still slide down the banister?”

Race relations are far more complex than we can usually can make it. And very few black people, or white, here at Tougaloo would ever know anything of that tradition. I hope that Boddie family was ashamed of having slaves and re-evaluating everything, but they were proud of the school.

You can see little spots, about two inches, that used to have little brass things. They still exist, but after Congressman Thompson got the building re-stabilized, they haven’t put them back yet.

Q. And what did they clarify?

REV. KING: People who had donated money, and the money was from the churches in New England. So there would be the Falmouth, Massachusetts Sunday School, or The First Boston Church Men’s Club, or things like that on pew after pew. And I had Ms. Welty out here once and she was just imagining already with those nice names – a few of them would be from up-state New York, and across the lakes you would have Overland, then Beloit College of Wisconsin, which is on Highway 61. As the New Englanders moved west you have this band of settlement from the Pilgrims and Puritans establishing colleges as a model for the Methodists who were establishing colleges. Eventually, they end up in Hawaii, but sailed there. Portland, Oregon is
names for Portland, Maine. And there are a lot of New England names in Washington and Oregon.

When the war started, within a few months of the Union troops moving into Savannah, New England church women moved in to teach and were saying that education is the way to freedom for any people, and these people.

This college, of course, started as a grammar school and, of course, had a high school, and eventually, after ten or fifteen years with those people as graduates began to add things. But it was chartered as a college, university from the start in the reconstruction time, in 1866. And that charter allowed integration and was never done away by the state legislature when the whites took control again because who cares those plow hands are out there. And the students did have to work, had farms here for, you know, seventy or eighty years. School, though, is thirty years older than Millsaps.

Let’s talk a little, though, about the building and kind of New England heritage. I could usually tell because I went to seminary at Boston University, and later at Harvard. I served a church in New England. So I could recognize these New England names all over the place. And when I got here, seeing them all was really interesting. One pew was from the Priscillas of, I think, North Hampton, Massachusetts. Who would the Priscillas be? They are all churches. This was their mission, sending missionary teachers and missionary’s money to Mississippi. Who would the Priscillas be?

Q. The UMW?

REV. KING: The equivalent of the UMW. We might have called that, and we used to say Susanna’s, meaning Wesley’s mother for the wives of clergy. But you are right, that’s where it came from, that much. Why would they call themselves the Priscillas? Use your American History or we will be here all afternoon. What?

Q. Is it an order?

REV. KING: An order? It was just a church group. They don’t use it now – well, some of them probably do. Who is the first Priscilla in American History? And John Alden. Speak for yourself.
Somebody tell us the story. Have we even lost these stories? Even though it’s New England, I heard it in grammar school.

A TOUR MEMBER: I’m from the country. I never heard it.

A TOUR MEMBER: I heard it; it’s just been so long since grammar school.

REV. KING: Yeah. The Pilgrims – John Alden falls in love with Priscilla and wants to send a message to her through somebody else, and she tells him, “Speak for yourself, John Alden.” And they marry. First uppity woman in American History. (Laughter.) But the name stayed.

Okay. When we came to the gate you would not have been able to see because we had to pause. There are two sets of letters on the gate. One is UCMS. That is United Christian Missionary Society. That is from the Disciples of Christ. They ran a school. Remnants of it are still at Edwards, Mississippi. Same thing: They had been formed to teach blacks literacy, and more. And theirs never became more than a junior college. Many of these schools all over the south had to function as high schools, junior high schools because the public schools would not offer schools beyond about the seventh grade and you certainly couldn’t go to the white public schools. On the poverty side of that, there were counties in Mississippi form the thirties into the forties where out junior colleges – Copiah-Lincoln, various ones like this, East Mississippi – that had dormitories for high school students because the local school districts didn’t have enough money to even offer a high school for whites. And you had to come from a family that valued education, would let you go away as a fifteen or sixteen year old. But we valued education more then than we do now. Okay. So that’s one denomination and they merged with Tougaloo late 1950s, somewhere along in there.

Millsaps is a result of a merger of several other Methodist schools, including one in Brookhaven and one in Grenada, separate schools for women. And the history of colleges is a lot of that kind of merger.

The other initials on the gate are AMA. Well, there go the A students.

A TOUR MEMBER: African Methodist –
REV. KING: That’s a good lead. Not quite. AMA is the American Missionary Association. And that’s the overall group that supervised these colleges. So Dillard in New Orleans was set up, same thing, right after the war. Talladega in Alabama and a few others around. And they would each have their own board of trustees, but the overall board working with the Board of Mission and almost being the Board of Missions for the Congregationalist Church, some bureaucratic mingling, but we don’t have to worry. So AMA – the AMA was created twenty years earlier than the War Between the States, in the 1840s, and it grew out of another group of church people led by church women who brought the men along. The AMA named right out there was created out of the Amistad Defense Committee when people said, what is the next step? And there were lots of abolitionist societies, but this was one which said if we push for abolition, we have to push for schools and education. And they had experience with educating blacks. And the women were the ones who did it and only a few men with the Amistad.

Now you are going to slip out of the B range if you don’t know Amistad.

A TOUR MEMBER: It’s a research center in New Orleans.

REV. KING: Okay. It’s a research center in New Orleans. I think it was at Dillard and I think after the hurricane it moved into Tulane for black history. What?

A TOUR MEMBER: Named after the ship.

REV. KING: Yes. Okay. Named after the ship Amistad. There are two great ships in slavery history. We know the Mayflower, and those churches were split, so the Arabella is what the upper class Pilgrims came on to Boston a year later. You know the speech, The city set on a hill, and all of that. That is from John Winthrop on the Arabella. Those folks have always been a little resentful of these middle class people, lower class people who sailed on the Mayflower before they did. Reagan made that speech popular again.

One of the Winthrop’s direct descendants was in the news yesterday, and expected to become president, as our aristocratic families do. Kerry is a direct descendant of
Governor Winthrop, and the speech, and must have been very shocked that he didn’t win.

But back to the AMA: Amistad means friendship in Spanish. In 1619 the Good Ship Jesus arrived at Williamsburg – I mean, at Jamestown a year before the Plymouth in 1620. This is a Dutch ship named Jesus selling slaves. The Jesus and the Friendship.

When the Amistad comes along the British are trying to restrict the slave trade. Once you are really on the ocean, unless you are close to somebody’s land, you didn’t get interfered with. Officially, our Constitution had done away with the slave trade and thought that slavery would gradually dissolve. But we rarely seriously enforced it.

The Spanish need more and more slaves for South America, Mexico, Peru, all of that. And they are running slave ships. By day the slaves see where the sun rises and where the sun sets. And they know every day they are sailing one day further away from Africa. The slaves on the ship for weeks build up enough common language that they can communicate. They are from different tribes. And they get to Havana, and then are going to be sent to be sold to – who knows – Charleston, Savannah, Veracruz, maybe even all the way down to Peru. And the slaves decide we had rather be dead, and revolt. And the Spanish who have run many peaceful slave vessels are taken by surprise and the slaves get sword and guns beyond the knives they have hidden from somewhere and killed most of the sailors, who, of course, are all white. They leave a few of the officers alive to take them back to Africa.

And so they order it’s either your head or you turn this blankety, blank boat around and Africa is that way. And so the white officers obey and sail toward Africa. At night they know how to follow the stars. So the boat zigzags towards Africa or towards freedom, towards Africa or towards freedom, and, finally, they reach freedom. And the slaves say, those are fir trees. Those are not palm trees. That doesn’t look like the Africa we know. It’s the land of freedom. They sail into Long Island Sound, and are promptly arrested by Americans – the slaves are. And the owners say they have shed white blood. And so the assumption is the slaves will be executed.
The Queen of Spain hears this and says, They are my property. I don’t want them executed. Have mercy, you dirty Americans. Not quite. She says, they are my property. I want them sold. So an international incident was going. Would America be allowed to execute them or will we return the property to the Spanish.

A group of women say, we have got to help, and start taking food to the jails, meeting people, and then they finally start teaching the slaves English, and handing out Bibles, and getting the slaves to sing American hymns. And eventually the men get organized into the Amistad Defense Committee. And what they have to argue to their neighbors is not just that slavery is wrong, and it was, you know, slavery still existed in places like New Jersey when this takes place, had only been ended in New England twenty, thirty years earlier. And, of course, still existed in the South. They said, These men are murderers.

The women and then the men said our fathers and our grandfathers fought with George Washington, fought at Bunker Hill, fought a Lexington and Concord and shed British blood. You have a right to fight for freedom and you have a right to defend yourself for freedom, and you even have a right to be aggressive for freedom, but this was worked out over several years. And, eventually, the U. S. Supreme Court and the lawyer who takes the case is John Quincy Adams, former President. And the first issue is will they be returned to Spain as property. Well, enough Americans don’t want the Spaniards claiming property that you get some political divisions and they win the case at the Supreme Court. But you have suddenly said that they are not just property and the law said blacks are property, not human beings but property. Some of the blacks do go back to Africa and lost history of most of them.

But the Amistad Defense Committee then reorganizes as the Amistad Missionary Association. And twenty years later the daughters of those women come into the South all over to teach. They also organize farm missions that are in the news. The American University in Beirut and the American University in Cairo, which were centers forty, fifty, sixty years ago of revolutionary student movements. The Muslim universities were too controlled by the British and the French, but the resistance to the British and the French, like Nasser, would be organized at the American University. Nothing to do with our
government, a church mission school which said, If you want to learn about Christianity, we will teach you, but we are offering you an education. That's the tradition of most mainline churches but they come right on down to here to us in Mississippi.

Now who do you think will have preached in this chapel? It was built around 1900. Other things about it, what looks different?

A TOUR MEMBER: No stained glass.

REV. KING: No stained glass. No big cross. Yeah, it's an odd remnant of New England churches, the little country church with the steeple that we see on Christmas cards, but there's a great architectural movement in America of Victorian Gothic. And you will find old churches built with remnants of this business. A New England church would have had wood inside, no paintings, no idolatry on the walls. The Puritan's and the Pilgrim's churches were open to nature so you would have had clear glass. But when this gothic thing comes along, 1870s, '80s, '90s, and others, it's the fashion. So these people built this church, sent money to build it. Students built it under carpenters and under architects who came down from Boston, but it was student labor. And black men and women who lived in the village but it was the latest, most contemporary church design. Nobody said, It's too fancy; we will let the blacks have last year's fashion. Okay.

So the building itself. We have now had concerts out here from the Symphony, things like that over the last few years. But who might have preached here? This would be run like a college. The old building for assembly on the campus, so a Sunday you had church. Students were supposed to attend church when I preached here. I said, we won't take attendance at church, but we still had mandatory religious chapel once a week. But I grew up with that at Millsaps. And I am glad. And Millsaps had other chapel functions once a week where you had somebody talk about engineering or medicine or art or history and I am glad I was forced to attend things like that.

Okay. But this was the chief preaching place. Who else might have been here before and after me? Speak up.
A TOUR MEMBER: Martin Luther King.

REV. KING: Martin Luther King preached here in this building several times. Eventually, Fannie Lou Hamer would have been here to sing.

The campus was the center for the civil rights movement because of these New England connections. Most black state universities expelled students, several thousand, for joining sit-ins or marches. White schools tried to do the same in a few places where white students marched.

In the first few months in 1960 when the sit-ins started, I was arrested end of March. At least four to five Millsaps students had been arrested before I was. They were graduate students who were native Mississippians went off to Vanderbilt Seminary or Duke Seminary or graduate school at the University of North Carolina. And when the moment came their Christian preparation, they have thought in advance that this would happen. They were ready and they moved. What that usually meant was they knew they could never come back to Mississippi. But they wanted to be part of things from the start of the student’s sit-in movement. The first day was more black students. The next day was about fifty black students. But the third day seven white students were joining. The quiet preparation that goes on does have a place.

Okay. Dr. King preached here. Bishop Galloway preached in this building. That’s almost as radical as Dr. King. Bishop Galloway has a building still up over that way, an old dorm, named for him. Millsaps College had a Galloway dormitory just torn down in the last two years to build something modern. And our church is named for Bishop Galloway. Bishop Galloway served on the Board of Trustees of the Millsaps, automatic as a church leader, and Tougaloo with its Yankee denomination. We don’t even know that in our history. But everybody at Galloway knew that in 1950. They may have thought it was just an eccentric Bishop, but we remember when he was our preacher. It was still called First Methodist Church after his death and then renamed Galloway. He believed a better future was possible. And he believed it would come mostly through education and, obviously, through the institutional church. And education and church were not regarded as way out, wild, radical institutions. We sometimes despair or both.
I wish we had minutes of some group that asked of Bishop Galloway, what are you doing? But we noted at the church that he went on mission trips for the ME Church South all over the nation. Well, all over the nation when he would meet with Northern Methodists, but all over the world. That’s part of our heritage, Galloway’s heritage.

When the time of troubles came with the church visits, this is after the Ole Miss riots, people are sort of told you are either this or you are that, and anybody who wanted to look for a moderate next step in the middle, Medgar Evers would have been one of those people who would be for some moderate next step, Dr. Selah and others. We had been trapped in this state. I was fortunate to be a student at Millsaps, went there in the fall of ’54. And when I first arrived at Millsaps we had interracial meetings of college students from all over Mississippi. This had gone on at least since the 1930s organized by campus YMCAs at Starkville, Oxford, and other places. Starkville would have had just men students at that time. YWCA people at Oxford or other places. And people at the black colleges. And Millsaps or Tougaloo would be the hosts.

You wouldn’t quite have an interracial meeting at Jackson State. That might have triggered the state too much, nor at Oxford or Starkville or Columbus. But people did what they could. And the YMCAs were very radical, part of, again, the ecumenical movement that becomes in our time the World Council of Churches, National Council of Churches here in this country. But it started out of missionary cooperation and getting our acts together and why are we sending Methodists to Korea when the Presbyterians are so strong already. And to this day the Presbyterians are the predominant group and practical cooperation in a world where they thought everybody eventually would be equal and the church had to be part of it. And then the ecumenical side, you have got to respect each other’s faith but still cooperate and work together.

By 1960s when the demonstrations – well, let me get my bag. We have the demonstrations that Medgar is organizing. Students wanted to do it. They had worked for nine months. The Ole Miss crisis gave people real stimulus, and right after the Ole Miss crisis Medgar really met them and ruined the only thing in our history where separate but equal really worked. I grew up saying separate but equal must be right. I grew up in a Methodist Church, I grew up in the youth fellowship, I had ministers who
said the world is changing. I knew that segregation, racism was wrong, but I thought as long as it was separate but equal it was okay. But I gradually learned these things.

Sometimes we didn’t even know we were on the edge. Say, 1950, I attended a state youth meeting, Methodist Church – and the Methodists did more of this than anybody else, much more than even the Baptists, because we were, you know, united in all of these ways. We had one state youth meeting of Methodist Youth Fellowship at Copiah-Lincoln College, and the president there was a very active Methodist, later became president at Delta State. He let black Methodist students come to meetings on the campus and black ministers. What I wasn’t sensitive to was they never stayed overnight and the rest of the youth would be staying overnight.

I have been to meetings for five or six years when I am junior high school and high school. I go to interracial Methodist Youth Meetings at Millsaps. Again, I am not sensitive that the sixteen year old kids can stay in a dorm. I think I stayed as a student even in Galloway dorm even when I was in high school at Millsaps. We didn’t get together for supper that evening. The very fact that we didn’t would show that we knew how important it was not to break bread together. But, I imagine some of the adult leaders wanted to push that point. And then as the world became crazier they began to say, maybe we shouldn’t.

I went to a National Methodist Student Movement meeting in 1958. The Supreme Court decision was in ’54. The National Methodist Student Movement had started having these big meetings again. The women continued it all along. The Methodist Men are trying to revive, having national meetings where people in small groups can see you are part of something bigger. That would have been a remnant of an interracial national meeting, but when I got there it was interracial, but I had experienced this kind of thing in eighth grade. And the Methodist Church was quietly doing that. The ecumenical thing, those national meetings would be every four years, and the next year it might be the Lutherans, and the next year the Presbyterians, and the next year might be the Congregationalists, and it was back to the Methodist’s turn. And they would be open to campus religious groups even if you weren’t in the Methodist Student Movement.
Here at Millsaps and Tougaloo we had the same kind of thing. The groups here, the specific group through a YMCA at Millsaps led by people from Galloway, some of whose funerals we have had in the last five years, and relatives in that family would say, “Did you know that my father, but he didn’t want it talked about in the 1950s and 1960s,” but the kind of people Dr. Selah must be going to who couldn’t say an interracial meeting was totally wrong, but fear, fear, fear. I saw those meetings shut down. I saw the Methodist Youth Movement totally segregated.

We – my freshman year we had students from Ole Miss coming to interracial meetings at Millsaps. The next year the state put pressure on and the radical teachers or moderates – you almost had no choice but to be radical and moderate. If you did anything you were doing too much.

First, the students at the state white colleges could not attend. Then the students at Jackson State and Alcorn could no longer come to Millsaps. Medgar Evers talked to me before his death, he guided me – I met him at one of these interracial meetings here at Tougaloo, and he called me and several other people, “Why don’t you come to our office and I can give you some literature on poverty and race and history and help you with term papers.” And he guided me for four years. Every white minister or teacher I knew said be glad you have gone to New England, you could never come back. Medgar was the only one who said, you must come back. And he talked to me that he and Myrlie were college graduates, had jobs, could go to California or anywhere and make it, but he said, the South has a history. Before emancipation black leaders were the ones most likely to run away. And as important as that was, that was leaving the black community on the plantation, again, with our little bit of our leadership, and people broke and did that. And he said, since then educated blacks have left the South, and he thought that I knew more about slavery than I did. He then would point to some of the women and men who were prominent abolitionists but who were run out of South Carolina and forced to leave. And Medgar said, we can never change unless black people and white people stay and commit to working together, but stay.

He would talk to me about how important it was for him to visit Millsaps College as an Alcorn student. How many people in black or white Mississippi know that that was a
formative part of building the leadership of Medgar Evers. And underneath the YMCA or any of these things is still the institutional church and the people who are on the edges there trying to move a little further.

Eventually those integrated meetings were down to just Tougaloo and Millsaps, and then eventually that began to disintegrate. And then by the spring of 1958, Millsaps has to shut down its contacts with Tougaloo completely. But Millsaps professors knew people out here. If there was some interesting lecture out here, teachers would tell me about it. We would come out to hear it. Very normal except we were defined -- by the late '50s the Citizen’s Council would be outside those gates taking down the license plate numbers of every white person who visited. And then the word would spread and people who had never come would be afraid. And maybe they didn’t even have to really do – what they usually did was go to interracial church women’s meetings and then find out what women had been there and list their husband’s names in the files. I thought that should stay private.

At this National Church meeting in '57, I met Jim Lawson, who was a Methodist minister and an officer in the National Methodist Youth Fellowship. He had been in India with the Methodist Board of Missions, studying Gandhi-ism, and he became the leading teacher of non-violence, organized the sit-ins. I was in on planning meetings in '59 for the sit-ins that started in 1960. He was always calling and would let me, you know, saw some hope in me. At one of the meetings in 1959, we would try lunch counters and would do role playing. We had some black and white women at role playing, and Lawson asked me, you know, to be a white policeman, and to tell them it’s against the law, and they were told you will publicly be given a chance and if you don’t leave, you know, then the arrests might start. And I went up to people and said, “Pardon me, ma’am, do you know that this is against the law.” And the audience collapsed in laughter and said, no southern policeman was going to say, “ma’am,” to a black woman. And I said, “Well, I guess I never heard that in Vicksburg.” And they said, and you didn’t curse.
My uncle, sheriff, had deputies in the family, other politicians – my grandfather was sheriff in Vicksburg. And I said, no white policeman would ever curse anyone. I later learned I was wrong.

But the black people could see something worth redeeming even in my and gradually I was pulled away, not having made the absolute decisions that other people had to make.

Back on this chapel, though: There is a bell tower up there. When the students would be released from jail, the bells would ring and they would gather, usually at lunch. Sometimes when there were twenty or thirty people in jail, teachers would let them leave class. A few other teachers wouldn’t. But the bell meant some people had been freed and had come back and they would tell their stories of jail.

In the Class of 1964, the year after Medgar’s death, the year after the Jackson Movement, over half of the graduates had prison records. The president of this college when the demonstrations and sit-ins and stuff started said, We will not expel students for demonstrating. We will hold them accountable on their grades. If they miss an exam because they are being held in jail, then the administration of the college needs to look at what the situation is. If they miss a test and weren’t arrested, then you hold them responsible. This is their first task. This was true at many other places. But the pressure was on. Black students mostly were expelled. And even black church colleges, most of which had close relations with the local community. Rust was a Methodist College and it had freedom similar to Tougaloo because Rust had been started by the Women’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Northern Branch, and their money like Tougaloo’s money, did not come from local people.

Local Presbyterian or local Episcopal schools across the south were receiving lots of donations direct from white churches. So when they began to do something you could be cut off, not as powerfully as cutting off public appropriations to a black college, but have to look at institutionally how did the church function in a few critical places. And those things were just very informal.
In Birmingham they are commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the great marches. We just focused on Medgar and his assassination here. In Birmingham they had one march from Birmingham Southern College down to the Sixteenth Street Church, the church that was bombed.

Why would Birmingham Southern sponsor commemorative march? And there is no reason any of you should know this: Marty Turnipseed, daughter of a Methodist minister, who took a stand for integration and was driven out of Alabama. So she spent a few years, I think in Ohio, or somewhere, but she came back to go to Birmingham Southern, like people went to Millsaps, and when Dr. King said, “Who will come and go with me?” She thought other white students wouldn’t. And she did, and was arrested -- a white southern Methodist woman and expelled from a Methodist college. And Millsaps took her in. Enormous courage, nobody announcing publicly, but the Methodist Bishop who is the Chairman of the Board at Millsaps, The Methodist President, Ellis Finger, took her in. That was in 1963.

In 1958 Jim Lawson was touring southern colleges to prepare for the 1960 sit-ins. We had literature that we had brought through the Methodist Student Movement. The Church Youth Movements were the way of spreading the word. And he had planned to come to Mississippi to Tougaloo and to Millsaps. He was a scheduled speaker at Millsaps but we didn’t say he was black. We were still doing this kind of a thing, and I think we mentioned he was National Vice President, or something like that, of the Methodist Student stuff. We had Religious Emphasis Week, which in those days church colleges, state colleges did, kind of a spring revival. At Millsaps you had theologians and going pretty deep. And I was on the committee setting the thing up with Bob Bergmark, a family from Galloway Church. Carol died just a few years ago, Bob about ten. And students said we want a discussion on religion and politics, we want a discussion on war, we want a discussion on race relations. We had one, invited a professor from Tougaloo, Anse Barenksi, to talk about religion and race. He was a non-practicing Jew who was a refugee from Nazi-ism who had come here deliberately thinking that Mississippi was going to be the front line of change eventually.
I didn’t go to that lecture but some student asked me, do you think there is a contradiction between Christianity and segregation? Well, he could have been a Mormon or a Buddhist and said, yes, as a sociologist these two institutions – well, the Citizen’s Council was active.

We now know that the Sovereignty Commission had spies at black and white colleges. Things got so bad at Millsaps I had integration literature stolen from my room. Then teachers had their offices -- we couldn’t have imagined that the Sovereignty Commission and the Citizen’s Council were doing this. It got so bad that a professor whom I was very close to, a major professor – I was a teaching assistant – asked me, do you think the student who was paid to attend my lectures because something I had said is at the secret police, the State Sovereignty Commission. He had asked around enough and found out they were paying students to spy on teachers. And he asked, do you think it is John or Jane? And I learned a million things, but I could stand up to him. My heart was broken that he even asked. I said, No, don’t you know, somebody broke into my room but I never tried to figure out whom. He said, That’s not the same thing as breaking into a teacher’s room. And I said, Well, it’s not that different. And I don’t want to know who did it. And five years ago, I might have done that had somebody asked me, but I can’t as a student talk about other students. And then he almost broke down crying, realizing in his terror how far he had gone with, again, institutions where large college and students are very close as you would be in a monastery, but the Abbott and the new initiate are still very separate and some lines don’t cross.

Things had gotten that bad at Millsaps. The newspaper and the Citizen’s Council attacked the college, demanded an apology. By that point in ’58, we had a state law that said teachers could not join controversial organizations and had to sign loyalty oaths, loyal to America, but that meant not communist. These were practiced around the Nation, and our loyalty oath here for public school teachers was modeled on the oath for college teachers, modeled on Berkeley, California, where the red hysteria had reach the point that you could not have a communist speak in your classroom and it was better not to have a controversial speaker who might be called communist.
The controversial people here were called communist. The state offered to screen speakers for Millsaps. That meant in the big assembly or in a small group of ten people. And the president rallied the students and the faculty and had a great meeting, saying we are a church college, this is America, we will never give in, we don’t need their services, I have told the state that we can handle this, and I, myself, will decide who is too controversial, and then announced we would not have these controversial people. The newspaper never even caught that. They thought it looked like Millsaps was still defiant. And the New York Times wrote about the small courageous college standing up to the state.

We then were told you cannot go to Tougaloo, faculty or students. You cannot do this. We cannot have anybody there here. We have got to cancel this black minister, who was scheduled for three weeks away, but they never even realized – and a few students were allowed in Baren’ski’s home, which happened to be on campus. But, technically, if you went to his home – you know, we are talking about brilliant people, Millsaps’ faculty making that distinction.

The reason Millsaps students were allowed to go to Baren’ski’s home is that we had already started integrated classes at Millsaps, which the institutional church needed to do before you had the Ole Miss crisis. The church, even in New Orleans, the Catholic Church did not desegregate a single first grade until after rioting, and after the rioting at the public schools. And we needed -- no church hospitals integrated. And we needed to say, people can do this quietly, and so on.

Baren’ski offered to teach a class in Russian and had only two or three students in Tougaloo who wanted to take it, so Millsaps students heard about it. He had been coaching some students in German language. And we decided at Millsaps, three or four of those kids came out to Tougaloo for a month or so. They had the class at like seven in the morning. And at one point Baren’ski said, we have got four Millsaps students, two Tougaloo students; it would be simpler if we drove in there. And Millsaps said, okay. And in the Library on the second floor on the south end, there are a few small rooms with tables. And here was Millsaps peacefully desegregating.
But when the pressure came, we gave in and the meetings here were canceled and for two years there was no contact. Then the contact was re-established with a member of Galloway Church. Eudora Welty came out here for an English conference. She knew full well what she was doing, and talked about literature and read from her work. That’s about 1962 – ’61. And other white people began to come back the next week when there was a historian talking about something, and gradually these black and white contacts came again.

I don’t think it’s coincident that Ms. Welty was eventually a trustee at Millsaps, but it’s Galloway Church again. A rich, rich heritage of respecting people’s differences and almost saying I don’t know the answer to everything. So she put her life on the line and once Medgar was killed and stuff like that a year or so later, once she had thousands of soldiers and people killed at Ole Miss, she knew she wasn’t being romantic if she feared for her life.

So Millsaps then is when are you going to integrate if you had these events? The faculty had several petitions for several years to the trustees where a majority of the faculty – and then students would circulate petitions and get the names of several hundred students, why don’t we go ahead and do this. So it was quite clear that some day we will, but we are not ready yet. And the fear Millsaps will lose money. Tougaloo lost a little money from local businesses and people who gave small donations. Millsaps could have lost massive money. And then Millsaps had to say, Will the buildings be bombed? Will the students who aren’t supporting integration be killed if a bomb comes to campus? I was pushing those people to make the move but I couldn’t say they were wrong with fears like this.

In the spring of 1963, Ole Miss riots were October, ’62, Millsaps has been trying to get the Southern Literary Festival to come, an organization from Texas to Virginia and Maryland, very prestigious, and Millsaps was finally able to be the host. Other places said it didn’t sound like any of their black students wanted to come, but they might. So Millsaps sort of hesitated and fused when nobody, you know, at the University of Virginia, who had a few black students. But I knew what was happening. And there were Tougaloo students like Ann Moody, who later became a writer; and people who
remembered Ms. Welty from Tougaloo two years earlier, and Eudora Welty was the featured speaker at the opening session since she is the great Mississippi writer. And Faulkner had died that summer.

So there is Millsaps, will we let Tougaloo people in? What if people find out that Medgar Evers came to our campus twenty years ago. It is better to keep doing things quietly but we are not doing things any more. And faculty pushing and saying, let’s open this. And so Millsaps dodges. Ellis Finger, who becomes a Bishop, but I am sure he is consulting with Dr. Selah, who is on the Board, and the close connections between Millsaps and Tougaloo -- again, institutional. Those of you who don’t ultimately go to the organized structured church; I defend the organized structured church, as conservative as we are, as long as we have a little bit of open eyes and ears.

Millsaps passes the buck to Ms. Welty, and says – and the organization had said, we will let Millsaps decide. You are the hosts. We are polite southerners. We won’t insist on bringing black students and none of our students want to come that near Ole Miss anyway. They had heard. So Millsaps has to decide. So Millsaps decides we will let the Southern Literary Association. And they tell Millsaps, It’s all right with us if blacks attend. Millsaps is on the spot again. And then they say, well, it would be impolite of Millsaps to embarrass Ms. Welty since she is the speaker. So they ask Ms. Welty. She wasn’t active in Galloway her last thirty years, but grew up in that church. And Ms. Welty says, well, of course, Tougaloo students can attend my lecture. And she reads from her literature as if it was totally normal, and risking her life again.

And I imagine Dr. Selah and some people from Galloway thanked her heartily for what she had done. And Dr. Selah saying at Easter I will get Galloway’s doors open. They are open, but there are people against it, but I will work with people but I have got to get past Annual Conference in June. There are people doing their quiet things the way they can. But when something needed absolute, they moved. When

(THIS CONCLUDES CD #2.)
EK: I’ll read a few more poems. We’ll get over to Medgar’s house, but it’s probably closed, but we will just go by there. It’s now a small museum of photographs, things like that. The outside is the important part. Sixty three, fifteen years ago, is very important in American history. I think the changes, the great changes, really are that year. The next year the Civil Rights movement is more secure, but we don’t know what is going on in the nation, and we don’t want to know and we are afraid to know, and we don’t want to know right now. Who’s keeping files on us, the funny old Citizen’s Council in Jackson, some fuddy duddy bureaucrat, whose a cousin of Ross Barnett, running the Sovereignty Commission? This is one of the few places in America that we are not being wiretapped. Everything we do on our phones, our mail, and so on. Mail is now safer than other things because it takes so long to do it. Remind me in a moment of a story about the mail, though.

The church visit is the star here, hoping this will go well. People are turned away at First Baptist, no surprise. But the reason we go ahead and start that week is the injunctions I have mentioned. And the injunctions, specifically prohibited churches. When they had done that? What is a Christian going to do when the law, Hitler or Stalin or Ross Barnett, when the law in advance tells you which churches you can go to, and which churches you can’t. That’s pretty incredible, when you think about the state intervening, it gets worse. But here’s this power. In a Gandhian sense, we have to decide: Will we defy the injunction?

Now let me give you some history which I gave some to some school teachers at Millsaps last week and will mention again tomorrow. I’ve written about, hopefully, will finally get some things published but somehow, along the way, I have been at extraordinary places, with extraordinary people, to hear and see extraordinary things. I always waited for somebody else who was there to talk and write about it. And these people have either died and didn’t do it or were killed and didn’t do it.

The demonstration is at Woolworth’s and you’ve read about that. The photographs in there should not be widely distributed. If you don’t want to keep one of those, I can use it with somebody else. If you want to keep it, that’s fine. But you have to pay a fortune to use those in a magazine or a book. The University Press has come out with a book this year on the Jackson movement and the Woolworth sit-in. They paid to have
the photographs put in the book. But I wanted you to get some sense of it. I’m there, calling Medgar every few minutes. The final picture on the walls out here has me as a nice minister comforting people, which I was doing in the end.

But I had been in jail on sit-ins, I’ve forgotten how many times. By then, I didn’t have to prove anything, and I had a job. A Christian minister should have gone over and leave my body over their bodies—I think if I had just been a minister and walked in the store, and I saw people being beaten, I might have put my body in between. Well, the people who went to that counter, they knew they might be killed. It was not up to me to say something and, I had a job, and I had to talk to Medgar. Once we heard that the first person had been beaten and picked up unconscious with blood coming out of his nose and ears, Medgar wants to come. I have to say to him, “You have to stay there getting national media, and I have to stay here, phoning you. We knew before it started that you and I couldn’t join it.” He knew that I had another reason not to join it.

After one of my arrests in Alabama in 1960, I was asked by the lawyers for Dr. King’s SCLC— we’ve been arrested by chance almost— I was called to the sit-in, praised at the seminary, and I had been arrested by accident. I was trying to organize, behind the scenes, meetings of Methodist women and black women who had been in prison of students at Huntington College and black students. I was doing everything I could not to be on the front line. After I was on the front line, everybody was arrested for disorderly conduct. The lawyers needed to show that disorderly conduct was fraud, so I was asked to join a black minister in a plan the lawyers had to go to the Supreme Court.

So I was staying at the Jefferson Davis Hotel having meetings on several trips down there, using the Methodist Conference office, who knew I was working with the generational staff. The bishop had to approve, the Board of Education had approved, and I was using whoever the Board of Education director was—institution again— but that looked terribly respectful to the police. They didn’t know those church was giving me names of secret whites to meet with. The hotel people knew I was fairly respectable. I asked if could have the Methodist minister to have breakfast with me. In the Jefferson Davis Hotel the dining room is the Plantation Dining Room, and I said I had a Methodist minister, and I have a credit card and can I put my breakfast on my room bill? They looked at me like I was a nut. But I hadn’t been drinking, and said,
“Yes.” I had one of the white ministers risking his job come have breakfast with me. At lunch I asked, “I have another minister that I need to have another lunch meeting with, “Can he come?” “Well, of course.” Can I put him on the bill? I wanted to take this evidence to the Supreme Court. “Well, of course.” And the Reverend Elroy Embry, a black Methodist minister came.

And we were arrested, and accused of disorderly conduct, breaching the peace, and trespassing on private property, and sentenced to a month or so on the chain gang. I served on the work gang with black and white. They didn't have chains. The blacks were laughing because I thought they still had chains. They had dropped the chains just a few months earlier. Out on the road gang, I learned a few things. Terrible heat again. The guards, at one point, stopped for water. They had a barrel and a dipper. One dipper for the whites and the whites all got their water before the black prisoners did. And the guard said, “Don’t let HIM have any water.” And the other white persons wouldn’t. And then it was the blacks turn. At the end of the black prisoners turn. One man came over and brought a cup of water to me. It was not Elroy. This was a black man in the hands of white power accused of some crime. He knew what to fear more I did. And I thought he was going to beaten on the spot and I would, too, and the officer said, “We’ve taken too much time here. We’ve got to get back to work.”

The local Montgomery paper took a photograph of me in black and white stripes on a prison work gang in Alabama, ran it on the front page of the Jackson paper and identified me as a member of the Methodist Conference. That did not go over well with the bishop and the church. I was actually due to come up for membership in the Conference and ordination as elder that year. We made a deal that I could be named an elder, and I was being appointed as a pastor to a church in Montana, where they expected you to be ordained to do the sacraments. The bishop was encouraging me to make Montana my permanent home. They needed somebody for the summer while the current minister went back to school, and I had figured that I could never come back. So I was shopping. They were looking for seminarians who might come, and I got ordained elder.

Back at seminary they said, “You are the only person we have ever heard of who is a Christian minister without a denominational affiliation. That will come as denominations begin to recognize everybody. But did you plan this? Well,
it had not crossed my mind that I was another crusader. So I was an elder in the Conference without being a member. This got postponed for several years until 1963, and the bishop had agreed there was a chaplain who had left in the middle of the year and I found out through Medgar that there was an opening and applied for it, and since I had a prison record in Alabama that compensated for my being a white Mississippian.  (laugh)  (Do you want to add that it was at Tougaloo? hdk)

I got the job and as I said, I went through the bureaucracy, but I came here in January, the week after the 28 men had signed their statement. A dozen of them have already been driven out of the state, and I am coming in trying to stay quietly behind the scenes, but to do something, you know, crossing the lines of—to be voted on for Conference membership at the Annual Conference where they have had terrible politics, as I’ve said, who goes to General Conference, what resolutions they would pass, and Roy Clark, head of the Board of Ministerial Education, got my vote separated and postponed several days. It was due the day of the Woolworth demonstration and there were people from Conference, only two blocks away, coming down---the little thing you read I mentioned the Methodist minister who actually came and Roy Clark didn’t think that afternoon was a good time for me to be voted on. He said, “You weren’t photographed, your wife, who was a native of Jackson, has already been arrested. I’m not voting on you this evening. Let’s wait until the last day of Conference, which is Friday.” That was the day the students marched. The night before the students marched, we held a demonstration of black clergy at the Post Office Federal Building. I had the bishop of the Episcopal Church, the father of Dr. Gray, who had been on the front lines at Ole Miss, standing up to the rioters. His father, pushing 80, had an assistant bishop who was terrible, a moderate. I asked the old bishop, “Will you go to jail? If you stand with us, maybe this black minister can make one final appeal that starts to let blacks and whites start talking openly together. Not the secret meetings we are having behind the scenes and defying the mayor, if he won’t do it as an official, can we get Episcopaliains and Methodists and others to say openly, ‘We are citizens of Jackson and we are talking’.” And I said, “If you were there and I’m there, probably there won’t be arrests. It’s federal property, but they will hesitate, and then the black minister can read this statement, ‘If we do not begin TODAY, we’re afraid the high
school students will march tomorrow. If we have SOME change, that can wait.” Some people in the Episcopal Church heard about this. His secretary came crying and said, “Do you know he’s had heart attacks since his son was in the front line at Ole Miss. Do you know his health is bad? His wife is already sick with cancer. He’s going to retire. Don’t make him do this.” I said, “I’m not making him, I’m appealing.” She said, “You can’t do this to that old man.” And many people have offered, and I went to him and I lied, I said, “We thank you. Medgar knows you are willing. But we THINK we won’t need you.” And I sort of thought that. This IS a US building. Are they going to come on a US building? Well, yes, they did. I tried to introduce the black minister, because I knew something about controlling frightened people, a mob. I wore my purple clergy stole, tried to have an opening prayer, and things quieted down a little, and then the black minister started—when we got out there, the white mobs were just screaming, and there I am with the stole, and I calmed it a little, and the black minister starts reading his comments, and the police charge and attack us. Medgar Evers gets me out of jail on bond. Anne Moody in her book is critical because I got bonded out. Medgar Evers bonds me out in order to get voted on by the Methodist Conference. The Conference rejects me as a minister by a vote of 85-84. People may have been segregationists were able to say another minister can have a different viewpoint. A remarkable vote. The troops are still at Ole Miss, and here the Methodist Conference by only a margin of only two vote change or three, and the bishop will probably have to cast the deciding vote. But the bishop never told them that he had appointed me to Tougaloo, nor did the District Superintendent say people who were there---it was a closed meeting. A remarkable sign to me: “My God, if it was that close, I’m hurt. But there is hope, there is hope, there is hope.”

More people started---the church visits start the next week. The visit comes to Galloway, after people are turned away at First Baptist. We decide that the injunction has to be defied or the Gandhian movement will be ruined. Every city in the south will have an injunction if we don’t defy it. Civil disobedience would mean Gandhian and you do that. Medgar decided we would defy the injunction. We didn’t want a lot of people arrested. And particularly people who had gone to church and he said, “I mean the injunction. None of the people who go to
church with me will be named. And I will be the only one arrested. And then we will get it back in court.” Deeper history here. Roy Wilkins, Medgar Evers’ boss in the NAACP—are we supposed to be back at the church at noon?

Voice: Yes. (Comment cannot be heard.)

EK: Wilkins, Medgar’s boss, comes down on Saturday after the 400-500 students, by that time we had gotten lots of reports had gotten out of jail—whose families had gotten them out—others we wanted to stay and fill the jails. But we had gotten these horrible reports of the violence. Wilkins damns the Jackson police, the Jackson white officials. He makes a powerful statement which is carried in the New York Times that this is fascism, this is like Nazi Germany. The press leaves, and Medgar says, “Stay with me.” I’m interested. He says, “Stay with me.” Wilkins says, “Let’s go to your office.” I say, “Ok. I’ll be here in the outer office.” Medgar says, “Come with me.” I’d been introduced to Wilkins before, and I was chaplain of Tougaloo, terribly respectable and this kind of thing. I think Wilkins assumed that any middle class minister, though I was a white southerner—any middle class minister would be opposed to demonstrations.

The door closes, and Wilkins turns on Medgar and says, “Who do you think you are? Martin Luther King? There’s too much Martin Luther King in this country now”. And then proceeds to damn Martin Luther King. And says the NAACP has kept its distance, has never supported——its actually given an award to Martin, but the average membership thought they did, but we’re not going to have the NAACP involved in anything like that, and, of course, the issue was not just would we act like Martin, when the demonstrations started, when the talks started, the Daily News said, “Negroes threaten Birmingham here.”

The issue was could Birmingham be repeated anywhere in America. The Montgomery boycott did NOT spread to lots of things. Birmingham was repeated in Shreveport. It might get repeated in Beaumont, Texas. It might get repeated in Tallahassee. And then the White House would have a mess on its hands, and the world criticism – the world had criticized and the Communists had criticized America when 500 people went to jail when the Freedom Riders came here to Jackson. The government wanted to keep the lid on peace here, but look good to the world. And
Wilkins said, “Medgar will NOT cooperate with Martin. You will NOT invite him to Jackson. You will stop the demonstrations. There will be no more mass marches. And if you continue, and you work with Martin Luther King, you know it means your job.”

Part of me says, “Am I hearing this?” The other part is, “How am I hearing this?” Afterwards, I met with Medgar privately and I said, “Did I hear that right? I thought this man was threatening to fire you.” Medgar said, “I wanted you there. Yes, this is not the first time he has threatened to fire me.” I thought, “What’s going on?” “And he means it. And if I do cooperate with Martin, and we don’t stop the demonstrations, I’ll lose my job.” He said, “I know he means it because this is the second time this year that he’s told me I’d lose my job. At the end of the summer last year, I was ordered to keep James Meredith out of Ole Miss. I told him that I didn’t control Meredith. I would lose my job. I honestly told Wilkins that nobody controls James Meredith but God Almighty. Meredith is a prophet, and he is a man of prayer, and he will NOT be stopped by us. And the promise was that Ole Miss could be desegregated after the election in 1964. I said, “Why is Wilkins doing this?” He said, “It’s not Wilkins. This threat to take my job is the president –Washington, and the foundations that run America. Wilkins gets so much money from Ford, Rockefeller, whatever, the money didn’t come from people and their dollar memberships. I don’t know whether it was this way historically, but in later times you had to have $100,000 - $200,000 to take a case to the Supreme Court. It just costs that much.” And he said, “Wilkins probably is against things the way the NAACP does it. But Wilkins is under orders from Washington, and the big money people of the United States.”

So he wrestles with this over the next two weeks. He then defies the injunction, takes the people to the Baptist Church. We had had demonstrations for two days on the golf course. He’s amazed that he wasn’t arrested. But Judge Cox, the federal judge, had taken over from the city judge’s, the county judge’s order and an arrest would have meant that federal officials could have arrested Medgar. And then they would have said, “What’s President John Kennedy, what’s Attorney General Robert Kennedy doing arresting a black leader in Ross Barnett’s state. So Medgar finally makes up his mind, challenges them, nothing happens on the golf course and at the church, he again is not arrested. He was the one who brought in the police to follow
him watching. Two black women start crying at the First Baptist Church and saying, “We will NEVER have any change. This is hopeless. If we can’t worship and pray together,” and Medgar decides on the spur of the moment, “I know Galloway is open and it’s mid-June and it’s close, so let’s go over to Galloway Church.”

At Galloway Church its fifteen minute after the hour or later, because they stayed around the Baptist Church until the police were getting close to arresting them, and they are not admitted. The church had voted, without authority to vote, that the doors were closed. But the pastor knew that wouldn’t stand up in the Methodist system, but it that’s what people wanted to do, let’s keep talking, and he will go back to what is a Christian church, and what is a Methodist Church. And they were turned away at Galloway. And a note is given to Dr. Selah, who has been there nineteen years, and he announces from the pulpit that he will not be there at the evening service. That he cannot worship or lead a service any place that turns anyone away. He will then turn it over to the bishop, who wanted the Associate pastor, Jerry Furr, who had signed the Statement of the 28, and who Galloway had not fired him, as other churches had. He also announced he would [leave]. That left it to the bishop for what to do.

The bishop could have insisted that the doors be opened, assign a new pastor who would {open the church?}, and the bishop ducks it. For three months Galloway has visiting ministers, all of whom are willing to come to a church famously segregated. Then the bishop finally names a moderate who thinks if he works carefully, he can integrate the church, that Dr. Selah after nineteen years, couldn’t do. The minister who came, Dr. Cunningham, son-in-law had signed the Statement of the 28 and had been driven out of the state, and he still thought you could do these quiet things.

So Medgar is really on the spot. Will there be another Birmingham in Jackson? Will Medgar lose his job? That’s Sunday. On Monday and Tuesday Medgar is seen by few people collapsed at his desk, sobbing. The president of the branch told me this. On Tuesday night we have a terrible meeting. We had been shutting down the mass meetings—only a hundred people or so, and Medgar pulls me aside right after the meeting starts to a little room in the front of the church. In this tiny church there are rooms on either side and Medgar needed to talk to me again. He is a born again
person. Physically, he’s a smiling light almost a halo, and he said. “I know what I’m going to do. I’m going to invite Martin Luther King to Jackson. We will work together. What the students have done with sit-ins and freedom rides is the only way right now that the mass of black people will become involved. If they are waiting just for Supreme Court decisions, we have taught Gandhi, not just Gandhi made the people involved, not just Gandhi talking to prime ministers, and SNCC and Core believed in the people being involved. And Medgar said, “Yes, I’ll lose my job. This is Tuesday night, and by Wednesday or Thursday, it will be known that I have invited Martin. I tried to call him today, but Martin wasn’t in.” We know from FBI records and wiretaps on Martin that Medgar had tried to call that day. It’s like a load has been lifted. Three hours later, he’s been shot dead.

I don’t think it was because he visited Galloway Church. What he told me had led to this decision was Christian witness. He felt terrible about Selah and Jerry Furr losing their jobs. He said, “I was so inspired by those 28 young men. Now one of them who survived has lost his job. What will Dr. Selah do? He’s been there almost 20 years.” I explained our procedure. Medgar was a Baptist. I said, “They’ll be without a church, but somebody national will find some money for a salary for a few weeks. They’ll have to leave the state, but as with the other men who have gone to California or Indiana or somewhere, but after five or six weeks, some bishop somewhere found an assignment for them. They still paid an enormous price. They didn’t think of their security and as for Selah, certainly he expected to live and die here.” Medgar said, “I feel so guilty. But I feel so good, because if those white ministers from Galloway Church could take a stand, I can take a stand.” Our church inspiring a black leader to make his decision from a white leader!

Now things get worse and worse in ’63. I am absolutely convinced that Medgar is executed by orders from probably the Ford Foundation, the CIA, working with the world image of the country. I think they bypassed the president, who would not have supported it. The US military is involved, the CIA, the FBI. There may have been some local racists who do not know who who’s pulling their strings. I don’t even think that Beckwith fired the shot. But all that is a different story. I know much of it, and I’ve had people the last few years coming to me to confess.
In November 1963 we were having church visits constantly. In September of ’63, the Citizens Council crunched down the Jackson churches. Fondren Presbyterian has voted to open their doors. The Lutheran Church has voted to open their doors. People are discussing the closed churches within the community, so we are finally having these discussions. The Sovereignty Commission and the Citizens Councils seize moderate white Christians and are saying, “Yes, we can take a tiny step.” They actually send instructions to conservative laymen how to fight back in your church. State government telling a church how to manoeuvre things! My God! And the churches are moving, so they decide to crack down, and they crack down on Capital Street Methodist Church and start the arrests. Capital Street didn’t ask for anybody to be arrested. For three weeks Tougaloo and Millsaps students had gone together to stand and knock at the door of the church and then when Millsaps students from Sunday School would come out, sing at Galloway and stand together. When it happens. Suddenly, people are arrested.

Two weeks later, at Galloway, John Garner, who’s a member of the church and the Christian Fellowship class decide what can we do. There are people in the class now who were here fifty years ago and have grown up in the institutional Methodist church decide that Galloway has people inside it that are no longer in control of the Board, the minister is trying to be neutral so they invite a student from Tougaloo. Her teacher invites her to attend Sunday School and church at Galloway where it is supposed to be limited to members and guests. The police come inside the church and arrest the church member and his guest. We had people lined up if they get put out, they will stand on the stairs. We have other people to come stand with them. We never thought the police would come inside the church. So that’s where we are.

The World Council of Churches knows what’s happening. That people have been arrested at Methodist churches and other churches in Jackson. Over the year other people are arrested in about a dozen other churches. The Methodist women put up the bond money, $1000. A year in Parchman is what you are sentenced to. And we had outside clergy and laity volunteering.

We crossed the national scene in November. On November 22 people hear the word that the president has been shot. They gather. The bells ring. They know that
something has happened. It is noon, people rush in, fill the chapel, and are waiting. Then the news is announced that the president is dead. We had an English teacher, from England, a well-known 20th Century poet, Elizabeth Sewell. She had never heard black funerals and people screamed and cried when they heard that Kennedy was dead. So she wrote this poem about this incident:

The Omens, Tougaloo College, November 22, Mississippi

“The cry that drowned the death muse that strange and mortal southern negro

It was Troy that Israel when they breached the final rampart and the great city fell,

That was not women’s weeping, men’s groaning prayer, but a flock of birds rose screaming

Through the suddenly thickened air circled once far above us

Then took off God knows where.

It may be that life goes onward, everything can be restored

But instinct omniscient is not to be ignored.

The city is fallen, fallen and dark leans ???

Female Voice: (indistinct)

EK: Well, we can talk some ….
EK: Over here is the parking lot now.

ES: Oh. The house gone.

EK: Yeah. During the Civil Rights we would meet there. I've been there on national strategy meetings with Martin and Andy Young in the room as we planned things. But it could have been marked forever as the place where Bob Dillon was killed. Bob Dillon was almost killed out here. I had an office in the chapel, an office behind the sanctuary part where we were. One evening students came over and said, “White men are attacking your house. There's a civil rights meeting going on in there with students. A truck cleared that way (?????????) pickup truck of some sort came. Two white men got out, and they had something that looked like guns—big packages—and they went right through the front door into the house, and we've got six men with hunting guns, rifles, from the dorm, and they are moving on your house from the back side. What do we do?” And I said, “Well, everybody is nonviolent in the house, but we better get over there and see what it is.” So they surround. And I said, “Let me be the one that goes to the door. “ And I rush the door, grab and open it, and these men are ready to shoot. The whites are in there and there's Dillon on the floor with the guitar. And another guy with a guitar. Over here, on the ES: (indistinguishable) somebody else may want some water. I'm out of water.

(Wind sounds, paper rustling)

ED: I'll share some more testimonial. Fall from grace and coming back. One of the pieces in that folder is about me, and the Fairgrounds failing. I guess I retold that story I'm sorry. When I faced the fact that I could not help a bleeding man by my side.

ES: (indistinguishable) I’m confused by this a little bit. Are we going fast enough. I didn’t realize that was going to curve. Sorry about that.

EK: No. this is a weird thing that has just been put in. I was afraid that I could never again go to prison. And that people would be counting on me, and I was arrested ---I’d be arrested on traffic charges and stuff like that. I’d try to get out very quickly. But I didn’t think I could take any major confrontation because I had failed. I could get others
to go to jail, but was afraid myself. In the summer of ’65 we were still pushing stuff on voting rights, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was trying to have a march on the capital. I had helped organize that, and as a national committee man I was one of the top officers in the party, and with the chairman and the vice chairman, we decided we have to stay out of jail so we can talk to The New York Times, and explain it and tie this demonstration in with national politics. And we’ve all been to jail many times anyway. Well, they weren’t afraid of going to jail or failing. They were right that some people had to do that.

The demonstration moved slower than we had expected. The police came with dogs, brought, not a garbage truck, but a trash truck to pick up limbs and stuff like that. The police hadn’t expected 300-400 people, and they were doing instant arrests. Or they were tied up with fire engines on the other side of an accident or something sad. The dogs began barking, and our people began singing, and we could tell from a distance that the police were about to lose it. They didn’t have enough, wanted more. They began to some violence with a few people. Some of our people were college students volunteers like the ’64 summer, but most of them were locals, and most of them were black women in their sixties and seventies from the Delta. The only kind of people who could risk going to jail. Their husbands certainly couldn’t and younger women couldn’t. Larry [???] said, “One of us needs to be down there, and Ed, you are better at this than anybody. I said, “But I’m white.” He said, “They know who you are. Get down there, and get our people to stop singing so loud. And cool it until they can finish the arrests.” I was thinking that I’m not the one. You think I know what to do, but I’ve never told you how I failed with the man with the flies (?) so we went down there.

When we got to the Fairgrounds, almost all of us men were beaten. They put the women to the side, but the group was probably 75%-80% women and only a few whites in it. So they started beating on the men first and had us run a gauntlet, clubbing us, tripping us –just having a delightful time. And they were really getting pretty bad. They would beat some men who would stagger and fall, and get up, and be beaten down again.

The women were gathered again over near a building and the women began singing, and I don’t know what they sang first, but it was all hymns. These weren’t Civil
Rights students, and then they began singing, “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood.” Very slowly. (singing) “There…Is…a…Fountain…Filled….With….Blood. In the south, historically, that is a funeral hymn, not a revival hymn. The next several verses go on “down to death.” People in those days knew the words that you had heard and the next line, “Sinners plunged beneath the flood lose all their guilty stains” but the last then “and a nobler, sweeter song, I’ll sing thy power to save when this poor listing, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.” That line is repeated, (singing) “Lies silent in the grave.” That began to calm the white men who were beating on the rest of us. I couldn’t have suggested what to sing. People back at the office probably thought I knew the perfect gesture. God’s spirit sort of did. And the women were waiting, afraid that they would be next, when they saw what was happening to the men. Had they sung, “We Shall Overcome,” they probably would have been beaten. But they sang what they needed out of the faith.

The police put a group of us, six or eight white, separated into a building. By the time they brought me in, things were already going on. We had all been beaten outside. Inside the building were some white college students, and they had been beaten, but standing in the middle of the floor in this Quonset hut was a white college kid with a big broom mop, something about six feet wide, that you would push, and the police were saying, using the “n” word, not colored, were not fit to vote. The only thing “n’s are for is cleaning and we will show you, if you want to come down here from New York or Massachusetts and help, then you better help learn how to sweep and mop. And then they would beat them when they didn’t like what they had done.

They came out with this guy, after he had been sleeping ---the other guys were what was going on, and dumped trash in front right where he had been sleeping. He became hysterical, and I had enough training in pastoral counseling, and I had worked in mental hospitals with chaplains. The guy totally lost it. He was frozen on the mop handle. He would have been falling or screaming, but that held him up, and they began moving over towards him to beat him, and God was with me, and I knew what to do. I said, “This man needs help.” I called some of his friends, “Come get him.” I told the police, “You leave him alone. They will help him. You stay…You do this…” Everybody is letting me give the orders. Then I said, “I know how to sweep.” When the
kids got him, I took the broom, and I said, “Ok, I have the broom. “ I expected to die. It was so startling that the police did not beat me and attack me. They began like “Oh, we’ve had enough. It’s clean enough.” Some little line and left.

Had they beaten me, they would have turned on the others who were left, and it would have just spread. But it might have been enough, and I was thinking rapidly, if I offer myself, maybe they won’t turn back on these students. Maybe if this is enough blood, the women and others—now the women had turned out that the black women were terribly beaten for the week they were in prison. There was a lot of violence. I’ve never been able to guarantee there wouldn’t be violence. Those ladies singing about the blood of the lamb and the fountain could never know that they almost caused a miracle in me. I laid down the mop, dumped the trash. No guards followed me. There was no need for words, but I was in charge. I realized I was in command. And the prisoners and the guards recognized this. There was no need for words. I joined my comrades seated on the floor. It was time for me to pray to myself. But words, wonderful words did come to me, despite my fears and doubts and old shame that I could not endure the torture. This time God was with me. God was on my side. And instinctively, I had been led by God’s Holy Spirit or whatever to do the single right thing. I didn’t realize I had acted and spoken to my jailors, “my warders, freely and friendly and clearly, as though it were mine to command.” That’s in quotes. That’s the line I thought. The quote is from Dietrich Bonhoffer’s Letters and Papers from Prison. And Bonhoffer had experiences where the other prisoners turned to him as a German leader and minister, but sometimes he did things and the guards would obey him. As though it were mine to command when I thought the words my soul could hear the words of Bonhoffer from his Nazi concentration camp. Many time I had circulated poems of Bonhoffer to prisoners. I had proclaimed his name in sermons. I read Bonhoffer to Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman the night before they came to Mississippi. I had used Bonhoffer to people facing torture. And now the words were for me. And this is Bonhoffer…some of the lines from his poem, “Who Am I?” Who am I?

They often tell me I would step from my cell’s confinement, calmly, cheerfully, firmly,

like a squire from his country house
Who am I?
They often would tell me talk to my warders, freely, and friendly and clearly as though it
were mine to command
Who am I?
They mock me now, these lonely questions of mine, whoever I am,
Thou knowest God, I am thine.
I had not planned that in any strategy of what we would do afore hand. I told people
don’t count on me, don’t send me down there. I’m not going to be able to help. I’m worthless.

Different point in closing. I don’t know how I get in these places, and these things happen. I think I’m supposed to write about them. Some of them I certainly talked about in colleges and churches all over the world. At the Democratic convention in 1964, I had held back the preceding fall—the minister can’t get involved in politics. There wasn’t anybody else, so I did. The Freedom Democratic party was organized out of the Freedom Vote in the fall of ’63 when Aaron [Henry] ran for governor. I ran for Lt. Governor. We lost, but 90,000 black people who weren’t registered tried to vote, and we publicized to the nation that the only reason we lost is that his brother, his black brother-in-law was a Methodist minister, and he was a lay leader in the black church, and I was a Methodist minister and you can’t win in Mississippi unless you have a Southern Baptist. (laugh)

We had to laugh at the absurdity. At the Atlantic City Convention, we are fighting, we have aroused the nation. The system is working, and the White House says that this Freedom Democrats have got to be controlled. Mrs. Hamer must never be allowed to speak again. I’m in a meeting with Aaron [Henry] and with Martin [Luther King], and with Walter Reuther, the head of the labor unions in the country. The meeting is chaired by Hubert Humphrey, who explains that Johnson says, unless he stops the Civil Rights people, he won’t be allowed to become president. Mrs. Hamer to his face has said, “If you take this job, this way, you’ll never be able to do any good for peace, or old people or medical care. Mr. Humphrey I’m going to pray to Jesus for you.” She wasn’t at the last meeting. We turned down everything, the compromises.
say the peace of the world is at stake. Humphrey and Ruether have begun to get
desperate. Byron Ruston is there and Martin. They have already controlled Martin. He
has given in. He will do what they say. I push Martin to do what’s right. Andy [Young]
says, Dr. King, you can’t go against the White House. Walter Reuther says to Martin,
“We will cut off your money and the Foundation money if you don’t do what the White
House says. And Martin agrees, but then made an agreement with me that he would
publically support what the government wanted, but when he talked to our delegates, he
would not do a kind of sermon. And they wanted our delegates to assemble to obey
Martin and he kept his word. The last thing Humphrey told us when we said we are
going back, and people will be jailed and he said, “You Civil Rights people don’t know
what’s going on. I may be in an concentration camp in the next year or so. We said,
“What?” Walter Reuther said, “Nine months ago, we had a meeting on August 24. Nine
months ago, we almost lost this country in a military coup. We have barely survived,
and we don’t know whether we are going to make it.” I started counting back.
November 24, 1963, what is that date? I get a chill. That’s November 22 that we almost
lost this country to a coup.

ES: Thank you so much. There’s an opportunity for folks who want lunch.
(indistinguishable comment)
Gracious God, thank you very much for your spirit that throughout the ages have guided
your people for freedom, for who we are to be. And God, thank you for Ed, his passion,
his love for you, and his heart to share with us. I pray that these stories might live in us
and we remember, as we learn from the past. God, most of all, thank you that we might
be open for your spirit, the calling that you have for each of our lives, the way that we
have an opportunity to serve you and to be a part of your mission in the world today.
We thank you for this church. We thank you for this time we have had. We pray that
you continue to work in and through us. God, we open ourselves up to you. In your
holy and precious name, we pray. Amen
Emily Sanford has just closed us in pray. We have returned after three and one half hours to the front of Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church after Ed King has led us on this Civil Rights tour.
EK: Over here is the parking lot now.

ES: Oh. The house is gone.

EK: Yeah. During the Civil Rights we would meet there. I’ve been there on national strategy meetings with Martin and Andy Young in the room as we planned things. But it could have been marked forever as the place where Bob Dillon was killed. Bob Dillon was almost killed out here. I had an office in the chapel, an office behind the sanctuary part where we were. One evening students came over and said, “White men are attacking your house. There’s a civil rights meeting going on in there with students. A truck cleared that way (????????) pickup truck of some sort came. Two white men got out, and they had something that looked like guns—big packages—and they went right through the front door into the house, and we’ve got six men with hunting guns, rifles, from the dorm, and they are moving on your house from the back side. What do we do?” And I said, “Well, everybody is nonviolent in the house, but we better get over there and see what it is.” So they surround. And I said, “Let me be the one that goes to the door.” And I rush the door, grab and open it, and these men are ready to shoot. The whites are in there and there’s Dillon on the floor with the guitar. And another guy with a guitar. Over here, on the ES: (indistinguishable) somebody else may want some water. I’m out of water.

(Wind sounds, paper rustling)

ED: I’ll share some more testimonial. Fall from grace and coming back. One of the pieces in that folder is about me, and the Fairgrounds failing. I guess I retold that story I’m sorry. When I faced the fact that I could not help a bleeding man by my side.

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Who am I?
They mock me now, these lonely questions of mine, whoever I am,

Thou knowest God, I am thine.

I had not planned that in any strategy of what we would do afore hand. I told people don’t count on me, don’t send me down there. I’m not going to be able to help. I’m worthless.

Different point in closing. I don’t know how I get in these places, and these things happen. I think I’m supposed to write about them. Some of them I certainly talked about in colleges and churches all over the world. At the Democratic convention in 1964, I had held back the preceding fall—-the minister can’t get involved in politics. There wasn’t anybody else, so I did. The Freedom Democratic party was organized out of the Freedom Vote in the fall of ’63 when Aaron [Henry] ran for governor. I ran for Lt. Governor. We lost, but 90,000 black people who weren’t registered tried to vote, and we publicized to the nation that the only reason we lost is that his brother, his black brother-in-law was a Methodist minister, and he was a lay leader in the black church, and I was a Methodist minister and you can’t win in Mississippi unless you have a Southern Baptist. (laugh)

We had to laugh at the absurdity. At the Atlantic City Convention, we are fighting, we have aroused the nation. The system is working, and the White House says that this Freedom Democrats have got to be controlled. Mrs. Hamer must never be allowed to speak again. I’m in a meeting with Aaron [Henry] and with Martin [Luther King], and with Walter Reuther, the head of the labor unions in the country. The meeting is chaired by Hubert Humphrey, who explains that Johnson says, unless he stops the Civil Rights people, he won’t be allowed to become president. Mrs. Hamer to his face has said, “If you take this job, this way, you’ll never be able to do any good for peace, or old people or medical care. Mr. Humphrey I’m going to pray to Jesus for you.” She wasn’t at the last meeting. We turned down everything, the compromises. They say the peace of the world is at stake. Humphrey and Ruether have begun to get desperate. Byron Ruston is there and Martin. They have already controlled
Martin. He has given in. He will do what they say. I push Martin to do what’s right. Andy [Young] says, Dr. King, you can’t go against the White House. Walter Reuther says to Martin, “We will cut off your money and the Foundation money if you don’t do what the White House says. And Martin agrees, but then made an agreement with me that he would publically support what the government wanted, but when he talked to our delegates, he would not do a kind of sermon. And they wanted our delegates to assemble to obey Martin and he kept his word. The last thing Humphrey told us when we said we are going back, and people will be jailed and he said, “You Civil Rights people don’t know what’s going on. I may be in a concentration camp in the next year or so. We said, “What?” Walter Reuther said, “Nine months ago, we had a meeting on August 24. Nine months ago, we almost lost this country in a military coup. We have barely survived, and we don’t know whether we are going to make it.” I started counting back. November 24, 1963, what is that date? I get a chill. That’s November 22 that we almost lost this country to a coup.

ES: Thank you so much. There’s an opportunity for folks who want lunch. (indistinguishable comment) Gracious God, thank you very much for your spirit that throughout the ages have guided your people for freedom, for who we are to be. And God, thank you for Ed, his passion, his love for you, and his heart to share with us. I pray that these stories might live in us and we remember, as we learn from the past. God, most of all, thank you that we might be open for your spirit, the calling that you have for each of our lives, the way that we have an opportunity to serve you and to be a part of your mission in the world today. We thank you for this church. We thank you for this time we have had. We pray that you continue to work in and through us. God, we open ourselves up to you. In your holy and precious name, we pray. Amen

Emily Sanford has just closed us in prayer. We have returned after three and one half hours to the front of Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church after Ed King has led us on this Civil Rights tour.
Oral History Civil Rights Tour Part 3 with Ed King

EK: I’ll read a few more poems. We’ll get over to Medgar’s house, but it’s probably closed, but we will just go by there. It’s now a small museum of photographs, things like that. The outside is the important part. Sixty three, fifteen years ago, is very important in American history. I think the changes, the great changes, really are that year. The next year the Civil Rights movement is more secure, but we don’t know what is going on in the nation, and we don’t want to know and we are afraid to know, and we don’t want to know right now. Who’s keeping files on us, the funny old Citizen’s Council in Jackson, some fuddy duddy bureaucrat, whose a cousin of Ross Barnett, running the Sovereignty Commission? This is one of the few places in America that we are not being wiretapped. Everything we do on our phones, our mail, and so on. Mail is now safer than other things because it takes so long to do it. Remind me in a moment of a story about the mail, though.

The church visit is the star here, hoping this will go well. People are turned away at First Baptist, no surprise. But the reason we go ahead and start that week is the injunctions I have mentioned. And the injunctions, specifically prohibited churches. When they had done that? What is a Christian going to do when the law, Hitler or Stalin or Ross Barnett, when the law in advance tells you which churches you can go to, and which churches you can’t. That’s pretty incredible, when you think about the state intervening, it gets worse. But here’s this power. In a Gandhian sense, we have to decide: Will we defy the injunction?

Now let me give you some history which I gave some to some school teachers at Millsaps last week and will mention again tomorrow. I’ve written about, hopefully, will finally get some things published but somehow, along the way, I have been at extraordinary places, with extraordinary people, to hear and see extraordinary things. I always waited for somebody else who was there to talk and write about it. And these people have either died and didn’t do it or were killed and didn’t do it.

The demonstration is at Woolworth’s and you’ve read about that. The photographs in there should not be widely distributed. If you don’t want to keep one of those, I can use it with somebody else. If you want to keep it, that’s fine. But you have to pay a fortune to use those in a magazine or a book. The University Press has come out with a book this year on the Jackson movement and the Woolworth sit-in. They paid to have the photographs put in the book. But I wanted you to get some sense of it. I’m there, calling Medgar every few minutes. The final picture on the walls out here has me as a nice minister comforting people, which I was doing in the end.

But I had been in jail on sit-ins, I’ve forgotten how many times. By then, I didn’t have to prove anything, and I had a job. A Christian minister should have gone over and leave my body over their bodies--I think if I had just been a minister and walked in the store, and I saw people being beaten, I might have put my body in between. Well, the people who went to that counter, they knew they might be killed. It was not up to me to say something and, I had a job, and I had to talk to Medgar. Once we heard that the first person had been beaten and picked up unconscious with blood coming out of his nose and ears, Medgar wants to come. I have to say to him, “You have to stay there getting national media, and I have to stay here, phoning you. We knew before it started that you and I couldn’t join it.” He knew that I had another reason not to join it.

After one of my arrests in Alabama in 1960, I was asked by the lawyers for Dr. King’s SCLC-- we’ve been arrested by chance almost-- I was called to the sit-in, praised at the seminary, and I had been arrested by accident. I was trying to organize, behind the scenes, meetings of Methodist women and black women who had been in prison of students at Huntington College and black students. I was doing everything I could not to be on the front line. After I was on the front line, everybody was arrested for disorderly conduct. The lawyers needed to show that disorderly conduct was fraud, so I was asked to join a black minister in a plan the lawyers had to go to the Supreme Court.
So I was staying at the Jefferson Davis Hotel having meetings on several trips down there, using the Methodist Conference office, who knew I was working with the generational staff. The bishop had to approve, the Board of Education had approved, and I was using whoever the Board of Education director was—institution again—but that looked terribly respectful to the police. They didn’t know those church was giving me names of secret whites to meet with. The hotel people knew I was fairly respectable. I asked if could have the Methodist minister to have breakfast with me. In the Jefferson Davis Hotel the dining room is the Plantation Dining Room, and I said I had a Methodist minister, and I have a credit card and can I put my breakfast on my room bill? They looked at me like I was a nut. But I hadn’t been drinking, and said, “Yes.” I had one of the white ministers risking his job come have breakfast with me. At lunch I asked, “I have another minister that I need to have another lunch meeting with, “Can he come?” “Well, of course.” Can I put him on the bill? I wanted to take this evidence to the Supreme Court. “Well, of course.” And the Reverend Elroy Embry, a black Methodist minister came.

And we were arrested, and accused of disorderly conduct, breaching the peace, and trespassing on private property, and sentenced to a month or so on the chain gang. I served on the work gang with black and white. They didn’t have chains. The blacks were laughing because I thought they still had chains. They had dropped the chains just a few months earlier. Out on the road gang, I learned a few things. Terrible heat again. The guards, at one point, stopped for water. They had a barrel and a dipper. One dipper for the whites and the whites all got their water before the black prisoners did. And the guard said, “Don’t let HIM have any water.” And the other white persons wouldn’t. And then it was the blacks turn. At the end of the black prisoners turn. One man came over and brought a cup of water to me. It was not Elroy. This was a black man in the hands of white power accused of some crime. He knew what to fear more I did. And I thought he was going to beaten on the spot and I would, too, and the officer said, “We’ve taken too much time here. We’ve got to get back to work.”

The local Montgomery paper took a photograph of me in black and white stripes on a prison work gang in Alabama, ran it on the front page of the Jackson paper and identified me as a member of the Methodist Conference. That did not go over well with the bishop and the church. I was actually due to come up for membership in the Conference and ordination as elder that year. We made a deal that I could be named an elder, and I was being appointed as a pastor to a church in Montana, where they expected you to be ordained to do the sacraments. The bishop was encouraging me to make Montana my permanent home. They needed somebody for the summer while the current minister went back to school, and I had figured that I could never come back. So I was shopping. They were looking for seminarians who might come, and I got ordained elder.

Back at seminary they said, “You are the only person we have ever heard of who is a Christian minister without a denominational affiliation. That will come as denominations begin to recognize everybody. But did you plan this? Well, it had not crossed my mind that I was another crusader. So I was an elder in the Conference without being a member. This got postponed for several years until 1963, and the bishop had agreed there was a chaplain who had left in the middle of the year and I found out through Medgar that there was an opening and applied for it, and since I had a prison record in Alabama that compensated for my being a white Mississippian. (laugh) Do you want to add that it was at Tougaloo? hdk)

I got the job and as I said, I went through the bureaucracy, but I came here in January, the week after the 28 men had signed their statement. A dozen of them have already been driven out of the state, and I am coming in trying to stay quietly behind the scenes, but to do something, you know, crossing the lines of—to be voted on for Conference membership at the Annual Conference where they have had terrible politics, as I’ve said, who goes to General Conference, what resolutions they would pass, and Roy Clark, head of the Board of Ministerial Education, got my vote separated and postponed several days. It was due the day of the Woolworth
demonstration and there were people from Conference, only two blocks away, coming down—the little thing you read I mentioned the Methodist minister who actually came and Roy Clark didn’t think that afternoon was a good time for me to be voted on. He said, “You weren’t photographed, your wife, who was a native of Jackson, has already been arrested. I’m not voting on you this evening. Let’s wait until the last day of Conference, which is Friday.” That was the day the students marched. The night before the students marched, we held a demonstration of black clergy at the Post Office Federal Building. I had the bishop of the Episcopal Church, the father of Dr. Gray, who had been on the front lines at Ole Miss, standing up to the rioters. His father, pushing 80, had an assistant bishop who was terrible, a moderate. I asked the old bishop, “Will you go to jail? If you stand with us, maybe this black minister can make one final appeal that starts to let blacks and whites start talking openly together. Not the secret meetings we are having behind the scenes and defying the mayor, if he won’t do it as an official, can we get Episcopalians and Methodists and others to say openly, ‘We are citizens of Jackson and we are talking’.” And I said, “If you were there and I’m there, probably there won’t be arrests. It’s federal property, but they will hesitate, and then the black minister can read this statement, ‘If we do not begin TODAY, we’re afraid the high school students will march tomorrow. If we have SOME change, that can wait.’” Some people in the Episcopal Church heard about this. His secretary came crying and said, “Do you know he’s had heart attacks since his son was in the front line at Ole Miss. Do you know his health is bad? His wife is already sick with cancer. He’s going to retire. Don’t make him do this.” I said, “I’m not making him, I’m appealing.” She said, “You can’t do this to that old man.” And many people have offered, and I went to him and I lied, I said, “We thank you. Medgar knows you are willing. But we THINK we won’t need you.” And I sort of thought that. This IS a US building. Are they going to come on a US building? Well, yes, they did. I tried to introduce the black minister, because I knew something about controlling frightened people, a mob. I wore my purple clergy stole, tried to have an opening prayer, and things quieted down a little, and then the black minister started—when we got out there, the white mobs were just screaming, and there I am with the stole, and I calmed it a little, and the black minister starts reading his comments, and the police charge and attack us. Medgar Evers gets me out of jail on bond. Anne Moody in her book is critical because I got bonded out. Medgar Evers bonds me out in order to get voted on by the Methodist Conference. The Conference rejects me as a minister by a vote of 85-84. People may have been segregationists were able to say another minister can have a different viewpoint. A remarkable vote. The troops are still at Ole Miss, and here the Methodist Conference by only a margin of only two vote change or three, and the bishop will probably have to cast the deciding vote. But the bishop never told them that he had appointed me to Tougaloo, nor did the District Superintendent say people who were there—-it was a closed meeting. A remarkable sign to me: “My God, if it was that close, I’m hurt. But there is hope, there is hope, there is hope.”

More people started—the church visits start the next week. The visit comes to Galloway, after people are turned away at First Baptist. We decide that the injunction has to be defied or the Gandhian movement will be ruined. Every city in the south will have an injunction if we don’t defy it. Civil disobedience would mean Gandhian and you do that. Medgar decided we would defy the injunction. We didn’t want a lot of people arrested. And particularly people who had gone to church and he said, “I mean the injunction. None of the people who go to church with me will be named. And I will be the only one arrested. And then we will get it back in court.” Deeper history here. Roy Wilkins, Medgar Evers’ boss in the NAACP—-are we supposed to be back at the church at noon?

Voice: Yes. (Comment cannot be heard.)

EK: Wilkins, Medgar’s boss, comes down on Saturday after the 400-500 students, by that time we had gotten lots of reports had gotten out of jail—-whose families had gotten them out—others we wanted to stay and fill the jails. But we had gotten these horrible reports of the violence. Wilkins damns the Jackson police, the
Jackson white officials. He makes a powerful statement which is carried in the New York Times that this is fascism, this is like Nazi Germany. The press leaves, and Medgar says, “Stay with me. “ I’m interested. He says, “Stay with me.” Wilkins says, “Let’s go to your office.” I say, “Ok. I’ll be here in the outer office.” Medgar says, “Come with me.” I’d been introduced to Wilkins before, and I was chaplain of Tougaloo, terribly respectable and this kind of thing. I think Wilkins assumed that any middle class minister, though I was a white southerner—any middle class minister would be opposed to demonstrations.

The door closes, and Wilkins turns on Medgar and says, “Who do you think you are? Martin Luther King? There’s too much Martin Luther King in this country now”. And then proceeds to damn Martin Luther King. And says the NAACP has kept its distance, has never supported—its actually given an award to Martin, but the average membership thought they did, but we’re not going to have the NAACP involved in anything like that, and, of course, the issue was not just would we act like Martin, when the demonstrations started, when the talks started, the Daily News said, “Negroes threaten Birmingham here.”

The issue was could Birmingham be repeated anywhere in America. The Montgomery boycott did NOT spread to lots of things. Birmingham was repeated in Shreveport. It might get repeated in Beaumont, Texas. It might get repeated in Tallahassee. And then the White House would have a mess on its hands, and the world criticism—the world had criticized and the Communists had criticized America when 500 people went to jail when the Freedom Riders came here to Jackson. The government wanted to keep the lid on peace here, but look good to the world. And Wilkins said, “Medgar will NOT cooperate with Martin. You will NOT invite him to Jackson. You will stop the demonstrations. There will be no more mass marches. And if you continue, and you work with Martin Luther King, you know it means your job.” Part of me says, “Am I hearing this?” The other part is, “How am I hearing this?”

Afterwards, I met with Medgar privately and I said, “Did I hear that right? I thought this man was threatening to fire you.” Medgar said, “I wanted you there. Yes, this is not the first time he has threatened to fire me.” I thought, “What’s going on?” “And he means it. And if I do cooperate with Martin, and we don’t stop the demonstrations, I’ll lose my job.” He said, “I know he means it because this is the second time this year that he’s told me I’d lose my job. At the end of the summer last year, I was ordered to keep James Meredith out of Ole Miss. I told him that I didn’t control Meredith. I would lose my job. I honestly told Wilkins that nobody controls James Meredith but God Almighty. Meredith is a prophet, and he is a man of prayer, and he will NOT be stopped by us. And the promise was that Ole Miss could be desegregated after the election in 1964. I said, “Why is Wilkins doing this?” He said, “It’s not Wilkins. This threat to take my job is the president—Washington, and the foundations that run America. Wilkins gets so much money from Ford, Rockefeller, whatever, the money didn’t come from people and their dollar memberships. I don’t know whether it was this way historically, but in later times you had to have $100,000-$200,000 to take a case to the Supreme Court. It just costs that much.” And he said, “Wilkins probably is against things the way the NAACP does it. But Wilkins is under orders from Washington, and the big money people of the United States.”

So he wrestles with this over the next two weeks. He then defies the injunction, takes the people to the Baptist Church. We had had demonstrations for two days on the golf course. He’s amazed that he wasn’t arrested. But Judge Cox, the federal judge, had taken over from the city judge’s, the county judge’s order and an arrest would have meant that federal officials could have arrested Medgar. And then they would have said, “What’s President John Kennedy, what’s Attorney General Robert Kennedy doing arresting a black leader in Ross Barnett’s state. So Medgar finally makes up his mind, challenges them, nothing happens on the golf course and at the church, he again is not arrested. He was the one who brought in the police to follow him watching. Two black women start crying at the First Baptist Church and saying, “We will NEVER have any change. This is
hopeless. If we can’t worship and pray together,” and Medgar decides on the spur of the moment, “I know Galloway is open and it’s mid-June and it’s close, so let’s go over to Galloway Church.”

At Galloway Church its fifteen minute after the hour or later, because they stayed around the Baptist Church until the police were getting close to arresting them, and they are not admitted. The church had voted, without authority to vote, that the doors were closed. But the pastor knew that wouldn’t stand up in the Methodist system, but it that’s what people wanted to do, let’s keep talking, and he will go back to what is a Christian church, and what is a Methodist Church. And they were turned away at Galloway. And a note is given to Dr. Selah, who has been there nineteen years, and he announces from the pulpit that he will not be there at the evening service. That he cannot worship or lead a service any place that turns anyone away. He will then turn it over to the bishop, who wanted the Associate pastor, Jerry Furr, who had signed the Statement of the 28, and who Galloway had not fired him, as other churches had. He also announced he would [leave]. That left it to the bishop for what to do.

The bishop could have insisted that the doors be opened, assign a new pastor who would (open the church?), and the bishop ducks it. For three months Galloway has visiting ministers, all of whom are willing to come to a church famously segregated. Then the bishop finally names a moderate who thinks if he works carefully, he can integrate the church, that Dr. Selah after nineteen years, couldn’t do. The minister who came, Dr. Cunningham, son-in-law had signed the Statement of the 28 and had been driven out of the state, and he still thought you could do these quiet things.

So Medgar is really on the spot. Will there be another Birmingham in Jackson? Will Medgar lose his job? That’s Sunday. On Monday and Tuesday Medgar is seen by few people collapsed at his desk, sobbing. The president of the branch told me this. On Tuesday night we have a terrible meeting. We had been shutting down the mass meetings—only a hundred people or so, and Medgar pulls me aside right after the meeting starts to a little room in the front of the church. In this tiny church there are rooms on either side and Medgar needed to talk to me again. He is a born again person. Physically, he’s a smiling light almost a halo, and he said. “I know what I’m going to do. I’m going to invite Martin Luther King to Jackson. We will work together. What the students have done with sit-ins and freedom rides is the only way right now that the mass of black people will become involved. If they are waiting just for Supreme Court decisions, we have taught Gandhi, not just Gandhi made the people involved, not just Gandhi talking to prime ministers, and SNCC and Core believed in the people being involved. And Medgar said, “Yes, I’ll lose my job. This is Tuesday night, and by Wednesday or Thursday, it will be known that I have invited Martin. I tried to call him today, but Martin wasn’t in.” We know from FBI records and wiretaps on Martin that Medgar had tried to call that day. It’s like a load has been lifted. Three hours later, he’s been shot dead.

I don’t think it was because he visited Galloway Church. What he told me had led to this decision was Christian witness. He felt terrible about Selah and Jerry Furr losing their jobs. He said, “I was so inspired by those 28 young men. Now one of them who survived has lost his job. What will Dr. Selah do? He’s been there almost 20 years.” I explained our procedure. Medgar was a Baptist. I said, “They’ll be without a church, but somebody national will find some money for a salary for a few weeks. They’ll have to leave the state, but as with the other men who have gone to California or Indiana or somewhere, but after five or six weeks, some bishop somewhere found an assignment for them. They still paid an enormous price. They didn’t think of their security and as for Selah, certainly he expected to live and die here.” Medgar said, “I feel so guilty. But I feel so good, because if those white ministers from Galloway Church could take a stand, I can take a stand.” Our church inspiring a black leader to make his decision from a white leader!
Now things get worse and worse in ’63. I am absolutely convinced that Medgar is executed by orders from probably the Ford Foundation, the CIA, working with the world image of the country. I think they bypassed the president, who would not have supported it. The US military is involved, the CIA, the FBI. There may have been some local racists who do not know who who’s pulling their strings. I don’t even think that Beckwith fired the shot. But all that is a different story. I know much of it, and I’ve had people, the last few years, coming to me to confess.

In November 1963 we were having church visits constantly. In September of ’63, the Citizens Council crunched down the Jackson churches. Fondren Presbyterian has voted to open their doors. The Lutheran Church has voted to open their doors. People are discussing the closed churches within the community, so we are finally having these discussions. The Sovereignty Commission and the Citizens Councils seize moderate white Christians and are saying, “Yes, we can take a tiny step.” They actually send instructions to conservative laymen how to fight back in your church. State government telling a church how to manoeuver things! My God!

And the churches are moving, so they decide to crack down, and they crack down on Capital Street Methodist Church and start the arrests. Capital Street didn’t ask for anybody to be arrested. For three weeks Tougaloo and Millsaps students had gone together to stand and knock at the door of the church and then when Millsaps students from Sunday School would come out, sing at Galloway and stand together. When it happens. Suddenly, people are arrested.

Two weeks later, at Galloway, John Garner, who’s a member of the church and the Christian Fellowship class decide what can we do. There are people in the class now who were here fifty years ago and have grown up in the institutional Methodist church decide that Galloway has people inside it that are no longer in control of the Board, the minister is trying to be neutral so they invite a student from Tougaloo. Her teacher invites her to attend Sunday School and church at Galloway where it is supposed to be limited to members and guests. The police come inside the church and arrest the church member and his guest. We had people lined up if they get put out, they will stand on the stairs. We have other people to come stand with them. We never thought the police would come inside the church. So that’s where we are.

The World Council of Churches knows what’s happening. That people have been arrested at Methodist churches and other churches in Jackson. Over the year other people are arrested in about a dozen other churches. The Methodist women put up the bond money, $1000. A year in Parchman is what you are sentenced to. And we had outside clergy and laity volunteering.

We crossed the national scene in November. On November 22 people hear the word that the president has been shot. They gather. The bells ring. They know that something has happened. It is noon, people rush in, fill the chapel, and are waiting. Then the news is announced that the president is dead. We had an English teacher, from England, a well-known 20th Century poet, Elizabeth Sewell. She had never heard black funerals and people screamed and cried when they heard that Kennedy was dead. So she wrote this poem about this incident:

The Omens, Tougaloo College, November 22, Mississippi
The cry that drowned the death muse that strange and mortal????southern negro
It was Troy that Israel when they breached the final rampart and the great city fell,
That was not women’s weeping, men’s groaning prayer, but a flock of birds rose screaming
Through the suddenly thickened air circled once far above us
Then took off God knows where.
It may be that life goes onward, everything can be restored
But instinct omniscient is not to be ignored.
The city is fallen, fallen and dark leans ????

Female Voice: (indistinct)
EK: Well, we can talk some ....