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FROM: Meeting of the Official Board
June 12, 1961

Mr. Hugh Smith introduced the following resolution which was duly seconded:

"Be it resolved by the Official Board of Galloway Memorial Church that the greeters or ushers of the church are hereby instructed to decline to admit any person or persons, white or colored, who, in the judgment of the greeters or ushers, seek admission for the purpose of creating an incident, resulting in a breach of the peace."

Before requesting discussion from the floor, Chairman Mann asked Dr. Selah if he would care to make any comments regarding the resolution whereupon he made a statement, copy of which is attached and made a part of these minutes.

After the resolution instructing the ushers to bar potential trouble makers was introduced and before the vote on it was taken, I made the following statement and said that I wished my remarks to be made a matter of public record.

"In my judgment the Freedom Riders hope to be turned away. If we do it, we will be playing into their hands, and they will cry to high heaven that Galloway bars colored people. I feel that the best way to handle these people is to let them in and let me read the statement I have prepared. Listen carefully to my statement which I would have read had the Negroes come.

A STATEMENT TO THE FREEDOM RIDERS

"I notice that we have some colored people with us today. In this time of racial tension I feel that two things should be said:

"First, if you came at the urging of the Congress of Racial Equality or some other organization, I am convinced that you did not come in a sincere spirit to worship God with us. If you came to embarrass us by flouting an old custom, you have not succeeded. If you hoped to be turned away so that you could use the incident for propaganda purposes, you have failed.

"Second, it is not sinful for white people to prefer to worship with white people or for colored people to prefer to worship with colored people. The sin comes when a church seeks to put up a color bar before the Cross of Christ. As Christians we cannot say to anybody, "You cannot come into the house of God." To discriminate against a man because of the color of his skin is contrary to the will of God.

"This pulpit has always preached the law of Christian love. This law means that we must seek for all men, black or white, the same rights, the same justice, the same equality of opportunity to develop the abundant life that we seek for ourselves. Anything less than this is not Christian love. This pulpit has plead for goodwill between the races; for only in an atmosphere of good will can we reach a peaceful solution of our problems.

"In my judgment your coming here today has not increased inter-racial goodwill or helped in the solution of the race problem. My

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From: Minutes of Meeting of Official Board
June 12, 1961

advice to you is to go home and let the southern people, black and white, work out their own problem by orderly and constitutional means."

"Now let me nail down this principle - there can be no color bar in a Christian Church. Neither the General Conference, nor the Annual Conference, nor the Council of Bishops, nor the preacher, nor the Official Board of the local church can put up a color bar in the church. That matter is determined by the nature of Christianity. The house of God is a place of prayer for all people-- black and white.

"There is nothing in the regulations of the church to bar colored people from membership. When a person seeks membership, he is not asked about the color of his skin. He is asked about his faith in God as revealed in Christ, and he is asked to promise to support and attend the church. Salvation is not by color but by faith.

"Since, as a matter of Christian principle, colored people cannot be barred either from worshiping here or from membership, what would I do in the present tense situation if a colored person applied for membership? I would have to tell him that he would feel more comfortable with his own people and that it was his duty to join a colored church and help it.

"What should a white church do in a community that contained only a few colored families-- not enough to support a church of their own? The white people should invite the colored people to come in with them.

"Negroes are not apt to seek to join white churches. The Negro preachers here in Jackson that I have talked with say that they really do not want to intermingle with the whites, but that they resent the laws and ropes that bar them. As someone has said, "Take the dare out of it, and ninety per cent of the problem is solved."

"Now, gentlemen, let me reiterate the Christian principle-- there can be no color bar before the Cross of Christ."

W. B. Selah

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