[ms-0436.005.010.007]

I should say in the beginning that I do not feel it is I who stand before the bar of justice but rather all of us who have perpetuated the evils against which I have made at least a belated gesture of protest. Nonetheless, a decent respect for the opinions of my Board of Trustees, my professional colleagues and the wider community prompts this statement describing the basis for my action.

Reasonable men can hardly deny that those twin enemies of democracy, racial discrimination and racial segregation, are much in evidence here in the San Diego Region. It is not just in the South where we have inherited the sins of our fathers. For the skeptical, a walk through Logan Heights on a Saturday night, attendance at a church in Logan Heights on a Sunday morning, a look at the Negro unemployment rate, a check on school drop-outs among the Negro youth, comparisons of rates on crime, addiction, broken homes--all these would be very instructive. They do not bespeak Christian brotherhood. They tell the ancient and tragic story that the inner man can be murdered or maimed just as his body can be: Only it takes longer, is more painful and those commiting the act may do so by default and hence be blind to their own culpability. And strangely, when twinges of guilt are felt they can be blocked off by divorcing effect from cause and thereby justifying discrimination and segregation by saying that the Negro is poor, or surly, or slovenly, or violent, or drunken, or in any other wise unworthy simply because he wants to be.

For brevity I have over simplified the case. Many Negroes are not so victimized, or even in the face of it have made their way to remarkable personal achievement. Many Whites have acted with responsibility and with great charity. Yet Logan Heights is an ugly fact. Discrimination in employment is a shameful fact. Negro resentment--even fury--is an explosive fact. White fear mixed with guilt are counter facts escalating the whole situation into a crisis. It is first and foremost a moral crisis but it is also a societal crisis that can be likened to a tinder box with a short and lighted fuse.

If the condition described is in essence accurate, what then are the alternative courses of action. If we do nothing and hope that time will soften the hearts of both the black man and the white man then we delude ourselves and shorten the burning fuse. If we say that the status quo is right and as Whites resent the Negro's rising level of expectation and his militant determination to achieve full citizenship rights, then we institute an American apartheid which will have to be enforced with police power surrounding the ghetto. If we say, as the more enlightened person does, that the legislative bodies and the courts will solve the problem for us, we forget that we the people are the legislative bodies and the courts and, sadly, there are pressures for evil among us that have to be countered by pressures for good. The point being made here is that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the famous Supreme Court decision of 1954 could not have been enacted or enforced without positive pressures of almost revolutionary magnitude.

The Congress of Racial Equality, made up of Blacks and Whites, finds its philosophic base in the Christian ethic most eloquently stated by Thoreau and Gandhi: Evil cannot be countenanced but neither can that counter-evil, violence, be used to overthrow it. Non-violent, passive but inexorable protest and resistance is the credo and is the technique. The members of the Congress of Racial Equality are for the most part middle class, well educated Negroes and Whites who take the essentially conservative position that Black Nationalism is no answer; that White Supremacy enforced by police power is no answer; that a policy of gradual change is no answer as the present race riots dramatically demonstrate. The only answer, and one that must come quickly, lies in non-violent but militant pressure to break the cycle of employment discrimination leading to poverty leading to slum segregation along racial lines leading to poor schools, leading to poorly prepared workers and then a repeat of the whole cycle.

Those in the Congress of Racial Equality are often disheartened by the awesome task of quickly effecting this necessary change with the pitifully weak means at their disposal. We have no money to buy newspaper space or radio and TV time. We can't engage in a money duel with mammoth banks or public utilities or realtors associations. We can't hire a battalion of lawyers to argue the case. We can only donate our time and our bodies to protest by picket, by speaking, by non-violent demonstrations, hoping to prick the conscience of the public into forcing the discriminatory employer to correct this evil. Oddly enough, the record shows that this has worked. Both the San Diego Gas and Electric Company and the Bank of America have scrambled to make radical change in what they had denied as being discriminatory practices; and hopefully, lesser companies will now follow their example.

One does not challenge giants with impunity. They do not admit of error easily and they have great power at their disposal. They can secure injunctions against those who protest their action and can impose such other legal fetters upon the protestant that he is soon forced between giving up the struggle or challenging the legal restriction. For most of us the latter choice involves an agonizing examination of conscience for who wants to put his family, his job, his material gains, his very person in jeopardy when his only possible benefit is a moral one? Yet who can, in the face of palpable racial injustice, answer Thoreau's penetrating question: "Must the citizen even for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then?" Laws are made by men. Legal rulings are made by men. They are not infallible. The whole legal mechanism in a democracy is based on the citizen's right to challenge existing law and to seek redress from unfair treatment. This is why we have a court system. This is the crucial function of the United States Supreme Court. A Negro named Brown had to challenge the laws of the State of Louisiana before the Supreme Court in 1954 reversed the "separate but equal" clause and ruled that segregation in the schools was unconstitutional.

To force a reconsideration of a legal ruling by the courts is not to defy or undermine law and order. It is to single out and test the validity of one small segment of man's law governing man's relationship to man. In sum these rulings make the "law and order" but who would allow by evil pressures or erosion the law and order we have in California to degenerate into the law and order of Mississippi; or the law and order we enjoy in the U. S. to be corrupted into the law and order of Nazi Germany or Communist Russia?

The last point to which I will address myself is one which seems to have offended many otherwise sympathetic citizens, to wit: Does it not flout propriety for a college dean of instruction to get himself involved in such an affair? The only answer to this question is a series of other questions. If not me, then who? Should not one who has enjoyed to full measure the benefits of American citizenship commit himself to lend aid to those not so blessed? Should it, as has been true in Mississippi, be children or near-children who act out the lesson in morality for the adult citizenry? Are not educators, like ministers, specially charged as defenders of the moral and spiritual values which are our heritage? Should I be enjoined, not only by the courts but by virtue of my position, from acting on moral issues as conscience dictates?

As you probably are aware, my wife and I were both arrested for our protest action. Although the attempt was made, we were not intimidated thereby. In past years we have had the sobering experience of contemplating the ovens at the Dachau concentration camp and the infinity of gravestones at Omaha Beach. I don't think we shall be constrained to walk in a prescribed path to useless ends.

Charles C. Collins

Charles C. Collins
August 18, 1964

I should say in the beginning that I do not feel it is I who stand before the bar of justice but rather all of us who have perpetuated the evils against which I have made at least a belated gesture of protest. Nonetheless, a decent respect for the opinions of my Board of Trustees, my professional colleagues and the wider community prompts this statement describing the basis for my action.

Reasonable men can hardly deny that those twin enemies of democracy, racial discrimination and racial segregation, are much in evidence here in the San Diego Region. It is not just in the South where we have inherited the sins of our fathers. For the skeptical, a walk through Logan Heights on a Saturday night, attendance at a church in Logan Heights on a Sunday morning, a look at the Negro unemployment rate, a check on school drop-outs among the Negro youth, comparisons of rates on crime, addiction, broken homes--all these would be very instructive. They do not bespeak Christian brotherhood. They tell the ancient and tragic story that the inner man can be murdered or maimed just as his body can be: Only it takes longer, is more painful and those commiting the act may do so by default and hence be blind to their own culpability. And strangely, when twinges of guilt are felt they can be blocked off by divorcing effect from cause and thereby justifying discrimination and segregation by saying that the Negro is poor, or surly, or slovenly, or violent, or drunken, or in any other wise unworthy simply because he wants to be.

For brevity I have over simplified the case. Many Negroes are not so victimized, or even in the face of it have made their way to remarkable personal achievement. Many Whites have acted with responsibility and with great charity. Yet Logan Heights is an ugly fact. Discrimination in employment is a shameful fact. Negro resentment--even fury--is an explosive fact. White fear mixed with guilt are counter facts escalating the whole situation into a crisis. It is first and foremost a moral crisis but it is also a societal crisis that can be likened to a tinder box with a short and lighted fuse.

If the condition described is in essence accurate, what then are the alternative courses of action. If we do nothing and hope that time will soften the hearts of both the black man and the white man then we delude ourselves and shorten the burning fuse. If we say that the status quo is right and as Whites resent the Negro's rising level of expectation and his militant determination to achieve full citizenship rights, then we institute an American apartheid which will have to be enforced with police power surrounding the ghetto. If we say, as the more enlightened person does, that the legislative bodies and the courts will solve the problem for us, we forget that we the people are the legislative bodies and the courts and, sadly, there are pressures for evil among us that have to be countered by pressures for good. The point being made here is that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the famous Supreme Court decision of 1954 could not have been enacted or enforced without positive pressures of almost revolutionary magnitude.

The Congress of Racial Equality, made up of Blacks and Whites, finds its philosophic base in the Christian ethic most eloquently stated by Thoreau and Gandhi: Evil cannot be countenanced but neither can that counter-evil, violence, be used to overthrow it. Non-violent, passive but inexorable protest and resistance is the credo and is the technique. The members of the Congress of Racial Equality are for the most part middle class, well educated Negroes and Whites who take the essentially conservative position that Black Nationalism is no answer; that White Supremacy enforced by police power is no answer; that a policy of gradual change is no answer as the present race riots dramatically demonstrate. The only answer, and one that must come quickly, lies in non-violent but militant pressure to break the cycle of employment discrimination leading to poverty leading to slum segregation along racial lines leading to poor schools, leading to poorly prepared workers and then a repeat of the whole cycle.

Those in the Congress of Racial Equality are often disheartened by the awesome task of quickly effecting this necessary change with the pitifully weak means at their disposal. We have no money to buy newspaper space or radio and TV time. We can't engage in a money duel with mammoth banks or public utilities or realtors associations. We can't hire a battalion of lawyers to argue the case. We can only donate our time and our bodies to protest by picket, by speaking, by non-violent demonstrations, hoping to prick the conscience of the public into forcing the discriminatory employer to correct this evil. Oddly enough, the record shows that this has worked. Both the San Diego Gas and Electric Company and the Bank of América have scrambled to make radical change in what they had denied as being discriminatory practices; and hopefully, lesser companies will now follow their example.

One does not challenge giants with impunity. They do not admit of error easily and they have great power at their disposal. They can secure injunctions against those who protest their action and can impose such other legal fetters upon the protestant that he is soon forced between giving up the struggle or challenging the legal restriction. For most of us the latter choice involves an agonizing examination of conscience for who wants to put his family, his job, his material gains, his very person in jeopardy when his only possible benefit is a moral one? Yet who can, in the face of palpable racial injustice, answer Thoreau's penetrating question: "Must the citizen even for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then?" Laws are made by men. Legal rulings are made by men. They are not infallible. The whole legal mechanism in a democracy is based on the citizen's right to challenge existing law and to seek redress from unfair treatment. This is why we have a court system. This is the crucial function of the United States Supreme Court. A Negro named Brown had to challenge the laws of the State of Louisiana before the Supreme Court in 1954 reversed the "separate but equal" clause and ruled that segregation in the schools was unconstitutional.

To force a reconsideration of a legal ruling by the courts is not to defy or undermine law and order. It is to single out and test the validity of one small segment of man's law governing man's relationship to man. In sum these rulings make the "law and order" but who would allow by evil pressures or erosion the law and order we have in California to degenerate into the law and

order of Mississippi; or the law and order we enjoy in the U. S. to be corrupted into the law and order of Nazi Germany or Communist Russia?

The last point to which I will address myself is one which seems to have offended many otherwise sympathetic citizens, to wit: Does it not flout propriety for a college dean of instruction to get himself involved in such an affair? The only answer to this question is a series of other questions. If not me, then who? Should not one who has enjoyed to full measure the benefits of American citizenship commit himself to lend aid to those not so blessed? Should it, as has been true in Mississippi, be children or near-children who act out the lesson in morality for the adult citizenry? Are not educators, like ministers, specially charged as defenders of the moral and spiritual values which are our heritage? Should I be enjoined, not only by the courts but by virtue of my position, from acting on moral issues as conscience dictates?

As you probably are aware, my wife and I were both arrested for our protest action. Although the attempt was made, we were not intimidated thereby. In past years we have had the sobering experience of contemplating the ovens at the Dachau concentration camp and the infinity of gravestones at Omaha Beach. I don't think we shall be constrained to walk in a prescribed path to useless ends.

Charles C. Collins

Charles C. Collins
August 18, 1964