

The New Negro Minister

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For many generations the Negro minister was taught that his place was exclusively in the pulpit; preaching the gospel and caring for the widows and orphans. He was to shun the very appearance of evil and walk not in the counsel of anything as ungodly as politics.

Why should a 'gentleman of the cloth' become alarmed over world situations, bus integration, going to school with white folk or the right to vote?

It wasn't supposed to be the minister's business if two white men tied a millstone around a sassy Chicago lad's neck, shot him, and then threw his bruised, beaten body into the muddy waters of the Tallahatchie River.

WHY, HE'D BE out of his place to question the white mayor or the white police chief about the savage, unholy bombing of a church—a house dedicated to the worship of God—by a pack of roving, murderous white men.

That era is over!

Today, in 1957, the new era is at hand—the era of the **NEW NEGRO MINISTER**. This 'new minister' carries a copy of the Constitution, a law book and a college degree in the same hand with his Bible.

This 'new minister' reads the Congressional Record as often and as analytically as he reads the Scripture. He's telling his people to sit where they please, live where they are able to buy, and to fight their oppressors with love and law.

KING OF MONTGOMERY, Steele of Tallahassee, and Shuttlesworth of Birmingham have emerged as modern editions of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Like the three Hebrew children, these **NEW NEGRO MINISTERS** are exhibiting the essential traits of young men who become eminently successful.

For years, they were caught in the grasp of Southern tradition, subjected to the humiliation of prejudice and discrimination; but they have attained, nevertheless, a position of enviable influence. What is the secret of their accomplishments?

FIRST, THE Reverends King, Steele and Shuttlesworth failed to compromise. They would not yield to threats made on them. They asked the opportunity to train their minds, and became superior intellectually.

They also failed to compromise their faith in God. A combination of physical strength, intellectuality, and faith in God gives unusual capacity for great leadership.

SECOND, THESE young men have been tested and strengthened by the injustices they have had to bear.

They simply tired of being pushed around and shoved back. They refused to be enslaved by custom, ignorance or fear of reprisal. They were not victims of opportunistic policies, nor were they slaves to expediency.

They were not even intimidated by fear of death. This is courage. Then too, these **NEW NEGRO MINISTERS**, with sublime insight that transcends reason and any consideration of personal safety, hope of reward or fear of economic pressures, have stood up to "King Jim Crow" and declared that neither they, nor their people, will serve a god of discrimination or worship the "golden image" of white supremacy. That is courage—courage in its purest sense.

Consequently, these three and the many other 'new' ministers have been given places of prominence, and they have become the means of leading this great nation to a recognition of right and justice.

All over the world, their temperance, their courage, their faith, and their leadership has been proclaimed.