

White Cleric Describes 'New Negro in Amarica'

Publication info: New Pittsburgh Courier (1959-1965) , National edition; Pittsburgh, Pa. [Pittsburgh, Pa]. 22 Feb 1964: 15.

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

The Rev. Robert Willoughby, pastor of the Mt. Olivet Methodist Church, Dearborn, Mich., speaking of the "new Negro," said that he has confidence in himself and that he is exercising his own divine prerogative as a child of God.

On a recent Sunday, the Rev. Mr. Willoughby exchanged pulpits with the Rev. Archie Rich, pastor of the John Wesley Methodist Church, a Negro congregation, in River Rouge (a Detroit suburb). Several members of each church accompanied their pastors.

Sharing the panel with Mr. Willoughby was the Rev. Dr. Clarence T. R. Nelson, pastor of the Scott Memorial Methodist Church, a Negro congregation of Detroit. Dr. Nelson told of the role of the Negro ministers and the Negro church in the battle for human rights through the years. He declared that if the white church had done its "home work" in the matter, things would not be as critical as they are.

FULL TEXT

PONTIAC, Mich.—"There is a new Negro on the scene in America today," a white Methodist minister told the approximately 75 pastors, chairmen and members of local church Commissions on Christian Social Concerns, of the Pontiac sub-district of the Flint District of the Detroit Conference of The Methodist Church, at a seminar held in Central Methodist Church here, recently.

The Rev. Robert Willoughby, pastor of the Mt. Olivet Methodist Church, Dearborn, Mich., speaking of the "new Negro," said that he has confidence in himself and that he is exercising his own divine prerogative as a child of God.

The Rev. Mr. Willoughby was one of ten Methodist ministers from Detroit, who went to Jackson, Miss., and was arrested for attempting to enter white Methodist churches there that are refusing to let Negroes in to worship.

"The Negro today has a new sense of timing—he knows that freedom and human rights are to be grasped now," the Rev. Mr. Willoughby asserted.

"The 'new' Negro has revealed new techniques in his fight for freedom and he sees a higher moral law, he knows that his goal will be attained because he knows he is right," he continued.

"The Negro senses a new kind of mission—a mission for all people, who have been disfranchised" Mr. Willoughby said.

In speaking about why he and other white ministers went to Jackson, the Mt. Olivet pastor said they went:

- (1) because we had to;
- (2) there are those in Jackson who wanted us to come;
- (3) there are those in Jackson who want their churches to be inclusive;
- (4) a Jewish rabbi, speaking at the March on Washington on Aug. 28 said "bigotry and hatred are not the worse things—silence is"!

Mr. Willoughby gave the following suggestions as to what we must do with a sense of desperation:

- (1) We must work to create a climate or atmosphere where each church will be truly inclusive;
- (2) We must enact

proper laws, legislation can restrain the immoral acts of segregation and discrimination!

(3) We must become personally involved in the struggle for . . . rights;

(4) We must establish friendships across cultural and racial lines;

(5) We must deepen ourselves with commitment to prayer.

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Sharing the panel with Mr. Willoughby was the Rev. Dr. Clarence T. R. Nelson, pastor of the Scott Memorial Methodist Church, a Negro congregation of Detroit. Dr. Nelson told of the role of the Negro ministers and the Negro church in the battle for human rights through the years. He declared that if the white church had done its "home work" in the matter, things would not be as critical as they are.

DETAILS

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| Ethnicity: | African American/Caribbean/African |
| Publication title: | New Pittsburgh Courier (1959-1965), National edition; Pittsburgh, Pa. |
| Volume: | 5 |
| Issue: | 8 |
| Pages: | 15 |
| Number of pages: | 0 |
| Publication year: | 1964 |
| Publication date: | Feb 22, 1964 |
| Publisher: | Real Times, Inc. |
| Place of publication: | Pittsburgh, Pa. |
| Country of publication: | United States, Pittsburgh, Pa. |
| Publication subject: | General Interest Periodicals--United States, Ethnic Interests, African American/Caribbean/African |
| ISSN: | 1047806X |
| Source type: | Newspaper |
| Language of publication: | English |
| Document type: | News |
| Accession number: | SFLN2NWPC0264PCJS021016676 |

ProQuest document ID: 371619852

Document URL: <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/newspapers/white-cleric-describes-new-negro-amarica/docview/371619852/se-2?accountid=11311>

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Last updated: 2016-02-09

Database: Ethnic NewsWatch

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