Friendship House Weekend at LSU; A Chance for Relevant Thinking

Southern Round Up

By Shirley Ryan

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In the wake of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, many Americans were prompted to promise themselves they'd do something concrete toward promoting inter-racial understanding and alleviating some of the deep-seated problems that accompany racism and extreme poverty.

For Baton Rouge-area residents with such ideals, the opportunity to place their sincerity and good will on the line came April 26-April 28 at Friendship House Weekend hosted by the LSU Catholic Student Center.

Attended by grass roots religious and lay leaders of varying ages, both races and many denominations, the three-day meeting had as its purpose to discuss the responsibility all Christians have in general to these problems, to examine the particular problems of our local community and to hopefully foster a community spirit that would lead to a unity of action in the future.

Dedicated to the memory and spirit of Dr. King, Friendship House Weekend provided a group of 100 Louisianians from Baton Rouge and neighboring cities as well as guests from several other states the chance to hear some relevant thinking on racial problems from local and national speakers. Though the reflections given by the speakers were undoubtedly thought-provoking and contributed from both the informational and philosophical point of view, it was perhaps in the open discussions that the real spirit of the occasion came out.

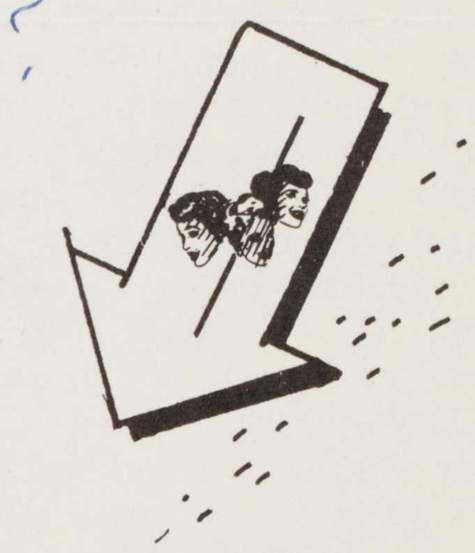
In the interest of objectivity you might say there was agreement and disagreement among the participants; there was even disagreement sometimes between those of the same race. In some very few instances it could be detected there might be a hint of underlying hostility there, but the overall attitude was one of mutual respect, openness of the spirit, and a willingness to tackle the problems together and face the future with hope side by side

The one recurring sentiment of all participants was that the weekend not result in a mere dialogue exchange. The consensus was there had been too much dialogue and rhetoric for years from everyone involved, but not enough action. After Saturday's activities a group of participants met to formulate ideas of positive action, which will be released soon.

Among the speakers for the occasion were Msgr. Daniel Cantwell, chaplain of Chicago's Friendship House for almost 25 years, Dr. Jewel Prestage of the Southern University Political Science Department, Father Rawlin Enette, Newman Club chaplain at Southern University, Father Michael Cody, chaplain at the LSU Catholic Student Center and Dr. Herb Rothschild Jr., LSU English Department.

Throughout the weekend, the Dameans, an ensemble of five seminarians playing bass, three guitars and a tambourine, gave selections of songs such as "The Spirit Is Rising All Over the Land" and provided a special touch at the occasion.

The idea for Friendship House is a lay effort to break down racial discrimination and segregation, but more implicitly to give all people the freedom to choose what they want to do without encountering barriers. In Chicago, Friendship House functions as an inter-racial center where interested people meet to work on committees and develop programs to break down barriers of discrimination. The Friendship House magazine, **Community**, is published from there also and the Chicago unit serves as a clearing house for Friendship House activities.



A STATEMENT

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED PARTICIPANTS IN THE FRIENDSHIP HOUSE WEEKEND OF MARCH 22-24, 1968, MOBILE, ALABAMA, FREELY AND OPENLY DECLARE THE FOLLOWING:

A) We oppose racial segregation in all forms but especially in all matters Catholic because it is inhuman and unchristian.

B) We urge the preaching of the Gospel of human dignity and equality to all people at all times without fear of tradition, or institutions or of those persons who might oppose this Gospel;

C) We oppose that hypocrisy which speaks of love but lives hatred and racial prejudice;

D) We urge a more christian use of people's money and other church resources, including personnel, to build better human relations rather than less important and frequently elaborate buildings and churches;

E) Of the undersigned, we, who are white, ask forgiveness of the Negro people of the State of Alabama and of the nation for all unchristian ways of thinking and living which have separated us from one another and caused such suffering.

SIGNED:

George E. Allen, Mobile
Trudie Barreras, Tuskegee
Sister Maria Maddalena, Mobile
W. J. Finnorn, Mobile
Meme Finnorn, Mobile
Sister Danita Wren, O. P., Mobile
Ray Barreras, Tuskegee Institute, Ala.
Sister Germaine Fleury, I.H.M., Mobile
Elbert J. LaLande, Mobile
Sister Patricia Kaiser, S.L. Mobile
Dorothy Dukes, Mobile
Sister Thomas Joseph, Mobile
Gloria Broadus Caponis, Mobile
Sister M. Donan Burns, O.P., Tuskegee
Sister Marilyn Keene, S.L., Mobile
Rayfield Goubile, Mobile
Father William James, Mobile
Sister Macaria Slattery, I.H.M., Mobile
Mrs. Annie Mae Allen, Mobile
Kathleen A. Sheridan, Mobile
Mrs. W. J. Carroll, Mobile
Rev. Marion H. Hall, Chicago
Elistine Agee, Plateau, Ala.
Mrs. Hannah Goubile, Mobile
John May, S.J., Mobile
Sister Maureen Therese, I.H.M., Plateau
Sister Rose Frederick, I.H.M., Plateau
Miss Carolyn A. Edwards, Plateau
Brother Foster, S.C. Mobile
Theresa Young, Mobile
Sister M. Claudian Cunningham, Tuskegee Inst. Ala.
Betty Plank, Chicago, Ill.
Father Emil Keil, Holy Trinity, Ala.
Diana Myers, Columbus, Ga.
Veda Myers, Columbus, Ga.
Sister Georgeann Hanson, S.L.
Maria Toomer, Mobile
Jeffrey Jones, Mobile
Claire Lagman, Mobile
Sister Mary Zoe, O.P., Mobile
Maceo Woolard, Jr., Tuskegee Ala.
Oscar Tyrone Jackson, Mobile
Regina C. Woolard, Tuskegee, Ala.
Rev. Robert DeGrandis, S.S.J., Birmingham, Ala.
Henry Chris Williams, Mobile
Rosemary Williams, Mobile
Undine Marshall, Mobile
John Marshall, Mobile
Sister Adeltrude Snyder, O.P., Mobile
Sister Alberta Caraher, O.P., Mobile
Alfred Thomas, Mobile
Mrs. Eloise Thomas, Mobile
Sister Susan Ardoyna, S.L., Mobile
Stanley B. Maxwell, Tuskegee, Ala.
Sister Mary Anthonoy Scally, Pensacola, Fla.
George F. Stiell, Mobile
Terry Young, Mobile
Consuela H. Carter, Mobile
Leo W. Bell, Pensacola, Florida
Sister M. Claritus Rivers, Mobile
Kenneth Dais, Mobile
Clement Laurence, Mobile
Sister Bernardo Cashman, O.P., Mobile
Sister Marie Audrey, I. H.M., Mobile

THEME: REVOLUTION: CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

The above theme pertains to the 1968 National Liturgical Week, to be held in Washington, D.C. from August 19th through the 22nd. The FH team will be on hand and are looking forward to seeing many of our friends from around the country but especially those from the Washington-Baltimore area.

Since one of the main concerns of the conference will be the contemporary racial situation, we feel it important to be involved.

If you will be there, please stop by our exhibit and stay for a visit.
Exhibitions and sessions will be at the Sheraton-Park Hotel.