

September 15, 1956

Mr. Peter Mellette,
Virginia Director,
National Conference of Christians and Jews,
222 E. Broad Street,
Richmond, 19, Virginia.

Dear Peter:

Please look at this rough, purely tentative draft of a letter to Dr. Clinchy, and his letter and brochure, and let me have your frank reactions. I'm not sure that I ought to say all these things. Maybe we should let Walter and perhaps others see it.

Thanks for any help you can give, and don't pull any punches!

Sincerely yours,

[*signature: "V"*]

Virginius Dabney.

encs.

Sept. 18, 1956

Dr. Everett R. Clinchy
NCCJ
43 W. 57th Street
New York 19, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Clinchy:

I have your letter and appreciate your inviting my opinion as to the proposed brochure.

It seems to me to be attractively designed and well-worded. Yet as I am sure you are aware, the message it conveys is sure to be taken, especially in the South, as pro-integrationist. Indeed, I hardly see how it could be otherwise.

Since this is true, the brochure is not likely to appeal to most Southerners [*sic*], or to persons in other parts of the country who are in favor of segregation. Perhaps you do not wish to appeal to these.

Your letter brings up the whole inevitable dilemma posed, especially in the South by the altogether natural and proper emphasis of NCCJ on brotherhood. This has been troubling me for some time, since the climate of opinion in Virginia and other Southern states is such that it is hard to differentiate between brotherhood in the religious sphere and brotherhood in the racial sphere. I realize that the emphasis of NCCJ is on interfaith relations. Yet when the national office singles out books on the race problem by Lillian Smith and Walter White for special accolades, as it did last winter, it can not fail to embarrass those of us in the South who are trying to work with you.

Which brings me back to the brochure. I don't know whether you could get out any very different type of brochure and remain true to your organizational objectives, as I understand them. But when I first joined this movement, it was thought of as something which promoted understanding among Protestants, Catholics and Jews. The Negro issue was hardly present at all. Yet with the Supreme Court's decision and all the collateral developments, the interracial issue has tended to crowd the interfaith issue out of the center of the stage and this is making things more difficult for us in the South.

So much more stress is being put in the press nowadays upon the race problem than upon the interfaith problem that when you mention "Workshops for Human Relations", "Intergroup Relations Centers" and so on in your literature, the average person thinks of Negro-white relations. I confess I don't know how to avoid this, if you are to function at all, unless you can put more emphasis in your brochure and your other publications and activities on the wiping out of friction among Catholics, Protestants and

Jews. As matters stand now, this phase of NCCJ's problem has been forced well into the background it seems to me.

[The page ends here. If there was more to the letter, it has not been located in the collection. Nor do we have Mellette's response.]