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Woody to Jim, 15 April 1959

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Forest History Foundation, Inc.

2706 West Seventh Boulevard
SAINT PAUL 16, MINNESOTA

April 15, 1959

Dr. James W. Silver
Department of History
University of Mississippi
University, Mississippi

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ELWOOD R. MAUNDER
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Jim:

Your friends await your blazing emergence with sincere hope, faith and love. You can bet your life that any time you can demonstrate a religious faith which makes spiritual pigmies out of us whom you call "Christers," I'm certain that God Almighty will be right there in your corner.

We "Christers" can't ever forget that Jesus Christ seemed to be more concerned with call girls, greedy tax collectors, prodigal sons, and like types than with the people who made great pretense of being religious. Nor can we forget that it was rascals like Saul and Augustine who had the most profound religious eruptions in our Christian history.

My friend, if the Christian churches you see around you seem gutless in the face of great issues; if what pours from your radio and press in the name of the Christian Church seems to be less religion than witch-doctoring or fraud, perhaps this is because too many people with guts and intellectual integrity have excused themselves from trying to exert an influence on the religious life of your community but at the same time have produced nothing of sufficient stamina to stand in its place. And yet, I wonder if the condition of the Christian Church is as "second rate" as you seem to feel it is. Who outside the ranks of "Christers" is taking a better turn at bat than the white Baptist minister up in Tennessee who took the Negro kids to school through the hostile gauntlet of his white neighbors? And who among the Negroes is doing more than Martin Luther King? Or if we get off the purely provincial (and I mean American) problem of segregation, how about the medical work of Dr. Schweitzer in Africa or the literacy work of Dr. Frank Laubach all over the world? These fellows are pretty good "Christers," don't you agree?

Viva la eruption! I hope you blow the top off the whole country not just Mississippi, the Confederacy and the forest-related community.

Salud,

Woody
Elwood R. Maunder
Director

Christers, 2nd class

ERM:eg