A VIRTUAL REIGN OF TERROR GRIPS BIRMINGHAM ALA. REV F L SHUTTLESWORTH AND OTHER NEGRO LEADERS ARRESTED, DENIED BAIL, HELD INCOMMUNICADO FOR 5 DAYS, DENIED COUNSEL, DECLARED GUILTY AND NOW FACE UP TO 3 MONTHS AS RESULT OF NON-VIOLENT EFFORT TO ERADICATE SEGREGATION. THREE MONTGOMERY CLERGYMEN OFFERING SPIRITUAL COMFORT TO MRS SHUTTLESWORTH WERE ARRESTED IN HER HOME. CHARGED WITH VAGRANCY DENIED COUNSEL AND ORDERED NOT TO RETURN TO BIRMINGHAM. THIS IS PART OF A LAWLESS PATTERN WHICH RESULTS IN BOMBING THE CHURCHES, SYNAGOGUES, SCHOOLS AND HOMES. IT IS ALL THE MORE FEARFUL BECAUSE IN BIRMINGHAM IT OPERATES THROUGH CONSTITUTED POLICE AUTHORITY. THE JAILING OF THESE LEADERS IS AN ACT OF TERROR DESIGNED TO DEPROVE SOUTHERN NEGRO COMMUNITIES OF LEADERSHIP. WE URGE YOU TO SEND MESSAGES TO UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL, GOVERNOR OF ALABAMA, MAYOR OF BIRMINGHAM AND NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS AND CIVIC LEADERS PROTESTING THIS NATIONAL SCANDAL. YOUR ACTION CAN SAVE LIVES=

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR PRESIDENT SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE=

PHWSr. ERC-NHyF.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

“Advice for Living”

November 1958
Chicago, Ill.

Question: I am engaged to a wonderful young woman. She is 19 and I am 23. She was raised as a Christian Scientist and I was raised as a Baptist. Our problem is religion. If we can’t decide which one of us will change his or her religion, should we get married?

Answer: Your problem is a serious one and should be carefully considered. Religious differences can cause a lot of conflict in a marriage relationship, and if at all possible, should be reconciled before marriage takes place between two individuals. Many couples fail to recognize the possible conflict which religious differences can bring about in marriage, thus finding themselves in later years at the verge of a separation. This problem should be faced honestly by both of you. Having a common religious faith would make for a more harmonious relationship in marriage. If you cannot persuade your fiance to accept your religious faith, and if you are not willing to accept her religious faith, both of you should be willing to learn as much as possible about the other’s faith.

Question: What do you do about a relative in her second childhood? This relative is 80 and the language she uses is awful. And she talks about everybody. Church doesn’t do her any good, because she comes right out of church and takes a drink of whiskey. I know old folks have special problems, but this old woman is a mess. How should we handle her?
**Answer:** If your relative does the things you mention she is going through more than a second childhood. It seems that she is giving expression to some deep imbedded habits which are problems of immorality rather than old age. Her real need is that of regeneration. If she is still alert enough to talk about people, she is certainly alert enough to be talked to. I would suggest that you turn this problem over to your minister, urging him to talk with her about this needed change. It would be well to remind her how near she is to the end of her earthly life, and how tragic it would be if she passed on without rectifying these habits. This realization might shock her into her better self.

**Question:** I have been a hard-working Christian woman for 28 years. Recently, I made an off-hand comment in the presence of the pastor’s wife to the effect that people who are leaving the church are leaving because they have never been saved. Since then, the pastor has insulted me several times. What shall I do? Shall I ignore him or should I leave the church?

**Answer:** I think it would be a mistake for you to leave your church as a result of the temporary misunderstanding between you and the pastor. It seems clear that the pastor’s attitude toward you grew out of what he considered an unwarranted criticism on your part. The statement which you made in the presence of his wife, however well intended, gave the impression of being a sly attempt to undermine the effectiveness of his ministry. Since this misunderstanding has developed, it is your Christian duty to seek to become reconciled with your minister. You must go out of the way to clarify your position, and make it clear that you were not seeking to minimize him. You must even be willing to go so far as to apologize for what might have been an ill-timed statement. Remember, a true Christian is willing to go any length to restore brotherly relationships.

**Question:** All my life I have tried to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. I recently met and fell in love with a boy who is just the opposite. He drinks heavily, gambles and runs around with a wild crowd. Should I marry him? Do you think he will change when we are married?

**Answer:** I think it is too risky for you to marry with the hopes that your boy friend will change after the marriage takes place. If he has these unbecoming habits now, there is no reason to feel that they will be miraculously changed after marriage. If you do not see some definite changes before the marriage it would be both unwise and impractical to go into a venture that can lead only to ultimate destruction.

**Question:** I don’t like my mother or father. They don’t understand me and I don’t understand them. I am a 17-year-old girl. The only person who cares about me is an old friend, a married man. I would like for his wife to be my friend, too, but I think she would object. What should I do? My life is a mess.

**Answer:** The best way to deal with your problem is to go back and seek to understand your parents. You may be assured that if one dislikes his mother and father, he will find it difficult to like other persons. An integrated home makes for an integrated personality. You are old enough now to sit down and have a heart-to-heart talk with your parents. You should be frank and honest with them. Only through such an approach can you get to the real cause of the misunderstanding. It might be necessary to call your minister in to guide and direct the discussion.
Being an impartial person, he could probably keep emotions from running too high. It is imperative, however, that you come to a new understanding with your parents. This will mean more to your personal development than anything else at the present time.

**Question:** I am a South American composer, a Negro. My wife is white and we have three lovely children. I have been treated very well and I have travelled quite extensively. An old dream of mine is to work in America. What problems will I find there? Will my wife's race complicate things?

**Answer:** An honest answer to your question impels me to admit that an interracial marriage does present some problems in America. The degree and intensity of the problem would vary with certain sections of the country. Although interracial marriages are legal in most sections of the United States, there are still customs and traditions which condemn such ties. Often these traditions and customs have religious sanction. It must be stated, however, that many interracial couples, after realistically facing these facts, have lived together very happily in the United States. I am sure that as time goes on, growing urbanization and wider world contacts will diminish the problem even more. So I would say that if you and your wife are deeply in love and emotionally secure, you can probably face all of the problems that would emerge without doing injury to your family.


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From James M. Lawson

3 November 1958

_Nyack, N.Y._

_In February 1957_ King gave a series of talks at Oberlin College where Lawson, recently returned from a three-year stay in India, was pursuing a master's degree. At a luncheon following King's first address, the two men discussed their mutual interest in Gandhian nonviolence and civil disobedience. Impressed by Lawson's background,

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1. James Morris Lawson, Jr. (1928–), born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, earned his A.B. (1951) from Baldwin-Wallace College. A member of FOR since 1947, Lawson spent almost a year in federal prison for refusing to register for the draft during the Korean War. Upon his release in 1953, Lawson spent three years in India as a Methodist missionary, where he studied Gandhi's life and principles. In the fall of 1956 Lawson enrolled at Oberlin College's School of Theology but left at the end of 1957 to work for FOR in the South. He enrolled in Vanderbilt University's Divinity School and conducted workshops on civil disobedience and Gandhian principles that attracted Nashville-area college students. Lawson's teachings helped bring about a student protest movement in that city, characterized by widely publicized sit-ins targeting segregated restaurants and theaters. After being expelled from Vanderbilt for his involvement in the sit-ins, Lawson received his S.T.B. (1960) from Boston University. In 1960 he became director of nonviolent education for SCLC, a post he held until 1967. Lawson also served as an advisor to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) from 1960 until 1964. In 1968 Lawson advised a group of striking black sanitation workers in Memphis; he invited King to Memphis to help in the strike.