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Judy Schultz- It is July 31st with reverend Starks Joan Beifuss and Judy Schultz. And so just kind of as background tell us something about how long you have been in Memphis where you did your seminary work and where you went to school and just kind of general background.

Reverend Starks- I was born here. I attended (muffled) high school here and college here. I attended the university of Chicago for some time and (muffled) at Fisk university and some work now at Memphis theological seminary. I have been in the city since the last time for approximately 12 years. I came here to pass the (muffled) here in the church. After a few years has moved over to the north side St. James (muffled) I had been there approximately (muffled) years almost 18 years.

Joan Beifuss- Were you (muffled) when it was first...

Reverend Starks- No no no I came here a number of years after it had first been bought from St. Presbyterian.

Joan Beifuss- That is what I am gauging the (muffled) I think they bought it in 1948,49...

Reverend Starks- Something like that, 48 I think but I didn't come to pastor Clayborne Temple until 56.

Joan Beifuss- And did you have an assistant pastor at that time?

Reverend Starks- At Clayborne Temple?

Joan Beifuss- Yeah.

Reverend Starks- We had a number of ministers who were local and that means they had local status and of course they shared the responsibilities the pastor would share or would have.

Joan Beifuss- Well Malcolm Blackburn wasn't there while you were there?

Reverend Starks- NO he came in later, he came in from the national council of churches to the church that he was assigned.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Reverend Starks- (Muffled) better than 200 (muffled)

Joan Beifuss- And was it at that time was it a center of any kind of activity as it became during the strike?

Reverend Starks- Well (muffled) we didn't have many activities what you call community activities but during my ministry there, a number of (muffled) you have the concession stand some other things which (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Was that (muffled) school of religion there.

Reverend Starks- (Muffled) adjacent to Clayborne Temple.

Joan Beifuss- Is that right now is that part of that complex which St. Patrick

's and Clayborne Temple has (muffled) ecumenical project?

Reverend Starks- I think they do have some ecumenical concerns, I feel that Clayborne Temple along with St. Patrick and with First Baptist Beale (muffled) can come up with some sort of structured program that would have ecumenical value and (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- When you were at Clayborne Temple was it strictly a negro congregation or where there any whites from the neighborhood or from in there that went to church there.

Reverend Starks- (muffled) one white family who lived (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) supreme court of justice that there was an address given where he grew up and it was on Linden St. (muffled) a block down from St. Patrick's on Linden St. Was that area entirely white at one time? (Tape Break)

Joan Beifuss- Was that are entirely white at one time?

Reverend Starks- Oh yes it was entirely white and people of substantial income.

Joan Beifuss- How long ago would that have been, do you have any idea?

Reverend Starks- Before my days. I am not in a position really to say but I imagine it was in the teens and 20's I imagine. But that area was really a first class neighborhood some years ago.

Joan Beifuss- where is the church now that you are at?

Reverend Starks- 600 (muffled) St. James AME church.

Joan Beifuss- Is that an all black area also?

Reverend Starks- No this field is the only truly integrated area in the city of Memphis if you consider the fact that integration, one color ethnic group other representative of another ethnic group comprise 30%. So out of every hundred citizens 1/3 or 30% would be considered a basis for integration. I felt hat you, the area in which my church is located would be, the integrated alley in the city of Memphis because they have the Herd Village there and you have a few other homes on (muffled) and other places where it is strictly whites. If the rest were negro I would say a 1/3 or more are white but they are fast moving out.

Joan Beifuss- Is there any kind of communication between the white and negro in the area?

Reverend Starks- To some extent every once in awhile I will look up in my congregation and I will see a white face more or less a young person see and as I understand it this has happened also at some of my colleagues, my white colleagues. The schools integrated there and of course occasionally a child would bring his playmate to church.

Joan Beifuss- What school? What elementary school is it then?

Reverend Starks- Well you have (muffled) school which happens to be a couple of blocks from my church. And the grant was integrated and by that I mean it had at least...it wasn't integrated but it did have one or two other peoples. (Muffled) you do have a integrated situation because the students from Hurt Village go there.

Joan Beifuss- Is Hurt Village a, was it a city housing project?

Reverend Starks- It is and one of the largest in the city.

Joan Beifuss- And it is all white?

Reverend Starks- No now it is beginning to color.

Joan Beifuss- Was it all white at one time.

Reverend Starks- It was.

Joan Beifuss- Then the city here not follow the guidelines I thought they could not build an all white federal housing project?

Reverend Starks- Well this was built before then I think Hurt Village has been built for some time in fact I think it was put there for the primary reason as to serve as a buffer between the white community and the black community,. And the negro had a peculiar pattern of growth just hopped right over and kept on going.

Joan Beifuss- Now it is an enclave.

Judy Schultz- When you first came back to Memphis did you join the minister's alliance, did you join any of the ministerial organizations and take part in..

Reverend Starks- Yes I became finally the secretary and eventually the president, which I sit now as president.

Judy Schultz- Now how many organizations for ministers, some are supposed to be for black and white and then I understand that one is a strictly negro and then I know the Baptists have a black ministers and a white ministers organization separate.

Reverend Starks- Well we have an integrated situation if you may say of only a few years with the large alliance that is the white.

Joan Beifuss- The ministerial association and Rabbi Wax...

Reverend Starks- Yes the ministerial association and Rabbis wax this particular group. Well this group for a number of years up until recently was completely white and then it dipped in recent times and began to take in negro members.

Joan Beifuss- Why would you join it then?

Reverend Starks- In fact you have now the vice president there is negro. The other group that is strictly negro with the exception it has 2 or 3 or maybe 4 whites who are members of this body too.

Judy Schultz- Who are those whites?

Reverend Starks- Dr. Beard is one, Dr. Wells is one, (muffled) at Southwestern is one I can't think of his name.

Joan Beifuss- Was it Darrell Doughty?, Carl Walters?

Reverend Starks- Walters is one, is a member and one other fellow who is white I think whom I can't think of his name at the moment.

Judy Schultz- Now what is the name of this organization?

Reverend Starks- That is the minister's alliance of Memphis and Shelby county.

Joan Beifuss- How large of a membership does that have?

Reverend Starks- Between 80 and 100.

Joan Beifuss- Do the Baptist ministers belong to that?

Reverend Starks- No see when you speak about, yes the Baptist minister's belong because this is an interdenominational body and of course now you have, each denomination has its own body which are denominational bodies and you have the Baptist, is the Baptist (muffled) and when you speak of numerical stamps among negros, so you two or three Baptist alliances, denominationally wise.

Joan Beifuss- Baptist conference I think and then the...is that now in the negro community do you have any percentages on what percent would be Baptist? Do you have figures at your fingertips?

Reverend Starks- No I am not in position to say that, I am not in position to give you those figures.

Joan Beifuss- Can you generalize and say what would be the strongest churches among the negro community the Baptists and would the AME be in there also?

Reverend Starks- Oh you have the Baptists, the AME's, the CME's, and also church of god in Christ. I think these denominations all appear strong in this area and

influential in this area and you do have of course some other denominations, 2 of the Christian church which is influential.

Judy Schultz- Well from the time you were in the, your minister's alliance that you are now head of had there been any attempt to have more dialogue with the overall minister's alliance and to try and ring the problem of race relations into more of the focal point for the minister's to deal with?

Reverend Starks- Well actually you have one in the same member, a minister and a minister's alliance, also a member of the white alliance. One in the same individuals. And of course if you may say dialogue but not in a formal way has always gone on between the two bodies since this occurred. Because they had a number of ministers that belong in this group who also belong in this group, and you had to think of course it wasn't until the crisis that we tried to effect some formal dialogue.

Joan Beifuss- But prior to that there had not been any formal dialogue.

Reverend Starks- No formal dialogue you see.

Judy Schultz- Now you say that you have been a member of the overall white alliance?

Reverend Starks- I didn't say that, I have visited the alliance but I am not a member.

Joan Beifuss- Oh you are not a member of the alliance?

Reverend Starks- No, no I am only a member of the one of which I said I was president.

Joan Beifuss- How long had that ministerial, interdenominational ministerial alliance been in existence, is that an old group here?

Reverend Starks- Oh yes it has been in existence long before I came on the scene and I am not in the position to give you the history of it but as far as I can ascertain it has been in existence many, many years.

Judy Schultz- Well has it focused, or has it as a group within it self tried to focus on improving race relations and doing things oh in any way like maybe setting up exchange programs with pastors from white churches to exchange on Sundays or anything that would be along this line?

Reverend Starks- Well over the years, not under my leadership but over the years it has tried to bring about should I say harmonious relationship in the area of race and it has used many approaches to this efforts, many approaches to this effort. At this moment I can't give you the specifics because the specifics escape me but I do know as secretary we have had many concerns and as president of course we have had concerns in this direction.

Joan Beifuss- This is kind of a hard question I suppose at the time of the strike and at the time of the crisis when that communication was needed badly between the white ministers and the black ministers there seemed to be very few channels open. Why has this city been so terribly far behind in clergy race relations because I think this city is farther behind than most cities in having white ministers and black ministers get together and...

Reverend Starks- Well actually in a city as we are now in where the tradition has hampered such constructive dialogues and constructive approaches to problems because of the individualism I would say that is in the picture. And not only from the (muffled) but from the denominations themselves. I felt that this can only be really overcome through an activity such as interfaith agency where the responsibility does not solely rest with the individual church minister. The individual or local congregation really found itself paralyzed in the present crisis because of this tradition, a tradition that extends back into the previous century where you say plantation mannerisms are still present with us and this plantation mannerisms of course are carried over into race relations and carry over into the churches and carry over into our social institutions, it carries over into all the areas of life. And it is these fellows that we have got to break and we must break. And even though we have a visible dialogue tie, it is still very limited. You answer to negative approaches to many problems, even the national council of churches, world council of churches the denominational hierarchies the top Escalon's of their denominations. See you have the local congregations expressing antagonisms you see and etc. There is only one way I feel that we can overcome this and it is through an interfaith agency where local man can relate him self to this agency and the local church in such a manner that the sole responsibility for the actions will be examined in a different light than we do now. Because everything we do we look at it through the spectrum of the tradition of the south.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) going on here now to set up some kind of a I don't know what, an interfaith...

Reverend Starks- I thin it will come to this in growth. We need a togetherness in this channel.

Joan Beifuss- And it would have been terribly helpful wouldn't it?

Reverend Starks- It would too because, it would have been terrific.

Judy Schultz- Wasn't Brooks Ramsay talking about some thing like that, that he was working on...

Joan Beifuss- I think there is some kind of a (muffled) but I don't think...

Reverend Starks- Well I know we are all concerned with such and we are trying to labor to bring forth.

Joan Beifuss- you are working on it?

Reverend Starks- Yes I am, I am involved in it too but you know you have got to have growing pains and trying to give birth it is a terrible thing sometimes to try and do it.

Joan Beifuss- Well now, I suppose I should probably get back to the chronology of the strike. When did you first know about the, that the sanitation workers had gone out on strike?

Reverend Starks- Well at the time they went out on strike I was in Tulsa Ok.

Joan Beifuss- Really that's my hometown.

Reverend Starks- Well that is where I was so...

Joan Beifuss- What were you doing in Tulsa?

Reverend Starks- Well I was there....I was there at a council, AME council and really council of bishops and really a (muffled) and I was there and when I picked up the paper one afternoon, and one morning it was, I saw headlines there, a lot of headlines (muffled) men in Memphis and the sanitation department were on strike.

Joan Beifuss- Were you here when there had been an aborted strike a couple years ago?

Reverend Starks- Yes I was.

Joan Beifuss- Was there any movement at that time for the black clergy to get involved in that?

Reverend Starks- No not tot eh degree that this last effort was.

Joan Beifuss- Could you speak for just a moment to the point of the involvement of the black clergy with their people. That is to why, it seems almost natural here in the south for black people to turn to their ministers for help and I don't think this is true any longer in the north, Why is that here that the black ministers still play such an important part?

Reverend Starks- Well actually a minute man is free in this type of tradition that we live (muffled). If any man can speak and can denounce the power structure it is a black ministers, for a separate reason he makes his living off of the power structure and of course the black clergy I would said is person oriented instead of situation oriented, I mean that is that he has lived the clergymen himself has lived in and around the edge of poverty all his days and he knows what an awful thing poverty is when it comes to defacing personality and (muffled). Human personality, wherever possible he gives himself to the eradication of such evils and most of his parishioners are people who are dependent upon the power structure for their existence, for their living. And they easily are open to retaliation when they go against the power structure.

Joan Beifuss- Reverend Starks what about the charges I have heard that numbers of the black clergy have sold out to one political ear or another in the negro community.

Reverend Starks- I can't substantiate such charges, I have always made it my business as a minister to never become a supporter or booster of any particular person or party because of any financial rewards which I do not receive. I do not want to pass judgment upon any candidate and for him to come and make a contribution to my church a contribution to any organization which I am a part of, I refrain from that. I want to be able to speak out against any issue regardless of who is involved.

Judy Schultz- Do you know whether any of the other black clergy has not taken your point of view and felt that maybe they could be more effective by aligning themselves with some particular political person?

Reverend Starks- Now when I say align and you speak of aligning yourself...

Judy Schultz- It wouldn't have to be for money but it could be in order to gain...

Reverend Starks- Yes I can support an individual, see I don't claim that I do not and have not, but what I am saying to you is that I am not a part of any effort where a group of candidates would come before me and my colleagues and say that if you will endorse me I will maybe will support some of your effort see, financially. I don't want that. But if I see a gentleman who is going places and who gives himself to what I feel is right then I give him everything I have without one expectancy ever crossing my mind as to expense or anything like that because I don't plan on getting so close that I would be his.

Joan Beifuss- In the past in the negro community in Memphis has this been one of the reasons for the division of the negro community that white political leaders came in and played one force off against another force that type of thing. I imagine that type of thing has been a practice whenever possible. Of course any person can go in and capitalize on division if they can. But the negro presence is like anybody else, negro people. See you might say negro community every group of people locally that you find in this group you will find (muffled) different opinions and of course you can't expect the negro to have one opinion. So there are people who support various candidates because they honestly believe in them. And occasionally maybe you find one who will do it, they will support the highest bidder. He will support the candidate who will give.

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled). If you read about the strike...

Judy Schultz- Where you there that whole week during that first week of the strike?

Reverend Starks- Yes,. When I came back, when I came back to Memphis I had some talk to me both white and colored about the sanitation strike and what was going

on. They told me also that the mayor and a few other people were meeting as labor people were meeting at one of the churches in the city.

Joan Beifuss- St. Mary's.

Reverend Starks- (muffled) the same problems.

Joan Beifuss- Now had they already started meeting when you got back?

Reverend Starks- They had started to meet because I came back and left and went right on to Lexington, excuse me, I came back and in a few days I left and went on to Lexington Ky. I should have said, well I came back to Memphis they were out on strike I was here for a few days and then I went on up to Lexington Ky.

Joan Beifuss- Well now on the few days you were here between Tulsa and Lexington did you talk to any of the workers?

Reverend Starks- No I didn't talk to any of the workers. I had should I say from previous years I have formed an opinion...I should say from previous years in my relationship with the sanitation department I had formed a certain opinion of what the conditions and so forth. I came to know them first hand.

Judy Schultz- Do you have any sanitation workers in your congregation?

Reverend Starks- I have two. But prior to, let me continue this line of thought. I came back and they were telling me about, the sessions going on in St. Mary's. So I decided I would attend one day, and I did and I talked to Dean Demmick and others. But I also began to question whether this was really the proper thing to do because it was really an activity drama played out on the stage before TV cameras and others which is not conducive to any constructive bargaining, therefore I didn't think too much of it so we left and...so some of the people involved of course were concerned also as to what would be the outcome.

Joan Beifuss- Is this some of the ministers that were involved?

Reverend Starks- No these were the sanitation people, the ministers of course were concerned too. They had all, some of them had already been working when I came back from Tulsa. See I wasn't in the initial (muffled). In fact I, they had a few meetings before I really came into the picture. See I thought that if something could be worked out and I think a lot of us did at these meetings at St. Mary's it would be good. Save the city a lot of anguish and a lot of expense and you would save so much of the same in the hearts and families of the people who were involved themselves. And we were praying and hoping that a solution would be found to the problem.

Judy Schultz- While you were here those few days did you among your colleagues or among any of the other people you talked to black or white did any of them have any ideas about future actions or further actions which should go beyond these meetings at the church since some people didn't put faith in a resolution, they really didn't think this was going to resolve the strike?

Reverend Starks- Well let me discuss some different approaches to the problem and also as a group as our own alliance. But I said to some of my colleagues and to some of others in as much as the minister's alliance, I mean the white alliance the integrated alliance I guess you would say. Had taken the initiative and was trying to work this thing out let us remain somewhat passive on the sidelines. But we don't want to see these sanitation workers a victim of a vicious system as happened before. So therefore, we were inactive in a large measure during this period of negotiations and what not, we really didn't come in force until after they broke up.

Judy Schultz- And you went to Lexington and by the time you got back that group of talks was supported or sponsored or hosted by the minister's alliance had broken up?

Reverend Starks- Well I went to Lexington and came back and they were in the process of breaking up. Union leader all of a sudden took on homes and so forth and this town is anti-union any way in a sense.

Judy Schultz- In a sense yeah.

Reverend Starks- At this point it was tradition is what they were saying to the union and of course that was all it needed was the papers to really take their support and so the papers did and that brought about, I think a false sense of support by many in their thinking as related to the community.

Joan Beifuss- Had to support the mayor against the man outside type of thing.

Reverend Starks- That's right.

Joan Beifuss- So then what happened?

Reverend Starks- Well of course a group of us became concerned with the viciousness of the system which we had always been concerned but this time there became an open expression of our sympathy with the men who were victim to such a brutal system. And we had a few session in which we wanted to know the union men and the sanitation workers that we would not let them down.

Joan Beifuss- Now when you say a few of us are you talking about people in the ministerial alliance or are you talking about the embryonic COME organization or?

Reverend Starks- Embryonic COME organization which at first was more or less composed of ministers and maybe one or two laymen, more or less ministers.

Joan Beifuss- Is this still before the Fred Davis council meeting, before the macing on Main St. or is this after?

Reverend Starks- Oh that was before, that was before see because the macing gave to us that very impotence we needed for sustaining power.

Joan Beifuss- But before this even happened there was...

Reverend Starks- Before this happened there was a growing symptom in the community that we could not leave these men alone the system is vicious and the system had grown,. I will let you know what I mean by it is this. Going back, not just date up to past for the sake of the past but telling it as it is. Going back some years ago when I went to St. James AME church I had in my congregation a man who formerly worked for the sanitation department. A man with 9 kids. He was on the streets when I saw him receiving checks from the government and working chopping cotton, picking cotton, hauling cotton, laborers, doing whatever he possibly could to make a living. Now he had worked a number of years for the city, but when his back was wrenched, they found out they could not use him even though they did have jobs where men did not have to carry a tub but his face was black and they could not use him. This was sickening. And he tried and tried to (muffled) but because he couldn't carry that fellow I preached his funeral he was only 40 some odd years when he passed. Hypertension and other things has carried him away with a bad heart. Which a series of causes you see, fiscal causes but a very likely stemming from one thing, is a man found himself in this position. I had another man, you see he is dead, I have a man now who is in my congregation who was operated on, now in this department prior to this sanitation strike a man had to get sick and well in just a few days. I mean sick and well. If he had to remain out two or three weeks and six or seven weeks as a member I had, I went down to see him myself had two operations. He didn't get paid but only the money he had up there and that was usually one other paycheck.

Joan Beifuss- Some type of possible coverage?

Judy Schultz- Or anything no kind of fringe benefits.

Reverend Starks- No kind of fringe benefits and plus the man was at the mercy of the people who were his superiors, there were no safeguards. They didn't like his attitude, they didn't like the way he worked, they didn't like the way he moved about, then they could transpond and put him out on the street. Now who would like to go down to the mayor's office on a grievance complaint every time something went wrong there and then let him dictate some whims. This is what I reference to when I speak about slave mannerism the slave out on the field they have no recourse for justice except he went to the master and the master could give it to him if he wanted to as he dictates on his own whims. Well no man wants to stand that way (muffled). Because that is exactly when it happens, I mean what happens.

Joan Beifuss- So there was a growing sentiment among you and among your fellow ministers and among some of your laymen, that here was a place you would have to make a stand so that some changes could be made.

Reverend Starks- Right that is just it.

Joan Beifuss- So what kind of preparations or was it really just kind of in the talk stage until the macing or what?

Reverend Starks- Oh actually there were no preparations so to say. We live one day and we work this day and tomorrow we will think about something. We work this day acted this day, we planned this night and early the next day we out there again working to settle it. And these things just kind of grew.

Judy Schultz- Did you try to go talk to any of the city councilmen or the mayor or contact anyone who might bring pressure to bear on the mayor to settle it?

Reverend Starks- Oh yes we had a session a couple of sessions with the mayor and we also had some sessions with the councilmen.

Joan Beifuss- Now are we still before the macing I am just trying to keep it in chronological..

Reverend Starks- No these are after the macing you see.

Joan Beifuss- These are after, ok were you..

Reverend Starks- We did attend the council prior to the macing and we had some sessions with the council, in fact the macing not a (muffled) of the attendance of the council.

Joan Beifuss- Were you in the council meeting that Fred Davis...

Reverend Starks- Yes I was.

Joan Beifuss- Could you, we know fairly well what happened there but could you give us your impressions of that meeting?

Reverend Starks- I think there was some misjudgment on the part of brother Davis when it comes to presiding, chairing a meeting of such. Of course not being a, I would say a man of the chair which gave an opportunity for this to breakaway to an additional other chair. (muffled) when a meeting reaches a feverish pitch and where there are individuals who are yet to be heard, it is always good for the chair, see to hear them even though sometimes you are pressed for time and I think it was poor judgment not to hear some of the individuals involved which also gave an opportunity for those who were then more convicted than others to express themselves in a literal manner.

Joan Beifuss- Mayor Lobe...

Reverend Starks- But I want to say this, I feel that brother Davis was trying his best.

Joan Beifuss- I was going to say that now did you become angry at Fred Davis yourself?

Reverend Starks- Oh no, no. Because he was trying. Some did, but he was trying. It was really an act of judgment, poor judgment.

Joan Beifuss- Was mayor Lobe at that meeting at the earlier part of that meeting do you recall?

Reverend Starks- I don't know it appears to me that one meeting we had he was there for awhile and then left, so he might have been in this meeting I don't know, he might have.

Joan Beifuss- Well now at the end of that Fred Davis, this had been a very confusing afternoon. Did you leave that meeting thinking that the committee of the city council was going to settle the thing then?

Reverend Starks- Well we had a meeting later see, we had a procession after brother Davis gave up the chair and we had some sessions we were trying to get, have a meeting of the minds on this particular problem and we thought we had affected some approach to the problem that would bring about the amicable solution. But (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- You are saying that after Fred Davis concluded that meeting that Thursday afternoon, that you met?

Reverend Starks- You see we were still reaching for solutions we were still trying...

Joan Beifuss- This is not with the councilmen this is after the councilmen were no longer there?

Reverend Starks- Right, yes, but see the councilmen were there for awhile if I am not mistaken. The appearance might have been that there were no councilmen in the chamber but if I am not mistaken and my memory serves me correctly there were meetings in the adjacent rooms to the chamber in which the few were grabbed from the department.

Joan Beifuss- Were you at one of those little meetings?

Reverend Starks- Yes, grabbed from the department but trying to bring about some sorts of constructive approach to the problem.

Judy Schultz- Now who were you meeting with in this small room?

Reverend Starks- Oh I was committed, brother Davis called and 1, 2, or 3 other people and brother Davis asked Brother Neders and brother Mimke Adams, and brother Davis, who I think chaired this particular committee. He was grappling with the problem, but we had some other councilmen, I said Mike Adams yes, not Mike Adams, it wasn't Mike Adams it was..

Joan Beifuss- Donelson or something?

Reverend Starks- Yeah brother Donelson, yes, brother Donelson yes. They were grappling and we thought we had some (muffled) to the problem.

Judy Schultz- What did you do with what you thought would be a good solution, did you go to present it to the mayor or did someone go to present it to the mayor and tell him about it or...

Reverend Starks- They were trying to get some recommendation they could present tot eh council you see.

Joan Beifuss- Tot he council.

Reverend Starks- That would bring about the settlement of this issue.

Joan Beifuss- Did that mean go on and (muffled)?

Reverend Starks- They didn't go too long and they came up with some pretty good proposals. But of course the problem was they were turned down.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah right.

Judy Schultz- Now that took place was that the day before the macing, that meeting?

Joan Beifuss- Yeah Fred Davis thing was the day before.

Reverend Starks- That was the day before the macing because it was out of this new session that they came to some agreement that we would have a meeting, a called session in the auditorium which would hold all of these people and they would be certain that recommendations would be made and etc. But it proved to be a mirage.

Joan Beifuss- Now when you went to the auditorium were you hopeful that some kind of a solution was going to be presented at that meeting?

Reverend Starks- Oh yes see we lived everyday hoping, see every day I got up I was hoping that the solution would be found. It was not a pleasant thing to be a part of a movement where you can't rest at night, your family can't rest. The wife pick up the phone and ought to be dead and no good, my daughter pick up and that time her mother was gone and my daughter pick up the phone and somebody is saying daddy is (muffled) and so on. My adopt4ed mother, I mean mother called me her adopted son, she would pick it up and....

Judy Schultz- You were getting threatening phone calls.

Reverend Starks- Yes, and then at night or in the morning your phone rings at 2 or 3:00 in the morning and no one would answer and you put it back and it would start right up again. It is no pleasure to be involved in activities that will keep your family always at the edge of apprehension and then you can't get no rest because you are trying to carry on your church work and you are trying to take care of other things and you are constantly on the go, see and you are afraid to let these men get out on the streets themselves because (muffled) it does make some difference. Good leadership and keeping the radicals from just grabbing the leadership at those particular times.

Joan Beifuss- What happened then at the meeting at the auditorium?

Reverend Starks- Well the meeting at the auditorium, we called...I am trying to recall things that are somewhat rather dim now in my memory.

Joan Beifuss- We have a chronological sheet but..

Reverend Starks- The meeting that went on at the auditorium opened the core session as promise by Downing Pryor and the commission went on to read off certain things and when it finished it closed itself to further discussion and this of course aggravated so many men you see. Aggravated many things. So on the spur of the moment that it was decided that if we couldn't protest there in the chamber then we would use the march as a protest and dramatize this. And it was during this march that we had the macing.

Joan Beifuss- Where were you in the march?

Reverend Starks- I was in the front a little bit to the right with Gerald Fanion and also Baxton Bryant.

Joan Beifuss- Did, were the men angry when they left he auditorium of the very fact of getting lined up for a...

Reverend Starks- No, most of them were not angry, I don't think they were angry, they might have been rather resentful but we didn't have too many people that were angry. See the fellow that you would call who really (muffled) march most of them were going to march.

Joan Beifuss- Of course, at that point it was still mostly sanitation workers too?

Reverend Starks- Yeah sanitation workers and sympathizers.

Joan Beifuss- This was the most unlikely group you would find doing this were the sanitation workers because they were mostly older men.

Reverend Starks- Yeah they don't care for violence at all.

Judy Schultz- Well when was the first time within the march that you became aware that something was going wrong and trouble was brewing up?

Reverend Starks- It appeared to me, I said to Baxton Bryant now, but it appeared to me I said to Baxton Bryant come off the walk and let's walk together, it appears to me now and by the time I showed up with Braxton Bryant and started to walking...I looked around and I didn't know what was happening but I could hear the hollering and (muffled) and what not. The next thing I know the police were out there squirting me and I had my glasses on see, and Champa was behind me to my left. The next thing I know they were squirting mace out there, every once in awhile I get a few bumps on my left side now. But my glasses protected me form my eyes. Of course when we began to march I had never put my handkerchief away because the

police officers began to put on their gas masks and I thought they weren't going to let us march and then they decided they would see. I looked over and people were calling and I looked around and they were also squirting this mace. Well the mace it renders you rather ineffective for the moment. You are standing there weak and just standing there. I am looking and I looked around for brother Champa and they were dragging him over and they had broken the march up of people going many ways and I was trying to find my way to the walk. So I finally got to the walk with a fellow named reverend Peace and Jim some more, Jim was (muffled). We all got together again to make the march on to Mason Temple.

Joan Beifuss- You did go on there with them?

Reverend Starks- Yeah we went on see, those of us who were able to go went on.

Joan Beifuss- How much of the march was left any idea? Half of it?

Reverend Starks- No I would say about, maybe half of it I don't know, I really don't know.

Joan Beifuss- Now did the police continue going on with you all the way to Mason temple?

Reverend Starks- Yes they went all the way brandishing their sticks.,

Joan Beifuss- But the mace itself was only used right there on Main St.?

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- And then they put it away?

Reverend Starks- I don't know, no no I guess they didn't use it. They were threatening all the way of course. You had some that were more brazen along these lines and others.

Joan Beifuss- Tell me how do you keep a group of men in a march when something like that happens and it kind of falls apart?

Reverend Starks- Well one of the things here the continuance was born of sheer desperation, you see you couldn't let the march fail for the symbolism involved so you had to continue. Those of us who could move had to continue. Because otherwise it would have been disastrous to the cause of labor and the (muffled) for the march to be completely disintegrated and no continuance. You see we had to move, there was no doubt about it because I didn't want to (muffled) but I had to do it and by that I mean when I had to, I was really sick in a way. Disgusted, and (muffled) here I had on my clergy collar too. I was hurting inside because of what I had seen them do to a lot of people you see and of course it was a painful ordeal for me. All the way but we had to do it. It was something that you had to do.

Joan Beifuss- Had you marched before?

Reverend Starks- Well I had marched but not in the sense that we marched that evening. I have never been a group participant in marches over the country like say Jim or something or MiddleBrooke. But I have always been concerned and there are moments in which I believe in dramatizing humans. I had marched but I had never been under this situation.

Joan Beifuss- What was the mood of the march when it finally reached Mason Temple?

Judy Schultz- Besides relief.

Reverend Starks- Well, there I would say the marchers had the mood of determination you see, that this was the crisis that really precipitated this determination.

Joan Beifuss- Did you speak to them?

Reverend Starks- Now this was a unity, and the cause of a unity that swelled up in the negro community over night because when we had our next rally we could hardly hold the people.

Joan Beifuss- Did you speak tot eh men at Mason Temple when you got back from the march or when the march got there?

Reverend Starks- Yeah well we said a few things, Jim., Dr. Jackson, others.

Joan Beifuss- Did you?

Reverend Starks- I am trying to think, I am trying to think what did I do. I just don't know my particular role at this particular time because you see I know the (muffled).

Judy Schultz- As soon as the men left well a few of you stayed there to plan?

Reverend Starks- Just because the meeting what we did was to send out communication to all the clergy and we met at Mason Temple that Saturday afternoon to organize.

Judy Schultz- Which was the day after the macing?

Reverend Starks- Right. And we organized.

Judy Schultz- What happened in that first organizational meeting?

Reverend Starks- We set forth the tentative organization.

Joan Beifuss- Had someone come in with a skeleton plan for organization?

Reverend Starks- Wee they were during this episode or this experience that (muffled) familiar with demonstrations and what not but the organization itself came more or less from a few people like Lawson, Ralph Jackson, others.

Judy Schultz- Was Jesse Epps at that meeting?

Reverend Starks- Epps, yeah, Epps and others. Now see this was a loosely knotted thing, it was tightly organized body it was loosely knitted on its own together...

Joan Beifuss- Kind of coalition.

Reverend Starks- Yeah see and open at both ends. To let people to come where they could support it and they could make a step out and in situations like that you have a lot of people who would support moves like this and you have other people who would give their support but can't give it physically.

Judy Schultz- Do you recall who came up with the name COME?

Reverend Starks- Oh yes, Jim Lawson. But that wasn't right then.

Judy Schultz- Oh that was later.

Reverend Starks- That was a little later you see.

Joan Beifuss- About how many ministers were at that Saturday meeting then you have any idea?

=We had a pretty large group and fairly representative.

Judy Schultz- Did you have any white clergy at that meeting?

Reverend Starks- At this meeting I don't think they did other than reverend Blackburn he was there and you may have had one or two see off hand I cannot think because what we did we had the meeting and we also had mass session. See had a mass meeting at the same time.

Joan Beifuss- Oh you did that Saturday?

Reverend Starks- Yeah Saturday we had a group in the same meeting see.

Joan Beifuss- Meeting where?

Reverend Starks- At Mason Temple. So now they were organizing upstairs, see I was residing over the mass meeting trying to get, keep these people interested and keep them moving you see, all the details upstairs I don't know.

Joan Beifuss- Was someone bringing you down the details from upstairs, was someone rushing down to tell you what was happening?

Reverend Starks- No see we had all been together and had been discussing this see. We went to check this out of course and I was to remain there to work with these people while the ministers were upstairs organizing, tentative organization.

Joan Beifuss- So then when they did organize did they then come downstairs and announce to the group about the coalition?

Reverend Starks- Well they organized and they came down and each began to operate along his particular function, the function in his area see. Because some men could do more in certain areas than other men.

Joan Beifuss- Now at this mass meeting then at Mason Temple then was that when the boycotting of the newspapers was announced?

Reverend Starks- No not at that particular meeting.

Judy Schultz- Were any actions planned and announced at that meeting any kind of boycotts or any marches or anything planned at that time?

Reverend Starks- Well, I am not in position at this moment really to say, I do know we were trying to do a number of things. We were trying to find means to support the families of the sanitation workers who were out of work and had no funds. We were also trying to find means which we could effectively dramatize the conditions under which these men worked. We were trying to also devise some way by which we could give the city officials the impression that we under no circumstances would allow these men to be left as they are without consideration that they could not cut these men off. We were trying to get the mayor to see and city officials that this was not strictly a labor problem, but that the race element enter into this picture in a pronounced way and this ought to be taken into consideration. We were also trying to put forth a knowledgeable program for the sanitation workers themselves. That is there are certain things you must do, there are certain disciplines that your family must follow.

Joan Beifuss- Such as what?

Reverend Starks- Such as full support, see a man who is not working can last well on strike if he has the support of his family who are willing to go along, whose members are willing to go along with him. A wife who would say to him I can't have the clothes that you wear. I can't have the clothes that I once had, that my neighbor has at this moment. But I am willing to stand with you shoulder to shoulder and it was this morale building that we needed to do, and we were concerned with that and we were concerned with the possibility of the enhancement of the strike effort. That is that (muffled) methods, dramatizing and this particular effort does not work, then what are you going to do next to elevate, to enhance and maybe a boycott you see, maybe (muffled). So you only escalate as you move along. And we were concerned with these.

Joan Beifuss- Was there, I never thought about it before, but what did the sanitation workers do with themselves all day, is that why there was a daily march so they would have something to go to everyday so they wouldn't be sitting around lost all the time they were out on strike.

Reverend Starks- No, no, no they had the union hall, see they used the union hall. No they had, the march was a measure of not only dramatizing but to make effective the boycott as near as possible.

Joan Beifuss- Well was there, did the sanitation workers themselves help with the distribution of food for instance and where there jobs for them to do?

Reverend Starks- Yes they assisted in many alleys. This had to do with food and other things.

Joan Beifuss- Who was in charge for the COEM group who was in charge of food stamps and urging land lords to hold off rent...

Reverend Starks- This was strictly a labor area of concern.

Judy Schultz- You....

Reverend Starks- The labor, union representatives.

Joan Beifuss- Do you know who was in charge of that?

Reverend Starks- Mr. Epps was the man who really sharing this responsibility such as other men such as Mr. Champa...

Joan Beifuss- I asked Mr. Epps about it this morning he said oh we had a committee.

Reverend Starks- We did have a committee but the committee worked only under these men's direction.

Joan Beifuss- I didn't have any names of who was on the committee...

Reverend Starks- I don't know the committee but I do know they had a group of people calling these various concerns but you have men like Mr. Epps and Mr. Champ and Mr. (muffled) and others who were really determined whether this particular demand made was legitimate or not and how far the union could go without really having this man's possessions. We possessed or something like that, so you had to have the union officials, and plus the fact, in a situation like that was necessitated (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Can I say at the beginning did you have any idea the magnitude of supporting strikers over a long period of time?

Reverend Starks- Well you see for a garbage or sanitation strike, the strike related to the pick up of garbage is never usually that long.

Joan Beifuss- You are saying it was kind of a short term?

Reverend Starks- Yes it was never that long, and we never expected at this moment, expectations for strike of this nature would never go a week, 9 days, 11 days. But after we got into the strike we found out that we are not only involved in a strike situation we were coming face to face with a tradition you see. Economic tradition, a racial tradition, you were coming face to face with the southern tradition. Which I mean in that, in the climate anti-union climate and you had to factor race into the picture you had to factor the carry over from another century of a ways of doing things and thinking and relating to the problem. See we found out after we got into it.

Judy Schultz- Well at what point did you decide to invite Dr. King to come in and be present?

Reverend Starks- Well we decided that the problem was of such magnitude that it need to take on national proportions. See these men had to be supported an they had to gather, they couldn't, but they had to gather some mean by which they could take care of pressing obligations. The union and those of us who were involved most of us could not let these men just pay a tremendous price without any concern to the ultimate outcome and as a result it was decided that we should bring in some national figures that would give the systems not only build the moral and morale but to open avenues where these men could get support. (muffled) the day Ruston came in. And because he spoke and saw the conditions and went back to New York and he spoke there and you had a tremendous response from all over the country supporting these men. Which was so that these men could eat another day and they wouldn't be evicted from their homes because the city at that particular time cut off all of its aids.

Joan Beifuss- Food stamps were cut off?

Reverend Starks- Food stamps, and everything else, when they found out these men were not going back you see. They federal food stamp program was cut off and so forth. now it was then that we decided to bring these men in, Barrett Ruston, Roy Wilkins, Martin Luther King and others.

Joan Beifuss- Can I backtrack a little bit, the Sunday morning after COME was formed without being named COME did you preach a sermon on what was happening in the community?

Reverend Starks- Oh I preached a series of sermons, I preached a number of sermons dealing with social responsibilities and you shouldn't necessarily say the prophetic and social, I mean the gospel for prophetic and social nature, prophetic gospel, social gospel because the gospel of course carries with it of course connotations prophetic and social and of course I did emphasize our social responsibilities.

Joan Beifuss- It was my understanding that out of that Saturday meeting all of the preachers there were to go back and tell their congregations the next morning.

Reverend Starks- But I became so involved in the sanitation strike until even my sermon suffered in that sense. I didn't preach because I was so involved in the sense I was up late Saturday and Sunday mornings, sometimes late and didn't get in every night and then so I had an opportunity to give some others.

Joan Beifuss- You were on the COME strategy committee weren't you?

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- No you mentioned before that there were a couple of attempts where the ministers met with the mayor, could you, after the meeting could you tell us about any of those instances?

Reverend Starks- Well that was an effort to impress the mayor with the urgency for the need of settlement and also to give him a true picture of the negro community and its thinking. A true picture of the negro community's thinking as related to the sanitation strike and to give him an awareness that this is not just a labor dispute this is more than a labor dispute. And that there are certain principles that we feel are important in the solution of this.

Joan Beifuss- now did you yourself go to the mayor's office?

Reverend Starks- I went to the mayor's office.

Joan Beifuss- What group of people went that time?

Reverend Starks- They selected a group of us to go down and talk to him.

Joan Beifuss- Was this all ministers?

Reverend Starks- It could have had a laymen or two in there I am not sure.

Joan Beifuss- Did this come out of the COME meeting or was this coming out of the ministerial alliance or...

Reverend Starks- This was a part of, should I say COME and the ministerial alliance almost faded into..

Joan Beifuss- One..

Reverend Starks- One see and this team as a result of this first meeting with us at Clayborne Temple and the minimum salary building, and mayor Lobe.

Joan Beifuss- Mayor Lobe came to the minimum salary building?

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- When was that do you recall?

Reverend Starks- That was during the strike period now I can't recall the date but it was during that period, it was during the intense effort to find a solution.

Joan Beifuss- Where in the minimum salaries building did you meet with mayor Lobe?

Reverend Starks- That was in the dining hall.

Joan Beifuss- Who all was at that meeting.

Reverend Starks- There was a number of ministers, of you name them and I will tell you they are there.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) What did the mayor say or what was your impression of the mayor's reaction to what you were telling him, did he believe you?

Reverend Starks- Well there was only one thing that the mayor wanted to do, he might have believed us I don't know. But there was one thing he wanted to do, he wanted to continue to talk. With within a large measure (muffled) to so many people that we were at least about to find a solution, which we were as far apart at this particular meeting as we had ever been.

Joan Beifuss- Now you invited the mayor down to the minimum salary building?

Reverend Starks- Yes we invited him.

Joan Beifuss- Who was the chairman of that meeting?

Reverend Starks- I chaired that meeting.

Joan Beifuss- Did you personally call the mayor and invite him?

Reverend Starks- Well we had a meeting, yes, I didn't personally call him see what I did., I was presiding over meeting in the church building when it was suggested by some of the clergy that we should talk to him. Also, and so someone went upstairs to call him and say he could meet us.

Joan Beifuss- Did he come right down?

Reverend Starks- Yes, he came down.

Joan Beifuss- Then he was..

Reverend Starks- See I might add in a large body such as we had that you always have various approaches to this problem and before a full commitment could be made by some there had to certain that the man would (muffled) and they wanted to know that themselves.

Joan Beifuss- And this is what developed in that meeting that the mayor would not take nay other approach?

Reverend Starks- Well he didn't what he wanted to do was to talk with a few of us downtown. He wanted to continue the talks downtown.

Joan Beifuss- Was he at the start of the meeting was he pretty jolly, I mean was he still on the friendly old basis that he attempted to be on.

Reverend Starks- Well I really (muffled) any other move but that type of approach.

Joan Beifuss- He wasn't getting sullen or anything?

Reverend Starks- Oh he had magnificent control see, he can smile and he can extend the hand, but his position ahs not changed.

Joan Beifuss- Talk through clenched teeth.

Reverend Starks- Well he answers that way in every expression. (muffled) differences in many thins you see. But he is able to, I think, exhibit a great deal of control. He is a type of individual as I see it who is a slow thinker and he uses....he doesn't change readily because he feels secure in the position he has already taken and a person who is a slow thinker does not change positions readily. Because he feels that if I change positions the insecurity is too great, he doesn't throw out I should say (muffled) here and there and there looking for a solution and then move to which is most compatible with the interests of the entire community as a mayor you see. And this is the thing that really impressed me with him because I feel that am a man who occupies such a position would be able to take the entire context of interests you see into his concern and his vision. And then (muffled) would be able to move from one position to a small distance from this position as related to the total interest of the community. I feel that way about it but he is an individual who is entirely different and that is the thing that is really impressive to me. Here is a man who occupies such a strategic position and such a position of authority and whose thinking was of such that it just chained him to this particular position.

Joan Beifuss- Then you went with the group that went to his office then right?

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Was that a small group?

Reverend Starks- Yes pretty small, it wasn't a large group.

Joan Beifuss- Could you name any of the people that were in that meeting?

Reverend Starks- Well I think Dr. Jackson was one of the members in this meeting. Jim Lawson, maybe Bell, I really don't know at this particular meeting how many of us and who was there but it was Donelson, I think, Jim Lawson and (muffled) and Kyles, Lightfoot, and Bill Smith, let's see...

Joan Beifuss- Now was that meeting then just kind of a continuation of the big meeting?

Reverend Starks- Yes it was his effort to make it a continuation of the big meeting.

Joan Beifuss- And what was your effort?

Reverend Starks- Our effort was really...

Judy Schultz- Just to try to get a solution.

Reverend Starks- Yeah our effort at this particular time you see was really to obey the wish of the mayor in as much as he was a man of authority and to give to him a (muffled) or showed to him at least a (muffled) of hope through him by going. But listening to him at the minimum salary building you realized many of us that there was no position that we could take that would be compatible to his thinking.

Joan Beifuss- Did you tell him that eventually?

Reverend Starks- Yes, I finally left the meeting myself. I just got up and left the meeting.

Joan Beifuss- you just got up and left the meeting?

Reverend Starks- I told him I am going I don't see where we could move any faster so I am going.

Joan Beifuss- And did he respond to that when you said that?

Reverend Starks- No he didn't respond, at that particular time because Dr. Jackson some say (muffled) there was no hope at this particular session so I just left and there was nothing further for me to talk to him about because I couldn't, (muffled) trust that had been handed me.

Joan Beifuss- Did some of the others stay and talk with him longer?

Reverend Starks- They eventually left too they were in there longer but not long. They left too because there was no possibility of solution.

Joan Beifuss- Do you have any idea how long that meeting would have lasted?

Reverend Starks- It didn't last too long, it didn't last too long because most of the fellows were on the same...

Judy Schultz- Impression...

Joan Beifuss- Well did you see him again that night, go to his office again?

Reverend Starks- Yes I was persuaded by Baxton Bryant and a young man from New York and a young lady from the southern regional council I think from Atlanta to share an experience with the mayor again, with them.

Joan Beifuss- Who was the young man from New York from the council of churches or some place?

Reverend Starks- I guess he was from the council of churches I don't know, maybe if you ever come across him in your tapes, I don't know. But we shared an experience with the mayor along the same lines, where Baxton Bryant pleaded with the mayor to reconsider his position and also to make it clear that he was identified with the black community sanitation worker in this particular crisis.

Joan Beifuss- Made it clear that Baxton was...

Reverend Starks- Yeah Baxton made it clear that he was identified with the interest of sanitation workers and with the black community and had sympathy with the sanitation workers who tried to make this clear to the mayor and of course he is a good friend to the mayor. Well the mayor said that he understood his position but that he hopes he would understand his and with a few words then he started in on me. Telling me about a number of things and he hoped that I would understand his position. Well I did the same thing then because there wasn't anything we could talk about so I excused myself.

Joan Beifuss- was this much later in the strike?

Reverend Starks- Yes this was in the strike much later than the initial (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Were there, I know the white ministers at this time, small groups of white ministers have started approaching individual councilmen. Were you working with the white ministers at all, did you talk to Rabbi Wax?

Reverend Starks- Yes we had a series of talks and then we talked a number of times, at least 2 or 3 times.

Joan Beifuss- You and Rabbi Wax?

Reverend Starks- Yes as to what could be done see I realized that they identified with the power structure, I realized that their relationship with the power structure was different than mine and we decided that maybe we could work in one area and make it work effectively in another.

Joan Beifuss- Now was their area to be the council kind of?

Reverend Starks- Yes about Wax was here and group of others they were to work with the councilmen, and they began to work on the councilmen.

Joan Beifuss- Did you get any reports back on how that was going?

Reverend Starks- Yes I talked to him as to some of the possibilities that could come through such a relationship after that exploding.

Joan Beifuss- And after they had seen a very council men what was your assessment of that as a tact, did that seem to get anywhere?

Reverend Starks- It wasn't moving you see, it hadn't moved. (muffled) to some extent some of them could not be approached.

Joan Beifuss- Did you feel I will say early in march or up to the middle of march or before Dr. King came in the first time, did you feel that the white ministers, the people on the ministerial association do you feel they understood what was happening?

Reverend Starks- No they didn't fully understand. You see because they were not really exposed to what was really happening except through secondary sources such as the newspapers. And the newspapers only printed those things which were you keep with the status quo and also as related to us inflammatory statements and material and so forth.

Joan Beifuss- Did you was there any attempt made to get a large group of white ministers together so that you could talk to them or reverend Lawson could talk to them?

Reverend Starks- Yes we had a series of some meetings together and they finally came tot eh point that something had to be done.

Joan Beifuss- Now when, was this still early in March or...

Reverend Starks- No this was pretty late, this strike had gone on for some weeks before we could get together as a body you see but you had some ministers like Brother Lawrich and a few others in the presbytery taking certain actions that the (muffled). Then you had some professors who are connected with the seminary and the COME CPC taking constructive action.

Joan Beifuss- CPC?

Reverend Starks- Common Presbyterian Church. Professors and also member of an denomination that is (muffled). It is a huge Escalon. And you had scattered concerns showed in various churches but no unified effort.

Joan Beifuss- Did you I think, did you expect help from the white ministers as such? Did you expect some kind of unified white support?

Reverend Starks- There was a time in my thinking when we first began that I thought maybe we could get some unified support or maybe we could get some express concern because something that will show the identity of the cause.

Joan Beifuss- Did you see that this public support could come from any part of the white community other than the white clergy, could you see it coming from any place else?

Reverend Starks- Well we thought, I should say I thought for awhile that maybe we were to have some support from the liberal elements more than we did get especially in the initial stages of this thing, I believe we did get some support from the liberal elements in some of the schools and some of the staff members at Memphis state.

Joan Beifuss- Any attempt made to reach those people directly? Say like the American association of university professors?

Reverend Starks- Not that I know of, not to my knowledge, not the (muffled). Of course there were moments in which we all met to see each other we talked as individuals and there were some responses. (muffled) is a good example, we had demonstrators joining in, white demonstrators joining with us in our marches and so forth to dramatize this. You may look at it a number of ways I think one of the things that a lot of white people maybe missed the bolt in thinking. When you have a group of whites in a march you have in a large measure taken an action that will minimize violence, you have done this in two ways, first is the power structure itself does not want to go on record as really having brutalizing two ethnic groups as I may say because they are brutalizing its own you see. Because they maybe will think again before they begin to brutalize its own. The next thing is the black power advocates and all that began to see that there is an identity, there is a relationship, there is a should I say agreement, and (muffled) in which there has brought about a coalition. After all in this way it tends to minimize those who would become black power in the sense that it is, I say black power advocates in the sense they are destructive. I am not against the black power period but the destructive element I am, and the destructive nature I am see. Because racism whether black or white is still there.

Joan Beifuss- My train of thought is squished, go ahead and I will think of it.

Judy Schultz- Well in, did you have contact with what it is frequently termed the black power advocate element. Like some of the younger fellows such as, the group which is called the invaders or some of the young fellows associated with these groups?

Reverend Starks- Yes but you must remember that most of the black power because they don't march.

Joan Beifuss- So although you might have had some contact with them they didn't participate in your activities and they were just kind of on the sideline?

Reverend Starks- Now they did participate now. At first we had an invitation to the fellows and of course now the invitation was such that as an invitation to participate and the participation was of such limited proportions as far as they were concerned until they did more or less become sideliners.

Judy Schultz- Did they choose to do that themselves because they didn't care to participate in the things that you all had planned to do?

Reverend Starks- As a body they had chose to do that but of course we had a few individuals who were identified with such movements that did participate in a constructive way.

Judy Schultz- What about some of the fellows who were picked up at some of the schools for trying to get the kids to leave school and march?

Reverend Starks- Now we can't, that was another area an area in which I didn't work in. Now that was on Middlebrooke. There was some areas that were assigned to different people even though the overall strategy was in some ways worked out by the strategy committee but that came under another facet of the COME.

Joan Beifuss- Was there not a group of young people that were working for COME and there was another group of young people that were not, not organized at all.

Reverend Starks- What you have reference to the..

Joan Beifuss- There were some kids that actually worked for COME and saw COME directives and things were there not.

Reverend Starks- That is true. So....

Joan Beifuss- All the younger people weren't off with eh invaders there were...

Reverend Starks- No no no no. See we had a group that we were working with in COME through Middlebrooke. Now in all the invaders, I will say this, all the invaders did not fail to work we had a number of invaders they worked and worked in constructive way in this thing not destructive.

Joan Beifuss- It is sort of a generic term and you kind of tend to throw everything into it and I realize it is a catch all term it is not accurate.

Reverend Starks- Right I think some of the finer fellows are there and you will find will be invaders.

Joan Beifuss- Was there on the COME strategy meeting itself were there people who didn't think you were escalating fast enough and people who thought you were escalating too fast? I assume that the strategy committee was not always of one mind about decisions that were made.

Reverend Starks- That is true.

Joan Beifuss- Were there a group who felt he escalation should be done more quickly that mass marching should have been started earlier?

Reverend Starks- You will always have that you will have the tension created by those that thing that we should accelerate and others that thing acceleration is too fast and others feel that was has been should continue to some extent the status quo you have got that. So yes I would say that in fact that happened among the ministers and one of my problems was to try to keep all participating and participating on a level of constructiveness and we have in the ministers a conservative group and as well as almost a reactionary group. We have the activists too, and (muffled) and my problem was to keep them supporting the effort.

Joan Beifuss- Do you have the faintest idea how many negro ministers there are altogether?

Reverend Starks- No I don't, I can say this, it is an awful lot of them.

Joan Beifuss- And a lot of them are part time ministers aren't they?

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- They hold other jobs.

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Judy Schultz- Well what kind of plans did you being to formulate when you talked about the first march which Dr. King came in to lead?

Reverend Starks- Of course the plans dealing with the march were in the hands of men who had done this before. Men like Jim Lawson and Middlebrooke and others that knew more about marching. Those men had participated in marches and we had a few others.

Judy Schultz- Did you meet Dr. King when he first came to town? Did you all have some meetings with him?

=Yes when he first came to town of course he spoke and I met him and we had a few sessions after that and Dr. King of course was a man who was concerned with the disinherited. He was a man who would give himself fully to enhance a life of the disinherited and he saw the sanitation workers as the disinherited and he was concerned and wanted to do what he possibly could to make abundant life possible for them.

Joan Beifuss- Had you met Dr. King before?

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Had you ever worked with him before?

Reverend Starks- No, he had been to Memphis before?

Joan Beifuss- Yes he has spoken here before.

Judy Schultz- What advice did he give or did any of his assistants give concerning the first march, did they even look into the preparation and what kind of route they were taking and what kind of marshals you had?

Reverend Starks- No, he didn't give himself to it because some of the people who were involved had been in marches with him such as Jim and Middlebrooke and Abernathy and others you see so he thought that this was taken care of. But he didn't give himself to the details at all.

Judy Schultz- Did you participate in that first march?

Reverend Starks- Yes.

Judy Schultz- Where were you?

Joan Beifuss- Hold up just a second. What was the status of communication with the police before that first march was the COME strategy committee cooperating with the police and giving them information about the route that was to be taken and that kind of thing or had you kind of cut off communication with the police.

Reverend Starks- Well there was some communication, I don't know to what extent this communication was and because we had a planned route and of course you don't have a planned route unless you do have communication with the police. As to what did happen I think there was not the faintest idea that in this particular instance during the planning that it would happen. Because as was brought out earlier some of the most docile, some of the most peaceful people that you will find are men in the sanitation department. There is one reason that they could be exploited for so long without any trouble without any difficulty because of this docile nature and so we really didn't expect what happened to happen.

Joan Beifuss- Tell us about the march then, or first would you like some more coffee.

Reverend Starks- No I think I am going to have to get out of here for too long.

Judy Schultz- We are about to run out of tape.

Joan Beifuss- Well let's change the tape I would like to get through the march and Dr. King's assassination if that would be possible.

Reverend Starks- Sure I will make...(Tape End)