

Biographical Data on George M. Houser

George Houser was born in Cleveland, the son of a Methodist minister. He lived for five years in the Philippine Islands, where his parents were missionaries, and spent his sophomore year of college as an exchange student at Lingnan University, Canton, China. He graduated from the University of Denver and later attended Union and Chicago Theological Seminaries. He was ordained a Methodist minister in 1943.

He is the Secretary of National Projects of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. As the organizer and first Director of the Congress of Racial Equality, he has been responsible for setting up numerous interracial workshops in various cities, to acquaint people further with the nonviolent direct action approach to the problem of racial tension, both through discussion and through experimentation. He has planned and directed summer workshops in Chicago, Washington, and Los Angeles.

He was the organizer of the Journey of Reconciliation, conducted in the spring of 1947 in the Upper South, through which policies of interstate buses and trains as regards segregation of passengers were tested under the Irene Morgan decision of the Supreme Court. In recognition of the contribution of this Journey toward ending travel segregation, he was cited for a Jefferson Day Award by the Council against Intolerance in America.

He was the Executive Secretary of the national Conference on the Church and War in 1950, the Christian Youth Conference on War in 1952, and the Conference on the Church and Peace in 1953, all of which were sponsored by the Church Peace Mission, a national organization to promote joint activity of denominational peace fellowships and the Historic Peace Churches (Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren).

He was a founder of the American Committee on Africa, an organization in the United States to promote interest in the struggle for freedom in Africa.

He is the author of "Erasing the Color Line" and of "Nonviolent Revolution in South Africa", and a co-author of the pamphlet, "We Challenged Jim Crow". He has contributed articles to magazines on problems of peace, race relations, labor, prisons, and the South African situation.

He traveled in Europe in 1951 and has recently returned from a six-months' trip to Africa (May-October, 1954) where he visited French West and Equatorial Africa, Liberia, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, the Belgian Congo, Angola, and South Africa. He consulted with such people as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of the Gold Coast; Dr. Nnandi Azikiwe, leader of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons; Manilal Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi; and Chief Albert J. Luthuli of the African National Congress in South Africa.