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May I introduce myself? I am Thoburn W. Anderson, minister of the Central Methodist Church of Skokie. The reason for the introduction is that to most of you I am a stranger, having been a resident of this community only a month.

I am here to speak as a representative of the Methodist Church. The following resolution, which I wholeheartedly endorse, was adopted by the Rock River Conference meeting in annual session in DeKalb, Illinois June 4 - 8, 1967.

WHEREAS, It is the stated position of the Rock River Conference of the Methodist Church that no person shall be deprived of the benefits of our society because of his race or creed; and

WHEREAS, The various local municipalities, the state of Illinois, and the United States government are the proper agencies to guarantee to all persons their just rights, privileges, and benefits of society; and

WHEREAS, Adequate and desirable housing and the attendant educational, employment and community opportunities are among the benefits stemming from a fair and just society,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the governing bodies of the various municipalities of our state, the administrative officers of the State of Illinois, and of the United States are asked to initiate such policies and programs as will guarantee these benefits to all persons regardless of race or creed; and further

BE IT RESOLVED, That the legislature of the State of Illinois, the Congress of the United States, and the governing bodies of the various municipalities shall be asked to enact immediately laws directed to that end, and further

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Conference Secretary forward copies of this resolution to all concerned local, state, and federal officers and legislative officials.

This resolution was adopted by some 700 ministers and laymen representing 363 churches in Northern Illinois. As Conference Secretary I sent copies to those responsible for acting on open housing legislation at both state and federal levels.

Since the last session of our state legislature did not enact a fair housing bill, it behooves the progressive communities of our state to guarantee to all persons adequate and desirable housing. It is heartening to see several communities enacting fair housing ordinances and I know Skokie will soon join them. Why this confidence? Because Skokie is a "Village of Vision" and has taken leadership in this area with its so called "Skokie Plan". Many have said that the "Skokie Plan" has failed and maybe the critics are right. But may I point out, unless you have vision and take some forward step, you can't be accused of failing. Many other communities in the suburban area owe much to Skokie for its efforts in fair housing. Another reason I am confident is that the educational program of the "Skokie Plan" has produced fruits - open communication on the problem, tolerance and understanding among its citizenry. As a newcomer, I sense an openness and spirit that did not come of its own accord. I am proud to be part of this community.

As some of you may know, I was most recently a resident of Park Forest. I am very proud of the record that Park Forest has made in this field of human relations. I hope that I have had a small part in making it a village of good will.

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From my background, may I share some observations in relation to the proposed housing ordinance.

(1) Skokie will not be inundated with negroes. The first negro family moved into Park Forest in 1960. To date there are 80 families now in residence, with some 10 families having moved out. In 1965 and 1966 the rate of negro move-ins was the same, even though cooperative housing, new houses, as well as resale houses (both through FHA and VA foreclosures and real estate brokers).

(2) Ghettos can only be prevented by cooperative realtors. In Park Forest the fine cooperation by realtors prevented houses near negroes from being shown only to negroes. Thus in a highly mobile community, such as Park Forest, there is a waiting list for cooperative and rental units, while individual housing units particularly 3 bedroom or larger houses are being sold almost as soon as available.

(3) When buyers, sellers and realtors work together the situation becomes truly equal and fair housing. The adage that once a house is sold to negroes it will always be in negro hands is not true. My experience such has not been the case. Negroes have rented to whites and sold to whites.

(4) Open housing means integration in the best sense of the word. Those negro families moving into Park Forest have enriched the life of that community. They have been active in civic affairs, as well as in the educational, social and religious life of the community. There is a tolerance and appreciation for different races and creeds that can only happen when all persons can work, play and live as neighbors.

(5) The real estate broker is often labeled as the obstructionist in the open housing situation. Many times the label fits, but too often the broker, being the middle man between the buyer and seller, is put in a difficult position because of a prejudiced seller. I believe the real estate broker needs protection. I am encouraged by the recent passage of a fair housing ordinance in Wheaton, which holds not only the broker responsible but equally the seller. The real estate brokers were partners in passing this far sighted legislation.

I, as minister of Central Methodist Church, make a plea for a meaningful open housing ordinance. No local church or synagogue can bring a solution to this crucial problem. No agonizing problem of our day has any chance of solution unless the whole people of God work, witness and pray together. May God grant us wisdom as together we seek an effective answer in this basic area of human rights.