

Strong NAACP, AME Statement On Ray Seen

By ROBERT CHURCHWELL
The Rev. Peter G. Crawford, president of the Nashville Chapter of the NAACP and pastor of the oldest congregation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church here, said today he expects the NAACP and the AME's annual conference to issue "strong statements" next week on "the disappointment of Negroes in the handling of the James Earl Ray case."

The Rev. Mr. Crawford, pastor of St. John AME Church, 1822 Formosa St., said he felt the two organizations would act to express feelings not only of Negroes but of "others disturbed by the case."

Wrong Rules

"Wrong rules the land while waiting justice sleeps," said the NAACP president, adding that "the average Negro feels disappointment with the manner in which they dealt with this case."

Ray pleaded guilty Monday and quickly was sentenced to 99 years in prison for the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King. Ray stated he did agree with opinions that no conspiracy was involved in the assassination of Dr. King.

The Rev. Mr. Crawford noted that an AME department head, Dr. H. Ralph Jackson, one of the leaders of the Memphis garbage strike that preceded Dr. King's assassination, "and others of our Memphis ministers," will attend the special conference Tuesday through Thursday at Bethel AME Church.

Dr. Jackson, former pastor of the host church, will address the conference Wednesday morning.

"I know these Memphis men will want to act and along with Dr. Jackson and myself we will probably get a strong statement out of the conference," the veteran AME minister said.

The Rev. Mr. Crawford said

the "quickie" trial aroused speculation that a fuller presentation of the facts in the case might have been stifled, and that Ray might have been only one of several involved in the slaying.

He said he will ask the local NAACP executive committee to name a committee to draw a statement making this position

clear in the strongest terms possible. The executive committee meets Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at the NAACP Branch office, 1308 Jefferson St.

The Rev. Mr. Crawford said that if Ray "had to take the rap" for other assassins, Negroes, as well as white persons, should regard his conviction

with sympathy.

"If there is a possibility he had to take the rap for somebody else, why shouldn't he win the sympathy of everybody — not just Negroes?" the Rev. Mr. Crawford said.

"Why shouldn't Negroes feel as sorry for him as everybody else?"

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 6

NASHVILLE BANNER

NASHVILLE,
TENNESSEE

Date:

3-17-69

Edition:

ALVAND C.

Author:

DUNKLEBERGER

Editor:

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

MEMPHIS

Submitting Office:

Being Investigated

44-1987

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED <i>ll</i>	FILED <i>ll</i>
MAR 19 1969	

WJ

44-1987-Sub-C-348