

April 4, 1968

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.

From: Dan Sweat

Subject: Clergymen's Conference

I met with representatives of the Atlanta Christian Council this morning to discuss followup on the suggested meeting the Clergy of Atlanta wants to hold to help get further understanding of and involvement in the problems which face the city.

The idea of the ministers is to have a meeting which would include the religious leadership from the five county area, the elected political leadership, top business, labor and education. In effect, they are talking about an Urban Coalition type mass meeting of the top leadership.

They are speaking in terms of from 500 to 1,000 persons.

What apparently prompted this interest on the part of the Clergy was Al Bows speech to them. It is now felt that Mr. Bows has put the Clergy on the spot and there is fear that the business community has gotten out ahead of the religious community.

The ministers who are behind this movement feel that the time is at hand to encourage some of the more timid ministers, particularly in the suburbs, to get moving. They feel that if these ministers can see what some of the business community is doing and saying, people like

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Bows, Paul Austin, Sterne, etc., that they won't feel they're risking their necks or their pulpits by getting involved in the "urban problems".

We have tentatively settled on May 6 as the date for the dinner and would like to issue an invitation to John Gardner. The program would consist of "rip-snorting" speeches from you, Paul Austin, John Gardner and a key religious figure.

The ministers' committee will be in to talk to you about it, present their ideas and get any suggestions you might have on Wednesday at 2:30 p. m.

DS:fy