

# Methodists Laud Police And Negroes

CHICAGO, March 16 (AP)—The Methodist Church's board of social and economic relations has commended both the Southern Negroes conducting sit-in demonstrations and southern police forces.

The board's statement, adopted last night, said:

"We commend participating students for the dignified, non-violent manner in which they have conducted themselves.

"We further commend the good professional performance of Southern police forces which have prevented chaos."

Hundreds of Negroes throughout the South have demonstrated against segregated eating in lunch counters and restaurants. One tactic has been to sit at lunch stools and in booths for hours even though service has been denied.

The 46-member national board, holding its semiannual meeting, said it viewed the students' demonstrations as "a challenge to community responsibility—a challenge to accept Negroes in their respective communities on terms of dignity."

"We regret that many citizens of our country are denied basic human rights," the board said. The demonstrations have "reminded us of such denials."

The Methodists also said that "as a denomination we have failed to live up to our pronouncements. In no section of our land have we carried out the teachings of our Lord with respect to race relations."

The board said that "students should be free to exercise their personal Christian responsibilities. Methodist institutions should not penalize students who do so."

But, the board added, "demonstrations, must be seen as a means of awakening community conscience and not as a goal in itself. Economic protest of any kind should be viewed as a last resort when attempts at negotiation fail."

The board's work, according to officials, is implementing social action measures and providing resource material relating to social and economic relations.