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Bob Hurt

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40 Protestant Pastors Ask Better Race Ties

By BOB HURT

A group of about 40 Church of Christ ministers meeting here Wednesday issued what they described as the first formal statement by a pastors' group calling for better race relations within the 2,000,000-member Church of Christ.

Their resolution lists two pages of specific areas of discrimination they say exists and "acknowledges the sin of racial prejudice . . . in Churches of Christ and church-related institutions and businesses."

The integrated group of ministers from several states emphasized that they did not constitute a formal organization, but were "a gathering of concerned Christians."

The Church of Christ does not consider itself a formal religious denomination, but a group of autonomous individual churches. It has no national organization of members.

About half of the ministers attending the meeting here at the Hilton Inn were from the South or Southwest, and most of the rest from Northern states.

A spokesman for the group said that their meeting marked the first time that a national group of Church of Christ ministers have ever met and drafted a resolution on race issues. The resolution will be sent the church's half-dozen national newspapers, the ministers said.

The Atlanta host of the gathering was Minister Andrew J. Hairston of Atlanta's Simpson Street Church of Christ.

Organizers of the meeting were Ministers R. C. Well, New York City; Eugene Lawton, Newark, N. J., and Jimmy Allen, a teacher of Bible at Harding College in Arkansas.

Among the more militant ministers attending the conference was F. D. Florence of

Rochester, N. Y. Florence is president of a group of Rochester Negroes organizing a factory owned and operated by Negroes in that city.

Florence described Church of Christ churches as the "chaplains of the establishment" and one of the slowest moving religious groups in the nation in race relations.