

The District Superintendents of the Washington Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, representing portions of the states of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, assembled in regular session, Bishop W. F. McDowell presiding, unanimously deplore the spirit of lawlessness which swept the towns of Lewisburg, West Virginia, and Salisbury, Maryland, resulting in the lynching of three men. These lynchings are all the more deplorable because in both cases the suspects were in the custody of the law. Two of them were in jail, while Matthew Williams, a third victim, was in a hospital ward and so bandaged as not to be able to see. He was taken, hung to a tree and afterward burned in the presence of many of the citizens.

In days like these when economic conditions create in nearly every community unusual social conditions which challenge leaders of the Church and Government to put in motion every constructive agency to keep up the morale of the people and keep down those influences which under the cover of "depression" strike at the very roots of our social order, it is to be deplored that any community should be disgraced and order and good government prostituted by a mob of lynchers. This, of course, augments the unrest which is already too apparent in nearly every community.

As Superintendents, representing 40,000 law abiding members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we deeply deplore the inhumanity of that element of people who engage in the barbarous practice of lynching and burning human beings - a practice unknown to any part of the civilized world except America. As representatives of the Christian Church which stands for law and order, we urge those who are entrusted with the administration of civil government, to search for, find, and bring to justice those persons who are responsible for this outrageous assault on society and good government.