

Following is an open letter which I will attempt to deliver personally to Governor Ross Barnett at the completion of my walk for civil rights from Chattanooga to Jackson:-

433 E. 25 Street

889-5177

Honorable Ross Barnett
Governor
State of Mississippi
Jackson, Mississippi

Dear Governor Barnett:

I have always had a warm place in my heart for Mississippi, the land of my childhood and my ancestors. I dislike the reputation this state has acquired as being the most backward and most bigoted in the land. Those who truly love Mississippi must work to change this image.

Frankly, I do not know which is worse - to be raised to believe that one should be happy to live in poverty and die twice as fast as the white man and to be told to reject the ideas of those who tell you democracy means the right to vote whatever the color of one's skin; or is it worse to be raised as members of a sort of "master race" which fights a losing battle to preserve injustice with barbaric laws and police state methods.

The British were wise in that they dissolved their empire before they were forced to do so. Consequently, the governments of countries such as India and Nigeria are stable and friendly and democratic. The French, on the other hand, held onto their empire as long as they could. Thus the bitter strife in Laos, Vietnam, Algeria.

The end of Mississippi colonialism is fast approaching. The only question is whether you will help it to end in friendship like the British, or try to hold onto what is already lost, creating bitterness and hatred, as did the French. For our sake, as well as the Negro's, I hope you will decide to try the British way.

The white man cannot be truly free himself until all men have their rights. Each is dependent upon the other. Do not go down in infamy as one who fought the democracy for all which you have not the power to prevent.

Be gracious. Give more than is immediately demanded of you. Make certain that when the Negro gets his rights and his vote that he does not in the process learn to treat the white man with the contempt and disdain that, unfortunately, some of us now treat him.

Sincerely,

William L. Moore
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