

(Not for Publication)

ORIGINAL OF PEACE SECTION  
21 S. 12<sup>th</sup> ST.  
ACRON, Form.

Excerpts from  
Reports by Albert Gaeddert  
on Summer Assignment in Mississippi, 1964

Wednesday, July 1, 1964, found us at Newton, Kansas. A brief Commissioning Service at 8:30 a.m. Central Offices. Esko Loewen gave the background of development that led to the call that came to us, our response, and the Commissioning Service. The primary step was the meeting of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, in Jackson, Mississippi, in June.

Orientation followed; present - William Snyder, Esko Loewen, Vern Preheim, Dr. Fast, Edna and I. The name employed -- Emissary of Reconciliation; Job description: to listen to white leaders, Negro leaders, both religious and civic; seek to establish communication and understanding between the groups; mediate between Negro and white where possible; coordinate with others engaged in similar work in Mississippi; and give thought to involving the Mennonite Church where possible in the future, and to visit as many of the Mennonite communities in Mississippi (perhaps the South) as possible.

Ed Metzler's letter which arrived in p.m. suggested beginning at Memphis in the Orientation School set up under National Council of Churches (NCC), July 2, 3. This seemed good to the Newton office and to us; so this became our first point.

July 3 --took part in Orientation sponsored by Council of Federated Organizations (COFO); although our work is not related to theirs, yet we can learn from them. "Freedom Schools", "Community Centers", Voter Registration helpers are main areas of their emphasis. About 40 persons present. Coming from all over our country; a large number of Jews in the group. Definitely not a religious group; however, motivated by a desire to help the "under-dog". Orientation School was held on Le Moine College, a Negro college in Memphis, Tennessee. It closed tonight. Met Grady Poulard; Staughton Lind, who is in charge of the Freedom Schools; Vincent Harding's address to the Oxford, Ohio training school, had been taped, and was played back to today's group. This was very positive, with strong historical setting of the problem; very good.

We came away feeling that with the absence of a religious base, it seems that the religious motivation is also conspicuous by its absence; this may be too hasty a judgment. It seemed they were too much on the surface; tonight's presentation of the work of the Freedom Schools was much much better; these are conducted for grades 1-12 in Mississippi. One feels these need to be visited.

Monday, July 6; it is 5:00 p.m. Have had a rather eventful day. First of all, yesterday was Sunday after July 4th. Went to Galloway Methodist Church. Dr. Cunningham spoke on liberty, and lifted out three words: Duty, Freedom, and Morality, which had had a very considerable effect upon our country. He mentioned civil rights by name, and did it very well in connection with duty, especially, saying that the rights were now clearly set forth by law, and it became the duty of everyone to apply them to all. We did not hear the evening message by the associate minister, Collins but in the Communion Service he had confronted the congregation very specifically with the question of what would Christ say to the people at Jackson especially those who had come to the communion fellowship? David Jenks who stays with Lawrence Scott a minister in the Reformed Church heard the message and took part in the service.

We met David Jenks yesterday p.m. Very fine person; reminds one of John Mosiman, Goshen College Church; soft-spoken, deeply devoted, and able to articulate very clearly. Is here for F.O.R. Has been here about one week; not certain whether he should continue here, or perhaps go to Columbus. His approach is very much like that of Scott. Scott had gone to the Gulf on the weekend; came back this morning. Met with him this morning. I like his philosophy of things; he has a very good historical perspective, and sets the Southern program and problem in its historical setting. He keeps in contact with NCC and with COFO, and gives due credit for their efforts. He appreciates the energy and almost blind devotion of the groups coming from the Freedom Schools, and thinks they need to receive credit for facing the problem head-on, even though they are not appreciated in the South, to put it mildly.

This morning I went to the Chief of Police here at Jackson; I wanted to tell him that we were here, and to see what he had to say. He had time for me, said he was not against the Negro, had grown up with them, lived not only in the rural area, but on a farm most of his life. He even made the statement "I love the Negro," although he may have had one finger over the other on that; yet he was very outspoken against any violence, saying that they tried daily to impress upon their entire force the fact that nothing is accomplished by violence. (The article in the Mennonite did not come to me at the time), but one wonders why there is so much of it, if the force as a whole is set against it. He was not adverse against our working here; he made it clear that those who came to stir up trouble were better off if they had not come. Did not get to the Mayor of the City, but to his deputy Bryant Horne. Very cordial; in fact that seems to be the way of people here, especially those in authority. I told him I was a Mennonite minister; he said later --I can give you permission to set up your tent immediately, anywhere you want to, and go to work! I told him it was not my intention to "set up a tent", but I would like to make contacts with people, and try to get communication going. Well, he did not see where the lines of communication were not open. And this one meets almost everywhere--(sounds like we have been here very long); but others say the same thing: they feel the lines of communication are open; they are not aware that even between whites they are not open. Scott says that too, and Jenks. Whether one ought to go back and check with him whether he really meant to give us permission to work as a Mennonite Church in the city? Perhaps we ought to begin a church here, with the full and express purpose of it being an integrated church!

At Rotary this noon Jenks and I had a discussion with a business man--a Catholic. He was not hesitant in telling us that we surely had problems at home; why not solve them, and let Jackson solve their own? My response was that what Jackson faces the nation faces, and that we felt we needed to understand this firsthand, and with a firsthand contact. The paternalistic attitude toward the Negro is very prevalent. While at Rotary they gave a five minute news cast; the first item was the report that the Robert E. Lee Hotel had decided to close its doors, in preference to complying with the civil rights regulations; there was applause to this, but not as wholehearted as one might have expected. Jenks asked of the fellow next to him whether the applause signified the consensus of the Club? His reply was that it did not; the fellow to whom Jenks spoke happened to be from the Radio News Service, and felt that the city was quite divided in its reaction. We learned that the Heidelberg Hotel, which is the larger, and which has several other large hotels belonging to the same management, took the other view of the CR, and were complying. (By the way, I rated a "flag" from the Rotary Club for being a visitor from farthest away).

Visited the NCC Office. Arthur Thomas was there; he was a bit discouraged with what is going on. In Columbus--about 50 miles from Meridian--they are not getting off the ground at all with the Freedom School. Negroes are not ready to rent building

space to them. Ministers are not cooperative. They will need to pull out, they feel. He asked Jenks about going there, especially to work with the ministers. McCord came in from Columbus while we were there, and his report confirmed what Art has been saying. They had not given up, but the teachers were not finding any place to stay; they had to sleep in the schools. Art thought too that with Titus Bender working in Meridian, we could perhaps do best to give him encouragement, and to strengthen our program there. He spoke highly of the work Titus had been doing there. Jenks is giving serious consideration to going to Columbus. He is the type of person who would soon engender confidence in ministers, if anyone could.

The way it appears to us now--(this is just before supper; Lawrence Scott and David Jenks just invited us to come eat with them)--we will call Titus Bender from Scott's apartment, to see whether we could go there for a visit; while there we could probably best decide where we could make our stay, and where our work might be centered. We went apartment hunting yesterday; we did not find much, but neither did we think we should settle down to any place before having talked with L. Scott. This we have done now, and we may well decide to go to Meridian for tomorrow and perhaps a few days, if not to make our location there.

We did speak to Titus Bender, who was very eager that we come see them.

July 8, Wednesday. Came to Meridian yesterday morning; came directly to Titus Bender's house. Titus, his wife, and two girls are ministers of a small Mennonite Church; working for the Conservative Mennonite group. They do much of their work with Voluntary Service personnel, four at the moment, plus one or two others who are making their stay here, but working, or else going to school. One of the fellows from the COFO office is a Mennonite from Eastern Mennonite School; he does not stay here, but visits here often; was here last evening. He had some difficulty with the police, when he was hit by another car; thought at first this was one of those planned deals, but it was not, and he came through quite well, with only a \$25 fine; the Attorney here is an understanding type of person, helping him to get out of it with no more fines slapped on him because of his connection with COFO.

The atmosphere is tense here. The White Citizens Council is active, but there are individuals, and one hears of more and more of them, who are saying "this is now the law, and we want to go along with it". At one moment one thinks the worst is perhaps over; the next--you aren't so sure but what a "last-ditch stand" is going to be taken by officialdom in Mississippi.

This morning Titus and I went to see Rev. Porter. He does not have a listed telephone; as long as he did he had to answer constantly, day and night. This is what COFO is having to do. Yet they cannot afford not to answer, not knowing but what it might be an emergency call from someone--a staff member especially.

Rev. Porter talked very openly after the first few minutes; his being apprehensive was certainly understandable. In fact, I can't say that I felt entirely free from fear of what might be the result of our being in his home. This is one of the things one needs to get used to, and to overcome. When a police car hesitated quite a while on the corner looking the car over with a Minnesota license, one wondered too what that might mean. One wonders a bit about the name of the country one is in, and blinks twice to recall definitely having left our shores; but one did not have to have a passport to leave or to enter, so here we still are!

Rev. Porter feels strongly that one great need is to open lines of communication. They are not open. Not only are they not open between whites and Negroes, but within each of the groups there are right lines. He thinks this would be one of the most

valuable services to be rendered here. They find virtually no one, except McCune, an Episcopalian minister, of the white ministers that will even engage in conversation with one of them. He thinks there might be a few who would come, were a meeting to be called. Tentatively we are trying for one on Friday; this needs confirmation. Titus Bender has the name of a Presbyterian man, who is coming here early this p.m. to talk to Titus and I. This is an area which I want to pursue.

Another field in which Rev. Porter (Negro) thought our group could fit into would be the teaching field. Of course, what the situation will be come September, no one knows; will there be attempts at integration and integrated schools? One doubts that there will be much of this by September. What is the alternative, Private schools for the whites? No one ventures a guess so far, Titus included. Rev. Porter thought if white superintendents--and these are the only kind they have here--would take out of state teachers at all, then this would be an area where we could very definitely make a contribution. These are two possible areas as it looks at this point, 1, trying to open communication between ministers; 2, some teachers that might be used. In number 1 we want to work here in Meridian; our first white minister contact was not too hopeful on this. He is a fellow with whom Titus has had several conversations quite in depth. He was here this p.m.; but he feels that his ministry is to preach the Word of God, and that his people will not listen; he will lose them if he in any way identifies himself with anyone that has any connection with COFO, or with those of a more liberal point of view. One cannot judge by one minister's reaction, but this was one who Titus felt would be open to it, and when it comes down to it, he wasn't open to it. We feel that it may be well to make some more contacts on a person-to-person basis with ministers before trying to get groups together. This may take some time to work on. I have the feeling now, that this is one area in which we need to work pretty directly, and too, that Meridian may be as good a place as any in which to try the experiment. So it seems to point toward being in Meridian perhaps, rather than Jackson. The help that Titus is, has been, and perhaps can be, is a big factor in the decision.

On 2) about getting teachers, this is very much in the embryonic stage. But here too one would like to talk to the Superintendent of Schools here at Meridian. It is a bit early yet to work on this.

Went to the place yesterday where the car had been found burning; this is less than five miles from the dwelling of Titus Bender's parents, who are missionaries to the Choctaw Indians. We visited there a few hours, saw their church building and the place where they work. People feel that there are those who know very well, but thus far \$25,000 has not tempted anyone to tell on anyone else. Some of the areas around here are a law unto themselves.

Gulfport--July 9, Thursday. Had a morning appointment with Dr. McCeowen, Rector of the Episcopal Church, Meridian. Dr. McCeowen is a tall, lanky, kindly dispositioned man. He wears his clerical collar but this is not what distinguishes him; his personality does. He is kind and gracious but discerning, and with an analytic mind, and very soon you are aware that you are in the presence of one with depth of character and depth of insight.

He knew of Titus Bender's work; (Titus has good rapport with many ministers). He knew of Mennonites from earlier periods of his life, perhaps in Pennsylvania, or some other part in the east; he did not say where. He knew of our relief work; had heard of our alternative service program, and we mentioned PAX, TAP, and VS. Several times his comment was: "Bless your soul; the world needs more of your kind."

He felt lonely when it came to the question of race. Other ministers were not interested. Once he had mentioned it at a ministerial association meeting, but the response had been such that he felt very "beaten" for having even mentioned it. His ministerial association seemed to deal more with the \$29 and some cents that they had in the treasury than with the issues that involve people. (One knows how this works). Most churches are Baptist here; each has some adjective before the name, but it is Baptist, or Bible Baptist, with only an occasional Methodist or Presbyterian thrown in.

He appreciated greatly our concern; wanted to know exactly what had brought us from the North; not in a critical way as if to ask: "what business have you here?", but what the motivation of our group was that led to this effort. It made one feel that now and then there is a lone soul with an appreciation for the things that seem so basic to us.

When it came to answers about what we could do, this presented problems. His first answer was: support Titus. He says the close contact Titus has with his groups, the influence he can have over their personal lives, this is the most important educational job that needs doing. He added that Titus probably had direct access to more people's thinking than all the other ministers put together who were at all open to consideration of integration. About keeping communication lines open--he felt that this would be a long, long, difficult road. Involved is the difference in theology among ministers; Rev. Porter had mentioned this the day before. (He is a Negro; McGeowen is white). They have things in common and can carry on a dialogue together; where whites with whites nor Negro with Negro cannot, due to differences in points of view, theologically.

Gulfport--July 11, Saturday. Interview with J. L. Henderson, operator of two Army Surplus Stores, Gulfport, what he says is about a \$100,000 business. A man who employs some Negroes along with whites; just yesterday had one of the managers quit, and a second said today was her last day with him, because of his storehaving the reputation of being an integrationist store. He sits down with his Negro help and white help to drink coffee at his table in the back of the store, around which he sat with Edna and I to talk. He offered to both of these lady managers to pay for an investigation by the FBI of his practices and his leanings to communism (of which they accused him), or of any unfair practices with his employees, and/or customers. He offered to pay the expenses to have them do this investigation so they would be satisfied in their own minds, and he would welcome them to continue their work; in fact, he asked them to continue.

He wanted these two ladies to see for themselves that the best thing is to come to term with oneself, so that one can live with oneself. So far he had not been successful in getting either one of them to reconsider staying on with the work.

These two ladies illustrate the fear psychosis that has hold of most people here. Mr. Henderson, on the other hand, represents the rare individual who has courage to work on principle, and to do so in an open manner, quite ready to take whatever consequences may result.

Mr. Henderson mentioned what had happened to the editor of The Chronicle, of Pascagoula, who in an editorial criticized Governor Barnett for the position against civil rights. The editor, Mr. Harkey, tried to continue his work; he lived for a few days at one place, then another, so that the public would not readily locate him; his office had bricks thrown through the windows, shots fired into the window at night, and other incidents. Mr. Harkey finally sold the paper after about six months. (This was when James Meredith enrolled at Ole Miss.)

Mr. Henderson made a survey of the Delta Region in 1946, and it was with this in mind that Harold and Orlo felt that he might have some suggestion of what might be done on a longer range program by us. Mr. Henderson said he was ~~able~~ to know what to suggest. We mentioned the shoe-distribution project of MCC, and how this had been distributed by Titus Bender. He said this is excellent; do more of it. Whether a Community Center could be started in an area closer to the Delta, from which we could work--he did not comment. This would possibly depend on how much we wanted to risk.

We asked what other ways he would suggest to us; he said--speak to people, confront them with the fact that in the future we must work with the rest of the nation; civil rights is the law of the land, and we need to work with this in mind. He wanted us to see church leaders, but also civic leaders, and just put it to them in a way that they begin to face the real issue. He mentioned what one sees here over and over, the people are good people, friendly, they will do anything for you--as Mr. Henderson said: "give you the last shirt they have," but on this matter of recognizing the Negro, they just become something else at the mere mention of the word. This is a strange phenomenon that we find hard to explain, and of course, much harder to "break through". Mr. Henderson speaks very highly of the work done here at Camp Landon. Perhaps what we need to do is strengthen our work in Mississippi at as many points as possible. Mr. Henderson says that he does not agree that the northerners are intruders; he says we can't win this battle by ourselves here at all. Those who say we can are merely saying: leave us alone, so we can go back to what we had.

Titus Bender sees this shoe-distribution project as something directly related to the program of education; children need shoes during the winter, to go to school; this is needed for warmth, and also they will not come without shoes. Shoes give status, as it were. Clothing is also needed, but according to Titus, shoes are a more direct aid because of their connection with the school program.

The evening we came to Gulfport, we attended a COFO sponsored meeting. Three of their number had been jailed, subject to getting bail, were being kept in jail overnight. The incident was in downtown Gulfport, where COFO members escorted Negroes to registration center to register to vote. Police lined the steps into the building where the Negroes entered. The police began to ask the attendants whether they were residents of Harrison County; (This was their way of identifying COFO members), if they were not, they were asked to go to the other side of the street. Four of them so asked, asked of the police why they should go to the other side of the street? This apparently gave the police enough to arrest them on the charge of picketting. (On the other side of the street the whites were lined up in large numbers; the scene seemed to be all set for an incident). The police then disbursed the group--everyone, and three of the four were held in jail for 25 hours. We did not get in on the afternoon scene. Harold Regier was asked to come over by Rev. John Else, counselor to the COFO group; I think Harold was asked to take John home; at any rate, Harold got there while the crowd was being disbursed.

The COFO sponsored meeting was nothing very sensational; freedom songs were sung, and voter registration was encouraged, but the participation of Negroes is not very wholehearted. One felt there was need for someone like Vincent, or M. L. King to give this more of a deeper undergirding and give it a religious meaning. There were no incidents at the meeting; outside of the building there were a few Negro police in cars, but all was peaceful. One is impressed by old and young coming: fathers with sons on their laps, mothers with girls at their side, as well as young people who comprised the larger group.

Visited Waveland yesterday. They were asked to stay out of the beach; you have probably been informed of this incident. No arrests, but the Sheriff and two patrolmen spoke to Marv and Ruth at length, and said in essence, we cannot let you do this; we have received numerous calls of integrated swimming on the beach, and we cannot give you protection from passers-by who might take pot-shots at you if they noticed this. The Unit decided not to use the beach again. They have a cemented lili-pool, about 1½ feet deep, about 14 x 12 which they cleaned out, and where they now swim. They are taking things in stride; doing a tremendous job on their project, and the Negro minister, Rev. Peters, is more than pleased with the group and especially with their clean up work. He doesn't see how a group of teenagers can get as much accomplished. They come to North Gulfport to the Recreation Center tonight, and the unit here goes to Waveland tomorrow morning for worship, and have dinner together.

July 15, Jackson, on way to Meridian; having been at Gulfport. Contacts at Gulfport: Sheriff McDonnell. A very busy person. We waited for over an hour in the waiting room before Mr. McDonnell came into his office. His desk was piled high with current papers, and it gave the appearance of each of the other offices bringing their orders in, and there was no evidence of a secretary who would organize things for him, making it simpler for the sheriff to go through a high stack of disorganized papers. He had just come from the streets. He knew about the work at Camp Landon, but he had overheard the telephone conversation between one of the jailees (COFO) the week before, calling an attorney in New York, who had mentioned the Menmonites and he had us identified with them. We made clear that we were not working with them; that, however, we had concerns about the rights of Negroes and concerns for them, even though our approaches to the problem would differ. His interest was that of keeping peace and order in the county; with this he had been charged, and this he was going to carry out. He calmed down after some conversation. Phone calls kept coming, and we wanted to excuse ourselves to go but he asked us to stay; this occurred at least three times. We made clear that we were working in a program of improvement for the Negro; he was all for this, he said. He knew of the class work that was being carried on from Camp Landon, and had no flaws to pick with it. We proposed the probability of a North Gulfport clean-up program together with the Good Deeds Association, and he thought this was an excellent idea. There is no opposition to the improvement of their lot (Negroes), as long as they are kept in their place. He offered full protection to people in the county, as long as they stayed within the laws. We asked about protection for the freedom workers too? He said as long as they behaved themselves and obeyed the laws, yes; but anyone who was not obeying the laws would be arrested and prosecuted.

Just how far we got, or what was accomplished is perhaps not too positive; someone remarked that it was a sad commentary that the caliber of county officials was not a little higher. We were able to make known our concern for the Negro as one with rights, desires, and hopes the same as ours, and his hesitation to let us go even though the phone rang almost continuously, was an indication that deep down he felt much like we did; the difference is that he had to "save face." Since North Gulfport is not within the city limits of Gulfport, it is the Sheriff, and not the Mayor, who has jurisdiction over the Negro area.

The Back Bay Mission. This is the center where the interracial ministerial alliance met for a dinner, and the place was bombarded with rocks. Orlo and Harold were present too. No one was injured; the windows that were broken are still boarded up. This is a Methodist group; they had up to 140 coming to their center for instruction, and also for worship services; this has gradually dwindled, to where only about 20 to 30 are in attendance now. This is one of the things to be expected;

there are not many families yet who want to take the lead in facing whatever comes because they believe in brotherhood so strongly. Often the husband who has a job, will just put his foot down and say: 'you are not going there any longer.' It is obvious that the pressure from the place of employment is more than they care to buck.

Mr. Henderson, operator of two Surplus Stores--who take a position that employes both whites and Negroes--we met in his store.

A man with an M.A. in Journalism, from Wisconsin University, but a native southerner. His wife, whom he met in Wisconsin, and who introduced him to the first Negro with whom he shook hands, has left him because of his business practices where he treats them equally. Two of his managers had quit him, because people are talking in town that he is an 'integrationist'. He has a coffee table in his store, where Negro and white sit together during coffee breaks to drink coffee. We sat at the same table with him as we talked. He is a very modest person, but obviously has strong convictions. Negro ministers, Camp Landon personnel, other individuals to whom we talked, spoke very appreciatively of Mr. Henderson. It will be very interesting to note whether his place of business may be boycotted, or how he will weather the storm. He needs our every encouragement.

Keith Tonkel, a Methodist minister, one of the 28 who signed the statement affirming the Methodist position on race; one who of very few, is still in Mississippi. Most of the others have been forced to resign their position, or it became so difficult for their families, that they had to move out. Keith is a young fellow, early 30s. Vivacious, kind, articulates well, serves part time as chaplain in Memorial Hospital, Gulfport. This is where I visited him. He inspires hope; his approach to the problem of the tension between the races is much like ours. He thinks that suffering is better than to inflict suffering; love is the action upon which we build and must work. What we profess must be lived in our everyday action. He was not pleased with some of the Methodist minister's approach to the problem, who came and spoke condescendingly to the South, failing to identify. He mentioned one who had been invited thus to address their M Youth Movement (whose name need not be mentioned) who just had not been appreciated by the MYM. He flew in (on a busy schedule), and flew out; and accomplished nothing, Keith said. He has a very deep appreciation for what Camp Landon is doing; and it is fellows like Harold and Orlo to lean on and give support that makes it possible for him to stay on. Keith is a very able person; one can easily see him in this role, and doing an excellent job at it. My guess is that he can stay, and that he will remain in Gulfport; that the worst storm has been weathered.

Famous McElhainey, Negro minister, Baptist. Very interesting person. About 50-55; has been to Baptist Seminary, not sure whether he has finished it or not. Speaks very highly of our summer Bible School materials; tells his own Baptists that this is something that makes sense, while the Baptist materials are written for college level students. The high regard people have for the work done at Camp Landon is a striking feature. Famous (that is his first name) says this Camp has done more for their people than their own churches together have done; in raising the level of Bible study for the children, the youth this is one area that he mentioned especially. But also in helping the Negro feel that he is a person in his own rights, and lifting his self respect. I came away having a new appreciation for the work of the camp. Harold's radio broadcast was mentioned specifically; and he said that this was about the only religious program worth listening to on the radio. When asked what more there was that our group could



do, he said, just keep this work going, enlarge upon it; this is excellent. He did speak for our establishing a Negro church in Gulfport; this would become a part of our conference, and they would attend and have voice in the conference the same as others. Between the white and Negro Mennonite church there would be free exchange of ministers and of other programs given; in fact entire worship service exchanges from time to time. He thought this would be excellent. When asked about integrated church, he said the individual person can be sniped at, but they won't attack an entire congregation. Well, he has a point there, but I am not confident that this is what we ought to do.

Numerous other contacts: George Reno, pastor at Cross Roads; Yoder at Gulfhaven; their two churches; Harold Evans, employed with Mr. Henderson, President of North Gulfport PTA, and president. I think of the Good Deeds Association, the barber-- who thought the most helpful book in the Bible for (a Sunday School teacher) was Revelations. It is not possible to report on all of it. One comes away from Gulfport with an appreciation 1, for their having been in the area for many years; 2, the good rapport they have built up during their stay; 3, the staff, who is wrestling continuously with what more they ought to be doing, especially now-- in providing some leadership in this tension period; 4, the devotion of this group of people: the willingness of a couple to live in North Gulfport in the interests of brotherhood between the races--and many other items that could and should be mentioned. I am wondering whether we ought not to have other centers in Mississippi with similar interests, perhaps patterned a little differently, more on the community house idea as in Atlanta? We want to keep this in mind as we go to Meridian. Lawrence Scott gave a shot-in-the arm to this type of thing needed in the South. He said if he were to come back, this is what he would do.

Sunday afternoon, July 19, Meridian, Mississippi. Went to Titus Bender's church this morning; a small church house, but it was full. A very good sermon, but had to preach it myself! There is a certain warmth of fellowship which one just does not get in the larger groups. This evening, want to go to one of the conventional churches, perhaps a Baptist church, for we have not been to one here in the South, where they are very conventional.

An interview with the Chief of Police here in Meridian on Friday, which I have not related. They receive one with cordiality; one difficulty I had with him was to understand him: his southern drawl was more than usual, and he did not speak clearly besides. I told him who I was, and what I was interested in. Said, he did not think I would have any trouble here at all. Would I be free to visit? Visit anywhere you want to, he said. Visit in the Negro ministers' homes? He didn't think I would experience any trouble. Could I get ministers of both group together? He said that he had Negro ministers in his office. Perhaps this explains Dr. Ceowen's statement earlier (Episcopal rector) that Meridian itself is perhaps the safest place in Mississippi, but warned not to be out after dark in the areas about Meridian. Mickey Schwerner, who worked from Meridian out, one of the three missing, did not get back before dark that fateful day in June; of course, that story will need to be told sometime as one hears it here from those who knew him, he was greatly appreciated here by Titus and others. One thing seems more and more obvious: they were kept in Phila until after dark by the authorities--you can fill in the rest.

Yesterday we went to Louisiana with Titus, who is getting the Mennonite ministers together early September when Nelson Kaufman comes here. This is a chore, as you will know, to get them together for a program; this is why he wanted to see personally those who are responsible for the program. Being that close to Gulfport,

and Orlo being one of the men responsible, he went to Camp Landon too. Orlo was in Kansas with the "Fresh Air" youngsters, but visited with Harold about it.

We talked about plans for the Delta. Titus is quite excited about this, and it sounds good; Harold too became enthusiastic. MCC did send a truckload of shoes earlier, which Titus took there. Titus thinks shoes have a particular virtue, connected with children going to school--who would not be able to go if shoes were not supplied. Government may assist with clothing and with food, which they will finally do--although it is not always certain that the people get it, but shoes they do not provide. But we should go beyond shoes, to the establishment of a center. We would not need to explain our total program to them, but emphasize the material aid program, with a center for distribution, from whence we could add such other services as would become feasible. Again one thinks of the advantage of Camp Landon's having been there for years, and accepted, so that their moves now are not thwarted nearly as quickly as those of newcomers.

The Delta project type of service will need to be done soon; 1 year, 2 years hence may be too late. That is to say, a crises center often shifts; and even this one here may not hold the attention for very long. This sounds like we are working where the "spot light" is pointed. That is not what I mean; but the time to strike is now!

There is another very real reason for us to be working here at this time: for the South this is a crucial period. For the Negro this is a crucial period. The church needs to be in for both reasons. But the church isn't involved. The local church certainly is not, except for a few brave souls here and there: Dr. McCeowen, Keith Tonkel, Rev. Porter, and a few others--Famous McElhainey; but they stand alone. They do not even have their own congregations following them. By and large the church is conspicuous by its silence here! Moreover, the COFO program is not church sponsored, nor church-orientated. In fact, many of the workers are not church members, many of them have been disillusioned by the church. They come in spite of the church, rather than because of the church. One does not speak with condemnation about these workers. One speaks rather saying that this is a sad commentary on the church! I am confident that many of these COFO workers come with basically a religious motivation; some do not; but they are not a church-sponsored, church-orientated, sent-by-the-church group. This disturbs one. Is it not all the more reason why at least the Anabaptist church ought to be here expressing her concern? Look at the very great potential there is for a small group which feels called to be the church as we believe the church is set forth in the New Testament! The colored race ought to know that there is at least a fragment of the church which has as much concern for the individual person as does the agnostic and the atheist.

Moreover, who is to set the pace for the future here? Do we leave this entirely in the hands of government, of civic leaders, of those who have left the church because they became disillusioned with it? One feels that the church is once again at the crossroads; which way will the church go? Will the church walk by on the other side, or will there be some Good Samaritians, who pick up the one who fell under the thieves?

Often I feel like going back to Jackson to speak again to the Mayor's deputy who said when I told him who I was, and represented: "I am ready to give you permission right away to set up your tent and go preach all you want to;" and ask him whether he was entirely sincere in his statement; that I felt the time was here where we should set up "tent" and go to work. That here--in the capitol of Mississippi--there ought to be a Mennonite church which would be open to all,

and which should serve all. There are people here, so friendly, so gracious, and I think many who would be ready to follow a deeper truth; once they could be helped over that blind spot of race.

As you will gather from this, there is work to be done. Those who are here working like the group at Camp Landon, and Titus here in Meridian, need our encouragement; we need to align with them, undergird them. But the others need us too. We are "called out," I believe, for such a time as this!

Tuesday, July 21. This evening finds us in Jackson; we are here on the way to the Delta area. Stopped in Jackson to check with the NCC. We learned about their plans for the Delta; and wanted to assure them that we are not working at cross-purposes with them, and to see whether they had suggestions where our work might supplement theirs. Perhaps we might even supplement a part of the material aid program with some commodity which would not duplicate what they are planning.

Perhaps we need not be too concerned about our work overlapping greatly with theirs. If we cannot see him or check with him by phone, we will likely drive to Greenwood to check with Catholic Father Nathaniel at the St. Francis Monastery, and also with the Pax Christi Community Center, both of whom were mentioned in Vincent's report of last March. We want to follow other leads from Vince's report: Leland, Mississippi, near Greenville; Amzie Moore, Negro business man; Hodding Carter III, newspaper man, Greenville, and his assistants Bob and Charlene Carpenter. These and others we want to check with. Perhaps we can follow up what MCC began when they made one round of distributing shoes in at least one of the counties in the Delta; Mrs. Pegues was one of the ladies in charge, according to Vince, and Titus Bender gave us the name of Mrs. Leona Luckett, who had given some help in the LeFlore County work. We know, of course, that the picture has changed some since Vince's tour; it may even have changed the course of some of the people.

We are interested beyond the program of material aid distribution; however, this may be a way to get started somewhere. If we could set up a center in the Delta, with a small group--even a couple, who could slowly develop this in the direction that we would ultimately want this to take. Titus and we spoke with Harold Regier about this, at Gulfport, and all of us got rather excited about possibilities such a move could set into motion.

This afternoon we sat in on a short orientation school of the ministers whom NCC is adding to the program. They are especially to be present at each of the COFO centers to give assistance to the college students wherever they work. Warren McKenna, NCC has been put in charge of this. A very fine move on NCC's part; granted that these students are not asking for church sponsorship, yet these ministers are to be there ready to counsel and stand at their side when they want to talk with a minister. The first part of the orientation was a demonstration of how to fall, curl up, cover your face and head that is exposed with elbows, arms, hands; in other words to protect stomach, vital organs, face and head when you are attacked. This seems strange to us, we have not met up with anything like this either, but numbers of them have, and they are very realistic about it. The approach is stressed as being strictly nonviolent and one of the new ministers wasn't so sure that he could be this when the test came. No give on this; whether they believed in it as a way of life or not, or fancied it theologically, it is in this situation the most practical, and that is what they are using and asking that each one employ. Following this demonstration--a role-play scene of two riding along, the police signaling them to pull over, and questions the police fired at them: primarily--what do you think you are doing here? Why don't you go back where you came from? and promise that they

would be followed perhaps 5, 10 miles, heading straight home, and if they found them again in the state they would be sorry for it. It makes one ask: Where are we? Back in the days of the cave man? Well, one cannot help but feel that there is a work for our church to do here. One returns again and again to the Gulfport situation, where they somehow are accepting us for what we are because of the work we have and are doing. We need several more places similar to that here.

Greenwood, Wednesday, July 22. The day began at Jackson. Drove into Greenwood about 10:00 a.m. Not knowing anyone here, we looked up the address of St. Francis Catholic Church, where Father Nathaniel is located. This was given in Vincent's letter. We found the place. Father Nathaniel is a young man. We gave him the letter of introduction to read which Vern had written. He read it carefully, and said he was exceedingly grateful for people with such a mission. The matter of communication between groups was of utmost importance; he welcomed us with very warm words, saying that there was nothing needed so much as people who served in the area of reconciliation. M. L. King's visit to Greenwood last night had brought a shower of leaflets the like of which he had not seen before; either the KKKs or the other group--but the paper says that a low-flying airplane dropped white leaflets signed by the "White Knights of the KKK of Mississippi." He did not have one of the pamphlets; one quote from the Jackson Daily News: "The local Negroes have failed thus far to realize that the 'Riot King' and themselves collectively are today just very black, very ignorant, very dumb, and ill smelling." Father Nathaniel says that there is no communication between him and the white ministers; he is identified with the Negroes, and he cannot do much at all to open any lines. He mentioned two persons, ministers, to contact. One of them, an Episcopal Rector, is out of town for the week; we will likely not get to see him. The other, Rev. Lee, minister of a Christian church, we went to see. He is open in part, though not very far. He has a "flock to feed," and cannot see himself alienating himself from any of them.

We asked Father Nathaniel about a possible work to do here in the Delta. He said he knew of no more needy area than Greenwood; Greenville is much more open, with a paper that has had good influence for some years. Clarksdale is less "closed" too than Greenwood. He said again the greatest need was that of someone to try to keep things from blowing up. It is in Greenwood that a large number of Freedom workers were arrested last week. Some of them still in jail. Others are meandering about the courthouse; the front doors of the courthouse, part of which is the jail, are locked. We wanted to see the Mayor without knowing that the two: Mayor and jail were in the same building, and were taken in through a rear-door basement entrance, up to the Mayor's office. He was not in; had gone to Jackson, but we had a short visit with his secretary, and are to come back in the morning at 9:00. The secretary was very ill at ease, with apparently the next door being the prison room, and only a corridor separating the two.

We told her about our interests, assuring her that we were in no way a part of the freedom group. We were a minister couple, interested in establishing a work in which we might minister to the Negro people, especially helping to lift their educational standards, and in other ways ministering spiritually to them. She did not see why we would need to see the Mayor about that; she thought we should see other ministers. We said we should make known that we were here, and why we were here. She asked us to come back in the morning.

We visited in the John E. Lee home, pastor of First Christian Church. Both Mr. and Mrs. were in the room. He has not been here very long; is not a native of Mississippi, but from Alabama. Statements like: it is hard for a northerner to understand the South; and "the relations between the races used to be much better,"

came often. The COFO workers have done more harm than good--we have heard more than half a dozen times today. When asked whether there were other ministers with whom he could talk quite freely about this problem of the races, his answer was that no one will speak out on this. And I can see this. No one would last many Sundays, he said, if they preached what they wanted to say on this. However, he does not share the view that the Negroes are in great need. Anyone who has enough desire to get a job, can get it. When pushed a bit on this, also those in the rural areas? he thought that was different; especially the older ones.

Father Nathaniel wanted us to see the Pax Christi project. We did this, after 5:00 this evening. Miss Kate is in charge of this. It is a community center work; reminds us of North Gulfport, except it is all within the Negro neighborhood, living quarters and center. Considerable building is being done to enlarge facilities: council rooms, library for adults, press room, some class rooms, etc. are added to the already fair sized facilities--skating rink, music room, class room or rooms, kitchen, dispensary, etc. Back of it all a nice chapel, connected to living quarters, where Sisters from both groups live. Sister Kate is the matron-counsellor-janitor-administrator type, not often found tied in one; she is not too appreciative of the COFO people, mainly saying that they lack a sense of faith and dependence upon God, which makes their life without purpose. Several of them come to her in private, just to talk; and one feels that they get some very excellent counsel there.

She says all she is doing is laying a foundation; but she tries to lay this well in the lives of the people who come under her influence.

One feels that her principles and ours do not go far apart at all. She wanted us to begin a work in Greenwood, for there was so much that needs doing. The private tutoring they are doing with adults, as well as the teaching to children and with young people, can and should be done over and over in all the several areas of Negro settlements in Greenwood.

We did not get to see the Methodist minister, of whom Titus had spoken to us. His secretaries were in, and welcomed us in to talk. We did. They expressed themselves very definitely against the freedom workers, but admitted that they had at least pricked the conscience of many. Like Rev. Lee, they felt strongly that they were endangering the Negro, and exciting the white, making the rift the larger. One needs to guard against accepting too readily that this tells the whole story. That they are young, too young, for this sized task, is clear, but would the older ones have had the courage to do it? Their approach could have been directed in a much better way, I feel. It is seriously to be questioned what they will leave in a place like Greenwood, except much stirred up ill will.

In terms of a needy area, here is one. Whether one thinks of reconciliation, or of working with the underprivileged, community center, or Mennonite House. Father Nathaniel was quite emphatic about the fact that his identification with the Negro, made him entirely ineffective as one who could bring about communication between W and N, or be of any service to white ministers. One has not felt this as keenly in previous contacts as one feels it here. How then should we work? This is the problem. At this stage, with the students still here for more than a month, I don't know that much is in prospect. But I think we must come in; only one isn't sure whether to come primarily as persons to try to bring about understanding, not trying at this point to do much with the alleviating of needs, nor the raising of standards with the Negroes; or whether this may change by November or so, that it would be possible to begin slowly with tutorial work, or a material aid type of program, and hope to still be able to keep vital contact with the white community.

At this point we just are not ready to say what it should be. Much prayer and further work is needed on this. We do want to go on to Greenville too, and perhaps even Clarksdale. It would be very good if a group of you were here and we could talk it over on the job.

Greenville, Thursday, July 23. Mayor Sampson, Greenwood. We met him according to appointment at 9:00 a.m. He wanted to hear our story; we told him who we were: Mennonite minister and wife; trying to find where we might do some work in the Delta region. He was open; a work with the Negro people does not seem amiss even to mayors. We told him of the North Gulfport work; certainly he was all for educating the Negro. He said the schools were good; we mentioned that the outside of the building looked good; he wanted us to look on the inside too. We have not. There is a white superintendent of schools; Negro principals and teachers in Negro schools. He says the schools are quite adequate. What is one to think of that? This does not agree with what one has read and heard. Where would we like to set up? We did not know, and he had no suggestions. Would we be cut off from the white community if we worked with the Negro? He did not answer this positively.

Greenville, on the West side of the Delta; Hodding Carter, editor of the Delta Democratic Times. Vincent mentions him, and credits Carter with creating an atmosphere of openness to the race issue. We conferred with him. He shook his head about Greenwood; and recommended that the Mayor's words be taken with a grain of salt. Told us that only last Saturday the editor of the paper had been driven out of town. He was a segregationist. But the theatre had been ordered desegregated, the editor went to see the show, and there was a little scuffle between the editor and one of the pickets, with the result that the editor had to leave town the next morning. Carter does not have much good to say for Greenwood.

Bob Carpenter, now working with the Delta Review, was not in; have not gotten to see him, but we may see him in the morning. Called his wife, and she wanted us to come over. Just how good it is to be on the highway after dark with a Minnesota license--?? So we did not go. Hope to see him at 8:30 in the morning.

Mrs. Jessie Brent, a very active woman in promoting education of both Negro and white, and involved also in the Day Care Home which is functioning in Greenville. We drove out to see her. They have a lovely home, about 5 miles from Greenville. Had a brief half hour with her, about the possibility of a group like ours coming into the Delta. When we mentioned Greenwood, she likewise shook her head and raised eyebrows. She mentioned by phone and also when we were there, that it is good to set up where your strength is. By this she means that in a situation like the present in Mississippi we might as well avoid the extremes, and build where there is at least somewhat of a climate favorable to us. Although they have the Day Care Home; this is only a small part of what is needed, and she thought we could well have something similar. Tutoring, other educational pursuits, and working to open lines of communication she thought would be ample to set us up here. Greenville is a city of 47,000, nearly 50% Negro. Whites and Negroes do not live by one another; Negroes live behind the white, which we noticed; the front of streets are lined with nice homes; the back side of the lots are the shacks of Negroes.

What is the greatest need? It seems to me it is still the idea of getting people to talk with one another. Mrs. Brent mentioned too how good it was to meet people who were concerned about things similar to her concerns. There are probably many isolated folks who would very, very much like to hear someone say for

them the things they are likely thinking so often. Father Nathaniel yesterday almost cried for joy when we told him what we were interested in; really we did not tell him, we gave him your (Vern's) letter introducing us to "Whom It May Concern." He read it more than once, I am sure, for it took quite a time before he turned to us to speak. He is alone, except for Sister Kate and the workers in their school and center. He says that he is cut off from working with white ministers, since he is working with Negroes. I can see this. In Gulfport it is a bit different, in part because we have been working there for nearly 20 years; neither is the air quite as tense as in Greenwood.

This area is a difficult one to work in; we have not proceeded as diligently in this as we should have; it may be too, that this takes more time in one area than we have and are giving at the moment. But if we could find the right person for this work, we should make him or her, or both, available: who could visit ministers, civic leaders, with sincere attempt to open the minds to a readiness to consider. That in times like this it is so important that we continue to speak to one another, to counsel and reason together in the interest of the cause of Christ for which we live.

And yet, there should be more. For one thing, this person (or couple) needs to have the fellowship and the counsel with others at least occasionally. For this reason a center would be preferred. Also, people seem to want to have evidence which is somewhat tangible; they want to hear about classes given, material aid distributed, or something in addition to just making contacts with others. Perhaps this is partly the background out of which we come, and the fact that we seem to have worked best that way in other areas. Another factor in this is that it is a means of keeping in touch with the churches at home. If there can be demands made on the home communities whereby they are called on to collect clothing, shoes, books, or whatever, there is built up a feeling of togetherness in the project. We do not work too well in ideas and the abstract that cannot be undergirded or supplemented by the tangible. So--one returns again and again to the idea of a center. This could begin with one or two phases of work or projects, and from there expand as the needs called for.

On the economic front we have not done anything. Vincent mentions this, and no doubt this is a severe problem. Mechanization works here the same as it does elsewhere, even more so. What happens to the Negroes? Many go to the cities, but are they prepared at all for such a move? Especially is this difficult for the older persons.

Saturday, July 25. Returned from the Delta yesterday. Martin L. King was in Meridian last evening. We came back especially to be here. We were not permitted to enter the city block on which the church is located. Police checked each one. Only COFO, Core members, the Press, and Negroes were permitted. They deemed it a safety measure. Paul Miller and I went together; had I gone alone I might have gotten in. One of the 3 policemen was very nice about it; the other 2 not so nice. The one went to make a call to the Chief (on 2-way car phone); Chief says: rather not! He told me: "If you talk to the Chief, and he gives you the 'go', I'll let you in." I thought I had it made, for I had quite a long talk with the Chief when we first came here (all on a voluntary basis, you understand). So I went to see him; he was not in. His deputy was quite nice about it too. Said this was strictly a measure of avoiding any incident. One of the others did not like it too well when I asked or stated that I did not think the group gathered to hear Rev. King would trigger any violence. He then stepped up and said: "We have decided that no one goes in but those we have mentioned, and that is what we mean, period." I thanked them for hearing my request. They said they

were sorry, and I said I was very sorry not to hear Rev. King. They asked why I wanted to hear him, to which I replied that being a minister (I had stated and shown my card earlier) one is very interested in the views and approaches of other ministers, particularly of those who advocate so strongly the nonviolent approach. They had no further word, except that I could not go. So I came home and wrote some letters.

Tuesday, July 28. This report covers a few days. Will begin, however, with the interview this afternoon with Lawrence Rabb, a lawyer, offices in the Mississippi Greater Life Building.

Mr. Rabb is a Methodist; is a man close to his 40s perhaps just in the 40s. A very open-minded person. Was on the one hand, very glad to hear me out on the purpose of my coming to see him, purpose of our being in Mississippi, clear from Minnesota; on the other hand, he was quite pessimistic on what could be accomplished. I came to him with the rather direct question about: 1, the possibility of getting a group, however small, of whites and Negroes together; and 2, the place where this might be done.

He gave me the background of their having formed such a group, which had been meeting a number of times. This was called about a year ago, when in Jackson Medgar Evers was shot. The group met somewhat ad hoc, although someone must have taken the lead. They met at first in the Episcopal Church; it was composed of ministers, lawyers, a few business men, also a few Negroes. The purpose of their meeting was to avoid something happening like had happened in Jackson. As things moved over toward the present summer, the KKK got a hold of the names of those who gathered, and used them for a black list. The manager of the Borden's Milk Company had been the one upon whom they focused attention at first, and the Company claimed that they had lost considerable sales on it. It seemed that the strategy of the Klan was to use the boycott, especially on the business men. Mr. Rabb did not indicate that it had effected his practice.

Mr. Rabb mentioned how this did work its way into the churches. The statement of the 28 Methodist ministers was picked up by the Mississippi Association of Methodist Ministers and Laymen, and how the last-named organization manipulated the expulsion of one after another of these 28. I quoted James Silver's statement, who says that since 1954 this Mississippi Association of Methodist Ministers and Laymen has succeeded to drive 68 Methodist seminary trained men from the pulpits in the State of Mississippi; Mr. Rabb said this statement is factually correct, based upon a study made by the Methodist church.

He went on to tell about the experience in their own church, where he was trying to help explain the situation to the people in a reasonable way, trying to avoid extremism. But without success. His local congregation had voted, 1, to discontinue sending any money for missions to the Methodist church, since part of it was going for work that would aid integration; 2, had officially voted the "closed door policy" to all Negroes; which is contrary to the official position of the church; 3, was stationing ushers outside on the sidewalk, to prevent any Negroes coming on the grounds; and 4, had voted to oppose any affiliation with NCC, or with any part of the Methodist program that would in any way have a part in NCC activities. He felt definitely that his usefulness to his local congregation was at an end.

Back to the possibility of a group meeting to keep lines of communication open: He said he just did not know what to suggest. Everyone was afraid: business men were afraid of losing their business; ministers did not care to be on the list of the triple K, and so there is no further meeting. I told him that my thought had



been to meet during the day, without any fanfare, just person to person invitations; even if there were only 2 or 3 from each group, and we would not come into the area as a body, but individually. But he shook his head on that, and said that you do not know who is around, and where. You can't tell what they will do, either directly or by way of blackmail.

Mention was made too of the Council for the Preservation of the White Race (CPWR); this, like the Klan, is a group who work secretly, and there is no list of members known. Mr. Rabb mentioned that they work on Hitlerian techniques, and are really to be feared more than the Klan for their brazen tactics. This is the group supporting the people in state offices, especially Barnett, Wallace, and others. Johnson (present Mississippi governor) is perhaps a bit more on the moderate side.

Two ministers whom I had not met before, but who are working very definitely on the positive side of things, are Rev. A. M. Hart, Presbyterian, and Rev. Tillman, Methodist, both have pastorates in churches on Poplar Springs Drive, Meridian. Both are young men, with seminary training. Dr. Tillman has been professor at Millsap College, and had in his classes a number of the 28 ministers who signed the statement. He remembered Keith Tonkel, one of the very few still in Mississippi. He is the pastor where the Lawyer, Mr. Rabb, serves on the Church Council; in fact, it was through Dr. Tillman that I got the name of the lawyer. He is the pastor who is having a great struggle within his congregation. The congregation is torn along the several lines listed above; particularly sad is the fact that all mission support has been discontinued, because some of the mission funds would find their way to the National Council, and for the support of integration. Next in line of the unfortunate moves was the struggle in which they are now engaged, not to use the Methodist materials in their educational classes. Under consideration was the nondenominational materials: Scripture Press, Gospel Light, etc.; Dr. Tillman expressed concern of these people growing up without knowing anything about their church, or its principles. (His troubles sounded strangely familiar). Anything that comes from the official body, which is affiliated with the National Council, is now voted out, since the NCC is working toward integration, inspired by the communists.

Dr. Tillman did not know how long he would be able to stay; he feels a deep concern for the future of these people; indeed, for the future of the Methodist church in Mississippi.

It becomes increasingly clear how difficult it is for ministers here; ministers who are concerned about the church as we see it in the New Testament. One admires their courage. But the power structure is on the side of the segregationists, and like Mr. Rabb says, they have things pretty well sewed up. He looks for things getting worse before they will get better; hitting rock bottom (these are his words), before there will be any improvement.

Is there still a place for us here? Yes! To strengthen the forces for good, by encouraging them; and by ministering in a positive way to those to whom we can minister, and who may have a very vital role to play in the future of the church, as well as of the state. It is not a bright future, but it is one which, under God, must be undertaken.

Wednesday, July 29, 1964. Visitation to the Meridian Freedom School located in Baptist Seminary, 16th Street, 31 Avenue. Negro Baptist Seminary building was nice at one time, but the three-story building has many window panes missing, and is in general state of disrepair. It is used, or has been, in a limited way for some class work even this past winter, according to Titus Bender.

First floor has library in one good-sized room; books have been donated; but the difficulty has been that people have cleared out their bookshelves. They have boxes of stored books, Mark says they will offer them for sale at the close of the school, for very nominal amounts, for any in the neighborhood who want them.

Subjects taught: typewriting; math; reading; but the greater emphasis is given to having the students express themselves, helping them to gain self-respect; helping them to analyze and to articulate; they did several "role-playing" acts as part of each of the classes we visited. Here is where Miss Pacchela seemed to be a master. She would have them play their own roles as Negroes, others as whites, and the two meeting on the streets, entering into conversation; which resulted, not in conversation, but in the whites talking to the Negro, with the Negro answering in an almost automatic "Yes suh, yes suh!" Then Miss Pacchela would ask the group: what did they contribute to the conversation? Did they contribute, or did they merely parrot the expected answers? How might they have answered? How should they have contributed? I don't know what the subject was named, but it seemed to us that the point was most helpful in helping these teenaged Negroes begin to say how they feel; and then she would ask them: What would you have done in the real situation?

Edna stayed for her second session; Miss Pacchela began by having the students (about 8), make a list of the "myths" (what people say about Negroes); these they wrote out. She collected the papers: they took one "myth" at a time, discussing them quite fully. She had them face up to it: is this true? "Negroes are dirty," was one; is this true? No. None of them? Well, they admitted some were. As in all groups. Another: "Negroes are lazy;" and again they faced up to it, and proceeded.

While Edna stayed, I went to another, taught by a young fellow (his name I did not retain). He had 14 teenaged girls, one fellow. He stimulated discussion by reading part of a novel; he also had them do a "role play" act; these young people express themselves quite well, especially playing the role of the white man and/or woman.

I am confident both of us came away from the Freedom School with quite a different feeling than we had when we first stopped there about 3 weeks ago.

There are not many Diane Pacchelas, probably, but what we saw here would be well to keep going for many years. It is not the type of thing that the extremists would want to have taught. They would give their assent to having the 3 R's taught, but they would feel "threatened," to have teenaged Negroes exposed to learning the abc's about self-respect; about expressing themselves openly, frankly, and honestly. But when you think of a whole race of people beginning to come into their own, then one feels like this is one of the ways that will likely show its fruitage within the next decade, and after.

Mark Levy lives in this type of thing. When asked what he would be doing when September rolls around, he was not altogether certain. He said if the Peace Corps program within the States develops as he hopes it will, both he and his wife will likely find themselves working in it. He did not spell out what his hopes were; one felt that it would be something like this type of thing dealing with helping people discover themselves, particularly underprivileged people.

When asked why it is that so many Jews find expression in the civil rights program? he said there were likely several reasons; they also found much expression in the Peace Corps. For himself, he was not very happy in his college days; he mentioned Antioch as one of the schools where he attended. Forgotten how he said it, but to the effect that it was closer to the Orthodox way of doing things, without the freedom

for expression that he liked. He thought very few teachers would be quite the same having had the Freedom School teaching experience. He felt too that the students would not be the same. In fact he thought they might begin to ask questions in the regular schools, that would bring into some strained relationships with the teachers. They had only one of the Meridian school teachers take part in the school, and most of the students who were children of teachers had not come, or having started, soon dropped out. This was not because they did not find it helpful or interesting, but because the parents would lose their jobs if their children continued to come. This is why the teacher who came, lasted but a few days. And these threats that come--well, we know what has happened to some, and one should not shrug their fear off as just something where they were lacking courage. Jobs mean a living; bombs destroy homes; bricks through the windows can lead to more the next time; crosses burning in your yard are grim reminders of masked riders who ride only after dark, etc., etc.

Again I feel that the church needs to be in this. The basis of the problem is not race, it is prejudice that is deep-seated, and is basically greed; it is the super-race idea of Hitler. This is going to be hard to change; we must remember how the good people of Germany went along with this for a long time, and we well remember what suffering was entailed before this obsession was overthrown. It was done by force. We believe there is another way of doing it; but it may call for a great courage and an initiative of goodwill that cannot be overcome. There is no quick answer for this. We need to be ready for a sustained drive, and all that may be involved in the consequences.

Perhaps what one is saying is that the New Testament needs to become incarnate again in many followers of the Master: Peter's who though they fumble the ball frequently, yet as often as they fall, they bounce back, under the strength of the Master's urging; Paul's, who just cannot be stopped, even though picked up for lifeless, yet taking the case of Christ to the magistrates or the jailer, on land or on sea; the Thomas's with their honest doubts, but coming out saying: "My Lord, and my God!" Is there anything as powerful as the "incarnation" in the flesh of numbers of followers of the Master?

Monday, August 3, 1964, calling on ministers. The morning hours were taken up by writing of the second tour to the Delta report. The afternoon--after the report was finished, I called on two ministers; and on a third, who was not at home.

Rev. J. Kelly Unger, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Meridian. A man 72 years of age, but does not show his age. Has been a missionary to Korea for 26 years; has been in the present pastorate 14 years. He is resigning for the 3rd time this fall, and is going to make it stick this time. Prided himself on his ministry in Korea, and has traveled to several Asiatic countries, including some work in India, and was well traveled in Europe. He knew of the Mennonites, but knew only of the bearded and the beardless kind, he said. His son is a minister in the South. He is a native Mississippian, but does not rigidly defend his home state. Says that he used to have several Negro ministers come quite regularly to his study, but within the last year could think of only two or three times that one had stopped. He was considered a "liberal," when it came to this issue of race; had been leader in the group that used to meet bi-racially prior to '54. This died out gradually, with one after another refusing to come. Their own Presbyterian ministers had been meeting longer as a bi-racial group longer than the ministerial alliance of Meridian. When asked whether it might be possible to have this renewed, perhaps beginning with a small group, and

entirely private without any public notice, he said that something had happened in this state for which he was very sorry; but people, especially ministers, were too fearful. He wished very much that the church had been at the leading head-end of this movement, and not trailing as it does. Now he thinks it will just need to bide its time. He did not flatly come out and say: "it won't work," or "I can't come," but it was a substitute for that.

Visited with A. W. Crump, St. Paul Methodist Church, (Negro). Lives in a good-sized well-furnished home, just across the street from the church. A membership of nearly 400. Had been affected by overworking in the heat, and needed to take it easy. A graduate of Hammond Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia. A moderate; perhaps a bit too ready to leave things as they are. Does not actively work with the freedom workers, but makes announcements of their activities. Knew several of them by name, and was appreciative of what they had sparked in the state, saying that even though they made some "youthful" moves that we might term unwise, we older ones likely would not have ventured as far as they have. Has been here 4 years, formerly at Biloxi. Did not remember any of the leaders there by name, but remembered their work in Turkey Creek. His view of meetings across color lines was a dim one; not on the Negro's part, but on the white's side. Negroes have their alliance meeting every Monday morning; sorry I didn't know this, I would have gone there this morning. His wife is principal of one of the elementary schools; she was not home, but my wife and I want to call on her at the school where she works from 9 to 4 getting ready. He did not expect that there would be any move toward integration, unless they were compelled to take the step even with one grade.

Want to call on the principal or superintendent of the Meridian School system; we need their evaluation too and get their thinking.

I think if one kept this up with some steady calls, and soon came with a definite proposal to meet at this place, on this date, and hour, one could get two or three from each group to talk together. Or am I just doing wishful thinking?

Tuesday, August 4, 1964. News: The three bodies of the civil rights workers were found this afternoon, about 6 miles from Philadelphia, and about 20 miles from the spot where their car was burned. One is glad the bodies are found. Only last Monday a business man told me that he was certain they were having a great time somewhere overseas; I had to ask him whether he had thought of the fact that at least one of them was married, and his wife was not far from here? He did not answer that.

Dinner with Optomists Club. Guest of Rev. J. Kelly Unger, pastor First Presbyterian Church, Meridian. He spoke on "Righting our Twisted Thinking," a sermon he had preached Sunday morning; it was good, but did not get to the issues at hand at all.

For me--the highlight was the conversation later with the chairman of the Club, and his wife. Ardent Mississippians; relations are good with Negroes. His pet pieve was that they would not take responsibility. In his own business he wanted to have one of them become manager of a department (do not know what his business is); this would be considerable more pay; but the Negro would not take it; preferred the lower wage, without responsibility. Of course, the one case is impuned to all of them now. I mentioned to the couple that one thing we had noted about Mississippians and their relation to Negroes: at best their attitude was one of paternalism. They said they realized it, but there was no openness to a consideration of being given an equal chance.

The wife was a daughter of a minister; had very good rapport with her maid; but found her taking things out of her home. You can't trust them, was her conclusion. Had she asked or tried to find out why this was done? "You just don't understand how these Negroes are" they interpret it as being unappreciative of all that is done for them!

Conversation with Charles E. Young (Negro), proprietor of a Negro hotel. The above mentioned couple asked me to speak to him about relations between Negro and white. Mr. Young says that there is an openness in business. He could call on the phone almost any of the business men; he said there was also some visiting between them and white couples. This he said was true of Meridian, but not of the rest of the state. All Meridian Negroes need is more industry, where people can find jobs. This he mentioned as need No. 1; No. 2 was to get the White Citizens Council to tone down. He did not go into this, his time was short. He gave me the name of the chairman in Meridian. Have not seen him yet. While I was there Mr. Young had a call from the Chief of Police regarding an arrest involving a Negro woman; it was evident that this was not a first-time call from the Chief relative to an arrest of a Negro. Mr. Young held out to the Chief, the beating the woman had gotten, and though I couldn't hear what the Chief said, it was obvious that there were two sides to the matter. Mr. Young's statements about the church were rather cutting; he could not see where preachers, who had nothing to say about our relationships to fellowmen had anything to tell the people of our time. Loving God and loving fellowman were two sides of the same coin, and were inseparable. He plainly told me: "We are ready to receive the whites as brothers, but you are not ready to receive us." Business has its open lines of communication; the church does not! A strange paradox.

Meridian is more open than some other areas. I would recommend that whoever comes next locate in another city, perhaps Jackson is still the preferred spot. I came anew to the conclusion that an outsider can more readily make contacts, than one who lives here. If one lived here one would need to think of the effect on continued relationships. And, though the problem is ultimately to be solved locally, yet at this stage an outsider can be helpful. It is a new trail to blaze each day, your work is not outlined for the next day; it is a venture in faith, but it is a good feeling that God can use us, and He does!

Wednesday, August 5, 1964. Today I spent the day with Baptists. It was a good day, though not a fruitful one. This morning I stopped at First Baptist, Meridian, but Dr. Beverly V. Tinnin, pastor was out for the day. I went to 15th Avenue Baptist Church, to see Dr. Bob E. Simmons, but he had a group of 3 in his office during the time I was there. (I learned later that they had come from COFO to ask his church's participation in declaring a day of mourning for Meridian, as a memorial to the 3 civil rights workers, whose bodies have now been identified). His assistant, one of them, the educational director, bade me come in and we had a lengthy conversation. Later the music director joined us. The door is not too widely open, I noticed very quickly. COFO people are anathema; rumors about them are believed, and one didn't sense any compunctions in promoting them--rumors that they not only live with the Negro families, but that they have broken up homes, continuing to live with the spouse. What does one do with such? I am confident that they could not be doing this and get away with it. Well, I told them that, and left it at that. While they recognize that my wife and I are not connected with them, yet we are "intruders" from the North, and who are we to suggest to them what to do? One gets farthest with them by gently yet firmly telling them our purpose in coming: that we come to listen, to learn, and to open lines of communication where possible.

They find it very difficult to admit that lines of communication are closed. Just this morning a Negro minister had come in asking for help to work out a baccalaureate sermon, with which they helped him, and even typed it for him. But this is just the point: where they can tell the Negro how, where he comes to the "boss" with a question, yes, the doors are open; but one can almost tell by the way they answer you that there isn't an openness of sharing, that can lead to fellowship, understanding, and searching together.

In the afternoon I did speak with Dr. Simmons. He had been well briefed on the purpose of my visit. Really, I knew that one cannot expect any openness for communication from the Southern Baptists, yet I was just curious enough to put myself into a position where they should say it; and they did. One thing that gripes them is that a seminary building which is being used for Bible teaching during the winter, and for which the Baptists pay, and it may even be a sizable sum; --this building they had made available to COFO for Freedom Schools! This was the straw that broke--. Well, it is interesting to observe them. They are a congregational group. Dr. Simmons speaks of his congregation as though it were a little kingdom, over which he has complete reign; no interference, please. The task of the church is to preach the Gospel. To consider the application to the social or the civic life; to think that the church had a responsibility for the welfare, the total welfare of the individual--that was strange language to him. They used to have meetings with the Negro pastors--before COFO came; but not since. He does not believe in integrated schools; this is not the solution. He thinks, though, it is coming; and he will preach to his people to be law-abiding, but he does not appreciate outsiders coming in to tell them this.

Stopped at Rev. C. O. Inge, pastor of the Hope Baptist Church (Negro). Rev. Inge was not home, but Mrs. Inge and her mother and I talked for about 2 hours. A very ordinary person, but a lot of common sense. She thought there had been some communication between Negro and white ministers, even recently, but was not very sure. She felt strongly the youth included her own daughters, would be more forward in expecting to be given equal privileges: they did not go to the back of the bus; they wanted better schools, and better jobs. She said much progress would need to be made by their people themselves: in cleanliness, keeping their homes painted and looking nice; especially also in being willing to take responsibility to improve themselves and the general situation. She plead for better teachers; so often the standards of the teachers--moral, educational, etc. were not good; she blamed their colleges. So--the day was very revealing; but once again: this is a "Closed Society;" the task is not one to be accomplished this week, this year, this generation! It may well take a new generation to bring on a "New Society." But the church must be in it; yea, there must be a church letting its light shine that both preaches and lives the Gospel! We have a work to do!

Friday, August 7, 1964, the last day in Meridian. What have we accomplished? That's a good question. I said to Dr. McCeown, Episcopalian Rector today that if he were to ask me that, I could not give him a very specific answer. He came back quickly: "but you have been here! You have come to see for yourself; you can go back to your people and speak from having seen, listened, heard." I told him about our tours to the Delta area, and the recommendations which would be coming from it; he thought this was a move in the right direction. I told him that to give material aid was not really solving the problem; "No", he said, "but there are times when this has to be done, as you well know." Well, one felt that at least one of those who tries to understand the situation, feels that it has not been in vain.

Too, he assured me that the Interracial Committee which did meet quite regularly before the summer workers came, will meet again after the workers have gone. They have already agreed upon a November date, and for a second and third session following, on an every-other-month basis. We don't want to claim credit for this; we lent our encouragement. They will start with what they have, and add to it as they can. He does not speak disparagingly about the summer workers; they did what they could; and, as Dr. Reed (Negro) principal of the Junior College-High School-Junior High, said: "The biggest contribution they have made is to stir the Negroes toward their responsibility to register to vote." Dr. Reed did not have many good things to say about them. He did not like at all the way in which they had come on to his campus, and without saying anything to anyone about it, distributed their literature; and when he went out to ask them how it was that they came in? they gave the school a very unfair write-up that came out in any out-of-state periodical that wasn't very complimentary. Reed did not appreciate this.

The experience has been and continues to be a very rich one. It was new; it did not have a pattern, and perhaps no two people would go about it in quite the same manner. One feels that we have left some encouragement to ministers and others. To some we could let them know that there were others who felt just like they did, and often they did not know that this was the case. People are very hesitant to speak on this, especially if they don't know whether its "friend, or foe" who is speaking to them. We have met some of the nicest people--both white and Negro; in fact we haven't met very many that have not been nice. Even those who came after the Club meetings: Rotary, Optomist--were not hostile; they disagreed, but not violently. And this is creditable; when they are willing to talk, this is hopeful. No one has told me to "get out;" several, including pastors, have let it be known that I was an intruder from the North. But even the Southern Baptist bade me God's blessing upon my work.

Perhaps the most tangible result will be the recommendation that we believe will be forthcoming through MCC. Or let me start a bit farther back: a) that we continue this mission, with another emissary of reconciliation. b) That we seek for a couple, who could give leadership to the beginning of a center, and to the work that would grow out of their guidance of setting up a center; a couple that could give a minimum of 6 months to it. c) That the center would reach out in several directions: material aid; educational work, perhaps tutorial in nature; but also sewing classes, and other more practical helps; day care school; tackle the longer range problem of the Negro earning ways in which he could help himself; and when the time comes--a church, open to all. Above all, this must be done in the Name of, and in the Spirit of Christ. Otherwise it will not stand. MDS may have a place in this; 13 Negro churches have been destroyed. Voluntary service could be used likely in a number of ways.

With Rabbi Schlager, Milton I. Schlager. Met him in the Jewish Temple. A very able person; university trained, I think it was Northwestern, Evanston. He made several pertinent observations: 1, The Negro must take his share of the responsibility. This one has heard a number of times; and from Negroes themselves. W. A. Reed, Principal of the Negro Junior College-High School-Junior High, placed this point as No. 1 in priority. 2, The Negro has lost his sense of family life; the family is no longer a basic institution with him. He did not give figures, but it happens over and over that the woman he lives with is a common law wife. I am giving what the Rabbi said, and I do not know just how one would go about gathering statistics on this. Often, he says, there are numbers of children who do not know who their father is. A lack of morality is what one hears often; and at least two Negro mothers have said this to me too; it does not come alone from those who are died-in-the-wool segregationists. This, the Rabbi says, is something the Negro needs to become aware of, and which he needs to take the

responsibility to correct. (There is enough too that goes on between the whites and Negroes at this point; but the Rabbi was speaking primarily about their loss of family consciousness.) 3, The Negro needs to assume responsibility to build his self-respect. He needs to learn to take civil responsibility as well and along with civil rights. The Rabbi is not a segregationist; therefore his words have the more weight. 4, He did not see how this could be done except by the weight of pressure from the whole nation. Here he was speaking about the bringing about of an improved station for the Negro. He felt that through the national government was the only way it could have begun, and could be carried out. I am not so certain on this, for it seems to me this is a spiritual problem. I countered with this, but his feeling is that religion has become so wrapped up in the institution that the spirit and the motivation is well-nigh gone out of it. He may have quite a point there.

An interesting contact. I asked the Rabbi why it was that so many Jews were in the freedom movement? He said that a suffering people is often or always the people with a vision; they are the ones who dream dreams; the people who live in hope of a better world, and in that sense are a messianic groups, having a sense of working with God in helping to usher in a better age! He recalled how the prophets arose during very difficult times; during the time of Solomon when times were very prosperous, there was corruption to the 11th degree.

Spoke again with Rev. Tillman, Methodist minister, who is having a real struggle locally, trying to keep his group within the fold of Methodism. He is quite discouraged. They have closed the doors to Negroes (locked 3 of them during the service, and have 4 sergeants at arms at the 4th door to keep any from entering that might come); have withdrawn support for all mission funds, because this goes to NCC; are in the process of discontinuing the use of Methodist literature--for the same reason--it is communist inspired. Although the lawyer chairman of his board is very liberal, more than a moderate, but he and the minister are completely out-voted. He is rather discouraged. Asked that we remember him in prayer. Wanted to know and to hear from us again, and he would keep us informed on what the results would be in his congregation. He was not so sure but what there might come the Southern Methodist Conference all over again.

Tonight--we tried to go to the Negro Baptist Church where the COFO workers are holding a meeting regarding the coming of the Democratic National Convention, and the seating of delegates. My wife and I were both in the car; we saw the police at every corner approaching the building; we did not actually try it, but it was tempting to see what the police would have to say.

Wednesday, August 12, 1964, enroute home, Crofton, Kentucky. Very likely the concluding chapter to our 6-weeks work in Mississippi. How short these weeks now seem? Perhaps some of the most significant days of our years; contacts made--with leaders of churches, and also civic leaders; in Mississippi--which is unlike any other state in our Union. The 3 civil rights workers disappeared a little over a week before we left, and their bodies were found about a week before we left Mississippi. More bodies had been found in the search for these 3; but so far none of the killers have been brought to justice, not even the murderer of Medgar Evers, who was killed more than 1 year ago; (indeed, the killer sold a piece of property to the U.S. government for more than \$20,000). Is any progress being made? Charles Freeney, from the Atlanta Mennonite House Unit, who spent several weeks at the Meridian, Mississippi COFO center, wondered too whether any progress had been made; he thought there was some evidence; just where is still a bit hard to say. He had not actually received beatings, but more than once in the car, out-ran the police; for they were certain that beatings would have been



the least that would have been meted out to them. He wondered whether he could have remained nonviolent in the situation.

At Mennonite House, 540 Houston Avenue Northeast, Atlanta, Georgia. Came here Saturday night. Vincent and Rosemarie had not returned; Virgil Vogts were there, but Virgil left Sunday evening for Chicago, MCC Peace Section meeting, where Vincents were to be too. Went to church Sunday morning to the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sr. are pastors. Martin, Jr. was away for the month of August, so we still have not heard him speak; he spoke in the Riverside Baptist Church, New York, last Sunday; next Sunday he is in Europe, his father told us. Martin, Sr. preached; his topic: "What Have We Left?" He is a dramatic speaker; and drove home the point of not resorting to hate, but to love, instead. One could easily see where Martin, Jr. had in his early years gotten that which is the keynote of his approach to the problem today. He plead with his people not to permit themselves to hate; hate can only destroy us; love never fails; love is the greatest, even greater than our faith and our hope, both of which are "musts" in the Christian life; but love is the greatest. The sermon was good; one would tire of all the "commercials" in between; but one senses a certain closeness of fellowship there, which not all of our churches have.

The afternoon Communion Service at the Unit was a most impressive service. Virgil Vogt said some very timely and appropriate things based upon Jeremiah 31, and on Hebrews 9. Charles Helms, a Presbyterian minister, who with his wife stay at the Unit House, and serve two Presbyterian churches in Atlanta or suburbs, officiated at the Communion Service; a loaf of bread had been prepared, which he broke in two, and from which each one broke a piece for partaking of the bread; the fruit of the vine was served in the chalice, from which all partook; there were 3 Negro participants in the group of 24 or 25. It was a very meaningful Communion, with His presence felt in the fellowship. Edna and I that evening had a long walk-talk with Charlotte Teichrow from Mt. Lake. She, like the others of the Unit, find this a very meaningful experience. It is different from any other Unit that we have, any other church that we have, or have visited. One feels that there is an openness for the truth, and a sincere searching that one covets for one's own parish. What wouldn't one give for such frankness, openness, that leads also to the development of Christian character and Christian fellowship.

The presence of several non-Mennonites is a real stimulant. It seemed to us this made for growth for all concerned. Perhaps this very factor may necessitate counsel and "standing by" some of the "younger" Mennonite workers, helping them to let this be the anvil on which their convictions and their faith is being hammered out, for where could there be a better setting for the formation of such faith? Even a liberal arts college may not be as appropriate a setting; the group is small enough so that close fellowship can develop, and counselling can develop naturally; and their work and the environment in Atlanta provide the laboratory with all the testing equipment.

We did not get to see many of the Unit members at their work; so it is not possible for us to comment there. Suffice it to say that the very fact that this group is there, lives at 540 Houston, they mingle with the people, this in itself is a witness in the deep South! The question was raised whether they were making enough contact with whites. This is a good question, and they will no doubt arrive at their own answer. One would encourage making more contacts. The parallel question is: Does identification with the Negro quite definitely preclude inability to contact the white? On the surface it seems so. Father Nathaniel, Greenwood, said that this is how it worked in his case. Is it not exactly in this area that we need to experiment, for there must be ways of

getting to the white, even if working with the Negro? Lines of communication are hard to open; it may take some persistence. No doubt one plays with the possibility of being rejected by the whites; perhaps even of having the work interrupted, attacked, destroyed; but may this be what we need to figure into the cost and the price? We want to exercise care and good stewardship in seeking out these possibilities of whether, and of how, as well as the when and the where. The climate at Mennonite House for this is a healthy one.

Mennonite House is biracial. This is a new thrust in the South; very few experiments of this nature have been tried of which one is aware. Koinonia is one, and they have met with much opposition. It likely would not work in the white sections of the city; COFO workers live in Negro homes, but, of course, Negro COFO workers could not stay in white homes. This is not a thing to be widely publicized; and even in our own constituency there would be much opposition were this known. Parents would hesitate to let their sons and daughters enter, for fear that love affairs might develop across racial lines. And this is not impossible; families from which young people come to the Unit should know that it is in places of service rendered by those who have common motivations that friendships often grow into the finding of life's companions. And love does not stop at the color barrier. This is not to keep people from living together with Negroes; it is rather to point out to them that they should approach the problem of friendship that is to be more than just good friends, with the longer range view than the period of service.

We left Tuesday for Americus, Georgia, to the Koinonia Farm; Roger Hart, a Presbyterian who stayed at Mennonite House, and whose home is in Florida, went with us, for this took him half way to his home. Roger had some very good things to say about his experience at Mennonite House; he had found there just what he had been looking for. The Helms said the same thing, and even Margot Thomas, who was not of the Unit, but stayed there during a period of research for her thesis, thought of selecting an Anabaptist thesis for her dissertation towards her M.A. degree. This is a great experiment in the ministry of our church in the South. We want to give this our prayerful support, and seek to give an interpretation to our constituency that they can and will appreciate.

The visit with Clarence Jordan was a rare treat! Their work is unique, and it is an experiment that is very difficult; here is an attempt to carry through on business principles the operation of a business, and the living of a New Testament fellowship of brotherhood which is open to all who want to come. Mr. Jordan himself thinks it may not succeed; he thinks the early church as described in the Acts of the Apostles, likely moved with wisdom when they discontinued the communal living in favor of going where the Spirit led them to carry the message of the Gospel.

Clarence Jordan's ability to tell the stories of the New Testament in today's language and in today's settings is tremendous. He has made a few recordings; I hope that he also puts some of these things into print. How vividly he tells of those whom Jesus chose! Matthew, the tax collector. The Collaborator with the Romans! The integrationist, who collaborates with Bobby Kennedy. Imagine him coming to Greenwood, Mississippi! And bringing Jesus along! With them comes Simon the Zealot; steeped in the keeping of the law; living in Mississippi, where the law would not permit ~~any~~ to stay in his house! Both of them--close friends of Jesus! Jordan thought Jesus probably had to sleep between these two quite often, to keep them from each other's throat. It becomes alive! A good climax to our Mississippi work! It is through the work of the Spirit of Jesus that the ways of reconciliation can become incarnate. May the Kingdom come into the church and into the South too!