

MISSISSIPPI REPORT

[Aug 5-13, 1964]

Arlee Beechy

The following is a personal account of my recent visit to Mississippi. I spent from August 5 to 13th in that state. I went under the umbrella of the National Council of Churches Ministerial Project and with the strong encouragement of the Mennonite Central Committee. The purposes of the visit were (1) to try to secure a first-hand view of the situation in Mississippi and to enlarge my understanding of the nature and dimensions of the social revolution going on, (2) to explore the general question of the possible role of the church in Mississippi (MCC and Mennonite groups are interested--the Conservative Conference is there now), and (3) to make what limited contribution I could during this brief period. I am asking careful use of this material, not because of its profundity but because of its personal nature.

August 5

I arrived in Jackson at 12:20 p.m. The airport limousine was not available and so four of us shared a taxi down town. On the way the cab driver said "they found the bodies of those three guys today." The other man in the front seat said "yes, and I guess this means more trouble again."

I spent the afternoon at the National Council Office getting acquainted and oriented. My major formal orientation was listening to a Vincent Harding tape. He gave the talk originally at the Oxford, Ohio training session. He is held in very high repute by the people who heard him. The physical facilities here at the National Council Office are impressive for their barrenness. McKenna, a National Council staff person, commented about the good work Albert Gaeddert is doing but he felt some of our people should have the direct first-hand contact with the Negro and white communities through their program. The National Council program is that of providing persons (counselors) to COFO (Council of Federated Organizations). The Council has a longer range program sketched out of its own. This includes medical and health services, legal studies and services, and ministerial leadership and interchange.

The initial impression is that distrust and fear are present to a marked degree in this state. Perhaps some of this is simply psychologically induced by anticipation. One of the National Council workers thinks this aspect may be overemphasized in the pre-orientation. The Council's training in non-violence and the precautions of calling ahead, asking someone to meet you, and asking the project to which you are going to call back upon arrival tends to encourage this type of mentality. This is standard procedure for all movement of workers.

I took a bus at 6:30 p.m. from Jackson. Two hours later I arrived in Hattiesburg. John Baumgartner met me at the bus station. A meeting in which the COFO director spoke was in session when we arrived. The director explained something of the total work of COFO. This includes community center work,

freedom schools, and voter registration. These are somewhat interrelated.

At the present time the ministers' project has 12 men and several women in it. They come from all over and are a very interesting group of persons. They have been coming for a week or two all summer. These men and women participate in various phases of the program with a basic thrust toward conversation with the white community.

August 6

I was up at 7:00, had breakfast at a Negro cafe, and after some general confusion in planning I left for the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. This is the base for voter registration and also has a freedom school.

I paired up with Cris Wilson, a sophomore from Stanford, in a voter registration team. We knocked on doors until 12:30 p.m. The sun was hot!! We were generally greeted with friendliness. The children often said, "here come the freedom workers." At two places Cris asked for a drink of water and in both instances we were warmly received and a fine visit followed. A cup of cold water in 94° temperature can have real significance to a tired person. These contacts were most interesting. I returned to this type of activity from four to six-thirty p.m. to catch the working people at home.

Everyone says the major value of the work is the presence of the northern people. This "presence" appears to be deeply appreciated by the Negroes. In many instances it has brought hope, an awareness of relationship, and encouragement to start moving instead of only accepting the situation. In some instances this nudge for action comes from a sense of uneasiness--uneasiness that so many are making sacrifices for them and therefore they must take some responsibility themselves.

One woman we registered for the Freedom Democratic party didn't know how old she was and she couldn't write but her spirit was strong. Many of the homes were poor but mostly clean. In many instances the mother is the stable person in the family.

We felt a bit of the fear and hate which Mississippi whites feel today. At one house two white young furniture dealers left as we got there. I thought I sensed deep resentment in them. Several times a car with four white fellows with several confederate flags passed us. Their expressions reflected hostility.

The young COFO workers are a diverse, individualistic, and dedicated lot. Their backgrounds and abilities, and faith varies but their common dedication brings them together. Why did they come? Because they believed in an ideal and they wanted to become identified and involved in it. One girl from Oregon who is planning to stay on said this very simply and directly. She said no other motivation will do. Personal reasons or adventure reasons won't stand up. Has she been afraid? Of course, but she has come to terms with her fear and feels called to work in this situation at this particular time. There is some inter-personal tension, some disorganized efforts, but what they have done is remarkable.

The community gathering this evening was an interesting one. Some 70 to

80 Negroes gathered to get organized and moving under their own direction. This was also the day in which the State Democratic Freedom Party was officially born in Jackson. This may well be a historic event. The key-noter paid respect to the 3 civil rights workers who were killed and went on to say we must not stop until we are as much concerned about the death of a Negro as we are about the death of white workers.

The bodies of the 3 civil rights workers were brought to Jackson about the same time I arrived there. There has been sober reflection and renewed dedication among many people as a result. The papers here carry a strange but understandable bias. They report that in three other murder cases the FBI turned things over to local authorities after which nothing was done to those accused. These papers almost imply that the people involved this time shouldn't worry too much. The northern race problems have also been given front filling here. The governor, Paul Johnson, makes frequent unfavorable reference to the summer progress. Typical is his recent statement that Mississippi doesn't need the "broken down, second generation aliens" from the north.

One of the interesting paradoxes of these days is the kind of inner fear one feels as he moves into the white community and how relaxed and safe he feels when he returns to the Negro community. For example, today noon we ate lunch in a nearby Negro cafe. The juke box was blaring away, and the characters looked a bit rough. We were the only whites around but we felt perfectly safe. Last evening we ate uptown in a "white" place and we felt less comfortable there.

August 7

Today Mr. Henderson and I went to the white high school to see the high school counselor. While we were in the hall or lobby the principal came by and spoke to us. After he identified us it was clear that we were not particularly welcome. He said he had only 15 minutes for us. We stayed for an hour and twenty minutes.

The principal was strongly hostile during the first part of the exchange. His lips were tense, his eyes sharp and intense, and his hands were frequently clenched. He stated that they had no need for pious, self-righteous outsiders who didn't know what the score was and who had plenty of problems of their own. We quickly agreed to the latter and also made it clear we were not in Mississippi to give easy answers but we wished to understand the situation. In order for this to happen we needed his help. We indicated we were here as Christian educators to discuss and exchange. Our failure to become defensive and sharp in rebuttal eased the situation some. His next approach was to talk about his own strong religious faith, his support of the church, his activity and leadership as Sunday School teacher, deacon, and board member. Increasingly he became more relaxed even though his basic position didn't change.

Summary observations:

1. He reflected an expected psychological defensiveness to the out of state invaders. This was intense and understandable.

2. He felt threatened and uneasy. He projected this feeling against us and stated we had just made the situation worse.
3. He admitted they had a problem but that the invaders had no right to propose answers to a situation which we didn't understand.
4. He used religion as a defense against all approaches.
5. Some understanding on our part of his position made it possible for him to share his own feelings more freely and may also have helped him in changing his image of the invaders.
6. He reflected fear at some of the practical problems he faces in handling a tense school and community situation.

At the close of the interview he actually expressed appreciation for our visit. An interesting slant came out when he stated that he and his friends are afraid to drive into the north with Mississippi license plates. I told him I regretted this very much but added that perhaps this might help him understand the fear some northerners have in driving in Mississippi with out of state license plates.

Our second contact was with the head counselor at Rowan High School (all Negro school) and we reviewed general educational issues and problems with particular reference to education for culturally deprived groups. The counselor received his M.A. in guidance from Northwestern. He is friendly, articulate, and appears to have a good guidance program in operation. Marvin Woodson, Indiana University star halfback, is one of Rowan High's cherished products.

This evening a car load was invited out in the country about 8 miles to a Negro home for a chicken barbecue. Several neighbor families joined us. The place was quite isolated at the edge of a large swamp area. The chicken and the spare ribs were delightful but the larger satisfaction came from feeling something of the deep, inner soul of these people. One of the neighbors was the Vice President of the district NAACP. He was a deeply religious man and very capable. It was clear why he was something of a community leader. I spent a considerable amount of time talking to him. He kept stating how much our presence meant to him and his people. He did so much of this that it almost became embarrassing. He placed a lot of emphasis on the sacrifice northern whites are making, the risks they are taking, and how much it means to know that there are white people who really want to help them in their struggle to become first class, respectable, and self-respecting persons.

August 8

I arrived in Meridian at 4:00 and checked in at the COFO Office. I spent 45 minutes talking to Sue Braun about Goshen study possibilities. It's clear she has had an important role in their operations this summer.

She thinks she wants to become a social worker and return to work with her people in Meridian. We discussed Goshen--its strengths and its weaknesses, including a frank look at our prejudices.

The Freedom school conference was impressive. A sense of mission, cultural identity, hope, and inspiration were perhaps more significant outcomes than the academic program of the participants. The evening performance of "It Happened in White America" was simply tremendous. I was, along with everyone else, deeply moved by the tragedy of it all. Late talks with Paul and Roy Miller at Titus Benders, attendance at the Meridian Mennonite Church, talks with 2 bright young Negroes looking for a good liberal arts college, and the ride back to Hattiesburg with the COFO workers rounded out the activities of the weekend.

August 9

Tonight added another dimension to the strange pattern in this state. A group of 15 were invited to the home of a professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. The cars had to be parked in scattered areas so as not to bring suspicion to the professor. The shades were drawn. A Negro folk singer was in the group. He was warned several times to sing more quietly so that the neighbors would not hear anything unusual. When we left the host took us out the front door a car-load at a time--without the porch light being turned on.

The host fled from Nazi Germany in 1938. He is part Jewish. He has been at this University for several years but has had about all he can take. He stated this reminds him of the Nazis except that here it has been going on for a hundred and fifty years. They are moving as soon as he can get another job. The wife of the professor was greatly concerned about the situation and about their failure to be able to do something openly. Some friends told them today that if the university finds out they are fraternizing with the ministers he would lose his job immediately.

The wives of two professors were also present. Several professors in the behavioral sciences are leaving this fall. Another professor was present. This was the first time that she openly identified with the cause. She is currently reading Mississippi: The Closed Society and is much impressed by it. She is planning to secure several copies (almost impossible to secure in Mississippi) and to pass them around to her friends.

The two lawyers from the National Lawyers Guild are interesting and able. They are involved in a case which happened just today. A Negro woman sitting beside a white woman was asked to give up her seat so that a white woman could sit down. She refused. A policeman was called and she was arrested. As she left all the Negro passengers got up and left with her. She has been freed without bail--which is unusual. The lawyers think the city does not wish to make a fuss about the matter at this time.

The lawyer reported that the National Lawyers Guild sent letters to all the lawyers in Mississippi asking if they would volunteer their services to help handle civil rights cases. The organization added that if there were enough volunteered the northern "rebel" lawyers would leave. There

were two responses. One replied that he would volunteer if he could prosecute and the other was a bonafide offer of assistance. My lawyer friends say that it is simply unbelievable the way in which legal procedures have been distorted and prostituted in the interests of preserving the Mississippi way of life.

Rosa Paige Welsh, Negro singer, evangelist and church worker is with the group. She has a great spirit. She was a short-term worker for the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. She reported a late night visit with a professor at Southern. His contract was not renewed because of his civil rights attitudes. Miss Welsh indicated they were such fine people, --free from self-pity and deeply dedicated in a Christian sense.

I took some things to a laundry across the street from our quarters. A middle aged Negro woman operates the place. She expressed appreciation for our being in Hattiesburg. After further talk I discovered her daughter had been a sophomore at Tougaloo last year and knew Goshen's Eli Hochstetler very well.

August 10

Monday morning we had a general planning session after which I spent some time trying to line up some appointments by telephone. Dr. Fred Roble, Executive Secretary of the Illinois Council of Churches, joined me Monday afternoon for a visit to William Carey College. Things were quiet there and most of the people we wanted to see were gone. A student took us around the campus. We met the head of the science department--who appeared open and sympathetic to the cause. She asked about James Miller. He taught at this school some years ago. We also met the professor of Religious Education. He was hostile in a self-righteous, religious sort of way. He reviewed how much he had done for the Negroes and how well they were getting along before the northern people started to push the matter. He wasn't too responsive when we talked about the pace of change and that national and world winds were blowing in such a way that there was no turning back.

Our last contact on Monday was with the superintendent of schools. He has been in the Hattiesburg schools for 42 years. He was born in Nebraska. He entered the Hattiesburg school system as a junior high school coach. He was, as Fred Robles said, "courteous in a cagey sort of way." He suggested that the Negro has had no cultural background and therefore started later and cannot be expected to achieve as well as the whites. He moved dangerously close to saying that Negroes might really have less ability than whites. He raised a question about why freedom schools are necessary. According to the superintendent the main problem in education is that Mississippi is a poor state and does not have the necessary funds. He was not enthused about outside resources helping Mississippi including federal aid to education. He was evasive on whether Negro education gets its fair share of the available resources. The state program of aid is based on actual number of pupils enrolled but the local school administrators can do some allocating within the program.

The superintendent was cautious about discussing integration. At first he said that integration was a matter for the board to decide and they hadn't talked about it. When pressed a bit he said they had discussed it some in

staff meetings. He probably revealed his own attitude when he said that they "had celebrated the 10th anniversary of the issuance of the Supreme Court ruling without any integration." He then changed the word celebrate to a less revealing term. When asked whether Mississippi educators can hope to continue to block integration he replied that there was a limit to what they can do. There did not seem to be any real awareness of the personal, moral, and the professional obligation men in his position should have to give creative leadership in these crucial years. The intensity and real character of the social revolution seemed beyond his conscious recognition. This provincial attitude was revealed in many ways. Perhaps it was a cover-up for not wishing to reveal any part of his own hand. This failure was the most disturbing aspect of the interview. He stated Negro and white teachers must meet the same requirements and they receive the same salary. He added that normally the white teachers were the better teachers. He also stated that his relationship to Negro teachers and principals is good but he just can't get as close to Negro staff persons as he did earlier. The superintendent must be approaching retirement and I had the feeling that he might be hoping to "ride out" his term without surrendering on the integration issue.

On Monday evening some of us returned to the Negro family we had visited on Friday evening in order to hear their 16-year-old daughter sing. She has a tremendous range and volume. She is just beginning some lessons with a music professor at University of Southern Mississippi. Her voice reminds me of Marian Anderson's voice.

August 11

Tuesday morning we cleaned up our living quarters. It needed it. There are twelve sleeping places in this hotel!! There isn't much room between the sleeping areas (springs and mattresses on the floor) and not much other room either. Ministers are coming and going all the time. They come from all denominations and from all sections of the country. There are usually several women here in the project. The participants are from pastorates, denominational headquarters offices, college chaplains, and state and city national council offices. The common task, the common frustrations, problems, fears, joys, and hopes helped to produce a good morale in the group.

This morning we talked to the Principal of Rowan High School. (Negro) He impressed us as a capable and dedicated school administrator. In 1953 the "separate but equal" idea was officially adopted as state policy. The 2000 school districts were reduced to 200 and a minimum subsidy for each pupil was authorized from state funds. Proportionately the same ratio of Negro and white children of school age enroll in the first grade but the casualty rate is very much higher from grades 2 to 6 and at grade 9 for Negroes than for whites.

1. The Principal feels COFO bypassed local educational leadership in planning for the freedom schools. He gives credit to the program for focusing on the problem, advancing adult education, and bringing attention to the voter registration situation.
2. Negro participation in city school policy making is restricted to a newly organized Principal's Advisory Council. There is no Negro participation on the Board of Education.

3. The problem of more post high school trade and technical education for Negroes is his concern. Nineteen Negro high schools out of approximately 200 are accredited.
4. The matriarchal pattern of Negro family life has implications for the self-image of the husband and the willingness of the mother to take risks in the civil rights movement when participation might threaten her social and economic status.
5. The Principal is deeply interested in civil rights but doesn't see himself a crusader.
6. Phi Delta Kappa may be helpful in moving toward integrating the local education honorary group.

On Tuesday afternoon we met a professor in the Student Union at the University of Southern Mississippi. He received his training at the University of Indiana. In hushed tones he talked about the situation there. In short he was basically sympathetic with civil rights goals but he was very fearful. He reported that professors were told not to discuss integration. The professor and his family have not felt accepted in the community. They are charter members of a new Methodist Church but he isn't happy with developments in the church. The church decided to cut off support to the National Council. Several weeks ago the Sunday school lesson was on race. The adult classes used another lesson. His wife teaches in the primary department. She used the regular lesson. He expressed appreciation for the contact. I wonder how many others there are like him? I would guess more than we think.

We had an appointment scheduled with the dean of student affairs but when we arrived at the office the secretary informed us that the dean had been called away and would not be back. I asked about seeing him at some other time and it was clear that he was not available to me. The secretary reflected a hostility that was not fully covered. It seems particularly tragic that a profession which is committed philosophically to respect for the human person should have representatives who violate this so flagrantly in their treatment of Negroes--or northern whites.

Our next scheduled appointment was with the librarian at the University of Southern Mississippi. We were ushered into his office. He did not greet us but from his seated position he told us to sit down. He repeated his request. After we were seated he got up and in a highly emotional manner stated he had a statement to make. He said that beginning now and continuing to the end of the summer and through next summer if there is a summer project anyone connected in any way with the project, whether COFO workers, ministers, or educators, is not welcome in this library. The campus security will handle any violators.

At this point my partner got up to leave. I asked if it was possible to discuss the library. He said he was ready to show us the library but would not discuss anything else. We toured the library. He responded to my questions directly. At one point he said that he had had some trouble with students mutilating some of the magazines. He went on to say that he got the President to expell three students this past year for this reason and that this is now standard policy. The way he reported this matter suggested

the man might have some other problems besides the summer project.

At the close of the tour I expressed appreciation for his time and extended my hand in farewell. He ignored my gesture and returned to his office. This behavior hardly seemed appropriate to an individual who has degrees from Earlham, Western Reserve, and Chicago University. Something fairly serious must have happened between COFO people and the librarian or between his wife (librarian at the public library) and the COFO representatives. The other possibility might be that he was carrying out institutional policy. I noted the door of the outer office was open when he made his opening statement. It is reported that the President of the University is a very active speaker for the White Council and that some of his speeches are published by the Council.

We dropped over to the Student Union to call a cab. While we waited we talked to a friendly student who was working at the main desk. We stopped uptown in the white community for a combined lunch and dinner about 4:00 p.m. This was only the second time I had done this. Tuesday evening we talked Freedom Schools with the Hattiesburg directors, the Arthur Reeses from Detroit. This talented Negro couple is giving good leadership to this interesting development.

The purpose of these schools include:

1. To strengthen the basic skills.
2. To enrich the weak areas (i.e., Negro history).
3. To strengthen political and social awareness.
4. To provide some educational opportunities for adults.
5. To focus on educational inequalities between Negroes and whites.

August 12

Fred and I visited the two Freedom Schools at Palmer Corners. The one class had 11 pupils ages 11 - 14. It was in charge of two ivy league graduate students. The subject was Negro history. The pupils appeared to be interested in the subject but the language of the teachers was at times beyond the pupils. At the other school the pupils were cleaning up a building near the church which is to be used as a library and study center. They were singing as they worked.

I left Hattiesburg at noon on the 12th. Bob Beech and Fred Roble took me to the bus station. The temperature was still around 94° with very high humidity when I left. A heavy rain enroute to Jackson cooled things off a bit. I checked in and out of the National Council Office. Warren Mckenna and Art Thomas were not in. Bruce Hanson took me to the hotel. I spent the evening cleaning up and catching up. It was good to return to a few of the more modern conveniences. I had a wonderful sleep.

August 13

I arrived at Tougaloo College around 10:30 a.m. I picked up a catalog at the Registrar's Office and then found Ed King in his office in the chapel.

King represents perhaps the top civil rights church oriented white leadership in Mississippi. He and his wife are native of the state and are graduates of Milsap College. He took his work in theology at Boston University and is acquainted with Peter Bertocci. He became chaplain and dean of students a year and a half ago. Since that time he has been arrested 10 times, crowded off the road and involved in an accident, and beaten up once. The charges often have been quite ridiculous. The last time was on an overparking charge. His lawyer is always close by since there is real fear that any extended time in jail would very likely lead to an attempt on his life. (See Look, Sept. 8, 1964 issue, "The Fight in Mississippi").

Rev. King is no longer acceptable to the state Methodist Conference. He is articulate, sincere, and dedicated. In many ways his spirit reminds me of that of Martin Luther King.

The president and dean of the college highly praised Goshen's exchange student, Eli Hochstetler. They indicated he was a top student, fine spirited, well liked and respected. They are interested in further exchanges. The college has a lovely campus with considerable land available for expansion. They currently have an enrollment of around 500 and plan to keep it at this figure until they have more facilities. A sister relationship has been worked out between Tougaloo and Brown University. This should strengthen Tougaloo's academic program as well as being helpful to Brown. Last year a determined effort was made by the Governor's Office to take away accreditation from Tougaloo but the AAUP and other national groups rose up with strong condemnation and the effort was given up for the present.

Shortly after arriving on the campus King and I went to hear Mrs. Claude Barnett lecture on Africa. She spoke to the freshmen who are in summer non-credit study. Her husband is president of the Associated Negro Press. She is an able, creative, and an interesting person in her own right. Currently she is active in the church and is public services director of Chicago radio station WYNR. She sees this as an opportunity to interpret Negro life and aspirations. She and her husband have attended all the new African independence celebration except one and know many of the leaders personally.

After the lecture we went to the dean's house for what we thought was coffee but ended with dinner. Mrs. Robert Wallace was also a member of a women's team from Chicago which came to Jackson to meet their counterparts for the purpose of working on the civil rights question. Her husband is dean of the Chicago Baptist Institute. This organization brings Negro Baptist ministers from the south for training purposes. Mrs. Wallace holds a high office in the Chicago and Illinois Council of Churches. A third member of the team which I met at Tougaloo was a Mrs. King, wife of one of the owners of the Swift Company. She is a woman of means having homes in Paris, Mexico City, and Chicago. Her husband is an artist. She has become deeply interested in civil rights. Our discussion over dinner and until 2:30 p.m. was about the movement including King's report on developments in the Democratic Freedom Party. The latest move by the officials is an attempted court injunction against the Party. The reasons given were that it was illegal for the new group to use the term democratic, that at the first state convention the state government was criticized, and that the party didn't follow the legal rules about time and place of precinct

meetings. None of these are valid. King recognizes the problem which the current election brings and wants very much for Johnson to be elected. He also deeply believes that it is highly important for the thousands of Negroes who registered for the new party that some recognition of their position is given--small as it may be--by the president and the regular democratic party. Such a symbol would create hope that there are ways to correct things in Mississippi. The delegates are going to Atlantic City with this hope and prayer.

The time passed rapidly. Dean Branch took us back into Jackson. I checked out of the hotel and had a few minutes to wait before leaving for the airport. I reflected on the atmosphere I felt these past 8 days. My reactions are difficult to define. In the main I am deeply troubled. Fear seems to be the dominant note and fear makes people do strange things. The shift from fear to hate is a short journey and unless one understands the fear it almost inevitably turns to hate. Love appears to be the only power which can break the vicious circle. The Negroes keep reminding us that in their loving the whites lies their only hope.

The trip home was interesting. Mrs. Burnett, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Montgomery and a fourth Chicago woman were on the plane. The latter two represented wealthy, socially minded, and concerned white women. The church hasn't seemed very relevant to these latter two. A Quaker has had some religious impact on one of them. Their interest is sincere and deep but is primarily humanistic. They met with their counterparts in Jackson. One told about the wife of the publisher of the main Jackson newspaper and how narrow and provincial and defensive she was at a lunch. The range of concerned people is large and varied.

Concluding Observations

An eight day visit to an area obviously does not give the visitor the right to make quick and final judgments and evaluations. The following should be viewed as initial impressions and tentative observations:

1. There is a universal human problem of exploitation--that is, the use of economic, social, and political power over others for selfish purposes, which inevitably leads to fear, distrust, and hate by those exploited and to fear, self-righteousness, and hidden or overt guilt by those doing the exploiting. Such a pattern always leaves deep psychological scars in addition to the cultural, physical, and spiritual impact left by such treatment.
2. There is a universal human aspiration or drive in all persons to be a person--to be accepted, recognized, and respected as a first class person and citizen. Continued rejection leads to loss of self-confidence and self-respect. These need to be restored before such persons (individuals and groups in any society) can fully function as persons. Such restoration will take time, patience, forgiveness, and compassion. Self-understanding by those rejected and those doing the rejecting are also essential ingredients for recovery.

3. The Mississippi situation dramatizes that which operates in the human scene everywhere and also illustrates what happens when the above equation is violated over a period of time. According to James Silver, author of Mississippi: The Closed Society, a native of that state, and professor of history at the University of Mississippi, the state is dominated by an all pervading doctrine of white supremacy--"whether achieved through slavery or segregation and rationalized by a professed adherence to state rights and bolstered by religious fundamentalism." Hodding Carter in his book Southern Legacy helpfully traces some of the historical factors which have contributed toward the Mississippi pattern of life including the economic factors involved. Both men conclude that the net result has been most unfortunate for the state.
4. The white Mississippian is extremely defensive today. The summer project has brought to national attention the situation in Mississippi. The invasion from the north also seems to say that "you here in Mississippi haven't done your duty and we're here to help you see it and to help you perform it." This effort seriously threatens the whole pattern of life in Mississippi and therefore the defensiveness is understandable.
5. The Negro Mississippian lives in an atmosphere characterized to a considerable degree by fear, and hopelessness. In certain instances individuals are beginning to hope for a better day but after years of exploitation it is a difficult thing to start hoping. The process takes courage. In some instances this hopelessness takes the form of apathy and in many instances there appears to be a kind of sorrowful resignation present. Behind this there lies a deep religious faith including a strong element of ultimate hope. There are also those who feel strong resentment against the system in which they are captured. It is amazing that this feeling has not broken out in violence to a greater degree than it has.
6. The most dominant note characterizing both the white and Negro communities is that of fear. Among the whites there is fear:
 - (a) of change in the overall pattern.
 - (b) of change in the economic balance.
 - (c) arising out of feelings of guilt.
 - (d) of the practical problems of transition and change.
 - (e) of what the Negroes might do if they secured power.
 - (f) of what the other members of the white community would think if they indicated any liberal views towards the racial situation.

Among Negroes there is fear:

- (a) of economic and social reprisals, loss of job, credit, etc.
 - (b) of loss of a "status" given by the white community.
 - (c) of physical harm.
 - (d) of failing to measure up to expected standards.
7. Negro educational leadership which I contacted was of a high caliber. The educators were knowledgeable about education, realistically hopeful, well prepared for their work, dedicated and surprisingly relaxed in their current situation. They have deep concern about changes in old order but they are reluctant to become directly involved in the civil rights movement. They believe that educational opportunity must be expanded and improved in quality for Negroes and whites.
 8. White educational leadership which I contacted was tense, anxious, and defensive about the situation. These educators, in the main, seemed unaware of or were deliberately ignoring the larger dimensions of the social revolution now going on throughout the world. An attitude of self-righteousness and provincialism characterized much of their outlook. Their failure to see the role of educational leadership in the contemporary situation is most tragic.
 9. There is tremendous challenge in the Mississippi situation for a ministry of reconciliation. Such a ministry would find great resistance but the need is urgent. In addition to the ministry of compassionate service to both Negroes and whites there is need for a ministry of compassion through communication at all levels with both the white and Negro communities. Long range economic and educational development are necessary if the total situation is to improve. Creative ways of utilizing concerned people and their economic and educational resources must be found. Educational opportunities for the culturally and economically deprived should receive attention by our educational institutions. This may be as important in the next decade as the international aspect of our educational program. All efforts must be carried out with a deep sense of humility, penitence, patience and in such a way that the recovery of self-respect and mutual understanding are fostered.

The success of the ministry of reconciliation will be largely determined by the quality of the persons engaged in it. Much of the ministry will be simply the "ministry of presence". It is out of this "presence" characterized by understanding and compassion that hope emerges again. It is also out of this experience that defenses can be lowered, self-examination is encouraged, and where fear and hate may be slowly replaced by social awareness, courage, and a new sense of freedom from oppressive guilt.

The foundations of the southern way of life have been challenged by the current social revolution. Non-violence has been characteristic of the approach used. Much has been achieved through this approach but tension and resistance may increase before the crisis is reached. The Christian has both the responsibility and opportunity to be engaged in the ministry of reconciliation not only because such an approach may be effective and irresistible but essentially because the core of the gospel calls him to a life of compassion and reconciliation.

10/7/64