

# WE SHALL OVERCOME

**SONGS OF THE "FREEDOM RIDERS" AND THE "SIT-INS"**  
**Spirituals, Gospels and new songs of the**  
**Freedom Rider and Sit-in Movement**

sung by  
**The Montgomery Gospel Trio**  
**The Nashville Quartet**  
**and**  
**Guy Carawan**



Nashville Quartet - Joseph Carter,  
Bernard Lafayette, James Bevel,  
Samuel Collier

Montgomery Trio - Minnie Hendrick,  
Mary Ethel Dozier, Gladys Burnette  
Carter

The three high school girls from  
Montgomery, Alabama and the four  
seminary students from Nashville,  
Tennessee that are heard singing  
on this record are representative  
of hundreds of thousands of other  
Southern Negro students who are

making it known through their his-  
toric "sit-ins", "stand-ins" and  
"freedom rides" that they will  
accept nothing less than first  
class citizenship today in Ameri-  
ca.

#### Nashville Quartet

The four fellows attend American  
Baptist Theological Seminary in  
Nashville. They have been key  
leaders and participants in the  
demonstrations there and on the  
recent "freedom ride" through  
Alabama and Mississippi. They



have been to jail and suffered  
violence and abuse many times  
for the cause of freedom. They  
have seen the lunch counters and  
theatres opened to Negroes in  
Nashville as a result of their  
actions.

Along with their serious approach  
to life they have the ability to  
laugh and sing and entertain  
others. Their singing for and with  
the students when they were in jail  
helped keep the morale up and ease  
tensions. As one student put it  
"it eased that knot in the pit of

my stomach". "My Dog Loves Your Dog" and parodies of Ray Charles songs about the happenings of the day are always favorites when they are clowning and cutting up. "We Shall Overcome" is the favorite of all the songs they sing. It has spread so fast and been so widely sung this last year that it has become the unofficial theme song for the movement. Other spirituals like "We Shall Not Be Moved", "I'm Gonna Sit At the Welcome Table" and "Oh Freedom" have been widely sung by them and the students at mass meetings, social gatherings and demonstrations.

#### Montgomery Trio

The three girls from Montgomery know what it is to live in one of the most brutal Jim Crow cities in the South. They have witnessed the historic happenings of the 1955 bus boycott, the mob violence in reaction to the "sit-ins" and the "freedom ride". Lack of police protection from the hoodlum elements has made it harder for students to demonstrate in Montgomery than Nashville. Also the police have directly intimidated the students but still they have demonstrated. The Montgomery Improvement Association has carried on the struggle in spite of constant harassment by the police and threats of violence from white hate groups. These girls who sing spiritual and gospel songs that express the spirit of freedom have sung often for this organization and for many other groups in Montgomery. They are used to the fact that these meetings may be harassed by police or white hoodlums and that they have to be careful about where they go, what they do and what they say. Songs like "We Are Soldiers In the Army", "Hold On" and "I'm Gonna Let My Little Light Shine" are some of their best and have helped to lift the spirits of many people in Montgomery.

#### New York Trip

Both the girls from Montgomery and the fellows from Nashville were heard on Feb. 10th this year at Carnegie Hall in New York at a benefit concert for the Highlander Folk School where they appeared with Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth from Birmingham, Alabama and with Pete Seeger, Guy Carawan, Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon. (It was at Highlander Folk School in the Cumberland Mts. of Tennessee that Guy Carawan met both of these groups and got the idea to bring them to New York for the concert. He has sung with both groups many times at Highlander and in Nashville. He and the fellows worked together to make the Folkways L.P. The Nashville Sit-In Story and they put on Nashville's first folk song "hootenanny".) This was both groups first trip to New York. Their Staten Island Ferry ride to the Statue of Liberty and the view from the top of the Empire State Building topped off a memorable weekend. After a weekend of sightseeing, shopping, parties, singing and making many new friends the girls from Montgomery commented on what a different world this was, especial-

ly the freedom of contact with whites which at present is not possible in Montgomery. The morning before they started home to Nashville and Montgomery on the train Moe Asch phoned and asked them to come up to his studio and make this record. Though they were all tired from the week-end they still felt like singing and what you hear on this record is a fairly spontaneous session of impromptu singing and harmonizing that took place that morning before they all started back to their respective homes.

#### About the movement:

Since Feb. 1st, 1960, hundreds of thousands of Negro students have demonstrated their desire and determination to struggle for "first class citizenship" in America. In over three hundred Southern communities they have "sat-in" at public dime store lunch counters, "stood-in" at public movie theatres, "knealt-in" at churches, "waded-in" at public beaches, visited segregated public parks, and disobeyed the segregated seating signs in busses, trains, depots and stations where waiting rooms, rest rooms, drinking fountains and eating places are segregated. They have come together to express this new surge towards freedom at mass meetings, prayer vigils and poster walks. They have participated in voter registration drives and stimulated economic withdrawal campaigns against the businesses that practice Jim Crow customs. They have very effectively dramatized to their communities, the country and the world that they will no longer accept "second class citizenship" in this "land of the free and the home of the brave." They have once and for all broken the Southern stereotype and disproven the idea that Negroes are happy with segregation. Over three thousand students have had to go to jail because they participated in these demonstrations. Many have suffered violence at the hands of hoodlums and policemen who in many cases are committed to enforce the customs of segregation. But this hasn't dampened the spirits of the students or the effectiveness of the movement. On the contrary it has continued to spontaneously mushroom all over the South where Negro student communities exist and their courageous action has caused the older generation of adult Negroes (who are generally very cautious when it comes to such radical social action) to act in support of them. Shocked and indignant over the treatment given the students by the hoodlum elements, police and courts, the adults have rallied to their aid and raised great quantities of money for their legal defense, participated in economic boycotts, gone to the polls in greater numbers, demonstrated with the students in increasing numbers and expressed a great pride in these bold new steps by the younger generation.

The result so far of all this protest has been the desegregation of dime store eating facilities in over a hundred and fifty Southern communities. Many gains on other fronts have been made also but most

of the emphasis has been put on the lunch counters and the forms of demonstration that has come to be known as the "sit-in". News of the "sit-in movement" and its accomplishments has gone around the world and the "sit-ins" will surely take their place in our history books as a milestone in the Negro's struggle for equality in the United States.

And it appears that this is only the first chapter to be written in this new ground swell of student protest. Already in Nashville, Tennessee, the students have written chapter two. After being the first major Southern city to achieve lunch counter desegregation last year, they have gone ahead this year to again become the first to achieve desegregation of the movie theatres, February 1st, 1961, the first anniversary of the "sit-ins", was celebrated by South wide "stand-ins" at movie theatres denied to the Negro students. In Nashville it took less than three months to again be successful. This was about the same amount of time it took them to gain access to the lunch counter stools last year. Now they are already discussing what their goal should be for next year.

The key to all this success has been the students use of the philosophy and the techniques of "non-violence" which they have adhered to with great dedication. The first example of its great power and usefulness was the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955. Martin Luther King applied the ideas and techniques of Ghandi to the situation in Montgomery and preached them to his sixty thousand followers who stayed off the busses and walked for eighteen months. This was the first successful mass non-violent campaign in the U.S. Since that successful milestone Rev. King and his fellow ministers of the newly formed Southern Christian Leadership Conference have been urging more mass social action campaigns based on non-violence to secure equal rights for Negroes in the South. Also such groups as CORE, AFSC & FOR with leadership experienced in the techniques of non-violence have been teaching and working in the South for the last few years. It was a likely thing for the students to have adopted these ideas and techniques once they came in contact with them. Once the powerful example of Montgomery was set and such a strong spokesman as Rev. King had preached the gospel of non-violence (which actually represents a radical fulfillment of their Christian teachings) across the South the stage was set for the Negro students to make use of it. It provided an effective channel of action for them when the time came to show their growing unrest and dissatisfaction with the slow pace of desegregation. The spark that set off the whole series of non-violent demonstrations across the South was the Feb. 1st sit-in of four students at Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960. The students faith in the power of non-violence has given them the courage to go back day after day and face the crowds of hoodlums, the assaults and abuse without striking back



and attempt to stand tall and peaceful in the face of danger and try and feel brotherly feelings towards their opponents. And it is this courageous, disciplined and loving behavior that has won them the respect and concern of so many people to their cause.

As I write this, news of the latest and most dramatic of all the student non-violent protests in the South, the Freedom Ride, is being broadcast on the radio. The mob violence in Birmingham, Anniston and Montgomery, Alabama has been the worst yet. Many freedom riders have been beaten senseless. Over seven hundred Federal Marshalls had to be called in along with National Guardsmen to help local police keep order while three groups of freedom riders rode interstate

busses and used bus stations without regard for the segregation signs. In Anniston their bus was burned to oblivion by an incendiary bomb thrown into the bus and some of the riders were hospitalized. Local police in Birmingham, Anniston and Montgomery in many instances during the first few days refused to give the riders protection. Some of these officials are under federal investigation now. If it hadn't been for the Federal Marshalls there would have been additional serious violence in Montgomery where a mob formed outside of a church where fifteen hundred Negroes were holding an anti-segregation rally featuring the freedom riders and Martin Luther King. They had to use tear gas to disperse the mob. Two bus loads of freedom riders then went on to Jackson Mississippi where

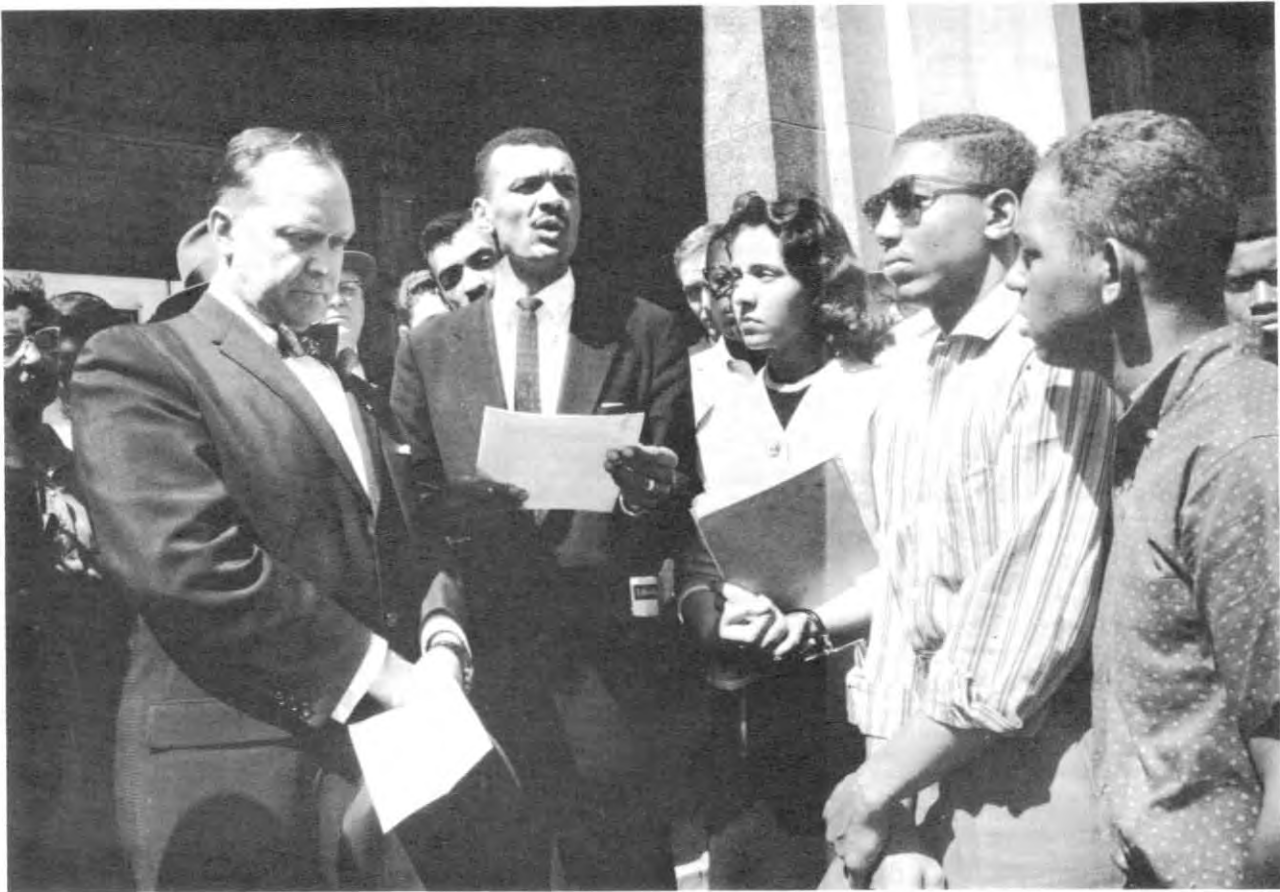
twenty seven of them were arrested and are now in jail. Seven more are in jail in Montgomery along with integration leaders Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, Rev. Ralph Abernathy and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth for using the segregated bus facilities there. Just what the outcome will be of all this is not yet clear. Student and adult integration leaders are calling for a Southwide assault on segregated travel facilities (including train & airplane stations) in response to these beatings and jailings. All of this has been headline news both in the U.S. and abroad for the last week. The Freedom Ride, if it accomplishes nothing else, has surely achieved its goal of dramatizing these evil practices to the American people and the determination of the students to overcome these un-American practices.



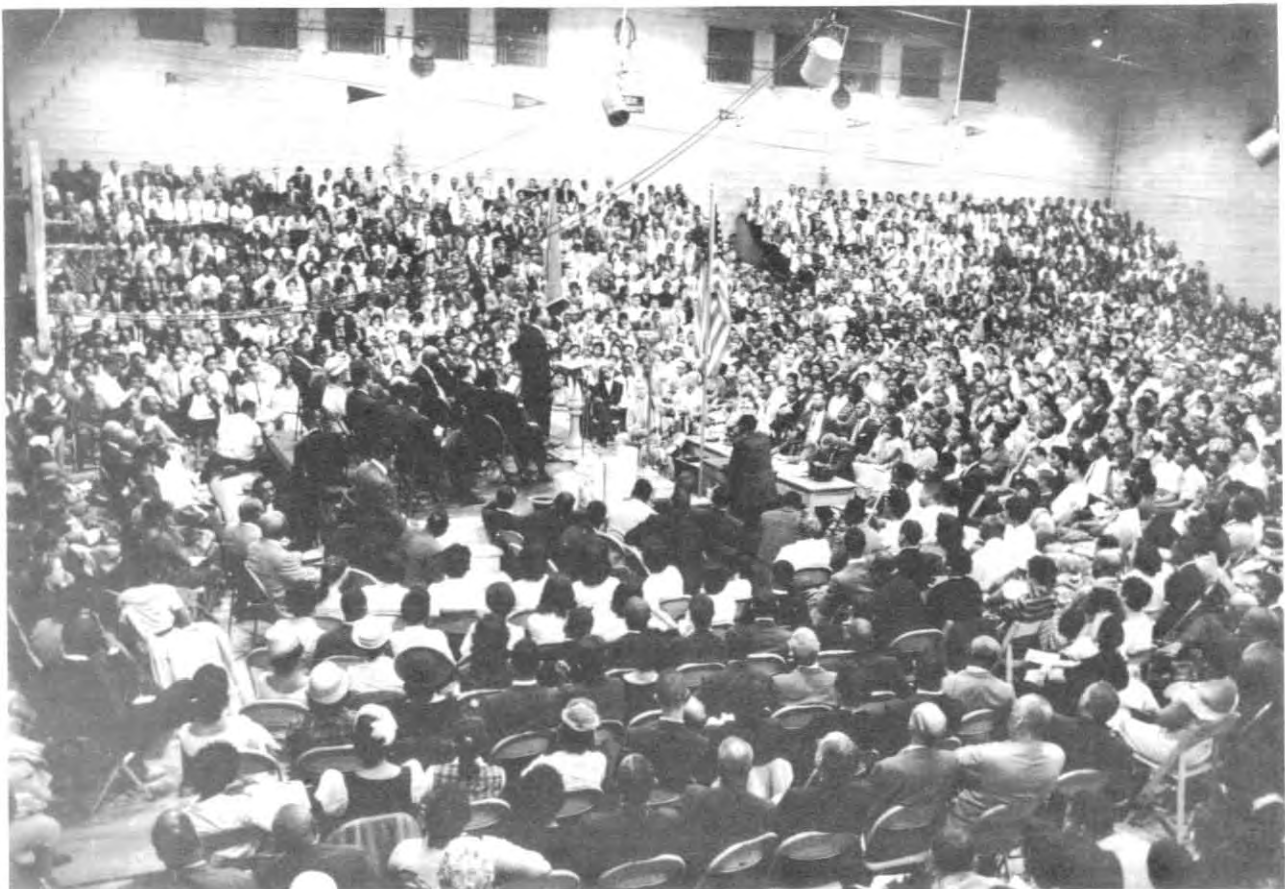
Students being taken to the paddy wagon



A discussion group on non-violence, Student Advisory Council



On the mayor's steps after 4,000 students marched in silence over two miles to that spot in protest of the bombing of Attorney Loobey's home, Tenn. (From left to right; Mayor Ben West, Rev. C.T. Vivian, and three student leaders; Diane Nash, Curtis Murphy and Lonnie Hubbard.)



Martin Luther King speaking to a mass meeting of 4,000 people the night after Attorney Looby's home was bombed.



**SIDE I**

**Band 1: THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE**

This little light of mine, I'm gonna  
let it shine,  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna  
let it shine,  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna  
let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it  
shine.

Deep down in the South, I'm gonna let  
it shine,  
Deep down in the South, I'm gonna let  
it shine,  
Deep down in the South, I'm gonna let  
it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it  
shine.

We have the light of freedom, we're  
gonna let it shine,  
We have the light of freedom, we're  
gonna let it shine,  
We have the light of freedom, we're  
gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it  
shine.

God gave it to us, we're gonna let it  
shine,  
God gave it to us, we're gonna let it  
shine,  
God gave it to us, we're gonna let it  
shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it  
shine.

Oh, all in the church, we're gonna  
let it shine,  
Oh, all in the church, we're gonna  
let it shine,  
Oh, all in the church, we're gonna  
let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it  
shine.

(Repeat first verse)

**Band 2: THERE'S A MEETING HERE TONIGHT**

Meeting tonight, meeting tonight,  
Meeting on the old campground.  
Meeting tonight, meeting tonight,  
Meeting on the old campground.

Sing just like this on the old camp-  
ground,  
Sing just like this on the old camp-  
ground,  
Sing just like this on the old camp-  
ground,  
Sing just like this on the old camp-  
ground.

This is the way we pray on the old  
campground,  
This is the way we pray on the old  
campground,  
This is the way we pray on the old  
campground,  
This is the way we pray on the old  
campground.

Shouting tonight, shouting tonight,  
Shouting on the old campground.  
Shouting tonight, shouting tonight,  
Shouting on the old campground.

Meeting tonight, meeting tonight,  
Meeting on the old campground.  
Meeting tonight, meeting tonight,  
Meeting on the old campground.

**Band 3: ROCK MY SOUL**

**CHORUS:**

Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,  
Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,  
Rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham,  
Oh, rock my soul.

Sounds of life, raging high,  
Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down;  
Sometimes I laugh, sometimes I cry;  
Sometimes I'm level to the ground.

(CHORUS)

Sounds of life, raging high,  
Sometimes I cry, sometimes I smile;  
Sometimes I'm down, sometimes I'm up;  
Sometimes I'm level to the ground.

(CHORUS 2X)

**Band 4: HOLD ON**

Paul and Silas bound in jail,  
Had no one to go their bail;  
Keep your hand on that plow, hold on.

**CHORUS:**

Hold on, hold on,  
Keep your hand on that plow, hold on.

Freedom's name is mighty sweet,  
Soon one day I'm proud we're gonna  
meet;  
Keep your hand on that plow, hold on.

(CHORUS)

Got my hand upon the Gospel Plow,  
Ain't got long on my journey now,  
Keep your hand on that plow, hold on.

(CHORUS 2X)

**Band 5: LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER**

Let us break bread together on our  
knees, (on our knees)  
Let us break bread together on our  
knees, (on our knees)  
When I fall on my knees, with my  
face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord have mercy on me. (Kneel  
before the Saviour, kneel  
before the Saviour now.)

Let us pray to God together on our  
knees, (on our knees)  
Let us pray to God together on our  
knees, (on our knees)  
When I fall on my knees, with my  
face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord have mercy on me. (Kneel  
before the Saviour, kneel  
before the Saviour now.)

Let us drink wine together on our  
knees, (on our knees)  
Let us drink wine together on our  
knees, (on our knees)  
When I fall on my knees, with my  
face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord have mercy on me.

**Band 6: WE ARE SOLDIERS IN THE ARMY**

**CHORUS:**

We are soldiers in the army;  
We have to fight, although we have to  
cry.

We've got to hold up the blood-  
stained banner,  
We've got to hold it up until we die.

My mother was a soldier;  
She had her hands on the Gospel Plow.  
One day she got old, she couldn't  
fight anymore,  
She said, "I'll stand here and fight  
anyhow."

(CHORUS)

I'm so glad I'm a soldier;  
I've got my hands on the Gospel Plow.  
One day I'll get old and I can't  
fight anymore,  
But you know I'll stand here, child,  
and I'll fight anyhow.

(CHORUS)

**Band 7: WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED**

**CHORUS:**

We shall not, we shall not be moved,  
We shall not, we shall not be moved;  
Just like a tree that's standing by  
the water,  
We shall not be moved.

We're fighting for our freedom, we  
shall not be moved,  
We're fighting for our freedom, we  
shall not be moved;  
Just like a tree that's standing by  
the water,  
We shall not be moved.

(CHORUS)

We must stand and fight together, we  
shall not be moved,  
We must stand and fight together, we  
shall not be moved;  
Just like a tree that's standing by  
the water,  
We shall not be moved.

(CHORUS)

**SIDE II**

**Band 1: YOUR DOG**

Dog, dog, dog, dog.  
My dog loves your dog;  
Your dog loves my dog.  
Etc....

**Lead voice:**

All of them dogs:  
I'm talking about a rabbit dog,  
I'm talking about a 'coon dog,  
I'm talking about a moon dog,  
All of them dogs.  
I'm talking about a big dog,  
I'm talking about a little dog,  
All of them dogs,  
All of them dogs,  
All of them dogs,  
I'm talking about your dog,  
I'm talking about my dog,  
All of them dogs,  
All of them dogs.  
I wonder why can't we sit under the  
apple tree.

My little doggie was a-playing one  
day,  
(dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)  
Down in the meadow in a bundle of  
hay.





(dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)  
 Your little doggie then came along,  
 (dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)  
 Hey, little doggie, won't you walk  
 me home.  
 (dog, dog, a-dog, dog, dog.)

You won't walk with me,  
 You won't talk with me.  
 Why don't you hold my hand,  
 So we can understand?  
 Now, can't you see that you and me  
 Will be so a-happy?  
 Sit under the apple tree.

My dog a-love your dog,  
 And your dog a-love my dog. Etc...

Lead voice:  
 All of them dogs.  
 I'm talking about a rabbit dog,  
 I'm talking about a 'coon dog,  
 I'm talking about a moon dog,  
 I'm talking about a black dog,  
 I'm talking about a white dog,  
 I'm talking about a long dog,  
 I'm talking about a hot-dog,  
 All of them dogs. (5X)  
 I wonder why can't we sit under the  
 apple tree.

#### Band 2: MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE

CHORUS:  
 Michael rowed the boat ashore,  
 Hallelujah!  
 Michael rowed the boat ashore,  
 Hallelujah!

Never been to heaven, but I've been  
 told,  
 Hallelujah!  
 The streets up there are made of  
 gold,  
 Hallelujah!

(CHORUS)

Jordan's River is deep and cold,  
 Hallelujah!  
 Chill my body but not my soul,  
 Hallelujah!

(CHORUS)

Never been to heaven but I've been  
 told,  
 Hallelujah!  
 The streets up there are made of  
 gold,  
 Hallelujah!

#### Band 3: I'M SO GLAD

I'm so glad I'm fighting for my  
 right,  
 I'm so glad I'm fighting for my  
 right,  
 I'm so glad I'm fighting for my  
 right,  
 Singing Glory Hallelujah, I'm so  
 glad.

I'm so glad segregation's got to go,  
 I'm so glad segregation's got to go,  
 I'm so glad segregation's got to go,  
 Singing Glory Hallelujah, I'm so  
 glad.

I'm so glad integration's on its way,  
 I'm so glad integration's on its way,  
 I'm so glad integration's on its way,  
 Singing Glory Hallelujah, I'm so  
 glad.

I'm so glad we're in this fight  
 together,  
 I'm so glad we're in this fight  
 together,  
 I'm so glad we're in this fight  
 together,  
 Singing Glory Hallelujah, I'm so  
 glad.

I'm so glad we're fighting to be  
 free,  
 I'm so glad we're fighting to be  
 free,  
 I'm so glad we're fighting to be  
 free,  
 Singing Glory Hallelujah, I'm so  
 glad.

I'm so glad that God is on our side,  
 I'm so glad that God is on our side,  
 I'm so glad that God is on our side,  
 Singing Glory Hallelujah, I'm so  
 glad.

I'm so glad we're fighting to be  
 free,  
 I'm so glad we're fighting to be  
 free,  
 I'm so glad we're fighting to be  
 free,  
 Singing Glory Hallelujah, I'm so  
 glad.

#### Band 4: OH FREEDOM

Oh, freedom, oh, freedom,  
 Oh, freedom after awhile;

And before I'll be a slave,  
 I'll be buried in my grave,  
 And go home to the Lord and be  
 free.

No more heartache, no more heartache,  
 No more heartache after awhile;  
 And before I'll be a slave,  
 I'll be buried in my grave,  
 And go home to the Lord and be free.

There'll be freedom, there'll be  
 freedom,  
 There'll be freedom after awhile;  
 And before I'll be a slave,  
 I'll be buried in my grave,  
 And go home to the Lord and be free.

(Repeat first verse)

#### Band 5: WE SHALL OVERCOME

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,  
 We shall overcome someday.  
 Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,  
 We shall overcome someday.

The truth will make us free, the  
 truth will make us free,  
 The truth will make us free someday,  
 Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,  
 We shall overcome someday.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk  
 hand in hand,  
 We'll walk hand in hand someday.  
 Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,  
 We shall overcome someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,  
 We are not afraid today.  
 Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,  
 We shall overcome someday.

The truth shall make us free, the  
 truth shall make us free,  
 The truth shall make us free someday.  
 Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,  
 We shall overcome someday.

(Repeat first verse)