

# the DELTA MINISTRY

A Project of the National Council of Churches in Mississippi

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## WELL, MT. BEULAH IS CLOSED

By JAMES M. WARD  
(An Editorial)

Among the racial agitators who picketed the Mississippi Legislature in Jackson last summer there were slew-footed, unsoaped, rag-tag of human flotsam who were roaming Mississippi to create hate and provoke a killing.

Among the flock of beatniks were teachers and staff members for a U. S. Government anti-pov-

**SEE HOWIE CARTOON,  
ON PAGE 8**

erty program operating out of Mt. Beulah at Edwards. Although they seemed to spend more of their time acting like a gang of degenerates they were, nonetheless, dipping into the taxpayers' pockets for government-subsidized civil rights agitation.

At least four of these instructors who were supposed to be molding the minds of the youth of Mississippi spent part of their time roaming around the White House in Washington demonstrating against the government's policies in Vietnam.

Aware that this human flux here on the streets of Jackson was supposed to be teaching innocent youngsters, the Daily News wondered what sort of flummery was going on and we told our readers so.

Well, Mt. Beulah has been closed.

Sargent Shriver, the head-knocker in the meandering and ambitious program to liquidate poverty in the nation, says never again will government money be spent at Mt. Beulah.

He did so after Senator John Stennis of Mississippi got eyeball to eyeball to Shriver before a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing yesterday in Washington.

Shriver admitted Mt. Beulah was a flop and that all kinds of bad judgement had been exercised at the facility, owned by the National Council of Churches Delta Ministry, and operated by some funny-named psychologist who drifted into Mississippi out of New York's slummy, dope-ridden, rape-minded metropolis.

We express gratitude and sympathy to Mr. Shriver for his frank admission of error at Mt. Beulah.

We are more than pleased by the performance of Sen. Stennis who entered the beatniks' sacred soil of subsidized revolution and dug out the cold, hard facts on how professional racists were dipping into Uncle Sam's money trough.

Mt. Beulah may be a lesson well learned for other limber-fingered operators who might want to do a little financial dive-bombing in the raging "war" on poverty.

To say the least, Mt. Beulah is the worst defeat for the beatniks since one of them accidentally got caught in a sudden rain shower.

## Setting The Record Straight

SOME ATTACKS on the work in Mississippi, like the one reprinted here from a Jackson paper, are merely laughable.

Some, which rely on terror and violence (see below) are frightening but do little to slow up the work.

But there are other attacks being made -- more subtle, but far more harmful. They are hard for people not familiar with Mississippi to understand, because they come not from brutal Klansmen but from "moderate" businessmen, "civic leaders" and clergymen.

The weapons are not shotguns but defamation, economic pressure, and political trickery.

This special issue of the newsletter is an explanation of, and answer to, some of the attacks.



Staff member inspects effects of shotgun blast on his front window

# What Is

## MOUNT BEULAH ?

Mount Beulah is a conference center located twenty miles west of Jackson. The Delta Ministry has leased these grounds, about twelve acres, from a denomination affiliated with the National Council of Churches. The Mount Beulah facilities include office and administration buildings, classroom buildings, dormitories, and recreational facilities.

Mount Beulah began in 1870 as an institution of higher education for Negro students. In 1954 the regular program of academic work was terminated and students were referred to Tougaloo College in Jackson. Between 1954 and 1964 Mount Beulah was used by the Disciples of Christ as a conference and service center, especially for the Negro churches in its denomination.

On February, 1965, the Commission on the Delta Ministry secured a long-term lease for the grounds, and on April 1, 1965, assumed formal occupancy. In six months the following activities have taken place at Mount Beulah:

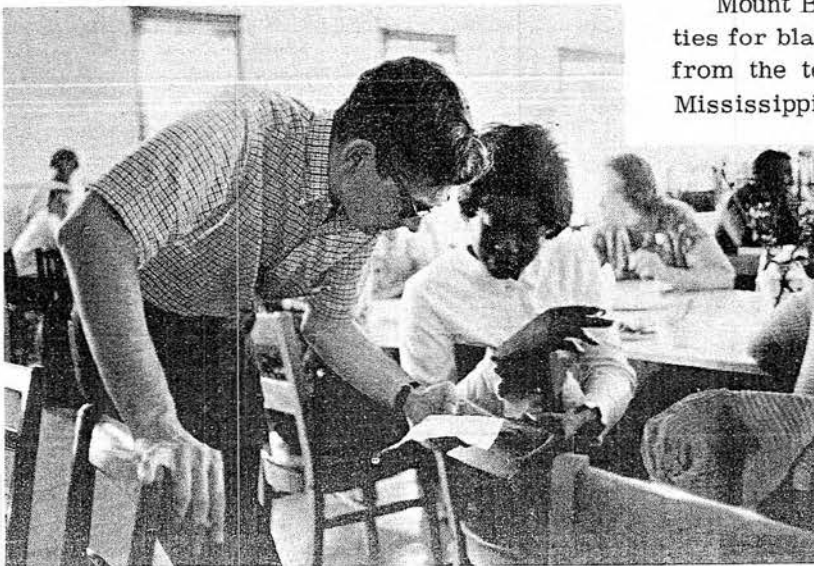
- more than 2,500 Mississippians have attended conferences and workshops lasting a day or, sometimes, a week.

- meetings have dealt with various concerns such as education, voter registration, and economic rehabilitation.

- the Child Development Group of Mississippi used a building as administrative center for its state-wide Head Start program.

- southern staffs of several organizations, groups from colleges as far away as California, and religious bodies have attended orientation seminars and workshops in preparation for working within the state.

Mount Beulah provides study and recreation facilities for black and white friends and co-workers apart from the tensions and hostilities which exist in most Mississippi communities.



# TRANSCRIPT

## of subcommittee hearings

from the

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR 1966  
HEARINGS BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS UNITED  
STATES SENATE 89th Congress First Session

Dr. George Gardner, Director  
Judge Baker Guidance Clinic, Boston, Mass.

"My impression on visiting these programs, and I visited seven of them in the Head Start area, when they were about halfway through the summer sessions, was that they were doing an excellent job, a good job in preschool education, getting children ready for the first grade work, and many of the children were well into the first grade in their schoolwork with regard to letters, numbers, reading, arithmetic and so forth.

"I thought that the students themselves seemed to be alert, attentive, and eager to get all of the advantages they could out of this program.

"I would say, too, that the teachers I talked with seemed to me to be highly efficient and well-trained teachers. Many of them had not taught at the pre-school level before they came in but they oriented themselves to the tasks peculiar to this particular age level and were doing an excellent job.

"I have seen Head Start programs in other areas and I was never impressed with them more in other areas.

"They were working under tremendous obstacles, getting little help from those that you very carefully hinted at this morning probably should be sources of help.

"They had to improvise and get their own troubles solved by themselves."

"It is my opinion that the Head Start programs I saw throughout Mississippi achieved a truly extraordinary degree of success in reaching and significantly improving the physical and mental health as

well as the future educational competence of many children involved in them.

"I saw children grow a bit, gain a bit of respect for themselves, feel that, after all, there is a lot more possible than they and their parents ever thought to be the case.... I simply want to thank you all for helping a rather impoverished group of American boys and girls achieve some real start toward a healthy and literate life."

Dr. Robert Coles,  
Psychiatric Research Scientist,  
Harvard University  
(After visiting Mississippi.)

"It was my general impression there was much that was good and much less that was bad, that the children were making a good deal of progress and that many of the workers were learning as well. My hat is off to the many young people who have dedicated their summer to this hot, sticky, and often, I am sure, frightening task. I envy them their guts, their grit, and their dedication. I am sure that the experience with the children is worth it."

Dr. Margaret Batson, M.D., Ph.D.  
Assoc. Professor of Pediatrics  
University of Mississippi School of Medicine

"The impression in the atmosphere has been created that something unAmerican has been going on here, because somebody, when they are not working in the child development center, has participated in some civil rights activity or some other activity. So far as I am concerned, I didn't know until now that there was something unAmerican or illegal about participating on your own time in activities of that type."

R. Sargent Shriver, Director  
Office of Economic Opportunity

"I would also like to point out that what they did in this program was not unique. The other programs in Mississippi had exactly the same kind of difficulties. They charged us for bus driver salaries when, in fact, it was for gasoline. They charged us for pre-program costs, which in some cases we disallowed. The other programs in Mississippi that I am talking about, charged us for things which we disallowed."



Prior to the summer of 1965 there was little interest in the poverty program by the white power structure of Mississippi. As an organizer for the White Citizens Council admitted, a general pattern has been to encourage Negro migration from the state. Many welfare and rehabilitative services have been offered--or not offered--on this basis. This conscious effort to uproot Negro residents in combination with the economic plight of most Mississippi counties has caused a tremendous loss in the number of young Negro Mississippians who remain in the state. White Mississippi encourages emigration which will make their problem the problem of the urban North.

The Delta Ministry, in cooperation with other individuals and organizations, communicated to the people of Mississippi, particularly the rural, poverty impacted, Negro communities, the opportunities available to them in Project Head Start, the pre-school poverty program. The response was overwhelming. Long denied an equal chance, and in some cases, any chance at all, for adequate education, the Negro communities eagerly volunteered for this effort to break the cycle of low education. Parents wanted their children to have an opportunity for improvement.

And it happened. Eighty-five centers were established. Young children blossomed. Adults were ecstatic with the program and with the new jobs. The cotton curtain had been pierced. The Negro community got a fresh look at what education means; they got new jobs at standard wages; and they ran those programs themselves. More than 1,000 Negro Mississippians were teachers or administrators or managers--for the first time.

Within ten days of the opening of the program Senator Stennis' committee sent an investigating team to the projects. The team was headed by Paul Cotter, identified by federal officials as a former investigator for the late Senator McCarthy.

Senator Stennis' men reported what the Office of Economic Opportunity knew, and what the Child Development Group was moving to correct--the administrators of this 1.4 million dollar program were making some errors.

Objective observers realized that a staff of this size, a program of this great scope, could not be established from scratch and run perfectly in the six-week period provided for preparation. In programs

## Why Was The Child Development Group Attacked





Sen. Stennis

such as this in which the poor and the dispossessed participate some of the leadership is (rightly) of people with limited experience.

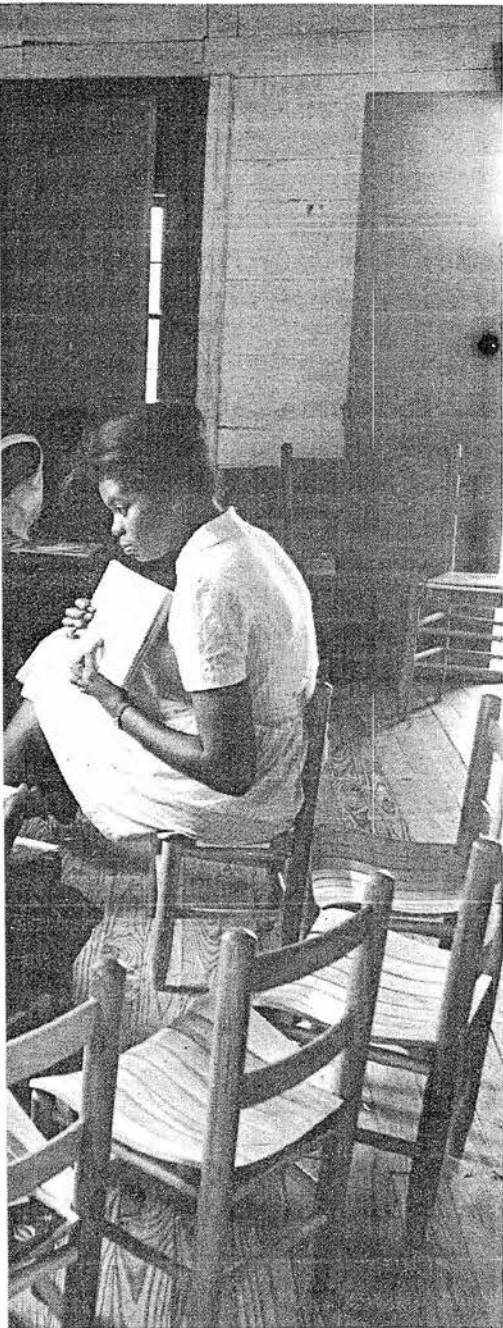
To expect absence of errors in such programs is not only to ask here a level of performance absent from even highly experienced bureaucracies, it is also to dare to recognize that one of the purposes of such programs is to provide training in leadership and administration. What should be required is a method for detecting and correcting errors, and this correction process was in operation.

The Office of Economic Opportunity officials have witnessed to the fact that this program was highly successful in gaining a real base of participants from the poor and unparalleled opportunity for learning the essential skills of leadership and administration.

But during the entire program Senator Stennis' aides released data which attacked the Child Development Group. Why? Because a poverty program had come into the state without being controlled by the existing white power structure. Because the Negro community had discovered what it could do for itself, contrary to racist traditions. Because these senatorial criticisms covered up the extent of harassment going on in the state; the attempts at murder of Child Development Group staff; the burning of Head Start centers; the constant arrests and intimidations. Because an attack on the Child Development Group could be used as a springboard to attack other programs and other organizations. Senator Stennis devoted 60% of the hearing time on the 1966 Office of Economic Opportunity appropriations to criticism of the Child Development Group; the Jackson, Mississippi, newspapers launched an assault on the Delta Ministry of the National Council of Churches.

What we are witnessing is the inevitable alliance between political forces whose security is threatened by the shift in social power for which the Child Development Group was working, and the voice of the white social structure still seeking through its endangered political base to prevent the effective operation of any movement by which their current position of superiority will be undermined.

That such an alliance should form is not surprising. It does mean, however, that a strong counter-attack is essential if the way is to be kept open for the social changes to which the Civil Rights Act and the programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity are dedicated.



The Commission on the Delta Ministry is a long-term project in Mississippi of the National Council of Churches. It is a program to provide relief to the needy, to assist in community development, and to encourage reconciliation with justice and dignity. The staff of the Delta Ministry works with local people in food distribution programs, voter registration drives, pilot health and education projects, and economic development programs.

Why does this effort of the Protestant denominations cause resentment and hostility?

A leading historian of the state has remarked that the Delta Ministry is hated by the white community more than NAACP, SNCC, or COFO. He has observed that the ministers associated with the Delta Ministry evoke the guilt feelings which the white Mississippians bear for their perpetuation of a closed society.

This by itself does not adequately explain the resentment toward the Delta Ministry which exists in the state. A more basic reason is the reaction to the stance with which the Delta Ministry presents itself, a posture of complete involvement within the Negro community.

From the planning stages to the actual inception of the Delta Ministry, the National Council of Churches has attempted to work with and include in its deliberations the leaders of the churches in Mississippi. With few exceptions the white churchmen prefer not to be associated with the National Council of Churches, to deny the need which exists in the state, or to oppose actively this work.

The Commission on the Delta Ministry and the other policy groups within the National Council of Churches deliberated at length the best strategy for realistically assisting those in Mississippi who had requested assistance. Alternative approaches were considered. One method could have been to work in an educative manner within the white community. Another could have been to establish bi-racial committees for promoting formal channels of communications. Another could have been to work exclusively with existing religious organizations.

The Commission on the Delta Ministry however chose to stand clearly and definitively with that group of people who are in the most dire need and who are prepared to assist themselves. The Delta Ministry lives and works with the poor Negroes who are participating in efforts to organize themselves and to develop their community.

The Delta Ministry staff, composed of Negro and white, of Mississippian and "outsider," has come to understand and to articulate the extreme gulf which exists in Mississippi between white and black, between promise and practice, between law and reality. This

# Why Is The Delta Ministry Opposed In Mississippi ?

is a threat to a system which proclaims white superiority.

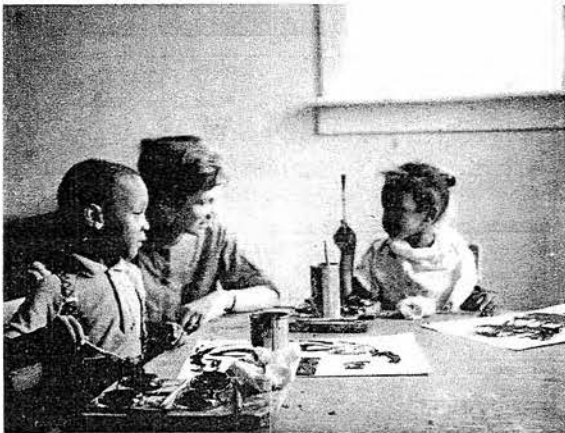
One further aspect of the Delta Ministry causes opposition. Its work is successful. A voter registration drive in Washington County produced 3,000 new voters. Its support of the Head Start program assisted in creating 1,300 new jobs within the Negro community. In cooperation with the National Student Association a statewide food program was initiated. In cooperation with friends in Congress a new association has been formed to construct new housing and create new businesses within the Negro community.

The Delta Ministry cannot be dismissed as easily as white Mississippi has disposed of other organizations.



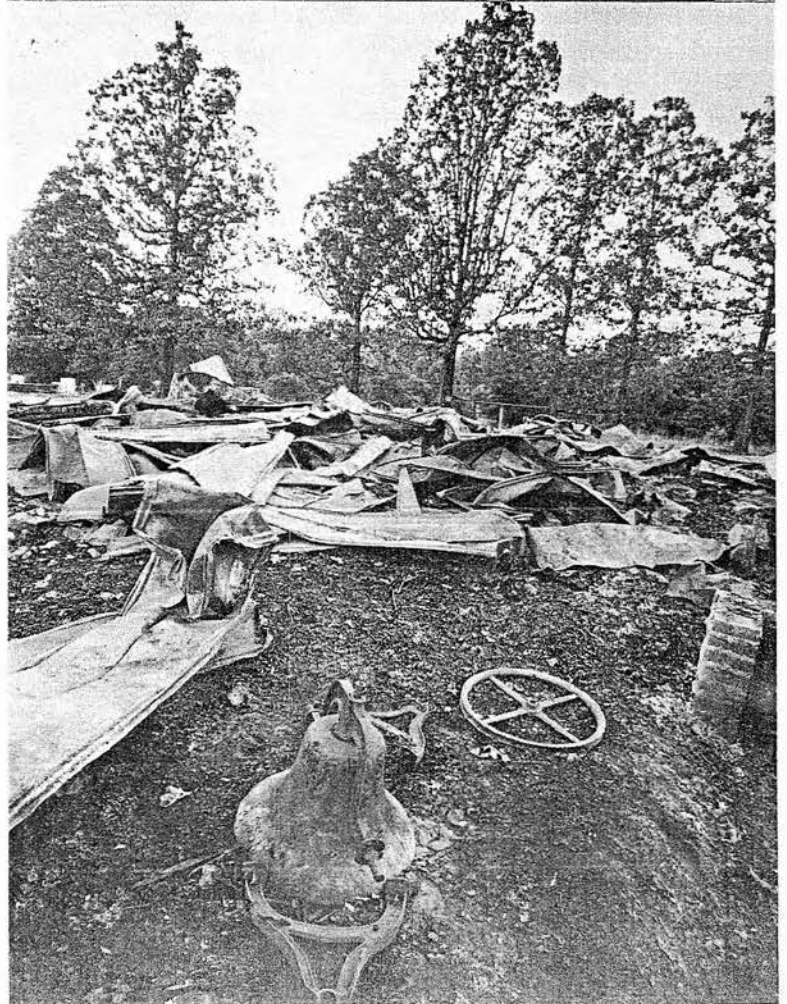
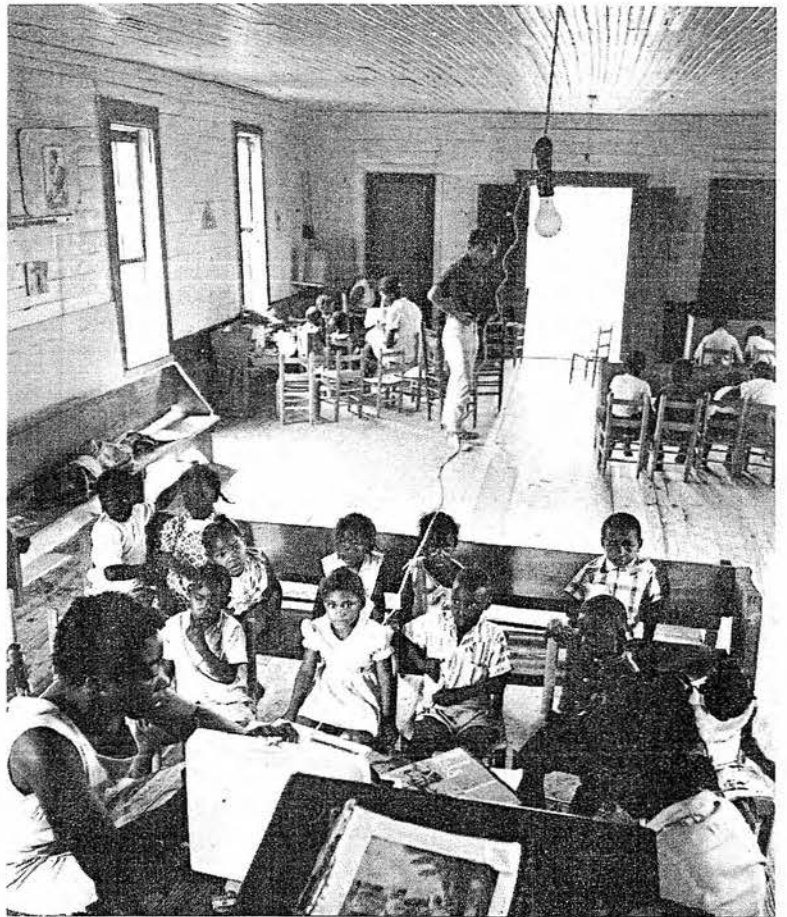
"I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says, 'I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods;' who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom....."

-- Martin Luther King



"We found the Delta Ministry to be made up of highly trained, completely dedicated men and women, both white and Negro. Their 'sin' apparently is that they are doing something. That will naturally cause resentment in Mississippi."

William J. Jacobs, editor, Ave Maria, the national Catholic weekly



# WHAT STENNIS DID NOT ASK ABOUT...

This description is one incident out of a summer of retaliation to CDGM personnel. Not given much public attention, or Justice Department attention, these acts of violence and intimidation did not deter the people from preparing their children for a new day.

Mr. Lamar Turnipseed, a member of the Child Development Group board, was driving home from a board meeting in August. Upon arriving at \_\_\_\_\_, he found that he was too sleepy to continue to Moss Point.

In \_\_\_\_\_ he asked a white man about motel facilities. The man said there were no motels available. Mr. Turnipseed then proceeded about a mile down the road where he pulled over to the side at a deserted spot. There he went to sleep.

After sleeping for approximately half an hour he was awakened by three men, two of whom were wearing guns and appeared to be policemen or someone from the sheriff's department. The men asked Mr. Turnipseed where he was going. He asked for time to think because he had just been awakened and was still foggy. Finally he told the men he was returning from a CDGM

board meeting.

One of the white men said, "This is one of the niggers getting the little niggers ready to go to the white school."

While Mr. Turnipseed was answering questions put to him, one of the men asked several times, "What did you say?" --and then, "Can't you say 'yes sir,' nigger?"

An officer slapped Mr. Turnipseed down and put his foot on his chest. They then took his wallet and money. They searched his car, looking through his briefcase and taking out some of the papers. Among these were notes from CDGM meetings.

They then took him to a side road. They asked more questions, wanting him to answer "Yes, sir." They then beat him up pretty badly, saying afterwards, "Weren't you trained to say 'Yes sir' to white folks?"

A new officer came around. He seemed to be nicer. He asked questions like "Are you trying to get colored children into white schools?"

Mr. Turnipseed tried to explain about Head Start. Finally this officer told him to get into his car and go home. When he asked about his wallet and papers, he was told that they were going to keep them for a while. The wallet contained about \$60 or \$70.

He then drove to the Delta Ministry office in Hattiesburg and called headquarters at Mount Beulah.

The statement of Mr. Turnipseed has been referred by O. E. O. to the Justice Department for appropriate action.

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The Delta Ministry helped bring the Head Start program to Mississippi, and is proud of its continuing association with Child Development Group of Mississippi.

We intend to continue to help develop programs dealing with the basic educational, social and economic issues.

Development of these programs has been an unforeseen burden on the DM budget. We must depend upon gifts from you and support from your denomination. The Delta Ministry

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