

37. Bunch

M E M O

TO- Anyone interested in following through.

From- Bob Beech

In view of the contrast between the present lack of civil rights activity in the state and the former "beehive" of activity, it seems urgent that a brief run-down or presently unfinished or even un-begun and badly needed programs be given. The following list can be used as a scrap book of un-completed ideas, a listing of programatic pieces and parts to use in future planning, or simply as a measure of the Church's inability to finish what it begins.

1. **VOTER REGISTRATION.** Of Mississippi's 32 counties, more than one-fourth have been completely untouched by voter registration efforts. At least one-half are still greatly in need of attention. And the rest still stand as items of unfinished business. Voter registration proposals similar to the one which guided this summer's efforts in Bolivar, Hinds, Amite, Wilkinson and Pike counties should be received and funded.
2. **CITIZENSHIP TRAINING.** It is still conceivable that we might win the battle and lose the war. If no wide-spread effort to provide training and experience for Mississippi's newly registered voters is provided, they could become the unknowing pawns of whomever proves most effective in the use of propoganda. Within the above-mentioned VR proposal, a section deals with ways to prevent this development. The Church should explore ways of initiating and cooperating with other agencies to set up state-wide programs in this area. In so doing, it should be noted that the most effective means of training thus far have been when each individual had an opportunity to become immediately active in the political realm through the Freedom Democratic Party. This "learning by doing" method surmounted obstacles such as fear, apathy, illiteracy and poverty.
3. **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION WITH UNION BACKING.** It has long been recognized that the South fears and hates the prospect of unionization almost as it does integration. Not too surprisingly, then, we have found many places where some unions are ready to work alongside civil rights people to accomplish broad community organization objectives. This should be further explored.
4. The problems embodied in the Delta Ministry's work with displaced plantation workers at Strike City and Freedom City are endemic. Problems in the areas of health, employment, education, housing, and other material resources predominate.  
**EDUCATION** - Need for adult literacy and job training, tutoring for school aged students, Freedom School classes in Negro history, pre-school, headstart-type programs and health education.  
**HEALTH** - A full-time team of nurses and doctors to live and work among these people (the Medical Committee for Human Rights did a minimal job in this area before it left the state this Fall).  
**EMPLOYMENT** - We are continually searching for ways of involving the very unskilled people we work with in productive, remunerative situations. The need to be in contact with northern-based business and industrial

personnel interested in trying to help with this problem continues, (See elsewhere the sections on Freedomcrafts and Coops,)

HOUSING - Strike City now has permanent brick houses (8) and Freedom City temporary, small prefab houses (24). The need to find some standardized manner of making low-cost housing available to large numbers of families quickly is imperative. So far, appeals to the various agencies of the Federal Government have met with failure. Any plan to stem the migration of southern agricultural workers to urban slums must begin with the solution to this problem.

MATERIAL RESOURCES - The need for food, clothes, tools, school supplies, books and other things enumerated on various available lists continues. The relation between givers and receivers needs more careful attention. Practical considerations such as timing, and placing of goods need thought. Also moral considerations such as the effect of the giving upon both donor and recipient need examination. Possibilities for reciprocation should be explored. Such things are now under consideration within the framework of CCAP's Southern Rural Action Program, but are far from clarified.

5. The expansion of a remedial education program now under way sponsored by students from Beloit College in cooperation with the Delta Ministry needs to happen. (see copy of Beloit Program,)
6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Many kinds of programs need support here. **FREE DOMCRAFTS**, is the wood working industry at Freedom City which makes nativity sets and is presently expanding and diversifying. (see Freedomcrafts pamphlet.) **FRANCHISE BUSINESS** offers a wonderful opportunity for the man who needs help beginning little of this is known or available in the South for Negroes. **COOPERATIVES** - a variety of efforts are underway here, but much more serious attention by experts needs to be given. A fine effort that embodies all the best values is the Poor Peoples Cooperation (see pamphlet). The Mennonites, Quakers, and others are willing to help in this field. Some overall coordination is needed. **AGRICULTURE** - The time when Negroes in Mississippi will no longer farm is far off. For the foreseeable future, expert help is needed to teach and indeed invent ways to make small farming pay off. Resources such as Doane Agricultural Service, Inc, are available as are local agencies to a limited extent. Possibly one ought to explore "adoptive relationships" between farmers in, say, Iowa and Mississippi. It would be unnecessary if large farmers in Mississippi were not mostly segregationists. **NEWS MEDIA. . .PRINTING. . .BOOKBINDING** - Several individuals are interested in setting up a newspaper. Again, technical help, capital, and moral support are the necessary ingredients. The newspaper has value beyond its economic capacities. Only two or three papers in the whole state are anything but house organs for Segregation. **Printing and bookbinding** are related efforts that some are ready to explore. **SHOES** - Contacts exist with a unique new shoe company in Atlanta. Possibilities for marketing the shoes in the Negro community by Negroes should be explored. **MOVING STORES ON WHEELS** - A chain of retail, door-to-door merchandizing vans has been envisioned. Items: everything from bread to boots.
7. FEDERAL PROGRAMS  
There are literally dozens of wars now going on in Mississippi between the white power structure and local citizens in communities where

control of money from the federal government is a possibility. In almost every case, we have discovered that we cannot count on the federal officials to act purely on the basis of RIGHT. Instead these decisions are political footballs. Beyond that, there is the question of federal implementation of already existing laws and regulations in the fields of education, health, welfare, employment, etc. Again, we find that the federal authorities are slower to move than the situation demands. This slowness is sometimes a matter of being understaffed to do the job needed; sometimes a matter of political pressure NOT to act, sometimes still a matter of personal incompetence. There is a need for civil rights-type pressure to be applied at all these points in order to keep the government people "on their toes." And in many cases, . . . especially as regards the Community Action Programs (CAP), the local leaders and government officials actually need our help in order to find their way to the right people in the Negro communities.

A CAP TASK FORCE is needed to travel around the state, helping Negro communities gain their fair share of these programs,

8. NEW COUNTIES.

Throughout the state are scattered more than 20 counties which have never had any thorough exposure to the civil rights thrust. They may now be benefitting indirectly from advances made elsewhere, but large pockets of people who have never heard a freedom song or attended a rally or freedom school or thought of attending an integrated meeting or sending their children to a white school exist. It may be coincidental, but the federal government is now spending tens of millions of dollars in the heart of this region to build and operate a Mississippi West Facility, . . . part of the Moon Program. Efforts must be gotten underway in these counties during 1966-67 in order that these people have some chance to express themselves in the state congressional and gubernatorial elections coming in 1967.

9. BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

There now exist in Mississippi thousands of books donated by people and groups in the north. In many places, these books sit unused in storehouses or abandoned freedom centers. A task force composed of a librarian and other workers could channel these books into useful programs across the state. In Hattiesburg, for instance, there now exists a willingness on the part of many teachers to urge students to use these books if they are set up in accessible fashion. (This was not true in 1964-65.) Plans are to place these books in a presently existing center and establish a library service. The local people could maintain this sort of program, but need expert help to get it started.

10. NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

In analyzing the problem of community organization in Mississippi's urban areas, a fairly simple and obvious solution to a number of problems is provided by the concept of Neighborhood Centers just as they are now maintained in many cities. Looking at Mississippi, no one is providing a program for youth, in the Negro communities. The church programs are very weak in this area. No civil rights groups have effective programs for youth. Civic programs for white youth exist in almost every urban center but they are set up as "private" through the device of selling the Teen Center property to some group for a dollar, etc. We are clear that long term program of any sort must begin with today's youth, . . . another reason for the Neighborhood center approach. Further, due to the pattern of Negro housing in most cities, a neighborhood location is best for any program. Emphasis must be placed on the fact that such a center, in order to be effective, would have to embody most of the principles and goals now present in Mississippi only among "Movement people." Without this, the time and money would not be worth spending. Rather than any other form

of new church development, all our denominations would do well to consider the impact of this approach carefully for its effect on the shape of the church in years to come.

11. COFFEEHOUSE.

In Hattiesburg, and possibly in other places, it would be good to open a "public forum" patterned after the Coffeehouse now prevalent on northern campuses. Plans for one occupying what is now the Delta Ministry office in Hattiesburg are now underway. This program would be geared to provide an open forum for the Negro community and also for the college community. Cooperation on the part of the heads of several of the denominational campus ministries is already assured. Assistance in financing the operation of the program and in getting speakers, etc. would assure its success. Such a program is part of a wider effort to combat the very effective thought control and brainwashing programs of the white supremacist and segregation forces. There is virtually nowhere for one who is experimenting with new thoughts to find a kindred spirit in the whole south as of now. The coffee house may turn the trick.

12. THE BLOCK ORGANIZATION PLAN.

Regarding urban centers in Mississippi, one of the weaknesses of the civil rights movement has been its tendency to grow away from meaningful contact with the grass-roots level. We have spent much time developing "local leadership." Then we have sat down with the local leaders and both we and they have proceeded to ignore the man on the street. This summer, we conducted a successful experiment in organizing one neighborhood according to the block system. Several items fit together in this approach. First is to ascertain what is the most needed area of improvement in the lives of the people in the neighborhood. . . as they see it. In our case, this turned out to be WELFARE. Next, set up home meetings to discuss the problem on each block. Third, move toward setting up an information and referral service to back up the people in the block groups. Finally, move toward forming a neighborhood association of block groups with written bylaws and with self awareness and cohesiveness that leads them to expand their concern from their initial area (welfare) to a wide variety of other areas. . . street paving, lighting, sewage disposal, protection of neighbors from police harassment, etc. Such a program can become self sustaining in many neighborhoods with three to six months of development of a staff person.

13. THE SEMINARY WORK-STUDY PROGRAM.

See brochure.

14. WHITE WORKER'S CONFERENCE.

Plans are now underway to assemble all the white civil rights workers in the south to examine their presence in the Movement in light of recent statements about Black Power, and more, in the light of the continually changing needs created by the many "successes" achieved in the last two or three years. Church participation should come financially and in terms of helping to provide leadership for such a conference. Tentative dates now are Oct. 14-16, place to be announced.

15. WORK WITH POOR WHITE COMMUNITIES.

For more than a year now, a stable relationship has existed between me and a group of very poor white people in rural Lamar county, Mississippi. The time has come when we can no longer excuse our failure to work with such people on the basis of their unwillingness to be worked with. Such programs must be explored by those whose thinking is "Movement oriented" or the effect of such work will be largely dissipated.

15. The Delta Ministry in Hattiesburg has followed through on its promise to rebuild the home of Vernon Dahmer, killed this January by KKK terrorists.

The home is now rebuilt, help coming from an unexpected source. . . the Hattiesburg Chamber of Commerce with whom we have worked openly and happily through the whole year. In cooperation with the Mennonites, we secured the services free of a building superintendant from Pennsylvania who lived in Hattiesburg for many weeks and saw the home through nearly to completion. Contributions of time, material and money have come from both the Negro and white citizens of Hattiesburg, balancing the personal and financial help from out of state. Promises remaining to be kept: To rebuild the store adjacent to the home which was also destroyed. To help the Dahmers return their fathers sawmill to production, and to see the children in the family who want it, through their college years financially.

17. A BOOK IS BEING PUBLISHED.

Plans for a photographic documentation of Poverty, U.S.A., are underway. Through the generosity of the Minnesota Task Force and others, the costs for the first printing of this book, together with all other costs and services are being donated. The proceeds of the book's sale will go to the people at Freedom City.

18. THE BAY SPRINGS SCHOOL.

North of Hattiesburg in the rural area lie about 30 acres of land with several old school buildings on them. The land, donated by the Dahmer family years ago for school purposes, reverted to the community when the school was closed in 1957. This spring the school board of Forrest County tried to sell the property at public auction. The community arose in wrath. We are now in the midst of litigation to prevent the school board from selling the land, simply because it's not theirs. But because of the well-known trend of civil rights related law suits in Mississippi courts, we took another tack as well. When the land was sold, we (the Commission on Religion and Race of the UPUSA) successfully bid on the land. Our bid was \$3,501.00. The bids were shelved, pending the outcome of the legal action against the school board. Thus, if we win the law suit, the land is not for sale. If we lose, we must buy the land and follow through on our alternative plan which involved turning the land over to a presently existing group of Negro trustees to manage and develop in the best interests of the community.

19. Clay County. For the last year, two Presbyterian members of the Delta Ministry staff have spent much time in Clay county, working with the civil rights Movement there and with the Presbyterian owned Mary Holmes Junior College. Since June, however, we have done almost no work there and have not even been able to answer specific calls for help, due to the severe financial limitations under which the Delta Ministry has been operating. Because of the continuing need for our help, because of the already existing Presbyterian involvement there, and because of plans to develop some kind of new church involvement in the community now under discussion within the board of National Missions, it would be well if we could maintain some staff involvement in Clay county.

20. SCHOOL REFERRAL AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

For the last two years, I have been personally instrumental in getting 7 college students and 5 high school students relocated outside Mississippi for better schooling. Also, I have obtained scholarship money so that students who wanted to could attend integrated schools in Mississippi. Recently, in cooperation with a former civil rights colleague who now teaches in South Carolina, the opportunity to set up a state-wide referral and scholarship program arose. Once again needed help is financial. Personnel exist within the state to maintain the program once operating capital is found.

21. RECIPROCAL CAMP AND CONFERENCE PROGRAM.

This summer, with the help of a Delta Ministry volunteer, we ran a pilot

project under this program. More than a dozen Mississippi teenagers were sent to camps in Colorado, Illinois, New York and Minnesota. We were not financially able to carry out the other part of the program. This involves a camping and caravan program making use of small group camping practices and using the facilities in Mississippi's excellent network of state and federal parks and reserves. Again, money is the only needed component.

22. RETARDED CHILDREN AND MENTAL HEALTH.

Mississippi is the only state to refuse federal funds under existing Mental Health development programs. The need in this area is fantastic. A traveling task force equipped with facts to help local committees with their needs is probably the most productive way of meeting the problem.

23. Some of us have been experimenting with starting a pilot project of what might come to be called THE NORTHERN GHETTO EVACUATION PLAN. We can see no reason why the south's segregationists should be left in peace, their efforts to pressure Negroes into moving north uncontested. What is envisioned is a program to help ghettoized Negroes to return to the south, take a responsible role in the economy and provide much needed leadership.

24. INTERPRETATION AND DIALOGUE.

Increasingly we hear southern churchmen saying they are sorry there has been so little face to face confrontation on the part of us "civil rights" clergy and themselves. (They don't talk about any kind of active involvement in meeting the needs we work on, but they do seem interested in talking.) I feel that some sort of NORTH-SOUTH exchange forum ought to be initiated to actively pursue this facet of our fractured brotherhood.

25. Mississippi is actively, even frantically seeking out those who might be persuaded to begin or transfer their business or industry to Miss. I believe we should begin to deal directly with this facet of Mississippi's need for growth. This, of course, is one place where we and the segregationists come close to agreement, . . . for different reasons. Let us in the church help with the relocation of industry in the south, . . . recognizing job opportunities as the most far-reaching aspect of the civil rights struggle ultimately.