

[Aug. 20, 1964]

Dear Rev. McKenna,  
Thanks for your help and guidance while I was  
in Mississippi. I wouldn't trade my experience in ~~Harmony~~  
for anything and am only sorry I couldn't stay longer.

Mississippi Project Report  
by Calvin Petersen

Sincerely  
Cal

Peggy and I felt as we went to the Association for Council Workers at Lake Geneva and heard a very challenging talk by Dr. Spike, who is the Council man in charge of Race Commission for the National Council, that this was one of the things in which the church should be active this summer. Dr. Spike had just come from one of the training sessions where the college students were meeting in June at the time of the disappearance of the three students who had gone down to Mississippi. They wanted to look at a burned Negro church. (14 Negro churches have been bombed or burned now in the last six to eight weeks in Mississippi.) When these three workers got into this area around Philadelphia they were stopped for speeding. It was very doubtful if they were speeding if this follows any kind of a pattern in Mississippi. They were taken to jail for six hours. They weren't allowed a telephone call, they weren't allowed anything, and they were probably (at least it is certainly the feeling of many of the people who know something about the Nashoba County jail and the police officers) beaten severely in the jail itself. All of this happened while we were at Lake Geneva and then, of course, Dr. Spike had to leave and the news of the missing workers, with, of course, the Mississippians saying they were on a Northern Holiday for awhile just to give publicity to the summer events. He said when he returned to the students from his experience, the wife of one student was driving back to Mississippi. Of course, they persuaded her not to drive, it was too dangerous so she flew. After awhile one of the students came up to Dr. Spike and he said "Dr. Spike, are the churches still with us?" This was kind of a hard question for Dr. Spike to answer, but he left it with us and said that the only way that the churches will be with these students in Mississippi is if we have pastoral counsellors down there. This is really the part of the National Council of Churches in the summer project, to ask pastors or ministers who were willing to go down and spend a week, two weeks, three weeks or a month down there at their own expense. They would do this so that these students with all of their various backgrounds would have someone to lean on and perhaps extend a relationship between students and the white community and then to fit into the community in anyway possibly that was available. Peggy can assure you that she wanted to go as much as I did, and possibly more.

I think it was much harder on her being home than it was on me being down there. But at any rate this is what happened.

Two weeks ago I started out and joined a group of about eighteen ministers. If you are as ignorant as I of the Mississippi geography before I went there you almost need a map, but Jackson is in the central southern part of the state and this is the office for the National Council. Once again it is not directing the work in any way, it is just trying to give ministers the guidance when they go in so they will be prepared a little bit for what they are going to face. I think part of the job is to scare the devil out of you too, or the life out of you, or whatever it is. This they do quite thoroughly before you set foot to go out to your particular station. The organization COFO is the combination of the NAACP, CORE and SNCC which are two student organizations for Civil Rights. It is really a unique organization and it is not a perfect organization. If you know anything about these three they don't work together harmoniously in a lot of areas, but in this summer project they decided to work together and they are in twenty-two areas. They are at Holly Springs, Batesville, Greenville, Greenwood, Pittsburg, Jackson, which is the center, Meridian, Harmony or Carthage, Canton and Hattisburg. They are just trying to go into Nachez, they send in a few workers and pull them out in 24 hours or 48 hours, in this area the White Citizens Council have been getting in machine guns and hand grenades. It is one of the hottest spots in the state, and we know that it is going to be very hard to work there, as far as any kind of relationships are concerned. McComb is a place where it has been very dangerous, but it is now a lot better. Gulf Port and Biloxi where you heard just recently about the mass arrests for people just being at an outdoor meeting. I know I didn't count twenty-two off, but it gives you an idea that it does cover the state in at least some manner. It was my privilege to go to Harmony. I really didn't think of it as a privilege at the time, there were eight of us asked to be minister counsellors and they had eight areas for us to go. Different people kept choosing different ones. One of the first ones they happened to mention was Harmony. Rev. Warren McKenna said it was a lovely project, the first pastor that went there got beaten but he made a mistake and they said it is really a beautiful community, you will love the people, you are out in the country. After he got through he said the only problem is that it doesn't have telephone service. Well, we all had maps and they were all looking at it and I

immediately saw that it was about 20 miles from Philadelphia, about eight miles from where the bodies were recently discovered. I knew immediately what Peg would think if I called here and said I had been assigned to Carthage, and particularly without telephone service, so I didn't volunteer for this place. I volunteered for a couple of other places but someone volunteered first and finally there was only one place left, and that was Harmony, so I had to call up and say, "Well, there is only one problem, we don't have a phone, but I am close to Jackson, only fifty miles away." Luckily enough she didn't have a detailed Mississippi map so she wasn't worried about Philadelphia. Actually some of the conditions have been better in Philadelphia because there have been so many FBI men there and because the Navy has been there constantly and the people there are scared to death of outside interference. I think that probably it would be safe, but we haven't been able to do anything in Nashoba County of which Philadelphia is the County seat.

Well, I got out to Harmony and I discovered that it was one of the most unique places in the state for work this summer. Highway #488 was supposed to go right through the community of Harmony, but it happens that all of the people in Harmony are Negroes and when the road plotters discovered this they very uniquely made a half-circle in the road and went around the community so that they are serviced by the usual rutted roads which are very seldom taken care of. You can always tell a Negro or white road in Mississippi. The Negro roads have no gravel and the white roads have gravel and have been taken care of. It is likewise easy to tell whether a Negro or white lived in the home, because the county will put gravel on the white's road clear up to the door, and so this helps a great deal when going out on voter registration because you don't want to go on a white persons yard if you can possibly help it.

Well, I got out there and had a very interesting first and second day. They were right in the midst of a building program. They are putting up an interesting community center and the pastor was still there. I was glad to have this overlapping. This was Rev. Edward Henninger, he is from Des Moines from Drake University, a man I would picture as probably one of the most peaceful men I have ever seen, surely he is a man who didn't go down to Mississippi to receive the beating that he did receive. He had also been there in February in the Canton area. He was aware of the conditions and the danger and I

am sure you have heard something about him through the News media. I had the privilege of staying with him in the same home and getting to know him real well and we worked together on this community building. I should go into this just a bit, the project is broken down into at least four areas. These twenty-two areas, are staffed with students who are somewhere in college, some have finished college, some are teaching. Our communications person was a teacher who has taught at the University of Indiana in Indianapolis. She is teaching currently at one of the high schools there. She gave her summer up for this. Most of the students were either juniors or seniors. There were a few that were younger, but most of them were quite mature. Some of them had graduated and were going on to other employment. Each of these in a particular field were donating their time and were sharing their knowledge in a particular area.

The Freedom School was a second area. Mississippi schools as you well know are, I think, the lowest in the nation as far as scholastic ratings are concerned, and the schools have always been very short on Negro History. I don't know, how many of you got Negro history in grade and high school? This is a forgotten subject but you see about ten per cent of our population are Negro and they have a tremendous amount of reference in the history of the United States. These are exciting classes for these people. They really enjoy history, but they also have English, Math and Science, and many other subjects because we had enough teachers there who could teach in any of these fields, either have practiced taught themselves or having the required number of hours so they could have done this, so this was a part of it.

Originally the volunteers felt they were just going to go on straight voter registration. This is the third part of the summer program. It is not as easy as that as you probably know because first of all you would have to train him, because he will have to pass the test for voting. Just this last week three of the U.S. Senators came through. One of the Senators from California and two from others states. They looked at the test and said that if this test were given to the U. S. Senate that there would be many of the Senators in Congress that would be unable to pass it. Of course, one of the things that makes it so impossible to pass this test is that you are completely at the whims of the one who is giving the test. He is the only one who can decide how to interpret the questions and answers. If you misinterpret the question or give the wrong answer you immediately fail. This pro-

probably isn't the worst part, though, because anyone who wants to register must go in and sign the registration blank and then their name is posted, for two or three weeks depending on the county, in the newspaper and at the courthouse so that any of his employers might have a chance to fire him in the remaining time. This is a very frequent thing. Or if they are on ADC or Social Security they will probably stand a good chance of losing this if they try and vote. Any of the economic pressures that can be used are used. The people in the entire project felt that this new Democratic Freedom Party was so important they gave up attempting to register the people at the regular polls and just went out and asked the people to sign this Freedom Democratic Party which really doesn't mean a whole lot, although it is as much as we would be required for registration in this state. It is the age of the person, whether they are a citizen, how long they have lived in the county, and then it is signed in front of three people. Even on this simple form, which will not allow them to vote this fall, but is merely trying to give a show of strength of potential voting. People lost their jobs over signing this piece of paper because the whites were sure this was another encroachment on their power. They were determined that the Negroes would not and should not be allowed to sign it. So there was a lot of fear as the kids went around trying to get these signatures, fear on the part of the Negroes and fear on the part of the whites as well.

It was a real privilege to attend one of these mass meetings, a district meeting for the Freedom Democratic Party. This was a grass root political movement. I think it is something we ought to be aware of, because it is something that I am sure is going to grow. (If you have followed the Democratic proceedings in Mississippi of the regular democratic party you are will aware of the fact that nothing was according to the Roberts Rules of Order. There was never an opportunity for discussion or debate, never an opportunity for the nays to voice their vote. Everything was cut and dried, and was typical of Mississippi politics.) These are the people that have been neglected, they figure that approximately twenty per cent of the Negro population are now registered at the polls. (The remaining, I think there are 430,000 Negroes who could vote if they were allowed to register.) So the remaining number of that group are not voting, but many of them are signing up for the new party, to get 300,000 before the National Democratic Party meets. This Freedom Democratic Party is trying to be seated and unseat the regular democratic party which is pledged to

vote to Goldwater in Mississippi. (This is their statement and this is their plan and many of them are not even planning to go to the National Convention.) I think they would probably boycott the National Convention if the Freedom Democratic Party was not making such a strong stand. The other thing is that nine states have already pledged their support to the Freedom Democratic Party, so I think it is very exciting and is going to be interesting to watch as the Convention opens and see what happens to these people.

The fourth area is Federal Programs. In the community of Harmony there were about 85 families, and I believe that only one of these families has been allowed an FHA loan. All of them owned their own property. They all had about eighty acre farms, certainly not plush, but not poor, at least not poverty stricken. One family had been allowed a loan on converting to a Grade A milk station, so they could process their milk for Grade A consumption. This was the one exception. As far as the County Agent being a help to these rural farmers, the county agent pretty well limits himself to the town of Carthage, the county seat, and dabbles a little in the problem of sanitation and the water supply in the town of Carthage, and has never been much help to the rural Negro families. They have a Negro Home Demonstration Agent and she has been of some help. The Federal Program is trying to go down and put pressure on these people, they are paid with Federal funds, they have a responsibility to every land owner in the community and so when they can be reported and perhaps be replaced if they are unwilling to use their facilities and services indiscriminately. We felt there are a lot of economic levers that can be pushed and need to be pushed, whether they are Negro or whether they are white, they deserve to have these programs which are tax supported and should be freely given to all people.

The problem as you can well imagine is to try and coordinate a group of volunteers so they don't go in 50 different directions at once. I didn't talk to anyone in Mississippi who didn't feel that this was one of the biggest problems, particularly if you are used to any type of organization and you come in and find that everyone is making their own plans and frequently they conflict with someone else's plans. But on the other hand, how can you try and have a strict organization when everyone is volunteer and everyone feels that their own job is the most important one. This was a real test for a lot of the people down there and I don't think it will ever be solved as long as you have this

type of organization. It is a movement, something that is too dynamic to stop. You either have to get into the stream of things, otherwise you are just bucking the stream, fighting against it. If you can be in the stream at the right time you can do something that will count. If you are just struggling and trying to organize the stream and get it to flow in the channel that you think it should you probably are going to end up very frustrated. At least this was the observation that I made. Also, I want to say I hope you don't think that I think that I am an expert on Mississippi. Surely, no one can be an expert on Mississippi in two weeks, but you can't be in Mississippi for two weeks without having some strong convictions on the state and what needs to be done.

Let me bring you up to the chief work of the community center in Harmony. I think I told you before I thought it was a privilege to have been sent there, because it is a unique area. These are some of the most independent and progressive Negroes that I have ever come in contact with in any area, people who were determined and hardworking. People who kept their buildings neat and kept their farms well and people who were determined that their children would have the best education possible. To me, I think, when you live with Negroes, when you live with anyone you don't think in terms of color. So often we have this stereotype of the Negro that he is lazy. You don't have to be in this community more than a day to discover that this stereotype is false, as any stereotype that you have. There isn't a lazy bone in their bodies more than there are in our bodies, and I saw them working on this community project in the rain and in the beating hot sun. When I had to stop they could keep on going. They said they were used to it. I don't know how you could ever get used to that hot sun but they really worked. You could see that by the way they had done things. They were the first community in 1927 to take advantage of the Rosenthal Fund. The Rosenthal Fund and probably many of you know more about it than I do, was the fund of matching funds to help the local communities establish their own schools. They not only paid for the white schools in town, according to the tax mill, but they asked the school board to increase their tax mill so that they could build and pay for their own school buildings out in Harmony Community. They built four buildings, one building was for a shop for mechanical engineering, to take care of tools and their farming equipment. Considering when it was built and how it was used it was a very good building. One of the nicest

buildings in the community was for the superintendent. It was a very modern building, well kept up and looked like an excellent house. Then they had two main buildings for the school, for the lunch program, for all the library facilities, and all of the things that would go along with this. They had three Negro trustees who were responsible to keep the building in repair, to take care of it, to buy whatever they needed. Once again, this was not out of public funds, because the public would not pay for any of the equipment that was used, so they bought their own furnishings. They bought their own fixtures, everything that was needed, their own phonograph, all of this that you would normally expect the State to provide. This was provided by the community themselves. They were proud of their school and they were proud of their young people and the record they made. They made excellent records. I learned from one of the adults that if a teacher was found to be napping he or she was fired. They had a teacher for grades, instead of lumping them all together. This was really a re-districted school building and it was planned this way back in 1927, so their grades could be separated. You have to admit that they had a lot on the ball when they were thinking of doing this. They were willing to sacrifice and they built it themselves and put it up and paid for it on this half share basis. They went along this way for many, many years, in fact until 1961 they had their own school. They didn't want to give it up then but they were forced to close. The county was very jealous of this separate school system. For enough reason, the county wasn't getting enough labor to pick cotton. This is one of the tragedies of the Negro education in Mississippi because when it comes cotton time, the first of September, the buses come around to the schools and pick up the children and take them out to the field and this continues on to the end of November. They are not paid for any of this labor, they completely miss out on their education, even though they started a month earlier, most of them start the first part of August. School teachers get paid for sitting in the rooms and probably the superintendent gets his tip for allowing and providing this free labor, for the large plantations. This is one reason why they were so discouraged about losing their school, because they never allowed their pupils to miss school. They started on time and went the full nine months and the kids got every moment of school. The other thing in which they were disappointed was on the re-organization plans. There are three Negro schools in the county for 2500 Negro students and there are five white schools for 2300 white students.

They couldn't understand why it should take more schools for less white pupils everything being equal. Of course, the problem as you can readily see is crowded classrooms, so most of the classes run from 50 to 60. The gymnasium is used for three classrooms without partitions. Everything is cramped and crowded together, but it is in a beautiful brick structure so any one passing by can see how much the Mississippians love the Negro and take care of them. From the outside the veneer looks real good.

Well in 1961 the change was made and the county schoolboard came in and looted the buildings, took out all the equipment that had been paid for by the community. It was tragic to go in and see how they had pulled the chandeliers, the light fixtures out, the switches off the walls. A piano had been burned in front of the building. Anything which they could tear out and take and been removed. Then of course, they blamed it on the Negroes. They said they were too dumb to take care of their own property. I asked Mrs. Sanders, "Who did this?" and she said "Well, of course you know we did it. We're blamed for it." She said, "You know, It's hard to imagine anyone tearing up their own buildings when they have sacrificed to put them up." It was very sad to them and the community superintendent reported that the school board said they'd allow the buildings to be used as community centers. You can use them out there and keep them as community property. It had been given by the people and so it didn't really belong to the school system, but in order to get state tax funds to run it, to pay the teachers, for the heat and light and other requirements they had turned this over to the county school system. At the beginning of this year the first thought was that we have four beautiful buildings up here on the hill, clustered in the pine trees to have our freedom school. We've got the classrooms, all we need to get are some benches and chairs up here and we'll have everything set. They scrubbed up the room and put up their ten thousand volume library of which they were very proud and which they had kept in tack since the building had been torn down, since they had been ordered out of it. They got everything ready to go and some of the whites, the Superintendent, and some of the other people from Carthage came out to look it over and the first thing they discovered was that this small community of Harmony had a larger library than Carthage. This didn't go over at all. "We've got to keep the Negro in his place, you know." So they condemned the building, they put up No Trespassing signs and said this is State property--You can't use this at all.

There weren't any other buildings available. Most of the people have small homes, adequate homes for their families but all they had was a community store and if you've ever been in a community store you know how crowded they are. They had two churches, two Baptist churches, that were within walking distance of the store, and so they said, "Why don't we use the churches?" So this is what they have been doing. But they immediately realized that the churches were in opposite directions and they could never do much as a community center so they got this idea of building a community center. It is called Harmony Community Center, they decided to pool their efforts and their resources. A man that had had this idea of having a community center for the young people for many years said "I have some land down next to the store. Let's just draw in my fences a little bit and make room for this building." The people got together and drew up the plans. There was a carpenter in the area who was going to come out and help them set it up. They all had practically built their own homes, so they said "We'll all pitch in and work together." This has been the outcome of not being able to use their own school buildings. They are building a 30' by 60' building. They're hoping that in the future they can put on a kitchen and wash room. But to begin with they are going to have room for their ten thousand volume library. They are going to have a general meeting room and they say that anyone can use it, except the White Citizens Council. And they have two office rooms in the front and they feel this is going to be a real asset to the community. The amazing thing is that it is insured for its full value. It is becoming very hard in Mississippi to insure a Negro country church or in fact, any Negro building. It is right on the highway, or right on this main dirt road that runs through Harmony Community. We called it a highway because it was pretty good compared to some of them. I'm sure that the roof is on now and the inside will soon be completed. Then they will be holding a lot of their activities in this place.

I should say just one word about Pastor Henninger. I called him Ed, we all went by our first names down there and it was a wonderful family relationship. The problem, I suppose, as you heard about it was that he called for a Doctor's appointment in the community of Madden, about 5 miles from Harmony. This was our closest Doctor and we felt that since we were about 20 miles from Carthage and we were 40 miles from the nearest Negro Doctor in Canton, that we should have some type of physical help in case we came to an emergency. The Doctor

in Madden has twelve beds for whites, four beds for Negroes and two beds for Indians. He has a Negro waiting room and whenever any of our group would go in there they were immediately requested, whether they were Negro or not, or whether they had Negroes with them or not, to use the Negro waiting room. We were Negro as far as anyone down there was concerned, which was fine with us, because we really learned to appreciate the Negroes, you would wave at the Negroes, but you would receive hate stares from the White as you drove by.

We had to go twenty miles into Carthage for all of our telephone calls because even though seventeen families had requested service, the telephone company had consistently refused to service the people of this community. They went into Carthage to make the telephone call and the Doctor said, "sure come right over". When they got there they made the mistake of going to a cafe. It was a hot day and they went for a Coke first, pardon me, not a Coke, for something cool to drink. This movement has almost become a religious movement in which you eat and drink certain foods. The Coca-cola Company has reportedly given about a million dollars to the White Citizens Council of Mississippi, so none of the workers would drink Coke while they were down there. This became quite apparent, because the community store stopped buying cokes when no one would drink them.

They got there and drank and discovered later that this was the worst thing they could have done because they were announcing to the community that they were there. They leisurely went over to the Doctor's office then and Pastor Henninger met him at the door and said, "I'm Pastor Henninger, this is the young student that I brought with me. He's got some foot problems, 'Are you the Doctor?'" He said, "Yes I am". "You ought to pray for forgiveness". Pastor Henninger said, "Yes, I think we all need to pray for forgiveness". By this time they were inside the waiting room and the Doctor said, "Ministers out to stick to preaching". Ed said, "Well, I think all ministers ought to preach". The next thing Ed knew he was being pushed by the Doctor into a mob that had developed from the waiting room that had been assembled before they got there. He was unconscious for the next four hours and didn't know what had happened. The student that was with him, got into the crouched position quickly enough so that he was kicked severely but he was only hit twice on the head, so he didn't look as bad as Ed. I had to pick Ed up in jail afterwards, but if I had met him on the street I wouldn't have recognized him, he had been beaten so badly. To be beaten for going to the Doctor, is quite something and to be beaten in the Doctor's office, and then to be dragged out of the Doctor's office and left on the cement by the car is unbelievable. John, the student who was also beaten was able to drag Ed into the car and

they sat there and waited for awhile. It took them they thought, at least fifteen to twenty minutes before the deputy came and then they were put in a pick-up truck and were hauled around the county roads for at least an hour and a half. Finally, they were transferred to another car in which three of their assailants got in with them and they took another trip. The only thing that we could figure out was that it was another attempt at intimidation and trying to scare them. Of course, being this close to Philadelphia you didn't have to think twice as to what they had in mind. Finally, they got to the jail where they were duly arrested for disturbing the peace even though both of them had promised to be non-violent and had been non-violent. They hadn't done anything, but I suspect that disturbing the peace is a just charge because nobody goes to Mississippi from the North without disturbing the peace. You have to take this as something that is bound to happen. (A white man and a Negro woman were crossing a street together and a woman got so disturbed that she lost control of her car and ripped the man's pants leg, she got so close to him. She just couldn't control herself.) So it does disturb the peace when we go down there. They were booked on charges and immediately questioned by the District Attorney. The Doctor charged them with disturbing the peace and swearing and one other charge, but the two other charges were dropped and they finally settled on disturbing the peace. They were in the jail at 1:00 p.m. This happened at 10:15 in the morning. There wasn't a Doctor called to try and help them until about 3:00 p.m. and they weren't X-rayed until 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon. They were interrogated all this time and asked questions which they refused to answer. It was about 2:00 p.m. before they were allowed their normal telephone call as a prisoner. So this disturbing the peace is a very dangerous type of prisoner, you see, someone who needs to be carefully guarded. We finally discovered what had happened and went in and bailed them out on a \$100 each. The tragedy of this bail, once again, is that inevitably unless you fight this, it goes back to the state that promotes this perversion of law and order. They did pay their bail. This was the day that Pastor Henninger was planning to leave for home. He had to fly home. He had told me the day before that he was planning on preaching on the topic of "The Suffering Servant". We need to realize the suffering of each other and we need to take others' burdens upon ourselves. Although he hadn't planned to use that title he preached last Sunday from the pulpit, and I guess he made quite an impact on the congregation with his sermon and his appearance, which is no doubt what is needed.

The legal defense have been looking into this, and in any other state in the union there would be no doubt but they could get a clear cut case of assault and battery by the Doctor. They would never have been arrested in the first place, that the people who attacked them would have been arrested and

would have been prosecuted for creating a disturbance. But in the State of Mississippi, (although a few lawyers are doubting this now) they feel that perhaps there is a chance but most lawyers felt that his case doesn't have a chance in the world, of ever being won. There is the possibility that it was lifted up to the Supreme Court level on the case that the jury was biased that it could, but as you know the legal framework and network makes it very hard to get these things done. I should say that we are very fortunate in having a Corp of doctors and three groups of lawyers, who are volunteering their time for the summer project and are going down from two, three, or four weeks offering their legal and medical advice. They are to help all of the workers around the state trying to get them out of jail as soon as possible and trying to help them in the charges that can be settled. There were eye witnesses as well--people who were willing to witness but still they felt that they were afraid they would have to let the case go. The same was true of a previous incident in which John was involved. They went in to make a telephone call, into the town of Carthage and stopped at what was the old bus station. There were two public telephones out in front of the building and the girls were using them. The operator of the cafe came out with a knife and threatened the girls with the open knife, so the girls hung up and got out. In the meantime, a man had backed his 1961 Chrysler into position so that he could back up and damaged John's car while he was waiting for the girls. It caused about seventy-five dollars worth of damage on the car. John followed the car until he got the license plate of the hit and run driver, then he went to the police and reported this. He hasn't heard a word from them except that it was a different man and a different car and just the old run around. Once again the lawyer said that unless the insurance company will do something we doubt that anything can be done through the law. I think this is something that we have to face as Northerners as we think about Mississippi, that probably the only way that there will ever be a change is in the case of the suffering servant. These people hate us for being there and they feel this is completely a Communist conspiracy. I talked to a Baptist minister last week and toward the end of our conversation when we weren't really getting anywhere he locked up. A Negro minister was with me, John Pollacheck, and he asked, "Isn't this all a communist movement?" I looked at him and I said, "No, I don't know a Communist in the group". "I haven't seen anything of any type of Communism anywhere here." I take that back because the police treatment is really totalitarian and the type that you expect in a Communist country. But as far as the teachers, the young people, who are out there, they are the most dedicated people that I have ever seen. People who are dedicated to a cause and whether they be black or white they fold their arms

together. They pitch in and work together and they are ~~and~~ and determined that a better world can come. They are going to help it come. The minister wouldn't believe it so we invited him out. The white communities are going to have to come together with the Negro in some way or another and they are going to have to talk together and are going to have to learn to live together. And I just don't see how this is ever going to take place without suffering. This is what Pastor Cooper kept telling us, "We don't have any problems in Mississippi. You are the problem. Get out of here and we won't have any problem". I think the biggest problem there is their own guilt and their refusal to look at the problem. Everytime someone from the North comes down there they are quite eager to place the whole responsibility on this one individual. Just as Jesus, when he set his eyes to go to Jerusalem, knew the danger of going South, there were many who tried to discourage him from going South, but whether he could ever have made an impact on the world without going to Jerusalem is quite another question. The laws of Mississippi will never change unless people are willing to sacrifice, unless we are willing to be beaten, unless in some way or another they will see that love can prevail. The only other alternative is violence, and I can promise you that these Negroes who have waited so long and have been patient are not going to continue to wait. They can love you with all their hearts and they do, but they have been beaten and they have been killed, they have been mistreated for hundreds of years, and if you and I were in their position you and I wouldn't be willing to wait forever either. We have our problems in the North to be sure, but next to Mississippi, I think they are very, very small. Our problems need to be dealt with and we should appreciate the outsider who can see them so clearly. The church must deal with problems.

August 20, 1964