

MISSISSIPPI DELTA

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December 1-16, 1964

INTRODUCTION Edgar Stoesz and Edgar Metzler spent July 30 to August 2, 1964 on an investigatory trip to the Mississippi Delta. On September 27 to 30 of the same year Edgar Stoesz stopped in Mississippi on a return trip from Mexico to make further plans for the initiation of an MCC program. These two visits and further discussion within MCC and with the Board of Christian Service in Newton, Amzie Moore in Cleveland, Mississippi, and Art Thomas of NCC culminated in the decision that I should spend an extended period in the Delta and among other things distribute some much needed relief.

BACKGROUND This report will be brief, considering the length of my stay, mainly because a fairly extensive daily diary was kept and extensive studies on the condition of the Negro particularly in the Delta are on file at Akron. But a few excerpts and comments will be helpful at this point.

1. Geography. The geographical area extends from just south of Memphis to Vicksburg with the Mississippi serving as the western boundary and a line drawn from these two cities through Greenwood as the eastern boundary. This "football shaped" area is about 200 miles long and 80 miles across at the widest point.

The Delta is a flat, almost exclusively agricultural area, receiving its name as a result of annual floodings until control measures were introduced some fifty years ago. The continual flooding produced rich silky soil leaving a top soil that is as deep as twenty to thirty feet in some areas.

2. Population. A century ago 92% of the U.S. Negroes lived in the South. Now only 60% live in the South. The Negro migration to the North in the 1950s averaged 12,000 each month with the pace continuing in the 1960s.

In a recent Christian Science Monitor article the population of Mississippi was given as 2,290,180, an increase of 6% since 1960. Yet the state has been losing 40,000 people each year.

The 1960 Delta population was given as 368,739. 38% of the Delta population is white and 62% non-white. The Negro population in some counties is as high as 72%. Most of the people live in the rural or small towns.

3. Closed Society. A trip to Mississippi confirms the idea that Mississippi is a closed society. Any report could be filled with numerous accounts, in varying degrees, harassments, weapons many white and Negro carry, bullet holes through houses, imprisonments, beatings and other difficulties encountered by anyone who tries to help the Negro. Such accounts are not included in this report, but it is suggested that articles like "Journey to Understanding" by a lawyer, doctor, educator and minister in the December 28, 1964 issue of The Nation be read alongside of this trip report.

Any report must be read in the light of a fractured society. There are two distinct uncommunicative groups.

- a) Negro Community. There is a very deep seated distrust and fear of the white. The white man continues to be referred to as the "boss man" and looked upon as the man who can make any Negro lose his job if he is angered. The Negro has often been cheated by the white society and continues to be cheated. As a result the Negro is unwilling to be straightforward. This refusal to speak one's mind has resulted in a resignation to life which is typical of many Negroes. Negro teachers and ministers seem to know how to operate within this type of society. They are economically dependent on the white; there is no economic independence so the Negro minister, teacher or employee must always please his employer. He is unable to "help himself" economically.

Some Negroes follow the civil rights workers but most are afraid to get involved because this means a loss of U.S. Commodities, job, the welfare check, heat, light, or perhaps even the house. Those in the movement want education and a new integrity. Whites in the Negro community, like COFO workers, have a tremendous impact because they assure the Negro that he is a human being in the eyes of some white and condescension is not necessary between races.

- b) White Community. Some whites say everyone in the South is happy, including the Negro, but some realize there is a problem and that they are working at it as quickly as possible. The white community is very critical of "outside agitators" who they state have caused the greatest dissatisfaction and disruption of communication. Outsiders are challenging "the Southern Way of Life." Most fear of desegregation is because of the economic change. Those that are concerned, which includes a few liberals, say that things will change but the only alternative is for the Negro to accept the schedule of the white man. This means that the whites think all changes will result as he gives the Negro something without being pushed by sit-ins, threats, force, or demonstrations. As if the white has the prerogative to disperse to the Negro what the Negro will get. This is the very essence of white supremacy. The battle meets at integration versus segregation with the white community using the argument of the "mongrelization of the races" (intermarriage) which to them means it is contrary to the Bible. As a letter to the editor of a southern paper wrote, "According to God's Word, anyone who attempts to mongrelize the human races. . . is in danger of God's retribution. As far as Mississippi being a better place to live, if we help the COFO and related organizations, my only answer is to refer. . . to history (modern and ancient), to find out what happens to (in all instances) a nation, when the people become mongrelized. What happens to their morals? Their religion? Their governments? It is the baser (ungodly) element who go into their states and provoke the baser elements of the states they enter to hate, bloodshed and murder." This is the continual defence whereas the real issue is of economics.

Whereas the Negro community has a fear and distrust of the white man and is unable to help himself economically, the white man is fearful of the economic change which results from desegregation and does not accept the Negro as being fully human.

4. Economics and Living Conditions. The Delta economy is primarily based on cotton. Before the introduction of the mechanical cotton picker the Negro had employment on plantations. Mechanization has resulted in massive unemployment since manual labor for all practical purposes is nearly non-existent. As mechanization improves even more are being unemployed.

The few industries in the area generally employ only the white. As a result many Negroes have moved to large cities in the North like New York, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee and Cincinnati. Through lack of education skills, unfamiliarity with city life problems are created such as tensions and slums in the Northern cities.

The Negro move North creates problems like slums, but by remaining in the South unbelievable rural poverty results. Mechanization has driven many from the plantation to small towns. The Negro remaining in the South can work as a day laborer whether he still lives on the plantation or in one of the small neighboring towns. Such a worker can find employment for three months during the year picking cotton at \$2 to \$2.50 per 100 pounds. In a ten hour day a grown man working steadily can earn up to \$5. Besides the three months of cotton picking, the worker can chop (hoe) cotton between two to three months at \$3 for a ten hour day. The earnings from picking cotton and chopping must suffice for the remaining six months of the year. During the cotton picking season generally the whole family works on the field from dawn to dusk; the rest of the year is a time of idleness and trying to make ends meet. A few Negroes can work at the gins for 75¢ to \$1.25 an hour for a twelve to fourteen hour day, six to seven days a week, with no time and a half for overtime. Working at cotton gins or other year around jobs for only \$1 to \$1.25 for a ten hour day is very discouraging.

Some women can find employment working as a maid for a white lady. The hours are upward of ten hours a day with six days a week. The salary ranges from \$8 to \$12 a week. This certainly is insufficient taking into consideration the large family the Negro mother must support. A few men find odd jobs at gas stations or as dishwashers, but the pay also is very small with long hours.

There is a small minority of Negroes who live better than the others. These are the teachers, ministers and land owners. Yet after saying this one must realize that only 2% of the land of the Delta belongs to the Negro and the 40-acre farmers are about the only Negroes that are on the way to economic independence.

Following are some statistics from Sunflower County. Of the 12,000 homes only 6,000 have flush toilets, 7,000 have no tubs or showers, 4,500 have no running water at all. The infant mortality rate is 40 per 1,000 compared to a national average of 22 per 1,000. The median annual family income in Mississippi is approximately \$2,000 for the white and \$600 for the Negro. Yet prices are the same as in any other part of the country.

Negro housing conditions are poor and inadequate, the homes often unpainted, the floors, walls, and roofs uncovered, often with a hole in one of them. Much of the furniture is in disrepair. Very few homes have refrigerators. Even in towns half the Negroes have no flush toilets, four-fifths have no tubs or showers. Part of the reason for the situation of the Negroes in the Delta area is the lack of educational facilities. Even those children who have access to schools have little incentive to go because the state of Mississippi does not have compulsory education, and Negroes have a hard time staying in school because of poor clothing or shoes. Also, they must work for their parents to help earn a living during the cotton season. As a result the Negro schools follow the cotton cycle, closing down in the fall for cotton picking and in the later spring for chopping and opening during the summer while there is no work in the fields. In the entire Delta there are only fourteen schools credited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. These are all white schools; there are no accredited Negro schools in the Delta area. One of the counties has no high school for whites or Negroes and three counties have no high school for Negroes.

Money does not seem to be available for education. At least the buildings are poor and books ragged. Yet money appears to be on hand for an abundance of law enforcement officers. For example, Sunflower County has a County Sheriff, one in each town and five constables for the rural area. This, in the light of the many towns with only about 1,000 citizens seems unnecessary. The largest town in Sunflower of 6,000 has a police force of 12 men. In addition, at a moment's notice, any white man in town can be deputized. When six Negroes in Indianola recently attempted to use the all white library (there is no Negro library in the county) 30 citizens were immediately deputized "to restore law and order."

The Ecumenical Press Service stated that only 6.7 per cent of the population of voting age is registered to vote, the smallest percentage of any state in the USA. In nine Mississippi counties not one Negro was registered in July, 1963, in 26 others fewer than one per cent were registered.

"Violence has marked the struggle for civil rights. In the summer of 1964 three civil rights workers were murdered, 4 shot and wounded, 55 beaten and injured, 250 arrested, 15 churches were burned and destroyed and 16 others were damaged."

The economic situation is summarized very precisely and adequately in the August 7, 1964, memo written by Edgar Stoesz and Edgar Metzler. "The economic problem in the Delta is acute and it is difficult to see how it can be alleviated without the development of some kind of industry. . . One of the difficulties in Mississippi is that federal programs designed to alleviate poverty and to help develop rural areas are stymied by the federal government's insistence on working through local officials. That means in Mississippi that Negroes get little or no help from federal programs. Economic pressures are also being exerted on any Negroes who register to vote or participate in any way with the civil rights movement." One frequently meets Negroes who lost their jobs, were evicted from their homes, lost their welfare checks, became ineligible for U.S. commodities or their heat and light were cut off as a result of registering or receiving aid.

PLANTATION DAY RESULTS For decades the Negro family lived on a plantation owned by a white person and picked or chopped cotton for the plantation owner. During these decades of life on the plantation a certain type of Negro developed. Many reports and novels have been written about the relationships of the white and the Negro on the plantation, the characteristics that have developed and the type of dilemma the Negro is now caught in as a result of plantation days. Often the Negro is criticized for his immorality or laziness. However, all of the characteristics displayed by the Negro in the Delta are largely a result of the plantation days.

A few comments about the results of plantation days upon the Negro will be mentioned. These are all inter-related to a certain extent. It must be remembered that these are not characteristics of the Negro but a result of the way he has been treated.

1. Family Concept. There is a very poor and loose relationship between a husband and wife. Negro men and women were largely considered as objects by the plantation owner and therefore "used" for the white man's advantage and pleasure. This has resulted in the Negro believing that this is simply the way life is and he must try to adjust to it. As a result he has become a part of it. Now they also have very loose relationships between husband and wife.
2. Family Life. Negro families in the Delta are very large. Most mothers have as many as eight to fifteen children. One mother I met had twenty. Many children do not know who their father is. Although most mothers are married a high percentage of the husbands have left their wives and children. Many families in the Cleveland area are matriarchal. There are mothers with five or six children who are not married.
3. Self-respect. As a result of the loose husband-wife relationships and, the living conditions, the Negro child has very little self-respect. Large families live in one or two room houses. They sleep, eat, play and have all of their family activity in this one or two room building. As a result of the close living, and older children of opposite sex sleeping together, children do not have any respect for their brothers, sisters, or parents.
4. "Mute Negro" The Negro on the plantation was the servant and responded to "the boss." He was never permitted to disagree, and as a result a Negro will not disagree with a white person. On some occasions I made statements to a Negro with which I knew he violently disagreed, yet he would never tell me but would simply smile or say "You're right." This is paternalism in the extreme.
5. Incentive. Since the Negro was seldom permitted to disagree or develop critical facilities he is often criticized for being lazy and not having incentive. However, if one considers the situation in which he and his forefathers have lived it is easy to understand why they do not have incentive. Secondly, many of the people who have become more progressive and were able to get ahead were quickly knocked down or cheated by the white.

6. Education. The Negroes were never sent to school because education was not necessary to pick cotton or chop. As a result there are many Negroes who do not know how to read or write. One can occasionally meet individuals who are unable to even sign their own name. Since education in the state of Mississippi is not compulsory it is a difficult struggle to keep children in school.

7. Leadership. Many of the leaders became involved in the civil rights movement and as a result of the harassment, opposition, and economic pressure, have either become silent or forced out of the state. One of the greatest difficulties of working in Mississippi is the lack of leadership on the local level. There are a few and quite scattered.

The list of characteristics could be endless. It would be well to read accounts and novels written about this subject to get a more rounded report.

PURPOSE In no area has it been as difficult to initiate an MCC VS project as in Mississippi. The problem is very complex. Thus it was suggested that I should spend a few weeks in the Delta to help in the immediate crisis of relief distribution but also investigate possibilities of longer term involvement. The Delta area was chosen at the recommendation of Edgar Stoesz and Edgar Metzler. The Negroes in the western and southern part of Mississippi are somewhat economically independent. Since the Negroes in the Delta are completely dependent upon the white man their plight of poverty is almost indescribable. As a result the Delta was chosen as the area of concentration. The mandate was to respond to the immediate need by distributing relief especially to the children. While distributing relief the question "What should the longer term MCC response be in this situation?" was continually asked.

MCC RELIEF During the early part of December 22,784 gross pounds (almost 12 tons) MCC food, clothes, and shoes were shipped to Cleveland, Mississippi. The material aid originated from three different sources.

1. Sources and Amounts. All of the material aid was delivered to Cleveland by three trucks from three different states.

- a) A truck load of 2,421 gross pounds of supplies from Kansas arrived on December 1, 1964. The entire load was from the stock at the MCC North Newton Regional Office. The initial idea was to distribute this one load of aid during my stay in Mississippi. The two drivers remained for a day visiting families in the Mound Bayou area who would be receiving the aid.

New and used children's shoes	845
New and used children's clothing	1,036
Ten cartons of canned beef	540
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	2,241 gross pounds

- b) Nebraska. As in the past the Henderson community canned beef for MCC. Generally, the canned beef was then taken to the North Newton Regional Office. Rev. John Gaeddert pursued the idea of delivering the canned beef directly to Mississippi. As a result a load of this beef arrived in Cleveland during the second week in December.

Canned beef	213 cartons	11,076
Broth	5 cartons	250
		<u>11,326</u> gross pounds

The three drivers Raymond A., Fred, and Irwin Friesen helped to deliver some of the beef to four different locations. The four locales were:

- i. Ruleville. A town approximately ten miles east of Cleveland in Sunflower County. It was put into the hands of a local Negro relief committee. The committee was asked to keep the name and address of each family receiving MCC relief. These will be sent to Akron.
 - ii. Sumner. This is a small town in Tallahatchie County. The food was unloaded on a plantation of 40,000 acres on which approximately 30 to 40 very poor Negro families live. Since delivering relief onto a plantation is trespassing, the relief was unloaded at a more responsible family who will distribute it to the others on the plantation.
 - iii. Some was taken to the rural area between Tippo and Swan Lake also in Tallahatchie. A more responsible family will distribute the relief in this area.
 - iv. Charleston. A business woman, Mrs. Keggler, was given the MCC relief to distribute to some of the poor in her area.
- c) Pennsylvania. My daily diary was regularly sent to Akron for various individuals to read. As a result of reading my diary it was felt that more relief should be sent before my departure on December 16. The Lancaster Conference Relief and Service Committee obtained a truck to deliver the supplies to Mississippi which were collected by approximately ten churches in the Lancaster County area.

Children's shoes - age 0 to 18 years	1,302
Warm clothing for children - age 0 to 18 years	2,630
Canned beef, chicken, turkey, pork and lard	2,080
Canned cherries	1,260
Dried Apples	280
Laundry Soap	1,485
	<u>9,037</u> gross pounds

The shipment of supplies from Pennsylvania arrived December 12. During the week end, arrangements were made to deliver the last shipment of relief to several towns and rural areas during the early part of the following week.

2. Methods of Distribution. The MCC supplies were distributed by using various methods. Basically three procedures with various combinations were used.

- a) Names of individual needy families were secured from individuals in the community. Everyone who recommends a family will in a sense be tempted to recommend his friends. Therefore, individuals such as the minister, civil rights workers, and local leaders were asked to give me the names of needy families. These families were then asked numerous questions and then supplies would be delivered to their homes. In a sense this is the best method because it gives the distributor an opportunity to personally visit the home and observe the response, need, and living conditions.
- b) A local relief committee can be organized as in Ruleville. In a situation like this the supplies can be taken to a church and the needy families asked to come and get them. This is not the most satisfactory method because someone can walk in one door, out the other and then after depositing the supplies return to get more. This method should be used only in cases where other methods cannot be followed. At the moment this appears to be the best method to give relief to those living on plantations onto which it is impossible to take supplies.
- c) Have a supply of relief in a home and then let mothers come and pick up any needed items. This method was used at a home in Cleveland where people could come at any time to pick up clothes, shoes, or food.

No one of the three methods is satisfactory for all communities or locations. Each community needs to be evaluated and the best method for that particular situation used.

Questions like: To whom is relief given? How Much? What storage is available? are answered in QUESTION AND ANSWERS section.

3. Area of Distribution. Basically MCC relief was distributed in four counties - Bolivar, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, and Leflore. Publicity about the conditions in Mississippi in the national press has resulted in a trickle of gifts to the state. Negroes in the cities and larger towns are beginning to feel the benefit of these gifts. Therefore, special efforts were exerted to get the MCC supplies to the rural areas. Poverty exists throughout the Delta but especially in Tallahatchie and Leflore Counties. These are also the more dangerous and difficult ones in which to work. Many poor live on the large plantations marked "No Trespassing." Winchester rifles are hung in very conspicuous places in vehicles owned by the whites. The "No Trespassing" posters mean that one is arrested if found on a plantation. MCC relief was secretly taken to one of these 40,000 acre plantations on which thirty or forty Negro families live. In another case a local Negro helped get relief to other folks on plantations by telling them to come to a certain church outside of their county. Thus MCC relief was also distributed to some of the most needy folks in the Delta.

The report could be filled with accounts of the living conditions and clothes (lack of clothes) of the people on the plantations. Folks on the plantations are especially handicapped because of their dependence on the plantation owner and live in extremely poor conditions with inadequate food.

TITUS BENDER Titus spent December 1 and 2 in the Cleveland area helping to arrange the MCC distribution. On December 15 I spent my last night in Mississippi in the home of the Benders. His suggestions to MCC go beyond the scope of VS but are recorded as the ideas of a concerned Mennonite in Mississippi.

1. MCC VS should seriously consider assisting at the Cleveland community center being built under the direction of Amzie Moore. The MCC person would be one of the staff members at the center.
2. Titus strongly encouraged MCC VS to assign some experienced relief worker to the NCC staff for a period of three to six months. During this time the distribution program would be set up or improved.
3. The folks in Mississippi and especially in the Delta need to get established on 40-acre farms. There are a few 40-acre farms but five or six of the best Negro farmers should be chosen by MCC to be established. This means that they need financial assistance which they cannot receive from banks or loaning firms in Mississippi. Titus felt the strongest on this point and would like MEDA to reconsider such a project. Amzie Moore also repeatedly mentioned that MCC or some organization like MEDA should make loans available to a few of the better families to help them become established and as a result become economically independent of the white community.
4. One repeatedly hears Titus make very favorable comments about MDS involvement in Mississippi. He hopes the rebuilding of the three bombed churches in the Jackson area will continue without repercussions and then feels other similar assignments should be explored by MDS.

The Christian concern and courage of Titus must be admired. He is taking a very courageous stand by not aligning with the whites' way of life. One gets the impression that he is considering becoming even more vocal in defining the Southern tradition. Not only is his stand on integration to be admired but he is also experimenting with some progressive and creative concepts for the renewal of the church within his fellowship.

ANZIE MOORE This man must also be admired for so many things that a list would be endless. Imagine a successful business man with a large business losing almost everything. He is a person who has been physically threatened many times and still is subject to psychological warfare; a man who has looked down the barrel of a gun; a top employee in the Cleveland Post Office being demoted to the position of a part-time janitor; a lonely man who lost practically all of his earlier friends and fractured his family relationships yet has a house full of visitors requesting counsel; a poor man with a tremendous faith who will share his little earnings with anyone in need; a Bible reading man who will say "I'm only alive because the Divine is protecting me." Amzie was of tremendous help in the distribution of the MCC supplies. Without his help the assignment would have taken a number of months and would not have been as effective as these few short weeks. He knows the people and can refer one to contacts in almost every community. He is very non-directive in his method of suggesting programs to MCC. His approach

is to show one the needs, conditions, and severely depressed and handicapped people, with the hope that from this first hand encounter some suggestions might develop. Part of the reason for this approach is that he does not have a solution for the complex problem. The best and possibly the only solution he offers is that either the direct intervention of the federal government or some rich northern philanthropist seem to be the only alternative at the moment.

Any MCC effort in the following areas would be greatly appreciated by Amzie.

1. Help to re-establish some of the better farmers on 40-acre farms. FDR introduced a federal program in the 1930's which was of tremendous help. The method was to pay the debts of the small farmers, give them a loan to start again if they would meet certain standards like having a well, a privy, and agree to let the government handle each farmer's financial records until he was capable of doing it himself. Many of these FDR farms are still successfully functioning even in Mississippi. Amzie would like similar farms to be established with the help of any one who can be of assistance. This is probably a request that should be given to MEDA.
2. As long as conditions continue to exist as at present he would like MCC to continue food, clothes and shoes distribution especially to the school children.
3. Community Center. Under the direction of Amzie Moore, a community center is being built on 100 X 120 foot lot in Cleveland. He wants this to be a center which is under the direction of local residents. The community center would have a very broad program including relief, recreation, clubs, sewing circles, various educational classes, library, health education, voter registration classes, only to mention a few. Various agencies would be permitted to sponsor different aspects of the diversified program. Each agency using the center would need to pay its own light, heat, and some rent, unless some other finances for operation and upkeep are secured from foundations or donations.

Amzie would very much like to have MCC involved in this center program especially because of its religious motivation and because it is church sponsored. MCC's strength would be work in the area of relief and possibly some classes like teaching clubs or ladies' sewing lessons. Many ladies are eager to take sewing lessons and make quilts and other items for themselves or to be sold. Sewing classes would also be taught in neighboring communities like the one in Ruleville. Twelve ladies in Ruleville came to me requesting an experienced person to teach sewing.

GREENVILLE While in Greenville on December 7 and 8 I contacted numerous individuals like James Carter, a notary public and business man at 901 Nelson; Rev. J. F. Redmond, and NCC workers. The Ministerial Alliance, which is the Negro Ministerial Association, met that day so I also attended this meeting.

1. Ministerial Alliance. It was obvious that the Ministerial Alliance was hesitant to take a stand against the white power structure although there are a few courageous individuals. In a sense this is understandable. Taking a stand often means that insurance on the church buildings is canceled and the members of this congregation may lose their jobs.

2. Delta Ministry (NCC). Both Art Thomas and Warren McKenna were especially concerned about finding an office. They were evicted from their downtown office on December 4 because of the Negro secretary on their staff. Temporarily they were located at the corner of Broadway and Nelson in a hall. Trying to secure a building for NCC or civil rights workers is equally difficult.

The immediate program concern of NCC is to arrange the relief distribution program. The biggest obstacle appears to be a lack of local leadership in the communities where relief is to be distributed. This is a real problem due to the lack of education and white pressure, and many of the educated must leave the state to find employment.

In December there were approximately 12 Delta Ministry staff workers. Each has a different assignment being located in various cities of the state. Programs are being developed in the following areas: educational ministries (leadership training, remedial studies, vocational training), emergency relief, health programs, citizenship projects and community centers. Details of the NCC program in Mississippi are printed in The Delta Ministry and December 24, 1964 Ecumenical Press Service.

Warren McKenna was especially interested for personnel from CWS or MCC to help in the NCC relief program. These two agencies are experienced in this field yet are not assisting this aspect of the developing Delta Ministry Program. At one time Edgar Stoesz spent quite some time trying to secure an experienced MCC worker to assist NCC but was unable to get any commitments.

WARREN MOORE Warren, a Memphis business man and former seminary student from Inter-Denominational Theological Seminary in Atlanta and Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, who is presently working for the Board of Christian Service of the General Conference Mennonite Church on a part-time basis, spent December 13 with me. The following is a brief summary of some of his concerns:

1. MCC relief work in the Delta is good and should temporarily be continued although it must be realized that more is needed than filling stomachs.

2. The people in the Delta should be air lifted out like MCC moved people to South America from Europe shortly after the last war. Warren, feels that this will make the white man die from his own venom. This is based on the assumption that Mississippi is a "foreign land" with a different ideology than the rest of the U.S.A. Amzie Moore would differ with this, stating that too many of the good educated Negroes with leadership ability have already left the state. Many poor that move North simply cause future problems by creating slums. Amzie will continually emphasize that Mississippi is part of the Union and the problem should be solved in their state.

Warren arrives at the correct conclusion based upon his assumption and likewise Amzie arrives at the correct conclusion based upon his assumption. Yet these two conclusions obviously are contradictory.

3. Warren also feels that MCC VS should assist at the Cleveland Center and explore other possibilities after getting established.

4. An emphasis on creative dialogue would naturally lead Warren to suggest that the MCC workers should live in a poor white transition community. This provides the opportunity to have dialogue with the neighboring white. It is almost naive to believe that one can communicate with whites while working with and in a Negro community, yet depending upon the personalities of the workers it would be an interesting experiment. How else can conditions be changed unless there is some reconciliation?

COFO The Council of Federated Organizations is the agency through which the civil rights organizations work in Mississippi. Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the advancement of Colored People (NAACP) are included in COFO. Most of the workers are Snickers. The activities during the past summer included freedom schools, community centers, and voter registration. Many summer workers remained in Mississippi at the completion of the summer to continue, concentrating especially on voter registration.

The dedication, commitment, courage and drive of the civil rights workers must be admired. However, there is wide diversity in the personnel and personal discipline on the local level. Yet they have a tremendous impact and are greatly appreciated by most Negroes.

Any Northerner interested in directly assisting the Negro, whether as a minister, MCC worker, or COFO worker, is classed as a civil rights worker or "outside agitator." The whites appear to see everyone as either being for or against them. In reality there is a wide diversity in the Negro community. But the Negro realizes the differences between a COFO worker and someone working under the sponsorship of a church organization like NCC or MCC.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS Before the trip and since returning individuals have asked numerous questions. Some of the more common inquiries and brief responses follow.

1. What is the greatest need?

The immediate short term needs are to provide clothes and food, especially for the children. There are other needs like helping those who lose their house, heat, electricity, welfare check, or U.S. commodities for no reason at all. The typical reply of the white clerk when approached is an excuse like, "she doesn't know where her mother lives." "She doesn't know where her husband lives." Naturally, there is the longer term need of assisting the Negro to become financially independent.

2. Are U.S. commodities available?

Yes, but it is difficult for a Negro to receive commodities and secondly the monthly supply lasts at the most only two weeks. A Negro must stand outside in the rain or cold for approximately three days before he gets to the front of the line to receive commodities. The white person can always break the line by stepping in front of the Negro any time he arrives. The long wait and comments made to the Negro while in the line shows extreme discrimination and the ineffectiveness of the present U.S. distribution program.

3. Is public welfare assistance available?

Yes, but too few receive welfare and some needy families are cut off for no reason at all. Here, like in the U.S. Commodities Program, the State controls the federal assistance and can use it to the disadvantage of the Negro. Most who register to vote or who cannot state the address of their mother or husband, or who receive relief from MCC, are cut off. It is unknown if the U.S. Commodities and welfare checks are reaching the poor whites without too much difficulty.

4. Can CWS secure supplies to distribute in the Delta?

Apparently they can. Warren McKenna reported that CWS was sending supplies to NCC, however, these are shipped in unmarked boxes. The NCC budget for over a three year period is \$518,000, receiving \$207,000 from the WCC.

5. a) To whom is relief given? How is it controlled?

To any needy family. It is difficult to be impartial and decide who is really the most needy. It can be controlled to a certain extent by keeping a file of everyone who received supplies. This was done with supplies MCC sent last fall and in December. The best control is to only serve the mother rather than each individual child. Only the mother can receive the supplies for the family.

b) What standards are applied to those receiving supplies?

Naturally, the COFO workers will have a tendency to help those who cooperate with them because these would be the nearest to them. MCC should give relief to anyone in need. However, I also had a certain standard. I, like Amzie, strongly favored those who had children of school age.

c) Is storage available?

People will make vacant stores or rooms available. It may be more difficult to secure storage on a longer term basis and rent would probably be requested.

6. What is the effect of the churches on the racial struggle?

Discrimination is at its zenith Sunday mornings. The church is a religious ghetto. Churches do not seem to speak to the issue of race. The status quo is upheld by the churches. No white minister can openly speak against discrimination without losing his job. Countless numbers of seminary trained ministers have been asked to leave the state for speaking openly.

Beverly Asbury, pastor of a Presbyterian Church and the College of Wooster, both in Ohio, writes, "they (established churches) have to be endured with a great deal of fatigue and boredom, and if I were faced with the attitude which exists in so many of them, I doubt that I could go to church."

It is obvious that the church exerts little effort to help the cause of integration or by preaching brotherhood. It would probably be more accurate to state that the church is a hindrance rather than a solution yet one must work within the church. Efficiency and success too often are the catch words. Human resources become the substitute for the divine power of God. As a result the established churches have become a social club.

One of the blessings of the Negro church is that some congregations permit civil rights workers to use the church building for mass meetings. However, the Negro minister also is not permitted to speak out openly without receiving opposition from the whites. One Negro layman probably made an accurate evaluation when he said "too many of our ministers in the South aren't saved."

7. Were you afraid?

Much time could be spent in speaking about one's feelings which makes interesting conversation but is not too beneficial. Suffice it to say that it is human to have fear when continually opposed when seeing brutality or be harassed. The realization that one is helping a worthy cause has a way of dispelling most of the fear. Also of great help was hearing about the courage of individuals like Amzie Moore or Joe McDonald, and by reading books like The Power of Non-Violence by Gregg.

Precautions must always be taken. During the daylight one avoids certain places and at nights avoids others. One is restricted. One also is never sure if the telephone conversations are monitored.