

Meldon Acheson Tatum, Concordia
July 22, 1965

Dear Mother and Dad,

Not much time, so will make this short. We ran into an impasse Monday, and Tuesday aft. about 5:30 a white guy attacked the group of us. He picked on me first and I got a black eye (look! Integrated face!) a semi-sprained wrist, (the one I always sprain if I don't treat it right.) and some bruises. Nothing serious. The others weren't hurt as bad. But it got the neighborhood out. Over 250 people gathered in 30 minutes. One of us was arrested for inciting a riot when he led them in a freedom song. (We bailed him out in an hour) Suddenly several people offered to let us stay with them and several local guys got their guns and guarded us that night and plan to continue as long as we're here. Four FBI agents interviewed us, (also) and today two guys from the Dept. of Commerce. We had a good meeting (over 300) yesterday; the people decided to meet again Saturday to set up an organization; boycott a segregated movie theater; and sign a petition for police protection. It looks like things are moving, and the Negro community feels guilty about letting 2 beatings occur in their neighborhood, so I walk around with my black eye and people can't get involved fast enough!

I have been talking to the FBI agents regularly here about C.R. (my beating, threats and just generally commiserating over mutual problems) All nice guys. The summer project ends Aug. 23. Core needs money desperately, (subsistence allowances to Staff have been cut off) and there is talk of closing down some projects to send people home to raise money. I may go to Tucson after Aug. 23 for that purpose. I'll have to see then whether personel here are needed more than money. If money is most crucial, I'll take the money-raising assignment.

Gotta run now.

Love, Mel

This letter is distributed to our people so that they might know what kind of situation Meldon is in as he endeavors to fulfill his mission. As you know he felt a compulsion to go and witness in this Core Mission Project. Our people of the Richland and Ollie Methodist Churches are giving him some financial and prayer support.

If you wish to write to Meldon, do so please through an address furnished by his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Acheson, Ollie, Iowa. Gifts should be sent through the church channels.

THE RICHLAND AND OLLIE METHODIST CHURCHES

Richland, Iowa

..... A.R. McMurrin, Minister