

Koinonia Farm
Route 2
Americus, Georgia
December 21, 1956

Dear friends,

Again it is the season in which we are reminded of the creative power of God! It is his love that cradles our existence and orders its relationships. We are giving thanks again at the bud of human love which blossomed into full flower like the world has seldom witnessed. Humbly we approach the lowliness of the miracle for we have experienced the blossom of His love in our life together this past year.

How does one talk of these deeper relationships? The Koinonia has been deepening its roots in the soil of this creative experience and we have been born into a closer, richer fellowship. But even to tell you this is not to say much. Perhaps it can best be told in the relation of the spirit to its manifestation in our life.

Last Christmas we announced that a neighbor family was coming to live with us as guests. This year that family has applied for membership and are growing in the life of the Koinonia. Another full member family was born into our midst when Gil Butler married Marguerite Reed in June. It was a lovely wedding fringed with the freshness of green matching the beginning of an abiding bond between them. Later in the year--Thanksgiving to be exact--one of the neighbor boys, Alma Jackson, who had been living with us, married Mary Munts. They have joined the community as guests.

Chris and Jenette Drescher became full members during the year, and though they are away on a business trip, They will return during this season. Joyce and Gertie Webster came as guests, and John Gabor is visiting with us. Ross Anderson is back from his trip and we are happy that he is taking up residence at Koinonia.

We have been blessed with a host of visitors, and though space has been scarce, we have not had to turn visitors away. We enjoy these interludes with our friends, student groups and work camps when we can catch up with their activities and witness to the joy that exists in our fellowship. One of the groups we entertained was the Continuations Committee of PEACEMAKERS. One weekend of discussion and fellowship brought us closer to an approach to our difficulties as they relate to a wider fellowship of ideas.

Out of the discussions with PEACEMAKERS a new enterprise was envisioned--an extension of our Roadside Market into a mail order business. The idea has developed beyond our wildest dreams and we are having to turn down smoked meat orders until our supply is replenished. We have become aware of how many folks in this nation are concerned with what is happening in South Georgia and we deeply appreciate the friendships which we have acquired in this undertaking.

The mail order idea grew out of the increasing reaction to the Supreme Court ruling which has kindled activity among the segregationists in the South. We felt the reaction first when our egg market began to drop; again when an injunction was served against our summer children's camp; when our Roadside Market was bombed and later pumped with buckshot; when economic pressures developed into a boycott of our products and our supplies. Perhaps the biggest blow in this whole period of distress was when one of our school children was mis-treated and we were faced with making a decision about his schooling. He is over 1500 miles away from home at Christmas and we miss him in our family celebration of the Joy and Peace of holiday expressions.

The publicity which has spread through the nation as a result of the story here has brought many friends to our aid. We have been publishing a newsletter to keep these friends abreast of developments. It has been due to the sharing of this host of people with us that we have been able to maintain the witness here. God's activity is not stopped by adversity and as a result of this outpouring of love we have been able to continue expanding the size of the group. We are in the process of building another dwelling unit to ease the housing shortage.

This year has witnessed the deepening of bonds of understanding between the Bruderhof and the Koinonia. Two of our member families, the Claude Nelsons and the Howard Johnsons, after prolonged visits in the Bruderhof communities, have continued seeking deeper extensions of their spiritual growth by joining the Brothers. We rejoice that they have found an answer to their needs, although we are missing the fellowship with them.

The Browne family was increased when a young man from St. Louis came to live with them. He is Gene Gulinson, a member of the Delmar Baptist Church. He is rapidly becoming a part of the family and of the community. He enjoys hunting and caring for the animals.

Even though the camp was not held on the farm this summer, but in Monteagle, Tennessee at the Highlander Folk School, we did have several young men visit for varying times--Lee Morgan, Stanley Thompson, Nicky Stasch (and his sister Pamela, who started in the U. Of Ga. this fall), and Jorgan Stenike. There was no lack of life while our children were away in camp.

This fall we had the privilege of having an Antioch College student with us for her internship, Audrey Smith. Seldom have we had a young person fit into the life as she was able and come up with so integrated a picture of the ideals and problems facing a community. We regret that school called her back, although we are rejoicing that young people like her are whetting their minds for a more complete experience of purposive activity.

The farm life has undergone changes which have made our work life more closely track our ideas of a total surrender to the Way. Just recently the women's activities have been integrated into the total community work program so that the line between family and community affairs is lessened. This does not mean the breaking down of family ties, but that the familial needs are considered as part of our community life. Every woman is assigned time with her children--time which formerly was caught between housecleaning, laundry, and community work (preparing meals, nursery, etc.) These assignments are made to cover the time corresponding to the men's work day. The evenings are still family focused.

The younger children's program has been divided into a Nursery and a Kindergarten. The nursery is for toddlers and babies and the kindergarten for those four and five years old. Each group has a separate space for activity and a program fitted to their development.

All in all, we are becoming a bigger family. Our children are growing and developing under the spirit of the concern of the entire community and we are providing more and more activities out of the fabric of our experience of A Way of Life under God. His Grace and Love, His protection and His blessing have been evident to us this year as never before. We are still aware, however, that His peace and goodwill are not abounding in this world. We are still aware, that we are only being born into the giving up of our lives to His Purposes.

As the whole world is quiet in expectancy of the time when the spirit of this season may become flesh and dwell among us, we entreat your prayers that we shall be ready to meet the demands of this new day in the South; that we shall have wisdom, understanding, and love.

Our greetings come to you therefore, out of the joy of the rebirth of the Christmas spirit. We entreat you to join with us in the ordering of relationships around you so that this spirit may become flesh and dwell among us. Wherever this Body is incarnate, there shall the fruits of the spirit be--and the most lovely of these is PEACE.

FROM

The Koinonia

Mo.

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