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October 21, 1968

A PERSONAL LETTER FROM CLARENCE JORDAN TO FRIENDS OF KOINONIA:

For several years it has been clear that Koinonia stands at the end of an era or perhaps its existence. Its goals and methods which were logical and effective in the 1940's and 50's seem no longer relative to an age which is undergoing vast and rapid changes. An integrated, Christian community was a very practical vehicle through which to bear witness to a segregated society a decade ago, but now it is too slow, too weak, not aggressive enough. Its lack of mobility gives it the appearance of a house on the bank of a river as the rushing torrents of history swirl by, leaving it with but memories of its active past. Other factors, which cannot be mentioned here, also contributed to the feeling that this approach is no longer valid.

One, however, must be mentioned, and that is the agricultural situation. When Koinonia was begun in 1942, farming in the South was still somewhat simple and there was great need and opportunity for the skills which we were able to contribute to the situation. During those first 10 to 15 years we had considerable impact upon the agricultural problems of this area. But in recent years the big machines and the business experts have swept the sharecroppers, tenants and little farmers off the land and into the ghetto. And we feel as needed and as effective as a freezer display at an Eskimo convention.

Something had to give. The obvious answer was to call it quits. The group had already dwindled, for a variety of reasons, to a mere handful--two families, to be exact. About a year ago, Florence and I decided that we would seek other directions for our lives. Warm and loyal friends extended us invitations to join faculties, to pastor churches, to be this-and-that-in-residence, etc. Some of these were challenging; one I had just about decided to accept. But somehow, nothing seemed to really click. Perhaps I was suffering from "battle fatigue" or was just plain tired. For quite a while it was as though I were living in a spiritual vacuum. No joy, no excitement, no sense of mission.

In this state of torpor, I got a very brief note from Millard Fuller, director of the Tougaloo College Development Committee. My first contact with Millard was in December of 1965 when he came by here to visit for a half-hour with his friend Al Henry, who was living here at the time. Millard was then about 30, a tremendously successful business man and outstanding layman in the United Church of Christ. As the half-hour stretched into a day and the day finally into a month, we learned that this was a time of deep spiritual crisis for Millard and his wife, Linda, and that both had reached the brink of destruction. Millard had become "a money addict" and was more enslaved to it than any alcoholic to his bottle. So great was his appetite that he had already become a millionaire and was reaching for more. But God reached for him, turned him around, and gave him the wisdom to do what even the rich young ruler in the bible wouldn't do--"Go, sell what thou

hast and give it to the poor, and come, follow me." During that month here he transacted by phone much of the business necessary in liquidating his assets in Montgomery, Ala., and distributing them to charitable purposes. Being a white native of Alabama, Millard wanted to express his discipleship to Christ in selfless service to blacks. He got a job raising money for Tougaloo College, a Negro school near Jackson, Mississippi. In this, he was both happy and successful.

His note to me in May of this year was brief and direct. "I have just resigned my job with Tougaloo. What have you got up your sleeve?" Nothing. Nothing up my sleeve, or in my head or heart. I'm blank. But wait a minute. Does God have something up his sleeve--for both of us? I got on the phone and called Millard at his New York office. Could God be trying to say something to us, to accomplish some purpose through us?

We decided to get together at once and discuss it. I would be preaching in a few days at the Oakhurst Baptist Church in Atlanta. Millard said he would fly down and meet me there. The pastor of the church, John Nichol, turned his study over to us and we spent all day talking and praying. At the end, both of us were convinced that God had given a radically new direction to our lives.

We still cannot fully articulate this leading of God's Spirit. But we had the deep feeling that modern man's problems stem almost entirely from his loss of any sense of meaningful participation with God in His purposes for mankind. For most people God really and truly is dead, stone dead. Or perhaps he has never been alive. With no upward reach, with no sense of partnership with God, man has chosen to be a loner, trying to solve on his own, but always in deep frustration and desperation, crushing problems which increasingly threaten to destroy him. Like the ancient architects of Babel, he proudly and pitifully calls, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." And it is extremely doubtful that with all our knowledge and skill we will be any more successful in saving ourselves than were the men of old. From bitter experience we should know by now that "unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

The church has been saying this all along, but has not believed its own message. So it has thrown up its hands and joined the multitudes who look to government for salvation. But even with limitless billions of dollars at its disposal, government simply cannot, because of its very nature, give man a God-dimension to his life. It is inherently incapable of reaching the inner recesses of man's being which must be touched if life on this planet is to be even passingly tolerable.

So we want to throw every ounce of our weight into helping men to radically re-structure their lives so as to be in partnership with God. Later I'll give more specific details about how we will go about this.

It has also become clear to us that as man has lost his identity with God he has lost it with his fellowman. We fiercely compete with one another as if we were enemies, not brothers. We want only to kill human beings for whom Christ died. Our cities provide us anonymity, not community. Instead of partners, we are aliens and strangers. Greed consumes us, and self-interest separates us and confines us to ourselves or our own group.

As a result, the poor are being driven from rural areas; hungry, frustrated, angry masses are huddled in the cities; suburbanites walk in fear; the chasm between blacks and whites grows wider and deeper; war hysteria invades every nook and cranny of the earth.

We must have a new spirit--a spirit of partnership with one another.

But how can these things become flesh and blood? How does the dream become deed and the vision reality? Can the lofty speculation be transformed into practical, hard-nosed action?

Even though both Millard and I are dreamers and visionaries, we have had plenty of experience with the stern, down-to-earth facts of life. Yet these questions overwhelmed us, and we desperately felt the need to share the vision with and seek the counsel of spiritually-sensitive and socially-aware men of God. Accordingly, we called together in mid-August about fifteen such men to come to Koinonia for a four-day session of seeking, thinking, talking. They were business men, politicians, writers, ministers, free-lancers --all with a deep compassion for their fellowman. From this conference emerged a course of action which, for want of a better word, we shall call PARTNERS. It has three prongs: (1) Communication; (2) Instruction; (3) Application.

(1) By communication we mean the sowing of the seed, the spreading of the radical ideas of the gospel message; the call to faith in God and the reshaping and restructuring of our lives around his will and purpose; the promise of a new spirit which produces a new way of life. It means "to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." To do this we will use every available means of modern communication. We will travel and speak extensively across the land and throughout the world. We will make tapes, records, films, publish books and circulate literature in every way possible. Already a good start has been made in this direction, but it will be greatly intensified.

It was felt that I should get to work on this immediately, and that Millard should assume full responsibility for the administration of Koinonia so that I can be released as soon as possible. The transfer should be complete by the first of the year, when my family will move somewhere into the Atlanta area. Being near a large airport will greatly facilitate travel, and the opportunities for "communication" will be much better in this great cross-roads of the South.

(2) By instruction we mean the constant teaching and training of the "partners" to enable them to become more effective and mature. There will be traveling "schools" to follow up and conserve the results of the speaking and communicating, to keep alive the new spirit, to strengthen and encourage. The first such school is already scheduled for early January. There will also be conferences and retreats, such as one held here at Koinonia, October 18-20. Some of the present facilities here will no doubt be used increasingly for this purpose.

(3) Application, in its initial stages, will consist of partnership industries, partnership farming, and partnership housing. These will be implemented through a FUND FOR HUMANITY.

The FUND has already been set up and is being incorporated as a non-profit organization. Its purpose will be two-fold: (a) to provide an inheritance for the disinherited, and (b) to provide a means through which the possessed may share with and invest in the dispossessed. What the poor need is not charity but capital, not case-workers but co-workers. And what the rich need is a wise, honorable and just way of divesting themselves of their over-abundance. The Fund for Humanity will meet both of these needs.

Money for the Fund will come from shared gifts by those who feel that they have more than they need, from non-interest bearing loans from those who cannot afford to

make the gift but who do want to provide working capital for the disinherited, and from the voluntarily shared profits from the partnership industries, farms, and houses. As a starter, it has been agreed to transfer all of Koinonia Farm's assets of about \$250,000 to the Fund. Other gifts are already beginning to come in.

The Fund will give away no money. It is not a hand-out. It will provide capital for the partnership enterprises.

The first enterprise to be launched is partnership farming. Under this plan all land will be held in trust by the Fund for Humanity but will be used by the partners free of charge. Thus, usership will replace ownership. This can be done because the Fund's capital has been provided by those who care and there is no need to pay interest on it. This is extremely important, for under the present system a farmer with an investment of \$150,000, which is not at all unusual, will pay \$10,500 a year in interest alone when figured at 7%. (We know farmers who are paying 8%.) Thus, with corn at the present price of about \$1 a bushel and the profit at about 30¢, the farmer would have to produce 35,000 bushels just to pay his interest. He simply can't bear this crushing load. He can either quit, move to the city and go on relief, or he must inherit the land--from his earthly father or his Heavenly Father. A poor man's hope lies only in the latter.

The Fund for Humanity seeks to provide such an inheritance. And like all inheritances, a man does not pay rent or interest on it. But out of gratitude for what others have done to set him free, he should himself share generously and cheerfully to help set others free. Or as Jesus put it, "You have received it as a gift, so share it as a gift." The partners, then, will be strongly encouraged, though not required, to contribute as liberally as possible to the Fund so as to keep enlarging it and making more capital available to others. If the partners have the right spirit (and I cannot see how this or any system can work without that) and there should be growing numbers--which it seems reasonable to predict--the Fund should be self-generative and ever expanding.

We think that each partnership unit should consist of one to four partners, with the units grouped close enough to cooperate with machinery, labor, and social, recreational and spiritual activities.

In addition to capital, the partners may need technical advice and spiritual nurture. These experts and shepherds will be provided by the PARTNERS organization. We anticipate that they will be volunteers arising from the speaking and teaching activities.

We have here over 1,000 acres with which to begin now. The Wittkampers will continue here as a partner family, and another family--the Al Zooks--have already arrived. Al and Ann have four young children, and while coming here directly from Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, Ill., they have had much farm experience. A local Negro family is very "warm" and will possibly become the Zooks partners, sharing equally with them in the enterprise. Some high school boys, who want to earn college money, will probably set up a cattle feeding operation. (One young "partner" experimented along this line this year and did quite well.) In each instance, land and capital are provided but not given, on faith, at no charge. As the partners are able, they will repay the capital over and above their gifts to the Fund, so as to free it to be invested elsewhere. The land remains in permanent trust and is therefore freed from the evils of speculation.

The same principles will be applied to partnership industries. We already have a fairly flourishing pecan shelling plant, fruit cake bakery, candy kitchen and mail

order business. Once again, partners will operate these ventures with no capital outlay in the beginning and never any rent or interest. Here again PARTNERS will provide technical assistance and pastoral care in its finest sense. As the businesses become successful, they should free the original capital and also enlarge the Fund for Humanity to foster other undertakings in needy areas both here and in other lands. Millard Fuller is an extremely imaginative, energetic, and practical business man (he had to be to make his million in a mere eight years) and already has some brilliant ideas for other partnership industries.

Partnership housing is concerned with the idea that the urban ghetto is to a considerable extent the product of rural displacement. People don't move to the city unless life in the country has become intolerable or impossible. They do not voluntarily choose the degrading life in the big city slums; it is forced upon them. If land in the country is made available to them on which to build a decent house, and if they can get jobs nearby to support their families, they'll stay put.

So we have recently laid off 42 half-acre home sites and are making them available to displaced rural families. Four acres in the center are being reserved as a community park and recreational area. Twenty of the tracts are being sold outright for a nominal sum and the families will make their own arrangements for building and financing. The other 22 sites will be developed according to partnership principles. The Fund for Humanity will put up a four-bedroom house with bath, kitchen and living room (this can be done at present costs for \$5500, lot and all), and this will be sold to a family over a 20-year period with no interest, only a small monthly administration charge. Thus the cost will be about \$25 a month as compared with \$57 a month for the usual interest-bearing financing. For a poor person, this can be the difference between owning a house and not owning one. The interest forces him to pay for two but get only one.

As with farming and industries, the partner family will gradually free the initial capital to build houses for others, and will be encouraged to share at least a part of their savings on interest with the Fund for Humanity. Even as all are benefitted, so should all share. If, as Jesus says, "it is more blessed to give than to get," then even the poorest should not be denied the extra blessedness of giving.

Perhaps I have now given you at least some understanding of PARTNERS and the new direction for my own life. I would like to encourage each of you to re-think your life and make whatever adjustments you feel necessary to bring it into line with the will of God. Augustine once said, "He who possesses a surplus possesses the goods of others." That's a polite way of saying that anybody who has too much is a thief. If you are a "thief", perhaps you should set a reasonable living standard for your family and restore the "stolen goods" to humanity, either through the Fund or by some other suitable means. Some of you may wish to join us and seek the new life of partnership with God and man. Above all, I beg you to pray that we may have the wisdom, humility, patience and love to be faithful to him who has called us to this exciting venture. And may God's peace rule in your hearts.

Yours in faith and expectation,

Clarence Jordan

GENERAL NEWSLETTER

The attached letter from Clarence Jordan gives much of the news about what is happening at Koinonia these days. To that, however, we want to add the more "homey" news, plus some incidents we've suffered through within recent weeks ... and a word or two about the pecan business.

Millard Fuller and his family joined us in late July. Millard and Linda have three children: Chris, 8, Kim, 6, and Faith, 17 months.

The Al Zook family joined us in two "shifts". Ann came down from Evanston, Illinois the first of September with their four children (Reba Kay, 9, Rodney, 8, Paula, 6 and Suzanne, 3) in time for the older children to start school. Al came down a month later after working out a notice at his previous place of employment.

Linda and Ann work six hours each day while Margaret Whitkamper keeps the two youngest children. Linda is secretary to Clarence and Millard while Ann is all over the place - making candy, filing, packaging products, etc.

Will Whitkamper still keeps us well supplied with fresh vegetables from his garden and, of course, keeps us in step with his great spirit.

Florence Jordan is her usual efficient and congenial self - handling pecan orders for 12,000 customers and greeting a steady stream of visitors .

David Whitkamper, Danny Whitkamper and Lennie Jordan are again attending the Negro high school in Americus. These teen age boys are still totally isolated from other white youngsters in the area. Among blacks there is total acceptance but among whites, there is total rejection. The younger children attend the white elementary school near the farm where they are accepted by the other children. White parents are not able to incarnate their prejudices in their children until about age twelve. Incidentally, David, Danny, and Lennie are starting a little business of selling pine cones to help pay for upcoming college expenses. See enclosed sheet "Pine Cones for Christmas".

Our spiritual life centers around Sunday School and Worship services in the community dining hall on Sunday mornings and Bible study at 9 PM on Wednesdays. At the study sessions, Clarence shares with all of us from his new Cotton Patch translation of Matthew which will be put in book form during 1969. (His translation of Luke-Acts will be published in February.)

What a joy it is to see these ancient writings jump to life under the pen of Clarence. We see that the message of Christ is relevant today and radically affects our lives when we listen. Behold, the Kingdom of God is at hand, now! Today is the day of salvation.

Within the past two months, we've had some fresh encounters with blatant discrimination. Some of you will recall an incident at the First Baptist Church in Americus where a group of us were ejected in 1965 for attempting to attend a Christmas service. Our group was integrated and included a white woman who was the daughter of the speaker of the evening at the church. Millard was also a member of our group that evening. Since 1965 the newspapers have reported certain "changes in attitude" among Southern Baptist Churches so Millard decided to attend this church again, to see if things had changed there. He went in August with a group of white farm visitors. They were received very politely. After the service, he sought out the "hospitality" chairman who had thrown them out in 1965. He asked him if Negroes were now allowed in the church. His answer was a quick "No". He inquired if physical force would be used to eject them. His reply was that he'd keep "undesirables" out "by whatever force necessary".

In late August, a young African visitor to the farm was involved in an auto accident. He was not seriously hurt, but had to go into town for medical treatment and dental work. At the doctor's office, he was asked to sit in the "colored" waiting room - marked as such. He refused to be segregated and sat, instead, in the main waiting room. Even though the room was packed with white patients waiting to see the doctor, this young man was called for treatment within three minutes, ahead of all the other patients.

At the dentist's office, however, he didn't fare so well. When he wouldn't go around back and sit in the little Negro waiting room, the dentist refused to treat him. (This incident has been reported to the Justice department.)

There have been other incidents like these, but you get the idea. In the rural south there is still a long way to go. Old customs and prejudices die a slow and painful death.

Incidentally, because of the wreck, we now have only one car for four families. We're in the market for another vehicle. Do you have a good used car for sale at a reasonable price?

WE ARE HAPPY TO REPORT THAT SALES OF PECAN PRODUCTS ARE WAY UP FROM LAST YEAR. AS YOU KNOW, WE DID NOT INCREASE PRICES THIS YEAR EVEN THOUGH PECAN PRICES GENERALLY ARE HIGHER AND ALL OUR COSTS HAVE ADVANCED. YOUR LARGER ORDERS ARE A REAL BLESSING - MANY THANKS!!! BUT, YOU WILL NEED TO GET YOUR ORDERS IN EARLY BECAUSE WE ARE JAMMED UP WITH THE LARGER NUMBER OF ORDERS.

THE PECAN COOKBOOKS, ESPECIALLY, ARE A MOST POPULAR ITEM. HEAR A FEW COMMENTS FROM CUSTOMERS:

"The Pecan Cookbook is wonderful! I feel most of my pecan customers will share my enthusiasm."

"Thank you for the Pecan Cookbook. I love it."

"The Pecan Cookbook is just what I needed. It has come at the appropriate time for me, as I was beginning to get the Christmas wrinkles in my brow, pondering over what I could send to friends ... so your book and pecan idea has been almost a life saver."

"The Pecan Cookbook is excellent."

"I am thrilled with the Pecan Cookbook."

THESE PECAN COOKBOOKS ARE EXCELLENT FOR A FUND RAISING PROJECT (GROUPS ARE ORDERING UP TO 100 AT A TIME!), OR AS GIFT ITEMS. SEND YOUR GIFT ORDERS IN NOW FOR SHIPMENT AT ANY TIME YOU SPECIFY. WHAT COULD BE A NICER GIFT THAN A PECAN COOKBOOK AND SOME PECANS FOR A WEDDING, A CHRISTMAS GIFT OR ALMOST ANY OTHER SPECIAL OCCASION?

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN THIS WORK. COME TO SEE US AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN. YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME.

October 21, 1968

PINE CONES FOR CHRISTMAS!

The high school boys at the East - Emma, David, and Barry - have started a little business to build up a fund for college. Call page one of the general newsletter.

Prices for pine cones are listed below. They are gathered right here on the farm, fresh off the pine trees. Every one is perfectly shaped and in beautiful natural color. You can paint your own cones any color you choose - or just leave them the way they are. If you prefer we will paint them for you in silver, green, red, or blue. Send your order in now and send these boys scurrying up a pine tree! All prices listed below include postage. The listed prices are all you pay.

PINE CONES

(4 1/2-5 1/2" tall, 3-4" in diameter)

1 doz. natural	\$1.95
2 doz. natural	3.50
3 doz. or more natural	1.75 a doz.
1 doz. painted	\$2.25
2 doz. painted	3.95
3 doz. or more painted	1.95 a doz.

MIXED CONES

(3 1/2-4 1/2" tall, 1 1/2-2 1/2" in diameter)

1 doz. natural	\$1.85
2 doz. natural	3.35
3 doz. or more natural	1.65 a doz.
1 doz. painted	\$2.15
2 doz. painted	3.75
3 doz. or more painted	1.85 a doz.

(2-3" tall, 1-2" in diameter)

1 doz. natural	\$1.50
2 doz. natural	2.75
3 doz. or more natural	1.35 a doz.
1 doz. painted	\$1.65
2 doz. painted	2.95
3 doz. or more painted	1.50 a doz.

MIXED CONES

(1/3 Jumbo, 1/3 Med., 1/3 Midget)

1 doz. natural	\$1.75
2 doz. natural	3.20
3 doz. or more natural	1.65 a doz.
1 doz. painted	\$2.00
2 doz. painted	3.20
3 doz. or more painted	1.75 a doz.

NOTE: PAINT SPECIFY COLOR (SILVER, GREEN, RED OR BLUE)

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*Add'l postage only on Western and foreign shipments. See price list. GIFT CARD SIGNED: _____
Mail to: KOINONIA FARM, AMERICUS, GA. 31709 Total Amount Enclosed: _____

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QUANTITY	ITEM	FLAVOR, ETC.	POSTAGE*	TOTAL

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KOINONIA COMMUNITY

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