

KOINONIA PARTNERS

ROUTE 2

Americus, Georgia 31709

October 27, 1969

FALL NEWSLETTER

1969

Have you ever tried to write thousands of people at the same time? If so, you know how difficult it is to write a Koinonia Newsletter! We wish time permitted a personal letter to each of our "partners" around the world. But you know how that is!

We do appreciate the letters you write to us. In this busy season, going to the mail box is like opening the front door to greet a hundred old friends and many new ones. What an experience! And it happens here every day . . . except Sunday.

Sunday is another story.

That's the day the white churches tell you to come to church 'cause you're welcome, but if you do come and ain't white, you ain't welcome. This is "understood" in polite Christian society around here, but is never openly spoken or written about. I'll tell you a little story to illustrate.



This summer a group of college students were at the farm to erect equipment in a park and playground for the new housing development (a "partner" from New Jersey donated \$3,000 for purchasing the equipment.) In the group was a young white boy - Don Chappell - who had been raised in the Congo as the child of Methodist missionaries. He came to Koinonia to help with the playground project before journeying on to California where he was to start his college career. During his stay with us he decided to make contact with the local Methodists. Accordingly, he went in to church one Sunday morning, but unfortunately made the

mistake of taking with him some of his friends among whom was a Puerto Rican fellow and a Negro boy. The hospitality committee barred their entry.

Don was upset.

Since the Methodists had sent his folks to tell blacks in Africa about Christ, he didn't understand why the church in his own country wouldn't want to tell blacks here about Christ. He stayed to talk with the pastor. Among other things, the pastor told Don he ought to cut his hair (his hair was probably 2" longer than a

military cut) and get a decent shirt. (Don was wearing a Congolese dress shirt - worn on special occasions in the Congo.) Don took note of the suggestions and promptly returned to Koinonia where Linda Fuller (the local barber!) cut his hair. During the week, Don went back to see the pastor, properly clipped and shaven and wearing an American tie and shirt. The pastor didn't mention the new look but did observe that Don still wouldn't be welcome unless he shed his black friends. Don balked at this because he said basic Christian principles were at stake. The pastor told Don that he personally regretted the "closed door" policy of the church but that he was not going to buck the policy. At this point, Don requested an opportunity to meet with the young people of the church in order to discuss the Christian issues involved. He promised to come alone to the meeting, properly dressed and without black friends. The pastor said he would take the matter up with the proper officials. Two days later Don was informed that he would not be welcome at a youth meeting because the church leaders were afraid of the ideas he might present and that he also might cause friction and disunity.



There's more to this story -- Ladon Sheats, (mentioned in Clarence Jordan's letter) took it up with Methodist officials in New York and Atlanta. Ladon was invited to church by the pastor on his next visit to Americus and when Ladon said he might accept, a local judge called back to ask that he not accept the invitation . . . Clarence Jordan, Millard Fuller, and Ladon Sheats met with the board of the church . . . a group from Koinonia made another attempt to attend church and were turned away - yes, there's more, but you get the sad picture. And the saddest part of all is that this hypocrisy is not limited to the First Methodist Church

First Methodist - YOU are NOT welcome

of Americus, Georgia. It is not limited to Americus. It is not limited to Georgia! But we who love justice and abhor the ungodly, especially the ungodly clothed in the traditional garb of righteousness, must not be weary, we must not faint. We must continue to pray, to work and to witness for brotherhood and for righteousness.

We wrote you in the Summer Newsletter about the arrest of Millard and Linda Fuller and their two-year-old daughter, Faith, in Unadilla, Georgia, for "visiting with Niggers" in violation of a city ordinance. After their release from the local police station with a warning to leave town because "we can't be responsible for your safety," Millard phoned Lorraine DeGilio at Koinonia to have her phone the FBI and ask them to come to Unadilla. They told Lori that they could not get involved since no actual violence had been committed. In June, two months after the arrest, THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION learned about it and wrote a front-page article on the incident. A few days later, the FBI sought out the Fullers in a remote North Dakota village, where they were on a combination vacation and speaking tour, and questioned them for three hours. Theoretically, the case is now in the

hands of Mr. Terris Leonard, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. Some of you may want to encourage Mr. Leonard to act on this matter.

The Matzes are coming back! In the Summer Newsletter we told you about Willard and Henrietta Matz. They were here for three months in the Spring doing volunteer work for LAOS. Willard is a retired agriculture teacher and Henrietta is a retired home economics teacher, from Attica, Ohio. While here, Willard erected a tractor shop for the farming program, and Henrietta helped in the office. They are coming back in November to join the Koinonia family. Willard will be helping make cabinets in the new houses in the Koinonia Partners housing development. Henrietta will again work in the office.

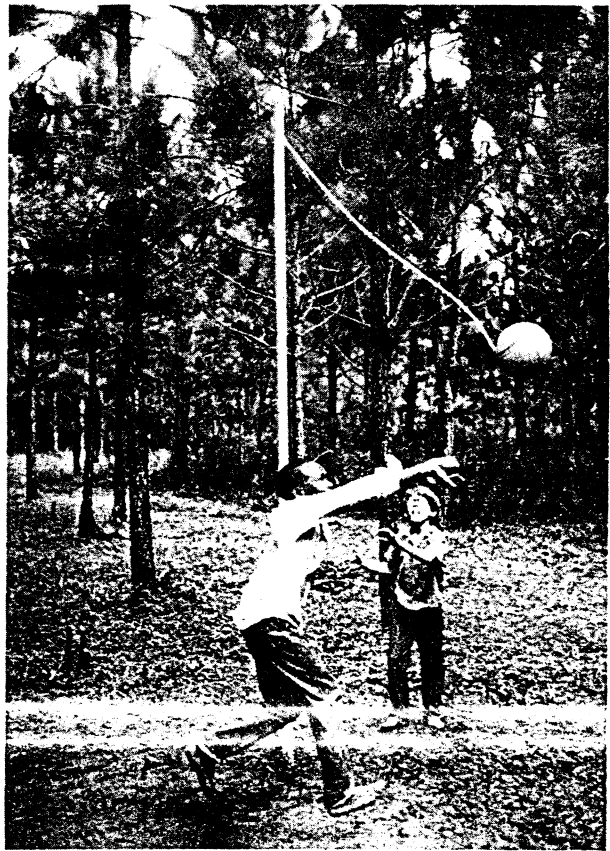
Several other new people have come to Koinonia within recent months. Carol Brink, who worked with Colloquy magazine in Philadelphia, is from Boston. She is helping prepare news releases, magazine articles, and other written material for the communications phase of Koinonia Partners.

George Maendel and Nelson Frey are doing two years voluntary service at Koinonia as their alternative service to the draft. They are working under the Eastern Mennonite Board. Nelson is from Pennsylvania and George hails from North Dakota. Both young men are tremendous assets to our program. Nelson is an accomplished carpenter so he has been busy working in the new office (now complete) and with the housing project. George has been helping combine peanuts and corn.

Lena Hofer is a young Canadian woman who was raised in a Hutterite Christian Colony in Manitoba. She is now attending school at Sumter High in Americus. (She, Lennie Jordan and Danny Wittkamper are still the only whites in Sumter High.) In her spare time, Lena paints everything in sight. She was in charge of painting and varnishing the new office. She is also doing some of the painting in the new houses.

Ariel McCloskey and her 19-month-old-son, Ivan, arrived from New Jersey in September. Ariel, recently widowed by the untimely death of her husband, is a talented writer who is now researching a prospective book for Koinonia to publish.

Joseph Johnson and Al Zook had a good year with their agricultural program. They combined 87 tons of peanuts from 87 acres. In case you don't know, that's pretty good - - - and makes a lot of peanut butter! We still have a few peanuts



Playground in Housing Project

on hand (most were sold right from the field). If you'd like some, we'll ship them out for 30¢ a pound, plus actual freight charges. The corn crop was good too but not as good as the peanuts. We won't brag about that!

Lennie and Thomas are beginning to feed their 97 steers for sale later in the winter. Their partnership venture looks great so far.

Clarence has been chief "advisor" to all the farming partners, so many days we've seen him flat on his back with grease dripping in his face while he "advises" about a broken chain on the corn combine. (Kind of reminds us of the American "advisors" in Vietnam.) When he isn't under a combine, Clarence has been translating the rest of the New Testament. LUKE-ACTS is just off the press and can now be ordered along with the new record JUDAS. Both of these new publications are listed in the price list.



Joseph Johnson combining peanuts

There's more news. But this is enough for now. Remember to get your holiday order for pecan products in early this year. There's a big crop this season and the orders are heavy. We don't want you to be left out!

Warm greetings from all of us at Koinonia.

KOINONIA PARTNERS

PHONE (912) 924-7253

ROUTE 2

Americus, Georgia 31709

October 27, 1969

A PERSONAL LETTER FROM CLARENCE JORDAN TO FRIENDS OF KOINONIA:

When I wrote to you a year ago, I told you that Koinonia Farm had come to the end of an era and that we were dreaming of a new venture called Koinonia Partners. We felt that the new program offered at least a few practical answers to some of mankind's most pressing and perplexing problems.

Now I want to share with you how the vision, even though far from fulfillment, is slowly becoming reality, and what our hopes are for the coming year.

The old charter was totally inadequate to turn our vision into action, so it has been amended to bring our legal structure in line with the new work. Koinonia Partners is now a non-profit organization qualified for tax-exempt status. Appropriate forms have been filed with the IRS to have us declared such an organization. A ruling is expected soon. Koinonia Partners will be governed by a board of directors consisting of three to seven members. The present directors are Ladon Sheats of New York, Dallas Lee of Atlanta, and Thomas Boone of Jackson, Mississippi. These men are faithful disciples of Jesus Christ who love God and their fellow man. They are aware of their great responsibility and have accepted it with humility. The administration of affairs here is in the hands of Millard Fuller, about whom I told you in my previous letter.

During this first year we have sought out dedicated people to share the dream and to be our partners. Materialism, competitiveness and self-interest are so deeply entrenched in our culture that they have almost exterminated the spirit of partnership and sharing. But people with this spirit have been coming. Many more are needed but we have faith that, in time, they will come. The breed is not yet extinct.

Perhaps our greatest concern during this first year was whether or not the idea would strike fire in the hearts of people throughout the world. Was it truly of God? Had its hour come? Did it make sense to a searching generation? Or would a mere handful dance in its light?

These questions have not been fully answered, but sincere people from California to the Carolinas, from Africa to Australia, have joined the circle of partnership. Many have participated with their sustained prayers and good will; with generous gifts and non-interest loans; with time, talents, and wise counsel. A few have answered the call to radical discipleship by drastically altering their life-styles to align with the teachings of Jesus.

In previous newsletters we informed you about the progress of Koinonia Partners' three major thrusts: communicating the revolutionary Gospel of Jesus, intensive instruction in discipleship, and the practical application of Jesus' teachings to human need. But because Christians generally have been more noted for their talk than their action, we feel a particular need for application, which expresses itself at present in Partnership farming, industries, and housing. The needs in this area are vast and immediate. Today is the day.

To provide interest-free capital for these enterprises, we established a FUND FOR HUMANITY. To date, more than \$100,000 in gifts and non-interest loans has come into the Fund. While this is encouraging, it is a long way from Isaiah's hope that "every valley (the poor) shall be filled, and every mountain and hill (the rich) shall be brought low." Instead of filling a valley, it is barely enough to fill a chuck-hole. One partnership farm requires more than \$100,000. The forty-two houses we hope to build for displaced rural families who might otherwise be forced into urban ghettos, will cost about \$300,000 to complete. This may sound like a lot of money, but I know of a church that recently spent \$75,000 just to renovate its pipe organ. (Enough to woo the most discriminating of celestial beings who might be addicted to organ music!) I know of another church that spent \$25,000 to install a huge fountain on its lawn, justified no doubt by the fact that Baptists need a lot of water. The cost of any one of several sanctuaries in Americus, Georgia, exceeds the total cost of all forty-two partnership houses. In fact, I believe that a sum of money equal to that invested in ecclesiastical real estate in this county would more than abolish its sub-standard housing. Perhaps it is easier to put a roof over the head of God, whom we have not seen, than over the head of our brothers, whom we have seen.

It is my hope that during the coming year we can complete at least twenty partnership houses at a cost of \$130,000 to \$140,000. (As you know these are modern, attractive 3 and 4 bedroom concrete houses which presently cost \$6,500 each to build. The family pays slightly over \$25 a month for twenty years with no interest charge. Two houses are already complete. A third is under construction and others are in the planning stage.)

When my wife and I were in South Africa last spring, we visited Kruger National Park, a vast expanse of 8,000 square miles (5,120,000 acres), which has been reserved for giraffes, elephants, lions, zebras, impalas, and other wild animals. If such a Garden of Eden can be set aside for the free use of animals, it is not unreasonable to make large tracts of land available for the free use of another of God's creatures--dispossessed man.

We want to buy another 5,000 acres of land, in addition to the 1,400 we already have, to emancipate it from the evils of speculation and exploitation and to make it available for the free use of disinherited people. If this land is purchased at the present rate of about \$200 an acre, it will cost one million dollars.

The partnership industries have expanded remarkably in the past year but they must be accelerated even more. Jobs in rural industries are the only hope for absorbing the people being displaced by agricultural mechanization. I hope that we can provide at least an additional 100 jobs in 1970.

So even though we are a century too late, we invite you to join with us in heeding the wise counsel of the ancient law-giver who said, "And if thy brother ... be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of the flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him" (Deuteronomy 15:12-14). To open our hands liberally to the children of those who served sixty times six years is not reparation, it is decency and wisdom and love. May we all have the grace to be God's men at this late hour.