

File KOINONIA PARTNERS

ROUTE 2

Americus, Georgia 31709

KOINONIA FALL NEWSLETTER #1 SEPTEMBER 1970

Many people out in the county around Koinonia are frustrated and angry these days because of the recent total integration of schools. They are quick to find fault with anyone who disagrees on this "crisis." Add to this explosive situation the ingredient of a "more visible Koinonia" due to (1) new families moving in and an increasing flow of visitors and volunteers, (2) an expanded farming and rural industry program and (3) a vigorous house-building project for displaced rural families, and you come up with potential trouble. So when open hostility, which has been dormant for several years, flares up again, it is deeply regrettable but no real surprise.

"Incidents" involving Koinonia people have been increasing in recent weeks. First, some of our young people were cursed at in front of the Dairy Queen in Americus. Then, several days later, food was thrown at them at the same place. In mid-August, Nelson Frey, George Maendel, and Dan and Beverly Prutsman were yelled at by a group of young men in a car in town. The youths followed our car beyond the city limits where they crashed a beer bottle into the side of the Koinonia car, as they roared past.

During the last week of August, Rodney Zook, the ten-year-old son of Al and Ann Zook, was stopped on the highway at Koinonia by a man who cursed him out for living with "a bunch of nigger-loving communists." Later that same day, Dallas Lee and Ed Young were driving toward Americus when a car pulled up behind them. The car followed right on their bumper for several miles and then the driver began making gestures as if he were reaching into the glove compartment. At that point, he pulled alongside the car and dramatically threw up his arm toward the driver of the Koinonia car as if to shoot a gun. Fortunately, he was bluffing. As the car tore on past, he swerved right in front of Ed causing him to move to the shoulder. At the first stop sign south of Americus the man's car was stopped. When Ed and Dallas came along, he jumped out, cursing and challenging them to a fight. When no response was made, he crawled back in his auto and roared off.

A week later, following our weekly Bible study, Jerry Anthony, Don Chappell and Ladon Sheats were walking up the highway toward Sunny Acres, the house occupied by most of the single fellows at Koinonia. About a hundred yards north of the main gate, a car approached them. The car slowed down, and just as it pulled even, an object was hurled out the window. It struck Ladon square in the face, felling him instantly. The car then raced off as Don and Jerry pulled Ladon to the shoulder of the road. Then they noticed that the car had stopped. Jerry ran for help as Don pulled Ladon further into the bushes. Moments later the car pulled on off down the road, not to be seen again. Jerry returned within moments with Millard Fuller and Jim Barnard. Ladon stumbled into the back seat, and they raced to the hospital. There the damage was assessed. His left nostril was ripped open, a deep gash

was cut in his upper lip, and several teeth were chipped. It took 2-1/2 hours to sew him up and bandage his wounds.

Our response to all of this harassment continues to be one of Christian love and forgiveness, as best we know how. We confess our inadequacy to get many "results" in this environment, but we steadfastly believe that God has called us to faithfully proclaim His Word on peace and brotherhood and sharing. We have no intention of compromising this witness to achieve an unjust "peace" with some racist neighbors. We need your continuing prayers as we move into an uncertain future.

While the above report is bleak, there are hopeful signs too. As reported in an earlier newsletter, several Koinonia people have been attending churches in town. Largely as a result of this, a few white townspeople have ventured out to visit with us. We have enjoyed good fellowship and the exchange of views has been encouraging. Our door remains open and we earnestly desire reconciliation with all people--white or black, northerners or southerners--for Christ calls us to "one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth." To that end we are committed.

We continue to have excellent relations with our black neighbors in the larger community--and they number 60% of Sumter County's population. Much of the fear that has gripped southern blacks for decades is slowly wearing away. Black families are readily responding to Koinonia's housing village and are moving into their new homes without fear. This month the fourth and fifth families moved in. Next month we expect the sixth and seventh families to occupy their new homes. Ashton and Marie Jones, referred to in the last newsletter, will be one of those families. (The Joneses are white. Other white families will live in Koinonia Village, too.) The eighth, ninth and tenth houses in Koinonia Village are under construction. Ten houses should be complete and even more houses under construction before Christmas. We want to build steadily until all 42 houses are built.

A very successful Bible school was held during the last 2-1/2 weeks of August under the leadership of Mike Tiernan, a student at the University of North Carolina, and with the help of several Young Life kids from Philadelphia and Connecticut. Over forty children attended the daily sessions in the Koinonia Village park and playground.

We are happy to report that Koinonia Partners, Inc. has been declared eligible for tax deductible gifts by IRS. This status was applied for a year ago and a favorable ruling was expected all along, but getting it is truly a bit of GOOD NEWS! Any gift you make to this work in the future will be tax deductible. Make your checks payable to KOINONIA PARTNERS, INC. Your gifts automatically go into the Fund for Humanity at Koinonia to build houses for poor families on a no-interest basis, to start other partnership farming ventures or partnership industries, and to help carry on our outreach ministry of preaching and teaching the Good News of Christ. (The total philosophy and program of Koinonia Partners is explained in a little brochure entitled "Koinonia Partners." Write for a free copy if you don't have one.)

Another item of truly Good News is that a Koinonia "partner" in Denver, Colorado, has donated money to erect a building for a new pecan shelling plant. This building is near completion. For the time being, the old equipment will be used in the new facility, but new, much needed, machinery will replace the old as soon as funds are available. This new, expanded shelling plant will enable us to produce many more pecans for our "nut" partners and, more im-

portantly, provide several more jobs for local people. Our hearts are full over this beautiful act of concern and sharing. We know you rejoice with us about this.

The budding Tie-Dye and Dashiki Sewing Industry, referred to briefly in the Summer Newsletter, is growing by leaps and bounds. Carol Brink, Linda Woods, Laurie Fuchs, and Linda Fuller are the partners in this venture. Four more women from the larger community are working with them and even more will be hired in weeks to come. Venora Ellis, a long time friend and partner of Koinonia from Westport, Connecticut, came down with her friend Jaqui Dendy, during the first week of September to help launch the production line for this enterprise. The shirts are advertised on the inside back page of the enclosed products catalog. Your orders will help this industry grow. The partners take only a modest living allowance, and other profits, as with all partnership ventures, go into the Fund for Humanity. Incidentally, sewing machines are needed. If you have an extra one that is gathering dust, ship it down. We'll put it to good use.

The harvest is on! Peanuts are all in now. We had an excellent crop this year although some nuts were lost due to heavy rains during harvest. Our average yield was in excess of a ton per acre on 127 acres. Grapes are in too--another good crop--over 14 tons. Corn is presently being gathered and that crop looks very good too.

Our friend G.T. Miller, over in Luverne, Alabama, is still having it rough with that lingering Ku Klux Klan boycott. He's lonely in the struggle, too. Drop him a note during a spare minute. His address is simply: G.T. Miller, Luverne, Alabama, 36409. Send him a little grocery money, too, if you've got any extra in your bank account. He'll go under if we don't help out.

Right now, sit down and order your pecans, fruit cakes and candy, plus some of the other items listed in the products catalog. We ship every day and want to fill your order. Your purchases enable this little enterprise to grow and create more job opportunities for so many people. And, profits go into the Fund for Humanity, as on other partnership ventures. Some of you may want to sell Koinonia products through your club or church group, or personally from your home. A couple in Philadelphia last season sold \$10,000 worth of Koinonia products from their home! On volume sales, you or your group make a profit and so does Koinonia. See the price list for volume discounts.

Most important of all, please keep us in your thoughts and prayers, and may the God of love and peace continue to rule in your hearts and guide you into acts of love, peace, kindness, and mercy in the months ahead.

MF:ld