

KOINONIA PARTNERS

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Bob Moore



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

So this is KOINONIA PARTNERS. We 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. Some of you may wish to join us and seek the new life of partnership with God and man. Others may want to share in the work through gifts or non-interest loans. Above all, we 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.

Koinonia Partners

Route 2

Americus, Georgia 31709

KOINONIA

In 1942, Clarence Jordan, theologian-farmer, and several friends, started a Christian community on a farm near Americus, Georgia. They named their venture Koinonia Farm. The word Koinonia, pronounced Koin-oh-NEE-ah, is Greek and means "a fellowship, or a community." The purpose of Koinonia Farm was two fold: first, to live together in community and witness, especially, to the Christian teachings on peace, sharing and brotherhood, and, second, to assist local farmers by introducing scientific farming methods. In the early years the community lived at peace with their neighbors, and made noteworthy contributions to the agricultural scene, particularly in poultry raising. But eventually they became the object of mounting hostility because of their witness against race prejudice. For years Koinonia withstood shootings, beatings, bombings, burnings and an economic boycott. A host of friends throughout the world helped Koinonia survive the nightmare.



Koinonia Farm Market dynamited, 1957

PARTNERSHIP HOUSING



Typical shack of South Georgia

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. 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, forty-two half-acre home sites have been laid off and are being made available to displaced rural families. Four acres in the center are being reserved as a community park. Twenty of the tracts are being sold for a nominal sum and the families are making their own arrangements for building and financing. The other twenty-two sites are being developed according to partnership principles. KOINONIA PARTNERS will put up a four-bedroom house with bath, kitchen and living room (this can be done at present costs for \$6,500), and this will be sold to a family over a twenty 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.



Willie Ware and Millard Fuller look over lots in new housing area.

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.

PARTNERSHIP INDUSTRIES

The same principles that apply to partnership farming also apply to partnership industries. There is already in operation 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 KOINONIA 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 a partner in these enterprises and brings to this phase of the work a wealth of experience in business.



Processing pecans



Hand selecting pecan halves



Mrs. Gussie Jackson, senior employee of pecan plant. She stayed even after Klan set her house on fire.

TIME FOR A CHANGE



As time progressed, it became apparent that new goals and new directions were needed for Koinonia. Clarence Jordan wrote about this need for change in a letter to friends of Koinonia on October 21, 1968:

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 also contributed to the feeling that this approach is no longer valid.

NEW DIRECTIONS



Clarence Jordan

In 1968, Millard Fuller, businessman-lawyer from Montgomery, Alabama, met with Clarence Jordan in Atlanta to discuss new directions for their lives and new directions for Koinonia. Both men had a strong sense of God's leading in their deliberations.

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. 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."

FARMING

Each partnership unit will 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 will need technical advice and spiritual nurture. These experts and shepherds will be provided by KOINONIA PARTNERS. It is anticipated that there will be volunteers arising from the speaking and teaching activities. Some are already beginning to come.

Koinonia Farm contains one thousand four hundred acres, so ample land is available for starting this phase of the work. The Wittkamper family, who have been at Koinonia for fifteen years, will continue as a partner family, and another family — the Al Zooks — have already arrived. The Zooks, while coming directly from Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, Illinois, have had much farm experience. Joseph Johnson, a local man, once a member of the Koinonia Community, is Al Zook's partner and will share equally with him in the first partnership farming program. Some high school boys, who want to earn college money, are setting up a partnership cattle feeding operation. 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.



Joseph Johnson
plowing peanut
field



Al Zook
pruning grape
vines



Lennie Jordan
with cattle
herd



Dave Mueller
digging for planting
pecan trees



Will Wittkamper
cultivating
strawberries



David Wittkamper
and Oscar Wood
sacking pecans

PARTNERSHIP

The first enterprise to be launched is partnership farming. Under this plan all land will be held in trust by KOINONIA PARTNERS but will be used by the partners free of charge. Thus, *usership* will replace *ownership*. This can be done because the capital of the FUND of KOINONIA PARTNERS 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%. (Many farmers have to pay 8%.) Thus, with corn at the present price of about \$1 a bushel and the profit at about 30¢, the farmer has 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.

KOINONIA PARTNERS 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 FOR HUMANITY so as to keep enlarging it and making more capital available to others. If the partners have the right spirit (and how can any system work without that?), the FUND should be self-generative and ever expanding.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

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 restructure their lives so as to be in partnership with God.

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 to 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.



Millard Fuller

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, hardnosed action?

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 1968 about fifteen such men to come to Koinonia for a four-day session of seeking, thinking, talking. They were businessmen, politicians, writers, ministers, free-lancers—all with a deep compassion for their fellowman. From this conference emerged a course of action which shall be called KOINONIA PARTNERS. It has three prongs: (1) Communication; (2) Instruction; (3) Application.



COMMUNICATION—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 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." Every available means of modern communication will be used: "Preaching partners" will travel and speak extensively across the land and throughout the world. Tapes, records, and films will be made, books published and literature circulated in every possible way.



INSTRUCTION—The constant teaching and training of the "Partners" and those who seriously want a new way of life built around the will and purposes of God, to enable them to become more effective and mature. There will be traveling "Discipleship Schools" to follow up and conserve the results of the speaking and communicating, to keep alive the new spirit, to strengthen and encourage. There will also be conferences and retreats. Some of the present facilities at Koinonia Farm will be used increasingly for this purpose.



APPLICATION—In its initial stages, Application 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 special fund within the non-profit KOINONIA PARTNERS organization. Its purpose is 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 meets both of these needs.

Money for the FUND will come from shared gifts of those who feel 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 and non-interest loans 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.